

Charity Number: 1165223

Summer 2020



Alliums in the garden at Gloucestershire Archives.

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Lockdown diary:

Week 10 Reflections on Gloucestershire Archives' lockdown

I am writing this in my study listening to birdsong through the open window. Over the last ten weeks I've enjoyed daily bike rides up and down the Cotswolds escarpment and views from Coopers Hill (aka the cheese-rolling hill) and other local hills as a change from the familiar, more urban, route to the Archives. A personal highlight for me was a close-up extended view of a hobby (falco subbuteo) in my garden, striking a pose exactly the same as in my bird book, thus enabling a certain identification. My new lockdown challenge is learning to play the flute by ear, via a weekly Zoom session with fellow musicians – definitely no windows open during this activity as I'm keen no-one hears my faltering steps without the sheet music I usually rely upon.

Apart from the flute-playing, this may all sound rather idyllic, but I'd much prefer to be announcing the Archives will be opening and back to normal shortly. For the first time in over 80 years, the service has now been closed to the public for 10 weeks, and sadly this position is unlikely to change for the foreseeable future.

Since mid-March, I've been maintaining a lockdown log documenting key decisions and activities. This started by implementing a more rigorous cleaning regime, making arrangements to isolate documents which had been consulted for 72 hours, working out tasks staff could do from home, followed by the decision to close the Archives from 23rd March. That evening the government announced the national lockdown, so new arrangements were shared with staff via our newly established WhatsApp group.

The Council's 'silver command' asked me to establish a post scanning system from scratch to enable County Council and Gloucester City Council colleagues to work from home. On 25th March Andrew Parry and I went into Shire Hall, looked at the

pigeon holes bulging with post and developed a plan to tackle what seemed an impossible task. At the end of a very tiring day, we had a list of contacts for the bulk of the pigeon holes, Andrew had cracked an efficient means of scanning, and we had come to terms with social distancing and other health measures that would be required. The next day we expanded our scanning team, established a process for dealing with any misdirected post to reduce potential security breaches, requested that incoming post was received digitally where feasible, and continued to track down contacts for the remaining pigeon holes. I must pay tribute to key workers Andrew, Abbi, Anthony and Rachel who have been doing a sterling job ever since. The challenge will be withdrawing from this service as it is enabling Shire Hall colleagues to work from home, but the very same people will be required to help re-open the Archives to the public. I also thank Kate O'Keefe, whose dementia-friendly skills have also been called upon in her redeployed role to provide community support in her locality.

So what have the rest of the archives team been doing? Paul Compton is checking the building twice a week, emptying dehumidifiers, and whilst there, keeping the garden well-tended. We monitor strongroom conditions remotely and can also adjust the settings for the mechanical equipment for much of the building from home. This was most helpful when the lockdown was first announced. The strong rooms (new and old) are producing very steady temperature and humidity readings which is very pleasing. Ally McConnell is dealing with deliveries, post and emergency access requests (e.g. from building contractors, copy certificates team etc) and whilst on-site cataloguing Dowty (not feasible from home). The rest of us have been doing the best we can from home. Only some staff have access to council IT equipment, so many colleagues have not been in a position to answer emails sent to work addresses. More laptops are now being provided. Huge inroads have been made into data cleansing and data inputting tasks, lockdown resources and activities created, and we've all been peeping into each other's homes via on-line meetings.

We've recently extended informal catch-up sessions to some volunteers and on-site partners.

Each week I send in returns reporting on business continuity and the number of colleagues in work (performing key worker roles), self-isolating or shielding but working, working from home and not able to work. More recently I've drawn up risk assessments for a phased return to work, drawing on national and international guidance, and now signed off by my health and safety colleague. Any relaxing of the 'work at home' regime needs to be signed off by the County Council's senior management. They will also confirm when we can re-open the public service. Certain minor adjustments (along the lines of those you see in supermarkets) will need to be made to our buildings before this can happen. We will advertise widely when we get to this stage, but at present no date has been set.

Coronavirus also put paid to our on-and off-site learning and outreach programme, and made planning the 10th Gloucester History Festival more challenging. Fortunately our collaborative bid to Historic England's covid-19 recovery scheme was successful. Next week we will start work with heritage and cultural colleagues across the city to prepare an innovative on-line and outdoor offer for the September History Festival. Further details will follow.

As an archives service, one of our key roles is to proactively collect responses to covid-19. I've been collecting regular briefings from Gloucestershire and South Gloucestershire Councils, but would welcome community contributions too. If you'd like to contribute diaries, photographs, short articles or local evidence, please find further details on our lockdown resources and activities page of the website: <https://www.heritagehub.org.uk/lockdown> or contact archives@gloucestershire.gov.uk.

Meanwhile, my best wishes to all Friends, particularly those who have been badly impacted by the coronavirus itself or the

associated measures. I look forward to seeing many of you again in person in due course. *Heather Forbes, County Archivist*

The Friends border: a virtual garden tour



We've had beautiful weather over the last ten weeks. Sadly Friends have not been able to see the Friends' border at the entrance to the Heritage Hub, and the new community garden and how well they are doing. We know our chairman has peeped through the locked front gates on his government-sponsored exercise, but thought the rest of you might enjoy a short virtual tour instead. Can you see the bee in the picture below?



