

Tales of the Vale:

Stories from A Forgotten Landscape

A collection of history research and oral histories from the Lower Severn Vale Levels

The view from St Arilda's, Cowhill

(Photo © James Flynn 2014)

Map key

Discover A Forgotten Landscape through our walks and interpretation points



Walk start point

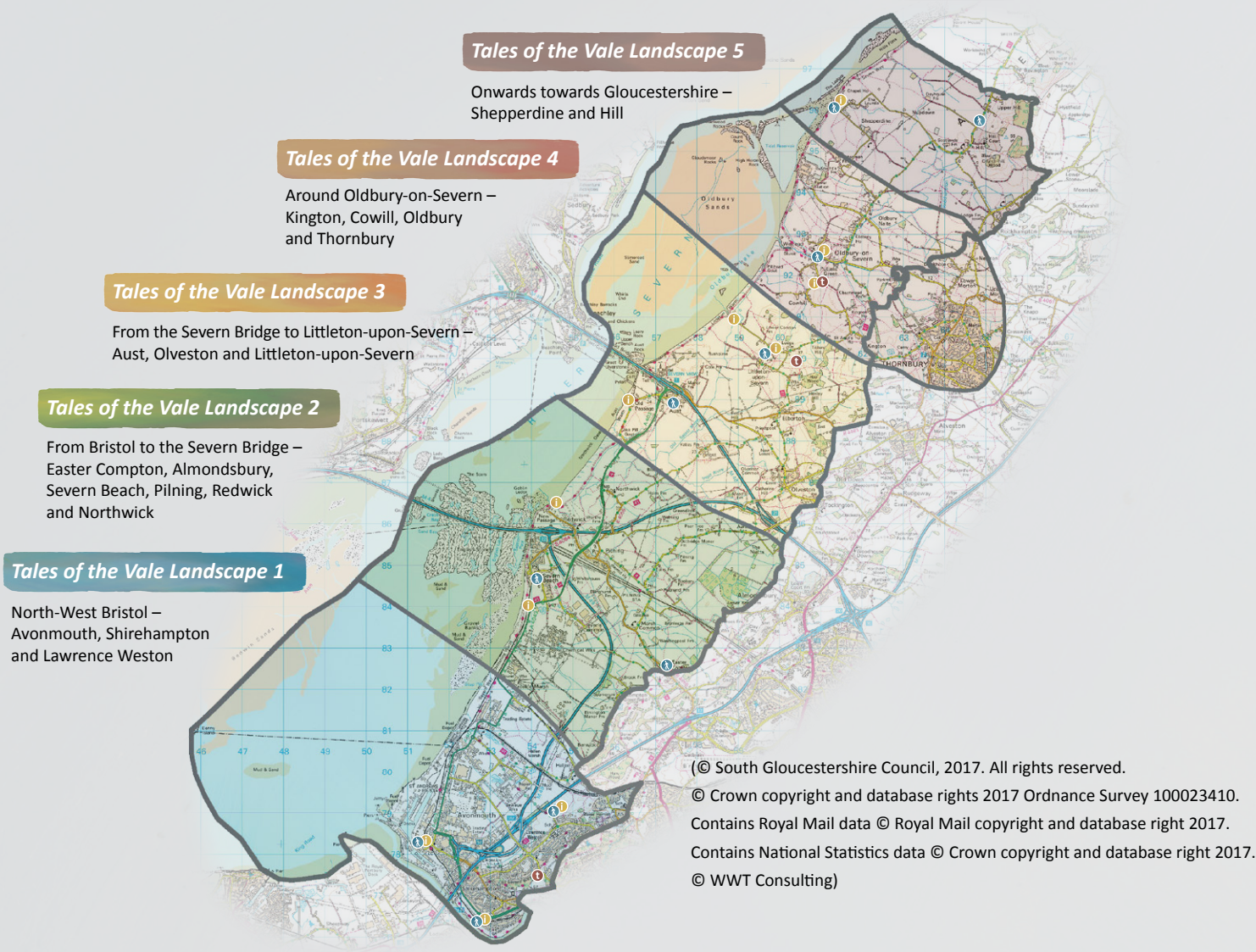


Interpretation



Toposcope

Tales of the Vale was edited by Virginia Bainbridge and Julia Letts with additional editing by the AFL team



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Onwards towards Gloucestershire –
Shepperdine and Hill

Tales of the Vale Landscape 4

Around Oldbury-on-Severn –
Kington, Cowill, Oldbury
and Thornbury

Tales of the Vale Landscape 3

From the Severn Bridge to Littleton-upon-Severn –
Aust, Olveston and Littleton-upon-Severn

Tales of the Vale Landscape 2

From Bristol to the Severn Bridge –
Easter Compton, Almondsbury,
Severn Beach, Pilning, Redwick
and Northwick

Tales of the Vale Landscape 1

North-West Bristol –
Avonmouth, Shirehampton
and Lawrence Weston

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The River Avon at Avonmouth

(Photo © James Flynn 2014)

Introduction

Introducing Tales of the Vale

Big skies: a sense of light and vast open space with two colossal bridges spanning the silt-laden, extraordinary River Severn. A Forgotten Landscape, this immense floodplain, has been shaped over millennia, first by the Severn's extraordinary tides and then by human activity. Adapting to its geology and rich natural resources, generations have lived their lives in this ever-changing landscape. Their stories, from the Iron Age to the Nuclear Age, have been explored, collected and brought together by the Tales of the Vale volunteers.

A Forgotten Landscape

A Forgotten Landscape was a [Heritage Lottery Fund](#) supported project that sought to encourage people to conserve, restore and explore the Lower Severn Vale Levels – the floodplain along the River Severn stretching north from the City of Bristol to the edge of Gloucestershire. Through over 60 projects, A Forgotten Landscape offered a range of ways for people to engage with the unique cultural and natural heritage of the area from 2015-2018.

Tales of the Vale

A Forgotten Landscape offered local volunteers a chance to learn how to explore the area's past in one of two ways; work with Dr Virginia Bainbridge and learn how to undertake top-quality research into the past using archives, old maps, and other sources, or work with Julia Letts and learn how to make professional oral histories, interviewing local people to record their thoughts and memories for posterity. One volunteer chose both!

This book is a collection of two years of work by our volunteers. Their work spans more than two millennia; we are immensely proud of and grateful to them all.

How to read this book

The book arranges the volunteers' work geographically into five sections, moving from south to north:

1. North-West Bristol – Avonmouth, Shirehampton and Lawrence Weston
2. From Bristol to the Severn Bridge – Easter Compton, Almondsbury, Severn Beach, Pilning, Redwick and Northwick
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Each section has a short introduction. This is followed by the historical research pieces and then you are introduced to the oral history interviewees for the area. Some of the sections are longer than others; they reflect the depth and breadth of the information our volunteers collected.

At the end of the book is a CD. Do listen to the wonderful voices and stories of our oral history interviewees.

Now, over to the volunteers and their work.

Dedication

This book is dedicated to the memory of Roger Staley, one of our oral history interviewees who has sadly passed away since his interview. His loss demonstrates just how important it is to collect our ephemeral voices before they are lost. It was a privilege to record his life.



A few of our Tales of the Vale volunteers

(Photo © Julian Kucharski 2017)

North-West Bristol

Avonmouth, Shirehampton and Lawrence Weston

The southern-most portion of our region, and the most densely populated, has produced a wealth of stories.

First, the history researchers invite you to travel back through time to visit mediaeval Lawrence Weston, discover the wealth of the Tudor merchants that built stately homes now vanished, and see how leaders of the day attempted to deal with the challenges created by Bristol's expansion in the Victorian period.

Then let the oral historians introduce you to men and women who grew up in the area. You'll meet people who witnessed the Blitz in Bristol, spent years working on the difficult rivers Avon and Severn, or worked in construction, ran pubs, watched the communities they love grow and still work hard to make them better places. They share memories of school and church, first jobs, first dates, dancing in Cuban heels in the Irish club and much more. Listen to their voices on the CD at the back of this book.

Lawrence Weston: a modern suburb or mediaeval farming community?

by Laura Webb

In 1066, Lawrence Weston was part of an estate owned by the Bishops of Worcester. The Bishops of Worcester made lots of records about their estates between the 1100s and 1500s. The records show how the people of Lawrence Weston lived and farmed the land.

In the Middle Ages, Lawrence Weston was one of the small villages or hamlets that were managed by the Bishops' manor at Henbury. The original village was on the higher ground, near to what is now known as Kings Weston Road, and the people farmed the marshy land lower down, where the modern suburb now is. Lawrence Weston gets its name from the Hospital of St Lawrence, which was where the suburb known as Lawrence Hill now is. The rents and other income from the peasants in Lawrence Weston went to pay towards the upkeep of the hospital, which was run by the church.

The land that was farmed by the peasants was a salt marsh, most of which has now been drained and built on for industrial purposes. However, there is a small amount of this land left as it would have been, now known as the Lawrence Weston Moor, which is managed by Bristol City Council.

I would like to find out, from the estate records and other information, what kind of farming was being done in Lawrence Weston in the Middle Ages and what life was like for the people of that time.

Suggestions for further reading

Christopher Dyer, *Lords and Peasants in a Changing Society. The Estates of the Bishopric of Worcester, 680-1540.* (Cambridge, 1980)

Christopher Dyer, *Standards of Living in the Later Middle Ages: 1200-1520.* (Cambridge U.P. 1989)



View over modern Lawrence Weston, built on the Henbury saltmarshes

(Photo © Laura Webb / AFL, 2016)

A Forgotten Landscape: The Lower Severn Vale, Trade and Exploration in Tudor Times

by Liz Napier

There was no town of Avonmouth with its deep-water dock, nor motorways, railways or bridges over the River Severn but, when Henry VII became the first Tudor king in 1485, this little corner of South Gloucestershire was already buzzing with activity. This was the gateway to trade between towns along the Severn and the Bristol Channel, and between the Port of Bristol and the newly expanded trade routes far beyond Europe. By the end of Queen Elizabeth I's reign, in 1603, the area had appeared in numerous Acts of Parliament, manorial and church records, merchants' and wealthy land owners' accounts and, finally, in the adventures of brave explorers seeking their fortunes. Amongst those acquiring wealth through the maritime trade of Bristol were the Chester family, whose purchase of the Manor of Almondsbury and its views across the Severn play an integral role in this account.

Dangerous water and safe havens

The prosperity of A Forgotten Landscape is inextricably linked to the waters separating it from Wales. After a journey of 220 miles from its source, Britain's longest river, the Severn (from the Latin word Sabrine, meaning 'boundary') merges into the Bristol Channel, where the full force of the Atlantic current is funnelled. Here is the second highest tidal range in the world, across an estuary full of sandbanks, rocks and small islands. Knowledge of these perils was vital for shipping heading up or down river, and for those attempting to navigate the tidal River Avon along its six miles from the Channel into the centre of Bristol.

Some charts and maps were available, e.g. this one drawn in ink and tempera (an ancient form of paint) on parchment. *"This is a chart showing the Bristol Channel and the River Severn...The tributaries of the Severn are indicated and figures along the banks record the distance in miles between their mouths...The map is thought to date from 1595, reflecting the fear that the Spanish were planning to invade the Bristol Channel in the 1590s..."*

Familiar names from the Forgotten Landscape are on this map, including Aust, Oldbury and Shepherdine.

Ships' masters engaged the services of a river pilot, or anchored in safe havens where they could wait for the right tide or unload goods into smaller vessels. The two main havens were Kingrode, slightly west of the mouth of the River Avon, and Hungrode, at Shirehampton. The Society of Merchant Venturers was responsible for maintaining the havens, ensuring the slipway at Hungrode was clean with adequate planks for loading and unloading vessels and, as noted in Queen Elizabeth's State Papers 1595-1597, for providing: *"a free school for mariners' children, and a yearly stipend paid to a minister to say service in a chapel at Shirehampton, near Hungrode; so that the mariners bound to attend their ships might be edified and not drawn from their charge, to the endangering of their ships and goods"* (Calendar of State Papers, Domestic).



1595 Map of the Bristol Channel and the River Severn

(© The British Library Board. 1595 Map of the Bristol Channel and the River Severn. Item No. f17)

Trade

As the size of ships and the number of countries they visited grew, so did the need for the exchequer in London to charge duty. In 1275, customs accounts first recorded the levying of tax on exported wool and hides and, by the mid-fourteenth century, this had widened to include all items passing in or out of the country. These records provide a wealth of information (*Bristol 'Particular' Accounts*).

Bata Mare of Shirehampton, William White master, from Chepstow, 22nd March 1504

(Owner of goods – Thomas Bocher)

34 measure	Woad
3 piece	Welsh cloth, Dozen Strait

Bata George of Shirehampton, Robert Aishurst master, from Chepstow, 12th August 1504

(Owner of goods – John Colas)

24 C	Oranges
5 Sack	Hops
1 bale	Madder

Presumably, the oranges were a previous import into Chepstow from warmer climes! Woad and madder were the principle dyes used at the time and were vital for the woollen and cloth trades. In return, large amounts of fish were imported into South Gloucestershire from Ireland. “*Herring was one of the fish most in demand among housewives of the period*” (*Bristol 'Particular' Accounts*). On 1st December 1516, the *Navicula Christofur* of Shirehampton returned from Ireland with “*151 barrels of herring and 12 C of hake*”. In 1517, the *Bata Marget* of Oldbury-on-Severn sailed to Ireland with a cargo of beans, malt and grain, returning on 22nd July with “*4-5 pipe of salmon*”.

By the middle of the sixteenth century, customs duties had been raised to such an extent that smuggling, piracy and other devious ways of avoiding payment were proving to be a thorn in the side of the authorities. By 1580, exporting various goods to enemy countries such as Spain and Portugal was banned, although this did not stop local merchants attempting to get them there. Clever ways for evading duties ranged from providing misleading names for goods and destinations, swapping paperwork, sneaking out of port under cover of darkness, off-loading goods at Hungrode and Kingrode into larger sea-going vessels, and protesting that storms had blown the ship off course so that it accidentally landed on a forbidden shore. Customs officers were frequently accused of negligence and corruption.

A port survey conducted early in Elizabeth’s reign concluded there were fifty-nine ‘pills, creeks and harbours’ (*Documents Illustrating the Overseas Trade of Bristol*), where goods could be hidden and smuggled in or out of the country. Many of these are in our project area!

The Chester Family of Knole Park and the Frobisher Eskimos

Mediaeval merchants used their wealth to purchase land, “then almost the only practicable form of investment” (*Medieval Merchant Venturers*), and their Tudor descendants did likewise. One of the main land-owning families began with Henry Chester, Sheriff of Bristol in 1470, whose great-grandson Thomas purchased the Manor of Almondsbury. In early Tudor times, the Manor was owned by the Abbey of St Augustine (now Bristol Cathedral). Following the dissolution, it was first granted to Sir Miles Partridge, a gambling friend of Henry VIII, and then to Sir Arthur Darcy who, in 1569, sold it to Thomas Chester. It was his heir, William Chester, who built a magnificent Elizabethan mansion at Knole Park, on top of the limestone ridge which splits Almondsbury village, affording a stunning view across the Lower Severn. Knole Park remained in the Chester family until early in the twentieth century. The fifteenth century octagonal tower is the only part of the building remaining, now attached to a modern twentieth century house.



Knole The Seat of Thomas Chester Esq.
Coloured engraving by Johannes Kip (1653-1722)
(© Crown Copyright: [UK Government Art Collection](#), No. 9024)

In 1577, Thomas Chester was persuaded to invest £25 (worth approximately £4,500 today) in a potential source of great wealth. Backed by Queen Elizabeth, this was the explorer Martin Frobisher's second voyage to the waters around Baffin Island, Canada. He returned with ships filled with ore which, sadly, proved to be worthless. He also brought back two adult Inuits, one a man and the other a woman with a small baby. Both adults died after a few weeks and both are buried at St Stephens Church, in the centre of Bristol, the mariners' church which Thomas Chester would have known well. The baby almost survived the journey to London but never reached Queen Elizabeth alive.

Summary

This article only briefly describes life in South Gloucestershire during the Tudor period. Despite daily hardships, political and religious upheaval and war, it was an exciting time, with new discoveries and many opportunities starting here, on the doorstep of a once Forgotten Landscape.

Suggestions for further reading

British Library:

<http://www.bl.uk/onlinegallery/onlineex/unvbrit/b/001cotaugi00002u00017000.html>

[accessed 1 December 2017]

Calendar of State Papers Domestic: Elizabeth, 1595-97, ed. Mary Anne Everett Green (London, 1869), *British History Online* <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/domestic/edw-eliz/1595-7>

[accessed 1 December 2017]

E Jones (2009). *Bristol 'Particular' Accounts and Port Books of the Sixteenth Century, 1503-1601*. [data collection]. UK Data Service. SN: 6275 <http://doi.org/10.5255/UKDA-SN-6275-1>

[accessed 1 December 2017]

J. Vanes, *Documents Illustrating the Overseas Trade of Bristol in the Sixteenth Century*, ([Bristol Record Society](#) 1979), p. 9

E.M. Carus-Wilson, *Medieval Merchant Venturers* (Methuen, London 1954), p. 79

Continuity and Change in A Forgotten Landscape farming

by Mary Jane Steer

My research began with a family photograph of an elderly couple and their links to farming on Severnside over 3 generations. Minnie Close was born in Compton Greenfield in 1867, and George Watkins arrived as a labourer on the Severn Tunnel in the early 1880s. Census records reveal Minnie's mother was a dairymaid (1861), and her father an agricultural labourer (1871). One of their sons later lived at Madam Farm in Lawrence Weston Road. During the 20th century the farms along that road were swallowed up through the arrival of docks, railways, industry, and motorways. What was a country lane bordered by rhines only 30 years ago is now unrecognisable. The approach roads from the new Severn Crossing have obliterated it and all memory of the agricultural livelihoods once practiced there. My aim was to find out how and why this happened.

Farming here goes back at least 3000 years. The rivers Severn and Avon provided transport and the low-lying clay marshes good grazing for Bronze-Age and Iron-Age peoples. In Roman times industrial exploitation began with the port at Sea Mills (Abonae), and roads carried silver and lead from Mendip north and east via ferries at Pill and Aust. The Emperor Hadrian encouraged drainage of land to increase arable production, and the villa at Lawrence Weston took advantage of this. Mere Bank, a scheduled ancient monument, may originate from Roman times. From the 5th century AD the area was part of

Mercia, whose kings gave much land to the church. The Bishop and Diocese of Worcester owned the manor of Henbury-in-Salt-Marsh for 900 years. After the Reformation the manor was sold to Ralph Sadlier in 1547.



Mary Jane at St Arilda's Church, Oldbury-on-Severn, with view across the landscape towards Avonmouth

(Photo © Mary Jane Steer/AFL, 2017)



Minnie Maria and George Watkins in old age
(© Mary Jane Steer, 2016)

Farming brought wealth as the fertile soil and mild climate supported dairy cattle and arable crops. A 1299 survey showed the Henbury land was 82% arable under a 2 course rotation in large common fields. The ridge and furrow pattern of such fields can still be seen at Pilning Nature Reserve, around Hill, and until recently at Crooks Marsh. The Black Death (1348-49), caused a population crash: in 1299, 142 acres of Henbury manor were cultivated, but by 1376-96 only half that acreage was cultivated. Arable crops grown were wheat 45%, barley 15%, legumes 5% and oats 35%. By the 1540s the land had become 86% pasture as dairy and cheese making increased.

In the late 1700s the Severn Vale held many smallholdings and farmsteads. The Commissioners of the Sewers ensured that tenants and landholders kept dykes and sea walls in good repair. The rural economy developed to include orchards and hops for cider and perry making, vetches and peas for animal feed, and teazles for cloth merchants (grown until 1910 around Alveston). Pigs and poultry helped the cattle manure the fallow fields, and provided extra food. There was fishing, flexibility in cultivation and good local markets for farmers' produce.

Following the Napoleonic Wars in the early 1800s, high prices and agricultural depression caused widespread discontent among the poor. Our area suffered less than other areas from the rural Swing Riots (1830-31), due to the varied rural economy described above.



The site of Madam Farm, Lawrence Weston Road, today
(Photo © Mary Jane Steer / AFL, 2017)

Government actions to appease the unrest included a series of great reform acts of Parliament, including the *Poor Law Amendment Act* (1834), and the *Tithe Commutation Act* (1836).

Tithes were a tax levied on landowners to support the Church, from 787 AD. The tithe (or tenth) of all produce supported the rector of the parish until the Reformation when the rights were sold to landowners, enriching the wealthy at the expense of

the poor. Tithe payers who leased their land had no incentive for agricultural improvement since, while they made the investment, much of the profit went to tithe owners. After the *Tithe Commutation Act* was passed, maps were drawn up and detailed surveys of the land of each parish made to calculate the cost of redemption paid to the landowners. Tithe Maps can be found on *Know Your Place* website, and are still used today for tracing rights of way and property boundaries.

The *Tithe Surveys* were made around 1840, when the acreage of land producing wheat was at its highest. The *Corn Laws* kept bread prices high in the early 1800s, but it became too expensive for the urban poor. Following the repeal of the *Corn Laws* prices fell and wheat imports rose. By the time the *Land Utilisation Survey* was made in the 1930s, wheat acreage was at its minimum. Two such surveys, a century apart, provide useful comparison for local historians.

Further changes in our area came through the enclosure of common fields, and the creation of the fields and hedgerows we see today. Private acts of Parliament in the 18th and 19th centuries allowed the reorganisation of land from scattered strips in common fields into small farms. One result was a loss of independence as the small farms were amalgamated into larger ones, and grazing rights on the former commons were lost. But it did allow agricultural improvements, leading to increased productivity and profitability for the major landowners.

Cheese making and cider manufacture were major local industries. Double Gloucester cheese used milk from both morning and evening milkings. It was skilled, heavy, work and was already in decline before the arrival of the railways, after which fresh milk could be taken to market instead.

Following the agricultural depression of the 1870s-1920s, many large estates were broken up and sold off. A 1936 Sales Catalogue gives

details of Aust, Spring and Poplar Farms on the Kingsweston Estate. Poplar Farm included a Cider House, cowshed, bull house and pigsties. Also listed was a dwelling house and garden included in the tenancy of Poplar Farm for an annual rent of £7 16s 0d, and occupied by one of Minnie and George's sons, Jack. After WW2 Jack lived at Madam Farm on Lawrence Weston Road into the 1990s. The site is now a roundabout on a trading estate.

