

Chairman's Report

Last year's AGM was held in the privately-owned church of St Nicholas, Great Munden: a fascinating venue, which took the Society's members to some attractive gently rolling countryside. Thus it was appropriate that last year's volume was *Humphrey Repton's Red Books for Panshanger and Tewin Water*, which showed how much of the county's landscape has been shaped quite recently by the hand of man. It is also fitting that this year, courtesy of Lafarge, we are joining the Hertfordshire Association for Local History at Panshanger for our AGM and their summer garden party.

Luckily for the future of the Society we have a number of volumes currently in preparation which range widely in time from the medieval court rolls of Norton to the pre-First World War school records of Weston. Also virtually complete is the Barnet Tithe Map; a reprint of the Andrews and Drury Map has recently been produced, as demand has been so high. The changes in the countryside shown in these maps will be even more obvious in the results of HALS's digitization of most of the county's Tithe Maps. Also in its early stages is another digitization project, this time covering the admissions registers of pre-1914 elementary schools. This involves the National Archives, local Record Offices and commercial companies.

The Society has been raising the awareness of its existence. We have recently printed a revised publicity leaflet and last year's Newsletter received a mention in the summer edition of *Local History News*. Furthermore, a review in the *Economic History Review* of Jane Walker's edition of *Datchworth Tithe Accounts* indicates that we have done the right thing by adding an illustrated jacket. The final paragraph states: 'The book is well produced and illustrated with a very attractive dust jacket, indicating that it is aimed at a wider market than just the membership of the Record Society. The Editor deserves praise for making such an important source more widely accessible'.

We are sad to record of the death of David Dean, editor of one of our volumes and a former editor of this Newsletter; an obituary appears overleaf. We also extend our good wishes to Gill Barber, the former Heritage Manager at HALS who has taken up a post nearer her home, and thank her for all the help that she, like David, gave the Society. We also welcome her successor, Julie Gregson. For all those celebrity chefs amongst you, this year's volume of the *Receipt Book of Baroness Elizabeth Dimsdale* should provide you with a range of delicacies to cook and enjoy (at your own risk).

Alan Thomson

Volume XXVIII for 2012/13:

The Receipt Book of Baroness Elizabeth Dimsdale (c.1800), edited by Heather Falvey

Some time after 1800, when she was in her late sixties or early seventies, Baroness Elizabeth Dimsdale copied just under 700 recipes and more than 80 household hints into a leather-bound book. At the top of some of these items she indicated their provenance - some had been given by friends and acquaintances in Hertfordshire society, others had been gleaned from published works ranging from medical treatises to scientific journals, others had come

from donors who cannot now be identified due to Elizabeth's tendency to use initials rather than names. Some of the recipes are of foreign origin given by acquaintances of her late husband. Many of the recipes have the same titles as those published in the burgeoning number of printed cookery books in circulation during the later eighteenth century, but the ingredients and methods differ; a handful, however, are recorded verbatim from such sources, indicating that either she, or her acquaintances, were collectors, or at least readers, of such publications.

This year's volume provides a transcript of all of these 'receipts' and household hints. There is no apparent logic in the original order of the recipes. It seems likely that Elizabeth had kept them in a number of notebooks and on pieces of paper, and then, late in life, had decided to record them in a more substantial book. Rather than reproduce the recipes in their original sequence, therefore, they have been re-ordered following a scheme similar to that in many of the printed cookery books of the day, thus enabling the reader to appreciate the wide variety of dishes that Elizabeth recorded in each category, such as soups, fish, meat, 'made' dishes, puddings, etc. Since much has already been written about those printed books, rather than analysing these recipes for their culinary merits and what they indicate regarding the development of cooking and dining in the late eighteenth century, the introduction considers who Elizabeth was and what her book reveals about her life and connections in Hertfordshire.

There will be an extensive glossary of ingredients and utensils; and several appendices, one being the original order of the recipes, another being mini-biographies of the donors who can be identified.

Whilst it is possible to recreate at least some of the dishes - some ingredients are no longer available, some recipes give only imprecise quantities - the volume will, of course, come with a health warning!