Heather Forbes, County Archivist

Spring is Sprung

Coronavirus has resulted in untold distress to countless people. The closure of a county archive probably counts for little alongside so much personal loss and suffering. However, many people will be missing the friendly welcome of Archive staff, the social interaction, and the sense of purpose that comes from collaborative research.



Last Autumn the Friends planted the borders at the front of the Archives with hundreds of plants. We hoped that as they burst into life this Spring they would give pleasure to visitors and regular users alike, but the gates are locked, there are no visitors of any kind, no one to enjoy the plants.

But the plants are still growing, leaves are unfurling, flowers are blooming. Perhaps they are a small sign that life goes on. If nobody sees them this Spring they will still be there in the Autumn, still there next Spring and the Spring after, when hopefully the virus has disappeared or at least been defeated by medical science.

So, for the time being, the Archives remains closed but the plants flourish, reminding us that there are good and lovely things more enduring than the temporary trials that beset us.

Clive Andrews

New Website for FoGA

Have you seen the new FoGA website yet? You can find it at:

foga.online

The old site will be running in parallel for the next year or so but all the latest information about the Friends can now be found on the new site. It is designed so that it looks as good on a mobile phone as it does on a computer.

The website also has links to our new Facebook, Twitter and Instagram accounts. Do check them out if you subscribe to one of those forms of social media. They contain lots of interesting photos and information. We are very grateful to Archive staff Ally McConnell and Rhianna Watson for setting up our social media accounts and for regularly keeping them updated with fascinating material.

Clive Andrews



A section from the Home page of the new website.

From the Archives

During the weeks of lockdown, we've been finding new ways to keep our Heritage Hub community of volunteers, researchers, partners and staff connected and engaged with the Archives and heritage more generally. We've created a new page on the Gloucestershire Heritage Hub website called "[Lockdown resources and activities](http://www.heritagehub.org.uk/lockdown)". This does exactly what it says on the tin! It's a central point where we can share our own initiatives and resources and signpost to relevant things elsewhere. Ideas range from virtual jigsaws from Archives images to an invitation to keep a Covid diary for permanent preservation amongst our collections.

www.heritagehub.org.uk/lockdown

We're also taking the opportunity to highlight and re-purpose many excellent resources which we already have. Do take a look at the page if you haven't already, and check in from time to time to see what's new.

Kate Maisey

While Gloucestershire Archives, Gloucestershire Libraries and Gloucestershire Family History Society's research rooms are closed to the public during the Covid-19 pandemic, customers have been unable to access digitised copies of Gloucestershire records free of charge. We've been working with Ancestry and can now provide free access to Gloucestershire's digitised resources until we can welcome you back to the Heritage Hub. Please use this link to access them: <http://www.ancestry.co.uk/s108677/t43849/rd.ashx>

You can also find some expert help on our prisoner records from our very own Paul Evans who offers some handy hints on using these records:

<https://www.facebook.com/AncestryUK/videos/2617419908531292/>

Claire Collins

1921 Census for England and Wales

In 18 months' time, in January 2022, the 1921 census will be released to the public by FindMyPast. Searching the Census indexes will be free but viewing images or transcriptions will cost; they have not yet revealed what that cost will be or whether it will be part of their normal subscription or not. Anyone will be able to view the images of the 1921 census for free online at The National Archives but the original census documents will not be available in the reading rooms and there are no plans to produce microfiche.

It was originally intended that the census for England, Wales, Scotland, the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man would be taken on the night of 24th April 1921 but that was postponed by almost two months in the wake of the Black Friday strike by coal miners, railwaymen and transport workers. It finally took place on 19th June 1921. There was some concern that the new date could mean that results would be affected by holiday-making but it avoid most of the big industrial holidays of the North. There was no census taken that year in Ireland due to the Irish War of Independence.

The 1921 Census showed that Great Britain had a population of 42,767,530 in 1921, which was an increase of 4.7% over 1911, with 20,430,623 males and 22,336,907 females.

Some of the questions asked of each person were the same as before but some were new and some previous questions were omitted. The questions asked were:

- name of person
- relationship to head of household
- age - this was now required as years and completed months,
- sex
- if age 15 or over, whether single, married or divorced

- if under age 15, whether parents are living, "both alive", "father dead", "mother dead" or "both dead"
- birthplace, county and town or parish (or country plus state, province or district for persons born abroad)
- if born abroad, nationality
- whether attending school or other educational establishment
- trade
- employer
- place of work
- number and ages of living children or stepchildren under 16

The enumerator who collected the form was also responsible for recording the number of "living rooms" at the premises.

New questions asked over those in the 1911 Census included whether a marriage has been dissolved by divorce - as divorces had greatly increased in the years up to 1921, it was deemed important to know exactly how many there were. Another new question was where each person worked, in particular to obtain information about the travelling involved in getting to work.

