



## THE WOOLHOPE NATURALISTS' FIELD CLUB

Registered Charity No. 521000

NEWSLETTER NO. 48 SPRING 2024

### FROM OUR RETIRING PRESIDENT

It has again been a great privilege to be President of the Woolhope Club, and I would like to thank the Vice Presidents, Jane Adams, our Secretary, and the committee for all their support over the last 12 months.

2023/24 has been particularly eventful. We have weathered the hopefully temporary closure of the Museum and the Woolhope Room, with especial thanks to Jane Adams for excellent liaison with the Museum and to our librarians, Jacqueline Jonson and Marianne Percival, for the orderly management of the Woolhope library contents. We have had another excellent and memorable series of field trips put together by Sue Olver and outstanding winter talks organised by Ann Harbour. The *Transactions* are going from strength to strength under the able editorship of Terry Morgan. Meanwhile, in the background, there has been a detailed and thoughtful programme of work to review the Club constitution and strategic objectives, also led by Terry Morgan with support from Jane Adams and other members of the committee, including helpful, detailed appraisal and analysis of options by Joseph Goldsmith, to fit us for the 21st Century with all the challenges it brings to us.

We have regretfully bid farewell to Roz Lowe, who has moved out of the county to be close to family. Roz edited the *Transactions* for many years, and then determinedly championed and led the construction of our website. I would also like to express my appreciation to Ian Porter who has been our careful and stalwart Treasurer and Membership Secretary for many years and is now stepping down. There are detailed tributes to Roz and Ian elsewhere in this newsletter.

The Wye exhibition is continuing its slow trajectory around village venues in Herefordshire. Going forward, an important and exciting task is to consider and plan for the reopening of the Museum and the Woolhope Room and the forthcoming 175th anniversary year of the founding of the Club, bringing together all the various dimensions of Club interests, in collaboration with the Museum and other relevant Herefordshire organisations.

However, storm clouds are also literally and metaphorically on the horizon, and we will all be aware that 2023 was the hottest year ever, hard on the heels of the hottest decade ever; this has implications for Herefordshire as elsewhere, especially on our landscape and biodiversity. The Woolhope Club has an extraordinarily wide range of members' expertise, interests and enthusiasms, and I am optimistic that we will continue to rise to these challenges and that the Club will go from strength to strength. So, it is with great pleasure that I welcome Howard Tomlinson as the next President to ably steer us through this coming year in the life of the Woolhope Club.

Rachel Jenkins

*The report below has been taken from the website of King's College, London. Members of the Club will be delighted at the well-deserved honour given to our retiring President.*

**Professor Rachel Jenkins**, Emeritus Professor of Epidemiology and International Mental Health Policy, has received an OBE for services to Mental Health policy and research in the UK and overseas.

Professor Jenkins directed the World Health Organisation (WHO) Collaborating Centre at King's Institute of Psychiatry for 15 years and continues to lead projects overseas, working with governments, and international and national organisations, to give support on mental health policy development and implementation, new legislation, training development and innovation, and in providing consultation and strategic advice to government and non-governmental organisations.

She is involved in the design, delivery and evaluation of a variety of capacity-building and training projects across Africa (Tanzania mainland and Zanzibar, Kenya, Malawi, Nigeria, Zambia), the Middle East (Egypt, Iraq, Yemen, Oman), Asia (Pakistan) and Europe, including the former Soviet Union. She also presents briefings, seminars and keynote and invited lectures around the world addressing mental health.

## **FROM OUR NEW PRESIDENT**

*Members who were at the Winter Annual Meeting in November 2023 will already be aware that we are pleased to welcome Canon Dr Howard Tomlinson as our new President, and he introduces himself below.*

It is a great honour to have been elected as the Woolhope Club's President for 2024-25. This is not least because I am following such a distinguished holder

of the office as Professor Rachel Jenkins, who recently received the OBE for services to mental health and research in the UK and overseas.

My background is rather different. I am an historian by training and was born and bred in Yorkshire rather than the Marches of Wales. But I have now lived in Hereford for over thirty-six years, for half this time at 5 Harley Court, the residence of the Headmaster of Hereford Cathedral School. It is a little-known late medieval house, disguised by its Georgian front, situated in what was once 'Old School Lane', just off the cathedral close. And there is a link here with the Woolhope Club too, the house being home to Alfred Watkins—that great Hereford polymath and president of the club in 1919—for the last ten years of his life. I hope that some of you may be free to view the fine timber-framed hall of that building on 8 June at the start of that day's presidential field meeting.

