



## WOOLHOPE NATURALISTS' FIELD CLUB

Registered Charity no. 521000

NEWSLETTER No. 44 SPRING 2022

### PRESIDENT AT LARGE

It is difficult to believe that I have come to the end of my presidential year and even more difficult to grasp that I have another year to serve. There are new faces on our committee now, so hopefully, this time next year there will be someone else willing to manage the programme and guide an unwieldy Central Committee. If not I shall be divorced.

One of the innovations I have tried to promote is the use of the Club's good name and expertise to play an active part in defending the cultural heritage of Herefordshire. We have a lot of expertise but much of it is hidden under a bushel – as they say. I have started writing regularly to Herefordshire Council and Historic England, generally responding to planning applications or threats to our heritage. Our first campaign was to try and save St Nicholas's Rectory, a fine Arts and Crafts building at the junction of Breinton Road and Westfaling Street. This failed because Historic England did not believe it deserved listing. However, with the support of some sympathetic councillors and a local Arts and Crafts enthusiast, another expanded defence of the buildings special qualities has landed in the in-tray of Historic England and we await the outcome. On the Club's behalf I also tried to get Bartonsham Farm – a good late Georgian house – listed. This is now submerged in a distribution depot run by Cotteswold Dairies and detached from the Bartonsham Meadows, which for centuries was its demesne. This also failed because Historic England did not consider it was immediately under threat. Apparently, you need a bulldozer or two to convince the bureaucrats in Bristol and Birmingham that a building deserves statutory protection. We also wrote a letter opposing another poultry farm, close to Broxwood Court in the north-west of the county. It seemed to very close to a registered landscape garden and virtually on the track of Offa's Dyke. We scored a direct hit since an archaeological survey using modern electronic systems discovered the Dyke underground - see the report by Keith Ray in the last

*Transactions*. This was a vindication of an earlier survey in 1904 by our infamous member, Alfred Watkins, who worked out on the ground where the lost dyke might be found but had no modern equipment to verify it - again see *Transactions* 1904.

More recently I have drafted a letter critical of a proposal to develop residential accommodation above Nos. 21, 23 & 25 Widemarsh Street – a group of listed buildings with the Mansion House at its centre. Obviously, the Club would welcome more residential accommodation in the City. This is inevitable with the decline of retail trade but the developer's preliminary survey of the properties revealed an amazing array of historic features and artefacts including much timber framing of various periods, moulded woodwork, panelling, plasterwork, a 17<sup>th</sup> century staircase and wall-paintings. The application provided little indication of how these treasures would be protected. Their historic research was minimal and they had not even consulted Nigel Baker *et al*, *The Houses of Hereford 1200-1700* (2018) which features the Mansion House.

The Club has been consulted regularly by the Council about the future of the Club's room and its contents in Broad. Both our library and the Broad Street façade are flagged-up in the Historic England listing schedule. Albeit, we expect the use of the room will be restricted during the reconstruction, which will turn the building over to the Museum, we anticipate that there will be many new opportunities to pursue, not least a large meeting room for our Winter Programme. Within the next few weeks the Council will need to decide if Hereford is prepared to receive and display the Leominster Hoard –see Tim Hoverd's description in *Newsletter* Autumn 2020. This will increase the footfall to the Museum considerably and since the Club is a permanent resident in the building, it would provide new opportunities for it to play an enhanced role interpreting and disseminating the broader significance of the Hoard. This issue was raised at a recent Central Committee meeting and it was suggested that the Club could host an academic conference and invite a variety of experts – both local and national – to take the Hoard apart and investigate its character and meaning. This was done with considerable success for the Staffordshire Hoard and the results published in a splendid tome by the Society of Antiquaries in 2019. The Club has a good

track-record for publishing miscellaneous volumes in addition to the *Transactions*. However, this is a long-way ahead. Nevertheless, a two-day conference in the Town Hall would draw the nation's attention to Herefordshire and fill the city with attendees and, in the longer perspective, add to the reputation of the city and shire as a focus for cultural tourism. These are early days but if it comes to pass, remember, you read it here first.