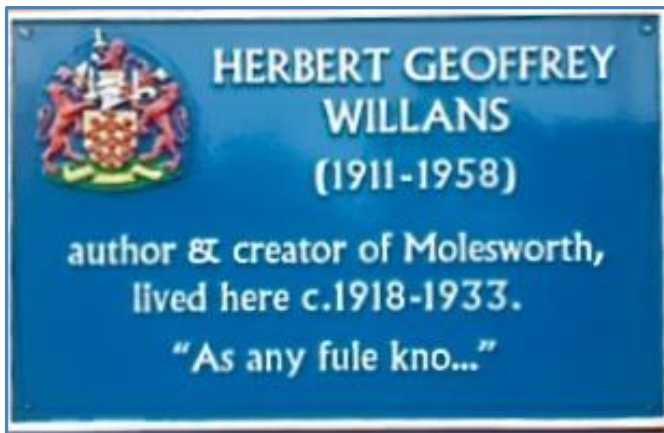
For Wales and Monmouthshire, there was an extra question for each person (over three years) on whether they spoke English and Welsh, English only or Welsh only. For Scotland, there were extra questions about whether each person (over three years) spoke Gaelic only and also whether they were entitled to benefits under the National Insurance (Health) Acts.

The so called "fertility" question introduced in 1911 about the number of years of the marriage and the number of children was dropped. Also the question about blindness, deafness or dumbness was removed.

The 1931 census was destroyed in a fire and the 1941 census was never taken due to the Second World War so the next available census will be the 1951 census due out in 2052!

Coming to a Street near The Hub

Who would have guessed it? Geoffrey Willans, the author of the Nigel Molesworth books and many other works of fiction, was born in Smyrna but actually grew up at 19 Alexandra Road, just off Denmark Road in Gloucester. In 2019, the Mayor of Gloucester unveiled this distinctive blue plaque at the house, in the company of the author's son Michael Willans, his nephew Robin Gilbert and the house owner, Dr. Roy Bhageerutty.



The family first moved to Alexandra Road in 1918 when Geoffrey was seven and his father was working at the Wagon Works; they had previously lived in Heathville Road. Geoffrey's nephew, Robin Gilbert, said that his uncle's greatest asset was his sense of humour and that it manifested itself in the Molesworth series of books about the precocious schoolboy in the Curse of St. Custards.

Geoffrey Willans was a very talented man who wrote many books, as well as the classic Molesworth series. His writings brought a smile to many faces over the years. Sadly he died too young, of a heart attack at the age of 47.

James Hodsdon

V.E. Day Commemoration Trail

Way back at the start of 2020 when we were all planning holidays, outings, and goals for the year, the powers that be at Gotherington were putting together ideas for a village event to commemorate the end of World War II. A history led event needs the backing of the local history society and so we were all mulling over ideas. Although our major village events always take place at the playing field they have, in recent years, incorporated an activity which takes residents out and about into the local environment.

Roll on four months and we found ourselves in the distracting grip of the pandemic. Captain Tom's fundraising achievement for the NHS captured the same spirit that was in evidence during WWII. It was natural for the media to link the two but by doing so it suddenly dawned on me that I had promised to create a commemoration trail around Gotherington and Woolstone for the V.E. weekend.

The limits put on us all by the lockdown made this more important than ever and I found myself creating posters, knowing that the bank holiday was only a week away. Each poster created for the trail has given an insight into a particular aspect of war time in Gotherington and at Woolstone, our neighbouring parish. For such a small area we have a wealth of information based upon personal memories, newspaper references, and official documentation.

Some aspects are ones that apply to everyone who lived through those years, other aspects are particular to this area. For instance, a one-way route was established through Gotherington to allow military vehicles driven over from Ashchurch to be serviced at a site between our village and Bishop's Cleeve without causing too much disruption. The area was deluged with American soldiers so it's not surprising that we also had a G.I. bride who held her wedding reception at the village hall.

What might be less predictable is the manner in which some German PoWs were treated. Those residents who are old enough to remember always mention one in particular, Manni. He was a young man who was captured at Dunkirk and who spent the rest of the war working as a farm labourer at Woolstone before, in 1947, emigrating to Canada. Apparently, he was always smiling, perhaps because he knew how lucky he was not to be stationed on the Russian front.



Photograph courtesy of Lawrence Osborne

The trail has covered the length and breadth of the parish, each poster highlighting an aspect of the war that occurred at that particular place. Given the lockdown, any resident who has been able to has been outside taking exercise. The posters have proved to be a distraction during the daily walks from our worries of the moment, sharing information which reflect a resilience in the face of hard times that are as relevant now as they were back then. There has been some wonderful feedback, residents amazed at what was going on during those war years. It is hoped this will in turn encourage some at least to become members of the local history society.

By Caroline Meller



GOTHERINGTON & AREA LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY



This photograph was taken in the farm yard of Grange Farm. Driving the cart is Mary Tamplin. Originally from Bristol, she came to Woolstone to work as a land girl. Most girls lived at hostels, such as the one at Dumbleton Hall, and were picked up at 7am by a lorry to be taken out to the farms. Work at any particular farm could last from a few days to several weeks, depending upon the time of year, and mostly involved crop growing. The girls were paid about £3 per week, some of the money being sent home to support their families. Mary, however, lived with the Jackson family, at Woolstone. Sitting behind Mary in this photograph are two prisoners of war who also worked on the farm.



