

NEWSLETTER

Updating Hampshire's History

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VICTORIA
COUNTY
HISTORY



Hampshire

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<https://vchhampshire.org>

Please visit our website, where you can find out more about **VCH** and our work, our group, details of our books, all our previous newsletters and more! We will shortly be incorporating a news BLOG

Email: contact@vchhampshire.org

WORK IN PROGRESS

Our next **VCH** Short has been written and sent to London HQ for editing: **Basingstoke Reinvented: 1800-1925, Agricultural Town to Industrial Centre**. Another Short, **Herriard**, is nearly finished and will be presented for publication shortly.

Newnham, Nately Scures, Up Nately and Hook is also in the pipeline and serious work has started on **Old Basing**, which will be a major addition to our collection of books.

Online publications, **Ellisfield**, **Tunworth** and **Sherfield-on-Loddon** are progressing well, and extracts and chapters can be accessed on the **VCH** website, via our [own website above](#).

ASPECTS OF VILLAGE LIFE

Village Celebrations, Queen Victoria's Wedding

To help celebrate the marriage of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert on 10 February 1840, the villages of Herriard, Tunworth, Lasham and Preston Candover, George Purefoy Jervoise paid for 97 pints of beer for the Tunworth celebrations, 45 quarts of beer for Herriard, and unspecified amounts of beer for the parishioners of Lasham and Preston Candover. His other expenditure was on beef, suet, flour and raisins. He spent £20 6s 1½d for Herriard, £6 1s 2d for Tunworth, £12 11s 3½d for Lasham and £15 for Preston Candover.



Bob Clarke

Cottage in Pyott's Hill

In 1892 William Bear, Assistant Commissioner, submitted his report on the condition of the Agricultural Labourer in the Poor Law Union of Basingstoke to the Royal Commission on Labour. Among the topics he covered was the condition of the farm workers' cottages. He visited a cottage at Pyott's Hill, Old Basing, belonging to Miss Soper of Basingstoke, and occupied by a widow paying rent of 1s 6d a week. He described the cottage as "extremely old, and in a disgracefully dilapidated condition". The living room was about 10 ft square, and only 5ft 6ins high. There was a small pantry attached to the living room which let in the rain, and the bedroom window was nearly falling out. The only water supply to this and the neighbouring cottages was the River Loddon, "the water of which is very thick after heavy rain".

Bob Clarke

ASPECTS OF VILLAGE LIFE

First Lady Chairman in Hampshire

As part of the move towards the democratisation of local government in 1894, 18 of the 37 parishes which constituted Basingstoke Rural District and having a population of 300 or more acquired an elected council. Known as 'village parliaments', members were elected either by a show of hands at a parish meeting or by secret ballot at a subsequent poll if one was demanded. Moreover, appropriately qualified women could vote and stand for election. At Sherfield-on-Loddon Mrs Agnes Barker was not only elected to the Council but served as its first Chairman. Councils administered charities; provided local amenities, including allotments, footpaths and village halls; and acted as institutional pressure groups, lobbying authorities for improvements in, for example, postal and bus services.

Roger Ottewill

A Shaky Start for Sherfield-on-Loddon's School

In February 1736 James Christmas, who lived at Stratfield Saye House with the wealthy Pitt family, died. He left £100 to build a school for the poor children of Sherfield and £1,100 to buy land, to provide an income for school maintenance, £25 pa schoolmaster's salary and further aid for the poor. Three trustees were appointed.



Things began well: the school completed by 1738, John Underwood appointed as schoolmaster, land in Swallowfield was bought and subsequently leased at £43 pa.

However, by 1739 the Swallowfield tenant had defaulted. With no rents and further outgoing expenses, by 1744 the charity was over £100 in debt. The bulk of this was owed to the schoolmaster for over three years' unpaid salary. The trustees directed a heartfelt plea to the Pitt family for help.

There is no record of the reply, but gradually the charity funds recovered, though there was one casualty. John Underwood remained as schoolmaster, dying in post in 1761, still owed all the arrears of his salary. The charity was £7 6s 10d in credit and the trustees paid that sum to Mr Underwood's estate, "towards such loss at our hands."

Lesley Mason

Sinful Lord of Steventon: Sir Pexall Brocas, 1605

In a Star Chamber case the Attorney General asked witnesses to respond to allegations against Sir Pexall Brocas, including :

- locking the church to prevent divine service
- letting his sheep into the church
- taking the glebe and tithes of Steventon for his own use
- depriving the last three rectors of their income
- stealing crops and animals from his tenants
- knocking down his own fences so the cattle and sheep of his tenants strayed onto his land where he impounded them for his own use
- keeping 'lewd' women in the manor house in addition to his wife whom he persuaded his servants to marry once he had impregnated them

His son Thomas, aided by the people of Steventon, drove Sir Pexall out of the parish in 1611.

The archbishop of Canterbury excommunicated Sir Pexall on 10 June 1613.

Jean Morrin

BOOKS AVAILABLE FROM: The Willis Museum, Basingstoke, the Basingstoke Discovery Centre and the Hampshire Record Office Winchester.

Village Reading Rooms

During the late 19C and early 20C reading rooms were established in many villages. For a small fee they offered working men access to board games, newspapers and books thereby facilitating adult literacy. Sometimes new premises were built as at Stratfield Saye thanks to the largesse of the Duke of Wellington. Elsewhere existing accommodation was used, such as the post office at Ellisfield. Rules relating to their governance and use covered various matters, including conduct. One for the Preston Candover and Nutley Reading Room stated that: "No intoxicating liquour shall be consumed on the premises. All gambling, quarrelling, or use of improper language, will be punishable by exclusion"

Roger Ottewill

On the first Monday in June, Basing celebrated 'Club Day' in the garden of the Bolton Arms pub. At 10 am, folk in their best clothes would process to church for a service, then back to the Bolton where they had a splendid feast, with beef and, when possible, the first new potatoes and green peas. Then there were games and stalls in the streets around before finishing with music and dancing. The Club Day lives on in the Village Carnival on a mid-June Saturday afternoon.

Mary Oliver

New hats for everyone!



In the early days of the railway, a truck loaded with wooden crates became detached and ran downhill towards Basing, where it hit a train coming the other way and fell down the embankment into the river. The crate burst open and was found to contain hats – which were happily rescued by the women of Basing.

Mary Oliver

The main occupation for the majority of men and boys was working on the land, and the villagers lived in Basing cottages mostly belonging to the Bolton estate. Those with large families often found it hard to manage, and their diet was very plain. Tea was a luxury and the parents would make 'tea' by infusing burnt crusts in boiling water. At least it was the colour of tea!

Mary Oliver

Consternation and Alarm at Old Basing

One day in September 1872, as a train from Waterloo was passing through Old Basing, the door of one of the carriages flew open and a girl of 4 fell out and rolled down the 50 ft embankment, "much to the consternation and alarm of the mother and the other occupants of the carriage". With no corridors and no communication cord, there were no means of alerting the authorities until the train reached Basingstoke. An engine was sent back in search, but in the meantime, the cries of the child had attracted attention. She was carried to Barton's Mill where she was found to be severely bruised, but otherwise uninjured. Mr Barton took the child to Basingstoke where she was reunited with her mother.

Bob Clarke



**Mapledurwell 2012
Steventon 2016**



**Medieval Basingstoke 2017
Cliddesden, Hatch and Farleigh Wallop 2018
Dummer and Kempshott 2022**