David Whitehead

### **CLUB OFFICERS 2022-23**

Following the elections at the Winter Annual Meeting 2021, the following took office at the Spring Annual Meeting 2022:

President	David Whitehead
Vice Presidents	John Eisel, Rachel Jenkins, Janet Cooper
<b>Hon. Secretary</b>	Jane Adams
<b>Hon. Treasurer</b>	Ian Porter
<b>Hon. Membership Secretary</b>	Ian Porter
<b>Hon. Editor</b>	Terry Morgan
<b>Hon. Field Secretary</b>	Sue Olver
Hon. Programme Secretary	Anne Harbour
Hon. Librarians	Jackie Jonson and Marianne Percival
Hon. Website Manager	Roz Lowe

**Those officers marked in bold are ex-officio members of the Club committee**

### **Committee elections**

Duncan James was elected to a vacancy in the cohort to retire 2024. Joe Hillaby, David Lovelace, Keith Ray and Howard Tomlinson were elected to retire 2025.

### **MEMBERSHIP & FINANCE**

#### **Membership**

As at 31st December 2021 we had a total of 593 members an increase of 16 compared to the previous year together with 27 Institutional members a drop of 3. There were 52 new members during the year, 23 had resigned or deceased and 13 memberships lapsed due to the non payment of the subscription.

#### **Finance**

Accounts for the year to 31st December 2021 are attached on a separate sheet.

The accounts for the year to 31st December 2021 show a surplus in the overall funds of £1295.74

Overall income for the year was lower due to a dramatic decrease in interest rates on some investments. Subscription income and income from royalties was also lower than the previous year.

Expenditure in the year varied due to various factors:

- the *Transactions* cost more to produce than the previous year.
  - the Newsletter costs reduced slightly as only one edition was produced by the printer.
  - Postage was less as there was the normal number of Newsletters
  - There was a meeting cost as the Woolhope Room could not be used for Committee meetings and a room had to be hired at the Castle Green Pavilion.
- The overall deficit in the General account was £642.92

There was no activity in the GW Smith Fund resulting in a surplus amounting to £1917.25

Ian Porter

### **THE GW SMITH FUND**

I am very pleased to be able to report that the book on the Downton Gorge, which had been held up because of the pandemic, will be published later this year. Grant offers are made with a time limit of one year, but because of the exceptional circumstances, on the recommendation of the Smith Fund Sub-committee, the Club committee has agreed that grant offer should be extended to the end of the year to enable this publication to go ahead. We very much look forwards to the completion of this project.

Since the last newsletter I have received two enquiries about possible grant-aid for publications. One of these does not qualify, and in order to determine the other we need further information, and cannot be progressed until this is received.

If any member has a publication project which might qualify for grant-aid, I will be pleased to discuss and advise them on this.

John Eisel

## PUBICATIONS COMMITTEE

Reports for the website and the editor's report are given elsewhere. We have welcomed Terry Morgan as our new editor, and he has enthusiastically taken on this role, and made remarkable progress. Elsewhere in this newsletter he has appealed for help with more technical aspects both of the website and for helping with the preparation of the *Transactions*. Contact details are given for anyone who would like to find out more. Please get in touch to discuss what is involved in this very interesting work.

John Eisel

## EDITOR'S UPDATE

### ***Transactions* 2021**

Work on the 2021 *Transactions*, scheduled for publication in September, is proceeding well. Interesting content is already coming together for the 2022 volume too.

### ***Transactions Extra* – Mycology, Digital Publication**

We're pleased to say that a paper by Dr John Edmondson will appear in our *Transactions Extra* format on the website, late in March. Dr Edmondson was formerly head of botany, then science, at the National Museums, Liverpool, and is now an honorary research associate at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew. The paper, which includes some fine illustrations, will appear in time for his address to the 125th anniversary conference of the British Mycological Society in April.

The paper explores the lives and contribution of two mycologists from North Wales—Mary Lloyd Wynne and Alfred Osten Walker—rather than from Herefordshire, but we are nonetheless delighted to publish it in view of its mycological interest and the insight it provides into the leading role of Dr Henry Graves Bull and the Woolhope Club during the second half of the 19th century. The Club's pioneering introduction of fungus forays acted as a magnet, attracting leading mycologists of the day from Britain and overseas, key people who developed the science. Mary Lloyd Wynne attended several forays in Herefordshire and was part of the collaborative

network in which the Club played so prominent a role, long before the establishment of national organisations. In 1880 she invited members, led by Dr Bull, to a remarkable foray at her home, Coed Coch in Denbighshire.

In view of the connections with the Club Dr Edmondson felt that our *Transactions Extra* was the right home for publication. For those interested in the Club's mycological activity in the period, his paper complements Edward Blackwell's excellent and enlightening outline (Henry Graves Bull, fungologist and father of the Fungus Foray, *TWNFC* 58 (2010), pp. 95-126), this time from an external perspective.

