

ISSUE 7
MARCH 2021

SW
SOUTH WEST
HERITAGE TRUST

SUPPORTERS NEWSLETTER



- Online Exhibitions
- Caring for Collections in Lockdown
- Revealing Hidden Histories

WELCOME

We've all been living through exceptionally demanding times during the last 12 months, and the many ways in which individuals and families have been affected will not quickly be forgotten. As the pandemic at last shows signs of easing, and the Trust prepares for the reopening of services, it's good at last to bring you this new edition of the Supporters Newsletter and to tell you some of the things we've been achieving. We also highlight some future plans.

Our museums and heritage centres closed to the public in March last year, and with the exception of some periods of reopening they've remained closed ever since. Homeworking and furlough have become familiar realities, as have online meetings and digital delivery. Generous support from emergency funds, and the outstanding resilience of staff, have helped us weather the storm and it's clear that, in spite of all the challenges, we can now face the future with optimism. It's also clear there can be no return to a world before Covid-19.

Many of our services, including those related to the historic environment, have been as busy as ever during lockdown. Much else has been reinvented for a digital world. In the following pages you can read about online exhibitions, sound heritage, working with young and old, and some remarkable life stories. We've acquired or rescued new material for the collections, and continuing projects mean that both staff and volunteers have been greatly increasing our access to heritage information.

The months ahead will demand determination and creativity from all at the Trust as we shape a new reality. In that process the loyalty and generosity of supporters, friends, volunteers and funders will mean more to us than ever. Thank you so much for being part of the work we do. We greatly look forward to welcoming you soon.

David Gwyther

Chair of Trustees

Tom Mayberry

Chief Executive

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Tabitha Martin and her Easter bonnet, Shepton Mallet, 7 April 2020 by Jason Bryant

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MAKE A DONATION TO THE SOUTH WEST HERITAGE TRUST

Did you know you can now donate online to help protect the rich heritage of Somerset and Devon?

Our museums tell Somerset's story from 400 million years ago to the present day. The rich archive collections we preserve record Somerset and Devon people and places from the 8th century onwards. Our care for the historic environment helps us protect wonderful buildings, landscapes and archaeology.

As a supporter your generosity already helps to make possible the work we do. We need support now more than ever to ensure that this generation and the next can discover a remarkable inheritance.

To donate go to swheritage.org.uk/donate



FOLLOW US:



NEWS

INDEXES

After more than a decade of indexing work by staff and volunteers, new online indexes to Somerset archive sources have been launched. They contain almost 250,000 entries and transform access to some key sources. 80,000 workhouse admissions and discharges have now been indexed together with 62,000 cases dealt with by Quarter Sessions from the 16th to the 19th centuries.

To explore all the resources visit somerset-cat.swheritage.org.uk/indexes. We're grateful to the dedicated volunteers who have worked tirelessly over the years to create content for the indexes. Periods of lockdown have provided staff with the opportunity to edit and prepare the entries. Further content is being added regularly.

A REMARKABLE LIFE

We were delighted in December to acquire a miniature by the artist Sarah Biffin. During the last 15 years the Museums Service has bought several paintings by this remarkable Somerset miniaturist and now holds probably the largest public collection of her work.

Sarah was born without arms or legs at East Quantoxhead in 1784. From an early age she showed great ability in drawing and painting, holding the pen or brush in her mouth.

Eventually her skills were recognised by the Earl of Morton who brought her to London. There she painted portraits of royalty and the wealthy, including George III, George IV and Queen Victoria.

After the death of the Earl of Morton in 1827 times became harder for Sarah, and she never fully renewed her earlier success. She died in Manchester in 1850. The Trust is about to launch an online exhibition to celebrate her life and work.



Image: *Portrait of a Lady by Sarah Biffin, 1846, recently acquired*

SAFEGUARDING THE LUNDY ARCHIVE

Shortly before the March lockdown we were alerted to an important archive relating to the ownership and administration of Lundy before its sale to the National Trust in 1968. Now managed by the Landmark Trust, Lundy is a unique haven for wildlife which lies off the coast of North Devon and which forms part of the county. The archive had to be moved from its location in Wiltshire no later than May - not difficult in normal circumstances, but very challenging in the middle of a national lockdown. Having carried out risk assessments our first attempt was thwarted when our van broke down on the motorway! A second attempt was successful, and the collection is now in our conservation facility at the Devon Heritage Centre in Exeter. When possible it will be transferred to the North Devon Record Office in Barnstaple before being catalogued and made available for research.