In 1846, 25% of men over 20 were directly engaged in agriculture, most living in tied cottages which went with the job. Every 25-30 acres of arable, and 50-60 acres of grass required a man's labour. By 1901 only 2.5% were so employed. Labourers left the land for urban work, and many, including 3 of Minnie's sons, were lost in WWI. Horse drawn mechanical reapers were in use from the 1850s, steam ploughs from 1870, and tractors began to replace labourers from the 1940s.

Although farming continues in the north of our area, industrialisation on Severnside began its decline around Avonmouth. The Royal Edward Dock opened in 1908, and railways were built to serve it. Chemical works opened near Avonmouth in 1962-63, on the site already used for mustard gas production in WWI. Nuclear power stations were opened at Berkeley and Oldbury-on-Severn in the 1960s. The M4/M5 junction at Almondsbury attracted distributive and other industries in the 1970s and 80s, and the rivers were crossed by the M5 bridge over the Avon in 1974, and the M4 and M48 Severn crossings in 1966 and 1996.

Suggestions for further reading

B.P. Hindle, *Maps for Local History* (Batsford, London 1988)

William Marshall, *The Rural Economy of Gloucestershire* (The History Press 2005)

G.E. Mingay, *Rural Life in Victorian England* (Heinemann, London 1977)

R.M. Smith and M. Tonkin, *Lost Farms of Henbury* (Redcliffe Press, Bristol 1996)

Know Your Place

<http://www.kypwest.org.uk/> - see Basemaps link for Tithe Maps

Place names in Henbury parish, including Madam Farm

<http://placenames.org.uk/browse/mads/epns-deep-40-b-subparish-000057>

Land Utilisation Survey of Britain

http://www.visionofbritain.org.uk/maps/series?xCenter=3160000&yCenter=3160000&scale=63360&viewScale=5805357.4656&mapLayer=land&subLayer=lus_stamp&title=Land%20Utilisation%20Survey%20of%20Britain&download=true



1936 Sale Catalogue of Kingsweston Estate, map showing Poplar Farm

(Reproduced courtesy of [Bristol Archives](#): 24759-35)

Lady Philanthropists and the Bristol Socialist Society: different attitudes to helping the Poor in Barton Regis Poor Law Union c1884-1910

by Chris Montague

Following the 1834 Poor Law Amendment Act, or 'the New Poor Law', two new poor law unions were established in 1835 to assist the Bristol Corporation in administering poor relief. Bedminster covered the southern suburbs and Clifton covered the northern suburbs, including the new suburbs of Bristol in A Forgotten Landscape's project area. One of the main purposes of such a law was to distinguish between the 'deserving' and the 'undeserving' poor, with lunatics, the elderly and orphans falling into the former while the able-bodied unemployed fell into the latter. In 1897, all three unions were amalgamated. Throughout the third quarter of the nineteenth century, well-to-do Bristolians had been relocating from the inner city to the wealthier suburbs, a phenomenon which only increased because of the growing disparities between urban and suburban Bristol. The Boards of Guardians, who were predominantly composed of upper middle-class men before 1884, were failing to halt disparities, which included – but were far from limited to – urban slum housing, wage inequalities and unsanitary conditions.

In the 1880s their record began to be challenged by women philanthropists from their own class and by working-class socialists. This study examines the two groups: the female philanthropic elite, and the radical Bristol Socialist Society, both of whom worked to reduce social problems in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. By focusing on the period 1884 – 1910, this research



Mary Clifford, Christian philanthropist

(Reproduced courtesy of [Bristol Archives](#): BRO Bk-842)

aims to understand how two similarly progressive factions, each with roots in religious Nonconformity, were divided in their means to solve social distress: the former politically conservative; the latter socialist revolutionaries. The research concluded that the notion of a 'deserving' and 'underserving' poor was cemented by 1910, despite the two groups' attempts to challenge Poor Law administration itself.

Suggestions for Further Reading

David Large, *Bristol and the New Poor Law* (pamphlet, Bristol Historical Association 1995)

Moira Martin, 'Guardians of the Poor: A Philanthropic Female Elite in Bristol,' *Regional Historian*, Issue 9 (2002) <http://www1.uwe.ac.uk/cahe/research/regionalhistorycentre/theregionalhistorian/bristol.aspx> [accessed 1 Dec 2017]

Helen Reid, *Life in Victorian Bristol* (Bristol: Redcliffe Press, 2005)

[Bristol Archives](#) (formerly Bristol Record Office): Info Box/18/45, *Notes on the poor law & later relief, board of guardians and institutions etc, c.1601-1920s*

[Bristol Archives](#): 45434/2, *Bristol Socialist Society minutes: Feb 1886 – May 1891*

[Bristol Archives](#): 31416/3, *Diaries of Harry Bow: Jan-July 1895*

General Election—January, 1910.

EAST BRISTOL PARLIAMENTARY DIVISION.



Frank Sheppard, Socialist campaigner and first Labour Lord Mayor of Bristol (1917)

(Reproduced courtesy of [Bristol Archives](#): BRO 11171)

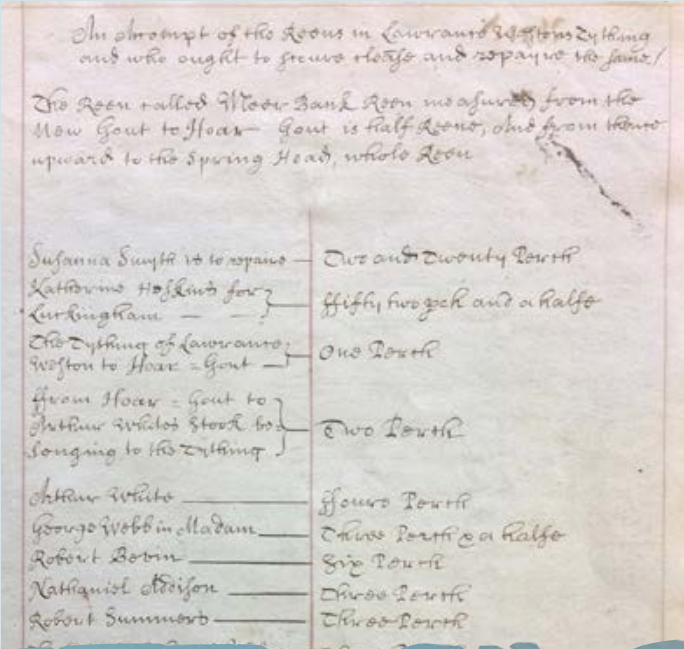
The History of Lawrence Weston Community Farm

by Justine Blore

In 1988 the Lawrence Weston Community Farm Project leased land from Bristol City Council for the development of the community farm, which officially came into being on August 10th of that year. There have been various stories about what was on the site beforehand from Roman artefacts to a Bristol Corporation waste tip, and flood-damaged cigarettes from the WD and HO Wills tobacco factory in Bristol. I set out to find out the truth about these and other stories, and some of the history of the local area and community.

There is much evidence of Roman settlement in and around Lawrence Weston. In 1947, a small Roman villa was discovered on Long Cross, known as the Kings Weston Roman Villa. Lawrence Weston was named in part after the leper hospital of St Lawrence at Lawrence Hill in Bristol, which was founded around 1208 by King John (1199 – 1216) who was a patron of the hospital. Rent from lands at Lawrence Weston went towards the upkeep of the hospital, and also the church of St Lawrence.

In the 17th century the Court of Sewers was responsible for inspecting the rhines (or reens) which drained this marshy land and keeping a list of the owners and occupiers of the land. The Court then organised them to make repairs where necessary, and severe fines were administered if a person was found to have neglected their duties!



‘An Accompt (account) of the Reens in Lawrence Weston Tything and who ought to scoure, cleanse & repayre the same’
(Reproduced courtesy of Gloucestershire Archives: D272 10/1/1)

In the 20th century after the Second World War, there was a desperate housing shortage in Bristol. The City Council purchased land in Lawrence Weston to build much needed housing, and the construction of the present housing estate started in 1947. In July 1968 following severe flooding in Bristol, thousands of packets of damaged cigarettes from the WD and HO Wills cigarette factory in Bristol were dumped by Bristol Corporation at their rubbish tip in Lawrence Weston, the present site of the community farm. Locals helped themselves to the free cigarettes, and Police reinforcements had to be called in to stop the looting.

Back to the present day, and Lawrence Weston Community farm continues to grow and reach out into the local community. Currently the farm receives funding from Bristol City Council, and funding organisations such as the National Lottery. Sales of farm produce (eggs, vegetables, and farm reared meat) and room hire also bring in some much needed cash, while staff and volunteers continue to do an amazing job with the day to day running of the farm. As the farm’s 30th anniversary approaches and as funding becomes ever harder to secure, I wonder what the future holds for Lawrence Weston’s Community Farm.

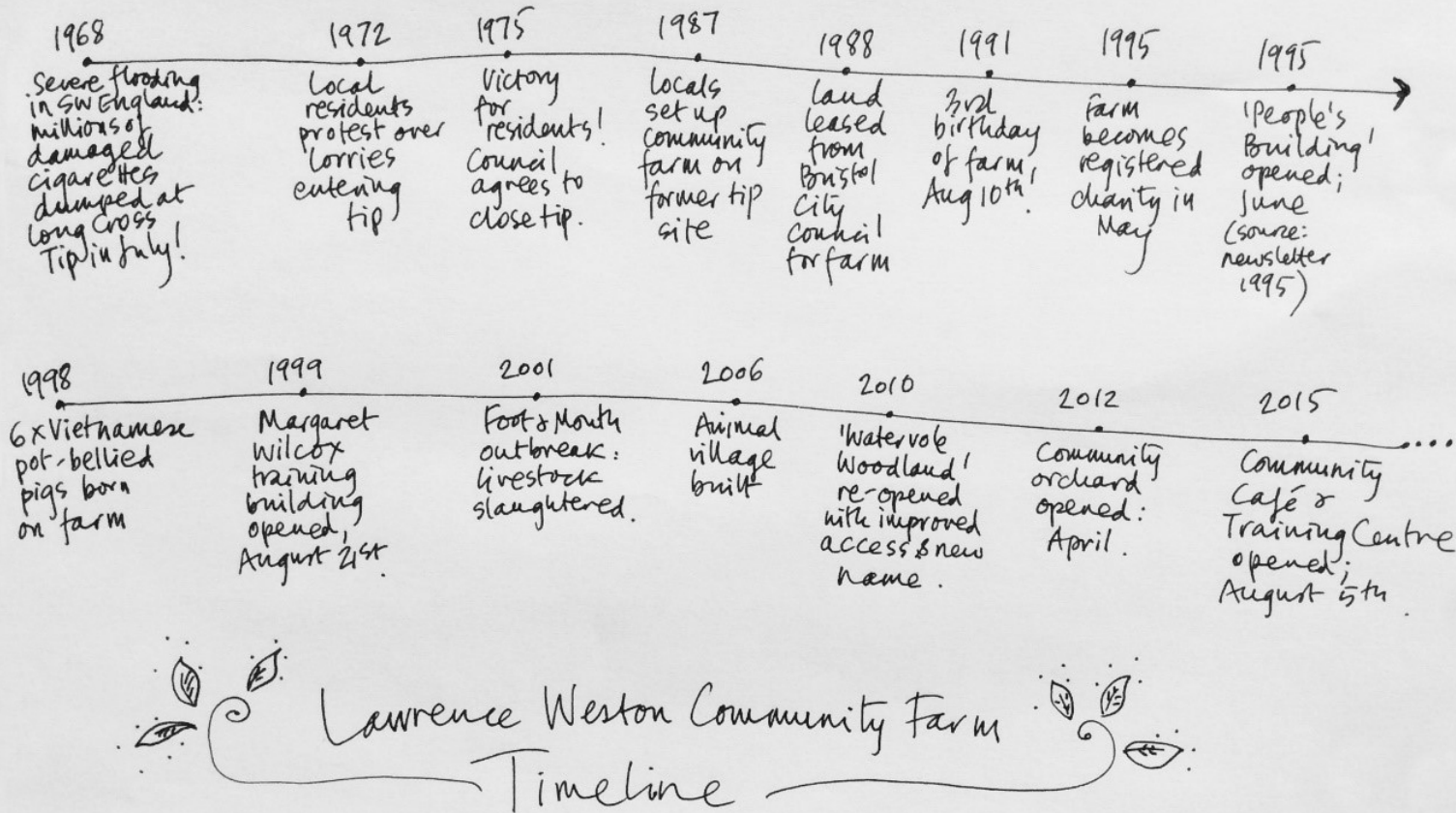
Suggestions for further reading
[Bristol Archives: M/BCC/LWE/1/1](#) (Bristol City Council meetings minutes 1986-91)

[Gloucestershire Archives: D272 10/1/1](#) (Minutes of the Court of Sewers, 1684)

<http://www.heritagegateway.org.uk/>
[accessed 27.5.2016, 9.16pm]

<http://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/>
[accessed 4.4.2016, 7.23pm]

<http://www.friendsofblaise.co.uk/history.php>
[accessed 25.4.2016, 8.03pm]



The Story of Lawrence Weston Community Farm as told to Justine Blore by local residents, 2016

(Photo © Justine Blore / AFL 2016)

Oral histories

Allan McCarthy

recorded by Steve Carroll

Allan McCarthy was born in 1939. His father was an electrical engineer and later Station Manager for BOAC (now British Airways) which meant several overseas postings during Allan's childhood. He recalls crossing the Atlantic in 1943 in a liner, "I remember warnings not to drop orange peel overboard, as leaving any debris would give U-boats a trail to follow".

Coming back to Bristol in 1950, there was a lot of evidence of bomb damage and rationing was still in force. Allan's family shared their home with several relatives and two Polish refugees. At school and later technical school Allan developed an interest in chemistry. At age 17 he secured a place as a junior chemist at the Imperial Smelting Works in Avonmouth. Allan's father tried to prevent him taking the position because of the pollution created by the smelter. "The smelting works tried growing lawns at the front of the plant, but they had to be replaced by gravel as the pollution killed the grass". Allan describes his role in different departments and his early work on CFC aerosols, which many years later were discovered to be harming the earth's ozone layer. He also explains the dangers of working with highly toxic chemicals and the alarming risks taken in disposing of them. He recalls the many changes in industry he has seen and regrets the loss of manufacturing skills and expertise over the span of his career.

"Pollution killed all the grass at the smelting works"



Listen to Allan on Track 02 talking about Severn Beach and on Track 09 recalling his job as a chemist at the smelting works

(Photo © Julian Kucharski 2017)

"I remember some big rats there!"



Listen to Chris on Track 09 talking about his job at the smelting works

(Photo © Julian Kucharski 2017)

Chris Maby
recorded by John Hastings

Chris has worked in and around Avonmouth all his life, for many different companies. He grew up on the Portway; his home backed on to Avonmouth football fields. He describes the farms, orchards and swampy ground where he played, all of which is now under concrete and the motorway junction. His father drove a steam engine at the port, and as a teenager, Chris would go with him on Sundays and have a go at driving engines.

After leaving school he had several jobs in the docks, firstly an apprenticeship with BOCM (the animal feeds company), then at the smelting works (*"I loved it there. I was on maintenance. I remember some big rats there!"*). Then he went to the Severn Valley brick company and then Courage's, the brewery. He even did a short stint in a shipyard at Avonmouth but the company he worked for went bust.

When Chris married Carol, who he met at the social club, they moved to a new house at Severn Beach. Their children were born here and Chris talks about family times and some local landmarks such as the Blue Lagoon. He recalls bad floods in 1973/74 when he helped a friend by 'bricking up' his front door, literally building a wall across it to prevent the water getting in. The family later moved to Portway where they settled and have stayed for 36 years.

David Trivitt
recorded by John Hastings

As a young man, Dave got involved in the construction industry. He recalls seeing his first JCB while digging trenches by hand at ICI at Severnside, and this spurred him into getting a job as an excavator. At 18 he was working on the construction of Oldbury Power Station. He describes his role as 'banksman' when they were excavating a reservoir in the estuary which retained water for cooling the reactors. He explains the 'tide shifts' - how they had to follow the tide out and do as much work as they could till the tide turned and came in again, *"On my third shift the foreman was run over by the lighting set and I thought to myself, 'Do I really want to be working in this environment?' but I was young and I didn't care"*.

Life in the construction industry was precarious and dangerous - "more common sense than health and safety". Following the work, he was involved in construction projects all over the country, including contracts on airports and the M5 and M4 motorways. Dave recalls some of his contracts, including working for Laings on the Second Severn Crossing where he drove a 'Rubber Duck', an excavator with huge wheels that operated in the estuary mud. He also talks about jobs on the Halen Hills cutting at Avonmouth, the pump station at Oldbury, and the Severn Rail Tunnel Crossing. Dave has lived in Sea Mills for more than 30 years and is involved in a neighbourhood group called Sea Mills Together.

"I thought to myself, do I really want to be working in this environment?"



Listen to Dave on Tracks 08 and 12 talking about his roles in the construction of Oldbury Power Station and the Second Severn Crossing

(Photo © Julian Kucharski 2017)

"My first job was to cycle to the farm to get milk for the office!"



Listen to John on Track 10 discussing house demolition in 1950s Shirehampton

(Photo © Julian Kucharski 2017)

John Hutton
recorded by John Hastings

John has lived in Shirehampton all his life. Born in 1925, he spent his first 6 years in his grandmother's house, a general store on the corner of Station and Pembroke Roads. He went to Portway Senior Boys' School, leaving in 1939 aged 13 and starting work as an office junior in a timber business. *"My mum bought me a new sports coat, a pair of flannels and bicycle clips. My first job was to cycle to the farm in St Andrew's Road and get the milk for the office!"* John describes the docks in the 30s and recalls the outbreak of war in 1939 when most employees left to join up. When air raids began in 1940, John's role was to deliver messages by bicycle if a fire was reported.

At 17 he joined the navy and served on ships protecting the Atlantic convoys. In 1943 his ship was separated from a convoy en route from Murmansk to Scotland. Low on food, water and fuel, the crew resorted to eating cardboard and tobacco. At the end of the war John returned to Avonmouth and to his job in the timber company. He left after 6 months because of deteriorating eye sight, and turned to plumbing, working for two different companies for 16 years before setting up on his own. He and his wife Audrey, who he met on a bus, settled in Pembroke Road and had two girls. As well as many other interests, they both loved music and dancing, and played at dances all over the area.

Ken Jewell
recorded by John Hastings

Ken's first job was working as a crew member on a tug boat at Avonmouth. His love of sailing came from a school woodwork project to build a Mirror dinghy which his group then sailed on the Chew Valley Lake. In Shirehampton he learnt his trade; to start with this involved painting and cleaning the tug and working as a deckhand. From the start, Ken loved his job. He says, *"Tug boatmen are a different brand of people. They don't work 9 to 5 and they follow the moon and sun because they follow the tides around wherever they are. It's more of a hobby than a job. I've been very fortunate indeed".*

Things changed drastically in the 1980s. The National Board of Dock Workers was disbanded and there were lots of redundancies. Health and safety transformed the industry and in the late 90s-early 2000s. All workers, regardless of how long they'd been on the job, had to gain qualifications at 'sea school'. Ken went to Southampton to get his. His work area ranged from Falmouth to Liverpool (tugs could be lent out to other docks), but usually it was Portbury dock, Sharpness, Avonmouth, Bristol and South Wales (Newport, Cardiff, Barry). The River Avon was busy in the 80s, but is less so now. Ken is now involved with Shirehampton Sailing Club. He says the area has benefitted from the re-opening of the pub, creation of a park, and landfill in the field between river and houses to stop flooding.

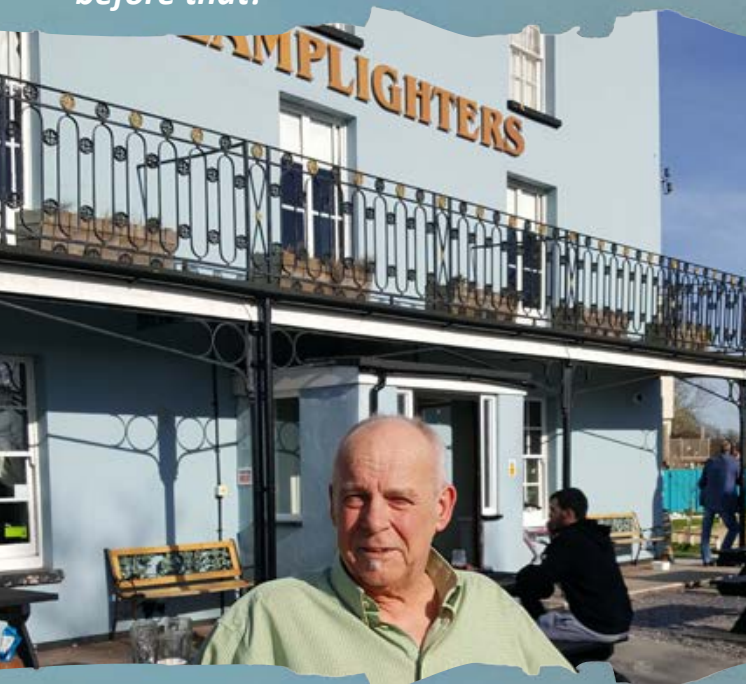
"It's more of a hobby than a job - I have been very fortunate indeed"



Listen to Ken's first days in the tugboat crew on Track 09

(Photo © Julian Kucharski 2017)

"The Lamplighters has always been my local, and my father's and grandfather's before that!"



Listen to Leon on Track 02 talking about trips to Severn Beach, and on Tracks 09 and 11 recalling his job at the docks and the Pill ferry

(Photo © Julian Kucharski 2017)

Leon Franklin
recorded by John Hastings

Leon Franklin was born in 1952 in a pre-fab in Shirehampton. His family had moved to Avonmouth in 1938 when his father got a job at Hosegoods Flour Mill. Leon describes his former home, built in 1948 and designed to last 10 years. He lived there until 1973! During his childhood in Shirehampton the riverbank was his playground. He went to school by steam train. His father left the mill and moved into haulage and scrap. Leon left school and studied business at college in Bedminster, whilst working at the scrap yard. It was a thriving business, *"One day I did a count for insurance purposes of how many cars we had in the yard and I counted over 300. Incredible, isn't it!"*

Leon later became a long distance lorry driver, loading and unloading things like timber, tea, butter, aluminium and New Zealand lamb from the docks at Avonmouth. He paints a vivid picture of the communities in Shirehampton and Pill at this time, describing the busy High Street in Shirehampton, the founding of the Cotswold Community Hall in the 50s, and the PBA (Port of Bristol Authority Club) in the late 60s. In 1990 Leon took over the Lamplighters Inn and describes his experiences of being pub landlord for 20 years. He talks about the highs and lows of running a pub; weathering the recession, the floods of 1991 which inundated the cellars and came up to 4 feet in the bar, and the many boisterous pub outings and events he organised.

