

neighbouring islands, was a settlement comprising mainly timber buildings but with up to twelve stone-built churches and one large rectangular stone building identified as the probable royal palace. The layout of the buildings was determined from robber trenches with little masonry surviving, and they are now marked out on the restored ground surface in modern stone. The one exception has been preserved, as excavated, in an exhibition building, together many finely worked artefacts. The good weather of the first two days had broken and the BGAS party scurried round the site protected by waterproofs and umbrellas.

We moved on to the open-air museum or "skanzen" at Strážnice, where we had lunch and took advantage of the excellent gift shop before having our tour. The museum contains 64 vernacular buildings, grouped to illustrate the ethnographic variation between the various districts of Moravia.

Continuing our way eastwards, we had time for a brief stop at Modra. There was originally to have been a choice of visits but the inclement weather meant the re-constructed Great Moravian village lost out to the pilgrimage church at Velehrad. This is an imposing Baroque building, heavily restored, but with traces of its medieval predecessor visible in the exterior walls and Romanesque east end.

The following day was spent exploring Kroměříž. The Cerny Orel is situated on the large main square, one corner of which is dominated by the former palace of the Bishops of Olomouc. In its present form this is largely the work of the wealthy Count Karel Liechtenstein-Castelcorn who became bishop in 1664. The fixed element of the day was a guided tour round the grand principal rooms, otherwise members of the party were free to explore the other attractions – the palace tower offered a view over the town, and the palace art gallery some world-class art (Titian, Van Dyke, Cranach etc). Outside, the palace is bordered by a vast landscaped park and the Bishops also had a "Flower Garden" – now UNESCO-listed this is a rectangle of several acres of parterres separated by hedged walks and various grand structures. Elsewhere in the town were the Bishop's Mint, several good churches, the regional museum with some interesting archeological displays and the main square was occupied by a visiting Slovakian market with some intriguing foodstuffs on offer and accompanying folksingers.

On the final day we headed east to Rožnov pod Radhoštěm, to another open-air museum, this time celebrating the local Wallachian architecture and culture. The Vlachs were Romanian shepherd migrants who spread west along the Carpathians. Although they adopted the local Czech/Slovak language they retained their Romanian culture and costume and unique system of animal husbandry based on highland grazing. The

Museum has two parts – the "Wallachian Village" and the "Water Mill Valley". The former was established pre-war based on timber buildings relocated from the town, together with some re-constructions, and the latter is a collection of mainly industrial buildings with the emphasis on water-power. Most of the machinery was demonstrated at work, and we enjoyed a tour with an enthusiastic and knowledgeable guide.

After lunch we arrived at the final visit of the tour, the castle of Helfštýn. Set in a spectacular and impregnable position on top of a high wooded hill, this castle was begun in the 13th century and gradually extended until the 17th by which time it consisted of a sequence of four courtyards. The castle has been heavily restored, with various service buildings converted into forges to support an annual festival of blacksmithing - an interesting contrast to the English Heritage approach.

Departure from Brno airport the following morning completed another enjoyable trip to this fascinating country. Thanks must go to Zoe for yet again organising such a wonderful and varied programme.

Peter Newley

Book Reviews

John Christopher, **Brunel in Bristol** (Stroud, Amberley Publishing 2013). 96 pp., 180 colour & sepia illustrations. Cardcovers, £14.99 [ISBN: 8781445618852]

Brunel in Bristol is one of a series: JC's *Brunel in Gloucestershire* appeared in 2012 (reviewed by Geoff North in *BGAS Newsletter 72*); *London* has arrived, but *Cornwall* seems to be running a bit late. That means some overlap regarding, for example, the Bristol & Gloucester Railway, so boundaries are not rigid: understandably included in this book is the well-known but unattributed Dutch print of the chaos engendered by the change of gauge at Gloucester, but the print chosen to illustrate the conversion depicts work at Saltash.

Chapters deal with Brunel's relationship with Bristol; the Clifton suspension bridge; Temple Meads and the GWR; the SS *Great Britain*; docks and other works; the Bristol & Exeter, Gloucester & South Wales Union Railways; the end of the broad gauge; and Brunel's legacy. Each chapter consists of a couple of pages of text followed by a selection of captioned images, of which a few are historic prints, and the rest are modern photographs (some by Colin Maggs), with the majority of the recent images being photographs by the author himself. The text is relaxed and engaging, if uncritical, and the images apt. Many of the prints, e.g. those by J.C.

