

NEWSLETTER

Updating Hampshire's History

No. 5

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VICTORIA
COUNTY
HISTORY



Hampshire

Professor Jim Wilkes



In our last newsletter we announced the generous donation of £10,000 from Professor Wilkes to help our project, and since then we have received this great photograph of him and his wife, Mary Ann. Thanks again to Professor Wilkes!

Jim Wilkes, originally from Southampton, was a chemical engineer at the University of Michigan and now lives in Ann Arbor, USA. He has recently edited 'Place-Names of Hampshire and the Isle of Wight' by his grandfather, Alfred Oscroft, soon to be published.

News Update



In November 2014, Nigel Atkinson, Esq, HM Lord-Lieutenant of Hampshire became an official Patron of the Hampshire New **Victoria County History** Project.

He is also President of the Hampshire Archives Trust and a Trustee of both Winchester and Portsmouth Cathedrals. Whilst Chief Executive of Gales Brewery, he became interested in local history and was later responsible for depositing the Gales archives at the Hampshire Record Office.

Barbara Applin

We are very sorry to report the sudden death of one of the founder members and a major contributor to the project. A full tribute will appear in our next Newsletter.

VCH Hampshire Work in Progress

Since its beginning in 2008, the project has made good progress. The current situation is:

Rural parishes: We have now completed two parishes: Mapledurwell (published as an 85-page paperback in 2012) and Steventon (publication forthcoming). Material on six other parishes is on the web covering Manors and other estates in Cliddesden, Farleigh Wallop, Newnham, Tunworth, Up Nately and Andwell; Economic history of Andwell and Up Nately; Education in Newnham, Up Nately, Andwell and Upton Grey; Religious history, Charities and Poor Law in Cliddesden and Farleigh Wallop and the Domestic buildings of Up Nately, Andwell and Upton Grey. Altogether there are 17 chapters on the web for these six parishes.

Basingstoke: There are six chapters on the web, particularly exploring the transformation of the town since the coming of the railways, with sections on its railways, manufacturing, shops and markets, education, as well as material about the medieval town.



There are now 115 items (as at 12 March) on the **VCH Explore** website including articles about timber-framed houses on the Hampshire downlands; the local carrier network centred on Basingstoke; Jane Austen in Steventon; 100 years of Methodism in Cliddesden; the Bungling Burglar of Basingstoke; Basing House; Park Prewett Hospital; the riots against the Salvation Army in the 1880s; and Sanitary Inspectors' reports from the 1860s with their graphic descriptions of privies that were "constant sources of noxious effluvia". There is also a selection of local wills and inventories as well as spreadsheets of census material.

We anticipate that 2015 should see the publication of Steventon, the completion of medieval Basingstoke, work on new parishes, and further chapters on existing parishes.

School Absenteeism for Harvests

Many school log books have entries for pupils being absent during harvest time. Lords of the manor were often benefactors of the village schools and were happy to use the children at busy times. In 1882-4 Mr Jervoise removed 14 boys from Herriard school to help with stopping pheasants in the coppice during the shooting season. In September 1890 several families were still away hop picking and in October children were absent collecting nuts and blackberries. Robert Mills of Steventon used school boys for haymaking and also encouraged the children to cultivate gardens of empty cottages. In the 1930s one boy was absent from Upton Grey school for helping his parents with mushroom picking. In the 1960s at Queen Mary's Grammar School (now The Vyne) a Farming Club was set up where pupils tended vegetable plots and sold capons and rabbits. *Jennie Butler*

River Pollution

In 1913 Charles Sclater Booth of Old Basing House was pleased to note that the council were not going to tar the roads near his property and the River Loddon. He claimed that the tar laid in 1912 had destroyed all the flies vital for the fish to survive and he had removed hundreds of dead fish. At Christmas 1912 he stocked the river with 400 ten-inch fish at a cost of £40 and all had died. Over the previous ten year period he and his friends had averaged 100-150 fish per year; in 1912 they caught just two. As he had purchased his property solely for the fishing he feared it was devaluing by approximately £50 per year. *Jennie Butler*

Turnips had been grown on Basingstoke Common since 1787. A draft report by Robert Cottle (dated some time between 1800 and 1859) on the Annual Turnip Show at *The Black Boy* mentions "Swedes, white, red or yellow, green, mangold wurzells". *Barbara Applin*

Hampshire VCH group is currently researching the history of Basingstoke and its surrounding rural parishes. When a rural chapter or urban section is completed, it is published on the Hampshire section of the national **VCH** website: <http://www.victoriacountyhistory.ac.uk/counties/hampshire> Transcriptions of documents used for research and short articles about interesting local people, places and themes are published on the Explore section of the same national **VCH** website: <http://www.victoriacountyhistory.ac.uk/explore/>

From Field to Table: Rabbit and Turkey

From reading 16th-18th century wills and inventories we have uncovered some interesting additions to the diets of our testators. In Basingstoke William Todd, cleric (d.1625) had a trout spear; William Paice, yeoman (d.1640) had partridge nets; George Thorpe, goldsmith (d.1728) had an apple roaster and a rabbit spit. Hatch Warren, now a housing estate in Basingstoke did not get its name without reason. The area had been depopulated by plague in the 14th century and was used chiefly for rabbit warrens until brought back into cultivation in 1712. In 1584 Sir Henry Wallop's sons sent conies that they had killed at Hatch to their tutor at Oxford. The parish supplied Basingstoke and as far afield as London with what would have been a valuable source of meat.