Marjorie Walliker
recorded by Liz Napier

Marjorie was born in Risca, South Wales in 1923 to a mining family at the start of the Depression. They moved to Shirehampton at the end of the 1920s looking for a better life, although her father still had to cycle around the area hunting for work, which he finally found at the Co-op Mill in Avonmouth. Marjorie describes the poverty of the period, her memories of the old National School in Station Road (demolished in 2016), the move to the brand new Junior School, and her first job in a greengrocer's in the village. She has been a member of Shirehampton Baptist Church since 1928, and describes her very protected teenage years (separate youth clubs for boys and girls!) and 'walking out' with her boyfriend.

Marjorie's most striking memories are of the air raids in the early years of the war, both in daytime and at night, the air raid shelters locally, and the damage to the village. Avonmouth suffered as it was on the route to Filton, and the Rivers Severn and Avon guided the German planes at night; Marjorie observes, *"The river told them where to go"*. She talks about joining up at the age of 18, leaving on the train for the first time and serving in the Army for the next four years. She finishes with a poignant memory of seeing her boyfriend after three years, at the end of the war while both were still in uniform, and their return home to Shirehampton and a new life.

"On a moonlit night, the river told them where to go"



Listen to Marjorie on Track 04 talking about Shirehampton in the Second World War

(Photo © Julian Kucharski 2017)

"The majority of my childhood was spent in the woods at Kings Weston"



Listen to Mark on Track 15 talking about a positive future for Lawrence Weston

(Photo © Julian Kucharski 2017)

Mark Pepper
recorded by John Hastings

Mark was born in Lawrence Weston and has lived in the area all his life. His grandfather first moved here when the estate was developed, and his parents met when his father, an Irish 'navvy' working on the Severn Bridge, lodged in Lawrence Weston. They had 11 children (Mark was the youngest boy) and brought them up in a 3 bedroom house in Mancroft Avenue. Mark describes his childhood as 'quite deprived' with 6 boys sharing 3 bunks in one bedroom. *"I had lots of friends and lots of enemies and it was a really bustling place. We took advantage of the open space. The vast majority of my childhood was spent in the woods at Kings Weston".*

Mark didn't fit in at school and often played truant. On one occasion he told the headteacher they were moving house and didn't return to school until found out by a brother months later and dragged back in! After leaving school, he had a number of jobs including a driver, a brickie at the smelting works and a short stint in the British Army. Mark got involved in youth and community work through his own children, helping set up a kick boxing club and a BMX track. This later developed into a career. He has been hugely involved in bringing improvements to Lawrence Weston over the years; this community is very important to him, and he currently works for [Ambition Lawrence Weston](#), which gives residents a say in how the area is developed.

Mary Ace
recorded by Esther Mars

Mary was born during the war (1941) when her parents moved temporarily from Avonmouth to a rented cottage in East Brent whilst the air raids were on. Her father cycled all the way back each week for his job as a shipwright in the docks. Mary recalls her school days in the building which is now the Avonmouth Community Centre. The playground was divided; girls on one side and boys on the other. Mary shares memories of being in the concrete air raid shelter in her garden and Polish refugees coming to the area by train. She recalls various places in Avonmouth, including the Pavilion where she performed in pantomimes run by Mr and Mrs Marsh. Later it became a gym which her father took over.

Mary says the docks started to decline in the late 60s and she describes this period as 'terrible'. She lists a huge range of shops in the village, none of which are still there. Mary recalls meeting her first boyfriends through the church in Lawrence Weston, going to the Irish Club and dancing in Cuban heels! She visited the funfair, dodgems, boating lake and Blue Lagoon of Severn Beach. She says, *"I remember the diving board and the floating pontoon. It was sea water that came in, filtered I suppose. The Welsh and people from Birmingham would come on excursions"*. She also has memories of the Severn Salmon Hotel owned by family friends. Apart from a brief time in Shirehampton (and being born in East Brent), Mary has lived in Avonmouth all her life.

"I remember the Blue Lagoon - it was sea water that came in twice a day"



Listen to Mary on Tracks 02 and 10 talking about Severn Beach and Avonmouth

(Photo © Julian Kucharski 2017)

"It's always been home, and it will always be my home"



Listen to Mike and Jackie on Track 15 talking about their ambitions for Lawrence Weston

(Photo © Julian Kucharski 2017)

Mike and Jackie Crouch
recorded by John Hastings

Mike was 7 when his family moved to Lawrence Weston from Knowle West in 1948. They moved into a newish council house which they swapped with a family wanting to move back to Knowle West. Mike was the middle of 5 boys. His father, a crane driver and docker, said he wanted them to grow up with some 'decent fresh air'. When Mike left school, he joined a brewery and later trained as a fork lift truck driver. At 19 he joined a family firm as a 'steel erector'. Jackie's family moved to Lawrence Weston on Christmas Day in 1949 and she was born 6 weeks later. Her father worked on the railways and later in the docks and her mother was a cook. Jackie has fond memories of growing up in the area, remembering that the top of Long Cross hadn't been completed when she was a child and ended in a muddy track. She went to Weston Park School when it was first opened.

Mike and Jackie have known each other for many years – in fact Mike first proposed to Jackie when she was 13 and again at 16! They finally got together in 1979 after previous marriages. They are now deeply committed to improving Lawrence Weston and work tirelessly on projects such as 'The Big Local' and 'Ambition Lawrence Weston'. They want to make the area safer, and a better place for the younger generations. Mike says, *"It is for the youngsters. Not us. We've had our time"*. He appeals to other residents to come and join [Ambition Lawrence Weston](#).

Mike Pemberton
recorded by Tessa Fitzjohn

Mike's parents moved to a new pre-fab in Walton Road, Shirehampton in 1947; Mike was born there in 1953. There were 7 prefabs on the road, built from pre-formed asbestos panels and put up as temporary structures after the war on land that had been previously used for allotments. The house has 2 bedrooms; Mike's parents had one, Mike and his twin brother shared another, and their older brother slept on a put-up bed in the lounge. Mike recalls that the house was so cold on winter mornings that they would sit in the kitchen light the gas rings and oven, then open the oven door so that they could keep warm.

Mike describes his happy childhood in Shirehampton, *"We played on the building site behind here which is now Church Leaze. I remember crawling through the concrete pipes!"* Mike's father drove a lorry for BOCM (an animal feed company) and Mike occasionally accompanied him on journeys. He also recalls his father's 1959 Ford Zodiac which was washed every Sunday and never driven if it was raining. Later, Mike worked at the Working Men's Club in Shirehampton. Many neighbours worked in the docks and came straight into the Club after work. Mike still lives in the prefab, and describes its rooms, furniture and facilities. It was extensively refurbished in 1997 and extended in 2001 when his mother was living there. Mike moved back in when his mother died. This was where he started his life and where he wanted to end up.

"I remember crawling through the concrete pipes"



Listen to Mike on Tracks 09 and 10 recalling delivery journeys from Avonmouth with his dad and his childhood in Shirehampton

(Photo © Julian Kucharski 2017)

“We sat on the gate and asked for chewing gum”



(Photo © Julian Kucharski 2017)

Muriel Harding
recorded by John Hastings

Muriel was born just before the war, the eldest of 4 children. She recalls the day war was declared because she was stung by a bee! Her father was an engineer at BAC (Bristol Aircraft Company) and therefore in a reserved occupation. Among Muriel's wartime memories are the air raids on Bristol, a bomb blowing their doors and windows off, being evacuated to South Wales, and her father growing potatoes in the soil on top of the air raid shelter. She also recalls American soldiers, *“My sister and I sat on the gate and asked for chewing gum. Sometimes we were lucky and they gave us some. They used to have dances and we sneaked up and tried to look in, until we were spotted and shoo'ed away”*.

After leaving school, Muriel worked in a flower shop. She recalls being sent out on her bicycle with deliveries, sometimes taking flowers to the hospital at Almondsbury and on one occasion delivering a wreath to a family in Southmead that had seriously wilted in the heat. She later joined her sister working at the Co-op because the pay was better. It was there that she met her husband Keith. His surname was also Harding, so she didn't have to change her name. They eventually got a council house in Sea Mills where they brought up their family and later moved to Weston-Super-Mare. Muriel moved to Shirehampton when Keith died so that she could be nearer her children.

Richard Chilcott
recorded by John Hastings

Richard has lived in Shirehampton all his life, and has had many jobs in and around the River Severn. His father worked as a crane driver in the docks for more than 40 years, and his mother worked at Park Golf Club. Richard describes his childhood, recalling the shops in Shirehampton, including Mrs Ray's sweet shop where the cat would lie on the sweets and cover the liquorice in cat hairs! He left school at 16 and became a messenger boy at the PBA (Port of Bristol Authority). He progressed to working in the granaries at Avonmouth docks, and describes how different animal feeds were unloaded. *“Sometimes it was dusty, sometimes itchy. If you had barley coming in, it was particularly itchy. You got extra ‘dust’ payments – 2 half days usually”*. Richard then did a stint as a hydro-graphic surveyor, monitoring the mud in the river. He recalls taking out some men in his boat who were from the Ministry of Transport. It was around 1985 and they were discussing the site of the Second Severn Crossing. One of his jobs was to change the car batteries that powered lights in the river marker buoys. On a grimmer note, he recalls pulling dead bodies from the river on two occasions. A later job was at the Britannia Zinc smelting company. Here Richard remembers being tested for lead in his blood and being treated for carbon monoxide poisoning. After many years at the factory, Richard changed direction and is now a self-employed carpenter in Shirehampton.

“If you had barley coming in, it was particularly itchy”



Listen to Richard on Tracks 09 and 12 talking about his jobs at Avonmouth and as a hydrographical surveyor on the estuary

(Photo © Julian Kucharski 2017)

“Where the Portbury dock is, was just rhines and marshes”



Listen to Lofty on Tracks 02 and 11 talking about his childhood in Shirehampton and the Pill ferry

(Photo © Julian Kucharski 2017)

Robert ‘Lofty’ Daniels
recorded by John Hastings

Lofty has lived all his life in Shirehampton. His father worked as an engineer on banana boats in the docks. His childhood memories include playing in the fields where the boats dumped their ballast, and crossing the Avon to Pill to go ‘birds nesting’ in the area which is now the Portbury Dock. Along the banks of the Avon, he recalls crabbing, fishing and scavenging, and once (in 1962) finding a washed-up boat which they carried home. He recalls allotments and small holdings where people raised pigs, and remembers the orchards of the big house, Myrtle Hall. Lofty went to school in Shirehampton and later Lawrence Weston, getting there by steam train or the 99 bus.

Lofty talks about meeting and marrying his wife, and buying the house in Shirehampton where he has now lived for 40 years. It is very close to the Lamplighters pub, and near the old slipway for the Pill ferry. The ferry took a constant stream of people (and their bicycles) from one side of the River Avon to the other. *“Dockers from Pill came across to get to Avonmouth. After work they came straight into the Lamplighters before catching the ferry home. A few people went the other way, as they worked at the power station at Portishead. Also people came over on Saturday for the cinema in Shirehampton – it’s now an apartment block”*. Lofty describes the old shops and shop keepers in Shirehampton and visits by bike to Severn Beach and Portishead.

Patricia Peters
recorded by Liz Napier

Pat was born in Shirehampton in 1934 but spent her early years in Richmond Terrace in Avonmouth, in a house owned by the Port of Bristol Authority, where her father and grandfather worked. As dock work was a ‘reserved occupation’, her father remained home during the war. Avonmouth was under the German bombers’ flight path; Pat recalls the 1940 daylight raid on the Filton aircraft factory, and later she mentions seeing the front of houses blown off and beds sticking out when Avonmouth Church was bombed. In 1941 the family moved to Sea Mills for safety, where Pat lived with her parents until she married. In 1945, she started at Portway Secondary School and recalls a whole day a week learning domestic science. Pat’s teacher used her own husband’s shirts for them to practice ironing on! She remembers cycling to Severn Beach to the Blue Lagoon, and day trips to Weston and Clevedon on the bus. After school, Pat went to college to learn how to use a comptometer (forerunner of the computer) and started working at the docks, in the early 50s, in the wages office of a ship repair company. She met her future husband at the PBA social club in Sea Mills and, after they married, they moved to Shirehampton, where Pat still lives. She describes changes in the village, houses replaced with shops, and the disappearance of street traders such as the cockle lady from Swansea. Pat comments on Shirehampton, saying *“It’s not a village now, not like it used to be”*.

“We just stood in the garden and watched all these planes come over”



Listen to Pat on Track 10 remembering the cockle lady in Shirehampton

(Photo © Julian Kucharski 2017)



From Bristol to the Severn Bridge

Easter Compton, Almondsbury, Severn Beach, Pilning, Redwick and Northwick

This low-lying land has been farmed for generations but it's seen remarkable changes in the last 150 years.

Follow the history researchers as they explore the transition from mediaeval to modern farming and trace the changing landscape as the railways came to the area, bringing people, technologies and ideas.

The oral historians will introduce you to people who still farm this land and who have been involved in more recent monumental construction projects - namely the Second Severn Crossing and its road network. Others remember when Severn Beach was 'the Blackpool of the South' or have long come to the River for the solitary purpose of watching the vast migrations of birds that feed on its mudflats.

The Earliest History of Redwick, South Gloucestershire

by Sue Binns

Where do YOU live? How much do you know about the history of the place where you live?

I have lived in Redwick, South Gloucestershire, for almost 40 years and I knew very little!! The Forgotten Landscape has given me the opportunity to find out more, along with help from historian Dr Virginia Bainbridge and fellow researchers.

Today, Redwick is part of the Parish of Pilning and Severn Beach, in South Gloucestershire.

Early evidence of people living in the area comes from archaeological work. Excavations have revealed a major Iron Age site at nearby Hallen and further discoveries have been made at Northwick. It is probable that people would have been travelling through our area at this time. Redwick was an area of lowland saltmarshes with seasonal flooding from the River Severn. Around the first millennium our area came within the territory of the Dobunni, a Belgic tribe who brought with them heavy wheeled vehicles, a plough and a form of potter's wheel. In 43AD came the Roman Invasion and evidence of a Roman camp was excavated near Pilning School. It was the Romans who started the first sea wall defences to enable the land to be better used.

The Saxons did not arrive in our area until 577AD and it was a long time before there was a permanent settlement here. There were

years of seasonal settlements that gradually became permanent as the building of sea walls prevented the encroachment of the sea on the land. Redwick first appears in documentation in 955AD in the *Cartularium Saxonicum*, under the name Hreodwican, place of reeds. Redwick is next mentioned as Redewiche in the Domesday survey of 1086 meaning Dairy Farm in the reeds. Here the entry stated that the land belonged to the Bishop of Worcester and was part of Brentry Hundred, its total population was 18.6 households, considered to be of medium size with 51 villagers, 40 smallholders, 35 slaves and 3 female slaves. Other neighbouring villages were Aust, Compton Greenfield, Henbury, Westbury and Yate. Interestingly, they all had exactly the same entry which would suggest that the clerks undertaking the survey measured one village and gave them all the same entry to speed things up.

In the early middle ages (post 1086) Redwick was a small hamlet in the lower Severn Levels, an area that was frequently flooded by the River Severn. Originally part of Brentry Hundred, it later became part of Henbury Hundred. By the 13th Century it was administered as part of the combined manor of Redwick and Northwick.

At Redwick, the stream named Chessell Pill (name meaning creek in the shingle) was an important part of the landscape. It allowed the people to enrich their diet with fish and was big enough to allow goods to travel by small boat up the Pill to Pillhead.

This photograph shows Chessell Pill to the right of the Rifle Range. Today it is hard to imagine that small boats sailed past here as recently as the 1900s to Pill Head to discharge coal. In medieval times, it was used to transport goods to and from markets. The River Severn was an important trade route and the Pill enabled people to trade more easily.

The Pill had fishing rights mentioned in deeds as far back as 1470 AD when some were gifted by Robert Poyntz of Acton Court to William and Isabel Stock (Stokke) along with 1 acre of meadow and 12 acres of pasture in the Manor of Redwick and Northwick, in the Parish of Henbury.

The Manor belonged to the Bishop of Worcester, who owned great estates in the area. He leased it to be managed by the local Lords of the Manor. The Manor house was on the ridge above the floodplain. The tenants were freemen, and also serfs and cottars sent to look after the cattle on the rich pastureland of the saltmarshes.

In the 1200s we start to get a clearer picture of medieval Redwick and Northwick, as records containing more information were beginning to be written. In 1221, Maurice de Gaunt the Bishop's tenant was granted a temporary licence to hold a market and a fair at Redwick by King Henry III. Maurice had given the King 100s to hold the market. In June 1222, the Sheriff of Gloucestershire was ordered to prohibit

the market, which was damaging the town and market of Bristol. This suggests that Chessell Pill was carrying important trade to Redwick. We know that the area had at least two mills which were also a good source of revenue.

Other wealthy men of the time leased land from the Bishop of Worcester. From a property deed in 1241 we know that part of the land was managed by Robert De Gurney as a tenant of the Bishop.



Chessell Pill (Creek in the shingle) winding through Redwick. It can be found on maps in 1579 and in documents in 1470 when it is mentioned in a deed transfer of land

(Photo © Sue Binns / AFL, 2017)



Cattle grazing the saltmarsh as they would have done over 1000 years ago

(Photo © James Flynn 2014)

Leading tenants included the Berkeley and the Poyntz families. Leases often changed hands, through death, marriage and sale. There is no map from medieval times and little recording to show who owned which piece of land. We do know that parts of the land passed from the Berkeleys of Berkeley Castle to John Ap Adams, John de Knovil, Reginald Botreaux and the Poyntz family of Acton Court.

Tenants were required to pay taxes to the Lord of the Manor and the 1291-2 *Taxatio Ecclesiastica* records the taxes paid to the Pope by the Bishop of Worcester. From this we find that he had £25 a year in rent from Northwick and the value of his arable and pasture lands

including two mills at Northwick was £40 6s. 8d. Once medieval flood defences were built, crops were grown using oxen to plough. This left the distinctive 'ridge and furrow' pattern shaping the land. Much of the area around Redwick has evidence of this today.

Medieval flood defences were not enough to prevent all tidal flooding from the Severn and the Pill. Records from St Mary's, the Parish Church of Henbury, tells of how the inhabitants of Redwick and Northwick, parishioners of Henbury, were affected. We learn that they were allowed their own chapel at Northwick so they could worship on Sundays when tidal flooding made it impossible to travel to Henbury.

From research at Bristol and Gloucestershire Archives we have found names recorded in Deeds, Manor Court Rolls, and the Lay Subsidies of 1327 and 1524. These let us find out if family names remain in the area and also give meaning to some local place names. In the 1524 subsidy list we find Thomas Vimpeny and Willielmus Dyer. Either they or their descendants gave their names to 'Vimpenys Lane' and 'Dyers Common'. Differing pronunciations and spellings mean that names can change over the centuries.

Manor Court Rolls from 1436-37 list the people who came before the local court and tell us the amount they were fined for breaking minor laws of the day. Such information gives an insight into everyday life in medieval times, however we do need to translate from Latin.



Part of the Manor Court Rolls of Henbury in Saltmarsh for 1559-1560, the second year of the reign of Elizabeth I. This entry for Redwick and Northwick lists some of the men living in the area. It is in Latin which makes it difficult to read

(Reproduced courtesy of Bristol Archives: BRO 4984/2)

From 1547 the manor was owned by Sir Ralph Sadler, a very high placed Tudor minister. From the ‘Inquisition Post Mortem’, or death duty survey, following his death in 1608, we find that two knights held the manor, Sir William Trye and Sir George Smythes. There is no mention of lower status tenants as in his other manors, so we can assume the manor was divided into two large dairy farms.

In 1607 much of the land was flooded in the Great Flood as the River Severn surged upstream flooding the English and Welsh coastlines for considerable distance and depth. Ellinghurst Farm on Marsh Common Road, now demolished, had a water mark on a first-floor room measuring the height of the water. Around 1608 we can learn the names and status of 32 men from the Manor of Redwick and Northwick who held arms for the county militia. It is recorded in *Men and Armour for Gloucestershire*. This suggests that despite extensive flooding the previous year many survived to continue their way of life.

Fascinating facts for Medieval Redwick and Northwick giving us a small insight as to what life may have been like for those living at the time.

Would you like to find out about your home area? I started with the *Domesday Book*, and the local website *Know Your Place*. Using the archaeology layer on the KYP map showed me what historical sites had been found in my area. I could not wait to find out more and Bristol and Gloucester Archives were a great source of information and help.

Good Luck with your search!

Suggestions for Further Reading

Bristol Archives - <http://www.bristolmuseums.org.uk/bristol-record-office/>

Gloucestershire Archives -

<http://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/archives/article/107703/Archives-Homepage>

Know Your Place – <http://www.kypwest.org.uk>

Transactions of Bristol & Gloucester Archaeological Society (vols 1876 to date) - <http://bgas.org.uk/publications.html>

B.S. Smith & E. Ralph, *A History of Bristol & Gloucestershire* (1972, 1982, 1996)

T. Astle, S. Ayscough & J. Caley, eds., *Taxatio Ecclesiastica Angliae et Walliae auctoritate P. Nicholai IV, c. 1291* (Record Commission, 1802)

P. Franklyn, ed., *The Taxpayers of Medieval Gloucestershire: an Analysis of the 1327 Lay Subsidy* (Alan Sutton, Gloucestershire 1993)

M.A. Faraday, ed., *The Bristol & Gloucestershire Lay Subsidy of 1523-1527* (BGAS: Gloucestershire Record Society, 23, 2009)

John Smith, *Men and Armour for Gloucestershire in 1608*, (1902; reprinted Alan Sutton, Stroud 1980) Glasscock

With thanks to the [Thornbury and District Museum](#)

Medieval Elmington Manor Farm: 1182-1547

by James Powell

Introduction

Elmington Manor already existed by 1182, when the name first appears in medieval records. Its history stretches back to the late Iron Age, when the land was already being farmed. The Romans built a settlement on the land, which is now known as Elmington Manor Farm. The reason Elmington was chosen is because it is so well documented from earliest times to the present. The objective was to research “The Estate Management of Elmington Manor Farm and environs 1066-1950”. The research relies on sources in public archives, planning departments, libraries and museums.

This piece covers the medieval period.

From Anglo-Saxon times Elmington Manor was part of the great estate north of Bristol belonging to the bishops and diocese of Worcester. Elmington manor was not mentioned in the Domesday Book of 1086, but was probably covered under Henbury. The Red Book of Worcester includes three surveys dating from around 1182, 1282 and 1299. They describe the amount of land held by the Bishop’s tenants and the services they owed. Richard Grenville answered for military service in Elmington. He was the tenant that Compton Greenfield took its name from. Peter Croc also held land.