On his walk around the village, Joe reads one of the posters and checks the information on the local history website on his phone.

Creating a Village Family Tree

The timing was perfect when, at the beginning of the lockdown, I was asked to identify a photograph which had been given to Gotherington Local History Society. It was in a box labelled 'Gotherington and Gretton' so it wasn't even certain that the photograph had been taken in our immediate area.

Eventually, with the help of social media, the names of those in the photograph and the place were identified: John Villar and his first wife, Kate, alongside his farm bailiff, James Long and his wife, Eliza. The place too was eventually identified as Hill View, Gotherington, where James and Eliza lived in the early 20th century.

Despite living at Gotherington for over 50 years I still get muddled whenever anyone refers to the Long family. Just to give you an

idea of the confusion that can arise, there are at least three members of the family called Tom Long. With time on my hands during the lockdown I was inspired by the photograph to create a family tree on Ancestry which would enable me in the future to know which Tom Long was which.

This mini-project quickly became all-encompassing. Family tree research spreads its branches back and might only include relatively few people not related by blood. I soon discovered that creating a family tree for the Longs metamorphosed into a village family tree as I connected more and more residents through marriage ties.

It struck me that this could become a useful resource for local historians. Up-loading information from paper files which had for years taken up numerous bookshelves in my home freed up valuable space. Adding this local history information to Ancestry would enable those with Gotherington connections to discover details about their ancestors lives that would go beyond a name recorded in a parish register. From a local history perspective, the tree gives our members access to family information (photographs, letters, even locks of hair) that will help to enhance what we as an LHS already know.

Creating a village family tree has given me a valuable insight into how numerous people have gradually connected over time and have been incorporated into local life. At the point of writing, more than 400 people have been added to the tree and it's beginning to feel like the human equivalent to the London underground. The hope is, when I finally reach the end of this project, to create a Gotherington equivalent to the underground map, using different coloured lines to represent surnames, with the village at the centre and the 'stations' branching out to show where these villagers came from and where, if ever, they eventually moved to.

By Caroline Meller

Captain Patrick Stanley Vaughan Heenan

A benefit of being in “isolation” due to the Coronavirus is having time to undertake some research that has been on my wish list for some time. Some of you will know of my interest in military history and it was whilst researching the Air Intelligence Liaison Unit of 100 Squadron in Malaya that I first came across Captain Heenan and his link to Cheltenham Gentleman’s College. Little did I realise where my research would lead. Far from being able to remove an item of research from my long wish list, I now want to delve further into the life of *the traitor of Singapore*.

Captain P S V Heenan was born in Stratford, North Island, New Zealand in 1910. He was brought up in Burma where his father was a mining engineer and was later sent to Cheltenham Gentleman’s College to complete his education.



On his enlistment to the Indian Army in 1935, he was described as 6’1” tall and weighing 13 stone. The following year he became heavy weight boxing champion for India and was also a keen rugby player – attributes that would ordinarily have been admired. However, Patrick Heenan was disliked by his fellow officers and was described as a womaniser.

Heenan, who served in the 16th Punjab Regiment of the Indian Army, was not unintelligent and rose to the rank of Captain and was attached to the Air Intelligence Liaison Unit of the 100 Squadron, where he served in Malaya and Singapore.

For some fifty years after the fall of Singapore, Captain Heenan's contribution to its capture by the Japanese was not documented but it was then to be found as one of ignominy and shame. Captain Heenan was arrested on December 9th 1941 when he was caught, during a Japanese air raid, hiding a radio transmitter he had been using to pass on information to the invading enemy.

By the time of his capture, the damage had already been done and the battle of Singapore was all but lost. As the Japanese closed in there was not time for a Court Martial and Heenan was held in prison no doubt anticipating his release by the Japanese.

On the morning of the 15th February 1942 a young British officer was exercising a number of prisoners, including Heenan. Obviously anticipating his early release by the Japanese, Heenan's arrogance proved to be his downfall, for the officer took out his service revolver and shot him dead. Within hours Singapore had fallen.

Geoffrey A. North

Friends' Events

Friends will understand that all events for this summer regrettably have had to be cancelled. However, John Chandler has kindly said he will defer his Mystery Tour until June next year. Other events that were in the pipeline will be re-scheduled, as soon as it becomes clear which and when destinations re-open to visitors and the degree of social distancing that might continue to be required. We will of course let members know about all future events as they are programmed.

Cherry Ann Knott

Friends' Visit to Stroud's Museum in the Park



These pictures were taken after the talk that formed the Collections Manager's lecture, which was the first part of the visit. The Collections Manager is Alexia Clark; she is on the far right of the pictures, talking with people (including Heather!) and answering questions. Others were having tea!

Alexia had brought out and displayed a very interesting collection of objects, including a first edition of Lyson's illustrations of the Roman paving at Woodchester following the 18th-century excavations.

I was particularly captivated by the portion of a Saxon mill-wheel paddle, found in the river bed of the Frome in the Stroud Valley.



Some Friends look at the exhibits selected for them by Alexia Clark.



Cherry Ann Knott

A Day in the Life of ...

