

### Charity Gift Aid Declaration

Boost your donation by 25p of Gift Aid for every £1 you donate

Gift Aid is reclaimed by the charity from the tax you pay for the current tax year.

Your address is needed to identify you as a current UK taxpayer.

In order to Gift Aid your donation you must tick the box below:

☐ I want to Gift Aid my donation of £ ..... and any donations I make in the future or have made in the past 4 years to **The Oxfordshire Victoria County History Trust**.

I am a UK taxpayer and understand that if I pay less Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all my donations in that tax year it is my responsibility to pay any difference.

#### My Details

Title ..... First name ..... Surname .....

Full home address .....

..... Postcode ..... Date .....

**Please notify the charity if you:** want to cancel this declaration; change your name or home address; or no longer pay sufficient tax on your income and/or capital gains.

If you pay Income Tax at the higher or additional rate and want to receive the additional tax relief due to you, you must include all your Gift Aid donations on your Self-Assessment tax return or ask HM Revenue and Customs to adjust your tax code.

**Standing Order Mandate** to make regular donations to The Oxfordshire Victoria County History Trust

Your bank's name address and postcode .....

**Please pay** to the account of the Oxfordshire Victoria County History Trust at Lloyds Bank, Wallingford branch, sort code 30-99-03, account number 01228711

Amount [in words] ..... pounds: [in figures] £ .....

On [date of first payment] ..... and then monthly \*/ quarterly \*/ annually\* ,  
until further notice\*/ until \*[date of final payment] .....[\*delete as applicable]

Name of my account .....

My account number ..... My sort code .....

My full name ( in block capitals) .....

My address and postcode .....

Signed ..... Date .....

**Please** return this form to the Oxfordshire VCH Trust, East House, Rokemarsh, Wallingford OX10 6JB. We will note the details and forward it to your bank. If you prefer to tell your bank directly please also tell the Trust the amount and timing of your donations.

*giftaid it*

THE OXFORDSHIRE VICTORIA COUNTY HISTORY TRUST 1997-2017  
Charity number 1064776

## 20th ANNIVERSARY NEWSLETTER

### WINTER 2017

#### NOW WE ARE TWENTY!

The Oxfordshire VCH Trust was set up in 1997 to raise funds for the VCH Oxfordshire project, to help bring to fruition its ambitious plan to research and publish a wide-ranging history of every parish and town in the county.

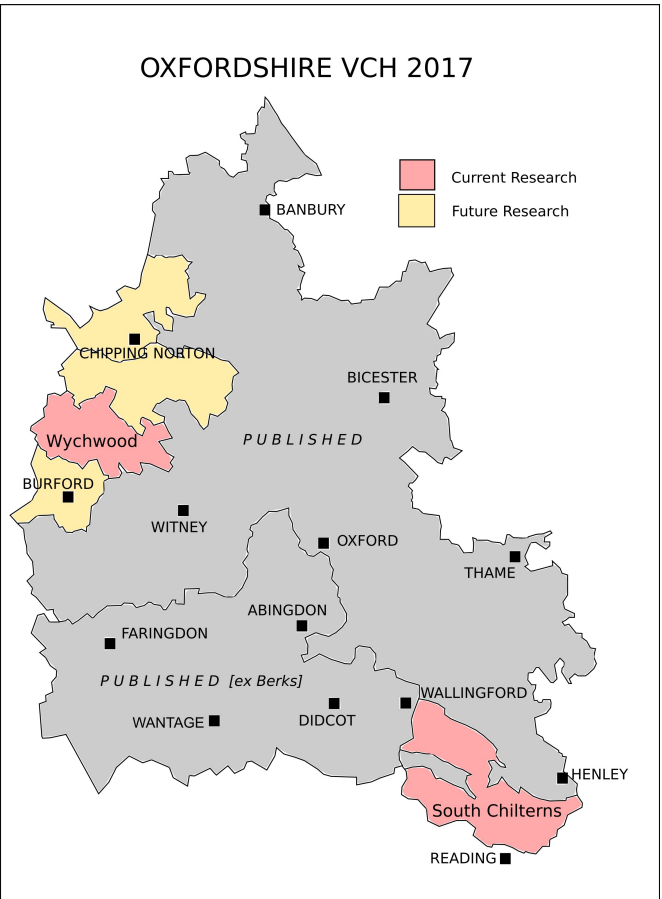
Twenty years on that goal is considerably closer, with 18 'Big Red Books' (out of 23 planned) now published, two others well advanced, and preparations for the remainder under way. The same period has seen the successful completion of Heritage Lottery Fund projects on Burford and Henley-on-Thames (resulting in two full-colour paperbacks in 2008–9), and the creation – undreamt of in 1997 – of open-access websites, making more widely available both the VCH's published output and its ongoing research-in-progress. Since 2011 the Trust has been the project's primary source of funding, a shift made possible only by the generous support of its many and varied donors. Further crucial support comes from the Trust's key partners, Oxfordshire County Council (which employs the VCH researchers), and the Universities of London (which oversees the VCH nationally) and Oxford.

