



# Friends of Wiltshire Victoria County History

*The Victoria County History of England*

***Friends of Wiltshire VCH***

*WVCH Trust Registered Charity No 1102882*

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**The Newsletter of the Friends of the Wiltshire Victoria County History, keeping you in touch with news, events and fund-raising.**

## Summer Garden Party at Iford Manor

On the evening of the Tuesday 26th July we were once again able to hold a summer garden party, impossible under Covid restrictions last year and much missed.

Nearly 100 had bought tickets for the event, which was held in the gardens of Iford Manor, near Bradford-on-Avon, kindly hosted by the owners, William and Marianne Cartwright-Hignett.



Rain held off until it was time to go home, allowing all to enjoy the drinks and canapés and the opportunity to explore the gardens. Our Patron Sarah Rose Troughton welcomed everyone; our President Michael Wade spoke of fundraising efforts and urged everyone to be generous; and Chairman David Moss described recent and forthcoming activities, before William Cartwright-Hignett spoke about the history of the Manor and its gardens, particularly the latter, created by designer and former owner Harold Peto to display ancient structures and statues, which he had collected on Mediterranean excursions, amidst carefully designed terracing and planting.

### IN THIS ISSUE

Garden Party at Iford Manor	1
Recent On-line Zoom talks	2
Appointment of New Secretary	2
Walks in August and September	3
Local History News and Easyfundraising	3
Future Events and Easyfundraising	4
Contact details	4



### On-line talks.

One of the great successes of the Covid restrictions has been the on-line talks we have been able to deliver with the help of the Wiltshire Museum, Devizes.

On the 19th May our consultant editor, John Chandler, gave a talk via Zoom called **Trying to Understand Wiltshire Landscapes**. Around 90 people took part, which is far more than we could have fitted into a hall.

John began with an introduction about the origins of the Victoria County History Red Books and how history has 'changed' over the years, or rather our interests and perceptions have changed. Many buildings that tell the history of our towns were lost to the town planners of the 1960s. But old maps and plans can help us work out how and why towns developed as they did.

John outlined the development of towns in Wiltshire from their early beginnings: the first towns were Roman, eg, Old Sarum, Verucio (Sandy Lane) and Cunetio (near Marlborough); around the year 900 there were fortified towns in Wessex, such as, Malmesbury and Wilton.

By looking at old town plans we can see the similarities in them. For example, Chippenham and Melksham both have a funnel shaped market place; Malmesbury and Shaftesbury are both developed from monastic sites on high ground. The presence of a castle often determined the development of the town, as in Devizes. And rivers were often instrumental to the town's defences as in Chippenham.

After 1250 the most successful towns were those with busy markets, such as Salisbury, Devizes and Chippenham, which are still known as market towns. Suburbs developed and, as industries were introduced, they affected the development of the towns, eg, the cloth industries and much later the railways. Leisure and travel have also been a big influence in Wiltshire from the Georgian spa towns (Melksham, Holt, Chippenham) trying to imitate the success of Bath to the development of road travel and the motor car.

John finished his talk with the quote, 'a town is a place where people think it's a town'.

Our second talk was given by Julian Orbach on the 8th July. Again around 90 people joined the Zoom session and Julian described his recent work on **Revising the Wiltshire Pevsner**. When Julian took on the revision of the Wiltshire volume by Nikolaus Pevsner it was intended to take 3 years, but ended up taking nearer 7 years.

The original Buildings of England Project was undertaken

by Pevsner with the publisher Allen Lane after the war, with the object of producing an affordable volume for every county in the form of an alphabetical gazetteer describing the architecture and art of England.

Pevsner didn't drive and he didn't know England well, but he aimed to cover 4 counties a year and finish by the mid 1960s. In all, 46 volumes were produced, starting with Cornwall in 1950 and finishing with Staffordshire in 1975 – not quite keeping to his timetable – but injecting his German accuracy and presenting the best of architecture in a concise form.

He worked at enormous speed: his wife drove him, he took notes and then wrote them up each evening and by 1963 had published Wiltshire, which was volume number 26. Pevsner loved Wiltshire and was lent a cottage by the writer George Grigson at Broadtown, which he lived in until his death. He and his wife are both buried in nearby Clyffe Pypard churchyard.

Julian liked Pevsner's working methods and the way he carried on collecting revision notes after the volumes were published. Julian's revision took so long because he had 3 tasks: correcting, revising and adding. During this time he contacted numerous organisations and building owners and, as the revising author, had to go and look at everything. This included combing the countryside for things Pevsner had missed and needless to say Covid was a delaying factor latterly. Pevsner did not consider 'new' things as worthy of inclusion and was also was not interested in the railways, missing out the buildings associated with Brunel.

The talk was illustrated with photographs of interesting features taken in Julian's travels around Wiltshire, many of which are included in the book.

*The Buildings of England: Wiltshire* by Julian Orbach was published in June.

### New Secretary for Wiltshire VCH Trust

Taking over from Hugh Wright, we are very pleased that Olivia Page has joined us as our Secretary. Olivia has a background in Medieval and Classical studies and experience in the volunteer sector. We extend our thanks to Hugh for his work over the last 2 years.



Romulus and Remus statue at Iford Manor

## Walks and Talks

We have 2 walks in the Salisbury area in the coming weeks, led by West Country Blue Badge tourist guide David Richards.

The first, on **Tuesday 24th August**, is titled *The Hidden History of Salisbury*, during which David will invite us to look at about 20 buildings and works of art around Salisbury, asking questions like 'What does it represent?' and 'How old is it?'

The walk will commence at 10.30am outside the Tourist Centre in Fish Row, behind the Guild Hall in Salisbury, and will be over in time for lunch, at The Cosy Club in New Street, close to the end of the walk.