Bourne, are recognisable, but sources are not given and there is no index, so readers who want to know more about an image will have to look elsewhere. Which museum hosts the marble statue of IKB shown on page 2? The bibliography is limited, but does include some recent works. Not all informed readers may agree with the selection of historic images (copyright problems?), but some of the modern photographs are interesting and not published before. Those of Brunel's tubular-framed bridge at Hotwells, for example, will intrigue many an industrial archaeologist and make the heart of a structural engineer beat faster, though not every architectural historian will go weak at the knees over the brick shed at Yate or the masonry at New Passage. Gromit Unleashed brings the story up to date. Space constraints mean omissions: what exactly did the dean of Bristol cathedral consult IKB about? Something structural, perhaps, or a complete demolition and rebuild? Architectural historians do not favour counterfactuals, but what might a cathedral designed by Brunel look like?

Bristol has largely forgiven IKB for being a second-generation economic migrant. Versatile as ever, he today multitasks as school project topic, icon, icon-maker, adopted son, entrepreneurial role model, national genius, patron saint and sacred cow. Anyone who even hints that aspects of IKB's personality, behaviour, employee relations or professional practices were less than endearing risks being keel-hauled under a dredger and impaled on the bowsprit of the SSGB. A lot of people locally know a lot about Brunel. This book, entry-level and uncritical, is not for them. Rather, its value will be to newcomers, tourists and other visitors, and it might be of educative value to UKIP supporters and others who would ban immigrants and their kin from the UK's skills base. My review copy would not enhance BGAS's excellent and under-used library, but I might send it to the Home Secretary, in case Universities UK, the Confederation of British Industry, the Engineering Employers' Federation, the Secretary of State for Education, or the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills have not done so already.

William Evans
Bristol

John S. Moore, **Counting People: a DIY manual for local and family historians** (Oxford, Oxbow Books 2013). 247 pp., 3 figs. Cardcovers, £17.95 [ISBN: 9781842174807]

This is sometimes listed as "Counting People: Using Numbers" (what else would one use?) This refers to the American version, but it is the same book. The cover design, which illustrates the best-known instance of people-counting in Britain, the Domesday Book, has been taken from the "Look & Learn" series, which gives this small paperback a friendly non-threatening

appearance, to counteract the common suspicion of statistics as being untrustworthy ("lies, damned lies..." etc.)

To overcome this suspicion, John Moore encourages those contemplating a study of the development of their local area, whether village, parish or town, to embrace statistics and use them to give structure and precision to their studies, especially when considering questions of size, growth and comparison with other places. On the way he gives advice on the use of computers, and answers the many questions students have asked him over 40 years of teaching.

After the Introduction the book is clearly laid out with chapters covering the agenda of Local Population History (questions to ask); Sources and Methods (how to find the answers); the study of medieval populations (some unfamiliar sources); English population history, 1538-1837 (the era of parish registers); the registration era, 1801-2011 (Censuses & BMDs) and Researching, Writing & Publishing with a short case study in an Appendix.

The author advises beginners in local history to start at Chapter 6 (the last). This guides beginners through the process of research, writing & publication, without putting off experienced authors.

Most amateur local & family historians will be accustomed to searching the census and parish registers. The earlier chapters are likely to break new ground, with useful references to little-used sources, especially in the Dark Ages of population history.

A word of warning; the sources are not always fully described. To be fair, no book can foretell what you may meet when you order a document from a record office: you may be presented with an original MS, in abbreviated legal Latin written in faded ink on damaged parchment; or it may be transcribed, translated and printed, with a helpful Calendar or index; or something in between. However, John Moore recognises the problem, and his advice is to work backwards in time, to get accustomed to the language and layout of documents, before tackling the demands of palaeography and Latin.

Use this book as it suggests: a DIY Manual. It has a good index, and an excellent bibliography; this is not a required reading list, thank goodness, but contains pointers to every period of history etc. which might supply lists of people to count. Even for inveterate name-hunters, there are plenty of sources to explore.

I am not a natural number-cruncher, but this book encouraged me to not be afraid of numbers, and to see how I might use them in their proper place.