... the Community Heritage Development Manager at Gloucestershire Archives

It is one of my greatest regrets that, at the age of 18, I failed my history A level. History had been my second favourite subject at school, although I had no idea of the sort of career I could make from this interest. At the age of 7, my mother bought me a book on the kings and queens of England. I remember very little about the potted histories of each monarch's life, but I do remember that it cost 12/6d, which was a significant sum back then. I lost the book very many years ago, but not my interest in history, and what we might now call heritage.

It was over 20 years ago that I first moved to Gloucester, because of work. I had memories of the city from my childhood, as we lived only 40 minutes' away and would sometimes visit the city for shopping. For much of my time in Gloucester, I have worked as a social worker. I trained in social work and community work in the mid-1980s. I made a conscious decision to leave social work back in 2002, and was lucky enough to get a job with the library service as a Social Inclusion Development Officer. This involved using easily transferable skills: working with communities, outreach, advising the service on equalities issues and breaking down barriers that some people faced when accessing the service. One of my responsibilities, at that time, was to work with the librarians based in the library at HMP Gloucester, looking at literacy projects for prisoners and their families.

It was also at this time that I worked with Health to set up Gloucestershire Books on Prescription, a self-help scheme run by GP's, to help their patients access books from their local library on managing their mild to moderate mental health issues. It was the first social prescribing project in Gloucestershire, and is still in

operation today. But it was my work with communities of interest that really inspired me.

In 2014 I was made redundant from the library service, and this was in the context of reductions in public library budgets across the UK, and quickly found a job with the City Council as a Neighbourhood Manager. This involved working with communities to improve quality of life in their neighbourhoods, and this ranged from dealing with anti-social behaviour, illegal encampments (Travellers), street scene (looking after the built environment, and streetscape issues such as managing fly-tipping), stray dogs (yes, really), monitoring and removal of graffiti, and being, in part, responsible for community efforts to improve Gloucester park, including reducing crime and helping support a new community interest group that was formed to protect and enhance the heritage of the park, as well as helping to organise events held in the park. One of my biggest tasks whilst at the City Council was to oversee some of the improvements in the city in readiness for hosting some of the international rugby matches for the Rugby World Cup 2015.

Three and a half years ago, I started working as the new Community Heritage Development Officer at Gloucestershire Archives. It brought together all the things I was passionate about – history and heritage, working with people and communities, equalities, social inclusion, working with volunteers, project work and outreach.

So what does a typical day look like? It's fair to say there is no "typical" day. I meet a lot of people, and enjoy the practical side of this – problem solving, communication skills, working in partnership and exploring what is possible. The post was a new post (part of the For the Record project), and this meant I had every opportunity to "make it my own".

But the very best thing was that, at last, I was working in an area that had everything to do with history and heritage. I read lots of

history books, especially on social history; I'm currently reading a book about crime in 1880's London (the decade, and the century, into which my maternal grandfather was born). And my favourite Christmas present, last year, was a very expensive facsimile edition of Charles Booth's poverty maps of Victorian London (it more than makes up for my lost copy of the kings and queens of England), where the blackest streets indicated the worst socio-economic conditions. The maps really are works of art, with streets colour-coded as to household income and what we would now call social class – from the palest of pinks, to crimson red, to grey, indigo and black, the very poorest. The poorest, blackest, streets also indicated the most crime-ridden, both in terms of perpetrators and victims. It was probably the first time that any researcher had made a connection between crime and poverty. If you want a sense of what life was like for the working poor in this period, I would highly recommend Henry Mayhew's book, *London Labour and the London Poor*, published in 1851 and, of course, Friedrich Engels, *The Condition of the Working Class in England*. To make that history really come alive, and to taste, hear and smell mid-Victorian London, with its debtors' prisons, pawn shops, workhouses, street urchins and hardships, try reading any of Charles Dickens' London novels of the period.

One of my first clients, when I was a social worker in the mid-1980's, was a woman who had been born in the East End in the 1890's. She will have long since passed away, but it always struck me, as a social worker, sometimes (early in my career) working with people born in the late Victorian period how short a period of time a century really is, certainly within living memory now we have so many people not only reaching, but living beyond, their 100th year. It used to fascinate me, as a very young child, being handed 12 Victorian pennies as my weekly pocket money, in the 1960's, and wondering who, in all those years, had also handled those coins. Perhaps a famous person, a chimney sweep, a market trader in Petticoat Lane, an artist, a Jewish elder, perhaps even a king or queen.

One of the areas of work I particularly enjoy, in my role, is project work. Last year, I project managed an externally funded, year-long project, called Never Better, culminating in a drama performed at Blackfriars as part of the Gloucester History Festival in September 2019. This was where a group of volunteers, recruited and managed by me, were asked to read and transcribe contemporaneous accounts of patient admissions and treatments in Victorian lunatic asylums. These transcriptions were used as the basis for the performance, brought right up to date alongside contemporary accounts of those living in the city today with their own mental health issues. Once again, I was working with people, dealing with sensitive issues and had to focus on mental health (one of the sectors I had worked in as a social worker). The Never Better project has been the highlight of my career, because I know it made a difference to so many people and because it gave a voice to some of history's most silent and ignored people.

