

Chairman's Report

My report this year is going to be different to other years because it will be the last one to be written by me. I wish to review some of the main events of the last fourteen years of activity by the Society, the period I've been chair since taking over from the late Peter Walne. I'm standing down now as someone else needs to take up the task and help provide a fresh and enhanced impetus to the valuable ongoing work of the Society.

It has been a pleasure serving on the committee (for sixteen years) and to have played at least some part in helping to add to the number of handsome scholarly volumes which have been made available to researchers into Hertfordshire history. It would be very wrong to suggest that their appearance has been much to do with me. My role has been rather one of encouraging others to carry out detailed transcription and writing, under the able eye of our editor Susan Flood. Also I've tried to act as an oiler of the wheels of Society administration, in conjunction with our secretary Heather Falvey.

In 2003, the Society published its first map, *Bryant's map of Hertfordshire 1822*, on four large sheets plus an index. While members received a copy for their subscription plus a book, the map sold well generally. The following year *Dury and Andrews' map of Hertfordshire 1766* on nine sheets with an index was published. Both maps have continued to sell well over succeeding years. In 2007 besides the hardback version of *A Victorian Teenager's Diary; the Diary of Lady Adela Capel of Cassiobury 1841-42* we published a paperback version to appeal to a different market. In 2008 the Society decided to depart from its long established simple dark red dust cover design and produce a handsome illustrated jacket featuring Jan Blaeu's 1645 map of the county to accompany *The Impact of the First Civil War on Hertfordshire 1642-47*. This initiative met with a very positive response. All subsequent publications will have illustrated jackets.

The Record Society owes much to the editors of our volumes and I want on behalf of all the members to give them our thanks. Bringing one of our volumes to publication means a great deal of effort over a long period, and the numerous and excellent reviews they receive in journals of many types acknowledge the content and quality of the books. Likewise the continued support we receive from grant-making bodies recognises the high standard of our Society's publications. Our aim is to produce a volume a year which some other county record societies, I'm told, feel is

ambitious and would be beyond them. While we do not consistently bring out a book in the year it was planned to appear, members over time do receive a volume per year. This means that sometimes more than one appears in a matter of months, and this is what will happen in 2010.

The Hertfordshire Record Society is acknowledged to be one of the leading and most innovative county record societies in Britain. I'm sure the Society will add to its reputation in future years for the range and quality of its publications.

Alan Ruston

Forthcoming Volume

Volume XXVI, *The Diary of John Carrington of Bramfield, 1798-1810, part I, 1798-1804*

John Carrington, farmer, overseer, tax collector and local constable of Bramfield, Hertfordshire was born in 1726. Following in his father's footsteps at the age of 20 he became gardener to Lady Cathcart at Tewin Water House. By the 1750s he was employed by Richard Warren of Marden Hill, Tewin and in 1760 became his master's tenant of Bacons Farm, Bramfield. An educated man, his earliest jottings, dating from 1738, are added to a book containing instructions 'to Add several sums into one Total summe' alongside arithmetical calculations which show that the young John had learned his lessons. The variety of subjects he chose to write about paint a picture of the man he was to become in later life: memories of storms, floods and fires, political and historical notes, and local news and gossip to a recipe for rheumatism and a cure for lice in cattle.

Shortly after the death of his wife in 1798, when John was 72, he began to keep a diary, and continued it until twelve days before his own death in 1810. John wrote for his own amusement and perhaps to interest his own family. He used anything that came to hand on which to write: the backs of sale particulars, accounts, bills, official printed instructions for the public duties he performed, assize calendars, and navy lists which were later roughly bound together into thirteen volumes now held at Hertfordshire Archives and Local Studies. These form an almost daily record of the last twelve years of his life, years which saw great change and often hardship for local communities caught up in the effects of the Napoleonic wars.