Mary Fraser
Malvern

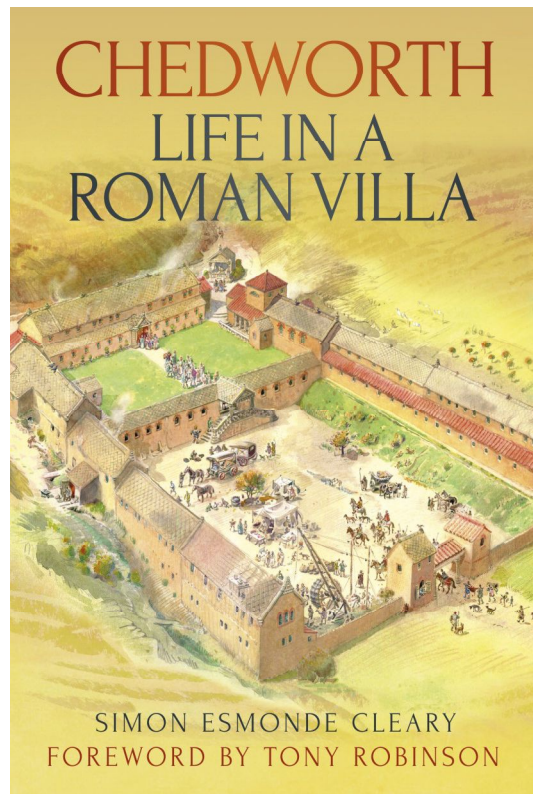
Simon Esmonde Cleary, **Chedworth: Life in a Roman Villa** (Stroud, The History Press 2013). 190 pp., 71 pl. & ill., 28 col. pl. Cardcovers, £17.99 [ISBN: 9780752486437]

Since its rediscovery in 1864 the Roman villa at Chedworth has been one of the best known and accessible villa sites in Roman Britain. Now in the care of The National Trust and rightly renowned for the beautiful setting in a deep Cotswold valley and superb fourth century mosaics, the villa features in every virtually book published about Roman Britain. Interpretations of the site have ranged from a wealthy estate centre to a fourth century sanctuary and pilgrimage centre. Despite this fame, very little is known about the detailed archaeology of the Chedworth complex. The Victorian excavations were primarily concerned with the recovery of the building ground plan and uncovering of mosaic floors with scant regard to the stratigraphy. Smaller scale investigations by Sir Ian Richmond in the early 1960's, Roger Goodburn and Sally Stow in the 1970's and more recent work by the National Trust have provided some much needed detail of certain sequences but all still remain unpublished.

This situation is now to be remedied with a forthcoming detailed report using all of the surviving records. As part of this project Professor Simon Esmonde Cleary from the University of Birmingham has produced this 190 page book giving a very readable and up to date account of the villa and its archaeology. Following a foreword by Tony Robinson and introduction by Professor Peter Salway, the author provides a narrative of the development of the site. Beginning with the setting of the villa and the recently discovered evidence for Iron Age activity, Professor Simon Esmonde Cleary describes the modest origins of the villa in the second century to the great remodelling and aggrandisement at the beginning of the fourth century, the laying of many high quality mosaic floors and the proximity of other monumental structures such as the enigmatic 'Capitol' (destroyed by construction of a now disused railway line) and a large temple or mausoleum 700 metres to the east. The author then places Chedworth in its regional and provincial context. Having given an account of the villa and its setting, the author uses Chedworth as a platform on which to reconstruct villa life for the Romano-British elite of the fourth century.

Fourth century Roman Britain is often referred to as the 'golden age' with the Cotswold villas being the richest in the province. The author asserts that the wealthy owners of Chedworth would have viewed themselves part of an imperial Roman aristocracy; expressed by the layout of the buildings, with public rooms for the receiving guests, formal dining, the provision of baths, and the display of mosaics. The villa would also have

been the centre of an extensive agricultural estate housing the household of the owner and a large retinue of servants and estate workers. The author rightly notes that much remains to be discovered about the Chedworth complex including the ancillary ranges of agricultural buildings. It is to be hoped that further work in the near future will provide a greater insight to the origins, economy and decline of this well-known site.



Although aimed at popular readership, this book also gives much of interest to all who are fascinated by the study of Roman Britain. The book is very well written and illustrated with many line drawings, black and white photographs and 28 colour plates. Errors are refreshingly few and the author is to be congratulated on giving us this highly readable account of Chedworth and its setting.

Mark Corney
Radstock

Editorial

We have received very few contributions for this newsletter. We have therefore had to drop down to 12 pages for this issue.

Articles for the next Newsletter by 15th February 2015.

E-mail: markburroughs@tiscali.co.uk