

Chairman: Dr Alan Thomson

Secretary: Dr Heather Falvey

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Chairman's Report

Paul Cassidy has taken over the role of Treasurer this year and has made some pertinent suggestions on how we can operate our finances, as well as keeping a close eye on our income and expenditure. The trustees have met regularly at HALS, but because of the current Covid-19 crisis, meetings are likely to be held online for the duration. The reviews section of the latest issue of *The Local Historian* includes a review article of two of the Society's publications *Hertfordshire Population Statistics* (revised), and *St Albans wills, inventories and probate accounts*, as well as Anne Rowe's book on *Tudor and Stuart Parks*. The review article is very complimentary about all these Hertfordshire books. Chris Brimblecombe, the retiring Treasurer of HALH, has agreed to be the Society's new Independent Examiner, as a replacement of J. Wells of Bramfield.

A number of local Societies and communities have had celebrations this year including the 175th Anniversary of the St Albans and Hertfordshire Architectural and Archaeological Society, and the 100th anniversary of Letchworth Garden City and of Welwyn Garden City. These have led to the publication of a number of books and articles. Trustees have also contributed to the journal *Hertfordshire Past and Present*, which Philip Sheail and Ruth Jeavons jointly edit. In the Spring 2020 edition our Secretary, Heather Falvey, has written the first part of 'The Miracles of King Henry VI- The Miracles recorded in Hertfordshire 1489-1500'. I have contributed to the ongoing series on 'Guides to Sources' on the subject of the House of Commons Journals, as well as an article on Colonel George Thomson, one of the illustrious family of Watton at Stone. This twice yearly publication comes free to members of the HALH and contains numerous articles of local interest for specialists and non-specialists alike.

HALS planned an ambitious programme for 2020 as the Year of Culture for Hertfordshire, but unfortunately because of the Covid-19 crisis this has had to be curtailed. However HALS is now technically separate from the main Library Service, though the Local Studies Library at HALS will still be closely linked to the Archives. Some interesting accessions have come in this year, some from museums and libraries, including Lowewood Museum Hoddesdon (which has now thankfully been saved partly by the action of local volunteers and historians), Watford Museum and Welwyn Garden City Library. Other Museums, faced with cutbacks should also be encouraged to deposit documents and historical sources in HALS, who can preserve them at the appropriate temperature and humidity, as well as index them online and make them more readily available for the public to study. Other deposits, this time from Hertfordshire County Council include VHS cassettes of local town developments in Hitchin and Watford, and other media include 381 20th century slides of Hertfordshire. These will be of interest to Local Historians later in the 21st century, when we hope our Society will still be producing volumes of primary source material as well as occasional maps of the county.

Alan Thomson

Volume 36, *The Third Earl Cowper and his Florentine Household, 1760-90*

In January 1757 George Nassau Clavering-Cowper left England to undertake his Grand Tour of Europe. Styled Viscount Fordwich, he was 18 years old and heir to an Earldom. He spent two years at Lausanne, then undertook a trip through southern Germany and Italy. While staying in Florence he fell passionately in love with a beautiful Florentine lady. Although he went on to visit Naples and Rome, he declined to return home as planned, but instead headed back to Florence. His passion for the lady eventually burnt itself out, but by then he was thoroughly embedded in the cultural and social life of Florence, and on succeeding to the Earldom in 1764, his sojourn turned into a permanent residence. Thus, apart from one short visit to England in 1786, George remained in Florence until his death in 1789.

An extensive body of primary source material relating to the Cowper family is contained in the Panshanger archive, held by Hertfordshire Archives and Local Studies (HALS). That part of the archive relating to the 3rd Earl contains a great deal of material written in French and Italian, and for many years it remained largely unstudied. Then in about 2006 Gill Cordingley, a Hertford local historian and former Chairman of the Hertford & Ware Local History Society (HWLHS), brought together a group of volunteer researchers. They included people proficient in French and Italian, in particular Sheila White and Maria Porter.

