



Heritage

No. 37

Spring 2011

Registered Charity Number 1087086

Journal of the Ottery St. Mary Heritage Society

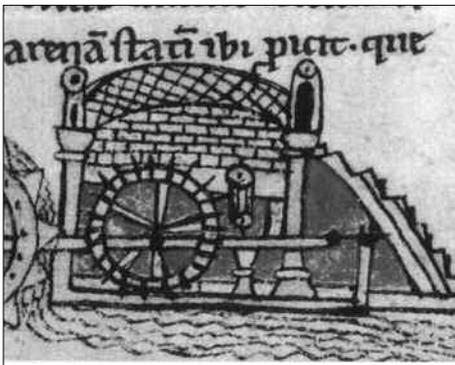
Including...



Roman Ottery? Archaeology Update p5



Judge Coleridge in session at work and play p6



More on Ottery Mills and milling

...and News on the current problems of reduced resources for the Devon Records Office.

www.otteryheritage.org.uk

FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Your committee of trustees have been extremely busy this past couple of months. As you know, when we lost our temporary museum premises at Salston some three years ago, the display panels, showcases and some of the larger exhibits were put into store in shipping containers – far from ideal, but the best we could find at a price we could afford.

At the time we were hopeful that alternative premises could be found quickly. Sadly this has not been the case and three years down the line our display ‘furniture’ is suffering from the ingress of moisture and mould. We have been offered the use of a new 40 ft container, and thanks to a small hardworking band of Trustees and Society members, the new container has been completely lined with insulating timber and we are now in the process of cleaning, drying out and storing those items that can be rescued. This exercise will continue for some weeks yet, but my thanks to those who have volunteered their help.

It is important to emphasise that the containers are used only for storage of display panels, showcases and the like.

In addition, we keep elsewhere a growing number of historical artefacts relating to the town. These are stored privately in safe conditions by our Trustees where, at the moment, none of it can be made readily available for public scrutiny.

The items include family heirlooms, collectibles, deeds and indentures, old invoices and documents, photographs and maps – fragments of the history of Ottery, entrusted to us in good faith, to be kept safely in perpetuity.

We are committed to catalogue and store every single item.

There is also a growing reference library of donated books which ought to be accessible.

These items don't belong to us. The Charity holds them on behalf of the town, and they should, therefore, be made accessible for examination by the public, on request.

With this in mind, the Society is now in negotiations with Ottery

Letters, articles or any other submissions to the Journal can be emailed to otteryheritage@googlemail.com

Editorial

The reduction in Devon County Council's resources to look after and make accessible the documentary history of the County must be a concern for all of us involved in any way with local history and heritage. The planned cuts to the Devon Record Office's budget were eventually reduced by 30%, and for that we must thank Dr Todd Gray for a vigorous campaign in support of the DRO, but services like this - where there's no immediately obvious economic benefit and no life and death or personal security issues pertaining - these are soft targets for cash-strapped Local Authorities, and continued vigilance is needed to make sure the service is maintained at an acceptable level.

So what is acceptable?

Difficult to say - we've got so used to the open-all-hours, instant service, immediate return on investment, jam today society. A slower, less available or responsive service is now inconceivable to us, and we can't reconcile ourselves to it. I don't say we should - I just wonder how we got into this position. Maybe it's got something to do with the terminal decline of the experiments in social welfare begun during the euphoric early post-war period - and the reassertion of policies and plans arising from the cultivation of individual liberty and self interest. We can only find out the answer to the question by encouraging close attention to the lessons of history. To do that effectively we need to prioritise in a different way, or else history, along with the arts and anything else that can't be easily shown to turn a quick buck, will simply not be there to edify and inform future generations.

I recognise that this might be seen as an overblown response to a little local historical difficulty, but it is the bigger picture that stands behind the problem we now have at the DRO, and it is there we must look, ultimately, for an answer.

Chris Wakefield

From the Chairman (cont from p1)

Town Council to lease part of the redundant public toilets beneath the Library at Flexton.

Once again we shall be asking for volunteers to assist in setting up this room as our 'record office' in the near future.

Finally, I am happy to report that our monthly members' meetings continue to be well supported and I would like to thank all the members and guests who help to set out the room, assist with refreshments, and put everything away at the end. Well done.

