

Chairman's Report

This year has seen the successful launch of the Barnet Map, the gestation of which has taken place over a considerable period. Many members of the Society have contributed to its production and the Trustees would like to thank them all for their hard work. It was launched at Barnet at the HALH Symposium last November, which proved to be an appropriate venue, attracting about a hundred visitors. Its publication was made possible by a generous legacy of £1,000 from a late member of the Society.

HALS continues to expand its activities and a number of members of the Society work there as volunteers on a regular basis. Given the current strictures on local government finance, HALS has had to introduce charges for room hire, so the Society will have to pay for use of the search room for meetings, and may be charged for shelf space storage of past volumes, yet to be sold. One advantage for researchers however is the digitization of primary source material by HALS, and the introduction of five digital microfilm readers for use by the public, which produce much clearer images. HALS is also keen to include the Society in its *Shared Heritage Strategy*, part of their 10 year plan, and has praised the standard of the Society's publications. This kind of cooperation is vital to us.

We are looking positively towards the future in that the volume on the *Wills & Probate Inventories from St Albans 1600-1615*, the publication of which is planned for 2017-18, should sell well in the city. For this short period there are a wealth of linked sources including 106 wills, 187 inventories, 22 probate accounts and 38 administrative bonds. The second volume of *John Carrington's Diary* will appeal to those who have enjoyed Volume I, which has been very well received and spawned readings and even a play. There is also going to be an exciting collaboration with the *British Record Society* over the publication of the *Hertfordshire Hearth Tax Returns* for the 1660s.

Local History talks have also supported the work of the Society, Philip Sheail giving a talk on the 3rd Earl Cowper, (the subject of our volume on his grand tour), to the Hertford & Ware Local History Society, and the Chairman has given several talks on *Hertfordshire & the English Civil War*, the subject of his volume for the Society. Future researchers, who might wish to edit a volume should consult the HALS catalogues, which have nearly a quarter of a million records online. Also Buckinghamshire Record Society have digitized online, in PDF format, all their Quarter Sessions Calendars between 1678 and 1733, which contain many references to parishes in West Herts; each volume is well indexed to help you find surnames and place names.

Digitization nationally has been developed over a considerable time on the website *British History Online*.

At <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/> you will gain free access to - for example - the *Calendars of the Papers of the Cecils of Hatfield House from 1306 to 1571*, as well as the *Calendar of State Papers Domestic James I, 1603-10*. There is even access to the obscure Court of Chivalry between 1634 and 1640 in which Edward Allen, gent of Sarratt in Herts, took Nathaniel Axtell to court in 1636. The *British History Online* site is a mine of both primary and secondary sources, some of which you have to pay for, but others such as the *Victoria County History*, or the *Inventories of the Historical Monuments in Hertfordshire* you can access from your computer at home. Any member of the Society who would like to have a go at editing a volume should contact any of the trustees; their proposal will be considered, and if the sources are found to be suitable, a future volume planned.

Alan Thomson

AGM Venue

After the AGM members will be able to visit St Leonard's church, Bengeo. This Norman church is Hertford's oldest building and has a number of interesting features, including wall paintings – believed to date from the thirteenth century – and evidence of the medieval scheme of decoration.

Although the entrance porch is a Georgian addition to the building, the South doorway is believed to be Saxon and the wooden door is thought to date from the fourteenth century, making it one of the oldest hanging doors in the country!

Review of Volume 31 from the *Economic History Review*

A fundamental premise of the eighteenth-century Grand Tour was that it would terminate more or less where it started. A young, aristocratic tourist, having travelled at least as far as Rome was expected, somewhat optimistically, to return more accomplished and sophisticated than when he left. George Nassau Clavering-Cowper, Viscount Fordwich, later 3rd Earl Cowper, failed to return at all. After reaching Naples in October 1759, he backtracked, via Rome, only as far as Florence. There, he settled and—30 years later—died. He broke his contented exile with a single visit to England in 1786, undertaken mainly in the hope of succeeding Sir Horace Mann as Britain's Envoy in Florence. This post, like all the British honours that he requested over the years, would be denied him, indicating, according to the editors, George III's disapproval of Cowper's prolonged absence. Others—among them Edward Gibbon (oddly unquoted)—were certainly dismayed at Cowper's neglect of his country, county, and family. So why, now, should we find him at all interesting?

The answer must be (allowing Bourdieusian terminology) for his habitus—Cowper's perfect knack of accruing cultural capital, whether by forming an art collection of high quality, by patronizing gifted artists and scientists (notably Volta), or by achieving influence within the cosmopolitan elite of Florence. Admittedly, Cowper began with considerable financial capital, having inherited much from his maternal grandfather, the 1st Earl of Grantham, even before succeeding to his father's earldom. But what was the prime, non-personal effect of the Grand Tour if not the exchange of the one form of capital for the other?