A £2.6 MILLION BOOST FOR THE QUANTOCKS

After four years of development the Quantock Landscape Partnership Scheme has been awarded a grant of £1.8m by the National Lottery Heritage Fund. With additional funding from the National Trust, the Friends of Quantock, the Quantock Hills AONB and EDF Energy the award will allow the £2.6m scheme to go forward, delivering wide-ranging benefits for the landscape and the natural environment and providing more opportunities for people to discover and enjoy them.

The scheme, developed by the Quantock Hills AONB Service in partnership with the South West Heritage Trust, the Friends of Quantock and many others, aims to inspire local communities to learn from the centuries of landscape development on the Quantock Hills and to undertake projects that will protect the landscape and ensure its resilience into the future. As with many projects planned for 2020 the scheme's fieldwork and community heritage projects have been delayed but are now due to begin during the spring of 2021.

THE CORONAVIRUS COMMUNITY ARCHIVE



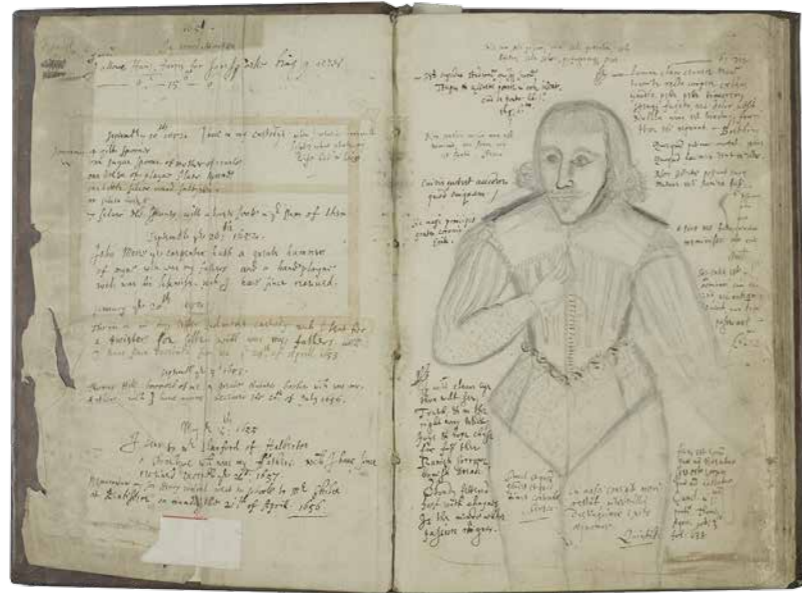
As a way of creating a Coronavirus Community Archive we've been asking people in Devon and Somerset to tell us about their experiences of the pandemic. We're living through extraordinary events that have affected all our lives to an extent we could never have imagined. We want to ensure that the stories of these difficult times are captured so that future generations can know about the challenges we faced and how communities pulled together. Why not add your own story?

There's a simple online form to capture your thoughts at swheritage.org.uk/news/coronavirus-community-archive/

A GLIMPSE INTO 17TH-CENTURY DEVON LIFE

We were delighted recently to acquire a superb 17th-century account book which had belonged to William Walrond (1610-c.1667). He was a member of the Walrond family of Bradfield House near Uffculme in mid-Devon. The volume contains almost 200 pages of closely-written accounts, interspersed with Latin quotations, and evokes the world of a Devon landowner in the years after the English Civil War.

The Walrond family had a sizable estate, and a continual programme of work was needed to maintain and improve it. The accounts include details of 'what it cost me to repaire Woodhouse, since my father suffered it



to bee ruined' – payments are listed for such items as lead, nails and linseed oil, as well as for masons, carpenters and plasterers. There are also frequent references to the repair of the estate's fulling and grist mills.

We encounter many of the people who gave service on the estate, including, for example, Grace Maunder, Agnes Willey and Thomas Ellis, all mentioned in 1657. The family's personal lives are also glimpsed through

their purchases, among them 'a side Table at Tyverton' and 'a hatt at Exon [Exeter]'.

We are most grateful to the Friends of the National Libraries and the Friends of Devon's Archives whose generous grants made possible the purchase the account book. We also express our thanks to Graham York, the dealer who first brought the volume to our attention.