'Floreat Ottregia'

Robert Neal

Forthcoming Events

Unless otherwise noted, all the Society's meetings are held in the Institute, Yonder Street, Ottery St. Mary.

2011

15th March (Tuesday) 7.30 pm

Mills in the East Devon Landscape

An illustrated talk on the history and technology of milling
Speaker: Martin Watts

19th April (Tuesday) 7.30 pm

Adventures in the Wine Industry

A wide ranging view over the wine industry
Speaker: David Bond

17th May (Tuesday) 7.30 pm

The Horsedrawn Romany Vardo

Speaker: Brian Phelps

21st June 2011 (Tuesday) 7.30 pm

AGM plus The Green Man of Ottery

Speaker: Sue Andrews

19th July 2011 (Tuesday) 7.30 pm

Green Lanes of East Devon and beyond

Speaker: Valerie Belsey

20th September 2011 (Tuesday) 7.30 pm

In the Footsteps of Peter Orlando Hutchinson

Speaker: Philippe Planel

18th October 2011 (Tuesday) 7.30 pm

Woodbury Castle - The Hill Fort

Speaker: Bungy Williams

15 November 2011 (Tuesday) 7.30 pm

Bells and Bellingring

Speaker: Dr Ian Campbell

2012

17 January 2012

Thackeray & Larkbeare (Tuesday) 7.30 pm

Speaker: Betty Williams

21 February 2012

An Insight into A La Ronde

Speaker: Salli Carr-Griffin

Heritage Society Trustees

Hon Chairman	Robert Neal	813686
Hon Secretary	Chris Saunders	812962
Hon Treasurer	Jim Woolley	812176
	Hazel Abley	
	John Pilsworth	812737
	Chris Wakefield	815262
	Betty Williams	814044
	Oliver Wilson	813021

Co-opted members

Membership Sec.	Judy Mullinger	813019
Meetings Secretary	Sylvia Wainwright	813041

Articles or letters can be emailed to the Journal at
otteryheritage@googlemail.com
www.otteryheritage.org.uk

Future funding of the Devon Record Office

For many decades the Devon Record Office has been one of the most important, and probably the best-used, depository of preserved records available for historical research by members of the public.

The recent speculation about the possible effects of budget cuts by Devon County Council sparked off a campaign to petition those councillors and officers responsible for the setting of annual budgets. The campaign was headed by Dr Todd Gray, chairman of the Friends of Devon Archives, and all interested associations and societies were beseeched to make known to the authorities their fears over the likelihood of much reduced services. Your Society played its part in this campaign.

The authorities were quick to respond, explaining the financial constraints under which they were currently operating, and stating their aims to minimise budget cuts in all areas under their control.

During the second week of February, The Budgetary Committee of D.C.C. made it known that their proposed cut of nearly £300,000 p.a. in the D.R.O.'s budget had been reduced by a third. This decision was endorsed by the full County Council meeting on February 17th.

If approved, the reduced budget would still lead to some job losses and possible reduced public access

to the D.R.O., so the overall news is not good. However, it is heartening to know that a large-scale petition can sometimes still have a beneficial outcome.

Chris Saunders

Editor's note:

The Committee has expressed its view, but members can still write personally to Todd Gray with comments or make suggestions about how to keep our records safe and readily available in the future, given the now diminished resources available. email todd@toddgray.co.uk

The reply to our letter from councillor Stuart Barker

Thank you for your email. There are no easy options for savings but it has to right that all services share the savings.

I want to be clear on the actual position of the budget, and the service. I have provided information below about how we have consulted extensively with the public on the level of funding for all council services and we will consult on the records service when we know what funding we will have. As we spend public money it is only right that there is an opportunity for people to tell us their priorities in how we allocate funding. Although none of the public meetings prioritised the records office we will not compromise the responsibility we have to preserve, restore and protect the heritage found in the various documents and collections. There have been no decisions on staffing levels or opening hours, these are made after consultations so we can

consider different views and whether there are other ways that can make savings or income can be generated to replace any funding loss. The need to maintain the facility at Exeter and the importance of continuing the maintenance of important historical records was fully understood when discussions with archivists took place

The records service currently spends £1.2m and the reduction of £289k, agreed with senior archivists, would enable us to ensure our duties will continue to be met. It also enables retention of the North Devon Records office. The savings figure was agreed after a number of meetings between archivists and senior officers. The savings from the records office are not out of step because we have to find savings of 27% across all services which this year means £54.6m so all services are expected to find efficiency savings to reduce spending. Any restoration of projected savings will need to be balanced by an equivalent cut in other services, this includes the care of vulnerable people of all ages or bigger cuts in the efficiencies libraries have to find which are no different from the records service. Unlike the records office, all the other services have already been finding cost saving efficiencies in the current year and will have to find more next year. Adult and Community services have had to find savings for three years, this has not been the case with the records office. The cost of a member of staff assisting is £80 per hour.

