



ALTRINCHAM HISTORY SOCIETY

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Hello everyone,

A couple of nice sunny days, then back to cold and wet, typical. Remember old sayings: February fill dyke, be it black or be it white (i.e. rain or snow); and March comes in like a lion, and out like a lamb. [Checking back through my diary, last year had hardly any rain in February.]

What is happening about Altrincham Town Hall? We continue for the remainder of this season at the Town Hall for the meeting in April and the AGM in May. And at last we have news that the art group Oyez Arts has been granted the lease for the Town Hall. So we will need to find a contact for the group to see about booking the council chamber for our meetings from September.

Dates for your diary:

26th April Friday – South Trafford Archaeology Group have a talk on Cheshire Oddities, by Keith Warrender, starting at 7.30pm in STAG HQ behind the Old Hall Hotel, Stockport Road. £3 for visitors

27th April Saturday – Chester Society for Landscape History – talk on The Geology and Landscape of Liverpool, by Jim Marshall, at 2pm at St Columba's Church, Upton near Chester.

1st May – Working Class Museum Library have the Frow Memorial Lecture - Energy Workers and the Transformation of Britain, late 1940s to mid-1990s, with Ewan Gibbs 6.30pm at The Old Fire Station, The Crescent, Salford. Cost £5. More details and to book through Eventbrite
<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/frow-memorial-lecture-energy-workers-and-the-transformation-of-britain-tickets-870973664677?aff=oddtcreator>

RNLI timeline: 200 years of lifesaving. A brief 3 minute programme. Also check the RNLI website for lots more. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pJ6Jy001pRg>

Cheshire's Archives: a story shared

Plans are going ahead for the county archives service. The current Record Office in the centre of Chester will be replaced by two new buildings: one on the outskirts of Chester and one at Crewe. Here's the latest from Cheshire Archives and Local Studies news email:

Site hoardings went up in Crewe in the middle of January, the old library building needs to be dismantled and the public realm remodelled before the construction of our new centre. This is a really important step for the project and showcases the collections and the new building in a prominent place in the town centre. You can find out more about the items we've chosen for the hoardings on our project site.

Our contractor, Kier, have now cleared the site in Lightfoot Street, Chester, and archaeological works are being carried out. We currently expect to begin construction on both sites in the late summer/early autumn. From **27 June 2024** access to our collections at the Record Office on Duke Street will be put on hold and will begin again once our new centres open in Winter 2025/2026.

Cheshire Archaeology - I used to pick up a copy of 'The Past Uncovered', newsletter produced by the Cheshire county archaeology service, with information about new discoveries. The last one was in 2000, but you can access back issues, and check recent news on their website: www.cheshirearchaeology.org.uk

Some YouTube items:

'Roman Road Myths – You never knew' - a 13 minute video by Paul Whitewick. Discussing the road from Salisbury to Winchester. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HhQrT8UJmp8> I like Paul's videos, he goes out and walks the routes and uses aerial footage and maps.

'Roman Vindolanda: an introduction' by Dr Andrew Birley, the son of Robin Birley. Andrew is CEO of the Vindolanda Trust that looks after the town and fort site on Hadrian's wall. 22 minutes presentation https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mlIxyMN_mnM This is two years old, so I presume more of the site has been explored by now. I visited way back in the 1970s.

'The Immortal Story of 'L' Battery, an epic of the retreat, by Gunner Darbyshire, 1 Sept 1914'. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fWoLIewn4GU> Captain Bradbury, one of Altrincham's two VCs, was in charge of the battery. Part of a project called 'I Was There!' produced by The Western Front Association. "The aim is to try to bring to life each of the 377 personal reminiscences included in the *I Was There!* series of weekly magazines published after the Great War of 1914-18." The video is just over 13 minutes, and there are notes about the project and the sources. This one is Ch3 E29 of more by The Western Front Association. [See AHS Journal 33 for more about Capt. Bradbury.]

Ten-Minute Talks from British Association for Local History (BALH)

These talks with slides and voiceover are available via the BALH website https://www.balh.org.uk/ten-minute-talks?utm_medium=email&utm_source=BALH&utm_campaign=newsletter-1539

Lots of topics, just a selection here include:

Did the plague visit Milford?

Kinmont Willie Armstrong

Language where you live

James Harley: a black Edwardian intellectual

Harry Wright and Baseball in Britain

The Scandalous Failure of the Birmingham Penny Bank

Victorian Workhouses in Wales

Temple Lodge Home for Inebriate Women

York's Factory Women

Small businesses in the community: stories behind two 19th century billheads.

Some bits of local news:

I noticed on my way to the February meeting that The Orange Tree pub in the Old Market Place was not showing any lights on a Tuesday evening at 6.45pm. I hope this isn't a bad sign for a 17th century building.

Work has started at The Wheatsheaf pub, at last. There is planning permission for conversion of the building to apartments.

The old Timperley Library on Park Road was designated by Trafford as an 'asset for disposal'. One of our



members pointed out that the mature trees at the site have been felled. The building is next door to the old Park Medical Practice, where the house has been retained and modernised, with four more houses erected in the back garden. It looked very exposed and strange without the trees. And now the old house is gone.

More on YouTube

"How Medieval monks lived: a visit to Cleeve Abbey, Somerset" a video on YouTube by Allan Barton, 'The Antiquary'. 15 minutes. An interesting look at this abbey, with some basic monastic information.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F1IE4ZTiZNY>

'Does this church hide Britain's most important Viking burial site?'

If you watched the video about **Repton** by the young men, listed in the last Newsletter, here is a different viewpoint by History Hits with Dan Snow. 12 minutes <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ale5ddAbdEg>

Local content on 'Digging for Britain' series S10E02. 'Arthur's Stone and a Georgian Mine' has exploration of a recently discovered mine system under Alderley Edge, dating from early 19th century.