Terry Morgan

## WEBSITE REPORT

Since my last report family health matters mean that I have been obliged to stand down as website manager, certainly before the end of the year and maybe sooner. To avoid the responsibility falling on too few shoulders in future, website tasks are being progressively shared out. The Membership Secretary now registers new members on the system, and our News editor is now responsible for the red Alert Banner. Our new website management team is led by David Lovelace and two other members have expressed interest and are exploring possibilities of the website. Contact me at [webmaster@woolhopeclub.org.uk](mailto:webmaster@woolhopeclub.org.uk) to learn more about what you could do and what information you would like to see on the website.

Roz Lowe

## WOOLHOPE CLUB LIBRARY

Please note that the library will not be open on Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> May, when the May Fair returns to our streets. We are otherwise open every Thursday from 11 o'clock until 2 o'clock. We have had some very interesting email enquiries but not too many visitors to the library.

We hold a stock of back issues of the *Transactions* which can be purchased at a very reasonable price if anyone would like to add to their

personal collection. We have a good number of copies from more recent years and a varied collection from earlier times.

Jackie Jonson and Marianne Percival

## **NEWS SERVICE**

As I'm sure most members know, the club now sends out items of news which are thought likely to be of interest to Woolhope club members that we hold an e-mail address for. If you have anything that you think is likely to be of interest to other members, please select news from the dropdown list at <https://www.woolhopeclub.org.uk/contact> and enter details of the news item and I will include it in my next e-mail to club members.

If you're not receiving the news items but would like to, follow the same procedure and I will get you added to the distribution list.

Jonathan Comber, Woolhope Club news officer

## **PICTURE MANAGEMENT AND INDEXING WOULD YOU LIKE TO HELP?**

The Club is building a small team to strengthen capacity, in publishing, the website and communications. There's a good deal happening, so if you would like to help in either of the areas below, please contact Roz Lowe (Website Manager) or Terry Morgan (Editor) at the email addresses shown.

### **Digital Pictures**

Good quality images are increasingly important to support the website, the *Transactions*, communications and special projects, so that we're looking to strengthen skills in handling them and to develop robust ways of working. If you have skills in handling digital images and optimising digital photographs, and would like to contribute, please contact Roz ([webmaster@woolhopeclub.org.uk](mailto:webmaster@woolhopeclub.org.uk)) or Terry ([editor@woolhopeclub.org.uk](mailto:editor@woolhopeclub.org.uk)).

### **Indexing**

Also, as per the email update sent earlier in the year, it would be valuable to have someone to help with indexing of the *Transactions*. Supporting instructions covering the Club's working methods are available. The work is necessarily detailed, but also offers the opportunity to get close to some excellent papers long before publication! Please contact Terry ([editor@woolhopclub.org.uk](mailto:editor@woolhopclub.org.uk)) if you feel that this could be of interest.

## **REDEVELOPMENT OF HEREFORD MUSEUM AND ART GALLERY AND HEREFORD LIBRARY**

Herefordshire Council have approved the next stage of their plans to redevelop the Broad Street site as a dedicated museum and art gallery and move the city library to Maylord Orchard. The Cabinet meeting on 24 February agreed funding for the next stage of these projects to work up final designs by the end of July 2022.

The City Library is expected to move at the end of 2022. The redevelopment of Broad Street will take two years with the building scheduled to re-open in early 2025. The feasibility studies for both projects are in the public domain and can be accessed via the Council's website.

The papers considered at the meeting state the cost of the Museum development to be budgeted at £15 million with £5 million allotted from the Stronger Towns Fund. An application has been made to the Heritage Lottery Fund for £5 million with the balance to be funded through capital monies available to Herefordshire Council.

The feasibility study provides detail of the work undertaken since January 2021 when the scheme was selected for Stronger Towns Funding. It includes illustrations which indicate possible interior layouts and provision of a roof terrace. Some parts of the interior will be substantially remodelled with others, such as the Woolhope Room, having little intervention.

Gallery space for permanent displays and temporary exhibitions will be increased. There will be a café, shop and rooms for meetings and

educational events. The carbon footprint will be minimised through use of passif haus technology and all areas will be made fully accessible.

The Woolhope Club is recognised as a key stakeholder in the project and the Council have indicated there will be some formal consultation with the Club and other stakeholders between March and June 2022.

Jane Adams

## LATEST NEWS FROM BLACKFRIARS ROSE GARDENS

At last, the new Blackfriars gates have been installed! Shockingly, Blackfriars Rose Gardens, set in a Grade II\* Scheduled Monument, are little known to many who live in Hereford. The site is far enough back from Widemarsh Street so that nothing can be seen unless one ventures up the entrance path.