Over the following years a number of items in the Panshanger archive were transcribed and translated. Gill published the findings of this research in the journal of the HWLHS. At that time I was Editor of the journal and by this means I also became involved in the work. One particular line of research was the transcription and translation from the French of a journal describing George's Grand Tour, written by his Swiss tutor. This project was being handled by Sheila White, but it was a major undertaking and so I offered my services as assistant and editor. The project was subsequently taken up by the Hertfordshire Record Society and the English translation of the journal was eventually published in 2015 as *Lord Fordwich's Grand Tour 1756-60*, Volume 31 in the Society's series of publications.

I volunteered to carry the research forward and transcribe the 3rd Earl Cowper's household accounts, beginning at the point when he returned to Florence in January 1760 and taking it through to his death in December 1789. Sheila White and Maria Porter agreed to help me in translating the French and Italian text. The major item in this study was a series of documents called the 'Stewards' Journal Accounts', which contain a record of household expenditure for the whole period. They provide a detailed picture of how George's household developed over the years. They show us how much money he spent on funding his lifestyle overall and what proportion he devoted to particular categories of expenditure, such as the furnishing of his palazzo, his wardrobe, his carriages and stables, and his patronage of the theatre. They also enable us to plot the growth in the number of domestic servants and to track the different properties in which he resided.

The record provided by the Stewards' Journal Accounts was supplemented by other documents in the archive. They included the 'Summary Household Accounts' which commence in 1779. By this time the Earl's affairs had become quite chaotic. His debts were mounting and his household was riddled with corruption. He thus called upon the services of a wealthy merchant friend, Antonio Menchi, to help him rectify the situation. Menchi's reports contain valuable information not only on the state of the household at that time but also in showing how such a household was run. Further information on the nature of the household is provided by the inventory of the Earl's effects which was taken immediately after his death in December 1789.

All this information has now been brought together in Volume 36, *The Third Earl Cowper and his Florentine household, 1760-90*. The amount of material contained in thirty years' worth of records is immense, especially in regard to the Stewards' Journal Accounts. Thus Volume XXXVI contains transcripts from these accounts for seven sample years, beginning in 1760 and then at five-yearly intervals up to 1789. It also contains key extracts from the Summary Household Accounts and a complete transcript of the inventory of the Earl's effects. In addition to the transcripts, Volume 36 contains an account of the Earl's life taken from the published sources and from some of the collections of correspondence contained in the Panshanger archive. It also includes an analysis of the Earl's financial and household affairs as revealed in the household accounts. As will be apparent from the above description, Volume 36 is a substantial piece of work. In fact, it runs to over 600 pages and thus for the first time ever it has been necessary to split an HRS volume into two parts to make its publication and distribution more manageable.

The 3rd Earl Cowper has often figured in general histories of the Grand Tour and of life in Italy during the eighteenth century. These accounts have traditionally been based upon the letters and memoirs of fellow aristocrats and English travellers. The publication of *Lord Fordwich's Grand Tour 1756-60* and *The Third Earl Cowper and his Florentine household, 1760-90*, have greatly extended our knowledge of the 3rd Earl through the study of primary sources. They reveal the extent to which the income from his estates in Hertfordshire and elsewhere was syphoned off to fund his luxurious lifestyle in Italy, and they provide a wholly new insight into the life of this most colourful character.

Philip Sheail

Review of Hertfordshire Population Statistics 1563-1801 from Hertfordshire People, No. 150 (September 2019), pp 39-40

This new edition of Munby's classic text for the history of Hertfordshire makes this long out-of-print volume available to a new audience. The statistics are still accurate and the discussion full of meaningful insights. However, the explanation of the figures in the tables must be read before using the figures themselves, as it is not as straightforward as it may at first seem. Munby provided multipliers to convert figures counting households or communicants into total population figures, and gave reasons for those multipliers. However, since 1964, when the original volume was published, three of the returns printed have been published in complete editions for the whole country. Falvey has included details of these publications and other recent work on population multipliers. Similarly, since 1964, the loca-