So, what is a "typical" day like for me? Well ... I may be interviewing a couple of volunteers. I could be writing or amending policies on learning and outreach, I may be chairing a meeting with one of our partners (one of my favourite is the partnership we have with Kingsholm Primary School, where we work with the teachers to bring children aged 9-11 years in to the Heritage Hub; this may be on class visits, workshops or our annual children's take-over day). And I could be looking at issues to do with customer service, or mentoring a colleague. And (another favourite area), dealing with equalities issues (as a Local Authority we have a statutory duty to promote equalities, as enshrined in the Public Sector Equality Duty Act 2010).

But, whatever I do, and whatever I'm working on, it will involve working with people, and working with history. Not so bad for someone who failed her history A level all those years ago!

Sally Middleton, Gloucestershire Archives

G.A. Quarter Sessions Project

Last year the Friends agreed to sponsor a project to catalogue some of the quarter session papers held at the Archives. For over 700 years, Justices of the Peace have played a major role in the administration of English justice. In the reign of Edward III (1327-77) it was decreed that two or more justices in every county should meet together to hear cases on four occasions each year, Michaelmas, Epiphany, Easter and the Feast of the Translation of St Thomas Becket (7 July). These 'General Quarter Sessions of the Peace' continued until they were abolished in 1971.

A statute of 1344 provided for justices to be appointed, and dismissed, by order of the Crown. They were to be knights and superior gentry, some of whom would be wise and learned in the law, and they were to 'enquire into, hear and determine' a vast range of crimes, such as theft, assault and sorcery. They had the power to arrest people, to imprison them, and to bind them over to keep the peace. The jurisdiction of quarter sessions was almost exactly the same as assize courts although in reality assize judges reserved more serious cases to themselves. In one way justices had *more* power than judges as they decided on someone's guilt or innocence themselves whereas it was a jury that made the decision at the assizes.

The Friends' project attracted a considerable number of people both members of the Friends and others. Volunteers received an introduction to the type of documents they would be dealing with and, when necessary, some palaeography tuition. The documents dated from the latter half of the 1700s and consisted of 'Examinations', the sworn statements of the accused either pleading guilty or explaining why they were not, and 'Depositions', the signed statements of accusers and witnesses. Volunteers had to extract the names, places, and the details of the crimes, and enter them on spreadsheets, which will be converted into a searchable database.

County of Gloucester } The Information of Elizabeth
 Do Ditt } Wife of Stephen Skillem
 C 56 } a parish of Winchcomb in y^e D^y
 County taken on her oath before one
 Powell Brett Esq^r one of his Ma-
 jestys Justices of Peace in & for
 y^e County afores^d. this 9th day of
 March 1768

This Informant being duly sworn says, That on y^e
 Morning of this present day, as she endeavored
 to stop a horse belonging to Thos. Wells of Stanley
 in y^e County, laden with a Bag of Corn in Market place
 of Winchcomb demanding y^e D^y. Can be paid
 in said Market place, that a sum of 10^s 6^d thereof
 might be paid to & for y^e Use of her Husband
 who rents y^e Stalls of y^e said Market. That one
 Sam^l Smith of Winchcomb afores^d. Baker
 came up to this Informant & told her y^e said
 Horse, & on her refusal so to do y^e D^y.
 Samuel did ^{thrust} ~~strike~~ this Informant on y^e head
 & afterwards ~~thrust~~ gave her violent kick
 then took her by y^e Handkerchief & forc-
 ibly dragged her a considerable space thro^o
 y^e street, & thereby did Bruise & greatly
 hurt this Informant, & this Informant
 further says that she gave y^e D^y. Smith no
 other provocation than is afores^d.
 The Mark Taken & signed y^e Day & Year above
 of Elizabeth Skillem written before me *John*

A sample document from the Quarter Sessions records.

Many of the crimes appeared to have been committed by people in need of food. Cases included the theft of chickens, ducks, eggs, broad beans and in one case 8 pence of bacon. Stealing coal or wood from commercial sites was another crime encountered more than once.

Traffic offences were particularly interesting. The Highways Act of 1718 stated that a cart was not to be drawn by more than three horses on penalty of 'forfeiting to the seizer all the horses above that number with all geers, bridles, &c'. Thomas Harris of Evenlode must have rubbed his hands with glee when he saw Thomas Keen of Campden driving a narrow-wheeled cart with *four* horses. He seized the front horse and took it to the constable and then appeared before the justices requesting an order to make him the legal owner of the horse. He was not the only man we have discovered who received a free horse as a reward for upholding the law.

Occasionally the justices had to deal with more serious crimes. Mary, the wife of yeoman Philip Cole of Pucklechurch, claimed he had assaulted her many times and shut her out of their house. She was terrified of him, and he was bound over to keep the peace on penalty of a £40 fine. Thomas Heaven of Woodchester surreptitiously put 'Spanish Fly', an aphrodisiac, in Jane Harrison's ale in the hope of pursuing his amorous intentions. But he gave her so much it poisoned her, though not fatally. Edward Wheeler, one of the constables of Painswick, overstepped the mark when serving a warrant and assaulted two unmarried sisters. He dragged one about the house so she was 'very much bruised and hurt by the constable'. They both swore 'that they never saw such riotous behaviour before'

Some of the defences given by the accused must have made the justices smile. George Meredith admitted stealing a saw but said he was innocent because he was so drunk he did not know what he was doing. When Carteret Taylor of North Cerney was accused of stealing 27 of Richard Symes's ducks he claimed he had absolutely no idea how an enormous quantity of duck feathers had found their way into his old milk churn!