The manor was part of the Forest of Kingswood, and Peter Croc, a Verderer, is mentioned in the Elmington deeds in Bristol Archives. This

was not a dense wood and was in fact a large hunting ground for the lords of the manor. Crooks Marsh is named after the Crocs because they were substantial land owners. A charter of 1228 exempted Kingswood Forest from Forest Law and this enabled the start of enclosure.

The Agricultural Resources at Elmington are not ideal. The land is heavy clay and medieval farmers had to work hard to eke out a living. There were arable fields to grow crops for inhabitants, but the population in England rose between 1066 and the Black Death in 1348-49. The tenants began growing arable crops on marginal land, which yielded less grain, and so they were living at subsistence level. LiDAR (Light Detection And Ranging) data provides evidence that arable crops were once grown throughout the manor and ridge and furrow is preserved and displayed by these black and white strips:

Open fields are described in a 13th century Elmington deed showing that people had parts of their land scattered around the manor.

‘two acres and four strips (seillones) of land of which one acre lies in the 'cultura' which is called Emenhulle between land of William fitzWarun and of Thomas de Bradewelle and one head extends to the land of lord Richard de Greynville at Hulkestede and the other to the meadow of Aylminton' and one acre lies at E---brygge? between meadow of lord Richard de Greynville and



This map includes Elmington. Source: N. Orme and J. Cannon, eds., *Westbury-on-Trym: Monastery, Minster and College*

(Reproduced by kind permission of [Bristol Record Society](#) vol. 62, 2010)

of William fitzWarun' and land of Robert de Bradewelle and one head extends to land of Nicholas de Berewyk' and the other to land of lady Simonda de Oldebury and the four strips lie in the field of Cumptone between land of Nicholas de Berewyk' and of Torephym de Aylminton' and one head extends to the wood of the said William Champeneis; to hold for term of his life paying annually to Wm. and his heirs 2s. at the four usual terms.'

A deed of 1333 describes Elmington Manor. There were 12 tenant messuages, or farmsteads, with lands for peasant families. There was arable land, meadow and a 20 acre wood. There was also pasture and marsh, meadow and wood.

Open fields work for arable land but not for animal husbandry. The natural resources dictated that enclosure took place early at Elmington and the deeds provide evidence of this as shown in this 1443 lease.

'One messuage and 5 ac. land and pasture which Isabella Henwode lately held in Aylmynton' and also one other messuage and 5 ac. land and pasture which Alice Denning lately held in Aylmynton' and also all lands and pastures enclosed or not enclosed called le Hyll' which the said Isabella Henwode lately held except that he grants to the tenants of the lordship of Aylmynton...'



Elmington Manor Farm (area of curved shapes centre right of photo) surrounded by striped 'ridge and furrow' pattern

(Photo © Environment Agency, 1M LiDAR data, captured in 2015, visualised using a Local Relief Model to highlight the remains of ridge and furrow earthworks)

Post-medieval maps show what was happening in the neighbourhood in the middle ages. The earliest maps are a 1720 plan of Kingsweston; a 1746 map of Clifton by Jacob de Wilstar; and plans of Kingsweston Estate 1771-2 by Isaac Taylor. They are followed by Parliamentary Enclosure and Tithe Award maps of 1822 and 1841. These maps show where the medieval common fields were, and show small fields enclosed out of the open fields and common meadows.

Land-use in Local Fines and Recoveries in 1509

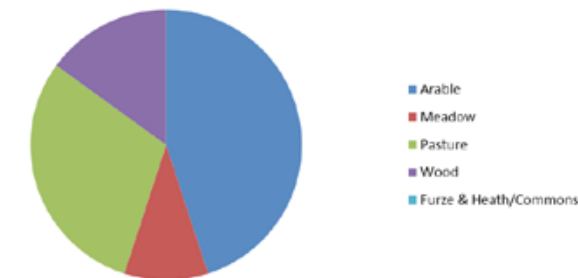


Chart based on statistical table by John S. Moore, Ed., Clifton and Westbury Probate Inventories 1609-1761, (Bristol 1981), p. xxxii.

The above table shows land use in 1509 at Clifton, Henbury and Westbury-on-Trym: arable crops (45%); meadow (10%); pasture (30%); wood (15%); furze and heath/commons (0%). Around 1381, Thomas Styward bought the lease of the manor and it was settled to Margery, his daughter, who married twice. Margery used a corrupt Inquisition Post Mortem, an inheritance tax certificate, to change her father's preferences.

Elmington Manor continued to belong to the Diocese of Worcester until the Reformation when its estates were reorganised. In 1547 King Edward IV granted Sir Ralph Sadlier a large estate north of Bristol, including Elmington Manor. There is a royal grant by Letters Patent as evidence of this. Rafe or Ralph Sadlier was portrayed by the actor Thomas Brodie-Sangster in Wolf Hall on Television recently.

Conclusion

To conclude, Elmington Manor Farm is probably the best recorded farm in the Severn Vale. There are many sources that may be used to trace the farm and a few have been included here.

Suggestions for further reading

Bristol Archives:

AC/D/6/ 2, 3, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 12, 50, deeds

EP/A/32/22, Tithe Award and map, 1841

40597/1, Enclosure Award and map, 1822

AC/AS/1/2, Grant to Sir Ralph Sadlier, 1547

Bristol Central Library:

Christopher Dyer, *Lords and Peasants in a Changing Society. The Estates of the Bishopric of Worcester, 680-1540.* (Cambridge, 1980)



The grant shows Ralph Sadlier kneeling before the King
(Reproduced courtesy of [Bristol Archives](#): AC/AS/1/2)

Paul Masser, Julie Jones and Bridget McGill, 'Romano-British Settlement and Land Use on the Avonmouth Levels: the evidence of the Pucklechurch to Seabank pipeline project', *Transactions of Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society*, 123 (2005), pp. 55-86

John S. Moore, 'Medieval Forest of Kingswood', *Avon Past* 7 (1982), pp. 6-16.
Bridget Wells-Furby, 'Margaret Styward and the Curious Case of the 1398 Elmington Declarations,' *Transactions Bristol Gloucestershire Archaeological Society*, 132 (2014), pp. 131-45

Over Court: the Life and Death of an Elizabethan Mansion

by Sarah Hands

Over Court was a prestigious Manor House built in the village of Over near Almondsbury that had its origins in medieval times. During the 17th and 18th centuries it played host to a number of notable local worthies but, by the middle of the 20th century, it was seemingly beyond repair and its final demolition in the 1980s brought to an end six hundred years of history. Although little of the building survives today, its narrative endures.

In Domesday Book the manor of Over was owned by the Bishop of Coutances. His descendants forfeited it to King William Rufus who gave it to the Fitzroy family. They in turn sold it to the Fitzhardings during the 12th Century and it remained in this family until sold by Thomas Apadam to Thomas, 3rd Lord Berkeley during the first half of the 14th century. The earliest recorded manor house was built around 1350 by Lord Thomas and Lady Katherine but there may have been a pre-existing hunting lodge as Thomas was a keen huntsman. Little is known about the appearance of the first manor house and today the only remnants are a fish pond (now a boating lake) and dovecotes.

Thomas left Over House and manor to his son John by his second wife Katherine. John increased his wealth, was MP several times and founded a cadet branch of the Berkeleys



Sarah J. Hands in front of Over Court's surviving Classical gatehouse c. 1728-43

(Photo © Graham Harlin 2017)

of Beverstone Castle. Over Manor, part of the Beverstone estate, was entailed to the eldest male heir, passing down this Berkeley line for the next 200 years, with the exception of a few months in 1485 when it was confiscated from William Berkeley by Richard III. William was knighted by Henry VII at the Battle of Bosworth and his property, including Over, returned. The last Berkeley owner, also a John, was forced to sell Over during the reign of Elizabeth I. He was a Catholic sympathiser and died in 1582 having lost most of the Berkeley fortune. Over Court was tenanted by Sir Edward Veele during the last years of Berkeley ownership and his impressive memorial can be found in St Mary's church, Almondsbury.



Over Court, shortly before demolition, 1980

(Photo © Crown copyright. [Historic England Archive](#))

In 1578 trustees for John Dowell (Dowle), the young son of a Bristol Merchant, acquired Over Manor on his behalf and in 1590 he built the two-storey stone Elizabethan Court. The layout was U shaped enclosing a courtyard, brew-house, bake-house and dairy and it was multi-gabled with dormer attics and mullioned windows. The house was set in extensive landscaped terraces, with an orchard, walled kitchen garden, separate coach house and stables, a lake and a deer park. Inside were wood panelled rooms, a minstrels' gallery and a grand wooden staircase leading to many bedrooms, some with fine fireplaces decorated with Tudor Rose carvings. On the top floor was a bacon room with ceiling hooks. Flemish tapestries adorned many walls and a large refectory table stood in the dining parlour. Until its demolition 400 years later, Over Court remained essentially unchanged apart from some repositioning of doorways, driveways and outbuildings. Tapestries and furnishings were sold off in the early 20th century and most of the wooden panelling and fireplaces were stolen or destroyed as the Court later lay unoccupied. The stables, gate house and coach house are all that survive today.



Over Court, engraved by Johannes Kip c. 1700-10

(Reproduced courtesy of [Bristol Archives](#): BRO Bk-4-5)

Over Court stayed in the Dowell family for nearly 200 years with each successor having the given name John. John 1 trained in law, married well, was a sheriff of Gloucester and became a Bristol customs officer. In the discharge of his duties he was thoroughly dishonest and disliked. He increased his estate to include holdings in Cattybrook, Tockington, Stanshaws, Hempton, Bowsland, Olveston, Patchway, Brokenborough, Easter Compton and Almondsbury. John 2 also studied law and had the reputation of being a tearaway in his youth. John 3 was sheriff of Gloucester in 1673 and his third marriage was to a very wealthy heiress of the Baker family of Kent. John 4 was a churchwarden of St Mary's, Almondsbury and his initials can be seen in iron studs on the church door. John 5 (John Baker Bridges Dowell, d. 1744), built a memorial for himself and for his parents in St Mary's Church, Almondsbury.

John 5 left his fortune to his close friend the Reverend Staunton Degge from Nottinghamshire. Degge died in 1765, leaving everything to his sister Dorothy Sitwell, and leaving his wife Felicia a tenancy of Over Court for just 3 years. The Sitwells continued to live in Derbyshire and rented out their desirable country residence to a number of Bristol's merchant elite until it was sold in 1807 to Edward Protheroe, a Bristol politician. One notable tenant was James Laroche a prominent slave trader, Master of the Society of Merchant Venturers and MP. Laroche was made

Baronet of Over in 1776, but investing his wealthy wife's money unwisely he was declared bankrupt in 1778. Another notable tenant was George Daubeney, Mayor of Bristol and slave owner. He was a leading Bristol business man involved in sugar refining, glass manufacture and banking.

Between 1807 and 1811 Over Court passed from Edward Protheroe to his brother-in-law the Reverend James Vaughan, then to James' brother John who lived there for 21 years before selling it on. John had a shipping partnership with John Maxse, with interests in Jamaican sugar plantations and in slavery. He married Maxse's daughter Ann who became patroness to a small school in Over.

In 1832 the trustees of the estate of Sir Henry Cann Lippincott (deceased), acquired Over Court on behalf of Henry's illegitimate son Robert. In 1839 after reaching his majority, Robert married Agnes, daughter of one of the trustees. She had four children in quick succession, died in 1845 and is buried in St Mary's, Almondsbury. Robert's eldest son Robert Cann, who inherited in 1890, had two families and seven illegitimate children. He finally acknowledged Annie, 34 years his junior, by marrying her four years before he died. Robert Cann was a published intellectual but a poor estate manager. This and large death duties left his widow struggling. The estate was gradually sold off.

In 1939 the Cann Lippincotts moved to St Swithin's farm when GIs were posted at Over Court. The place was left too badly damaged to be reoccupied and was never lived in again. Annie died in 1941 and is buried at All Saints, Compton Greenfield. Two of her daughters, Gertrude and Kathleen, kept up the fight to save the house, but two disastrous fires in the 1970s forced a sale to developers and in spite of public protest Over Court was demolished.

Suggestions for Further Reading

Robert Atkyns, *The Ancient & Present State of Gloucestershire* (1712, reprinted 1974)

Nicholas Kingsley, *The Country Houses of Gloucestershire, 1500-1660* (Phillimore, Chichester 2001)

J. Latimer, 'Leland in Gloucestershire' *Transactions of Bristol & Gloucestershire Archaeological Society* 14 (1889-90), p. 230

W. J. Robinson, *West Country Manors* (St. Stephens Press, Bristol 1930)

Samuel Rudder, *A New History of Gloucestershire* (1779, reprinted 1977)

John Smith, *Berkeley Manuscripts: Lives of the Berkeleys*, 3 vols, ed. J. Maclean (1883-5)

Redwick and New Passage in 1823: what came before and what came afterwards?

by Kath Burke

I researched the evolution features and growth of Redwick village, looking at why, how and when the Severn River and the Binn Wall (Sea Wall) were at the centre of all that changed. My research in Henbury starts in 1815. I plan to show how the Binn Wall and the Severn made a village into a small town of its time and how some families took opportunities, and grew with the village.

The Binn Wall protected the area along the Severn from the tide.

‘On March 28th, 1815 high tide and bad weather came together and the wall was thrown down by which incalculable mischief was done. At New Passage, Mr. Dart the Boatman and his daughter escaped by climbing a high tree and watched as their house was swept completely away.’ *Gloucester Journal, April 3rd, 1815.*

The Commission of Sewers (now *Wessex Water*) oversaw the ditches and rivers, and oversaw the repair and good order of the Binn Wall. Each landowner along the wall was responsible for rebuilding their part of the wall.

The wall was surveyed by John Rastrick and he advised a new wall should be built behind the existing one, with a one in three slope, as vertical walls could not withstand in tide (Bristol Archives: 35749/38). Again in 1820 the river and tide were surveyed, and a new wall was planned.

I have seen the large map at Gloucestershire Archives and it is amazing (Gloucestershire Archives: D272/9/5). It shows drawings of each section of the wall and who was responsible for building each section. Along the lower edge are three ink and watercolour drawings of New Passage House, Severn Lodge and Darts House. It was lovely to find that Mr. Dart rebuilt his home and the map showed the part of wall that he was responsible for rebuilding, as well as other landowners along the Wall.

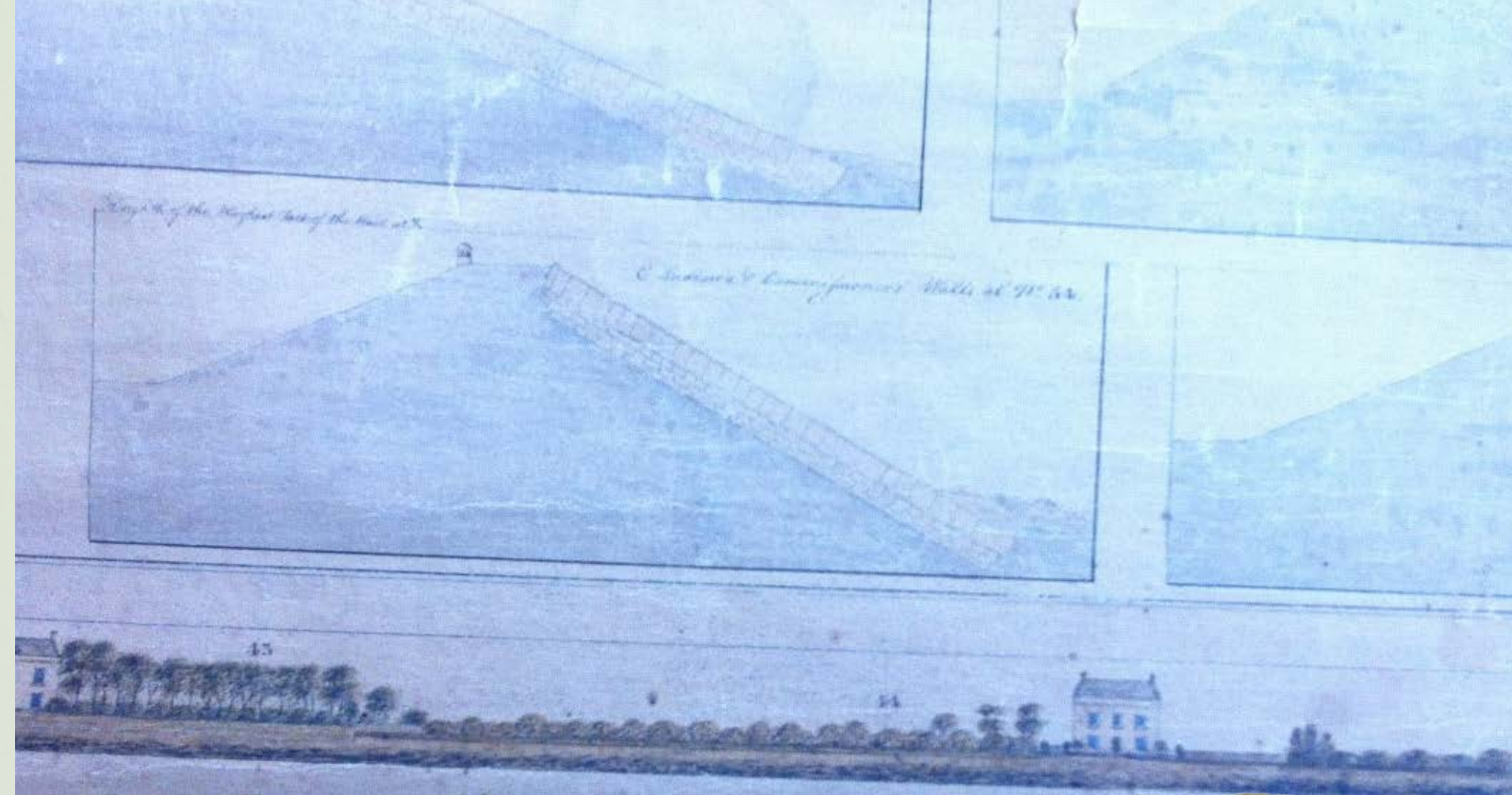
The New Binn Wall changed the Village; it became a safer place and more people came to live there, hence my working title: ‘Don’t Binn it, Save it!’

Suggestions for further reading

B.S. Smith & E. Ralph, *A History of Bristol & Gloucestershire* (1972, 1982, 1996)

[Bristol Archives](#): 35749/38, report of John Rastrick, civil engineer, on repairing damage to the sea wall, 1815

[Gloucestershire Archives](#): D272/9/5, plan of the Binn Wall at Redwick and Northwick, 1820-1



A section of the Commission of Sewers' map showing New Passage House, Severn Lodge and Darts House, and how the Binn Wall should be rebuilt. Gloucestershire Archives: D272/9/5

(Reproduced with kind permission of [Gloucestershire Archives](#))



Redwick today

Railway Construction in A Forgotten Landscape

by Adam Mead

“When I heard that the South Wales Union Railway would run through a portion of my estate I became alarmed for I had heard that navvies were a perfect set of savages and it would not be safe to remain in the neighbourhood”. Thus Robert Cann Lippincott began an address to 300 stalwart navvies and their families, summing up the anxieties raised by two significant railway projects in A Forgotten Landscape, the Bristol and South Wales Union (1858-63) and the Severn Railway Tunnel (1873-86).

Bristol and South Wales Union

Welsh steam coal was highly regarded by the steamship companies operating out of Southampton and a Severn crossing was strongly desired by both coal and ship owners. Leading figures in the Bristol Chamber of Commerce took up the idea and formed the Bristol and South Wales Union (BSWU) to build a railway and ferry to form this crossing. Landowners in A Forgotten Landscape persuaded them to construct a tunnel to take the railway through the ridge between Patchway and Almondsbury and to construct a station at Pilning. The Company had difficulties raising money and was unable to afford piers that could handle bulk shipments of coal. Deprived of coal traffic it turned to the tourist trade and upgraded the New Passage Hotel. The returns from tourists, never willing to brave the New Passage weather in winter, proved insufficient to pay the Company’s way. The hotel went bankrupt in 1866 and in 1868 the Company had

to be rescued by the Great Western Railway (GWR). However it had made big changes to the landscape; a pier 546 yards long at New Passage, a railway line crossing the area, a station at Pilning, a tunnel at Almondsbury, and the ferries running from the pier.

The navvies who built this railway caused little trouble. Railway construction was virtually over by 1852 so there was no longer a migrant navvy workforce moving from project to project. Most of those who built the BSWU were local agricultural labourers attracted by wages twice those they would normally earn. Such crimes as they committed – being drunk, stealing from each other, fighting each other, poaching, and stealing food – occupied only a small proportion of the cases handled by local magistrates. Those working in A Forgotten Landscape were mostly concentrated on the tunnel at Almondsbury where huts were built for them and local gentry provided cultural activities beginning with musical evenings in 1859. Relations between the navvies and the local community became cordial enough for them to play a full part in Almondsbury’s celebrations when the Prince of Wales married in March 1863. These celebrations included a dinner for 300 given by Robert Cann Lippincott at which his closing words were more cordial than his first: “I am glad to say that my fears have proved groundless, for a more orderly, quiet, and respectable class of hard working men I have never met with”.

The Severn Tunnel

GWR began construction of the Severn Railway tunnel in January 1873. For six years it made slow progress and GWR finally lost confidence in its original engineer when a large spring flooded the workings in October 1879. A very experienced contractor, Thomas Andrew Walker, then took over the project.

Walker inherited about 400 men and from December 1880, when the spring was pumped out, he steadily increased his workforce until he was employing a maximum of 3600 men in December 1883, from which date he steadily reduced his workforce. About 1600 of the 3600 were based on the Gloucestershire shore and, as with the BSWU, most were agricultural labourers who lived in the locally or came from the Forest of Dean. Previous experience had shown that for large railway projects it was best to construct a village to house the workforce, and Walker built such a village on the Monmouth shore at Sudbrook. It still stands today.

Walker wished to build another village in A Forgotten Landscape but the land he wanted at Redwick and New Passage was valuable and worked through leases landlords and tenants would not surrender. He could only house navvies on land directly above the tunnel - quite insufficient to accommodate 1600 men – and water for huts located there came from the mouth of Chesil Pill. This was polluted by sewage from Redwick village upstream. Other housing close to the tunnel became



Severn Tunnel workers underground and Black Rock pier

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(<http://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk>)



Severn Tunnel Workers at Black Rock Inn

(Photo © [Chepstow Museum](http://www.chepstowmuseum.co.uk))

severely overcrowded: one pub had 22 navvies in a single room and elsewhere four men slept in each bed, two by night and two by day. Many local wells dried up because pumping water out of the tunnel lowered the water table. Overcrowding and a poor water supply meant disease and in 1882 navvies twice introduced typhoid into Bristol. Five people died and the city's health authority successfully pressed the responsible Gloucestershire authority to end the outbreaks.