tion of some of the documents has changed, with Falvey updating these and providing a key to the abbreviations used and also taken the opportunity to add to the text and to modernise some wording. There is also now a comprehensive bibliography. Falvey has also used Diana Munby's copy of the original publication and incorporated some additions and corrections. In addition, and to enhance the volume, Falvey has also added some new appendices: one gives numbers of communicants in the archdeaconry of St Albans in 1595, and another gives references to some Hertfordshire Hearth Tax Returns. Recent publications, since 1964, noted are the 'ecclesiastical' census' of 1563 and 1603, Protestation Returns of 1641 and 1642, The Compton Census of 1676 and also highlights other indicators of population such as the Lay Subsidy, Hearth Tax, Window Tax and census data 1801-2001, most of which do not provide detailed figures. Local Historians and Genealogists wish to know about the population in a town or village they are studying, but Munby's book was aimed at the study of communities, not just individual parishes, and the comparative study of them over time. The Appendices are useful with clear explanation of scope and MS references, Appendix 4 is particularly interesting. It relates to the Report of the 1841 census by Rickman and his calculations of population growth or decline from a study of the numbers of births, marriages and deaths in old parish registers, over a three year period, from as many parishes as possible in a county. For Hertfordshire, Rickman calculated population in 1570, 1600, 1630, 1670, 1700, 1750 and 1801 this giving a picture of the rise and fall and average from the registers of '116 Parish churches and chapels'. There is also a clear table of townships / parishes where there are missing records. The size and shape of the book is now not so easy to put on a bookshelf, A4 landscape with 2 columns of text. There is a faithful reproduction of the original book, tables, maps, but with more footnotes, updated and in some cases expanded. The larger size makes it easier to see the detail on the maps at Figs 2 -5, and the tables are now clearer. There is an excellent Bibliography showing where specific records are kept, printed primary sources and secondary sources, if readers wish to investigate this subject further. An excellent book, as it always was, with useful updates and enhancements that I would recommend for the historian of Hertfordshire. A fitting tribute to Lionel Munby.

Jane Tunesi

Review of Hertfordshire Population Statistics 1563-1801, from Herts Past & Present, 3rd Series, No. 34 (Autumn 2019), p. 32

First published in 1964, local historians will be grateful to the Herts Record Society for publishing this updated version of such a useful research tool. Heather Falvey, working with Diana Munby's original copy of the book, has added two useful new appendices: one lists communicants in the archdeaconry of St Albans, 1563-1603, the other includes references for newly published hearth tax returns. References for those documents that have changed their names and locations since 1964 have also been updated. The landscape format of the new edition has greatly enhanced the clarity and appearance of the figures and tables. The cover showing John Oliver's 1695 'Actual Survey of the County of Hertford' is a further attraction for readers.

Ruth Jeavons

Review of Volume 32, *Wills, Inventories and Probate Accounts from St Albans, 1600–1615, from Herts Past & Present*, 3rd Series, No. 35 (Spring 2020), pp. 31–32

A hundred members of SAHAAS were involved in the compilation of this volume, many of them associated with the seventeenth-century research group. It contains transcriptions of 299 documents: 101 wills, 150 inventories, 28 administrative bonds and 20 account books, mostly carefully recorded by the Archdeaconry of St Albans. There is nothing boring about wills and inventories and this collection enables us to step back into St Albans during the last days of Elizabeth I, the plague year of 1604 and the reign of James I. Lists of belongings and instructions as to whom they should be left reveal the day-to-day life of the person making the bequest: their health, family and domestic life as well as their occupation and property. Predominant among the occupations shown in this collection are the yeomen, tanners and inn keepers. Butchers and blacksmiths are also among the wealthiest. The highest value inventory is that of Thomas Webster, a tanner with many acres of land and, intriguingly, a cheese loft containing 21 Essex cheeses. His inventory is valued at £599 1s 4d. A shoemaker left a hundred pairs of shoes. Other trades include those of glover, fishmonger, butcher, bottlemaker, brewer, shoemaker and a musician. Their lives are revealed in their possessions and bequests. Bedding, furniture and clothing were often mentioned and the editors offer a detailed analysis of such information, showing, for instance, that damask table-cloths had a higher value than those of holland or flax. On the modern question of energy and fuel, we learn that there were only six bequests of seacole, wood being more commonly used at the time. In 1588 the Mayor of St Albans bought two acres of woodland to supply fuel for those in need. Another fascinating detail concerns the value of different coloured rugs. Green rugs were the more highly valued because they had to be twice dyed – yellow and blue. The glossary explains many unfamiliar kitchen terms: a ‘pouldringe trough with kever’ was a salt trough with curing cheese or meat. In 1605 Innocent Beech left two ‘buckinge tubbes’ worth 2s. The glossary tells us that this was a tub for steeping cloth in lye made by leaching water through wood ash. This book is an education in the seventeenth-century life of St Albans. I found it difficult to put down.

