



Wiltshire Local History Network Meeting Minutes

Via Microsoft Teams

11 November 2020, 7.30pm (18 attendees)

Attending: Julie Davis (Wiltshire & Swindon History Centre) (Chair), Ruth Newman (Sarum Chronicle), Stuart Raymond (book reviews editor for Wiltshire Archaeological and natural History Magazine, also researching Avebury), Jane Browning, Jo Hutchings (Aldbourne Archive), Jane Schon (Wiltshire Museum), Carolyn Birch (Redlynch Local History Society), Rosalind Johnson (Victoria County History researcher), Tony Pratt (PhD candidate researching agrarian history at Winchester), James Holden (representing Victoria County History Trust), Julia Hunt, Anthony Kent (Tisbury Local History Society), Anne Trevitt (Bemerton Local History Society), Chris Caswill (representing Victoria County History Trust), Brian Edwards (Visiting Research Fellow at The Regional History Centre, UWE Bristol), Nick Baxter (Marlborough Local History Society), Terry Bracher (Wiltshire & Swindon History Centre).

Apologies: Gill Swanton, Jane Howells

Minutes of the last meeting

Julie noted that the Moulton archive project had not begun yet due to lockdown. Volunteers for the project will still be needed.

If you would like your details to be updated on the website, removed or added, please contact Julie in the first instance (julie.davis@wiltshire.gov.uk).

Julie Davis – Wiltshire & Swindon History Centre

Archives South West Newspaper digitisation project:

The Archives & Records Association is working with a consultancy on the viability of digitising newspaper holdings from south west repositories such as the History Centre. Terry and Julie had a meeting with them – at the moment they are looking at various delivery and consortium models, and asking for feedback on the issues WSHC has dealt with on with similar projects (such as the school admission registers project and Ancestry digitisation).

Women's Life Writing Project – Adam Matthew Digital:

Adam Matthew Digital (based in Marlborough) has approached us alongside similar repositories in England such as the Somerset History Centre, to take part in another digital based project.

The aim is to create a major academic digital resource on Women's Life Writing, c.1700-1940, bringing together diaries, commonplace books, travel journals and letters that describe women's lives and experiences in their own language.

Although the end date for material for consideration states 1940, this appears to be flexible. Adam Matthew digital want to make digitally available high-quality facsimiles of rare books, manuscripts, maps, art works, objects and printed materials for teaching and research. In addition, we provide a wealth of secondary resources to complement the archival materials and aid teaching and research, including interactive maps; specially commissioned scholarly essays and image slideshows. Through the use of digital technologies such as 360° image viewers and interactive mapping, we work with our collaborative partners to enhance the experience of users interacting with primary sources.

Adam Matthew worked with us on a microfilming project in the 1990s and hopes to use this as a starting point. It sounds like an exciting project and one we hope to get involved with. If anyone would like to highlight a collection that they have used at the History Centre which would make a good candidate, please contact Julie.

Know Your Place:

New addition on the site – regarding upscaled sections of town and village centres, set off the actual map on the physical document. As a result, when the maps were digitally stitched together, they had to be cut off. WSHC has now created cropped images of these upscaled sections and added them to the map as data points. These are now accessible in the same way as the tithe awards - simply check the box next to 'tithe village and town centres'. There aren't a great many of them, but they are represented by large brown circles in the centre of their associated town or village. One example is Bradford. To find out more take a look at WSHC Archivist Mas Parkin's blog <http://www.wshc.eu/blog/item/know-your-place-wiltshire-how-to-use-get-the-most-out-of-and-contribute-to-this-expanding-and-exciting-resource.html>

E-volunteering opportunity:

To help put WSHC's collection of Wilkinson early C20 postcards onto the site and create a specific layer for them. The role will involve remote working from home. It will be a very simple but rewarding job. Contact max.parkin@wiltshire.gov.uk if you would like to find out more.

Tony Pratt – Historical Atlas project proposal

Tony is currently working on a thesis of the agricultural history of Wiltshire and other counties. He has found historical atlases particularly useful, with a map on one page and text on the other. He suggests that an atlas for Wiltshire would be of value. To consider:

How would the project be organised?

What should it achieve?

Possible topics could include: physical environment, historical periods and prehistory, religion, politics, population, industry and commerce, agriculture and rural society, transportation, population and health, administration areas and more.

How would we want to go about it?

Online sites already in place such as WSHC's Wiltshire Community History and Know Your Place were suggested; it was felt that anything would need to be map based for an atlas. Julie Davis felt the longevity and security of material on websites could also be an issue. James Holden felt updating the information on a website could be difficult in terms of time and resources. There was much interest in a publication, but the cost could be prohibitive. Rosalind Johnson noted that the graphics in a publication would probably be costly.

Ruth Newman is currently doing some work on Methodism in Salisbury for James Holden; would this be useful? James Holden is writing a piece on non-conformist chapels for the Wiltshire Buildings Record – he would be prepared for this data to feed into an atlas. Julie noted there may be more information that could be sourced this way.

Anthony Kent suggested that print on demand might be a way forward for a printed works. Tony Pratt and Julie noted that Ho Nob Press use this model. Julie has mentioned the project to John Chandler and he would be happy to help where he could, although his workload is already high in other areas. John Chandler was described as a "jolly good egg"; there was general agreement and appreciation for this sentiment.

Stuart Raymond showed the group his copy of the Devon and Cornwall atlas as another example.

Tony asked for expressions of interest and for the creation of a working group to see what is possible. Julie will be happy to co-ordinate such a group from the History Centre. Tony asked that groups take the suggestion back to their members to see if they would be in favour and if they would like to contribute in some way. Julie agreed to be the contact point for enquiries.

