



Wiltshire Local History Network

Meeting
Wednesday 26 May 2021, 7.30pm
Online via Zoom

Minutes

Present: Julie Davis (Chair), Naomi Sackett (Archivist, WSHC), Jan Pennington, Jean Belt (Purton Historical Society), Liz Johnson (Easton Royal Heritage Group), Marion Hobbs, Marion Coupe (Netheravon Fittleton & Haxton History Group), Nick Baxter, Ruth Newman, Tony Pratt, James Holden (Victoria County History), Jane Howells (British Association for Local History), Jane Schon (Wiltshire Museum), Jo Hutchings (Aldbourn Archive), Julia Hunt, Pam Kimber (Pewsey and Devizes), Maureen Mitchell (Netheravon, Fittleton & Haxton History Research Group) (17 attendees)

Apologies: Gill Swanton, Stewart Raymond, Barbara Fuller, Wendy Lawrence

1. Actions from previous meeting

Breaking the Mould: the Spencer Moulton and Dr Alex Moulton archives – the cataloguing of this material as part of an NHLF funded project is still progressing, although slower than hoped now as items need conservation work before they can be catalogued but hoping to move forwards soon.

Womens Life Writing c1700-1940 digitisation project – a representative from the publisher Adam Matthews is coming to look at documents to use in this project to assess condition prior to digitisation.

Open communities project JSTOR – Julie noted that most are already aware of this as it was covered in the last meeting so won't go through again. We will get stats back to see how many people using this material – so far it is roughly 50-50 JSTOR users and independent users.

Know Your Place historic map website – the latest new layer will be online very soon. It will be another postcards layer. Volunteers are enjoying working on it remotely and are doing great job keeping going with it.

2. Local History Month 2021

WSHC have worked in conjunction with Wiltshire libraries on Local and Community History Month this May. Each has a local studies champion to promote profile of local history and help people discover more and use their local library and history centre for local history research. It has been online again this year. Those libraries that contributed were asked to do something that matters to them. Devizes focused on Roundway Park (book produced recently - The Forgotten Country House: The Rise and Fall of Roundway Park by Simon Baynes). Melksham focused on Melksham Art Trail, Salisbury also had an exhibition, and Corsham focused on the Methuen local landowning family and Corsham Court. We also tried to join in with SW local studies librarians using hashtag themes to share material. Julie would like to make it even more collaborative going forwards, which aim before Covid. She would like to help local history groups to raise their profile and tell people what group about. WSHC hosted a social media day to highlight local history groups and various groups got in touch and we helped those not using social media to help people discover them.

Julie asked if societies would like to be more involved? Did they use social media? She asked when libraries reopen properly – would you like to be involved next year? Perhaps put up display, run taster session to attract people coming to library that may not know about the group? Alderbury and Whaddon were going to do a display last year and it was a shame it had to be cancelled

Jane Howells asked about whether the online presentations from staff at WSHC as part of Local History Month would be continuously available. Julie confirmed it has been decided they will be removed following the event but they will be run regularly after this trial to see if people liked them.

Nick Baxter has given a talk "Samuel Taylor Coleridge in Wiltshire" to the Marlborough History Society, the Hungerford Historical Association, and earlier this month to the Marlborough College Summer School as part of a free series of Zoom lectures leading up to the Summer School. The talk can be accessed on summerschool.co.uk which is the website for Marlborough College Summer School, under "Watch again".

Marion wondered if anyone else doing anything about centenary of British Legion? Other groups? Jane Schon (Wiltshire Museum) says the museum will be open and they will do something on British Legion centenary on social media but the archive remains closed. Plans for exhibition had to be shelved.

3. List of speakers for groups

The idea of putting together a list of speakers was raised a while ago to put a list together (previously Mike Marshman for WLHF found it difficult to contact speakers and permission would be needed to pass on their details if they were not already in the public domain which proved difficult). There was a general consensus that a list would be useful. A suggestion was that groups could put people forward and the group could contact the individuals to ask if details can be included, and Julie can then collate them. WSHC don't tend to use speakers doing own events or non-local speakers. Any further feedback is welcome.

Jan Pennington said that WFHS normally have speaker each month – was it possible to ask those speakers if happy to go on the list?

Ruth Newman added WFHS have been collating list of speakers for many years although they have not received one this year. Barbara Fuller used to do the list. People used to use long list of previous meetings to get in touch with each other and refer good speakers. The members list for WLHN can work in a similar way – people can get in touch with us to pass on to other societies. WSHC have back copies of WLHF publications and newsletters – Julie recently emailed a section of that to someone with the list details (but they are increasingly out of date).

Julie to contact Barbara Fuller to ask about the WFHS list.