Over the last 20 years the Trust has raised £1.6 million towards the project. As a result of donations the Trust now pays for 3½ of the 4 members of the research team. The Trust's current aim is to raise £150,000 a year to maintain progress at its present rate. With your help we can move on to the areas in the west of the county shown yellow on the map opposite.

#### ANOTHER ANNIVERSARY



Though the Trust raises the money, credit for the published volumes is due to the research team: currently Simon Townley (County Editor), Simon Draper, Stephen Miles, and Mark Page. This year marks Simon Townley's completion of 30 years with the Oxfordshire VCH. Many congratulations to him for his achievements over that period.



#### PROGRESS THIS YEAR

The focus of current work is completion of Volume 19 on the Wychwood area, and of Volume 20 on the South Chilterns.

The Wychwood volume (now well advanced) looks at the former royal forest of **Wychwood** and the adjoining **Cornbury Park**, along with nine nearby villages stretching from **Idbury** and **Fifield** on the Gloucestershire border through to **Leafield** and **Ramsden** near Witney. The core, apart from the forest itself, is the former royal estate centre of **Shipton-under-Wychwood**, whose large parish included (until the 18th or 19th centuries) the neighbouring villages of **Lyneham**, **Milton-under-Wychwood**, **Ascott-under-Wychwood**, **Leafield**, and **Ramsden**.

Draft histories of most of those places are available on the VCH Oxfordshire website, the most recent additions being accounts (by County Editor Simon Townley) *see page 2*

## VCH HISTORIES: THE LAST TWENTY YEARS

The five volumes and two paperbacks published under the Oxfordshire Trust's auspices cover three market towns and over 50 other places across the county, stretching from **Witney** and **Burford** in the west to **Henley-on-Thames** in the south-east. Another 14 parishes (and counting) are available on the VCH Oxfordshire website, ahead of publication in their final form.



Witney market place c.1780 (VCH Oxfordshire 14)

Witney, Henley, and Burford were all planned medieval towns, whose origins and physical development are explored in some detail. Other themes include Witney's famous blanket industry (Volume 14), and Henley's role as an important trans-shipment point linking its wide hinterland with London (Volume 16 and the paperback *Henley-on-Thames: Town, Trade and River*). The 2008 Burford paperback (*Buildings and People in a Cotswold Town*) includes a detailed gazetteer of the town's important stone and timber buildings, several of which were tree-ring dated as part of the project.

The rural parish histories cover a wide variety of settlements. In west Oxfordshire most are nucleated villages in stone-built Cotswold style, amongst them (in Volume 17) the Thames-side village of **Kelmscott**, with its well-known William Morris associations. The VCH's work there benefited from its involvement in the Kelmscott Landscape Project (overseen by the Society of Antiquaries), which resulted in an additional free-standing publication. Very different is the 'new' west Oxfordshire town of **Carterton** (covered in Volume 15), which originated c. 1900 as a colony of smallholders laid out by the enterprising entrepreneur William Carter. The earlier Chartist colony at **Charterville** is covered in the same volume.

The **Chiltern** parishes are radically different, those on the uplands characterised by dispersed settlement, early inclosure, and extensive wood-pasture. A first for the VCH was an archaeological project with the South Oxfordshire Archaeological Group in 2008, which succeeded in locating the site of the 'lost' medieval church of **Bix Gibwyn** (see Volume 16 ).

## PROGRESS THIS YEAR (continued from page 1)

of **Leafield**, **Cornbury**, and the **forest** itself. Leafield was one of the villages most intimately connected with the forest (in which it had grazing rights), while Cornbury began as a 'working' medieval park before the building of its grand house in the 17th century, and associated landscaping.

Work in the south-east (for Volume 20) is focused on a dozen parishes from **Crowmarsh Gifford** in the west to **Shiplake** in the east. Both are available on the VCH website. Parishes completed this year include **Newnham Murren** and **Mapledurham**, the latter well known as an important regional centre of Roman Catholic recusancy, and for its impressive Jacobean manor house and adjoining estate village. The parish's south-east corner was absorbed in 1977 into neighbouring **Caversham** (now a suburb of Reading), on which work is also under way. **Newnham Murren** ceased to exist as an independent parish in 1932, but formerly extended from the Thames up onto the Chilterns, its boundaries described in a charter of 966. Its medieval chapel survives by the river, some distance from the modern village, which is now effectively merged with Crowmarsh Gifford. Work on **Mongewell** and **Goring** is also well advanced, and both will appear on the website during 2018.