AGM, 7 July. This year's venue

Members will be aware that we try to hold the Society's AGMs in locations associated with the most recent volume, and this year's AGM offers a rare opportunity to visit the grounds of Panshanger House, featured in Volume XXVII. Although the house itself was demolished in the 1950s, much of Repton's landscape survives - Pevsner wrote: 'All that is left of Panshanger are remnants of the admirable landscape created after Humphry Repton's plan of 1799....The views from the N of the valley past the trees down to the series of lakes created by the widening of the river Mimram are still superb...'. Lafarge Aggregates, who have owned the site since 1998, have embarked on work to restore the site and Panshanger remains Grade II* Listed.

HRS Members are invited to join members of the Hertfordshire Association for Local History for a guided tour of the Panshanger grounds from 10.45 on the day, followed by lunch in Tewin Cricket Club and talks on Repton's landscape and the Desborough family, the last owners of the house. The AGM will follow at 2.30 pm. Further details and a booking form are enclosed with this newsletter. (Lunch £6, paid in advance)

David Dean

The Society regrets to announce the death, on 12 February 2012, of David Dean. David was one of our founder members, serving on the committee from its inception in 1985 until 2007. He edited Volume VII, *St Albans Quarter Sessions Rolls, 1784-1820* (published 1991), and was instrumental in commencing our occasional map series.

David enjoyed over 40 years of collaborative research in the St Albans and Hertfordshire Architectural and Archaeological Society (the Arc & Arc). A leading member of that society, he served for four years as its president and four as chairman of its local history group. He was a member of the St Albans Seventeenth Century Research Group, which collectively researched St Albans in that period and produced *St Albans 1650-1700: A thoroughfare town and its people*, edited by J. T. Smith & M. A. North (published for the Arc & Arc by Herts Publications, 2003). David was a recognised authority on the history of St Albans and gave numerous lectures to the Arc & Arc and other local history societies. He participated in the national prize-winning *St Albans circa 1820* (SAHAAS, 1982), the results of a project aiming at a detailed map of the town. He had an impressive list of publications including *Alban to St Albans, A.D.800-1820* and was also a St Albans Blue Badge tour guide.

David served on the committee of the HALH for many years, both as an ordinary member and as vice chairman, and contributed a chapter in *A County of Small Towns: The development of Hertfordshire's urban landscape*, ed. Terry Slater and Nigel Goose (Herts Publications, 2008).

David worked tirelessly for all of these organisations and was always very generous with his research. As recently as 2011 he dragged out of his computer the text of Volume VII and gave HALS permission to add it to their computerised catalogue. This, as well as his publications, will be a lasting legacy to David. In all of his activities he was constantly supported by his wife, Ann, and we extend our sympathies to her and all of their family.

Reviews

Volume XXIV, *The Diary of Benjamin Woodcock, from Family & Community History*

There are few first-hand accounts of workhouse life, either by inmates or officials. Woodcock's diary is interesting as it was written in the wake of the 1834 Poor Law Amendment Act, just after the formation of the Barnet Union when a new central workhouse was erected to replace parish workhouses. It was not a personal journal but a notebook, its contents open to scrutiny by Woodcock's employers, Barnet Board of Guardians. Despite this constraint, it discloses much about the author and daily life in the workhouse.

A former draper, with no apparent experience of workhouse administration prior to appointment in 1835, Woodcock emerges as the antithesis of the heartless and bullying workhouse master as he regularly (and convincingly) reveals concern for the health and welfare of his charges. This is evident in the case of young female inmates sought as domestic servants by local householders, and who are often dismissed as unsatisfactory after a few weeks' trial. For example, a request by a labouring man for a housekeeper was declined by Woodcock who, after inter-

viewing the applicant, decided such an arrangement would 'not be prudent' (p.130).

Woodcock reveals life in Barnet workhouse as soap opera- mysterious thefts of vegetables from the workhouse garden, an elderly inmate who fears his deceased brother is in danger from body snatchers, and intimations of money stolen from a dying inmate by a newly devoted ward-mate. Woodcock also deals with endless shortcoming of local tradesmen, inmates coming to blows with one another, and a deluge of visitors wanting to inspect the workhouse whose plumbing is far from satisfactory. There are even occasional touches of comedy, as when Woodcock confesses he 'pulled the nose' of Old Ned Hull for his abusive language (p.48). Gear's informative introduction to the diary, and various appendices, such as the workhouse admissions and discharge register, help to make this a fascinating snapshot of 1830s workhouse life. Written when *Oliver Twist* was making its first serialised monthly appearances, the diary provides a valuable antidote to Dickens' relentlessly grim portrayal of conditions in workhouses.

