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June lecture report

'Cheshire Names' by Dr Harry Parkin, 19th June 2024

Dr Parkin, Senior Lecturer in English Language at the University of Chester and editor of *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Family Names in Britain*, gave an enjoyable and instructive online talk to members on the 19th June. Setting the scene with a discussion of methodology and historiography the point was made that studying names provided an important gateway to a wider understanding of historical and cultural contexts. Focusing

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specifically on Cheshire for his examples Dr Parkin singled out some names which were specifically identified with parts of the county. That said, he made clear that the county unit – chiefly administrative in nature – was not always the most meaningful setting to make sense of the origin and diffusion of family names. Increasing population mobility could be an obvious complicating factor as in the case of western parts of Cheshire was proximity to Wales.

November lecture 2024

'The Local Studies Toolkit'

The talk will be given via Zoom by the CILIP Local Studies Group. Keep checking our website for updated details in the near future, or contact the Programme Secretary Brian Higgins (hslc1848@gmail.com)



September lecture: 'One-Place studies: their place in the historical landscape' by Janet Barrie: 18th September 2024

Our September lecture will examine the principles of conducting a one-place study by considering the nature of a 'place' and a 'study'. Our speaker will discuss the range of skills involved in undertaking a one-place study and how they relate to other branches of history. This will be primarily through the consideration of several worked examples of one-place studies to illustrate the main points of the talk.

This talk will be held online at 14:00 on Wednesday 18th September 2024

To register for this event, please contact our Programme Secretary Brian Higgins via the email address: hslc1848@gmail.com

A Zoom link for the event will be sent by Brian closer to the time

The speaker, Janet Barrie, is the current Chairperson of the Society for One-Place studies. She researches the people and activities associated with the Springhill area of Rossendale, Lancashire. Within this she is particularly interested in the role of nonconformity in the area and is developing an interest in the medieval forest. She holds an Oxford Advanced Undergraduate Diploma in Local History, has just submitted for the Postgraduate Certificate in Regional and Local History from the University of Lancaster, and is about to commence reading for an MA in History at the University of Birmingham.

Book launch: *Rogue Agent: From secret plots to psychological warfare, the untold story of Robert Bruce Lockhart* – 16th October 18:00-20:00

Sir Robert Bruce Lockhart (1887–1970) was an impressive figure: a diplomat, intelligence agent, conspirator, journalist and propagandist who played a key role in both world wars. He was a man who charmed his way into the confidences of everyone from Leon Trotsky to Anthony Eden.

Rogue Agent is the first biography of this gifted yet habitually flawed maverick. It chronicles his many exploits, from his time as Britain's 'Agent' in Moscow, and his role in a plot to bring down the communist regime, to leading the Political Warfare Executive, a secret body responsible for disinformation and propaganda in the Second World War.

Exploring Lockhart's unorthodox thinking and contributions to the development of psychological warfare as well as his hedonistic lifestyle, late nights and many affairs that left him in a state of perpetual debt, *Rogue Agent* tells the thrilling story of this unconventional war hero.

Join author (and HSLC Council member) James Crossland in conversation with Ian Skillicorn of the Liverpool Book Club for the book launch in the Athenaeum Library Reading Room, followed by a wine and canapés reception in the News Room.

Book your attendance via Eventbrite: <https://bit.ly/47jJZfv>

March lecture report

'Lancastrians: Mills, Mines and Minarets' by Professor Paul Salveson, 20th March 2024

Paul Salveson, Visiting Professor at the Universities of Bolton and Huddersfield entertained those who had attended the Annual General Meeting with a spirited lecture dealing with the subject matter of his latest book with its punchy alliterative title.

In it he offered a kaleidoscopic presentation of some of the key forces and individuals who, especially in the industrial heyday of the county, had helped to give Lancashire its distinctive identity. The well-known image of the Lancashire and Yorkshire railway network (which still proudly graces a wall near the old booking offices in Victoria Station, Manchester) assisted in defining the geographical setting and a host of well-chosen other illustrations helped to flesh out his story. The extent to which Liverpool conformed to or set itself apart from the broader Lancashire patterns was a recurring point in the lecture as well as in the question-and-answer session which followed.

February lecture report

'In Search of Roman Rural Settlement' by Dr
Caroline Pudney, 21st February 2024

The Society was fortunate to hear a fascinating and informative lecture from Dr Pudney arising out of her current main research project and the excavations associated with it in the Wrexham area. The discovery not only of impressive artefacts, especially the lead ingot with its high silver content bearing the inscription which certified its belonging to the period in which Trebellius Maximus was imperial legate, but also the unearthed evidence of tile works and corn drying kilns indicated the varied economy of this area.

Particularly interesting was Dr Pudney's account of two seasons of excavations conducted in the village of Rossett and the discovery there of the remains of a winged-corridor Roman villa. Though evidently a far less imposing cluster of buildings than those previously discovered in the more highly populated and economically advanced southern counties, nonetheless the Rossett villa poses challenging and tantalising questions about the possibility of other such sites being found in this area and, more generally, about the character and duration of the Roman presence within it.

A recording of the lecture itself can now be accessed via the Society's website.

November lecture: 'Joan Thirsk' (1923-2013) and the porous frontiers of English Regional and Local History

A lecture given to the Society (via Zoom) on
the 29th November 2023 by the President

The lecture began by pointing out that although Joan Thirsk published relatively little on Lancashire and Cheshire the ramifications of her methodology and findings and the kind of questions she posed in her many publications have a general relevance to the history of all parts of this country.

Although agrarian history was her principal specialism, her interests extended far beyond it. What made her approach to



regional and local history so distinctive. Five main reasons were suggested. (1) As a woman she had a different vantage point on the past and pursued questions which male historians had tended to sideline or ignore. (2) The fact that her initial academic training was in a Languages, not a History, degree gave her a sensitivity and alertness to language and discourse which stayed with her throughout her working life. (3) That she worked under the great economic and social historian R.H. Tawney for her doctorate encouraged her to absorb much of his quintessentially humane approach to the past and his unshakable belief in the present value of studying history. (4) That her first academic post was in Sociology, not History, broadened her range of questions as well as content and helped shape the frameworks, categories and theories she used. (5) The long-lasting effects of her war-time work in the famous decrypting centre at Bletchley Park - which cracked the Enigma code - helped give her that rigorous attention to detail, hidden meanings and connections which always characterised her work.

Joan Thirsk's legacy, the lecture concluded, was to challenge all regional and local historians to go way beyond the accumulation of details and place them in appropriate wider contexts, to recognise patterns and, ultimately, arrive at the big picture. Her kind of regional and local history was always positioned in the mainstream and at the cutting edge, something which others in the field should always aspire to.