The project will continue when the Archives re-opens.

Clive Andrews

Sir Robert Atkyns and Mr J Kip delin et sculp (artist and engraver)

Thirty years ago, Nicholas Kingsley (late of this parish as it were) wrote an article for *Country Life* on the 'conundrum' of how Sir Robert Atkyns chose the places which Johannes Kip was asked to draw and engrave for inclusion in his *Ancient and Present State of Glostershire* published in 1712. Although there are 65 illustrations in the book, 60 of them the houses of the county gentry (61 counting Chepstow Castle which was not in Gloucestershire but was linked through the lord of the manor of Tidenham and the bridge over the Wye), there were yet others he might well have chosen.



Shipton Moyne, The Seat of Walter Estcourt, Esq. drawn and etched by Johannes Kip [1712] re-issued 1768 (image taken from <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/830259>)

As we know, Gloucestershire was a big county, including those parishes in the diocese of Bristol when it was created in 1542 and much more recently in Avon and then in South Gloucestershire local authority areas. It must have taken Kip a considerable amount of time to travel around the whole county, as well as staying in each place long enough to carry out a simple survey and then to draw it. Kingsley suggested therefore he may not have been able to reach the farther bounds of the county. The engravings are a unique resource and particular ones are frequently used by local historians. The Gloucestershire Gardens and Landscape Trust is one such, using them to examine historic gardens and compare them with the present day.

A more general project is now underway necessitating visits to Gloucestershire Archives to research background information, especially maps. Like many regular visitors, the lockdown is just totally frustrating. However, some work can still be done, and in particular, a lucky find through a second-hand bookseller enabled me to study Atkyns more intensively than has been possible in the limited time available on visits to Gloucestershire Archives.

Not long before Covid-19 began to sweep through the country, a fairly casual internet search came up with a copy of the Atkyns reprint (both volumes), said to be in good condition, and at a reasonable price. As the meticulously-wrapped parcel was undone, a nearly pristine copy emerged. What a pleasure! It was a surprise to find that it had come all the way from the private library of someone in Canterbury. Less surprising was the fact that discreetly marked in pencil inside the back cover was Alan Hancox's name, and the price £30. One for those noting rises in the cost of living! Lots of people will remember Hancox's second-hand bookshop in a basement off the Prom in Cheltenham. When he knew he was seriously ill, he started to sell the books in his library – a very sad business. Would that I had spotted the Atkyns then.

So one response to Kingsley's article now possible after studying Atkyns is a robust defence of Atkyns and Kip's coverage of the

county. Marking on a map all the houses that were illustrated shows that they were exceedingly well spread round the county. It's clear that there were clusters of several within a short distance of each other, which was entirely practical, but there were some on the farthest boundaries of Gloucestershire and there was no significantly large area with none at all. There is more to be found out about how the ones to be drawn were selected, and to some extent it will always be impossible to know much without being able to talk to Sir Robert or Mr J Kip. But the achievement of the two men in the conditions of early 18th century travel are remarkable.

by *Anthea Jones*, Gloucestershire Archives researcher.

This article was an Archives blog. To read other blogs, go to:
www.gloucestershirearchives.wordpress.com

Friends' Purchase

We're very grateful to FoGA who successfully bid for an 1848 estate map of Iron Acton and Yate at auction (£200 plus commission) in early September. The map itself is a plan of New Lodge and Stover estates in the parishes of Iron Acton and Yate which were owned by Rev John Wadham. This has been accessioned (Ref: D15148/1) and the catalogue description is now online. We were able to liaise with several South Gloucestershire groups who helped secure the plan for the archives. These included Sodbury and District Historical Society (who contributed to purchase), South Gloucestershire Mining Research Group (who made a significant contribution to purchase in exchange for a digital copy), and Yate Heritage Centre who flagged up appropriate folk to contact.

Claire Collins

GlosDocs: One way to Publish Local History

The invitation from the editor to write an article about the *Gloucestershire Local History Documents Online* (or *GlosDocs* for short) project made me think about how local historians will be able to pursue their interest post the Covid-19 pandemic. Much research into the disease needs to be done but it is clear that the mortality rate for those infected rises rapidly with increasing age particularly for the over 60s. This, of course, closely matches the age profile of many local history and similar organisations. Without an effective vaccine it is hard to imagine that the lectures and visits we have all enjoyed will resume in the same form for some time, if ever. However, plenty of folk will still be doing 'local history' and it is possible that *GlosDocs* may have a greater rôle to play than at the present time.

GlosDocs (glosdocs.org.uk) is an experimental project of the Gloucestershire Local History Association which enables any member group or individual to “self publish” material online. This might be complete articles, exhibition displays, research notes, image collections, maps, transcriptions, online versions of out of print publications or any other type of document. Typically, the documents, whatever their type, are in the form of Portable Document Format (PDF) so they can be read on any computer.