Navvies working at New Passage had only a coffee room and a chapel amongst their huts. They had otherwise to rely on such recreational opportunities as the local community could afford. A cricket club and a Total Abstinence Society were started at New Passage and the Zion Chapel opened at Redwick. Despite lesser facilities than provided at Sudbrook, navvies were again responsible for only a minority of the cases coming before local magistrates. Their crimes were again mostly drunkenness, stealing from each other, fighting each other, poaching, and stealing food. Once again most navvies had their families with them and most single navvies lodged with navvy families. Such domestic influence perhaps kept crime at a lower level than might have been expected. The project's impact on A Forgotten Landscape's area was also less than expected. The tunnel mouth was some way south of the pier at New Passage and in consequence the railway line was shifted and Pilning station moved a short distance. New Passage was made a rural idyll once again: the pier was torn down and the railway line to Pilning torn up.



Severn Tunnel entrance today near Severn Beach

(This work has been released into the public domain by its author, Brettpal at English Wikipedia)

Suggestions for further reading

British Newspaper Archive – <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/>

Gloucestershire Archive: DA22/880/2, annual reports of Medical Officer ... for Gloucestershire, 1873-1913

Thomas Andrew Walker, *The Severn Tunnel, its construction and difficulties 1872-87* (Kingsmead Reprints, 1969)

Roger Cowles, *The Making of the Severn Railway Tunnel* (Sutton, Gloucester 1989)

David Brooke, *Railway Navy: that despicable race of men* (David and Charles, Newton Abbot 1983)

Oral histories

Pat Edwardes

recorded by Scott Bryant

Pat has lived in the Pilning area all her life, going to school in East Compton (now called Easter Compton) in a one-room school which is now the village hall. *“The school had block flooring and when you walked on it, some of the blocks were loose and vibrated like a xylophone! Outside was a stone building with bucket toilets in which were quite the norm in this area until the middle 50s”*. Aged 7, Pat moved to Redwick and Northwick Council School. She recalls growing up in an area which has now changed beyond recognition with the building of the A403, M48, and the Severn Bridges.

She spent hours in the fields and on nature walks, and remembers collecting rose hips during the Second World War. She recalls her father building an Anderson shelter in the garden but because it was below sea level, it filled with water and they never used it. Pat took her first job in a local grocer’s shop. She dealt with rationing, collecting and cutting wheels of cheese and the customer who asked if she had any ‘gumption’, which she thought was rude, before realising it was a cleaning product! Pat describes the disruption from building the A403 and the closure of rail services in the area when the Severn Bridge was built. She has spent her whole life closely linked to the church, and met her husband Roy through the choir. She talks about the church’s central role in the community and how this has changed over the years.

“Bucket toilets were quite the norm!”



Listen to Pat’s wartime memories on Track 04 and how she met her husband on Track 14

(Photo © Julian Kucharski 2017)

"I wouldn't wish to live anywhere else"



Listen to David's memories on Tracks 04 and 16

(Photo © Julian Kucharski 2017)

David England
recorded by Scott Bryant

David was born in Redwick in 1931, half a mile away from where he lives now. He helped on his grandfather's farm at Pill Head from a young age, and could drive a tractor and plough by the age of 11. He later moved to Severn Lodge Farm at New Passage. At 25, he became a lorry driver, working for the same local firm for 42 years delivering animal feed around the area. He would do the milking at night, then take the lorry to Avonmouth to load up, do the morning milking and then do his deliveries during the day.

David has many childhood memories of the war including being short of food and catching rabbits and blackbirds (which they wrapped in bacon and baked in the oven). As children, they would pool their farthings and go up to the bakery and wait for newly baked bread. He also remembers air raids and seeing barrage balloons at Avonmouth protecting the Severn Tunnel. David recalls going to Chepstow races on the Aust ferry. He says you often had to wait for hours because of the tides. He talks enthusiastically about post-war village life, including regular trips to hotels and dance halls in the local area. He describes how his world outlook changed after taking the lorry driving job, but how he still valued his country life. He has a deep love and pride of Redwick, *"I wouldn't wish to live anywhere else in the world, I'm happy with what I've got and the wonderful people round here"*.

Paul Bowerman
recorded by John Hastings

Paul Bowerman has lived at Severn Beach for 18 years and visits the salt marshes virtually every day to watch and monitor birds. Paul's interest in birds developed as a teenager in the late 1970s; he would walk 5 or 6 miles from Henbury to the marshes, through the industrial units and chemical works, to get to the sea wall. He describes the smog, smoke and pollution in this era. Coming back to the same place for 40 years, he has seen many changes. Most of the chemical factories are gone, replaced by warehouses, housing, a gas power station, wind turbines and the Second Severn Crossing. The area is less polluted but much busier with traffic.

Paul describes how the salt marsh was used as a rifle range from WW1 until it was sold off by the MOD in the late 90s, bought by a man who turned it into a nature reserve. Paul describes the birds that visit and his role in monitoring and ringing them. He expresses his love of the area and the excitement of holding a tiny bird in your hands that has flown to Africa and back. He also describes a darker side to the Severn, finding the bodies of drowned animals and occasionally people. His favourite spot is a seat on the beach at New Passage, *"There's always something to see. Birds drop in as the mud becomes exposed - it's a huge bird table. Anything migrating up and down the estuary will pop out of the sky and feed right in front of you"*.

"It's like a huge bird table"



Listen to Paul on Track 09 talking about the changes he's seen over 50 years

(Photo © Julian Kucharski 2017)

Memories of Aust and Pilning

recorded by Felicity Pine

Born in Aust in 1942, our interviewee – one of 7 children - recalls a way of life in their small cottage which is now hard to imagine. There was no electricity; they used paraffin lamps and candles for light and a paraffin can to keep warm. Water came from the well behind the houses. Once, a neighbour's cat knocked a paraffin lamp into it. *"It took about three days of pumping the well out before they would allow us to drink from it again. I never fancied that water afterwards as I could always taste paraffin"*.

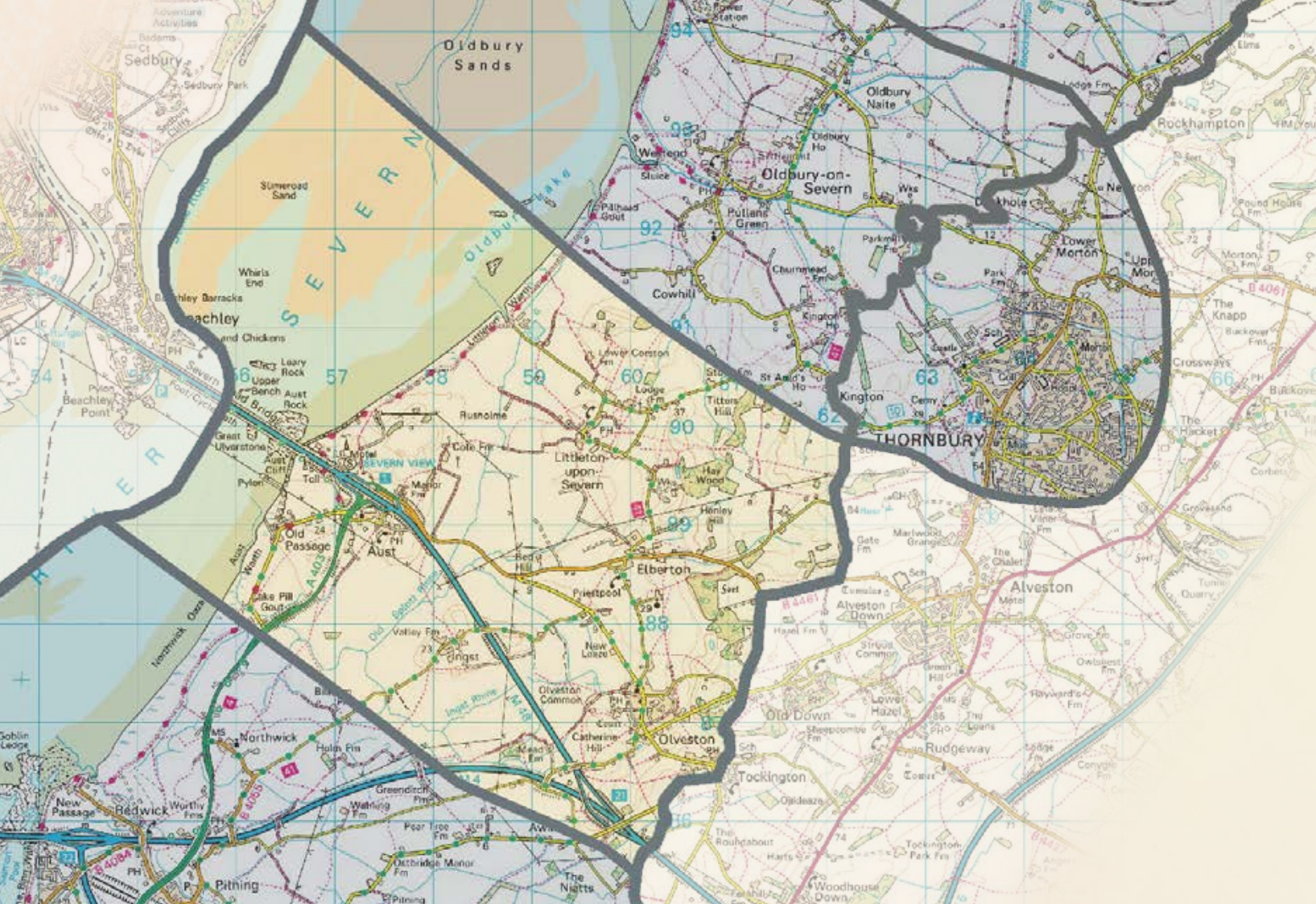
Each spring our interviewee supplemented her pocket money picking woodland flowers – violets, primroses, bluebells and cowslips - for a man who sold them to shops in Bristol. She played under the cliffs at Aust and took free trips back and forwards on the Aust ferry. As a teenager she moved to Northwick and at 20 she married, moving to her husband's family farm in Pilning Street. She talks about her role as a farmer's wife in the 1960s, recalling the terrible winter of 1962/63 when the milk froze in the churns. During three memorably cold nights she recalls trying to keep a litter of twelve piglets alive – sadly they all died. She also talks about what it was like to be a young mother during this period, the doctor's role in the community and how almost everything in the area has changed over the years.



"We loved playing in the church yard"

*Listen to this lady on Track 07 talking about the winter of 1962-63
and of the changes she's witnessed on Track 16*

(Photo © Eric Garrett)



From the Severn Bridge to Littleton-upon-Severn Aust, Olveston and Littleton-upon-Severn

The Severn Bridge is the focal point at the centre of our middle region. This stunning 20th century engineering achievement is visible throughout the rural landscape that surrounds it.

Eric Garrett, a long-time community historian and also one of our oral history interviewees, gives us a potted history of his village, Olveston. Eric's wealth of knowledge shines through the words.

Then read on to meet local people who are often, like Eric, deeply rooted in their communities. Their intimate knowledge of their villages give us the kind of insights not often captured in formal history books. The arrival of electricity, helping out as a child on the farm, or the experience of being someone new in the village - all these simple but meaningful stories are here. As are the recollections of people who changed the landscape forever when they came to work on the engineering marvel of the Severn Bridge. Not many people can tell you what it's like to stand on the concrete piers below the towers or descend into the cathedral-like chamber that houses the suspension cable.

A brief history of Olveston, the centre of the Lower Severn Vale

by Eric Garrett

My name is Eric Victor Garrett. I was born at Church Farm, Olveston, in July 1929, and have lived in the parish all my life. My maternal family have lived in Olveston for over 150 years and family connections in the area go back far longer. My great grandfather Edwin Organ, Inn keeper at the Black Lion Inn, Falfield, purchased the White Hart Inn, Olveston in 1861. He was also a timber merchant dealing mainly in oak, a trade which he continued when he moved to Olveston. His eldest son Ernest Herbert Theophilus Paul Organ took over the White Hart Inn following his father's untimely death in June 1897 and was also a farmer. His younger brother Edwin Absalom took over the timber business, which by then had a large timber yard in Bedminster, Bristol. My father was born at Church Farm, Abson, Gloucestershire and whilst a young lad his family moved to Washing Pool Farm, Easter Compton. He married my mother Elsie Mary Organ at Almondsbury church in January 1920. They farmed at Over Court Farm and St. Swithins Farm, Almondsbury, before moving to Church Farm, Olveston, in 1928.

My early education was at Olveston National School, with a final three years at Clark's College, Bristol. I took a five-year apprenticeship at Cathedral Garage, Bristol, followed by 35 years in the aircraft engine factory at Patchway. I have been gathering local history for the past forty years. I am a founder member of Olveston Parish Historical Society and have written several books.

Olveston Parish lies on a limestone ridge and on marshes located in the middle of 'A Forgotten Landscape' of the Lower Severn Vale. There was Prehistoric settlement in the area and farming and fishing became the chief occupations. Iron Age hill forts including those at Knole Park, Elberton and Oldbury acted as look-out points guarding the river Severn.

The Romans occupied Britain in 43 AD and remained for some 350 years. Their port at Bristol within the mouth of the River Avon was named '*Abona Trajectus*'. They built villas in the area, one being in Tockington Park, Olveston. They began building sea defences to prevent tidal floods, and causeways over the marshes to ferry boats for transportation of troops and civilians across the River Severn to their new town of Caerwent and garrison at Caerleon.

William I led the Norman Conquest of England in 1066. To establish what he had conquered, William ordered a survey of England which was recorded in the 'Domesday Book' in 1086. The Normans replaced the Saxon wooden churches with stone buildings. Several stone churches in the Severn Vale were Norman built and enlarged later. In the Middle Ages the King presented his favourites with manors, and some become great local landowners. A Crok family resided at Olveston Court held some 7000 acres in the 14th and 15th centuries. Olveston was a very rich parish with two manors. A Rectory Manor was controlled by the Prior of Bath Abbey who



Tockington Village

(Photo © Eric Garrett)

in 1429 granted the great tithes of Olveston Church to Lord Hungerford of Farley Castle near Bath to fund the Chapel at the castle.

In 1565 the Bubonic Plague, which affected Bristol, was brought to Olveston by a young married couple who fled back to the wife's parents, but too late as they were already infected.

In the 18th century the whole area was agricultural with plenty of common land. The wealthy landowners were instrumental in getting the common land enclosed to enlarge their estates, to the detriment of the inhabitants who held the right to use the commons for food. The final common land enclosure for Olveston was in 1844. A 2½ acre piece

of land was donated by a yeoman farmer at the start of the 19th century to the parishioners of Olveston for use as a garden allotment to support their families.

Tourism in the 18th century began to expand and used the ferries to cross the river Severn. This resulted in improved roads with stone and tarmacadam surfaces. Railways followed and reached the lower Vale in 1863 at the New Passage ferry port.

New industries came to the area, firstly a new shipping port at the mouth of the River Avon in 1872 named 'Bristol Port of Avonmouth'. Brick making began at Cattybrook in 1864, after smaller brickworks were started at Littleton-upon-Severn and Oldbury some thirty years earlier. Aircraft manufacture began at Filton in 1912.

The two World Wars brought the biggest changes to Severnside. The port at Avonmouth expanded and its hinterland had chemical factories built, one being the National Smelting Company on 400 acres. A network of railway lines was laid to transport heavy goods and military equipment. Before the Second World War many lanes in the vale were still only green lanes. For the first time all the through lanes were covered with tarmacadum to provide easy access for emergency and military vehicles. A new access road was constructed for the Aust Ferry to enable military vehicles to use it. Both World Wars brought a large expansion to Bristol Aeroplane Company at Filton and Patchway which absorbed many agriculture workers.

In 1957 and 1958 the Imperial Chemical Company acquired planning consent to build a factory at Chittening. As a result, they purchased a huge number of farms in the area that ran into many hundreds of acres. The Company was given permanent building consent which has allowed other commercial developers to erect factory style buildings over the past 30 years.

The Severnside witnessed another big change to its marshland with the construction of the two Severn Bridges and its feeder motorways. The parish lands of Olveston were partitioned by the two motorways into three segments, the village of Aust became a cul-de-sac and Northwick was surrounded by new major roads.

Now in the 21st century the villages of the Lower Severn Vale, formerly a very rich dairy farming area, have gradually become dormitories. This being the result of affordable motorcars providing easy and quick access to employment, allowing town dwellers to move into the countryside. Dairy farms in the Vale can now be counted on one hand. Many farm houses and farm buildings have been converted to domestic usage, with some farm buildings converted to light industrial use.

It was the various land enclosures of the 18th and 19th centuries that resulted in the development of the Severn Vale. Industrial development began in the second half of the 19th century and continues.

Suggestions for further reading:

[Olveston Parish History Society](#), *Olveston Parish: a Brief History* (1995)

D. & J. Bone, *A Thousand Years of Witness: the Story of St Mary's Church, Olveston* (Tockington Press, Bristol 2001)

E. Garrett, *Quakers of Olveston 1654-1868* (Tockington Press, Bristol 2005)



Olveston

(Photo © Eric Garrett)

Oral histories

John and Kath Alway

recorded by Suzanne Hedger and Julia Letts

John and Kath were born at either end of the village of Aust. John lived in Old Passage House, formerly a hotel and coaching stage on the route from London to Ireland. He relates childhood memories of growing up in this 22-roomed house and playing with friends on the warth by the ferry jetty. He recalls bombs being dropped in the area in WW2 and the local black market during rationing. On one occasion he remembers his mother swapping bacon, eggs and butter for a new pair of shoes! After school, John joined the family farming business. He gives details of farming in the 40s and 50s, including sheep dipping, pig killing, milking by hurricane lamp, and badgering his father to replace the farm horses with a tractor. *"My father goes off to market one day and when he came back, mother said, 'Have you had a good day?' 'Yes', he said, 'I've bought a grey mare.' He'd bought the first grey Ferguson tractor in the area, £365 it cost, and I've still got the receipt for it!"* When John was 18, his father died of a stroke so he and his mother took over the farm. John's farming days ended when he fell through a barn floor and damaged his knee. He talks about subsequent jobs as a secondary glazing salesman, a rep for a veterinary company, and a site maintenance manager at Aust services. He has lived his whole life in Aust (moving only 300 yards from where he was born) and knows the place, and its history, inside out.

One of Kath's earliest memories is of returning from Chepstow on the Aust ferry when two planes got into a dog fight in the skies above them. The children were forced into the bottom of the boat, and, when it docked, told to run for their lives! She has happier memories of family picnics on the sandy beach at Aust and catching salmon, stranded in shallow pools, with her hands. She recalls playing games on the main road and occasionally having to move aside for cars coming through to the ferry. It was a life spent outdoors, often picking fruit for her father, a market gardener, and flowers for a Miss Fowler who made dandelion and cowslip wine. She recalls the Aust fete held on the warth where she sold homemade lemonade and sweets. Kath met John through her brother and they were married in 1960 in Aust church. The sixties were a time of huge change in Aust, with the motorway cutting the village in half. She vividly remembers when the Severn Bridge was being constructed, *"I was pregnant at the time and not very well. I was just lying there and I used to hear the machines going up and down when they put the bridge cables in, 'clonk clonk' all day and all night, it never stopped"*.

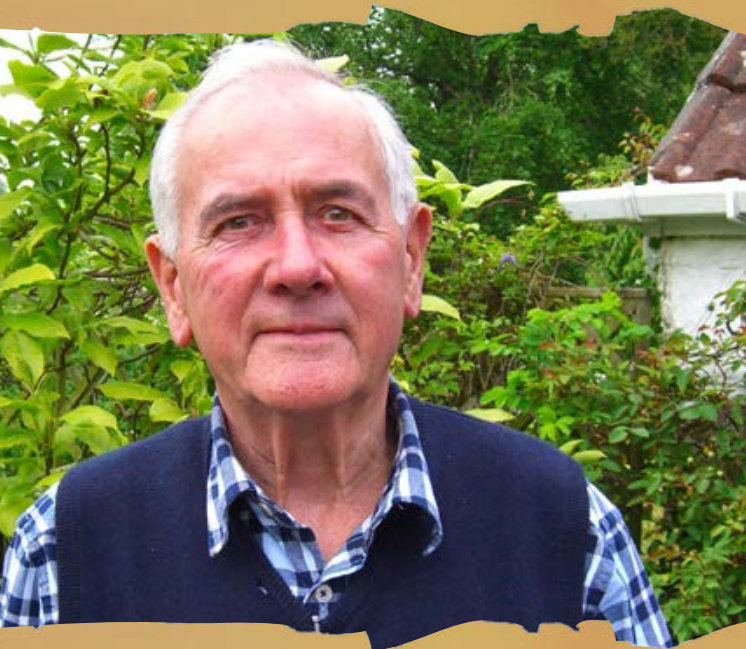
"Aust was our world. I've moved 300 yards from where I was born. That's it!" (John)



Listen to John talking about Aust on Tracks 02 and 04, the Aust ferry on Track 11 and the bridge construction on Track 12. Listen to Kath's memories of village life on Tracks 02, 06 and 11, and of the bridge being built on Track 12

(Photo © Julia Letts 2017)

“The importance of these two structures cannot be underestimated”



Listen to John's memories of the Aust ferry on Track 11, and his involvement in the bridge construction on Tracks 08 and 12

(Photo © Julian Baldwin 2017)

John Evans
recorded by Julian Baldwin

John's first experiences of the Severn were catching the Aust ferry to South Wales to visit his parents who had retired to Redwick. John had recently finished degrees in civil and highways engineering, and in the summer of 1961, on one visit home, he saw a sign saying 'Severn Bridge Construction'. He literally knocked on the door and asked for a job. He became the youngest engineer on the bridge project and started work at the Beachley end, constructing foundations for what would become the piers of the Severn Bridge. He describes the difficulties of doing this in an estuary with a 40 foot tidal range.

John met his wife, who lived in Newport, while he was in digs in Chepstow. They got engaged while John was doing 'tide shifts', so it wasn't easy to see each other. They married in 1964 and bought a house near his parents in Redwick where they've lived ever since. John describes his job and its challenges, including working on the piers during the freezing winter of 62-63, *"We managed to keep going because we were prepared, but the quarries in the Wye Valley (supplying us with aggregate) froze. The crusher jaws shattered in the cold"*. From 1963 to 1966, John worked on the foundations and steelwork of the Beachley viaduct and Wye Bridge. He later worked on lock gates for Portbury Dock and the strengthening of Severn Bridge. In the 80s John was involved in the construction of the Second Severn Crossing, and he's still a consultant on several big structure projects worldwide.