Ruth Jeavons

Review of Volume 29, *Records of the Manor of Norton in the Liberty of St Albans, 1244–1539, from Rural History* (2019), 30, pp. 105–106.

Manorial court records have become a central source for historians of the medieval countryside. They document the domination of tenants and inhabitants by the lord of a manor, but they also tell us much about peasant society and the inner workings of households and families. More court rolls should be made available in print to enable students and non-specialists to appreciate their variety and richness. A welcome edition of the Winslow (Buckinghamshire) records was recently published, and now the court books and rolls of another manor on the St Albans Abbey estate, Norton, has appeared thanks to Hertfordshire Record Publications. This book begins with a group of local enthusiasts who had explored the archaeology of Norton and excavated part of the medieval village. To find out more about the historical background they enlisted the help of Peter Foden, who translated the court records. He and the Norton Community Archaeology Group have produced this volume togeth-

er, so the introduction includes the fieldwork, with a number of maps, together with information about the documentary sources and their historical interpretation. The local inhabitants are reminded that Norton, which has been absorbed into the suburban spread of Letchworth Garden City, was once a village of about fifty houses a mile from the market town of Baldock.

Outsiders will gain much from this edition. In the national context the records of 1316–17, the years of the great famine, show a peak in transfers of land as the agrarian crisis stimulated the land market. As would be expected, the mortality of 1349 is reflected in twenty-seven deaths, with a further five in 1361. More unexpected is the apparently routine business of the court held in July 1381, shortly after the great revolt in which St Albans Abbey faced the hostility of its tenants.

In the long term, the records depict advances in the freedom of tenants. Marriage fines were supposed to be paid by unfree tenants and about three occur each year between the 1240s and the 1340s. They were clearly resented, and ceased in the late fourteenth century. Fines for failure to carry out labour services disappear much earlier. Serfdom persists in the records in the repeated but ineffective orders for fugitive serfs to return, well into the fifteenth century. The documentation of serfs, made to help lords maintain discipline, also tell us about peasant society, such as the women who occasionally paid their own marriage fine, suggesting a degree of independence. The reports of fugitives incidentally reveal much about patterns of migration.

The St Albans court books begin unusually early in the thirteenth century, and it is salutary to see in the 1240s complex disputes about the succession to land. Peasants did not emerge from a state of innocent simplicity and then become complicated – they were always enmeshed in a tangle of customary rules. The courts at Norton dealt with more than the usual number of problems arising from the desire of tenants to sublet, and the setting up of wardships for underage heirs. Tenants seem to have encountered difficulties over the maintenance of buildings at an early date, around 1300, though as everywhere these intensified after the Black Death.

These documents rightly are made accessible in English translation and the work has been well done. A few words cause problems, such as ‘corn’, which looks as if it should be ‘wheat’, and ‘room’ is probably better rendered as ‘chamber’, and ‘bowl’ as ‘pan’, assuming that the original text has *frumentum*, *camera*, and *patella*. All doubts could be removed if the possibly ambiguous Latin word were to be printed alongside the English.