Carrington writes in December 1800: 'Thus ends the most extraordinary year 1800. When things of all kinds was never known so dear, wheat £5 pr load'. The highest price for wheat he records is £5 3s per load at the end of December that year. As a man of apparently no formal education he nevertheless exhibits a shrewd intelligence and a financial soundness in his business dealings. The high prices gained for all farm produce, as a direct result of the war, gave John financial security and allowed him to purchase property and financial investments. For most of his life he served his local community as a member of the Bramfield vestry for which he acted as Surveyor of the Highways and Overseer of the Poor as well as being one of four Chief Constables of the Liberty of St Albans and Hundred of Cashio. With a wide circle of friends and acquaintances he appears to have had a long reputation for honest dealing and a generous heart for those in his local community less fortunate than himself.

Extracts from these diaries were published by Phillimore in 1973 (*Memorandums For ... The Carrington Diary* by W Branch Johnson). Now long out of print this new publication by the Hertfordshire Record Society will for the first time contain the whole text of John's diary, 1798-1810 (in two volumes) and the diary of John's son Jack who continued his father's diary until 1812 together with some earlier jottings. With the addition of an historical introduction and appendices to include biographies of local persons, a glossary and full indexes of names, places and subjects this publication will make John's life fully accessible to all.

It is hoped to publish the first volume containing John's diary from 1798 to 1804 in September 2010 and the second volume in 2012 or 2013.

And now three reviews of Volume XXIII, Alan Thomson (ed), *The Impact of the First Civil War on Hertfordshire, 1642-1647*

Review of Volume XXIII in *Economic History Review*, 62, 4 (2009)

This is an extremely useful collection for those interested in the material impact of the civil wars. It is to my knowledge the first published collection to make available such an extensive sample of papers from the very voluminous, but also very miscellaneous, TNA Commonwealth Exchequer papers. Alongside these are some particularly rich and interesting cases from the Committee for Compounding—the committee charged with imposing penalties on royalists and delinquents. Finally, there is some material from the State Paper series SP16 dealing with the local militia.

These last two categories of document, although arising from routine administrative operations, reveal some of the local politics of the war. The first offers insight into the wartime careers of Sir John Boteler

and Sir Thomas Coningsby; the militia committee reveals divisions within the parliamentary alliance over how to conduct the war. In fact, as Ann Hughes has argued in an influential article, the Committee for Taking the Accounts of the Kingdom, whose operations gave rise to the many of the Commonwealth Exchequer papers collected here, could also be a highly political body—audit is about more than counting the money, of course. In addition to these TNA records Thomson has included an excellent selection from those held by Hertfordshire Archives and Local Studies, some of them further accounts but also interesting personal papers which offer a richer sense of the local political scene.

The document selections are divided into three parts. The first deals with the organization for war: raising and equipping troops, supplying the arms and horses, the administration of the war, communications and fortification. The second deals with the raising of money in loans, contributions, and taxes, the problems of assessment, collection, and payment. The third examines the effect of the war (primarily its material impact on the fortunes of those caught up in it), detailing the impact of quarter and sequestration and including some fascinating qualitative evidence about those who lost out.

There is an excellent introduction, outlining the scope and range of sources included, and offering an analytic narrative of the war effort as it impinged on Hertfordshire, as well as a very useful biographical appendix. The county became part of the Eastern Association in 1643, with which it appears to have had an atypical relationship. There was not much active fighting in the county, but the war was nonetheless a heavy burden.

In outlining this experience Thomson also draws on material in print, and draws attention to the dimensions of local experience that are not revealed (at least not very directly) in these administrative sources: the networks through which solidarities formed, and by which Hertfordshire was drawn into the wider political argument. This fuller picture also emerges in the fascinating short biographies and in the personal papers excerpted here. In particular we have the rich records of the composition proceedings against Sir William Boteler, a relatively hesitant royalist who became entangled in the parliamentary administration as an enemy of the cause on the basis primarily of incautious words. Included here are the depositions made against him by his neighbours and tenants. By contrast, those familiar from other contexts are left to one side, in favour of these less well-known figures. Thus, the future regicide and Hertfordshire man Daniel Axtell (about whom Thomson contributed an excellent article to the Oxford DNB), who is said to have threatened to fire a shot at Lady Fairfax during the King's trial, appears only in an account of moneys owed for free quarter in Langley.