Peter Higginbotham

Volume XXIV, from *Local Population Studies*

After the passage of the Poor Law Amendment Act in 1834, the central authority for the administration of the Act, the Poor Law Commission, ordered that parishes be formed into unions. At the 'centre' of each union, ideally in a market town or city, was to be a workhouse in which most relief was to be administered. By August 1838 the Commission had managed to organise 14,000 parishes in England and Wales, containing 80 per cent of the population, into 580 New Poor Law unions (F. Driver, *Power and pauperism: the workhouse system, 1834-1884*, Cambridge University Press, 1993, p.37). The Barnet Union in Hertfordshire was one such example. As the introduction to this volume details, it was formed in July 1835 with the market town of Chipping Barnet at its centre and comprised a further five parishes from Hertfordshire and four from just over the county border in Middlesex. Representative(s) from each parish were elected to the position of Guardian, one of whom served as a Chairman, and they met regularly alongside some *ex-officio* members in the local public house. The Assistant Poor Law Commissioner, Daniel Adey, attended the first meeting and thereafter frequently checked the union's progress. By the spring of 1837 a union workhouse had been built in Barnet, prior to which those in receipt of indoor relief were housed in three older poorhouses. This sequence of events was typical of most (compliant) rural New Poor Law unions throughout England and Wales.

What, therefore, does this transcription of a workhouse master's diary offer that aids our understanding of the workings of the New Poor Law?

Whilst many unions experienced a similar transition from the Old Poor Law to the New, masters' workhouse diaries are extremely rare, especially during the early years of the New Poor Law. This is in part because keeping workhouse diaries was not statutorily compulsory, unlike other administrative tasks such as keeping Board of Guardian's minutes and workhouse accounts. Searches I undertook for my doctoral research regarding the rural unions of Wessex returned only one such diary, whilst a

subsequent national search has returned few others. This is a shame, for much minute detail concerning the operation and management of workhouses was documented within diaries, including admissions, discharges, provisions, workhouse apparatus, punishments and medical treatments in and outside of workhouses.

Whilst the keeping of a workhouse diary was not mandated by law, it was still written with a purpose. As Gear suggests, Woodcock was probably directed by the Guardians to keep the book because it was consulted by the Board on a regular basis. This instrumental function is reflected in the diary entries. On many occasions Woodcock asks direct questions within the diary about how best to proceed on a particular matter. On other occasions the master is intentionally reflexive about a course of action already acted upon. In the October of 1836, for instance, after noting that he gave two pints a day to men taking up potatoes, he writes 'Hope I did right' (p.17). Every so often entries are annotated with comments from the Guardians demonstrating that the diary itself was as used a mode of communication between master and Board.

Beyond micro-level detail about the operation of the New Poor Law and the everyday management of indoor relief, this diary also sheds light upon the role of the workhouse master. Here, Woodcock documents his face-to-face encounters with visitors, traders and fellow employees as well as the relief recipients themselves, detailing their circumstances, behaviours and requests. Although his commentaries were clearly written with his audience in mind, his notes challenge the stereotypical characteristics of the early New Poor Law union workhouse master, created by both true and exaggerated tales of extreme unfeeling and cruelty towards inmates, such as those in G.R. Wyther Baxter's 1841 *Book of the Bastilles*, and in the evidence collected by a Select Committee inquiry into the Andover union scandal in 1846/7. This diary provides a more balanced and cooperative picture of the workhouse master. Woodcock's comments portray him as careful, strict, understanding and genuinely interested in the lives of those who entered the workhouse doors, as these examples illustrate:

'Thomas Smith, the blind man, on his return this Afternoon said the Resurrection Men had Attempted the previous night to Steal his dead brother and askd me to let him go out the following day as he wished to watch the Churchyard all Night but I of Course refused 24 October 1836' (p.17).

'William Spencer, aged 71, pauper of Shenley, admitted in Chipping Barnet house this day, by order of the Board. Examined by the Medical Officer the following Morning, In a low weak state, for want of food 17 November 1836' (p.23).