The last paragraph gives several clues as to my historical interests: Hereford's built environment; the history of local education, particularly the Cathedral School over the past 800 years, the subject of my book published by Logaston Press in 2018; and the history of Hereford Cathedral, as well as Truro Cathedral and other churches within and without the diocese. But I look forward in 2024-25 to learning about many other aspects of the history and landscape of our beautiful county. As usual, an excellent programme of field meetings and lectures has been organised by members of our hard-working committee for my presidential year, and I hope to meet you at some of these events over the coming months.

Howard Tomlinson

### **CLUB OFFICERS 2024-2025**

Following the Winter Annual Meeting 2023, the following are the members of the committee, as defined in the Club rules, who took office at the Spring Annual Meeting 2024:

*President	H. Tomlinson
*Vice-presidents	R. Jenkins, D. Whitehead, J.C. Eisel, J. Cooper

Elected members of the Committee

To retire 2025: D. Lovelace, K. Ray, J. Comber, T. Cusworth (co-opted)

To retire 2026: M. Jenkins, C. Montez, W. Watson, J. Adams

To retire 2027: A. Harbour, D. James, M. Percival, J. Goldsmith

*Acting Hon. Secretary	J. Adams
*Acting. Hon. Treasurer	J. Comber

\*Hon. Editor

T. Morgan

\*Hon. Field Secretary

S. Olver

Those marked \* are ex officio.

Members will be very sorry to hear that Ian Porter has had some medical issues and resigned as treasurer as from the Spring Annual Meeting 2024, where the Club's accounts he prepared for 2023 were approved. He has been treasurer and membership secretary since 2009, when he took over from Muriel Tonkin, and has always dealt with the Club affairs in a most efficient manner. This has enhanced the smooth running of the Club, and it is only when he will not be there that it will be realised how much work he did in the background: he will be a hard act to follow.

At the Club committee meeting on 9 February 2024 the committee, under its powers under Rule III, were pleased to appoint, in an acting role because it was too late to elect him at the usual time, Jonathan Comber as treasurer. In addition, at the February committee meeting, Toby Cusworth was co-opted to fill a vacancy on the committee and has kindly agreed to take on the role of membership secretary, duties which were formerly performed by the treasurer. At the Winter Annual Meeting it was announced that Jane Adams had resigned with effect from the Spring Annual Meeting, and she was elected a member of the committee instead. She has very kindly agreed to continue to act as secretary until a successor can be found, and if anyone is interested, please contact her through the website to find out what is involved.

## **MEMBERSHIP AND SUBSCRIPTIONS**

At the Spring Annual Meeting, it was announced that as at 31 December 2023 there were 620 members (599 in 2022) and 25 institutional members. Our membership varies a bit from year to year but is basically stable.

Subscriptions for 2024 became due on 1 January 2024, and are mostly paid by standing order. It is not unusual for some members who do not pay in this way to need reminding, and this is done by putting a tactful reminder slip in with the Spring newsletter. These were prepared just before the Spring Annual Meeting; if anyone has a reminder slip, but has paid in the interim, please ignore it!

## **ROZ LOWE**

In November, our then President hosted an informal lunch at Moccas for members of the Club Committee, as a farewell to Roz Lowe, who, with her