Devon County Council carried out public consultation on the reductions to our funding during Tough Choices road shows which took place last autumn. It visited a significant number of locations across Devon to ensure that our council tax payers had the opportunity to tell us their priorities on spending the reduced resources. The process informed us of which services they wanted to protect and which they didn't see as a priority. Our web site also provided an opportunity for everyone to tell us what our funding priorities should be. Not surprisingly the public priorities were the care of vulnerable people of all ages - especially children,

Letters, articles or any other submissions to the Journal can be emailed to otteryheritage@googlemail.com

education, road maintenance and libraries. Nearly 1000 Devon people attended these consultation events and around 34000 visited the tough choices web site.

The evidence of visits to the Exeter records office indicates that there has been a decrease each year and the numbers visiting the new facility are lower than those who visited the office when it was in Castle Street. The vast majority of visits are to research family history so the growth of available web based research sites may well be contributing to the reduced numbers.

The open public consultation process was used to inform priorities in the many services we are responsible for and was used to inform the allocations in the budget proposal. At this stage

we are only considering the overall budget figures. If the full council agree the budget on February 17th then we will start a consultation exercise with stakeholders, users, friends groups, staff and public to determine what suggestions/ideas there are which will address the reduced budget or generate income to replace the savings. I hope we will be able to have a FAQs type web page where we can show suggestions and our reaction. As reductions in staffing levels will need to be considered as part of the process there will be a consultation period with them to determine if they have any alternative options that will meet the agreed budget, this will take place after the public consultation so we can apply the information we gain from that exercise. A combination of measures

may well be part of a final recommendation. It is only when all the consultation exercises have been concluded will decisions be made and changes begin. The conclusion of consultations is not expected until April.

I do appreciate that these are difficult times and I would not want to be here by choice. We have to find new and innovative ways to save costs and preserve the traditions and history.

Regards

Stuart

(Councillor Stuart Barker is The County Council's Cabinet Member for Adult and Community Services).

Coleridge at Home

Peter Harris very kindly delivered this photo through my letterbox - which I took as a reminder that a visit to Nether Stowey to examine the upgraded Coleridge Cottage is overdue (and will be rectified later this year).

On the reverse was written - "STColeridge's great great grandson at Nether Stowey, Somerset". I am by not certain how many great great grandchildren STC had or which one this is. I suspect it is Alwyne Coleridge, who died in 1980, which makes it quite an old picture of the Cottage.

The upgrade - or "re-presentation" of Coleridge Cottage includes some exciting-looking changes to the house itself and the garden, described on the NT website as follows:

Letters, articles or any other submissions to the Journal can be emailed to otteryheritage@googlemail.com



Inside Coleridge Cottage pre 1980. S.T.Coleridge's great great grandson sits in his illustrious forbear's parlour room.

"The plans include dressing some of the original 18th-century rooms as if the Coleridge family had just walked out of them, as well as presenting the non-show rooms as exciting interpretation spaces.

We intend to open an extra room, which was originally the family's kitchen, as a version of how it may

have looked in 1797 when they were in residence.

For the first time in over 100 years of our care, you'll be able to venture outside into the courtyard and garden. In the courtyard you'll see the well the family drew their water from. The garden beyond was vital to Coleridge as a place to find solitude away from the hubbub of family life".

aw

Local Archaeology Update

The archaeological watching brief, undertaken by the Society for DCC on the foundation works for Ottery's new skatepark, has turned up a piece of Roman tile (see photo). It was one of very few finds of any interest on the site but it does offer encouragement to the idea that somewhere in the vicinity, there existed some kind of Roman buildings. Roman finds in the parish are not common - some potsherds have been found in Church Field in Alington, but nothing else has turned up until this.