To access - Ctrl & Click on this link, then select the section of programme 'From 14:53 Cheshire'.

https://www.google.com/search?q=digging+for+britain+season+10+episode+2&rlz=1C1GCEA_enGB1077GB1080&oq=&gs_lcrp=EgZjaHJvbWUqCQgAECMYJxjqAjiJCAAQIXgnGOoCMgkIARAJGCcY6gIyCQgCECMYJxjqAjiJCAMQLhgnGOoCMgkIBBAjGCcY6gIyCQgFECMYJxjqAjiJCAYQIXgnGOoCMgkIBxAuGCcY6gLSAQo1NjQ1MDBqMGo3qAIIsAIB&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8#fpstate=ive&vld=cid:fe4faf98,vid:C7zk6XM0oK0,st:893

New Technology – Trafford's unique Heritage Trail. [Details care of Mel's Computer Care Newsletter]

Trafford has introduced an immersive Augmented Reality (AR) Heritage Trail, bringing the area's history to life in a unique and engaging way. The AR Heritage Trail is based on cutting-edge technology, which blends the physical and virtual worlds, allowing visitors to explore Trafford's historical landmarks and learn about their significance through interactive AR experiences. This initiative is a collaborative effort between the local government, historical preservation organisations, and technology innovators, aiming to preserve and promote the city's cultural heritage. Users can access the AR Heritage Trail through a dedicated mobile app, which uses GPS and AR technology to guide them through the main historical sites. As participants approach each location, the app overlays historical images, videos, and information onto the real-world surroundings, providing a captivating and educational experience. The AR Heritage Trail serves as an interactive classroom, offering an alternative and engaging way for schools to teach history and encourage a sense of community pride. Trafford's AR Heritage Trail stands as a testament to the city's commitment to preserving its cultural identity while embracing the possibilities that technology offers in storytelling and education.

Unveiling Flint Castle: a journey through Wales's Rich History. 17 minute video by 'Historic Adventures'.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3jQy8YvQ5pA>

Rediscover Welsh History – description of walks – short or longer, cycle routes, and day trips to historic sites in the care of CADW. Even a running route at Flint Castle.

<https://cadw.gov.wales/visit/days-out/rediscover-history-checklist>

Ewloe Castle, Flintshire – 'The hidden Castle in dense woodland'.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oHCwrBOcwFU> a 14 minute video by GT Explores, with a good commentary.

Life and Death in Hong Kong during WW2 – A blog about another National Archives project relating to records of British and Allied POWs after the 1941 invasion of Hong Kong. Keep going to the end for interesting Comments.

<https://blog.nationalarchives.gov.uk/life-and-death-in-hong-kong-during-the-second-world-war/>

1941 National Farm Survey – records currently only available by a visit to The National Archives

The 1941 National Farm Survey is one of the most comprehensive records of land, that we hold in our collection and is a window in time on the UK's agriculture and land use in the middle of the Second World War. Containing extensive data on over 300,000 English and Welsh farms, the survey is among the most-requested record series at The National Archives.

Currently, the complex filing of the paper record makes it difficult for readers to order, and use, with the records only available in physical copy. This project will digitise the series in full and create a new digital cataloguing arrangement to make each farm searchable online.

The project began in October 2023 and will finish in March 2027.

<https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/about/news/300000-farm-records-going-online-thanks-to-grant-from-lund-trust/> [I hope I'm still around by 2027. This is something I've been wanting to check.]

Woolworths report – What Woolworth stores are now,
15 years on. Via Civic Voice:

The collapse of Woolworths into administration on 26 November 2008, resulting in the closure of all 807 stores by 6 January 2009 and the unfortunate loss of 27,000 jobs, marked a significant blow to the nation's high streets. Led by Graham Sout, a Fellow of the Institute of Place Management, and the mind behind CannyInsights.com, a retail consultancy based in Gateshead, the #Woolies15 research meticulously identifies the 807 premises from which Woolworths operated before its collapse. Over 15 years, Graham has tracked the subsequent occupants of these locations through personal site visits and extensive desk research.

The status of each location was most recently verified between September and December 2023.

Graham's dedicated efforts included visiting 529 of the 807 ex-Woolworths locations, some multiple times, offering a vivid picture of the changes that have unfolded over the years. These changes not only reflect the transformation of each building but also serve as a demonstration of how our towns and high streets have continued to evolve in that time.

You can Download the report here: https://www.cannyinsights.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/woolies15_report_graham_sout_cannyinsights_january_2024.pdf



Do you know about **Nico Ditch in Manchester**? Have a look at this Blog by Dr. Mike Nevell.

<https://archaeologytea.wordpress.com/2020/01/31/landscape-longevity-and-the-continuing-mystery-of-nico-ditch-manchesters-first-great-ditch/>

A very local video by 'Wicked Acorn' – "To cross Sinderland Brook (a Cheshire adventure)" about 10 minutes <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TVcBRQdQ-aU>. Intrepid Canadian searches for the confluence of . . . Baguley Brook and Fairywell Brook.

A seasonal touch

'Lent Music from a stunning ancient village church' at Damerham, Hampshire. 21 minute video by Ben Maton 'The Salisbury Organist'. Ben has done several videos of visits to ancient churches, and explains the history of and plays the organ in each one. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z6IGHTM9TcM>

Here's a bit of fun. **Mice to meet you!** Very, very short video, but Warning if you don't like Mice ! <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GCH1yxorAbw>

Looking forward to longer days, and better weather for exploring.

See you around, Hazel