husband Laurie, was moving to the West Country later in the month. She joined the Club in 1995 and became editor of the *Transactions* in November 2005. At that time the *Transactions* were somewhat behind in publication, a situation that she set about remedying, with unbounded enthusiasm, and helped by her exceptional computer skills. She spent much time in editing material that was to be published and working with authors. Once up-to-date, the volumes have since been published on time, in the year following that to which they refer. Roz introduced the use of colour photographs in the *Transactions*, an innovation which greatly enhance the volumes. Some years ago, she organised the construction of a new website, the outward face of the Club in this digital age, and spent countless hours in digitising material published by the Club. As part of the process of making information readily available, and with financial support from the Smith Fund, all volumes of the *Transactions* published since 1900 were digitised by an outside contractor, and she undertook the technical aspects of putting this material on the website. Earlier volumes had already been digitised, and so all of our published volumes are now available in digital form and can be searched in this way. Making such material publicly available can only be a credit to the Club and is due to Roz's work. She also edited and produced on behalf of the Club hard copies of the index to the Club's *Transactions*, and two other books, one on the Downton Gorge Nature Reserve (2011) and a supplement to Brian Smith's book on Herefordshire Maps 1577 – 1800 (2012). She retired as editor on 31 October 2015, subsequently spending much time on developing the website. As well as the editorial role, she was president for 2009-10 and 2017-8. We wish her well in her removal to Devon.

### **VERA PERRY**

Older members of the Club will be sorry to hear of the death of Vera Perry at the age of 97, who, with her husband Roy, joined the Club in 1964. Roy was President of the Club and Vera herself was very active in Club work, participating as a member of the committee for a number of years. In the 1980s she and Roy organised and led four out-of-county visits, an activity that lapsed in the middle 1990s. More details of her involvement with the Club can be found in the obituary of Roy Perry, which appeared in the Club *Transactions* in 2008.

### **REVIEW OF RULES AND LEGAL CONSTITUTION**

The rules under which the Club has been run have been gradually altered over the years from those agreed in 1852, but, having taken advice, the Club Committee has decided that they do now need to be updated to match expectations for charities today—it is now a long time since the Club first became a registered charity.

It is proposed that the Club will become a Charitable Incorporated Organisation, with a constitution based on a model issued by the Charity Commission for charitable organisations with members, and now widely adopted. The committee believes that the Club will benefit in several ways:

- from clarifying its legal status;
- from a clearer statement of its charitable purposes;
- from clarity about a range of important constitutional and organisational governance points—such as the operation of AGMs, and the role of members and trustees (the committee in our case)—which are minimally expressed or not covered in the current rules;
- through greater flexibility to allow the Club to adapt to changing circumstances.

In short, the committee believes that this will provide a strong, updated, and appropriate foundation upon which to continue and develop the Club's activities for the future.

Proposed change to the rules was first reported at the Winter Annual Meeting of 2023, and it is hoped we may be in a position for members to consider and approve a draft document at a general meeting in the autumn. This will not be earlier than September 2024 and due notice will be given. Timing may vary depending on progress.

A Strategy Committee has been set up and has met on several occasions; this has been a key topic on its agenda. We are fortunate to have the help of Joseph Goldsmith, a member of the Club and a retired barrister, to guide our deliberations, and the input of Jonathan Comber, with his practical experience of similar matters in other charities. A draft constitutional document has been produced, and this was accepted in outline by the Club committee meeting in February. While professional legal advice will be needed, it is intended that as much work as possible is done in house, to minimise costs.

## **G W SMITH FUND**

I have had no news about a possible project which has been pending for the last year or two, but recently I had a discussion about a likely project, which will be followed up next year. We are very keen to hear of other projects, and if any member has one which could be considered, please get in touch to see if it might qualify, and if so, how to go about it. The main object of the fund is to bring information about Herefordshire into the public domain. The Fund was set

up in 2001 after the Club received a legacy from Geoffrey Walter Smith, who died in October 1998. The initial rules were revised slightly in 2003 and 2007.

John Eisel

## **FRIDAY GEOLOGY LECTURES, MARCH 2023 TO JANUARY 2024**

The Friday evening lectures once again featured high-quality speakers addressing a variety of subject matter. The Club was also represented at the Festival of Geology, organised by the Geologists' Association, at University College London on 4 November 2023.

### **Dr Dennis Bates, 'Strange Plankton of the Past' (24 March 2023)**

Dr Bates's lecture explored his extensive research on graptolites, a group of 'zone fossils' found globally from the Cambrian period until they became extinct in the Carboniferous, although descendant creatures exist today. He described their development and the main forms of this colonial animal (zoid); they were free-floating (planktonic) and dispersed by currents, tides, and wind. These fossils featured in the Knighton map recently published with the help of Woolhope Club Members.