'James Kelly Aged 16, Casualty Pauper from Friern Barnet, was Admitted on Friday 17 th Nov[embe]r. This youth in Addition to the Smallpox, was in A most filthy Lousy Condition. We had him Striped & Washed & Put him in one of the Out houses. He tells me he never was inside A Church or Chapel, in his life. He was born at Gurnsey 16 November 1837' (p.102).

In conclusion, this is a high-quality transcription of a very rare document that provides new understandings of the workhouse system under the New Poor Law. If Gear's introduction offers only a rudimentary account of the operation of the New Poor Law at the national level, it

contains much information that helps to place into context the Barnet Union and Woodcock's life before and during his employment as master. Appendices to the diary contain transcriptions of rules for the labour master, workhouse accounts (1835-38), an extract of the first 450 entries of the admission and discharge register (1835-37) and an extract of a register of paupers placed in service (1836-39). These add valuable further context. An index of places and subjects and an index of peoples' names will also prove of great value to welfare, local and family historians in navigating their way through this most useful volume.

Samantha A. Shave
University of Sussex

Volume XXV, *Datchworth Tithe Accounts*, from *The Agricultural History Review*

Tithe accounts have long been recognised as important documents for agrarian historians because they can provide information on prices and farming practices for small and medium-sized estates, rather than the institutional accounts and large estate records that tend to dominate our view of the subject. However, it might be worth adding a rubric applicable to most other primary sources, that they are only valuable when properly understood. As Jane Walker's very detailed introduction to this set of eighteenth-century Hertfordshire accounts makes plain, the complexity of tithing arrangements makes this necessity particularly pressing. The great tithes on all products of the soil might be collected in kind, compounded for wholly or in part in cash, or (until 1549) fall upon the labours of people, in the output of a mill or a fishery. In addition, particularly after the Dissolution, the great tithes might be owned or farmed by a layman, but much 'privatised' monastic land remained exempt from tithes. Not only this, but tithing customs varied from parish to parish, and had to accommodate new crops, such as turnips or potatoes, and others that were difficult to levy in kind, such as milk.

The Datchworth accounts were maintained by Rev. William Hawtayne (1680-1747), chaplain to the Earl of Essex, by whom he was presented to the living in 1709. Hawtayne moved in court circles, and became chaplain to Caroline of Ansbach, Princess of Wales after 1714. In the first few years of his incumbency Hawtayne also kept accounts of his direct farming activities on the 20-24 acres of glebe lands in Datchworth (approximately half of it composed of strips in the village's remaining open fields). Although Hawtayne's income shifted over time largely to (more convenient) composition payments, the accounts reveal that between 1711 and 1717 his total income from Datchworth amounted to between £120 and £140 per annum. Thereafter, wheat prices declined, and it appears that some of the village's farmers were either in some financial difficulties, or less willing to compound in cash, possibly because age was causing them to wind down their farming operations. Either way, Hawtayne rarely managed to extract more than £100 from Datchworth thereafter. Only accounts for 1726 and 1739 are not recorded.

As is often the case with an account book kept by one person over a long period, the Datchworth accounts are actually something of a miscellany. They include details of composition agreements with a few tenants, various partial surveys of the parish, a tantalisingly brief description of the pattern of farming and the rotation on John Whitfield's farm in 1715, and even the values of grain sold in

Northumberland and Cumberland in the winter of 1739, reported by 'Mr Cook a very serious elderly man and at that time a serjeant in Major Farrer's Troop in Earl Cadogans Regiment of Dragoons Quarterd in my parish of Leighton Bossard ... in the year 1741'. Very helpfully, the editor has also included a range of other sources in this volume, including the 1607 Glebe Terrier, 1721 Land Tax returns and poor relief payments, and some biographical information on some of the tithe payers.

This information adds up to a very useful volume for agrarian historians interested in prices, fluctuations and farming practices in lowland England in this period. The editor's introduction is very thoroughly researched, providing a very detailed background discussion to the law and history of tithes in England, and a very effective analysis of prices and income from the Datchworth tithes. This meticulous introduction, and the transcription and preparation of the accounts themselves, displays the editor's considerable expertise. As ever, agrarian historians should remain profoundly grateful to the continuing efforts of county record societies to organise, sponsor and produce valuable editions of this kind; upon their continuing efforts so much else depends.