Andrew Hewitt
recorded by Julian Baldwin

Andrew was an experienced bridge engineer working for the Department of Transport when he was sent down from London to 'look after' the first Severn Bridge in the mid 1980s. The bridge was strengthened in the 70s following several collapses of 'box girder' bridges elsewhere in the world, but since then the amount and weight of traffic had increased exponentially and further extensive strengthening work was needed. Andrew says his main job was to keep the traffic flowing whilst this work could take place, for example by significantly narrowing the lanes, giving them extra space to work in. Andrew explains some of the technical challenges that cropped up and how they solved them. He mentions the occasional highlight (sitting on the piers below the traffic on a nice day) and various accidents (often caused by high wind). He explains that there are in fact four bridges – the Aust Viaduct connecting to the Severn Bridge, then the suspension bridge itself, then a viaduct across the Beachley peninsula, and finally a bridge over the River Wye. Andrew tells why there are no trees below the bridge at Beachley; *"There's an army camp there, and squaddies who missed the last bus back from Bristol had to walk back over the bridge. Then they would jump off it into the trees to avoid a 2 mile detour!"* Later in the eighties, Andrew was involved in planning the approach roads for the Second Severn Crossing. Andrew explains how they compromised with local people, planning mitigation works to reduce the impact of the new roads.

“The wires splay out inside this great chamber – it's just an amazing place”



Listen to Andrew's experiences of the Severn bridge and Second Severn Crossing on Track 12

(Photo © Julian Baldwin 2017)

“This place has such a long history”



*Listen to Lyn on Track 13 talking about the
upon-Severn floods*

(Photo © Sandro Sodano)

Lyn Carnaby
recorded by Felicity Pine

Lyn Carnaby moved to Littleton-upon-Severn in the 70s when her husband started working at Oldbury Power Station. She got involved in village life through the local church, helping out with the Sunday School and meeting some fascinating people through the church PCC. However, moving to a new village was not always easy and at times she felt lonely. She helped set up a Ladies' Circle for local villages which has thrived for 25 years. She says, *“We used to meet in Aust Village Hall as we never really generated many people from Littleton-upon-Severn. They seemed to be very resistant to it, at the time. We really wanted the village to be a much more accommodating place for people. Now after 40 odd years it's become the most fantastic village, and we have a lovely community”.*

Lyn wrote the guide book to St Mary de Malmesbury church after her husband died. In this interview, she describes many fascinating local events and local characters, which she has been researching over the years. She tells the story of the 69 foot whale that got beached on Littleton Pill in 1885 and the Britannia aeroplane that landed in the estuary mud in 1954. She also talks about a terrible flood in the area and effect of foot and mouth disease in 2001 – she says she will never forget the flames and smell of burning.

Eric Garrett
recorded by Julia Letts

Eric was born in 1929 and has lived in the parish of Olveston all his life. He grew up at Church Farm and one of his earliest memories is delivering milk to neighbours before school. Eric was 9 when his father died. His uncle took over the farm and his mother moved to a rented cottage next to the White Hart. During the war years, they moved into the pub which his mother ran. It was a busy place, especially popular with American soldiers stationed at Over Court. Eric recalls, *“Saturday night - you couldn't move in the pub. We had a local three-piece band but no music licence so my mother was always concerned. She said they could carry on as long as the police ignored it. The sing songs that took place were unbelievable!”*

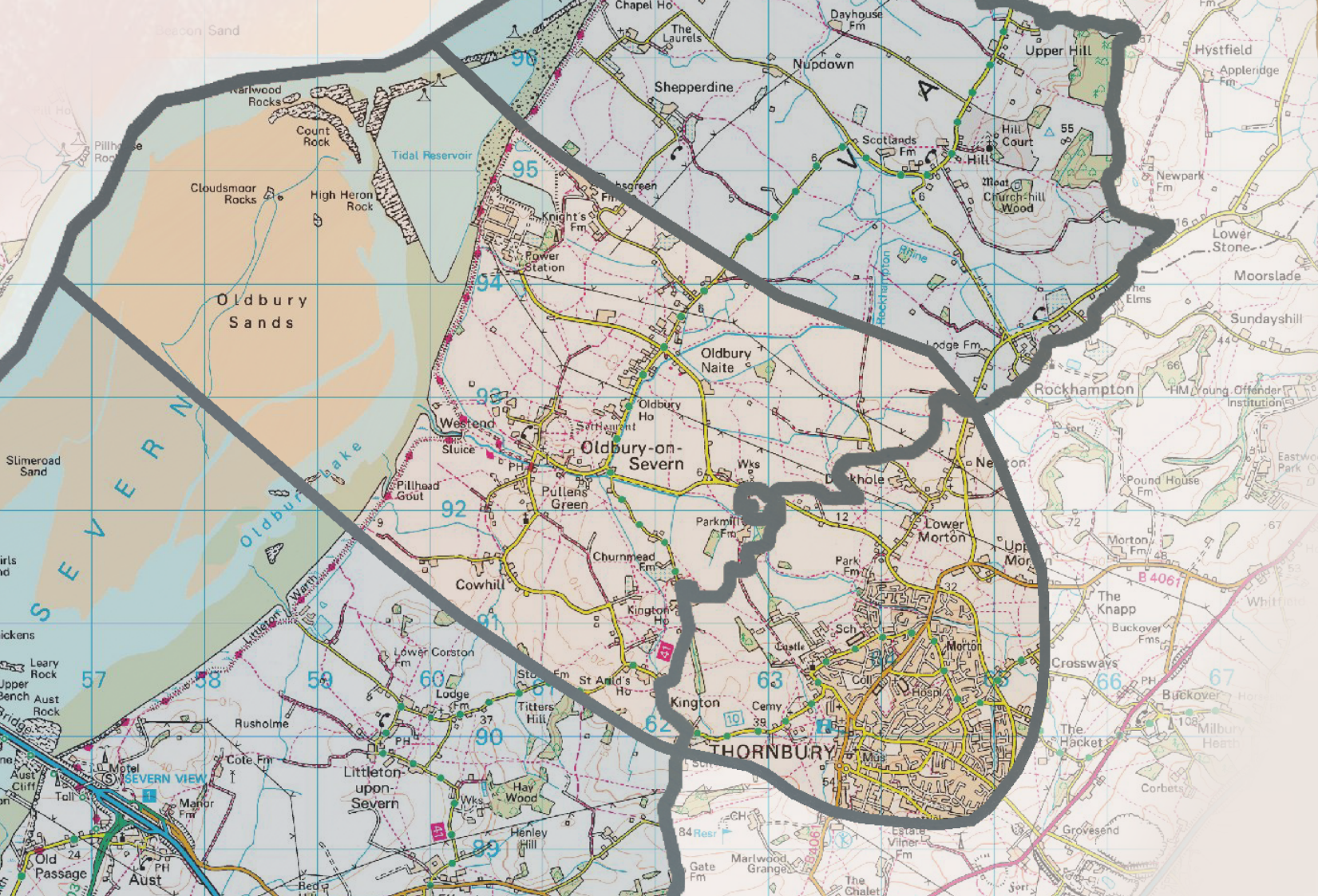
Other personal recollections include a day light raid on the Bristol Aeroplane factory, Italian POWs clearing land drainage rhines, and an unexploded mine on Olveston Common. Eric recalls Olveston village and its businesses in detail. He describes the changes in farming from the 30s onwards, visits to Aust, Severn Beach and Weston-Super-Mare (by charabanc) in the 1930s, school days and joining the scouts in the village. In 1945 Eric started an apprenticeship at a garage in Bristol. In 1953 he moved to the Bristol Aeroplane Company where he remained as an engineer for the next 30 years. Eric also talks about how the Parish and landscape has changed, the arrival of services (water, sewage), housing developments and the effect of the motorways and Severn Crossings.

*“Saturday night you couldn't
move in the pub!”*



*Listen to Eric's memories of timber wagons on
Track 05, the Severn Bridge on Track 12 and his
reflections on Track 16*

(Photo © Julian Kucharski 2017)



Around Oldbury-on-Severn Kington, Cowill, Oldbury and Thornbury

Around Oldbury-on-Severn, the landscape bears testament to our ancestors' lives on the levels with its ancient earthworks and churches.

At the heart of Oldbury lies a Scheduled Monument known locally as 'The Toot'. A Forgotten Landscape, DigVentures, and an army of archaeology volunteers investigated this large, enigmatic enclosure to learn more. Read about what they discovered in the report from the dig team that starts this section.

Then meet the men and women who make their living from this land. Although traditional salmon fishing has died out in the area, it's still very much alive in the memories of our interviewees. What a muddy life it was! But it wasn't all work - there are memories too of sailing on the river, picnicking on its edge and catching tiddlers in the rhines. Farming has changed substantially over the years, from farm horses to computerisation. Memories of the hardships and joys of working the land are shared in equal measure. Some of these memories contrast sharply with the experiences we hear from young people in Thornbury, who have divided opinions on staying in the area or moving away.

A Summary of the archaeological investigations of the Toot at Oldbury-on-Severn

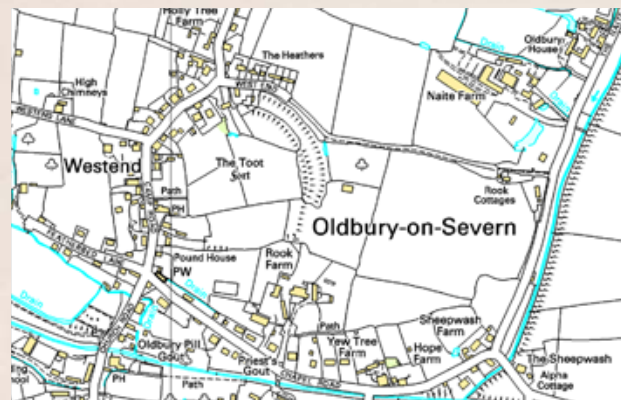
by A Forgotten Landscape's archaeology team

The past of Oldbury-on-Severn is etched into its road layout. Towards the northern edge of the village, a pair of banks is visible. They can be seen both on the maps of the area and by visitors standing in the roadway that follows their outer edge. They are presumed to be the remains of a prehistoric enclosure. Walk to the west along that road and, as it turns south, you trace the ditch between the western banks. Houses built along the road tower above you, using the higher ground to protect their foundations from the not infrequent flooding that used to affect the village. This enigmatic monument is called the Toot.

This monument has been variously described as an Enclosure, a Roman Camp and, lately, a Hill Fort. The banks around the 5 hectare site vary in their level of preservation, but do resemble those at other Iron Age Hill Forts around the country. However, the Toot is not on a hill! In addition, before this project, too little evidence had been found to date it to any particular period.

An AFL project was designed to study the monument and a number of approaches were used:

- A study of historical documents and reports of previous studies
- A topographical survey recording the above ground remains in detail for the first time
- A geophysical survey of the buried remains, using both earth resistance and magnetometry



The map shows the visible ramparts to the north and the curve of Camp Road to the west tracing the line of the ditch between the banks

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Geophysical results from one of the fields, the shading reflects the pattern of the earth resistance. The vertical light and dark bands in the middle show an old field boundary. The light results on the bottom left represent the "palaeochannel" of the Severn
(© AFL 2017)

- Two campaigns of excavation, the first with small, 1m by 1m, test pits and the second with much larger trenches
- An auger survey to sample the soils across the site to establish the survival of micro fossils for dating and to determine land use
- Optically Stimulated Luminescence (OSL) dating of minerals in excavated soils, to date the construction of the ditch and banks
- Drone survey gathering the best ever images of the site used to create a 3-D model
- Review of available LiDAR data of the site

While specialist help was needed for high tech methods, for training and for supervision, all of the fieldwork was done by volunteers overseen by the AFL team. Around twenty volunteers have been working on the project for roughly 2 years, accumulating a combined 200 working days' effort on the project, with a further 200 expended by an augmented team on the main excavation. The core team undertook training in, among other things, the geophysical measurement techniques, topographical surveying, excavation techniques and LiDAR interpretation. This ensured the work was conducted to professional standards and that it could be properly incorporated in the national database of archaeological knowledge. As this programme is drawing to a close the team is continuing to work on other projects within the AFL area and looking to a life beyond AFL to exploit their enthusiasm and training.

So what was found?

The full results are recorded on the project website (<http://www.aforgottenlandscape.org.uk/projects/archaeological-reports-oldbury-camp-toot-oldbury-severn/>) and there is only space here for limited highlights.

The geophysical survey used both earth resistance and magnetometry techniques to look for buried evidence and a number of apparent features were identified within the site, including an intriguing honeycomb pattern. However, what these represent is unclear and no structures were found in either of the digging campaigns. Artefacts from a very wide range of dates were found, from Neolithic flints, through Iron Age and Roman pottery to medieval and even modern rubbish! Though the finds were few in number, that fact alone is interesting.

The most important discovery was from the OSL method; this gives a clear date for the monument. Samples were analysed from several heights of the inner bank. See the photo for a view of this high tech activity in action! The most important sample was at the level of the original soil surface, the surface that the bank was built on. Here the dates came out in the range 100 BC to 100 AD. Thus the ditch was started, and the material excavated from it was

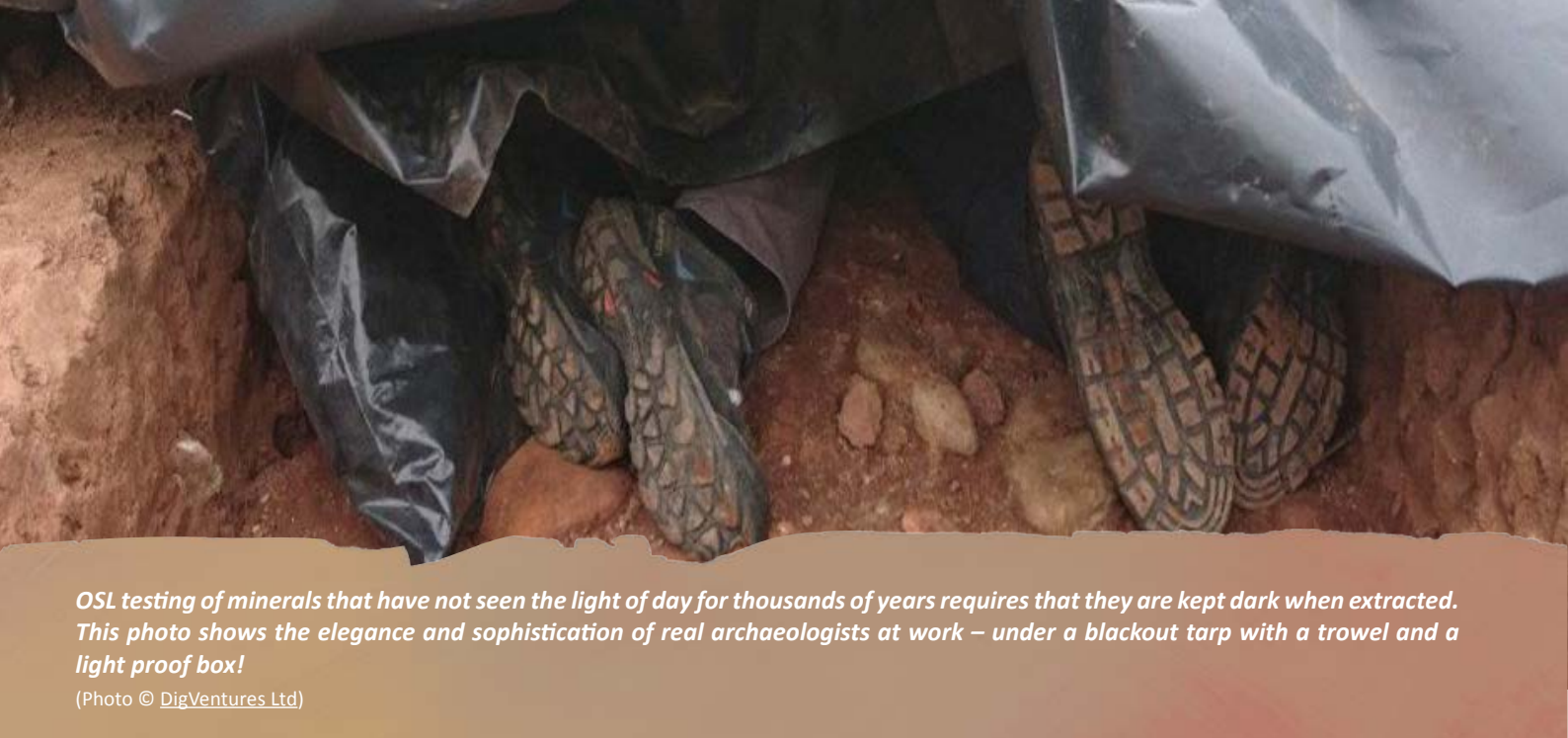
used to build the bank, at a crucial period in British history. The successful Claudian invasion of Britain in 43 AD brought Roman rule to the islands. So the monument seems to have been made shortly before or just after the Romans first arrived in the area. Further analysis may narrow this range down. Another interesting finding was that the ditch was probably constructed quite quickly and was not maintained, that is, it was not “re-cut” to clear out slippages.

It seems, therefore, that the original structure was built in the late Iron Age/early Roman period. But no evidence has been found that it was used after it was built and the banks and ditches began to erode. Examining the finds we have from the fields, though, we can make some comments about later activity on the site. During the medieval period the fields were probably ploughed and manured with waste from nearby farms, which explains the tiny, broken and rounded bits of medieval pot. By the 14th century, the fields may have been left for pasture, a common practice at the time. From the 16th century onwards, the village began to expand, and bits of more modern rubbish began to find their way into the soils in and around the Toot.



Aerial view of the primary excavations in the northern ramparts

(Photo © DigVentures Ltd)



OSL testing of minerals that have not seen the light of day for thousands of years requires that they are kept dark when extracted. This photo shows the elegance and sophistication of real archaeologists at work – under a blackout tarp with a trowel and a light proof box!

(Photo © DigVentures Ltd)

Another interesting discovery relates to the ancient course of the River Severn. Earth resistance results, combined with the environmental samples from the augering, demonstrate that the Severn extended to just south of the monument's location. However the evidence so far only dates this to the Mesolithic period, several thousand years before the Toot was constructed.

We don't know where the river edge was when the monument was built. One of our aims is to perform more augering to understand the environment outside the monument better.

This work has made a major step forward in understanding the site. We have the key date for construction and better mapping

of the site, both physically and in terms of the geophysical data. There is further detail on its connection to the Severn. Finally, the geophysical results show intriguing patterns but very limited evidence in the actual ground. We have found a lot about the Toot but the site has kept many of its secrets!

Acknowledgements

- Access to, and permission to survey, the monument has been graciously given the local landowners, tenants and the community of Oldbury-on-Severn. Their kind support and assistance was welcome.
- Permissions to investigate this scheduled monument were provided by [Historic England](#) who issued a section 42 licence for the survey. A copy is included in Appendix 5.
- Funding for this project was provided by the [Heritage Lottery Fund](#), [South Gloucestershire Council](#) and [Horizon Nuclear Power](#).
- Archaeological support and practical project management has been provided by the South Gloucestershire Council. Rebecca Bennett as Project Manager has been particularly energetic in providing technical and managerial help.
- The data gathering and analysis was conducted, in all weathers, by the enthusiastic team of volunteers recruited to this project as part of the "A Forgotten Landscape" Landscape Partnership Scheme.

- Training in geophysical and topographical surveying was provided by Philip Rowe and Hazel Riley respectively.
- Drone survey was undertaken by AerialCam Ltd. (<http://www.aerial-cam.co.uk/>)
- Planning, supervision and reporting of the excavation campaigns was undertaken by DigVentures Ltd. (<https://digventures.com/>)

References

Full results are reported on the project webpage at <http://www.aforgottenlandscape.org.uk/projects/archaeological-reports-oldbury-camp-toot-oldbury-severn/>

“We took the baskets down to the river on a big sledge”



Listen to Allan on Track 03 talking about salmon fishing in the Severn

(Photo © Julian Kucharski 2017)

Oral histories

Allan Knapp

recorded by Julian Baldwin

Allan grew up at Salmon Lodge, in Oldbury-on-Severn, a fisheries house on the river bank (demolished when Oldbury Power Station was built). His father and grandfather were traditional fishermen, making their own fishing baskets (kypes and putchers) and stringing them out in the Severn for nearly a mile. Allan says the fishing started to decline by the 30s and his father went to work on the Aust ferry from 1944 until its closure in 1966. Allan thinks that the decline was due to overfishing. He says, *“There were stacks of fisheries in the river right from Berkeley down to Severn Beach”*. He talks of the dangers of fishing on the Severn, including tides, fog and quick sands. Oldbury was a major dairy farming area and his mother made cheese. It was a time when there was no electricity and everything was done by candle light or Tilley lamps. Entertainment was home-made.

Allan started an apprenticeship as a wheelwright in Elberton in 1939, and in 1944 he joined the army. After the war, he moved into the building industry, working on a site for 2 years and then setting up on his own (he built his own 4-bed house which he completed when he was 76!). Allan talks in detail about various aspects of village life, including entertainment before the days of television – local dances, concerts, whist drives and skittle matches. He also has memories of farming, orcharding and cider making, as well as the village pubs and the local school.

Don Riddle

recorded by Felicity Pine

Don Riddle was born in 1930 and has lived in Oldbury-on-Severn all his life. He vividly recalls village life in the 1930s and 40s, as well as events and experiences during the Second World War. In those days mobile cider mills went round the farms in autumn making the cider, which was fermented in barrels on the farms and sold in the spring sales. This was an important area for fruit growing and dairy farming. Over the years Don has watched the orchards and dairy herds disappear. He says, *“I have seen vast changes in farming life. Just in Oldbury itself we had up to 30 milk producers. Now in the Parish of Oldbury-on-Severn there are 3 or 4 milk producers at the most, and we have seen the churns die out and the bulk collections start”*.

Don's mother drowned in the River Severn in a tragic accident when he was 8 years old. He grew up with his grandparents in the village, and after leaving school, he started farming. In 1962 he joined the Milk Marketing Board as an artificial inseminator, a job which he did for 31 years until retirement. Don started salmon fishing with his father aged 9, and he tells many stories about fishing over the years, including the time when he and Deryck Huby caught a salmon that weighed 36 and a half pounds! In retirement Don still makes traditional salmon baskets (putchers) and retains his interest in old machinery. He takes his engines around to local shows.

“My little daughter is holding it up and the fish is bigger than her!”