Of course this does not amount to a full picture of the war in Hertfordshire, and a single collection of documents could not hope to do so, but the range of sources reproduced is unusual. The editorial

conventions are very scholarly, without cluttering up the handsome and readable text. The collection is made very user-friendly by the editorial material - introduction, notes, and bibliography - and a thorough index. Overall it provides fascinating detail on central aspects of the experience of war, and will be extremely helpful for advanced level teaching on the subject, and for those with an interest in local history or the history of the civil war. It offers a good introduction to the range of sources available to those intending to research in these areas.

Michael Braddick
University of Sheffield

Review of Volume XXIII in *The Society of Friends of the National Army Museum Book Review Supplement*, May 2009

We have reviewed Hertfordshire Record Society publications in the past; the level of scholarship has never less than impressed. The latest volume of military interest, the twenty-third in the Society's series, maintains a high standard.

Any researcher, be they amateur or professional, knows the pure hard graft needed to get the best from local County record office archives. This is not intended to slur County archivists, a dedicated corps of specialists who serve notwithstanding budgetary pressures, simply that much detailed and dedicated work can require hours of hard work. Volumes such as this provide a hard and fast bedrock for further study.

The volume as presented collates such vital records on the Civil War from the most fundamental of baselines; economic costs and impacts at a county level. The key source is the local sub-committee of the Committee for Taking the Accounts of the Kingdom, set up to audit the expenditures of committees controlled by Parliament in each county. There are four key sections. The first, the Introduction, puts Hertfordshire into context of the war as a whole and explains the impact overall on the county, including the actions of some key personages critical to Hertfordshire but perhaps overlooked in the context of the war in general. The second considers the mechanics of the war; the raising of officers and men and the clothing, equipping and purchasing necessary to form units, and the cost of fortifying key locations. The third reviews the crucial (and often overlooked) factors of funding the war - and how sometimes this was opposed; the last reviews the impact on communities and individuals.

It is quickly apparent that an enormous amount of effort has been expended to draw together a mass of sources, often disparately organised. Much has been done to reconcile source material organised chronologically or geographically - and vice versa. Obviously, it is not a volume which is meant to be read (and the English of the period can be difficult

to digest to the modern, casual eye) but it is a most highly commendable work of synthesis and access. Original documents are extensively footnoted to provide collaboration and context; and the occasional details - particularly on issues of individual pay - are enlightening. The Appendices, Bibliography and Index are also commendably constructed.

If you are a military historian interested in Hertfordshire, this should be sought out; if you are a Civil War historian (specifically of Hertfordshire or not) it is of enormous value - not least in terms of hours spent at the National Archives and the County Record Office.

Review of Volume XXIII in *The Local Historian*, August 2009

This very useful and interesting volume brings alive the experience of living in Hertfordshire during the first Civil War, both for the Parliamentarians who controlled the county and for the defeated Royalists. It contains a wide range of documents, mostly taken from the papers deposited by the local sub-committee of the Committee for Taking the Accounts of the Kingdom. Much of the material is drawn from SP 28 in The National Archives, the so-called Commonwealth Exchequer Papers, a vast and rich class that is still largely uncalendared and for that reason remains underutilised by historians of the period. Thomson's volume shows how very rewarding the laborious task of wading through SP 28 can be, all the more so because of (rather than despite) its often random and unsystematic nature.

The admirably clear and informative introduction is itself a major piece of 73 pages. It is divided into four sections: the first presents a general background to the Civil War, and the remaining three contain a commentary on the three sections of documents. The first section offers a good account of how Parliament gained control of Hertfordshire in 1642, and how it then set up an apparatus of government through local committees. The financial mechanics of keeping troops well paid and supplied, and the resentment fell towards Parliament's new taxes (the excise and the assessment) are analysed concisely and persuasively.

The second section (and section A of the documents) explores the processes by which the county organised for war. The raising, equipping and arming of troops, the supplying of horses (be it legally or by seizure, or even theft): the role of the committees and their secretariat; and the fortifying of garrisons and towns are examined in turn. The third section (section B of the documents) looks in depth at how the war was actually financed. This material unravels the mechanisms for raising money through rates, loans and contributions, as well as taxes such as the assessment and the excise. The procedures for paying the troops are

analysed, and there is a particularly good section on the role of paymasters (documents 106-114). Throughout, the often ad hoc nature of Parliament's fiscal machinery is evident.