### **Dr David Whitworth, 'An Introduction to Carbon Capture and Storage' (22 September 2023)**

Dr Whitworth, of Merlin Energy Company, Ledbury, gave a very comprehensive talk about carbon capture and storage. He talked about suitable sites for building plants and the processes involved, the carbon tax, and carbon credits that can offset carbon emissions. His research in Utah with the reservoir rocks of sandstone and shale has the potential to be used in the Forties and Nelson Oil reservoirs of the North Sea. He explained the present and the expected future position of carbon capture in the UK.

### **Prof Richard Bryant, 'Holocene in Herefordshire' (20 October 2023)**

Prof Bryant showed photographs illustrating our Holocene in Herefordshire, which began 11,700 years ago with a dramatic rise in temperature and ended with the proposed new Epoch of Anthropocene, with a start date of 1950. He explained that climate changes, such as those ongoing today, had happened in the past, and that humans had increased in population and were affected by extremes just like dinosaurs.

### **Katherine Andrew, 'Mortimer Landscape of North Herefordshire' (15 December 2023)**

Kate Andrew introduced her book, *The Mortimer Landscape of North Herefordshire*, and illustrated her talk with fine photographs of a landscape

extensively shaped by the Devensian glaciation. This landscape set the scene for prehistoric settlement—hunter gatherers, Bronze Age peoples, and the tribes of the Iron Age—and for life in the Roman, Saxon, and Norman periods. The seat of the Marcher lords been at Wigmore Castle. She explained too how the landscape had directly influenced the outcome of the Battle of Mortimer's Cross during the Wars of the Roses.

**Dr Sue Hay, 'Martley Rock - a Victorian Gem Unearthed'** (19 January 2024)

The lecture focused on the petrography and structural findings of the latest research at a unique site. In a very small area, excavation had exposed complex relationships, with exposures of the Precambrian and Lower Palaeozoic rocks of the inlier, surrounding Sliurian and Carboniferous rocks, and younger Triassic sediments. Between 2004 and 2015, Dr Paul Olver, John Nicklin, the landowner, Bill Barclay of the BGS, and members of the Woolhope Club, the Earth Heritage Trust, and Teme Valley Geological Society, had all played a part in excavation and rediscovery at a quarry first investigated over 200 years ago.

## **WINTER MEETING PROGRAMME 2023-24**

The Saturday talks, held in the Town Hall between September and March, covered a wide range of topics, and were well attended as the shadow of Covid finally receded. Some featured particularly lively question and answer sessions. We're grateful to our speakers for making one of the Club's key activities successful and once again to Anne Harbour for organising a high-quality programme.

**Duncan James, Recent Research into Timber-Framed Buildings in Herefordshire** (16 September 2023)

Among much else in a gripping lecture, our buildings recorder illustrated the use of dendrochronological testing to date timbers scientifically, thus helping to refine views about dating on stylistic grounds; typical layouts for houses at different periods and how houses were altered or rebuilt as fashions and social circumstances changed; the evidence, including carpenters' marks, showing how timber frames were constructed, disassembled, transported, and reconstructed at the final site; and startling proof of sudden technological change—from c.1540, timber was pit-sawn rather than trestle-sawn. He reviewed many buildings in Herefordshire, with excellent diagrams and photographs, and how his research was uncovering a growing number of counter-change ceilings, such as those so wonderfully illustrated in the recently published *Transactions*.



**The F. C. Morgan Lecture: Dr Stephen Roberts, ‘Radicalism in Herefordshire, 1640-60’** (14 October 2023)

Dr Roberts, editor of nine volumes of the *History of Parliament*, outlined the brief impact of radical puritanism in conservative Herefordshire, during and after the Civil War. Sir Robert Harley, of Brampton Bryan, drew up the ‘Puritan Survey’ in 1640 to dismiss the county’s clergy and condemn the cathedral establishment; his wife, Brilliana, died during a royalist siege. John Birch, governor of Hereford in 1645, held similar views. Radicals associated with military rule (e.g., Wroth Rogers), petitioned parliament in 1650 for a ‘fit’ ministry and much besides. With the Restoration and return of property to the church, accommodation between protagonists set in; some radical legacy lay in ‘quietist’ movements such as the Quakers. Dr Roberts dealt expertly with many questions.