The second on **Thursday 23rd September** is a *Tour of Stratford-sub-castle*. This walk will explore the village, church and fields beside Old Sarum, including the life and influences of the Pitt Family.

Again starting at 10.30am, this time outside the Reading Room opposite the church in Stratford-sub-castle. There is parking available, but, with no nearby pub, lunch has been arranged at The Wheatsheaf in Lower Woodford.

To book these walks, please email David Moss, saying whether you wish to book the tour and lunch or just the tour – [wiltshirevch@gmail.com](mailto:wiltshirevch@gmail.com). Please note there are only 20 places available on each walk.

Payment of £15 per head for each tour should be made by BACS if possible, giving your surname as the reference. (Sort 40-52-40, Account 00033115)

Alternatively, cheques should be made payable to 'Wiltshire VCH Trust' and sent to Mrs Tean Dallaway, 15 St George's Place, Semington, BA14 6GB.

Payment for lunch will be on the day.

**For the Salisbury walk, please book by Saturday 14th August and for the Stratford walk please book by Monday 13th September.**

On **Wednesday 13th October** Professor Catherine Clarke, Director of the Centre for the History of People, Place and Community in the University of London and head of the VCH Central Office, will talk on Zoom about "*All History is Local: Wilton, 1066 and the VCH Past, Present and Future*" She will start with the life of King Edward the Confessor, written for his wife Edith, who had strong connections with Wilton Abbey, and will expand from that to the significance of local history, as

meticulously researched and interpreted in the volumes of the VCH.

Tickets for the Zoom talk are £9 each via the Wiltshire Museum, Devizes website, [wiltshiremuseum.org.uk](http://wiltshiremuseum.org.uk)

## VCH Red Boxes Project of 2019

Interesting items unpacked during this project:

A miner carved in coal, from County Durham; a tie that can only be worn by pilots who have used their ejector seats in action, from Oxfordshire; the sheet music for Eric Coates' Dambusters March stamped as property of the Boots Orchestra from Nottinghamshire; musket balls from Oliver Cromwell's siege of Basing House from Hampshire, one flattened where it had hit the walls, the other still round after a misfire by a nervous soldier; there were also examples of foods, such as, Melton Mowbray pork pies and Maldon Sea Salt; and the rich multicultural history of England was represented too in stunning sari fabric from Leicester and a Kathak jewellery set from Middlesex.

The items collected from 15 counties are available to view in a permanent on-line gallery at <https://www.history.ac.uk/research/centre-history-people-place-and-community/chppc-red-boxes-gallery>

## A History of English Places

An exciting new venture for the VCH has been launched. A brand new map-based smart-phone app is now available – History of English Places.

In the free version you can navigate the historical first-ever edition of the Ordnance Survey map and use the location pins to explore descriptions of villages, towns and cities.

A monthly subscription is available (£1.99 per month; £9.99 per year) which allows access to detailed entries taken from the 175 volumes of histories produced by the Victoria County History project.

The two extracts above were taken from *Local History News*, the magazine of the The British Association for Local History.

## Easyfundraising

One of our supporters joined Easyfundraising last Autumn following our Autumn Fundraising Appeal and has single-handedly raised nearly £60. It may only be a few pence at a time, but it really adds up. Please take a look at how to join on Page 4 of this Newsletter. The more people that join, the more we can raise.

## Forthcoming Events

### Diary Dates

**Tuesday 24th August**—Hidden History of Salisbury Walk, led by David Richards

**Thursday 23rd September**—Walk around Stratford-sub-castle, led by David Richards

(Booking Details for the above talks are on page 3 of this Newsletter)

**Wednesday 13th October**—Talk by Catherine Clarke, Head of VCH Central Office

“All History is Local: Wilton, 1066 and the VCH Past, Present and Future”

(Booking for this Zoom talk is via the Wiltshire Museum, Devizes website.

Full details on Page 3 of this newsletter.)

### RAISE FUNDS FOR US WITH YOUR ONLINE SHOPPING

You may have started shopping on-line more during the pandemic. If so don't forget that you can help raise funds for us by joining **Easyfundraising**

Simply go to the [www.easyfundraising.org.uk](http://www.easyfundraising.org.uk) website, select Wiltshire Victoria County History Trust as your cause, register and start shopping.

You can also download a reminder button to your desktop, which will remind you if you shop with a company that is part of the scheme. Once you have done this the button will prompt you if you are browsing a company that belongs to the scheme, so you will never forget.

<https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/wvcht/>

Many well known High Street and online shops take part in this scheme and it is a way of replacing some of the fundraising we are unable to pursue at the moment, eg, John Lewis, Lakeland, Hotter Shoes and many more.

**There is no extra cost to you. It is merely accessing the charity donations of the supplier.**

If you are reading this Newsletter but you are not yet a Friend of WVCH please contact our Hon. Treasurer, Tean Dallaway, at [wiltshirevch@gmail.com](mailto:wiltshirevch@gmail.com)

Subscription rates are £20 pa single, £30 couple, £50 club/society, £100 corporate, £500 life

Considering making or updating your will? Please consider leaving a legacy to the WVCH Trust.

A gift in your will is an excellent way to support causes which are important to you and, as charities are exempt from inheritance tax, it can also be tax-efficient for you.

This newsletter is distributed electronically to all those members and supporters who have supplied email addresses and given their express permission for us to contact them in this way, so saving on postage costs in the future and also ensuring that more of your contributions go towards the writing of the VCH.

Our newsletters are also available to read on our Web-site: <https://www.wiltshirehistory.org>  
[gilalder55@gmail.com](mailto:gilalder55@gmail.com)