This book is the first of two companion volumes on Cowper's life; its main achievement being to deliver an English translation of the 66,500-word tour journal kept between 1756 and 1760 by Cowper's tutor, Jean Chastellain, a Swiss army officer. The forthcoming second volume promises previously unpublished documents concerning the earl's subsequent life in Florence. This first volume, nonetheless, contains a 59-page introductory essay divided into sections which, beyond discussing the tour of Lord Fordwich (as he was then styled), considers his entire life and summarizes his family's history up to the sale and demolition of Panshanger in 1953/4. As for the translation, one notes the editorial policy of 'remaining broadly faithful to the tone and character of the original'. There being no parallel text, one assumes its accuracy. Chastellain's journal is characterized by a military thoroughness and persistence rarely found in the genre. Only for the duration of Cowper's stay in Lausanne (effectively home to Chastellain) is it set aside, except to record excursions into Switzerland. What Cowper actually did for 25 months in Lausanne is partly revealed by Chastellain's record of expenditure on the tour (also published here) and the introductory essay.

The journal includes observations on the economic character of the places visited and on curious industrial processes. We are told this prefigures the 'economic tourism' of the 1780s, which it may do, though similar observations were made by English tourists on the continent 150 years before. Italy's economic and moral decline is a persistent theme. In a dilapidated, inhospitable Venice, the Doge's Palace is found to be 'the cesspit and blight of this city', while Padua, 'a sad place', is found to have 'fallen into a state of decay [that is difficult to comprehend]'. On Tuscany, Chastellain offers a succinct analysis of its particular decline: the defunct Medici dynasty had always sustained commerce, while even its Court had been a stimulus to the economy; now, its new Austrian rulers were draining the depopulating state at an annual rate of two million 'ecus. Though the journal is Chastellain's, not Cowper's, their joint responses to what they saw and experienced permeate the journal. It is even possible to detect Cowper's emerging connoisseurship, though the editors are misled by a letter Chastellain wrote to Cowper's father calculatedly alleging that they were viewing Rome's art and architecture only for the sake of appearances. By the time the 2nd Earl Cowper would have received it, the pair had thoroughly examined 50 churches, 20 palaces, 11 villas, and 22

ancient sites in and around the city, which any serious student of Rome will recognize as indefatigable commitment and not pretence. Only by seeing innumerable works of art during his tour would Cowper become the man of taste portrayed with other identifiable Britons in Zoffany's *Tribuna of the Uffizi* (1772–8). The editors' modest aim in publishing this valuable primary material seems to be to illuminate Cowper's life—this is reflected in a narrow bibliography—whereas its potential application is, in fact, much wider. Indeed, those interested in the effects on social behaviour and cultural practices of dramatic, relative changes in the economies of states allowing the free movement of leisured individuals and luxury goods will find much upon which to reflect.

Timothy Wilks
Southampton Solent University

Review of Volume 26 from *Local Population Studies*

John Carrington was born in 1726 and followed in his father's footsteps in becoming a gardener. John subsequently became the tenant farmer of Bacons Farm, adjacent to Bramfield village in Hertfordshire. In 1767 John married Elizabeth who was 13 years younger than himself. The wedding took place over three years after the birth of their first child, also called John (Jack). The diary covers the period towards the end of his life and this first volume covers the seven years from 1798 to 1804.

The original records are mainly written on the backs of, in the margins of, and in other spaces in a variety of discarded documents. Prior to their deposit at the Hertfordshire Archives 'the diaries' had been sorted into date order and then roughly stitched into thirteen volumes of around 40 pages each. The diary is unusual in that it continues beyond Carrington's death in 1810 until 1812. The final period was compiled by Carrington's son, Jack. The present volume is ably edited by Susan Flood, the former County Archivist. It includes brief biographical details of members of the family, local landowners and clergy. The index is extensive but particularly valuable are the many footnotes which help the reader to understand more obscure elements of the text. Illustrations of buildings mentioned in the text include a superb watercolour of Bacons Farm allegedly painted by the thirteen-year-old son of Joseph Strutt.