Before you rush off to look for a Roman temple or villa complex, you should note the following. The tile has been well worn by movement in the soil from ploughing, so it has most likely originated some distance from the point of discovery. On the other hand careful field-walking might, in some future investigation, turn up other clues.

The back of the tile is scored with criss-cross lines, of the kind you might use to provide a key for plaster or mortar, so perhaps it was a facing tile or a floor tile, although there is no trace of any decoration on the reverse.

The details will be noted in Devon County Council's Historic Environment Record, to inform future research efforts.

Along with the Roman tile fragment, a considerable amount of iron ore turned up at one spot in the site. A sample has been examined by an experimental archaeologist specialising in early iron production, and it appears the ore is good enough to smelt if enough were found. Just in case the opportunity for smelting ever arose, 40lbs of the ore was bagged up and retained. There may be more news on this at a later date.

Letters, articles or any other submissions to the Journal can be emailed to otteryheritage@googlemail.com



Top: Roman tile fragment from the Skatepark site. It measures about 50mm x 75mm and is scored on the back face.

Above: Iron ore in East Devon is particularly associated with the greensand ridge running through the Blackdowns, but pockets of it can crop up in a variety of places.

Sainsbury's site investigation

The pre-development investigation at the site of the new Sainsburys has, from an archaeological point of view, been rather disappointing - the evidence suggests that nothing of any significance has happened there! On the other hand, even a zero result could be telling us something about Ottery; possibly that the original town was contained in a small area around

Broad Street, Silver Street and Cornhill, and once Grandisson's College was built in the 1330s, any further expansion would take place avoiding the immediate environs of the College itself. This might explain why Hind Street is the only route into Ottery with little development on its southern edge none at all to the north (bar the last 50 yards or so).

Chris Wakefield

THE COLERIDGE FAMILY

A stranger to Ottery St Mary could be forgiven for assuming that whenever the name Coleridge is mentioned in relation to our history, one is referring to Samuel Taylor Coleridge, the poet. But the county of Devon, and the town of Ottery in particular, has another equally illustrious branch of the Coleridge family whose services to the United Kingdom, to Devon, and to the town of Ottery St Mary are less well known. I am, of course, referring to the family of Lord Coleridge.

Both families have common ancestry, with Lord Coleridge being a descendant of James Coleridge, an elder brother of the poet. Whilst Samuel Taylor Coleridge is rightly acclaimed for his scholarship and wit, the descendants of James Coleridge have been prominent in the service of their country, as Members of Parliament, Lord Lieutenants and in particular in the Legal Profession. John Duke Coleridge was created "Baron Coleridge of Ottery St Mary, Devon" in 1873 and became Lord Chief Justice of England in 1880.

Many of you will be aware of my interest in "all things military" but in reality my collecting taste is much more eclectic and wide ranging. I am often to be found rummaging around antique and charity shops, auction houses and reclaim centres, in search of something that takes my fancy. Often my "find" is a book. On one recent such foray, I came across an old book entitled "Peeps at Parliament - Taken from behind the Speaker's Chair", written by Henry W. Lucy and published in 1903. It covers the period 1893 to 1895 and provides amusing vignettes of the people and events



(left): Lord Chief Justice Coleridge presiding at the Percy Lefroy Mapleton trial in 1881. A cartoon in the Illustrated London News of November 12, 1881. (right) a formal portrait - engraved from Eden Upton Eddis's painting (1812-1901). (both pictures from Wikimedia Commons)

occurring in the House at the time. A quick glance at the Index found several references to Coleridge and I will share these with you over the next few months. The one that follows refers to the 1st Lord Coleridge.

A Wary Judge

"Occasionally the Premier [i.e. the Prime Minister] seems to be asleep, but it is not safe to assume as a matter of course that, because his eyes are closed and his head resting on the back of the bench, he is lapped in slumber. There is an eminent judge [Lord Coleridge] on the Bench, whose lapses into somnolency are part of the ordered proceedings of every case that comes before him. For many terms he baffled the observation of the smartest junior, as of the most keen-sighted leader. He had his sleep, but instead of awaking with a less guilty start, and ostentatiously perusing his notes as others used, he, when he awoke, scrupulously preserved exactly the same position and attitude as when he truly slept. Closely following for a few moments the argument of the learned gentleman who had lulled him to sleep, he, softly opening his

eyes, and not otherwise moving, interposed a remark pertinent to the argument. For a long time his device baffled the Bar. It was discovered at last, and is today of no avail."