H. R. French
University of Exeter

From *Family & Community History*

Eileen Wallace, *Children of the Labouring Poor: the working lives of children in nineteenth-century Hertfordshire*

In July 1844 James Dye, aged 10 (or 7 in one account) suffocated after being stuck in a chimney flue in a country mansion outside Hertford. He climbed for his father, a successful chimney sweep in the town, despite use of boys under 20 being made illegal in 1840. The inquest jury delivered a verdict of accidental death and Dye senior was fined £10 for sending his son up the chimney. This is one of the lamentable stories of conditions faced by working children in 19th century Hertfordshire, related by Eileen Wallace.

While none are a surprise to anyone familiar with Royal Commission and Parliamentary select committee reports which investigated child labour, the cumulative effect of Wallace's account has a strong impact.

After an introduction the author examines the lives of children in six trades: agriculture, straw plaiting, silk manufacture, papermaking, brick making and chimney sweeping. Some trades were found throughout the country; others such as straw plaiting were concentrated in Hertfordshire and adjacent counties, partly due to proximity to London. Chapters provide background to each trade in Hertfordshire, and then deal with particular aspects of the conditions in which the children lived and worked: their housing, schooling, work tasks, and treatment from employers and those with whom they worked. Whilst this structure provides a clear account of individual trades it leads to occasional repetition; for example, school absence due to harvesting and parental pressure to maximise family income by setting children to work as early as possible (under five in straw plaiting!), feature in several chapters. (As Nicola Sheldon stated at the 2010 FACHRS conference, 'the vibrancy of the local child labour market was the key determinant of levels of truancy'.)

Sources will be familiar to local and community

historians - school log books, local newspapers, parliamentary papers, Poor Law Union records, Medical Officer of Health reports, and the 19th century census returns. These are used to good effect and provide vivid contemporary accounts of the working and home conditions of the children. Extracts from sources are enhanced by an excellent selection of illustrations, in particular 19th century photographs. Whilst Wallace makes few comparisons with the situation of children in other trades or regions, and provides little detailed analysis, this is a readable and instructive narrative of children's employment in her chosen county and is recommended to historians with an interest in the subject and period. It should also be a useful source of comparative evidence when the results of the FACHRS school log book project are analysed.

Clive Leivers

Special offer from Beds Historical Record Society to HRS members: 25% off *How Bedfordshire Voted*

J. Collett-White, ed., *How Bedfordshire voted, 1685-1735: evidence of local poll books, I, 1685-1715*

J. Collett-White, ed., *How Bedfordshire voted, 1685-1735: evidence of local poll books, II, 1716-1735*

J. Collett-White, ed., *How Bedfordshire voted, 1735-1784: evidence of local documents and poll books*

These volumes comprise transcripts of the poll books for the County and Borough seats of Bedford and some election accounts showing candidates' expenditure. Providing evidence for an in-depth study of the people, places and landholding in Bedfordshire, they offer a crucial resource for local and family historians. The full price of each volume is £25.00; but the publishers, Boydell and Brewer, are offering them to HRS members at £18.75 each.

Orders can be placed on 01394 610600 (phone); on 01394 610316 (fax); to trading@boydell.co.uk (email); or on-line at www.boydellandbrewer.com

Postage rates per book are £3.00 in the UK; £6.50 per book to mainland Europe; £10.00 per book outside Europe. **Free postage if orders are placed online.**

You MUST to quote offer code **12095** to ensure that discount is given. *Offer applies to direct orders from individual purchasers only and ends 31 August 2012.*

Repton's Red Books

It has come to our attention that some copies of Volume 27 have printing faults, which include black marks on some pages or poor printing. We hope that all faulty copies have now been identified, but it is possible that some may have been missed. If your copy has either of these problems, and you would like it replaced, please contact our Secretary, Heather Falvey (contact details in AGM papers).

GIFT AID - a plea from the Treasurer

As a charity, the Society can claim back Gift Aid on its annual membership subscriptions. A number of members have already completed Gift Aid forms, for which we are very grateful, but many have not. If you are a UK taxpayer and would be willing to participate in the Gift Aid scheme, please tick the relevant box on this year's subscription form and I will send you a Gift Aid form.

Gwynneth Grimwood