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Image: Empire Windrush

BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Black History Month (October) provided an important opportunity to reflect on Somerset and Devon's many links to Black history and for the Trust to express its continuing commitment to the process of revealing history's hidden voices and lost perspectives.

Among the stories we shared online one related to the Somerset and

Devon children born to White English mothers and Black US Army fathers during and shortly after the Second World War. Nationally it is thought there were about 2,000 such children, many of whom referred to themselves as the 'brown babies'. In Somerset the children were particularly remembered because they were sent to the same children's home at Holnicote House near Porlock.

The Trust also partnered with Devon Development Education to host an online event celebrating the Windrush Generation. Retired Assistant Professor of Midwifery, Faye Doris, and Euten Lindsay, a well-known Devon chef, shared stories about their heritage and connections to Windrush.

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RECORDING THE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT

The Historic Environment Record (HER) maintained by the Trust is an amazing database of 40,000 historic sites, buildings and structures within modern Somerset. See somersetheritage.org.uk

The year 2020 was a time of significant development for the HER. In January more than 7,000 entries for Bath & North East Somerset also became available on the site and the HER team began work on a major funded project to transfer nationally-held data to the West Country's locally-based HERs. For Somerset alone information was added relating to more than 8,000 sites. The

project is helping ensure that Somerset's HER remains one of the most up-to-date and user-friendly in England.

Two short films for the Trust's YouTube channel were created during lockdown, one explaining how to use the HER, another describing what aerial photography can tell us about buried heritage.

HER volunteers have also been busy when possible. Nearly a quarter of a million field names have now been added to the HER's online tithe maps, making these remarkable historic sources more accessible than ever before.

AVALON ARCHAEOLOGY PARK

Volunteers at Avalon Archaeology Park continued their work throughout most of 2020. They benefited from being able to work outside with plenty of room.

The reconstructed Saxon longhall was given a new coat of limewash and repairs were made to the rammed earth floor. The woodcarving team finished a series of images based on designs from Anglo-Saxon manuscripts, and wooden frameworks for Saxon and Viking tents were also created.

The Roman building received a new coat of limewash at the furnace end, the entrance stairs were completed and the porch roof was covered with timber donated by a local Glastonbury company. Roman stone roof tiles, salvaged from a villa excavation in Somerset, were reused for the first few courses of the roof, the remainder being supplied as new cut stone from the Hadspen quarry in South Somerset.

The production of tesserae (cubes of stone and clay) for the Roman mosaic continued and has now passed the halfway point. Decorative tile antefixes have also started to be added to the ends of the roof. There was even time to give the Viking boat a coat of linseed oil before the renewal of Covid-19 restrictions brought activity to an end once more. We're very grateful for all the skills and commitment that the volunteers so loyally bring to the site.



Image: Close-up of decorative antefixes



Image: Roman gable end finished

THE ROYAL ORDNANCE FACTORY, PURITON

As part of a community history project the Trust was recently commissioned by Sedgemoor District Council to gather the memories of people who had worked in the former Royal Ordnance Factory at Puriton, Somerset (ROF 37). The project began in 2019 and was completed during 2020.

ROF 37, which closed in 1988, stood on a 700-acre site and was originally dedicated to the production of a new explosive called RDX. Creation of the secret factory complex at Puriton began in 1939 and included the digging of the Huntspill River to provide a water supply and the building of a railway spur with sidings. By 1945 the

factory had produced over 20,000 tons of RDX for the war effort and was employing more than 2,800 people. They included chemical scientists and technicians, as well as office, administrative, security and canteen staff.

In the years following the war ROF 37 made chemicals for the plastics industry, explosives for the Korean War, rocket propellant and another new explosive called HMX. After closure the site was eventually taken over to become a smart campus, called 'Gravity', focused on clean growth and innovation.

One major outcome of the project was the creation of a short film featuring former employees. It can be seen at [youtube.com/watch?v=g4ym0JqQJW8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g4ym0JqQJW8).

Two very successful Community Heritage Days also took place, coordinated by the Trust, the District Council, Somerset Film, Gravity and the 37 Club, an organisation for former staff. People were actively encouraged to bring memorabilia from their time at ROF 37, some of which now forms a community archive cared for by the Trust. A vast quantity of plans recovered from the site are also to be added to the archive.