William Silvester, tanner (d.1781) owned a fishing rod. John Grantham, yeoman of Cliddesden (d.1570) had ferrets and nets, presumably for catching rabbits, as well as ten turkeys. Turkeys were a delicacy on English tables by 1550, having been introduced from Mexico in 1518. Thomas Walker of Cliddesden (d.1549) lists two peacocks. Were these ornamental or for the table? Many testators had beehives.



A very detailed inventory of William White, apothecary in Basingstoke (d.1636), lists many spices familiar today and that of Oliver Herne, tallow chandler in Basingstoke (d.1747), includes fish hooks and pickling jars.

Jennie Butler and Sue Lane

Turnip Theft in 1867

Fourteen women and four men appeared before the town bench on 19 February 1867, accused of stealing turnips from Messrs T and J May's field near the Holy Ghost ruins. At about 2 pm on 15 February, Superintendent Hibberd was told that people were stealing from the field. When he and PC Hunt arrived there all 18 of the defendants were pulling up turnips and turnip greens. He asked them whether they knew they were doing wrong. They replied that they thought anybody was allowed to take the greens. He asked whether Mr May had given them permission. They said that he had not, but they had heard they might take them. Superintendent Hibberd then told them that he has instructions from Mr May to take anything away from them, and to take their names. The turnips they had picked filled four sacks, and the greens were sufficient to fill a cart.



Mr Chandler, for the defence said that the defendants had gone into the field believing they had permission to do so, and the police had confirmed that none of them had tried to hide what they were doing. He trusted that the bench would not convict and so cast a slur on their character, as they were respectable working people. Mayor Wallis said that Mr May had brought the case to prevent a repetition of such an act, but had decided to withdraw the summonses, subject to the defendants agreeing to pay the costs. The defendants were discharged on paying 3/6d each.

From: Reading Mercury and Berkshire Chronicle, February 23, 1867

Bob Clarke

Sheep Stealing

On 29th April 1656 Richard Abbott, a butcher of Basingstoke, refused to say who had sold him the sheep he drove up London Lane towards Basingstoke; he killed them and sold the flesh the next day in Basingstoke market and sold the skins to Crosse of Alton. Nothing in this deposition suggests theft, other than his refusal to name the seller, but on 7th January 1657 Henry Head, husbandman, charged him with stealing 'one tegge sheep' and Miles Coleman, labourer, gave evidence that the previous evening he had taken beer to Abbott, who was being held in prison for stealing sheep from Henry Head and William Ronegar. The following October, Richard Abbott was charged with stealing three heifers. *From 'Depositions before Magistrates', Anne Hawker's notes.*

Barbara Applin

Grow Your Own Potatoes

In 1818, a time of great hardship for agricultural workers, the farmers of Cliddesden and Farleigh Wallop gave every cottager a piece of land on which to grow potatoes and the rector, David Davies, provided the seed potatoes – enough for the produce to feed each family for a year. The scheme was based on one first introduced by the Bishop of Bath and Wells and was described in the press of the time as 'a wise and benevolent mode of diminishing the pressure on the poor rates'.



Sue Lane

Many Ways to Name a Sheep

These days, the non-farmers amongst us know what ewes, lambs and rams are but from reading many inventories we have learnt to be more precise when describing a flock. A wether is a male sheep, usually castrated, in its second season and a shear wether is a sheep after its first shearing. The lead sheep of the flock was given a bell to wear and was known as the bellwether. A keb/kebber was a ewe that had lost her lamb or often in Hampshire, a young sheep unfit to join the main flock but of value for fattening for meat. A teg or hogget is a yearling before the first shearing. The former *Dorchester Arms* public house on the A30 at Newnham was renamed as *The Hogget* and for some time incorrectly displayed an inn sign of a young boar. One mystery and noticeable omission from the inventories so far researched is the lack of rams, just four have been found belonging to Francis Prince, yeoman of Cliddesden (d.1557).

Jennie Butler

The Earl of Portsmouth - Traditional Farming

Gerard Vernon Wallop, 9th Earl of Portsmouth (1898-1984) was an influential writer and speaker on organic agriculture, and was ahead of his time in warning of the dangers of arable monoculture and the indiscriminate use of chemicals in farming. He put his ideas into practice on the Farleigh Estate, with an extensive programme of investment in farm buildings and machinery, and the estate became a showpiece, visited by agriculturalists from both home and abroad. Lord Portsmouth was one of an international group promoting traditional agricultural methods and values, from which the Soil Association developed. Always practical, he is seen here in the 1930s addressing a group of visitors on the virtues of manure.



Photo by kind permission of Lord Portsmouth

Alison Deveson