Reading Carrington's diary one is immediately struck by the many similarities with the more well-known diary of the shopkeeper, Thomas Turner. Both served their local communities as overseers and collectors of taxes in the eighteenth century. They each provide unique insights into life in their respective villages: East Hoathly in Sussex and Bramfield in Hertfordshire. Both record dining, sermons preached by the vicar and watching cricket matches. Sermons are generally approved and texts on which they are based usually supplied. Carrington commends Mr Newton preaching at Tewin Church, 'a very good historical sermon from the beginning of the world to these days'. Turner comes across as the more earnest in his religious devotion but regularly fails to live up to his principles. Whilst Turner continually regrets getting drunk, it does not appear to

overly concern Carrington. Turner supplies exhaustive descriptions of what he eats, invaluable material for food historians, whereas Carrington is more sparing in providing evidence. Both diarists record their financial transactions in considerable detail and thus give valuable information to the social and economic historian. Both are written against the backdrop of war with France: in Turner's case it was the Seven Years War and for Carrington, the Napoleonic Wars. Carrington's diary provides confirmation of high food prices which price indices often inadequately measure. Carrington wrote: 'Thus ends the most extraordinary year 1800. When things of all kinds was never known so dear, wheat £5 pr load'. Like Turner, Carrington details his journeys which are on foot (to Ware and Hertford) or by pony. He also ventures further afield to St Albans and London.

Farming is an important theme in the diary, which is a valuable primary source for agricultural historians. Carrington's farm embraces both arable crops and livestock and he pays regular visits to market to buy and sell animals. His diary frequently records weather conditions. On February 1st 1799, Bramfield experiences the deepest snow for many years and the lanes are 'unpassable'. Few come to the market. Mr Raymond, a farmer from nearby Potters Heath, attempted to do so but was found dead, perished in the snow.

Carrington has a particular focus on death. In March 1802, John Osburn went to 'dip water in his pale as being dark, fell in the water and drowned'. In August, John Tyler dies after slipping from his cart and the wheel went over his body. He was just 36 and had a wife and four children. In December 1802 Mr Hide is killed by the sails of a windmill. There is a simple recording of the facts as known to Carrington. There is no theological reflection on the uncertainties of life as Turner tended to do. Turner's Providential God regularly intervened in life both to aid the nation in the war against the French and to protect Turner and others from harm.

As Constable, Carrington frequently attended the Quarter Sessions and crime and punishments are a diary theme. In March 1799, Carrington 'saw Joe the Hatter going to be hanged in the road from the gaol. He stood up in the cart with wite hatband on...He said he was inisent'. Susan Flood's footnote provides details of the case; that Joe the Hatter was Alexander Hobbs who had been found guilty of Highway Robbery. In May 1802, Carrington saw a woman stand in the pillory for almost starving a child to death. Once again the footnotes provide invaluable background to the case.

There are descriptions of funerals including that of Earl Cowper who died at the age of 22. After the funeral procession arrives at 'Cole Green. All his capitall tenants met the herce and joined the procession with white hatbands, gloves and sashes...the pall bourn by his tenants'. Thus diaries and probate accounts taken together enable the historian to reconstruct the funeral customs of the eighteenth century.

Apart from death, the other experience certain in life is paying taxes. In 1799, Carrington travels to St Albans Town Hall to receive instructions from the Commissioners of Taxes about the new tax on income. It was the introduction of Income Tax. The footnote is a little wanting here as it was a graduated tax which rose from two old pence in the pound to the highest level of two shillings (10p) in the pound only on incomes over £200. It was to finance the Napoleonic War and was a temporary tax due to expire at the end of the war!

The present volume also includes 'The Arithmetic Book' which contains not just mathematical data and calculations but all sorts of vignettes and accounts of local and national events. Reading it is rather like rifling through someone's muddled private papers but it is a delight to do so. The Arithmetic Book covers a much longer and earlier period than the diary.

Carrington's diary is a mine of source material for historians and for the general reader captures the everyday life of a small village at a time of great change in society. We look forward to publication of the second volume which will complete the project.

Ken Sneath
University of Cambridge

Review of Volume 29 from the *Agricultural History Review*

Well-produced editions of primary sources in translation are always welcome and this present volume is no exception. The editors have produced a valuable collection of various sources pertaining to the St Albans manor of Norton. These include the translation of the court books of the manor dating from the first extant and very short halmote court held in April 1244, to the final court book entry dating from April 1460. In addition the editors have included surviving court rolls of the later fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, amongst them some view of frankpledge courts, plus an eleventh-century charter and an account dating from 1488-89. There is a comprehensive and useful introduction explaining the sources at hand while also exploring aspects of the archaeology of the manor. A number of useful maps and illustrations alongside subject, name and place indices have also been included, which undoubtedly add value to the volume. Of particular value, especially perhaps to those less familiar with the obscure terminology of court rolls, is the inclusion of a glossary.