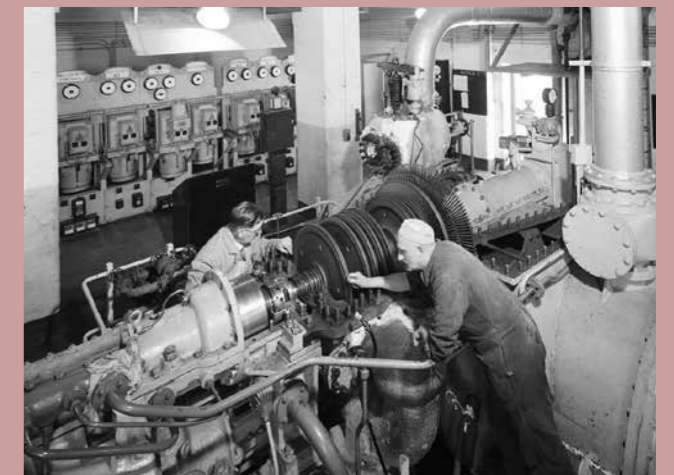


Image: ROF 37 by Stanley Kenyon

THANK YOU

KEY WORKERS

REACHING FOR RAINBOWS

Local photographer Jason Bryant has been documenting the pandemic in Somerset. His images, which feature in a Trust exhibition, chronicle the experiences of individuals and communities as they respond to the challenge of Covid-19.

Images include rainbows, people expressing their thanks to key workers, families reuniting and people rediscovering their local environment. The exhibition also depicts the new normal of face masks, hand sanitiser and social distancing. Jason has continued to document the county in and out of lockdown including, most recently, at Christmas and the beginning of the vaccine roll-out.

Because of lockdown we have published the exhibition on our website, where it can still be viewed. Over the winter it was also briefly available to visit at the Museum of Somerset.

Images clockwise from top right:

A priest applies hand sanitiser, 10 March

Summer solstice celebrations, Glastonbury Tor, 20 June: Hundreds gathered on Glastonbury Tor to celebrate the arrival of the summer solstice on Saturday 20 June. The National Trust and the local council had requested that people stay away because of the ban on mass gatherings.

The Pyramid Stage, Worthy Farm, Pilton, 22 June: Glastonbury Festival's Pyramid Stage stands empty on a peaceful Worthy Farm. This photograph was taken a day before what should have been the opening of the festival's 50th anniversary season. 200,000 ticket holders, artists, staff and volunteers were due to attend.

Christopher Dando being reunited with his wife and daughter, Cheddar, 7 July: Christopher and other staff members at Court House Care Home isolated at the care home for more than three months to reduce the risk of the virus being contracted by residents.

Under the mistletoe, Somerset, 12 December

Background image: Handwritten sign, Wells, 25 April



VIEW MORE EXHIBITIONS ONLINE

The exhibition, 'Landscapes of the Mind', celebrating the art and life of Tristram Hillier R.A. (1905-1983), became a critical and popular success during its five-month run at the Museum of Somerset. Sadly, Covid-19 meant that the exhibition had to close early but we have since reopened it online. The exhibition displayed 50 works by Hillier, gathered from collections across the UK, and focusing chiefly on immaculate and haunting landscapes of Somerset, Spain and Portugal. It was the first retrospective of Hillier's work in more than 30 years and was, according to The Times art critic Rachel Campbell-Johnston, 'long overdue'. It was made possible thanks to Arts Council England and the Weston Loan Programme with

Art Fund. A catalogue designed and written by the Trust team was published to mark the event.

'The Arborealists: Trees and Woodlands on Exmoor and Dartmoor' took place during the summer at the Museum of Somerset. The exhibition explored Exmoor and Dartmoor National Parks through the seasons and our connection to the natural world. It featured more than 50 works, including paintings and photography, produced by members of 'The Arborealists', a group of professional artists who share the rich and versatile subject of the tree. Because of lockdown we have also made the exhibition available online.

See online exhibitions at [swheritage.org.uk/digital-exhibitions](https://www.swheritage.org.uk/digital-exhibitions)



Image: Claire Cansick, *Culbone Wood Fernery with Whitebeams*



Image: Tristram Hillier *Le Havre de Grace* © Manchester Art Gallery

SOMERSET REACQUAINTED

Somerset Reacquainted was a creativity-in-isolation project created by Somerset Art Works for their artist members. It was conceived in response to the unique period of isolation experienced during the pandemic. Artists developed new approaches, capturing encounters with nature and explorations in their own locality.