While working to clear weeds and replant the rose beds over 2017 - 2018, volunteers pondered how to draw people into the monument and rose gardens. Key in this was replacing the solid wooden gates that gave no clue to what lay inside. Many passed the gates without a glance, missing the well-designed information case beside them giving Blackfriars history.



The effort to raise the visibility of Blackfriars began with a design competition amongst young artist/ blacksmiths in Herefordshire in summer three years ago. An 18-year-old blacksmithing student in Holme Lacy, Joe Shevelan, won the competition in December 2019. Three months later, the pandemic set in, delaying the process of raising money, applying for

planning permission from Historic England and Herefordshire Council, and making the gates.

By January 2022, all was approved. Peter Downey of Pontrilas, the distinguished master blacksmith, made the gates. However, children and parents enter through the gates to reach St Thomas Cantilupe Primary School, so installation had to take place during the half-term. Thus, the week of 21 – 25 February EC Joseph & Sons of Hereford removed the old gates (to be recycled in another location thanks to help from Councillor Jeremy Milln), then re-dug the postholes and hung the new gates.



The photograph of the new gates gives an idea of the transformation: Joe Shevelan's design is attracting attention, and whether open or closed, one can see into the site. The gates are open 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. every day of the year. Their official opening by Dame Kate Bingham will take place on Friday, 20<sup>th</sup> May at 3 p.m. when the replanted rose gardens will be beginning to bloom.

Anne Harbour

## HEREFORDSHIRE VICTORIA COUNTY HISTORY TRUST

Back in December 2020, I provided an update in this newsletter on the progress of research by the Herefordshire VCH where I advised that a book on the history of Colwall had recently been published and

acknowledged the generous grant that the G. W. Smith Fund gave towards the publication costs. If anybody would like to buy a copy of this book or indeed the earlier ones on Eastnor and Bosbury, please contact me at [research@vchherefsresearch.org](mailto:research@vchherefsresearch.org); and I will advise the best way of getting a copy to you.

Since then, we have made good progress on Cradley (although slower than planned due to various factors including Covid-19 restrictions) but it is expected that a draft will go for peer review in the next month or so. Hopefully publication will occur in late 2022 or early 2023.

Dr Hannah Ingram was contracted last year to research and write the two small parishes of Coddington and Donnington. She is making good progress on both and has produced initial drafts of virtually all of Coddington and about half of Donnington. These will need editing, as they are a bit too long at the moment but it is likely that draft histories will be put on the VCH website later this year <https://www.history.ac.uk/research/victoria-county-history/county-histories-progress/herefordshire>. These two parishes will not be published in book format until the red book is produced. Copies of our 6-monthly newsletters can also be viewed at the same website address. I expect that the Cradley draft will also be put online once we are happy with it.

The intention is then to move on to Mathon which will include most of what is now West Malvern. This is because the VCH works to the parish boundaries as they were in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century to ensure that nowhere is omitted.

We would like Hannah to continue with this research and we have a reasonable amount of money in the bank but we need to raise about £10,000 before we can do this. While I have some charitable trusts in mind to approach who will hopefully contribute the majority of this, if any member of the club would like to make a donation or knows of a charity that may be willing to give us a grant, please let me know. Equally if anybody wants to help with the research, please contact me.

Once all these 4 parishes have been completed, the plan is to research Ledbury rural which includes Wellington Heath and then update the 2 EPE

books on Ledbury as well as researching the standard VCH topics which weren't covered in those books. Then we can produce the first red book on Herefordshire since 1908. At this point, we can start thinking about researching elsewhere in the county which I believe the club members will welcome.

Jonathan Comber  
Treasurer Herefordshire VCH Trust



Coddington Church



Donnington Church

## PUBLICATIONS OF LOCAL INTEREST

In the autumn of 2021 Logaston Press published the following books, which will be of interest to members of the Club. The first is a general survey of farming in Herefordshire up to 1871, with chapters in chronological order, but with certain themes developed separately. The second is very well illustrated, and although only a minority of the sites described are in Herefordshire, there is enough to make it worthwhile for members of the Club. Copies of the books have been deposited in our library, and full reviews of both books will appear in the 2021 *Transactions*.

***Herefordshire Farming through Time. Fellers, Tillers, & Cider Makers* by Katherine Lack, xiv +249 pp, illustrated ISBN 978-1-910839-51-5, £15.**

***Forgotten Castles of Wales and the Marches* by Paul R. Davis, vi + 282, illustrated. ISBN 978-1-910839-52-2, £15.99.**