

# Wednesday Evening Walks Programme Announced

We have once again arranged a series of six guided walks on Wednesday evenings in May and June, to look at parishes where VCH has been active this year.

All members of the trust are very welcome to come along, whether or not they have been involved in the research groups; as always, there is no charge for trust members, and they are welcome to bring friends, from whom a donation for the evening would also be welcome. Dates and venues are as follows (meet for a 7 p.m. start in each case):

- 25 May: Idridgehay and Alton, including a visit to Alton Manor (pictured, below, in the 1920s, courtesy Picture the Past). Meet outside Idridgehay church on the B5023.



- 1 June: Wensley and Snitterton. Meet outside Darley church at Darley Bridge on the B5057.
- 8 June: Horsley and Kilburn: Meet outside Horsley church at the west end of the village street.
- 15 June: Alfreton. Meet at Rogers Lane carpark at the eastern end of High Street, near Alfreton Hall.
- 22 June: South Wingfield. Meet outside the church on the B5035 near the bridge over the Amber.
- 29 June: Duffield. Meet outside the church near the bridge over the Derwent (just outside the village to the south).

## Volunteer Groups to Continue

We will continue into the summer term with a short programme of meetings for each of the volunteer groups.

The Matlock and Wirksworth groups will reconvene on Tuesday 10 May (2–4 at the County Local Studies Library and 7–9 at Wirksworth Town Hall); and the Chesterfield evening group will meet for the first time at 7 p.m. on 4 May in Chesterfield Library.

We will contact members of the Chesterfield afternoon group individually to arrange a suitable date for a first meeting, since the county editor has a series of University appointments on dates in May on which that group would normally meet.

## Draft histories on the web

After various delays and false starts, we have begun mounting draft parish histories on the county website — itself recently revamped.

We propose to begin by uploading those which will go in the first hardback volume on the Bolsover area. Then, gradually, we will make available those for other parts of north-east Derbyshire (including Chesterfield itself). We will also cover, in time, parishes in and around the Derwent valley on which a number of volunteers have been working. Parishes in the south of the county, worked on by the volunteers' group meeting at Burnaston, will also be mounted.

It has taken longer than we would have liked to get to this stage, but having now made a start we should be able to have most of the text already drafted on the website by the end of the summer.

We are hoping to use this development to get renewed publicity for the project by issuing press releases to local newspapers as each parish is uploaded, stressing that for many of these places this text is the first attempt in modern times to present a systematic general history of the community concerned based on original research.

To view available text visit <http://www.victoriacountyhistory.ac.uk/counties/derbyshire/work-in-progress>.

The VCH and accompanying county sites have all had a significant revamp, courtesy of the central office. This has improved the design and navigation of the site and enabled easier uploading of information — currently shared by the publicity officer and the treasurer, along with the county editor.

# Nottinghamshire Notes

The group of volunteer researchers meeting fortnightly at Nottinghamshire Archives has continued to press on with draft parish histories for several parishes, mostly in the south of the county.

A welcome recent addition to the group has been a member of the Old Mansfield Society, who has kindly offered to continue work on Mansfield from where it was left by the county editor a couple of years ago. This came about as a direct result of a talk to the Old Mansfield Society about VCH in Nottinghamshire. An outline text for a group of parishes centring on Mansfield (the northern half of the North Division of Broxtowe wapentake) was prepared when VCH first restarted work in the county, and some infilling was done for Teversal, the smallest of this group. A complete history of Mansfield (or indeed Sutton or Kirkby in Ashfield) will obviously be the work of some years (and preferably more than one person) but a start has been made on the modern economic history of the town.

The Nottinghamshire group will resume meeting at Nottinghamshire Archives on Tuesday 3 May (10 a.m. – 12 noon). At the end of the summer term we will mount on the county website draft text for all the parishes on which work has been started. This will be the first positive step towards making available VCH parish histories for Nottinghamshire which the History has been able to take since before the First World War.