The resulting exhibition offered an insight into the creative processes of more than 60 Somerset-based artists during the first lockdown. It was open at Somerset Rural Life Museum during the autumn.



162ND INTERNATIONAL PHOTOGRAPHY EXHIBITION



We're delighted to be reopening the Museum of Somerset with an exhibition in partnership with The Royal Photographic Society. The 162nd International Photography Exhibition once again celebrates compelling and contemporary imagery from photographers

worldwide. Held continuously since 1854, the world's longest-running photography exhibition has enabled generations of artists to express themselves without restrictions on age, subject matter, country or context. *(running dates to be announced)*

Images clockwise:
Ian at Home by Frederic Aranda, UK. *Menu Ma and Yellow* on Menu's family rooftop, New Taipei City, Taiwan, 2019 by Su Cassiano France/Australia. *Alone (Watch Tower)*, *The Outback*, 2016 by Roei Greenberg UK. *Alice and Sarah*, Glen Lyon by Hay Mat, UK.

UNLOCKING OUR SOUND HERITAGE

Sound recordings are among the most evocative but fragile items in our collections. They need special equipment to make them accessible and they don't age well. We're fortunate that the British Library is leading a national project, called 'Unlocking Our Sound Heritage', to digitise sound recordings before it's too late.

We've selected 600 of our most significant recorded items or collections to be included in the project. They include recordings about the Trade Unionist A. J. Cook (who spent his early years in Wookey, near Wells) and our large Somerset Oral History collection. Devon dialect recordings made by the Women's Institute are also included, as is the Winkleigh Oral History Archive, and recordings from the Dartington Hall Trust by and about Michael Chekhov. The originals are a mixture of open reel tapes, cassettes, CDs and minidisks, each

of which present their own challenges. Some have not been heard for years.

The recordings are being professionally digitised and, where necessary, catalogued at Bristol Archives, the project 'hub' for the South West. All the digitised recordings will then be preserved by the British Library and will also be available in our searchrooms. Outreach events linked to the project will include Heritage Open Days later in the year and a work being created by the Plough Youth Theatre, Great Torrington, which takes inspiration from the recordings.

This huge national project is principally funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund and the British Library, with donations from other charities and individuals, including the Foyle Foundation and the Garfield Weston Foundation.

SUPPORTING CARE HOMES

Reminiscence sessions are greatly valued in the care sector as a way of supporting individual wellbeing. Our unique access to real and replica heritage objects provides groups with plenty of stimulus for activities and a chance to travel down memory lane.

Our usual sessions have had to cease because of Covid-19, but we were keen to find ways of continuing to provide reminiscence activities, especially during such challenging times for some of the most vulnerable. For that reason we've developed remote resources that can be used in any locked-down care home.

An interactive DVD called 'Somerset and the Second World War' allows participants to guess the object, listen to real oral history recordings and explore rationing, evacuees, the Home Guard and more. We've also launched a new Heritage Memory Box Loan Service that makes reminiscence resources available to care homes and other shielding groups.

Each box contains objects and activities designed to stimulate recall and encourage communication. We offer three themed memory boxes - 'A Sweet Tooth', 'Toys and Games', and 'the Second World War'.



ENQUIRE WITHIN

Somerset and Devon Heritage Centres usually welcome hundreds of visitors every month who are researching topics of many different kinds. Though that hasn't been possible for much of the past 12 months, we've continued to answer enquiries remotely on subjects as diverse as hedgerows, overseas ancestors and police houses.

But face-to-face contact has been missing and for that reason we decided to trial free online Q&A sessions. They proved very popular and were booked up within a couple of days.

Questions were submitted in advance so the team could research answers and provide the most helpful guidance. The events were also an opportunity for follow-up questions and for experiences to be shared.

People joined from across the country, enquiring about subjects including military service, how to access parish registers, and emigration. We were able to assist by suggesting places to search, where to find documents, and how to use our catalogue and indexes. Similar events are planned for the future.

WORKING WITH YOUNG PEOPLE

The impact of the pandemic on schools has made many headlines in recent months and we've been working hard to continue our educational work with young people. During the first lockdown we moved quickly to provide heritage content and activities that children could do at home with their families.

The Trust's Learning Team was able to resume school-based workshop sessions in the autumn. Special care was taken to ensure sessions could take place safely, with schools visiting on days when the museums were closed to the public. Renewal of annual subscriptions to our Learning Service has been encouraging

and demand for loans of objects to support the curriculum has also been very high. We've been delivering loans to schools in a Covid-safe way.