That said, there was no doubting its impact on communities and individuals, and this forms the subject of the final section (section C of the documents). Here we find detailed evidence of the effects of free quarter and the depredations of soldiers, and the sequestration of Royalists. The latter is brought vividly to life through the inventories of goods sold, the effects of which could be shattering. For example, Anne Fanshawe, daughter of Sir John Harrison of Balls Park, described how he lost a total of £130,000 (roughly the equivalent of £40-50 million today). The book thus evokes the experience of Royalists living within a county controlled by Parliament. All in all, this book publishes for the first time a great deal of valuable material that sheds light both on the piecemeal appropriation of power by Parliamentary local committees, and on the sufferings of their victims. It thus gives us a remarkably clear picture of the realities of this devastating conflict within one county community.

David L Smith

Hertfordshire Association for Local History Forthcoming events

2010 Garden Party at Ashwell

Having visited St Mary's church on a previous Garden Party, we will meet at the URC Chapel, which had an Art Nouveau make-over in 1907. From there we will walk along the southern edge of the Anglo-Saxon market-place to Ashwell Museum, which was opened in 1930; it is one of the older village museums in the country. From there we will walk past Ashwell Bury, redesigned by Lutyens in the 1920s, and Ashwell Mill, to Ringstead Field, opposite Ducklake House, where there will be a working sheep dog demonstration and the chance to see two traditional breeds of sheep. Tea will follow at Ringstead House, by kind permission of Mr and Dr Dorrell.

Tickets £6 per person. **Contact:** David Short, 59 High Street, Ashwell, SG7 5NP

31st Annual Symposium 'Brewing and Malting'

Saturday 12 November 2010

organised by Bishops Stortford Local History Society
St Barnabas Centre, Church Lane, Thorley, CM23 4NF
There will be a series of speakers and also various stands run by local history societies.

Tickets: HALH members £13; non-members £16

Lunch: £7 (extra) (or bring your own)

Contact: Wally Wright, 121 Sheering Mill Lane, Sawbridgeworth, CM21 9ND

The British Association for Local History

The BALH is a useful society for individual members, providing them with a well-written journal and also with news of local history events and developments all over the country. It also offers membership to societies, in return for which they obtain insurance for their visits and meetings. The HRS is a member. We would like to take this opportunity to advertise the BALH's informative website at www.balh.co.uk. The BALH also organises visits and events. The following are among those planned for 2010:

- 5 June: Annual Lecture and Awards day
[see below for more details]
- 6 September: The Hereford Cathedral Library and the Woolhope Naturalist Field Club
- 2 October: The Whitby Museum of the Literary and Philosophical Society and Archive, and the Captain Cook Memorial Museum, Whitby.
- 6 November: Conference at Hull on 'New research into the history of Hull and district'

Incidentally, the BALH offered HALS very favourable rates to distribute its leaflets for the Delmé-Radcliffe archive appeal: there was a very good response from this. So thank you, BALH, from all Hertfordshire local historians.

BALH Local History Day 2010

5 June, 10.30 to 16.30

at The Imperial War Museum, Lambeth Road, London, SE1 6HZ

11.00 Open Forum Discussion

'Local History and the Internet',
with Jacqueline Fillmore and Bamber Gascoigne

12.30 BALH AGM

13.00 Lunch break

(packed lunch included in ticket price)

14.15 Presentation BALH Local History Awards

The Association aims to support Local History at all levels. To this end, it presents awards for personal achievement, for research and publication in local history and for a society newsletter.

14.45 Annual Lecture by Dr Adam Longcroft, senior lecturer in Local and Regional Studies, UEA
'New Insights into Vernacular Architecture: a view from the flatlands of East Anglia'

Tickets: £12.50 for members (quote 'member of Herts Record Society'), from BALH (L), 7 St Mark's Road, Salisbury, SP1 3AY (include SAE) (cheques payable to *BALH*)