## More on Miss Wilmot

Newsletter readers will remember that a few years ago we discovered a good deal more work than we previously realised had been done on parish histories for Appletree hundred in south-west Derbyshire, before VCH had to lay off most of its paid staff around 1908. The work in Derbyshire was done by a young woman named Cecily Wilmot, a distant member of the Chaddesden gentry family, who like many other VCH staff in her day had read *Modern History at Oxford*.

Thanks to help from several trust members, we were able to get Miss Wilmot's handwritten and typed drafts converted into word-processor files with a view to updating them to a point at which they could be mounted on the county website. The second of these objectives had to be put on one side because of pressure to complete the Lottery-funded work, but can now be picked up again.

In the meantime, the Wirksworth volunteers' group has been progressing steadily south from Wirksworth itself to the southern edge of the parish around Idridgehay and Biggin. Because of the need to unravel a mismatch between parish and manor boundaries at this point, involving Duffield and Ashbourne (two other larger multi-township parishes), we investigated the pre-1914 slips (now kept in Chesterfield Library) for Duffield, which lies at the north-eastern end of Appletree hundred. This revealed that although Miss Wilmot had not drafted any text for this part of Appletree, she had done a considerable amount of research (in effect all that was asked of staff for a parish history in her day). She had even arranged the slips for each of the eight townships in Duffield ready for writing up.

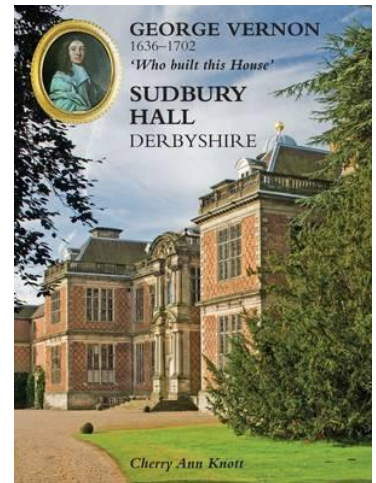
The quality of her work has been demonstrated over the last few weeks. From her work it has proved possible to draft histories of most of the older estates (some known as manors, some not) in Duffield ancient parish, all of which were held of the main Duffield Fee, the large Ferrers, later Duchy of Lancaster, lordship centred on Duffield Castle, which was in turn part of the honor of Tutbury.

As elsewhere, one of the great strengths of the early work on VCH was the way in which classes in the National Archives for which there are still no modern on-line indexes (such as the feet of fines, recovery rolls, and private deeds endorsed on the Close Rolls) were searched systematically. Full abstracts were also made of inquisitiones post mortem between 1509 (when the published calendars end) to the end of the series in 1640. This work, done for a county as far from the National Archives as Derbyshire, will save literally tens of hours and hundreds of pounds for the trust. This will enable us to proceed faster than we had previously realised with work on the parishes in Appletree.

The results of the recent campaign in Duffield will be put on the county website over the summer. If possible, we will also look to mount draft text from some of the other parishes in the hundred, where there is a great deal of interlocking landownership between parishes, involving some of the best known families of medieval Derbyshire.

At a later date we hope to rally support for people to work on the other aspects of these parishes which in Miss Wilmot's day were not included — such as economic history, education, and nonconformist chapels — to produce more complete accounts. For most of the parishes in south-west Derbyshire, which saw little or no growth of population or industry in the post-medieval period, this would not frankly be a very complicated or long drawn out task.

## Make a date for our AGM



The 2011 Trust AGM will be held on Thursday 9 June at County Hall Matlock, from 2pm.

At the business meeting the Duke of Devonshire (who will be attending) will be installed as our new president. There will be the usual reports from officers.

At 2.30 pm we will then hear Cherry Ann Knott talk about Sudbury Hall — on which she has recently published a book (above).

Cherry Anne Knott has been Property Manager at Sudbury Hall (a National Trust property). She has carried out extensive archive research, both independently and for the National Trust, centering on the building of the Hall and on other associated properties.

We hope that VCH Trust members and friends will put this date firmly in their diaries. A separate invitation and supporting AGM papers will be issued nearer the time.

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