A. E. Levett's *Studies in manorial history* (1939) first drew attention to the value and importance of the court books of the various manors belonging to the abbey of St Albans. These were, in effect, edited versions of the manorial court rolls, containing only the types of entries which were of direct significance to the lord. As such, the St Albans court books contain a wealth of information on land transfers (including upon the deaths of tenants), marriage licences and information on various manorial customs and villein dues. The abbey was a notoriously conservative landlord, forever in conflict with its various tenants and famously causing affront to the townspeople of St Albans not only by

treating them like villein tenants, but also by insisting on calling them thus. In this respect, then, the existence of the court books can almost be seen as a reflection of the mentality of the lords of St Albans, creating simple short-hand reference guides to all matters pertaining to unfreedom in their manors by extracting the relevant information from the original court rolls. The latter, by their very nature, included a great deal of business concerning relations between the tenants themselves, such as brawls, accusations of debt, petty thefts and broken contracts. Such cases generated revenue for the abbots, but were not of any longer-term consequence. Instead it is in land transfers, the rendering of labour services, marriage licences and other cases detailing other villein dues, such as having to use the mill of the lord to grind one's grain, that tests for unfreedom and the status of individual plots of land can be ascertained. These served as precedents and the compilations were a handy reference to the personal status of individual families and the land they held. Therefore the court books of the St Albans manors, the present example of Norton included, are excellent sources for anybody interested in the long-term development of villeinage and the often conflictual relationships between lord and tenant, including landholding patterns and peasant land markets.

That said, this present edition does include some interesting gems illustrating daily life at medieval Norton and the lord's attempts to regulate these to safeguard what he considered to be his assets. In May 1338 for example a decree by the lord is included stipulating that none of the unfree tenants were to spend their time at the tavern of Baldock to 'waste there their goods and chattels to the grave damage of the lord' (p. 115). This seigniorial decree was not due to moral concerns; instead the lord wanted his tenants to brew for themselves and ordered that they 'shall have a common brewery in Norton' to sell ale regulated under the assize, which would have generated an additional income for the lord.

Overall this is a wonderful and useful volume, not least because the documents included span a significant chronology and include key periods of stress in later medieval rural life, including the famine years of the early fourteenth century and the arrival of the Black Death. It is likely to be highly valued as a teaching tool for undergraduate and postgraduate students and to be welcomed by anybody interested in researching daily life in later medieval England.

Miriam Muller
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The perils of transcription: an illegible word or a 'scribal error'?

As a member of the Richard III Society's Research Committee I am currently running a project to transcribe (and eventually publish) the wills contained in the late fifteenth century register from the Prerogative Court of Canterbury known as 'Register Milles' held at the National Archives (reference TNA, PROB 11/8). There are over 660 wills in the register, many of which are in Latin. The register comprises copies of the original

wills made by clerks in the Prerogative Court and occasionally we come across copying errors. Of course, the writing in the register itself is not exactly easy to read but some words seem to be just plain wrong. I came across one recently that caught my eye.

Stephen Burton, citizen and freemason of London, was a parishioner of St Michael's, Cornhill. In his will, dated 30 October 1488 (TNA, PROB 11/8/271), he bequeathed new torches to burn at the elevation of the Blessed Sacrament in his own parish church and in three other churches: in 'saint Tolowse [St Olave's]' in the old Jewry of London; in the parish church of Edmondton (Edmonton), Middlesex; and in the 'parissh Church of our Lady of Rikwadisworth in the Counte of Hertford'. There is, and was, no such place as Rikwadisworth (this is definitely what has been written) anywhere in the UK, never mind in Hertfordshire, but of course there is Rickmansworth, and the parish church is dedicated to St Mary. 'Rickmansworth' has had numerous spelling variations over the centuries – in the medieval period it was often Rikmersworth, or Rikm'sworth – but never Rikwadisworth. It seems that the PCC clerk simply wrote what he saw in the original as he copied Burton's will in the register.

I have not been able to find any connection between Stephen Burton and Rickmansworth. No Rickmansworth testator was surnamed 'Burton' in the fifteenth or sixteenth centuries (there are 174 and 228 wills from those centuries at HALS), although the surname does occur in 13 late medieval St Albans wills (but never Stephen Burton) (Susan Flood, ed., *St Albans Wills 1471-1500*, HRS, vol. IX). So what Burton's connection was with Rickmansworth we will never know (perhaps he was born there). His legatees were mostly servants and former apprentices, so no clues from them either. But we do know that he wished to be remembered by the parishioners there when the host was elevated – at least for as long as the torch lasted.

Heather Falvey

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