Christopher Dyer
University of Leicester

Review of Volume 34, *Walter Morrell’s ‘Manufacture for the New Draperie’, from Textile History* (2019), 50:1, pp. 121–122

Walter Morrell was a man with a dream. Or rather a business project to provide training to the poor, thereby giving them access to meaningful, paid work producing the increasingly fashionable ‘new draperies’ that would boost the economy of seventeenth-century Hertfordshire and the country as a whole. While Walter saw himself as ‘a true and faithful subject unto his prince and country’, sadly, the great and the good of Jacobean Hertfordshire did not see things in the same way, and ultimately he failed to attract sufficient long-term investors in his project. As such, this book presents a fascinating case

study that offers something to early modern textile historians, as well as those with interests in social and business history. The book consists of a substantial Introduction written by Michael Zell and Heather Falvey that is followed by a full transcript of Morrell's *Manufacture for the Newe Draperie*. The transcript is supported, and enlarged upon by two appendices giving details of forty-three additional documents, and of the Hertfordshire men listed in the documents, along with a glossary, predominantly of textile terms, and a very useful map of Hertfordshire that forms the endpapers.

In addition to providing the transcript, the editors are to be congratulated on illustrating several pages from the document, so allowing the reader to see how the text was laid out, and the style of the handwriting. Morrell's book was 'Devided into Three Bookes', with the first providing a review of the evolution of his project to teach carding, spinning and weaving of new draperies. After gaining the support of Robert Cecil in 1608–1609, Morrell engaged in discussions with the privy council and received their backing, too. Alongside this factual account, Morrell included discussion between two sides: 'Clothier', who promotes traditional wool cloths, such as broadcloth, and 'New Draperies', who extol the virtues of the new fabrics that were lighter weight woollens and mixed fibre cloths. In Book Two Morrell discusses his efforts to gain support for his project amongst the Hertfordshire gentry. Book Three presents more conversations between 'Clothier' and 'New Draperies' that are reminiscent of those between 'Velvet breeches' and 'Cloth breeches' that make up Robert Greene's *A Quip for an Upstart Courtier* of 1592. Greene promoted similar arguments about the need to protect national interest, and identity, by buying and wearing home produced cloth rather than expensive, foreign imports.

The two editors, both historians, have a long-standing interest in, and expertise of, the early modern textile industry. Michael Zell's expertise in the new draperies, in relation to Kent in particular, is well known from his *Early Modern Kent 1540–1640* (2000) and *Industry in the Countryside: Wealden Society in the Sixteenth Century*, (2008). The origins of this Hertfordshire-focused publication can be found in Zell's 2001 article 'Walter Morrell and the New Draperies Project, 1601–1631', published in *The Historical Journal*. Here Zell works in tandem with Heather Falvey, who draws upon her work on the new draperies in Hertfordshire that originated in her MSt dissertation on riot and enclosure in Berkhamsted, Hertfordshire, 1618–1642; an article drawing on aspects of this was published in *Rural History* in 2001.

This volume serves as a very timely reminder of what excellent work the county record societies do in making historical records, such as *Manufacture for the Newe Draperie*, accessible to a much wider audience. While the manuscript itself is in the collection of the Huntington Library, San Marino, California, the material it contains is central to the history of Hertfordshire in the early seventeenth century and as such deserves a volume in the Society's series. Indeed, while the book reveals much about Jacobean Hertfordshire, it says as much about the country as a whole. The discussions about poverty, social provision for the needy, alongside the need to develop and protect the wool and cloth trades, were national as well as local concerns. In turn, this book merits a wider readership than just the core of loyal readers who belong to the Hertfordshire Record Society. The Society and the two editors are to be congratulated on a very useful, carefully edited and scholarly volume. While Morrell may have failed to bring his

vision to fruition, Michael Zell and Heather Falvey have brought their long term interest in Walter Morrell to a very successful conclusion.

Maria Hayward
University of Southampton

Laurie Hughes

We were sorry to learn that Laurie Hughes died, after a short illness, on 6 May 2020, aged 90. As well as a stalwart supporter of the Hitchin Historical Society for over 40 years, he was Honorary Treasurer of the Record Society from 1990 to 2002.

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