Action: Please contact Julie if you might like to be involved in a possible Wiltshire Historical Atlas project, or if you have any feedback you wish to give regarding the proposal (julie.davis@wiltshire.gov.uk).

Anthony Kent – Tisbury Local History Society

The society was not able to meet in January or February but are now planning an e-magazine to help the society stay in contact. They are looking for 800 word contributions plus book reviews; they have three potential articles so far. They are also running a local history project on Tisbury in the time of Covid. This will include oral histories about residents' experiences. Julie noted that the Wiltshire & Swindon History Centre would happily accept the oral histories and any other material into their collections. Wiltshire Museum are also collecting.

Stuart Raymond - Wiltshire Archaeological Magazine

Please send him book suggestions for book review in the next WAM edition (samjraymond@btopenworld.com).

Anne Trevitt – Bemerton Local History Group

The group are producing a new publication about life with Covid, due to be published on 1st week in December. It is based pieces written by local people charting their experiences. Julie noted that the Local Studies Library at the Wiltshire & Swindon History Centre will be acquiring copies, plus for Salisbury Library too.

James Holden – Victoria County History

With buildings such as TNA and WSHC closed, there was a worry that this would affect the work of the VCH but a lot was achieved through online study by main researchers Rosalind Johnson and Louise Ryland-Epton which carried them through to WSHC re-opening. Every effort is being made to move forward with the editions. The Chippenham volume is making good progress and is 80-85% complete with publishing expected in 2024; more quickly than expected. Work is starting on volume 21 of 25 in the series for south east Wiltshire with Ros currently working on the parish of Whiteparish, and also volume the 19 for Mere is ongoing. This volume has been taken forward by the Institute of Historical Research in London, the central co-ordinators of the VCH; good progress is being made. All volumes except the early general topic volumes are available online at www.british-history.ac.uk/ The latest approved draft texts are also available to view for free on the new website www.wiltshirehistory.org/

No events been able to take place this year and income is £6,000 down. It costs £150,000 for every completed volume. They have enough money in hand to meet current commitments, but beyond that it will be very difficult. They have launched an autumn appeal on their new website www.wiltshirehistory.org/ They encourage everyone to take a look at the website; the aim is to create a site for those interested in local history research, enhancing and complimenting the work done by organisations such as WSHC with its

Wiltshire Community history and Know Your Place sites. There is a section about local societies.

Jane Schon highlighted that the archive and library at Wiltshire Museum would also be happy to feed into this work; they hold rich and valuable resources in their collections.

Anthony Kent noted that the local societies page held a very bland and generic statement at present; it would be good to get a list up and running. The Tisbury and Bourne Valley societies would be happy to provide their details. Julie will put a call out into the WLHN minutes.

Action: Please could those societies who are interested in being listed on the VCH Wiltshire website contact James Holden (vjholden@gmail.com).

Jane Shon – Wiltshire Museum

The museum has been affected by Covid and is due to re-open in the new year. Jane herself is on furlough at present. There is a varied programme of events happening online; please see the museum's website for further details www.wiltshiremuseum.org.uk/whats_on/ The online catalogues are still operational. Please contact Jane or the archives team with accession numbers of items you are interested in viewing. They will contact you to book a viewing session as soon as they can which will take place when they re-open. The museum's volunteers are doing a great job on their Covid oral history project.

Ruth Newman – Sarum Chronicle

This is a group of historians and others who work to publish material on Salisbury and District. They have successfully produced two books during lockdown: Salisbury Cathedral 800 Years and Sarum Chronicle Issue 20; their most popular yet which is stocked in many outlets in Salisbury. Ruth reported that she, Jane Howells and John Chandler would all be retiring from the committee. The Chronicle would remain in safe hands with Emily Naish and others.

Terry Bracher – Wiltshire & Swindon History Centre

The 'Salisbury Trails' app is now available on Apple and Google, but due to the current lockdown it has not been promoted. As part of the project, the local community are being asked to help add material to the app; Ruth Butler, Education Officer at WSHC is currently talking to a number of community groups about this and will be invited to a future meeting to talk about the project.

AOB

Julie Davis – WSHC

Know Your Place:

The Wiltshire & Swindon History Centre want to do more with the Know Your Place Site by creating 'Story Maps' using the site's software, ArcGIS; this example is from KYP Bristol (<https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/152e8a8b36d8430397572e4fdf63ac88>). We are trialling the Chippenham 'Pudding Brook' project, undertaken by a local artist who also has an interest in local history. If anyone can contribute geological knowledge to this project, please let Julie know.

Lancaster University 'Mapping Loss' project:

Mapping Loss: Communities in War and Peace (<https://wp.lancs.ac.uk/greatwar/>) was launched by Lancaster University to mark Remembrance Day.

The map grew out of Streets of Mourning, a collaboration between the university, Lancaster Military Heritage Group and the King's Own Regiment Museum with funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund. The project mapped the names of Lancaster's First World War dead onto a street plan of the city, showing exactly where they and their families had lived.

Dr Corinna Peniston-Bird, part of the team behind the project, said: "It would be wonderful if people across Britain could check their home addresses on Armistice Day and discover this link to the past. We would love to ensure that all projects completed in towns and villages across Britain over the last six years have this way of sharing and visualising their data for the use of families, schools, researchers, and genealogists locally, nationally and, indeed, internationally."

Researchers from across the UK are invited to add their findings to the map by uploading a spreadsheet listing the dead soldier's first name, surname and street address, along with any other data they wish to be displayed.

Future Online Meetings

Julie asked for feedback regarding whether another online meeting was a good idea. There was a general indication that this would be the case.

Date of next meeting: Wednesday 10th February, 7.30pm