Listen to Don's memories of fishing and cider making on Tracks 03 and 06, and flooding on Track 13

(Photo © Julian Kucharski 2017)

Deryck and Marion Huby
recorded by Felicity Pine

Deryck first came to this area in 1937 when he was 11 years old. His father had got a job as a gamekeeper on the Berkeley estate and the family moved to an isolated cottage by the duck decoy pool. Deryck recalls, *"The bird life was tremendous. We used to get hoopoe and nightingale - three pairs of nightingales! It was wonderful, and I listened to them for many years"*. Deryck explains that wild ducks were caught by luring them into a decoy net which funnelled them into tunnels from where they could be retrieved by the gamekeeper. It was Deryck's job to keep the decoy clean and feed the ducks. On two occasions they caught more than 50 wild ducks in one go. It became illegal to catch wildfowl in this way in 1952.

After school Deryck became a farmer and went to Hartpury College to study agriculture. In the early 60s he joined the Milk Marketing Board as part of their insemination team, and spent the rest of his working life in this role. Deryck also talks about his hobby as a salmon fisherman, spending 32 years with his colleague Don Riddle, working various salmon pools on the Severn.

Marion grew up at Paddington Farm, Berkeley, rented by her family. She went to a small private school in Berkeley, travelling there by pony and trap. She recalls writing on slates, and doing sewing and embroidery. She left school at 14 to look after her grandmother and later went to catering college, which led to a catering job at the power station. *"Our dining room for the VIPs was built on the second storey and looked out over the River. There were a lot of boats that went regularly down to the Sharpness docks and they knew all the ladies in the canteen and as they went by they blew their hooters!"*

After meeting and marrying Deryck, Marion carried on working until she had children. She then built up a business growing and selling her own vegetables, making bread and cakes for local businesses and selling the salmon caught by Deryck.

"We used to get hoopoe and nightingale – three pairs of nightingales!"



Listen to Deryck's memories on Track 03 and Marion's on Track 08

(Photo © Julian Kucharski 2017)

“What a beautiful place to spend your time!”



Listen to Christabelle talking about salmon fishing on Tracks 03 and 08, and cider making on Track 06

(Photo © Julian Kucharski 2017)

Christabelle Tymko
recorded by Jacquie Rinaldi

The daughter of a fisherman, Christabelle's early life revolved around salmon fishing. She describes the yearly cycle, which started in winter with the collection of withies which were woven into putchers. Christabelle recalls the excitement of the days leading up to April 16th, the start of the fishing season; everything had to be made ready. Trailer loads of putchers were stacked on the river bank ready to be carried across the mud and fixed into place on the river bed. As she got older, Christabelle was involved in every aspect of salmon fishing, helping out whenever she could by going down the Severn and wading through the mud to check the putchers as the tide went out - twice a day, whatever the weather. She went to college in Bath but came back whenever she could and always for the start of salmon season, bringing student friends to help; the hard, muddy days in the river followed by jolly evenings of cider drinking and singing in the local pub. She recalls going in her mother's car to the station in Patchway where salmon were sent off to Billingsgate fish market and also delivering salmon to local hostelrys and restaurants. The building of the first Severn Bridge and the power station badly affected the salmon fishing. By 1984 the catches had dramatically diminished, *“There's a photo of me with my girls at the end of May carrying back a twenty pounder ... it was early in the season, and we thought it would be a good year. Then there was nothing, nothing for over 6 weeks – it was hard. We were penniless”.*



Christabelle Tymko fixing the putchers into position

(Photo © Christabelle Tymko)

*“The sunsets were silver or gold light
across the Severn”*



*Listen to Joyce’s recollections of living by the
Severn on Tracks 02 and her views on the power
station on Track 08*

(Photo © Julian Kucharski 2017)

Joyce Tibbenham
recorded by Felicity Pine

Joyce Tibbenham was born in Oldbury but moved to Salmon Lodge, on the banks of the River Severn, when she was 10 years old. She has vivid memories of this home and feels deeply connected to it. She says, *“Lots of memories come flashing back about Salmon Lodge, more than anywhere else I’ve been. The sunsets were silver or gold light across the Severn, and with the water as well, it was ideal. It was beautiful down there”*. Joyce recalls lying in bed watching the tops of barges above the Severn bank being towed down the river. She has happy memories of summer evenings eating picnics on the sea wall until dusk fell and squally days when you had to lean into the wind to stay upright. She would either walk over the fields to school or go by pony and trap; it was Joyce’s job to catch the pony (‘a rascal!’) every morning.

Joyce talks about her grandfather and her father, who were both traditional putcher fishermen, catching salmon in baskets strung out in the river. Despite never learning to swim, Joyce would go with them to check the putchers. Ironically she hates salmon. When she started work, the family left Salmon Lodge and moved Sheepwash Farm to make it easier for Joyce to commute by bike and bus. Joyce ended up living in Sheepwash with her husband Harry. Joyce also recalls the impact of the war on Oldbury, wildlife and the landscape, other childhood memories such as being in the Girls Life Brigade, getting married to Harry, and her love of poetry and dancing.

Mary Jennings
recorded by Jacquie Rinaldi

Mary has spent the last 40 years in Oldbury after moving to the village with her husband Don in 1976. Whilst bringing up their four children in Bristol in the 60s, they decided to learn to sail. They became hooked and joined Thornbury Sailing Club at Oldbury. When their youngest child went to University, Mary and Don found a cottage for sale in the village. Their home was close to the drainage rhine through Oldbury and during tidal floods, the water got within 3 inches of their house but they never flooded.

Mary has happy memories of cycling around the area and describes her routes, the wildlife and birdlife. She describes the view from the jetty at the sailing club and her sailing trips up and down the Severn, which always depended on the tide. Occasionally they would sail to Denny Island or Beachley for picnics. She describes one particular trip to the Windbound Inn at Shepperdine and coming back in the dark, *“It was a lovely night, the sailing was good, you had the stars and the moon, and the tide was being sensible. It was great”*. Mary and Don started a junior week at the club to get more children involved in sailing. She recalls families coming to camp overnight during club week and the club house being rebuilt from a building that had been dismantled and transported from the old Avon Bridge site. Mary has volunteered for many groups, events and campaigns during her 40 years in Oldbury.

*“Sailing by the stars and the moon ...
it was wonderful”*



*Listen to Mary’s descriptions of sailing on
Track 02*

(Photo © Julian Kucharski 2017)

"I remember walking in snow drifts up to my waist"



Listen to Richard's farming memories on Track 07 and local floods on Track 13

(Photo © Julian Kucharski 2017)

Richard Bennett
recorded by Felicity Pine

Richard's grandfather bought Morton farm from the Eastwood Estate (near Thornbury) in 1916. It passed to his mother, then to him and then his son. It was mainly a dairy farm, with about 40 cows when he started out, although he says they did 'a bit of everything' through the years, including poultry, pigs and arable. Richard recalls what the house and community were like in the 1940s. He went to primary school in Thornbury. At 11 he moved to a boarding school in Bristol. Richard left school at 16 and started working on the farm, going into partnership with his father at 20. He talks about running the farm, building up the herd, his involvement with 'Young Farmers' and success in various agricultural competitions.

He vividly recalls the winter of 1962-63 when it started snowing heavily on Boxing Day. *"The cows were out and I remember going up over the hill behind the farm to find them, walking through snow drifts up to my waist. They were underneath the big rookery, and to try and get them away from there to do the milking was difficult. I kept falling over in the snow. We got the cows tied up but couldn't find the milk churns as they were covered in snow. Eventually we got the milking done but the milk lorry could not get out to us. They were tough times!"* Richard is particularly proud of his children and their achievements. His son expanded the herd to 500 cows and now works all over the world in the dairy industry.

David Webb
recorded by Steve Carroll

David was born in 1946 in Buck Lane. He started work aged 15 just a quarter of a mile away at Manor Farm, owned by the same family since the 16th century. He's now worked there for 55 years. His early memories include noticing his grandfather's unusually bony hands. He had caught anthrax whilst burning infected cattle and had the flesh burnt off his hands to prevent infection spreading. As a young man, David did a variety of jobs as well as farm work, such as collecting father's milk round money, washing straw in a ditch for a local thatcher, collecting cider apples and doing combine harvesting. David recalls sharing cider and gossip with other locals as they waited on the roadside for a haircut from the barber, rabbiting with ferrets, and trips to the seaside sitting on upturned milk crates with his sisters in the back of his father's milk van. David also recalls the twice yearly pig killing, *"The local butcher would come and kill it. It was brought to the back door then. A big old table was brought out and mum, dad and grampy would be out there carving the old pig up, making faggots, and sharing it all out. Nothing was wasted, everything was used"*. When relatives came to stay, David recalls twelve people sleeping head to toe in the family's two bedroom cottage, which was without mains water, drainage or electricity until the mid-1950s. David says that the Lower Severn Vale has changed beyond recognition during his lifetime. The once everyday sight of people working in their fields is now a rare thing to see.

"Nothing was wasted, everything was used"



Listen to David Webb recalling his way of life on Track 16

“It was lucky no one lost their lives that night”



Listen to Matthew talking about his childhood on Track 02 and flooding on Track 13

(Photo © Julian Kucharski 2017)

Matthew Riddle
recorded by Dave Howell

Matthew is vice chairman of the Lower Severn Drainage Board; he's been a member since 2003. He lives and farms in Oldbury-on-Severn. He talks about the Board's work managing the drainage of inland water through a system of pumping stations, 'rhines' (man-made waterways) and tidal flaps to drain into the Severn at low tide. He discusses maintaining rhines through regular dredging and flailing of vegetation, whilst trying to help protect them as important corridors of wildlife, including endangered species like water voles. Matthew talks about warning systems and using data to predict tides and flooding. He explains the history of the rhines and speculates about what the landscape here would have looked like without them, and what would happen if the management of its drainage suddenly ceased.

He graphically remembers the flooding in 1981 and its impact upon Oldbury, *“It was quite lucky that no one lost their lives that night; it was dark, there was a power cut, the weather was atrocious, and suddenly there was a deep flood in places. When the tide went down, people were left with mud in their homes, and it takes a long time to get rid of the stench of Severn mud”*. He also remembers what the rhines used to be like before they were deepened in the 70s, and recalls fishing in them as a child with a net fashioned from a pair of his mothers' tights and a coat hanger, catching sticklebacks or elvers, which his mother would serve on toast to his father.

Ron Taylor
recorded by Jacquie Rinaldi

Ron was born in 1930 in Saw Mill Lane in Thornbury, one of five boys. Despite money being tight, he recalls a happy childhood, mostly spent outdoors. His father was a carter at the Saw Mill. Ron would go out with him on the long timber carts, pulled by two huge horses, to collect trees from outlying farms, coming home at dark, *“The lantern swinging on the trees on the cart”*. Ron describes the sights and sounds of the old mill, and the spectacle of the huge horses swinging out into the road to get into John Street. He also recalls the day that Old Mrs Mundy donated the Mundy Fields to the town as playing fields. He went to see the handing over ceremony and the fireworks.

Ron talks of the war years in Thornbury, recalling the statues of Romulus & Remus at the gates of the Prisoner of War Camp along the Gloucester Road and seeing POWs in the town. He left school at 14 to work with Tuckers, the local builders. He was employed on several estates around Thornbury, Oldbury and Kington. After work he walked to 'The Bathings' - a concrete swimming pool owned by the Pearce family where young people and families gathered to swim, *“It was the place to be ... everyone who could swim had learnt to swim there!”* Later, Ron moved to Berkeley Power Station where he worked on maintenance for 25 years. The regular income allowed him to buy the home where he and his wife brought up their family.

“The lantern swinging from the trees on the cart”



Listen to Ron's childhood memories on Tracks 04 and 05, and looking back on Track 16

(Photo © Julian Kucharski 2017)

The Staleys - Roger and Hazel and their son Dave ***recorded by Jacquie Rinaldi and Dave Howell***

Roger and Hazel grew up three miles away from each other on family farms, but didn't meet until Roger set up a Church Youth Fellowship for young people which Hazel joined. Roger's farm was in Kington - a mixed farm which had been in his family for a generation. They had no electricity and used candles for light. He dreaded, as a child, pumping water from a bore hole into a tank for use in the house. He recalls the first vehicle on the farm, *"An Austin 10 – ADF460, I can see the engine now. We had it all through the war – no trouble. We had 4 cart horses on the farm at first. We were very modern though in those days, quite a thing!"* Roger went to school in Thornbury until he was about 9, and then to a prep school in Cheltenham. After National Service, he returned to the family farm and took on restoring Kington house, opposite the farm, which his mother had bought in a derelict state for £1500.

Hazel's farm was in Sibland on the other side of Thornbury. She was the eldest of 5, with 4 boys below her; much of her childhood and young adulthood was spent looking after them. During the war, they took in relations from Bristol (Roger recalls his mother putting up families who had walked out of Bristol and had nowhere to stay). Hazel's farm was also mixed; she recalls milking cows by hand and making cider. They had a cheese room and an apple room in the farmhouse. *"The cheese*

had to be turned quite regularly. They were in truckles and then you had to cut them up. Of course they lasted a long time, a year or more". Roger and Hazel talk about the Youth Fellowship and how they travelled about the area holding services in chapels of different denominations.

Dave grew up on the farm in the '60s and '70s. When he left school, he shifted the farm's emphasis from mixed to an intensive pig farm. The 2001 foot and mouth outbreak had a devastating effect, forcing the slaughter of his entire stock and a radical rethink. They decided to build up a self-storage business whilst returning arable land to traditional pastures and wildlife habitat through an arable reversion scheme. Dave discusses how mechanization and technology have changed farming practice over the past 30 years; how things are now driven by the economics of large supermarkets, with larger acreages managed by a single farmer and farmers having to be more astute to survive. Dave has a deep love of the countryside and views himself as a steward of the land, *"Once you're a farmer, it's in your blood. You can't help it. You are always looking at the crops and watching the weather; you long for spring to see things burst into life, you enjoy the seasons. I see myself as a steward of this land. I want to look after it as best I can and then pass it on to the next generation".*

"We had four cart horses on the farm at first"



Dave Staley now runs the farm with his brother. Listen to his thoughts on farming on Track 07

(Photo © David Howell)



Listen to Roger and Hazel's wartime memories on Track 04, and Roger's memories of the Church Youth Fellowship on Track 14

(Photo © Jacquie Rinaldi)

***Aidan, George, Rosie, Lily, Caitlin, Matthew and Theo, all 14
from The Castle School, Thornbury***

Aidan lives in Tytherington, 15 minutes' drive from Thornbury, whilst George lives five minutes' walk from school. Aidan has a love of nature, and likes being in the countryside when he can. George is more at home in the town but spends time at his Nan's place where they keep horses. Both boys feel that Thornbury is small and the shops are boring. They prefer to go further afield, to Cribbs Causeway, or they shop online. They spend time playing sport, riding bikes and playing computer games. They say the biggest pressure on teenagers is the feeling that you have to conform in terms of what you look like and what you wear. George says he will definitely move away from Thornbury as a young adult, but might move back later in life.

Rosie lives in Littleton-upon-Severn. She likes her village and enjoys being part of its community. Her grandparents also live in the village and her gran tells her stories of growing up here and going fishing with her parents. Lily and Caitlin both live in Thornbury and spend time at friends' houses or in Mundy Park. Caitlin likes the park but thinks there should be teenage shelters so that they can hang out together. Rosie plays the violin and goes to music school on Saturdays. Lily does trampolining. All the girls like to go to Cribbs Causeway and feel that there's little to keep them in Thornbury. They say they are influenced by social media and spend a lot of time online.

They say, *"You constantly have to follow the same trends. There are certain brands that people have to wear. If you act in a certain way or look a certain way people will give you a hard time for it, so you have to go with what everyone else does".*

Theo and Matthew also live in the town, Theo in an 18th century beamed house with a fascinating history, and Matthew in a house on an estate. Theo's family goes back two generations in Thornbury. His grandmother moved to the town from the Forest of Dean. Matthew's parents moved to the area for work. He has relatives in the North East. Both boys love the green spaces of Thornbury and, whilst they understand the need for new housing, they are sad to see fields they know disappearing under concrete. They don't think the town can support so much house building. Both boys are aware of the current political situation with Brexit, but they don't think of themselves as European. They imagine they'll move out of Thornbury when they are young adults. Theo is keen to get involved in politics. He says, *"My phone is my life"* and realises this sounds crazy but that everything he needs, from his morning alarm to his 700 albums, are on his phone. Matthew is interested in working in industry and thinks he's well-placed at the moment as Thornbury is surrounded by growing engineering companies.



Listen to the teenagers' views on Track 16

(Photos © Julia Letts 2017)



Onwards towards Gloucestershire *Sheppertine and Hill*

Wandering on foot in the north of our region, the level, quiet land feels remote and unchanged, despite the silvery towers of the closed nuclear power station. But the fields and hedgerows have their tales to tell; our history researcher reports on how old maps can show us the hidden past and uses of the landscape, and provides direction so you can take a walk in this beautiful area to see for yourself!

The collective memories of the people who know this area well are filled with stories of farming, fishing, cider making, river transport, everyday joys and sorrows – and the coming of the first nuclear power plants at Oldbury and Berkeley. Meet the keeper of the tin chapel in Sheppertine and an eyewitness to the boisterous evenings in the now demolished Windbound pub. The people of A Forgotten Landscape are always full of surprises.

The Changing Landscape
by Mary Knight

Looking from the top of Stinchcombe Hill or Thornbury Ridge across the levels have you ever thought about how much the rural landscape has changed over the centuries? My memory goes back to the late 1960s; I remember looking across and in nearly every hedgerow there was a dead or dying elm during that period. It was estimated that Gloucestershire lost two thirds of its elm trees to Dutch Elm disease.

The Parish of Hill was examined for this project because it was small enough to plan out a methodology for researching the field boundaries, how they have changed and the rate of change. Unlike the South Wealds field boundary project, www.highweald.org, which chose as its starting point the modern Ordnance Survey (OS) maps and worked back in history, the chosen method began with the earliest available documents and worked forward. As this was being mapped using a Geographic Information System (GIS), it was better to know exactly where the smaller field parcels were and then see how they grew in size, than estimate from the modern maps where the disappeared field boundaries had been and so work backwards in time.

The documents easily available to the researcher of every parish are an enclosure map (and award if one was enacted), tithe maps and their apportionments, any estate maps, and

the 1st edition Ordnance Survey maps. Many, though not all, of these documents are available to see on the Know Your Place (KYP) web page (www.kypwest.org.uk); KYP is a very useful and informative tool to start any research with. Other sources are aerial photography which often captured the fields from the air, and most recently the Environment Agency made Light Detection and Ranging (LIDAR) data available. This is used to examine the surface of the earth and can be very accurate; it is possible to see where the earlier field boundaries and features were.

Another useful source for Hill is the 1835 Lower Severn Drainage Maps and Reference Book, because the map is cross referenced and gives land owner, occupier, field names and use. This information had sometimes changed by the time the Tithe Map was produced in 1840. So was there an error in collecting the details or had the field names changed or the owner / occupier changed in that 5 years? That would take further cross referencing between other documentary evidence, for instance the 1840 census and manorial records, to determine.

The aerial photographs show the area was mostly old ridge and furrow cultivation until after the Black Death when, with the consequent decrease in population, dairy farming increased and by the 1840s pasture was the main land use.

This comparison covers the area surveyed for the Severn Drainage Map, which was the lower farming land in the parish. Table 1 shows the rate of change in the 19th century; the 25% decrease in the number of parcels of land between 1835 and the 1880s 1st edition Ordnance Survey (scale 25":1 mile) is the greatest change. This reflects the introduction of machinery, increased efficiency of farming practises and often fewer people available to work on the land.

Source Document	1835 Severn Drainage Map	1840 Tithe Map	1880's OS 1st Edition Series 25":1 mile	Avon County aerial survey April 1975	Google UK
Total no. of field parcels	188	174	141	123	102
% change from 1835 total	100%	8%	25%	35%	46%
% unchanged from 1835 total	100%	92%	75%	65%	54%

Table 1. Rate of change from 1835

Table 2. Outline plan of field boundaries



Table 2 is an outline plan of the field boundaries in the parish showing which ones are currently in existence and those which have been lost.

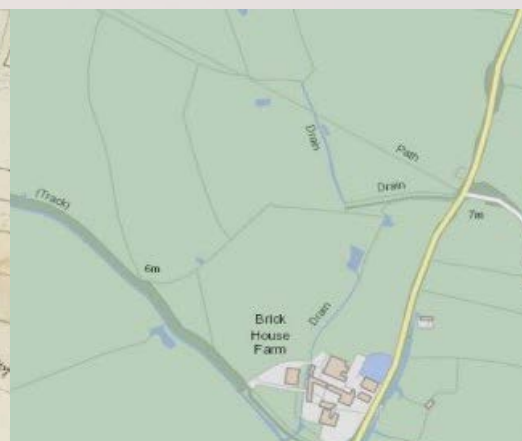
Seeing for yourself how the field boundaries have changed and what landscape features still exist is a great excuse for a walk. To plan a walk, you'll need an up-to-date Ordnance Survey map or look at an online version on your local authority website, although the latter information is not necessarily downloadable. Plan how, by using the public rights of way, you can see those points of interest or curiosity which you noticed on the earlier maps on KYP.

Please observe the country code at all times www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-countryside-code/the-countryside-code and follow the maxim, 'Take nothing but photos, leave nothing but footprints, keep nothing but memories'.

Here's a walk to visit field boundaries in Hill. It's based on information from the 1st Ed 1880s OS map and the 1840s Hill Tithe map, both available on KYP, as illustrated.

Starting at Hill Road at OS Grid Reference ST 6512 9634, opposite the red letter box, walk west along the public bridleway (shown by the green dashes on the current OS map) that follows the track to the former Stuckmoor Common. I noticed the single apple tree in the field to the left (parcel number 134 on the 1880s OS map), a sole survivor of the past orchard. Carrying on along the bridleway, you'll

pass through two fields (parcels 107 & 104). You'll see that most of the hedges have not been maintained traditionally by the practise of hedge laying. But note the large pollarded willows; these would have been around at the time of the Lower Severn Drainage records - the metal tags show they are covered by a Tree Preservation Order. In the next field (parcel 95) the very distinct ridge and furrow of past farming practises is easily distinguished. There is also a level margin to the field headland where perhaps the plough was turned and the cattle grazed when this was strip cultivated. The bridleway then passes along an old track (from at least 1840) called Roughcroft Lane, shortly turning left and crossing former field parcels 23 and 40 down to Longpool Lane, another old grassed track. Turn left into Longpool Lane and follow the track back to Hill Road. Longpool is a pleasant double rhined lane on the 1835 Lower Severn Drainage maps, but just around 50 years later, on the 1880s OS map, it had a single rhine to the south side. Today it is ditched on both sides. There was no act of parliament for extensive enclosure of the land, probably due to fact the there was one large landowner. The current Lord of the Manor, the Jenner Fust family, are descendants of Richard Fust who bought the land in 1609.