**Stuart Hedley, ‘Initial Studies on the Vegetation of Herefordshire’** (11 October 2023)

In a beautifully illustrated talk, our botany recorder outlined how surveys for the National Vegetation Classification (NVC) Scheme were done: identify homogenous stands of vegetation; sample plants within them; collate results; and compare them with national data. For Herefordshire grasslands, he believed that NVC records of most SSSIs had been made but an FOI request would be required to view them; several organisations had carried out *ad hoc* work. Similarly, he had not yet had time to access original data from a valuable multi-faceted survey of our woodlands, carried out in 2006-09. To progress, he was working on sample NVC survey across grassland and woodland, intended to explore vegetation in different landscapes and underlying geologies, and Herefordshire’s importance as a ‘liminal’ county, with many vegetation types intermediate in character.

**Dr John van Laun, ‘The “Destruction” of Hereford Cathedral: Preservation, Restoration and Intervention’** (25 November 2023)

Dr van Laun noted that Romanesque fabric, removed by Wyatt after the west end collapsed in 1783, had become ornamental garden stone, before rediscovery and display in the Bishop’s Cloister c.1840 (later in St John’s Walk). Since more original stone had been collected as Cottingham replaced or replicated Romanesque material in 1841 (as with Scott’s work in the 1860s), original features could be compared with 19th-century replacements. The context for Havergal’s colour plate of medieval washes in *Fasti Herefordenses* was fascinating. Cottingham had left a crucial legacy of Romanesque plaster casts and drawings. Images of restoration plans and Romanesque carvings created animated discussion and audience participation, whilst comparisons were made with Romanesque work from Kilpeck and Shobdon.

**Dr Roger Gill, ‘No Shortage of Honeybees’** (6 January 2024)

Dr Gill discussed honey production, bees in Herefordshire, bees today and in the future, and also the history of bees and people; he reviewed prehistoric cave paintings and Minoan jewellery, literary treatment—from the Bible to Virgil’s *Georgics*—and artistic representation. In Herefordshire, Alfred Watkins’s contributions linked beekeeping to the Woolhope Club; the Herefordshire Beekeepers’ Association, of which Dr Gill was treasurer, remained energetically committed to talks, practical training, and publications. He showed that while other pollinators were greatly threatened honeybee populations worldwide were increasing, explained how bee colonies operated, and dealt with crucial topics, such as threats from disease and Asian hornets, design of bee hives, change in agricultural crops, and bee-friendly planting. An engaged and appreciative audience raised many questions.

**Dr Jane Adams, ‘Political Reform in Early 19th Century Herefordshire: Slavery and ‘Old Corruption’’** (27 January 2024)

Dr Adams reviewed the state of the nation c.1815—national debt, huge political weighting towards an elite including Anglican clergy, burdensome indirect taxation, and growing critique of colonial policy and slavery—before exploring local politics to the 1830s. Petitions to parliament dealt with economic relief, relief of Roman Catholics, Queen Caroline, slavery, and franchise reform; the Herefordshire anti-slavery society petitioned before abolition in British territories in 1833. The Reform Act of 1831-32 abolished the county’s rotten boroughs. By 1831, Herefordshire was economically stagnant without widespread unrest (despite protest by agricultural workers), constituency interests were balanced, and petitioning gave political voice, including to women. Nationally, petitioning helped drive subsequent state intervention in social policy.

**Prof Jim Rose, ‘Glaciation of the British Isles, with Reference to the Hereford Area’** (17 February 2024)

Prof Rose outlined his interpretation of the glacial history of the British Isles. Outstanding recent work on the Devensian glaciation, the last in Britain when Hereford had been at the limit of the ice, had not been hampered by the destruction of evidence wrought by each new glaciation. Nonetheless, despite the challenges geologists sought to date earlier glaciations and correlate them with Marine Isotope Stages (MIS) records. The MIS 16 glaciation featured major expansion of ice in Wales and Scotland, whilst the MIS 12 glaciation had hugely eroded eastern England. The period from then to the Devensian glaciation was particularly difficult to interpret. Prof Rose’s memorable video, showing the onset and retreat of glaciation in Britain through known stages, gripped his audience and was repeated.