The Learning Team has also been working hard to become more sustainable. Biodegradable materials for learning activities are now sourced whenever possible and alternatives have been found for single use plastics.

We've even managed to recruit a new Learning Officer for the Museum of Somerset. She is looking forward to welcoming school groups to the museum as soon as possible!

LGBT+ HISTORY MONTH

LGBT+ History Month takes place each February. It celebrates the lives and achievements of lesbian, gay, bi and trans people, and reflects on the history of LGBT+ rights. Throughout February we shared the stories of several inspiring figures who lived in the South West or were connected with it. Two of those stories are retold in the following pages.

OLIVER MESSEL



Oliver Messel (1904–1978) was one of Britain's most successful stage designers.

During a career that spanned more than 50 years he created sets and costumes for theatre, opera, musicals, ballet and film. Messel's unexpected association with the West Country relates to the period during the Second World War when he was based in Somerset to design camouflage for pillboxes.

Messel was born in Sussex and educated at Eton. He studied painting at the Slade School of Fine Art where he was taught by the celebrated Henry Tonks. Messel made masks for a production of the ballet *Zéphyre et Flore* in 1925 and went on to collaborate with many leading directors in the English theatre. In the 1930s he began

to work in film and travelled to Hollywood for several major productions including *Romeo and Juliet* (1936). In 1946 he designed sets for the famous production of *Sleeping Beauty* which reopened the Royal Opera House after the war.

Messel travelled extensively and forged friendships with prominent society figures including Cecil Beaton, Noel Coward, Evelyn Waugh and Nancy Mitford.

Messel joined the army in 1940 and was posted to the Royal Engineers as a camouflage officer. For a seven-week period he designed pillbox camouflage on the Taunton Stop Line. After the fall of France in June 1940, the military created a range of defences to stop a Nazi invasion. The Taunton Stop Line ran through Somerset and was intended to be a defence against German attack from the west.

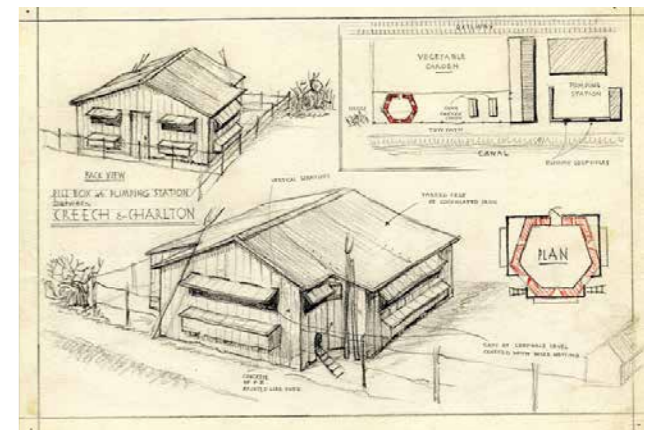
The artist Julian Trevelyan, a fellow officer and friend, described Messel as 'in his element' camouflaging pillboxes, 'many as gothic lodges' and others as 'caravans, haystacks, ruins and wayside cafes, always with great attention to detail'. In 2016 a rare collection of drawings made by Messel was given to the Somerset Archives and Local Studies Collection. The drawings show designs for pillbox camouflage and illustrate Messel's great skill and imagination.

After the war Messel continued to work in film and theatre, winning an Academy Award in 1960 for best set direction for *Suddenly Last Summer* (1959). He moved to Barbados in 1966 where he continued to work, creating architectural designs for private homes. In Messel's lifetime same-sex relationships were illegal, but because of his background and social connections he was able to live as an openly gay man with his partner Vagn Riis-Hansen.

Oliver Messel died in Barbados on 13 July 1978.



Oliver Messel, 1936
(© National Portrait Gallery, London)



Camouflage by disguise. A machine gun emplacement disguised as a small cottage on a hillside overlooking the River Parrett.



Camouflage by merging. This colour illustration is accompanied by a description of how to camouflage pillboxes using foliage and brushwood.

CHARLES HAMILTON

‘Her or him, whichever he or she may be...’

The person first known to the world as Mary Hamilton was born in Somerset in about 1725, the daughter of William and Mary Hamilton.

When she was still a child her family moved to Angus in Scotland (perhaps their country of origin) until at about the age of 14 Mary made a far-reaching decision. She put on her brother’s clothes and set out bravely on the road back to England.