VCH Assistant Editor Dr Simon Draper (in blue jersey) explaining the mound of Ascott D'Oyley's medieval castle (centre right) to members of the Oxfordshire Buildings Record, May 2017

## LATEST PARISH HISTORIES ONLINE

The latest additions to the VCH Oxfordshire website (address opposite) are histories of **Wychwood Forest**, **Cornbury Park**, and **Leafield** in west Oxfordshire (earmarked for Volume 19), and of **Newnham Murren** and **Mapledurham** in the south-east. **Ramsden** will follow in 2018, before the Wychwood volume is revised in preparation for its submission to press.

## FUTURE PLANS: CHIPPING NORTON

While the VCH's immediate priority is completion of its Wychwood and South Chilterns volumes, as part of our plans for completing the series we are now looking ahead to what will come next. This will be a volume covering the former market town of Chipping Norton in west Oxfordshire, and half a dozen surrounding places including Hook Norton and the Rollrights. Work is planned to begin in 2019.

## SOME RECENT REVIEWS

Reviews of our most recent volume (on Ewelme Hundred) have been overwhelmingly positive. For *The Local Historian's* reviewer it 'achieves the same high standards of research and rigorous attention to detail as its predecessors, and will no doubt end up as thoroughly well-thumbed and fingered ... a handsome volume, with many excellent illustrations as well as the maps.' *Landscape History* calls it 'a model for the future' in its 'fully rounded picture of this ... distinctive area' – 'very well produced (including a first-rate block of colour plates)', and 'another triumph for the Oxford team'.

## CONTACTING THE VCH

For the past 18 months the Oxfordshire team has led a slightly peripatetic existence during redevelopment of the Westgate Library, where it was formerly based. Discussions are currently under way with Oxfordshire County Council to secure a new base, which may not be in central Oxford. For up-to-date information, please check the VCH Oxfordshire website (address below).

Meanwhile we are grateful to Oxfordshire History Centre for providing us with a foothold and an official postal address. Please note that email contact is recommended for a swift response, and that our former telephone number is not currently valid. (Main contact: [simon.townley@history.ox.ac.uk](mailto:simon.townley@history.ox.ac.uk))

## WHERE TO FIND VCH HISTORIES

VCH histories are available in various forms:

- hardback 'Big Red Books', available in public libraries, or to buy: see links from VCH website, or <https://boydellandbrewer.com>
- published volumes online: [www.british-history.ac.uk](http://www.british-history.ac.uk) (currently Volumes 2 to 17)
- unpublished parish histories in progress: [www.victoriacountyhistory.ac.uk/oxfordshire](http://www.victoriacountyhistory.ac.uk/oxfordshire)



## THE VCH NEEDS YOUR HELP

The Trust's aim is to raise sufficient funds to complete the VCH's coverage of Oxfordshire, and this is where we need your support. Please help us with one-off or regular donations and use the gift aid form on the back page if you can, as this will enable the Trust to increase the value of your gift by 25%. At present we need to raise £150,000 a year. Donations should be sent to the Treasurer, East House, Rokemars, Wallingford OX10 6JB, and can be made by:

- cheque (payable to the Oxfordshire VCH Trust);
- CAF cheque;
- standing order (form on back page); or
- direct payment into the Trust's bank account (sort code: 30-99-03; account 01228711)

The names of donors will be printed in the Red Book volumes to which they have donated, unless they wish to remain anonymous.

### The Oxfordshire Victoria County History Trust (registered Charity 1064776)

**President:** Tim Stevenson, Lord Lieutenant of Oxfordshire.

**Patrons:** Lord Camoys, Lord Saye and Sele, Lord Hurd of Westwell, Sir Charles Ponsonby Bt, The Chancellor of the University of Oxford, John Howell MP

**Trustees:** Dr Kate Tiller (Chairman), Nigel Mogg (Vice-chairman), Barbara Allison, Sir Hugo Brunner, Christopher Butterfield, Prof. Robert Evans, Catherine Fulljames, Tim Hallchurch, John Harwood, Tom Hassall, Prof. Joanna Innes, Cllr Lorraine Lindsay-Gale, John Leighfield, Michael Macfadyen, Dr Jill Pellew, Sarah Taylor, Liam Tiller (Hon. Treasurer)

[www.victoriacountyhistory.ac.uk/oxfordshire](http://www.victoriacountyhistory.ac.uk/oxfordshire) (work in progress)

[www.british-history.ac.uk](http://www.british-history.ac.uk) (published volumes online)

Oxfordshire VCH Trust, East House, Rokemars, Wallingford OX10 6JB