This facility is not intended to replace the publishing of books, journals, monographs and pamphlets in hardcopy format which many groups do very successfully. However, *GlosDocs* makes available online, valuable material compiled by groups, which cannot be published in hardcopy format due to the constraints of printing costs and distribution. Furthermore, very large documents and image collections can be accommodated which are likely to be too big for a group's own website (which would provide links to the material on *GlosDocs*.) One way of thinking about the site is that it is an “electronic filing cabinet” where each group can manage its “own drawer”. The aim is that if you can use a word

processor and book a holiday online, then you will be able manage your part of *GlosDocs*!

The idea for the website came about at a GLHA Local History Day, where as usual, there were some excellent displays on view. A lot of hard work had gone into researching and mounting the displays and it seemed a great pity that they could not have a wider audience. Fortunately, this has coincided with the emergence of low-cost “unlimited” web space and the availability of suitable open source (“free”) software to handle it online. It was also immediately clear that the scope should be widened as described above.



Roberts



Butler

Painswick Exhibition: 2016 - Coats of Arms [Painswick Local History Society]
<https://glosdocs.org.uk/painswick/exhib201608>

We are grateful to the early contributors who have provided some excellent material, but, predictably, it has been slow in coming. However, that is not a problem as it has allowed certain aspects of the site to be developed without undue pressure. A prime example of this is displaying historic photographic collections. Rather than the usual fixed 'gallery' of images, the user can search the list of captions using their own keywords and a gallery of just the matching photographs is displayed. We have also experimented with hosting audio content.



Local History Day Display 2017 [Stonehouse History Group]

<https://glosdocs.org.uk/stonehouse/glha>

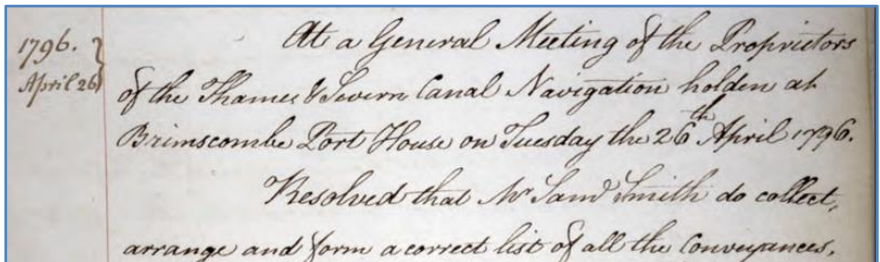


Dauncey's Mill, Uley, Gwladys Davies Photographic Collection [GA D14791]

<https://glosdocs.org.uk/gd-mills>

All the PDFs on the site are associated with an "index page" which is similar to an abstract for the documents. A "keyword" search facility on the site enables the user to search the "index pages" for items that interest them. Moreover, external search engines (e.g. Google) index these pages as well so your content can be found by anyone using Google.

In one of the most significant projects to date, the Gloucestershire Society for Industrial Archaeology has uploaded a digitised version of several letter and minute books (1783-1822) of the Thames and Severn Canal company which contains more than 1000 pages and is proving popular with canal historians.



Thames and Severn Canal Company: Minute Books 1783 - 1874 [GA TS/166]
https://glosdocs.org.uk/tsc_minute_books

As you will see on the site, some material is just one or two pages and this is fine and perhaps will be used by groups to share their output when, post Covid-19, other methods may be limited. It has already been mentioned that it was predicted that take up would be slow. In general, the over 60s generation have not been "brought up" with computers and while they might be pretty good knocking out a Word document, quite understandably publication still means hardcopy and not digital. [The use of PDF and, usually, A4 format in *GlosDocs* makes it easy to print all or part of a document if you don't like reading information on a computer screen.]

As a physics research student, the present author was lucky enough to use one of the most powerful computers in the UK back in 1968. Subsequently, he has worked with computers throughout his career

in the nuclear industry and now enjoys using them in the fields of local history and archaeology. It was back in 1996 that a proposal to digitise the General Index to *Transactions* was put to The Bristol & Gloucestershire Archaeological Society. The letter declining the proposal was very polite and stated that they had taken advice and in effect the technology was in effect "not up to it" However as soon as it had been demonstrated that it could be done a couple of the B&G Council members championed the cause. It was then only a few years before more than 120 volumes of the [BGAS *Transactions*](https://glosdocs.org.uk/gsia/bgastransactions/) were online. It does take time for new ways of working to become established (or to even test them). When we get to the "new normal" perhaps more people will be encouraged to try publishing on *GlosDocs* and hence its potential to make their work to be available to everyone online might be realised. Time will tell.

At this stage of the project we are more than happy to advise on the preparation of material and even upload it for you. This applies to both individuals and groups. Please contact the author on 01453 860595 or glosdocs@gloshistory.org.uk for more details.

Ray Wilson, Gloucestershire Society for Industrial Archaeology



Former Llanthony Corn Mill, Merchants Road, Gloucester [Hugh Conway-Jones]

<https://glosdocs.org.uk/gsia/llanthony-mill>