Jim Woolley

Editor's note:

On the same topic I spotted a reference to Justice Coleridge in the on-line Autobiography of Henry Rider Haggard, which shows a rather more animated side to his character...

"Talking of the Boer War reminds me of Sir Redvers Buller. I knew him and his wife, Lady Audrey, very well. We used to dine at their house, where we met a number of distinguished people, among whom I remember Lord Coleridge, the Chief Justice. He was a brilliant conversationalist with a marvellous memory. I have heard him tell story after story without stopping, till at length I began to hope that the stock was running low."

It would appear some of Samuel Taylor Coleridge's talent for talking had reappeared in other parts of the family!

Mills in Ottery

Our next members meeting will be addressed by Martin Watts – an authority on mills and milling in the UK and anyone who has an interest in archaeology – especially industrial archaeology should make an effort to attend.

To give some additional local context to the talk, there are a couple of things that I've noticed over the last month or so in relation to milling in Ottery that I hope will add another dimension to what Martin has to say.

The first item concerns the existence (or not) of a mill at Alfington. The “Mill Lane” which runs northwest-ish from the main road through the village, leads nowhere in particular, and peters out when it has reached the last few houses. It is shown on the 1843 tithe map continuing towards the river, then turning sharp right to join Landscore Lane by the easternmost Fenny Bridge. Just across the river in Feniton parish there is indeed a mill, and it has been suggested that Alfington's Mill Lane is named for this mill, there being no other obvious explanation.

Here's another thought however – the Manor Book of Ottery lists a rental from about 1680 and named among the Old Barton Tenancies in Alfington are plots of land called Milham Meadow and Millparke – which appear to be situated in the vicinity of the end of Mill Lane. Even earlier than that a rental from 1382 lists the same Milham in Alfington.

Again, if we read John Leland's itinerary as he passes through East Devon in 1542, we find the following...

“A(bout) 5 Miles farther (from Clyst St Mary Bridge) I passid by a forde over a Riveret caullid Tale, that a mile dim. lower above S. Mari Oterey Toun goith into Oterey Water.

Ther is a Bridge of Stone by the Ford of Tale, From this Ford of Tale I rode about 2. Miles farther to Veniton Bridge, where Oterey Water is devidid into 4. Armes by Pollicy to serve Grist and Tukking Milles.

Apon 3. of these Streames I roode by fair Stone Bridges. The First Arme of the 4. was on the lefte, and had no Bridge that I markid. On the North side of the first Bridge was a Chapelle now prophanid.

It is clear that there is more than one Mill that was visible to Leland when he rode along what is now the old A30 eastwards towards Honiton, but equally unclear what he meant by the four arms of the river, the three stone bridges and the location of the mills. What we see today is two bridges, but there is the possibility that the third was farther along the road near the location of the railway bridge. It is about here that WGHoskins suggests a stone bridge mentioned in a charter dating from 963AD, but the water in the stream here is

running northwest so is clearly not “devidid by Pollicy” from the river Otter. The “Chapelle prophanid” is most likely At Anne's chapel, which stood on the little island just north of the present western bridge, rather than the nonconformist chapel still standing about 60 yards to the east.

Finally, there is on the tithe map an odd broadening of the river immediately south of the A30 opposite the modern Fenny Bridges Hotel. This was known as Street Pool, and was in existence when the 1061 Charter was drafted which granted the parish to the cathedral at Rouen. Although not impossible, it's an odd thing for a river to do naturally, and the suspicion remains that it may have been man made, possibly for water storage for mill propulsion!

So there may well have been a mill just inside the parish somewhere around this location. Any remains could easily have disappeared completely as the river Otter changed its course – Street Pool has now disappeared for example, although its outlines are still visible.

Leaving the Alfington Mill for further investigation, I noted also in the Accounts for the parish from 1448, indicate plenty of milling in progress – three fulling mills to kick off with and these quite possibly all in the town of Ottery,

So milling has been an important part of Ottery's history and we can anticipate more interest at our next meeting.