In the years that followed Mary would go by the names of James, George, and finally Charles Hamilton. Amidst so much that is uncertain about a remarkable life it is clear at least that a male name and male attire came to assume fundamental importance as expressions of identity. Mary had become Charles.

In Northumberland Charles Hamilton entered the service of Dr Edward Green, a ‘mountebank’, or seller of quack medicines, then worked for Dr Finly Green before setting up independently as an unqualified doctor. In May 1746 he arrived at Wells in Somerset and lodged in the house of Mary Creed. This much we know from the official records of a subsequent court case, preserved at the Somerset Heritage Centre.

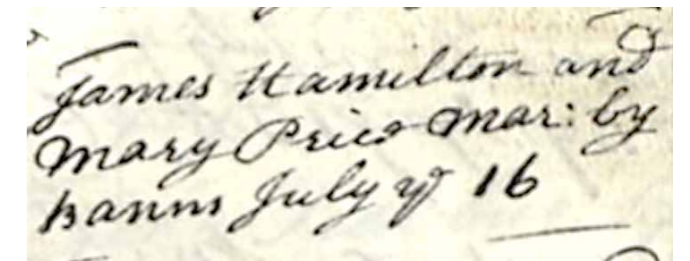
Rumour would soon add further scandalous detail, including a tally of 14 supposed marriages to evidently unsuspecting women. The novelist Henry Fielding would ensure the notoriety of Hamilton’s story by writing a largely fictional account of it in a pamphlet called ‘The Female Husband’, published anonymously in November 1746.

One marriage ceremony certainly did take place. On 16 July 1746, at St Cuthbert’s Church in Wells, Charles (or, as the parish register has it, James) Hamilton and Mary Price, the landlady’s niece, were married by the Revd Mr Kingstone.

For two months they travelled through Somerset as husband and wife selling quack remedies, until at Glastonbury on 13 September Mary Price confronted the truth of her situation and denounced her supposed husband to the town authorities. He was confined in the gaol at Shepton Mallet to await trial, and on 7 October appeared before the Court of Quarter Sessions in the Great Hall of Taunton Castle.

The magistrates struggled to agree what the crime should be called. They decided eventually that Charles Hamilton was an ‘uncommon notorious cheat’. The severity of their sentence, and the terms in which they delivered it, reflected some of the outrage and the perplexity the case had aroused: ‘and we, the Court,’ they said, ‘do sentence her, or him, whichever he or she may be, to be imprisoned six months, and during that time to be whipped in the towns of Taunton, Glastonbury, Wells and Shepton Mallet.’ At three-week intervals until Christmas 1746 the humiliation of four public whippings was duly carried out.

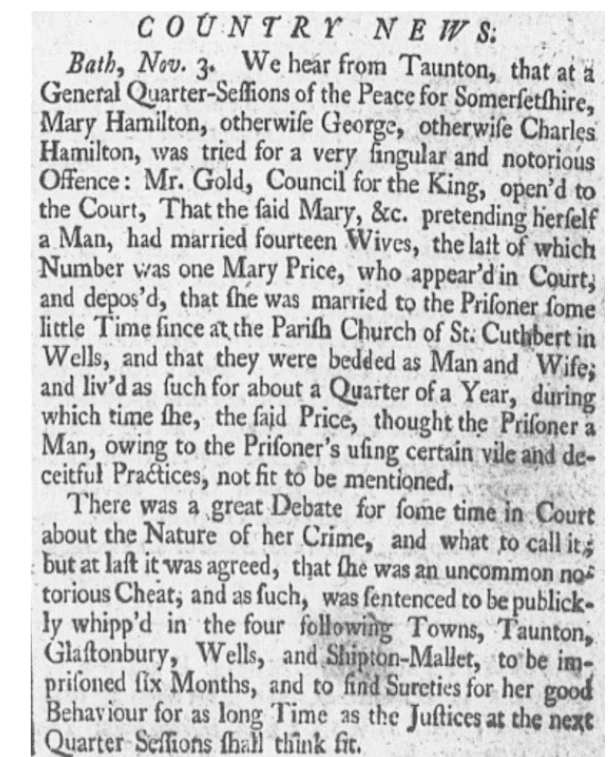
No more is heard of Charles Hamilton after that, and no date or place of death has been found. Perhaps it is best to remember him as he was described in a Bath newspaper during his first confinement at Shepton Mallet. He continued even there to sell his remedies and was attended by fascinated crowds who flocked to see him. The newspaper recorded that the ‘bold and impudent’ Hamilton remained at that time ‘very gay, with perriwig, ruffles, and breeches’, still defying the world as the world closed in.