Looking at Hill on Know your Place. L-R 1st Edition Ordnance Survey map, 1840s tithe map and Ordnance Survey 2016 map

(© Know Your Place South Gloucestershire www.kypwest.org.uk/tag/south-gloucestershire)

Entrance to Stuckmore Common at the start of the walk

(Photo © Mary Knight / AFL, 2017)



You can see wildlife as well as history out in the countryside

(Photo © Mary Knight / AFL, 2017)

With some historical research a walk in the countryside or town is brought further alive with imagination; not only is the wildlife there to spot but also our past.

Suggestions for further reading

A Forgotten Landscape for general reading of the Severn Vale. www.aforgottenlandscape.org.uk/

Know Your Place website for research using different eras of maps. <http://www.kypwest.org.uk/>

R Muir, *The New Reading the Landscape, Fieldwork in Landscape History* (University of Exeter Press, Exeter2000)

W.G. Hoskins, *The Making of the English Landscape* (Hodder and Stoughton, London 1955)

Oral histories

Alfred Till

recorded by Steve Carroll

Alfred Till and his brother came to live with their grandparents at Chapel Houses (a terrace of three cottages near Shepperdine) after their mother's death. Alfred's grandfather was a fisherman, catching flounder and shrimp in the Severn. He would row from Chapel Houses to Chepstow and back, going with the tide. Alfred's grandmother was in charge of the tin tabernacle chapel at Shepperdine, which meant that Alfred had to attend church every Sunday. The one time he bunked off he was made to read the bible at home all day. At that time, Chapel Houses was located on the breakwater's edge and the tide came right up under the cottage windows. From the sitting room window he could watch salmon leaping, and on one occasion he found an unexpected visitor outside the house, *"It was a winter's morning and I walked out of my house to go next door, when I saw a seal up on its fins looking through our living room window!"* He also remembers watching airships flying overhead from Germany to America, a windjammer sailing by, and at night listening to howling south westerlies rattle the eaves of the cottage. In the freezing winter weather of 1940 Alfred's grandparents died within 32 hours of each other. His grandfather had caught a chill whilst rowing a man out to the lighthouses just a mile off shore. His grandmother also caught the chill and died before her husband. Alfred and his brother (aged 14 and 13) then had to leave Chapel Houses and go to live with an aunt in Upton on Severn.

"I saw a seal looking through our window!"



Listen to Alfred's memories of Chapel Houses on Track 02 and Track 14

(Photo © Julian Kucharski 2017)

"You haven't lived if you haven't been mudding"



Listen to Jan's memories of the Windbound Inn on Tracks 02 and 14

(Photo © Jan Small)

Jan Small
recorded by Jenny Gathercole

Jan was born in 1936 and moved to The Windbound Inn, Shepperdine, in 1950 with her mother where she lived for the next 10 years. This move enabled her mother's cousin Morty to continue to run the pub after her aunt's death - the brewery insisted that he should not run the Inn without a woman present. Jan describes the Windbound in the 1950s as a very basic place. Water had to be collected from neighbours and the bar was just one room with barrels on a trestle table and wooden seats around the outside. Jan had little material comfort or social contact but this didn't trouble her. On the contrary, she accepted and immersed herself in the ebb and flow of life by the riverbank.

She has a deep connection to the landscape. She describes the magical day she sat alone with her dog by a pond in a copse on the riverbank; to her great joy and disbelief, a nightingale started singing. She recalls the sheer joy of playing in the mud of the river at low tide, *"You haven't lived if you haven't been mudding!"* She describes the journey of the wild salmon from Tommy Cornock's baskets in the middle of the river to the sandwiches made by her and her mother for visitors at the pub. She also describes the risks and dangers of the river and remembers a photo taken by her mother of a man (Lord Rufus Noel Buxton) wet up to his shoulders with long stick who had walked across the river from Wales.

Mike Bennett
recorded by Steve Carroll

Mike's great-grandfather lived at Shepperdine and began fishing for salmon, shrimp and eels on the River Severn in 1907. Each year he made hundreds of traditional salmon baskets, selling 200 putchers to Welsh fishermen. Mike's grandfather Harry continued combining farming and fishing and was known locally as Fisherman Bennett. He bought the cottage where Mike was born and has lived ever since. Mike remembers being taught to make putchers which, once mastered, he could do in 30 minutes. Neighbours who helped were paid in rough cider from the Bennett's orchard, which produced a 1,000 gallons a year. Fish catches were delivered to the Windbound Inn, run by a cousin. Shrimp were cooked by Mike's grandmother, who also paundered rabbits as a side line, while his father and aunt made local deliveries by bicycle. The Bennett family continued fishing until 1957, when the construction of Berkeley Power Station prevented them continuing. Mike left school at 15 to work for a local farmer. He later inherited his family's cottage, and also acquired land at Shepperdine, keeping cattle, sheep and pigs. Mike talks with fondness for traditional farming values and his love of looking after livestock and the countryside. He recalls many local characters, such as two 'rabbiters' who often tried to out-brag each other in the White Horse Inn. *"When they left the pub, they would check their snares on the way home to see what they had caught. At their next visit to the pub they would accuse each other of having left the pub early to empty the other man's snares as well as their own!"*

"My great-grandfather started fishing around here in 1907"



Listen to Mike's fishing stories on Track 03 and cider making on Track 06

(Photo © Julian Kucharski 2017)

“There’s been a chapel by the river since 1350”



Listen to Sandra on Track 06 and 07 talking about farming and cider making, and on Track 14 talking about the Tin Chapel at Shepperdine

(Photo © Julian Kucharski 2017)

Sandra Grey
recorded by Felicity Pine

Sandra grew up on farms in Almondsbury and Pilning. She has childhood memories of the Severn Bridge being built and having to wait for big machinery to cross the lane on her way to school. She remembers the freezing winter of 1963 when the rhines froze over. After this, the family moved to Wapley and this is where she met Andrew Grey at a Young Farmers’ Valentine Day dance. They married and moved to Shepperdine in the 70s. Andrew’s family go back generations in this area and Andrew’s mother Primrose was the organist at the Tin Chapel in Shepperdine for 50 years. Sandra talks about her own connection with the Tin Chapel, relating its fascinating history (a pre-fab structure brought over the Severn in sections from South Wales) and the centenary celebrations in 2014. *“We haven’t got a village hall, so we thought it would be nice to celebrate at the chapel itself. We had a big tent, and Bishop Michael came. Because it is only a little building, we took out the two windows and attached a marquee, and over 150 people came”.*

Sandra also talks about the Windbound Inn in Shepperdine. It gained its name from the river folk who stopped for a drink there whilst plying their trade on the Severn and claimed they were ‘windbound’. After closing as a pub, it was used for various purposes before being bought by the company building Oldbury Power Station. Sandra watched as the building it became derelict and was finally demolished in 2017.

Bill Gill
recorded by Steve Carroll

Bill first moved to Gloucestershire in October 1960 to work at Berkeley Power Station. His first month was memorable, as he got married on the 1st, began a new job on the 10th, then his mother died unexpectedly, and on the 25th he was woken by a huge explosion. Two oil barges had collided in fog on the Severn. Drifting into a railway bridge, two bridge spans fell onto the barges and ignited the oil, causing the deaths of five men. Bill quickly settled in to his new life, but compared to his home town of Salford, he admits that he found Berkeley very quiet and very clean. He says, *“It took me some time to realise that a local window cleaner couldn’t be found only because one wasn’t needed, there was no pollution!”*

He describes the deference locals paid to engineers working at Berkeley’s ‘atomic’ station as they called it, and the collision of old world ways with new technology. He also remembers salmon turning up in the station’s cooling lagoon, and being smuggled out by contractors. In 1967 Bill moved from Berkeley to Oldbury Power Station. He recalls supervising the world’s first robotic welding operation inside a reactor, an earthquake in the Midlands that nearly shut down the reactor because of the effect on the station’s instrumentation, and how Oldbury stepped in to prevent a power blackout in Bristol and Bath. He also describes 2,000 wagtails living in the turbine hall roof space, attracted by the warmth.

“We had ten thousand visitors on one day”



Listen to Bill’s stories of his power station days on Track 08

(Photo © Julian Kucharski 2017)

Contributors

Adam Mead

Chris Napier

Hello. My name is Chris Napier. A Forgotten Landscape is a great idea. The project encourages people to chat and to dig out the fantastic stories you have heard and read about. I got involved almost from the start and signed up for the Oral History group. Working for many years in the radio industry, I thought I could add to the ever-growing library of recorded interviews with the characters along the River Severn and help to preserve their memories for future generations.

Christopher Montague

A 3rd-year student from Exeter University, Chris volunteered for A Forgotten Landscape in summer 2016. His main interest was in comparing political solutions to housing and welfare issues around 1900 with the present day. He studied poor law provision in the new suburbs growing up north-west of Bristol in the late 1800s. All the new suburbs in the AFL area fell within the Barton Regis Poor Law Union, the new name for Clifton Poor Law Union, which was changed because the prosperous residents of Clifton did not wish to be associated with poverty.

Dave Howell

Whilst I've spent most of my life in the South East, my family is rooted in South Gloucestershire and I've always felt drawn to this landscape. Moving back West in 2015, I began making audio recordings along the estuary before stumbling upon a leaflet about the AFL project. Working with the oral history team provided a new focus to what I was doing, allowing me access to set the fascinating recordings of people who've lived and worked in the area within a series of soundscapes built from recordings of the landscape itself. It's helped me reconnect with a sense of place and family history.

Eric Garrett

Born at Olveston July 1929 to a farming family, educated at Olveston National School with a final three years at a private school in Bristol. Father died in 1938 and mother in 1948. Following my father's death I started vegetable gardening to support my mother with four children and a desperate need for vegetables during the 2nd World War. Apprenticed to motorcar maintenance in Bristol. Following completion of apprenticeship switched to the aircraft industry with Bristol Aero Engines Company where I spent some 35 years and took early retirement. Married June 1961 to Tockington girl Shirley Browning and was blessed with two children Allison

and John. I became interested in local history with the start of the Olveston Parish Historical Society in 1976 and have been their archivist for the past 37 years. When A Forgotten Landscape was set-up it intrigued me to find out what it was all about. Now after almost three years it has proved to be an asset to the community driven by a very good team of leaders.

Esther Mars

I'm always interested in people's stories, their take on an area and their experiences. I think they give much more colour and detail than just a photo. It's also a lovely area that I wanted to get to know a bit better. I worked as a radio journalist years ago and wanted to revisit those skills too and this seemed a great group and project to get involved with. Unfortunately with work commitments I wasn't able to be as involved as I'd of liked but loved the training, interviewing and the camaraderie of the oral histories team involved.

Felicity Pine

I was attracted to working on this project partly by my interest in family history research, but also because I was curious about the historic Lower Severn Vale.

It has been a joy and a privilege to listen to fascinating oral histories, and to be taken into the confidence of the interviewees as they delved back into their past and those of their parents and grandparents. At times it has been a moving experience, as difficult events have been recalled, but I hope it has also been as much an enjoyable experience for the interviewees as it has been for me.

Jacquie Rinaldi

I moved "all the way" to Kington in 2013 from Thornbury where we had lived for 25+ years. I'd recently and unexpectedly given up a long and successful career in Adult Community Education to help out with elderly parents. I found myself in Oldbury Shop having a cuppa and reading the 4ward magazine; Tales of The Vale was recruiting. My father had been involved in an Oral History Project prior to his death for the Imperial War Museum. So it was a subject close to my heart. It's a great team. It's built on old skills and forged new. I sincerely hope it has been as a rewarding experience for those whom I felt fortunate to interview. I trust that in some small way we have captured the essence of what living and working was like for those within the Severn Vale.

James Powell

I went past this area regularly and I wanted to find out what it was like to live here in the past. Fortunately, Elmington Manor Farm was part of the Church and Lay estates who kept their records that are now available in libraries and archives. Elmington could never be described as a Model Farm. I have had access to a professional Archaeologist and a Historian to help me with my research and writing up. Other Forgotten Landscape researchers have also helped me. I have seen new places in the Forgotten Landscape but there is still much to discover.

Jennifer Gathercole

I live in Bristol and enjoy the strange and beautiful landscape of the Lower Severn Vale. As a sociologist, I am passionate about uncovering hidden stories and invisible voices; as such the Tales of Vale Oral History project was a wonderful opportunity. I also enjoy photography and am studying for a Masters in Multi-disciplinary Printmaking. I have made photo-etchings pertinent to the local geography and stories from the area. I plan to facilitate a printmaking workshop with people from Bristol who have experience of displacement to offer their printmaking response to the landscape and stories therein.

John Hastings

I live in Shirehampton and saw an advert for ‘Tales of the Vale’ in my local paper. I had never done any recording before but immediately realised the value of talking to ordinary people about their lives. Over the past two years I have recorded interviews with 11 people from Shirehampton, Lawrence Weston and Avonmouth and have found it a fascinating and absorbing experience. When you start talking to someone in depth about their lives, you find that they’ve got things in the back of their heads that they haven’t talked about or even thought about for decades. Developing these thoughts and memories orally has been a hugely rich experience.

Julian Baldwin

I came to the Oral History project with a background in sound recording and an interest in Local and Family History and found it to be an excellent fusion of all three interests. Along the way I have met many interesting and talented people – both interviewers and interviewees. My energies now remain focused on bringing the current and future OH recordings to a world-wide audience on the Internet.

Justine Blore

Justine heard the stories about the origins of the Community Farm through volunteering and wanted to find out if there was any historical evidence for them. She discovered just how important the ‘Court of Sewers’ was in keeping this marshy area drained before the modern suburb was built.

Kath Burke

Kath Burke was born and brought up in Pilning and has lived in or near the area all her life. Her family settled at New Passage in 1823. Kath has been researching her family history and set out to solve the mystery of why her ancestor Thomas Bachelor Norris and his wife Frances Codrington first came to New Passage. She discovered it was because the Binn Wall flood defence, rebuilt in 1820, made it a safer place to live. In addition, Thomas Norris saw business opportunities relating to the postal service that would result from the coming Great Western Railway route to New Passage; this route then connected with the ferry passage to Sudbrook in South Wales. The family ran the Post Office and began developing the area near the New Passage Hotel, and later built Zion Chapel in New Passage. Members of her family still live in their family home in Pilning.

Laura Webb

Laura Webb, who recently moved to Lawrence Weston, noticed that there were some older houses on the estate. She set out to discover what was there before the new suburb was built in the 1960s.

Liz Napier

When I attended the first AFL volunteers’ meeting in January 2016, I had no idea how much it would take over my life. After many years of researching genealogy, family and local history, and with a background in radio broadcasting, I was excited to discover this project and signed up for the oral and history research groups. Through it, I’ve made many new friends, heard fascinating stories, and learnt new research and writing skills. I chose to write on the Tudor period, which has turned into an epic subject which will keep me occupied for many more years. I’m so pleased I followed up the advert for that first meeting!

Mary Jane Steer

I have lived close to A Forgotten Landscape for over 40 years, and always been interested in local history, but never actually done any! My retirement from paid work coincided with the formation of the history research strand of A Forgotten Landscape. I thought the project would be an ideal way to make use of spare time, meet new friends and contribute to a worthwhile project. And so it has proved to be!

Mary Knight

I am by profession a public rights of way officer and my job has been to make getting into the countryside for everyone easier, inviting, and, if possible, hassle free. I have enjoyed working with the disabled ramblers; everyone should have the opportunity of discovering the outdoors. With this project I focussed on the historical side of the landscape that we have shaped through the centuries. I work a lot with maps in researching the historical context of highways. By volunteering for A Forgotten Landscape I have been able to widen my knowledge of research into agrarian practises and how we can trace the past into today's countryside. I am also a member of the Archaeology Research group which is very new to me and compliments the historical research. This is the start and not the end of my interest in the Severn Vale.

Scott Bryant

Sarah Hands

I live just outside the project area and have been volunteering as a local history researcher for several years in Yate. I was looking to improve my study skills and to contribute to the body of historical knowledge of Britain's ever changing landscape, I thus joined A Forgotten Landscape. England's lost country houses and the private stories behind their public facades have long fascinated me. When I discovered that Over Court, a former Elizabethan mansion

near Almondsbury had all but disappeared, I jumped at the opportunity to piece together the mixed fortunes of the house and the corresponding triumphs and disasters of its occupants.

Stephen Carroll

The opportunity to receive training in oral history interviewing with TOTV appealed as I felt I would learn by using my experience of recruitment interviews in a new context. I think of oral history as a form of reportage. People's memories of daily life, work, society and events, historic or small, are at least as valuable and worth conserving as a heritage building, landscape or artefact. Listeners connect emotionally with an interviewee's voice and empathise with their stories in a way not possible by reading about them, or visiting an historic site. Being an oral history volunteer with TOTV and learning so much about my local region has been immensely satisfying, and interviewing people about their lives a complete privilege.

Sue Binns

I have always been interested in history but have been too busy to do much about it. Now retired, A Forgotten Landscape has given me the opportunity to research Redwick where I have lived for nearly 40 years. Through the history research project I have had great fun finding out about my local area and meeting many other like-minded people.

Suzanne Hedger

Tessa Fitzjohn

I joined A Forgotten Landscape's project as I was intrigued to learn more about that particular landscape, with its history of salmon fishing and farming. A hinterland caught between the industry of Avonmouth, the mud flats of Aust bordered by the M5 and Bristol. I learnt the process of deep listening and oral history collection is a discipline, a privilege, and an intimate and enriching experience for both parties. I now use this skill in my art projects as its a brilliant way for bringing people together.

AFL Archaeology Volunteers

The archaeology team members come from a diverse range of backgrounds. There are members with years of experience volunteering on archaeology projects but for many their first experience was with AFL. All are excited about history and archaeology and enthusiastic to learn more. We were brought together through the AFL training days on geophysical surveying and LiDAR interpretation. Some came to learn and others to share their existing knowledge. Overall, the members' breadth of experience has helped the team to work well and to produce high quality work on Oldbury-on-Severn's enigmatic "Toot". Looking forward, we hope to develop our skills further and exploit them on other projects.



Oral history training session

(Photo © Julia Letts)



Tales of the Vale:

Voices of the Lower Severn Vale

Our audio CD contains the voices and views of the people recorded for the Tales of the Vale oral history project. It is narrated by two of our volunteers, Julian Baldwin and Felicity Pine.

For over two years, our volunteers recorded more than 50 people from across the project area, far exceeding the number of interviews we thought we'd achieve! We have created a record of how people experienced life in this area through the 20th century to the present day. Our interviewees were aged between 14 and 90 and from a wide variety of backgrounds. This CD contains just a fraction of what they told us. There are further extracts on our website (www.aforgottenlandscape.org.uk) where you can also find an online version of the CD. Full versions of all the oral histories recorded are archived in [Gloucester Archives](#) (all our recordings) and [Bristol Archives](#) (Bristol city area recordings).

Finishing the CD

(Photo © Julia Letts)

Track listing

Track 01: Introduction

Track 02: Village life and growing up by the water's edge

Track 03: Salmon fishing in the Severn

Track 04: The Lower Severn Vale in wartime

Track 05: Mechanisation and the end of horse power

Track 06: Orchards and cider making

Track 07: Farming - changes and survival

Track 08: Construction, development and the arrival of nuclear power

Track 09: Avonmouth - docks, industries and pollution

Track 10: Changing communities - Avonmouth and Shirehampton

Track 11: Ferries at Pill and Aust

Track 12: The Severn Bridge and Second Severn Crossing

Track 13: Flooding and flood prevention in the Vale

Track 14: Churches, chapels and the Windbound Inn

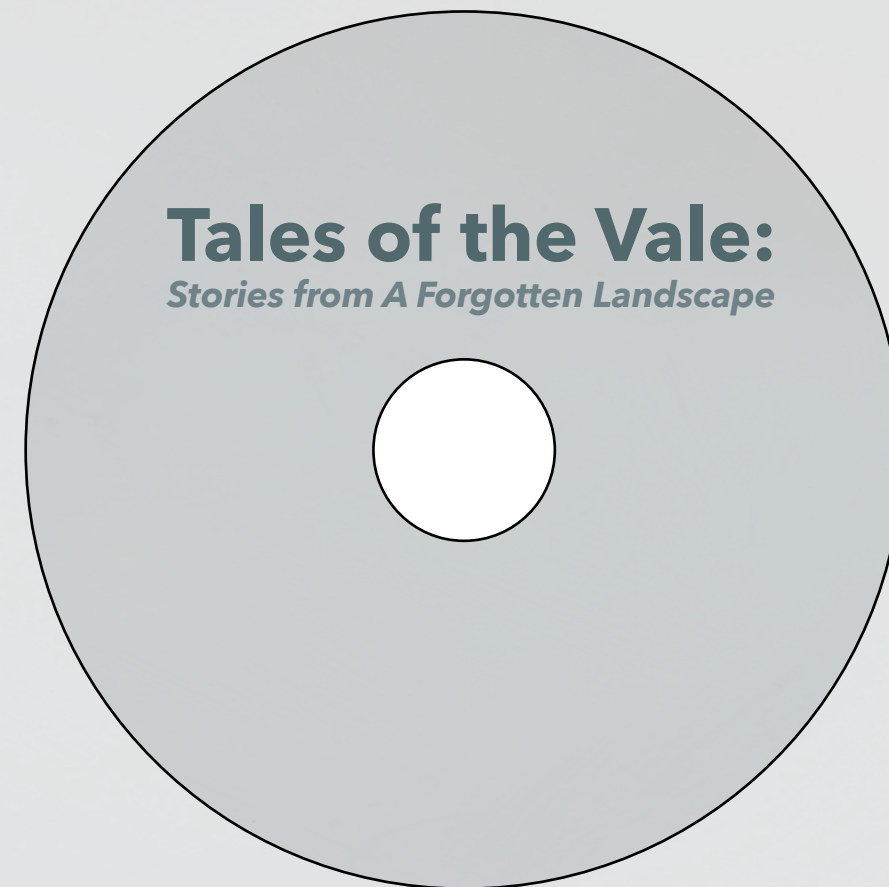
Track 15: Lawrence Weston - a positive future

Track 16: What is progress? Views from across the generations

Track 17: Our final thoughts

We are immensely grateful to all our interviewees who gave us their time, shared their memories and gave us permission to use their stories.

Special thanks to Dave Howell for his landscape recordings and for hours of help on the CD production.





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