Daniel Lysons account of Ottery in 1822

Daniel Lysons (1762–1834) was an English antiquary and topographer of the late 18th and early 19th century. With his brother Samuel, Lysons began compiling a book called “Magna Britannia”, - a topographical account of the whole of Great Britain. He only completed work on counties named B-- to D-- so you will instantly see why he is much remembered in Devon. This is part of a much longer account (available on our website).

Knighteston, in this parish, gave name to a family, by whom, about the year 1370, it was sold to Bittlesgate. After continuing a few descents in that family, it was entailed on Lord Bonville, who enjoyed it notwithstanding a claim made by Anthony Widville, Earl Rivers, as next heir of Bittlesgate. Upon the attainder of the Duke of Suffolk, it fell to the crown. It was afterwards purchased by William Sherman, Esq., whose family resided here for several descents. From them it passed by a female heir to Copleston, and, by purchase, to Hawtrey: it is now the property of the Rev. Dr. Drury, who purchased it of the trustees under the will of the late Stephen Hawtrey, Esq., in 1803.

Thorne, in this parish, gave name to an ancient family, whose heiress brought it to Coke. The Cokes continued here for many descents: the barton was afterwards in severalties. It now belongs to the episcopal school at Exeter; some part of it having been given by Messrs Rolfe, Vivian, and Pitfield, and the remainder purchased in 1776.

Cadhay also gave name to a family whose heiress married John Haydon, a bencher of Lincoln's Inn, in the reign of Queen Elizabeth. The Haydons continued here for several descents. Cadhay afterwards belonged to William Peere Williams, Esq., barrister-at-law, author of the "Reports." One of his co-heiresses married Admiral Thomas Graves, afterwards Lord Graves, of the kingdom of Ireland; which title was bestowed upon him for his gallant services in the memorable action of the 1st of June, 1794. Lord Graves resided at Cadhay, and died there in 1802. His elder daughter brought Cadhay in marriage to William Bagwell, Esq. It is now the property of Sir Thomas Hare, Bart.

Holcombe belonged to the Malherbes; afterwards to Moore: at a later period, it was, for some descents, the property and residence of the Eveleighs. It now belongs to Captain Charles Grant, R. N.

Ash was successively in the families of De Lupo or Wolfe, Treley, and Bonville. After the attainder of the Duke of Suffolk, it was granted to Walrond. It has since been in the family of Bennet, and is now the property of the Rev. Thomas Putt.

The barton of Bishops Court, said to have been the seat of Bishop Grandisson, having been held on lease by the family of Mercer, as early as the reign of Edward III., was purchased by them in fee, in the reign of James I., and is now held in jointure by the widow of Henry Marker, Esq., junior, whose grandmother was heiress of the Mercers. The Babingtons, a branch of the Derbyshire family of that name, had an estate in this parish by inheritance from [the family of] French, and resided on it for some descents.

What's on elsewhere

Branscombe Project

18 April - Monday 7:30 pm
WWI: Reports from the Home Front
A talk by Nigel Freathy

EXHIBITION

9 - 16 April: THREE BIG HOUSES:
Hazelwood, Hole House & Barnell [now Trafalgar Barton]

17 October - Monday 7:30:

Village at War:

talk by Sue Dymond & Amanda Statham

EXHIBITION

22 - 30 October: BRANSCOMBE'S WAR:

Life in Branscombe during WW2

more details: www.branscombeproject.org.uk

Colyton Parish History Society

Wed 23rd March: THE BLACKSHIRTS IN EAST DEVON

Todd Gray 7.30pm Colyford Memorial Hall

Wed 27th April: POLTIMORE HOUSE a HISTORY

Dr Claire Donovan 7.30pm Colyton Town Hall

Wed 28th September: CAPT WILSON and the PELEW ISLANDS

Alan Jones 7.30pm Colyton Town Hall

Wed 26h October: THE YANKS ARE COMING

The Americans in Colyton 1944

Ben Joslin 7.30pm Colyford Memorial Hall

Wed 23rd November: RECENT DISCOVERIES AT SHUTE BARTON

Stuart Blaylock 7.30pm Colyton Town Hall

more details www.colytonhistory.co.uk

Otter Valley Association and Sid Vale Association

both run a comprehensive series of local walks. visit www.sidvaleassociation.org.uk or www.ova.org.uk for details.

Letters, articles or any other submissions to the Journal can be emailed to otteryheritage@googlemail.com more information at www.otteryheritage.org.uk