**Prof. Rachel Jenkins, ‘Climate Change in Herefordshire and its Impact on Biodiversity’ (16 March 2024)**

Prof. Jenkins described climate change mechanisms over millennia, recent aberrant and rapid warming due to increased greenhouse gases from fossil fuels, deforestation, livestock, fertilisers and cement, and the urgent need to avoid reaching climate tipping points. She reviewed Herefordshire's weather since 1900, demonstrating how far seasonal temperatures and rainfall had changed, and, with huge supporting evidence, the impact on an extensive range of flora and other wildlife. Although Herefordshire was newly attractive to some species, many more had difficulty adapting, were shifting northwards, in decline, or facing local extinction. Prof. Jenkins emphasised that national land-use change was crucial to reduce emissions, recover nature and ecosystem function, and to reduce nutrient runoff to water courses. This included devoting more land to biodiversity (the 30 by 30 programme) and switching more farmland from meat and dairy production to plant-based foods, since they provided the same number of calories from 30% less land, with far fewer emissions and less river / soil pollution. She reviewed implications and steps for the county.

*Please note that more detailed reports of these meetings will be printed in the appropriate volumes of our Transactions*

**DR HENRY GRAVES BULL**

It has come to the attention of the Herefordshire Fungus Survey Group that the gravestone of Dr Bull, that great figure in the Woolhope Club and in mycology generally, is in need of attention. His grave is in Breinton churchyard. The group is hoping to raise funds for the restoration of the gravestone, and it is the intention to put a link on that group's website so that anyone interested in this project can subscribe. This is clearly something that members of the Club might like to support, and the website can be found by Googling 'Herefordshire Fungus Survey Group.' It is intended that this link will be added later in March, when the website is updated after the annual meeting of the group earlier in the month.

**TWO ANNIVERSARIES AND A CONCLUSION**

As many members will know, Craswall Priory near Hay is a monument of national importance, providing the unique example of Grandmontine architecture in Britain: of Grosmont priory in Yorkshire no vestiges remain above ground; Alberbury priory in Shropshire was built for the Arrouaisian canons of Lilleshall, so does not conform to the strict architectural rule of the

Grandmontines. This year 8 February marked the 900th anniversary of the death of St Stephen of Muret, founder of the Grandmontine Order.

Craswall Grandmontine Society, founded by Carole and Kate Douglas, recently celebrated its 40th anniversary, but has now sadly closed. The archive, however, has been transferred to the Ewyas Lacy Study Group (<https://www.ewyaslacy.org.uk/>) and the Longtown and District Historical Society (<https://ldhs.org.uk/>), and can be accessed via either website. The Society's achievements from 1983 to 2014 have been written up in the *Transactions*, including two articles by Joe Hillaby in 2004 and 2006, in which year John Freeman also contributed 'Charters of the de Lacy family in favour of Craswall Priory'. In his 2006 article Joe Hillaby, CGS Chairman 1989-2019, suggested that the skeleton found at the site in 1905 was that of Walter II de Lacy himself.

More recently the Society has created its own website; worked with Historic England and Natural England to provide interpretation panels on site, together with a new plan in memory of Carole Hutchison; and obtained permission from the publishers to digitise her book, *The Hermit Monks of Grandmont*, now freely available on the website. It has also commissioned three projects: an aerial photogrammetry survey of the whole precinct by Aerial-Cam Ltd; osteological analysis and repair of the arm bone excavated by Lilwall in 1904, with an interactive 3D model that people can view online; and a resistivity survey which indicates the outline of the original cloister, related to the original church, now referred to as the south chapel. The reports are all available on the website.

Note: Craswall Priory can be visited by arrangement with the owners, Mr & Mrs C. Richards. They can be contacted by phone (01981 510276) or by email ([richardsabbey@hotmail.com](mailto:richardsabbey@hotmail.com)).

Caroline Hillaby

## OTHER POINTS OF LOCAL INTEREST

### **Talk at Woolhope on Nicholas de Hereford**

A talk by Chris Moore will take place on Saturday 20 April starting at 7.30pm at Woolhope Parish Hall (HR1 4AX). The event is a fund-raising effort by the Friends of Woolhope Church (admission £5 on the door, refreshments available after the talk). Club members may well be interested since material about Nicholas has appeared several times in our *Transactions*. For more information see <https://woolhope.church/friends/st-george/>