4. WSHC Collection Highlights – discussion

WSHC are looking to find ways to promote lesser-known collections to users and others (same reason as using the JSTOR Open Communities). Two collection highlights have been produced as a test highlighting Wiltshire Yeomanry and Diocesan Records. The highlights show the collection, examples, reference numbers, and book list for references people. They can be found here:

https://wshc.org.uk/images/pdf/RMY_Collection_Highlight.pdf

https://wshc.org.uk/images/pdf/Diocesan_Records_Collection_Highlight.pdf

We would be grateful for any feedback on whether you think these will be useful – sent to julie.davis@wiltshire.gov.uk

5. Any other Business: Information share for those attending

Purton Museum Historical Society. www.purtonmuseumandhistoricalsociety.com

Jean Belt and Marion Hobbs

Upcoming events

25.6.21 a walk along a section of the Purton boundary

10.7.21 a visit to St Mary's Church, Lydiard Park

The Purton Cricket Club's Bicentenary Exhibition in Purton Museum - open on Saturday mornings - is to be followed by "Purton Farming and Butchers" in July

Hoping to appoint a new Curator before the end of the year

Monthly talks to resume in the autumn, either on Zoom or in the Village Hall

James Holden – VCH. Updated last time about continuing work on new volumes. This is ongoing and not much to add; researchers are making progress. It was also mentioned last time that the VCH short of money due to lack of fundraising opportunity last year. Beginning to put this right. A talk last week by John Chandler was excellent, on the understanding Wiltshire townscapes. Another red letter event will be held on 8 July when Julian Orbach will be giving a talk both live and in person (keeping the number small for distancing) in aid of VCH funds on his new book.

Summer garden party for supporters at Iford Manor on 27 July

More events to follow to get fundraising programme back on track.

Jane Schon Wiltshire Museum reopened on Thursday last week. It is open 3 days a week then gradually increasing into the summer. Response has been amazing. They are encouraging people to book in advance to keep numbers down and maintain distancing. Well received, and nice to have voices back in the building. Jane was back in work having been on furlough and back to collections left to sort in archiving library for her. They cannot

open library yet – and were not able to open last year at all. They are working out logistics to open safely. If there is anything that you want then email Jane <jane.schon@wiltshiremuseum.org.uk> or the general Wilts Museum archive email address and she may be able to photograph or scan the item depending what it is. Exhibitions – new exhibition 'Ways of Seeing Wiltshire' is mixture of art and literature. It opened last week and will run until August. September will see Eric Ravilious exhibition which had been postponed.

Marion Coupe is part of a small research group Netheravon Fittleton & Haxton History Group. They have created a website during lockdown [Home - The history of Netheravon, Haxton and Fittleton \(netheravonspast.co.uk\)](http://Home - The history of Netheravon, Haxton and Fittleton (netheravonspast.co.uk)) and would be interested to see the websites of other groups. Some groups have websites but not all. She invited everyone to look at the website and give feedback or if they have something to contribute then to get in touch as Wiltshire village history is all connected. Julie asked if they would want to share experience of creating one. It grew out of another website called Village Soldiers. Book published – about all people of villages of Netheravon, Haxton, Enford, and Fittleton with biographies of them the soldiers, and pin-pointing on a map where they lived. It was done by local web designer who offered to do another. Julie mentioned that many societies had created websites for the WW1 centenary. Marion also asked about WSHC connection to Wiltshire Buildings Record – they are doing farm survey on Salisbury Plan (the farmstead project) which is relevant to Netheravon and is likely to be of interest to other villages.

Ruth Newman. Small group in Laverstock who had a book published a couple of years ago. They are in process of producing own website and got someone who doesn't know Laverstock but keen on designing website. It is close to launching. They kept it simple and small initially following a BALH talk by Paul Carter. They have found it successful to work with someone interested in design. Also, Salisbury Museum is working on new gallery for 2024, by 2022 it will be well under way. They have lots online and getting lots of local vols involved and small advisory group involved.

Jane Howells (BALH) suggests that people look on their website under societies directory – any society members can send info about themselves and can see range of different society websites. It gives varied examples from across the country.

The BALH online offering enormous including blogs, lectures, 10 min talks. Well worth looking at.

[British Association For Local History \(balh.org.uk\)](http://British Association For Local History (balh.org.uk))

Liz Johnson chair of Easton Royal Heritage Group nr Marlborough. The group has a website and she has spent lockdown writing book about the village to launch in October. They will be displaying archive material in village hall and will launch the book then. She asked what other recommended to to get reviews and publicise the book.

Tony recommended using Wiltshire Radio or Salisbury Radio, always desperate for people to give them local information and always worth a try. Sometimes they like a chat on air, and sometimes advertise it themselves.

Ruth recommended flyers, cheap to produce and then get volunteers to distribute. And recommended a launch with wine!

Jane - BALH has a reviews editor. Also recommended an article in Local History News and their 'LH Publishing checklist'

Wilts Record Society

Wiltshire Museum – send to Jane Schon or general Wilts Museum email and they can circulate amongst members and volunteers.

The presenter James Thomas was recommended if you are happy to go to Swindon for Wilts Radio.

Send press release to newspapers. Can invite press to launch.

WSHC can also publicise

6. Suggested date of next meeting

August was agreed.

Keep in touch and Julie will try and help with any questions or to point in right direction if can't help directly.