Marriage of James Hamilton and Mary Price at St Cuthbert’s Church, Wells, 16 July 1746.



St Cuthbert’s Church, Wells



LIVES REMEMBERED



Victor Ambrus (1935 - 2021)

We recently received the sad news that the artist Victor Ambrus passed peacefully away on 10 February. Victor was a friend of the Museum and a wonderful artist whom we had the pleasure of working with over many years.

Victor was one of Britain's foremost illustrators of history, folk tales and children's books. He achieved fame with his archaeological reconstruction drawings created for Channel 4's Time Team. His style is unique and immediately recognisable.

Born in Budapest in 1935, Victor trained as an artist at the Hungarian Academy of Fine Arts. His studies were cut short by the Hungarian Uprising in 1956 when he was forced to flee the country. He came to London and from 1957 to 1960 studied at the Royal College of Art.

Victor's output as an artist was enormous. He illustrated over 300 books, including his own, produced hundreds of drawings for Time Team, undertook work for exhibitions, including at the Museum of Somerset, and created artwork for commemorative stamps.

Several of Victor's artworks are on display at the Museum where they help to tell Somerset's story.



Victor is pictured with members of Time Team at the Museum of Somerset in 2016 where an exhibition was held to celebrate his work and achievements.



Margery Rowe (1933-2020)

We were very sorry to learn last year of the death at the age of 86 of Margery Rowe, County Archivist of Devon from 1977 to 1996.

Margery belonged to the pioneering generation of English archivists and gained a reputation as the undisputed authority on Devon's archives. As important as her professional skills were the kindness, practical good sense and cheerful determination which inspired the lasting affection of so many people.

Margery was born on 27 December 1933 and grew up in Manchester. After attending Manchester Grammar School for Girls she read history at Manchester University. In 1956 she became an archivist in the former Exeter City Record Office, and so found herself working with one of the richest city archive collections in England. She relished her task and the unsurpassed knowledge of the collections she achieved made her the perfect guide for the many researchers who found their way to Exeter.

In 1977 she became the third person to lead the Devon Record Office, readily accepting many challenges including the move from South Street to Exeter City Library. In 1988, believing that North Devon could best be served by a branch office, she set up the North Devon Record Office in Barnstaple. Margery retired as County Archivist in June 1996 but she was far from idle. Already, during her working life, she had made an enduring contribution to scholarship through her published editions of Exeter city records. Now, with Mary Ravenhill, she produced splendid volumes called Early Devon Maps (2000) and Maps of Georgian Devon (2002). She also remained active in many organisations dedicated to Devon's history.

Margery married David Rowe in 1961 and their happy life together lasted for more than 50 years. Her achievements as an archivist will long outlast her and as a person she will be remembered with fondness and gratitude by

many people. They include the present-day staff of the Devon Archives and Local Studies Service to whom for so many years Margery remained such a friendly and familiar presence.



John Coles (1930-2020)

The death on 14 October of Professor John Coles, at the age of 90, brought to a close a lifetime of outstanding archaeological achievement. John, who with his wife Bryony was one of the Trust's Founder Members, will be particularly remembered in the West Country for his pioneering work on the wetland archaeology of the Somerset Levels.

John was born in Canada but made his name in Great Britain, where, in 1980 he became Professor of European Prehistory at the University of Cambridge. Despite the distinction he rightly achieved he remained the kindest and most approachable of men and introduced a whole generation of students and researchers to subjects as diverse as the archaeology of wetlands, experimental archaeology and Scandinavian rock art. In 1973, having already worked on the Levels for some years, he set up the Somerset Levels Project. It remains one of the high points in the history of Somerset archaeology and marked the birth of wetland archaeology as a discipline around the world. His discoveries vastly increased our knowledge of the area's prehistory and yielded many remarkable finds, including the Neolithic Sweet Track and the unforgettable jadeite axe, dating from 3,806 BC, now on loan to the Museum of Somerset.

John never lost touch with his friends in Somerset and supported the Trust from the beginning. He will be long remembered. To Bryony, herself a distinguished archaeologist, we offer our sympathy in her loss.

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