

Chagford Local History Society - Newsletter - August 2021

Dear Members

It's been a long break for the Chagford Local History Society, with no events during the whole of 2020 and cancellation of the winter programme earlier this year. But the CLHS is still alive and well and is returning this October with a new programme of six talks to take us up to May 2022. All these are planned to be held at the usual venue of Endecott House, starting at 7.30 pm and all on the last Thursday of the month (but note different time and date for the AGM). Our first talk, on 28th October, will be given by our chair, Jon Lawrence, Professor of Modern British History at Exeter University and author of *Me, Me, Me, the search for community in post-war England*.

Programme for 2021-22

28th October: Jon Lawrence, *Memories of community in 20th century Chagford*

18th November: *Annual General Meeting + wine & cheese social. Note 7 p.m. start*
2022

27th January: John Mather: *The whetstone mines in the Blackdown Hills*

24th February: Emma Cunis: *Ancient Tracks on Dartmoor*

31st March: Mark Hailwood (Bristol University): *The Alehouse in early modern Devon*

28th April: Todd Gray: *Devon's Last Slave Owners, 1834*

26th May: Janet Tall (South West Heritage Trust): *The Acland family - agriculture in schools*

Membership of the CLHS entitles you to free entry to all of these talks. Non-members are always welcome too, for the modest fee of £4 for each event

Membership and subscriptions

Because of the cancellation of a whole year of events the committee decided to suspend subscriptions for all members for a year. However, with the new programme imminent, we need to resume taking subscriptions from our members. Subscriptions are essential to pay for the speakers, room hire and the running costs of the Chagford Archive. The new subscription period will run from November 2021 to October 2022, and for that year will remain the same as it has been for some time, a bargain at £10 per person. The AGM in November is the traditional time for taking your subscriptions, but we'd be delighted to take advance payments at first meeting on 28th October or any time sooner than that. A renewal/application form is at the end of the newsletter, page 6.

New members

We're on a recruitment drive! We're always looking for new members, so tell your friends and neighbours about the CLHS, particularly those who are new to Chagford. As the Bellacouch development fills up we're very keen to offer new residents an opportunity to familiarise themselves with the area, past and present, and have the opportunity of meeting other residents.

Treasurer needed

We're also on a recruitment drive for a new treasurer. John Elliott has served the CLHS in this role for several years and now wishes to pass on the baton. He's steered us ably through the time when we had the good fortune to have a lot of money to spend setting up the Chagford Archive, thanks to the grant from the National Lottery. The accounting is much simpler now, and will take up very little of anyone's time, but it's still a necessary task to ensure the smooth and transparent running of the Society. If you, dear member, or anyone you know, might like to take on this task, John will be delighted to tell you everything you need to know and you'll then enjoy the gratitude of the whole committee and membership. Please contact the secretary or John Elliot for more information.

Chagford Archive

Again a call for volunteers. With the autumn approaching and the threat of Covid receding we want to resume work in the Archive. Until Covid struck we had a team of volunteers cataloguing the wealth of material that is held by the Archive and dealing with new items gifted or loaned to us. The Lottery grant, alluded to above, enabled us to set up our rooms next to the library and buy all the necessary equipment to create a first-class community resource. But to achieve this we need to carry on with the cataloguing so, eventually, the material in the Archive will be



accessible to all. Before the work came to a virtual standstill last year our volunteers were committing about three hours a week, usually working in pairs. So it's a sociable activity, you'll learn a great deal about Chagford, and will be contributing to the creation of a brilliant resource. Training will be given to new volunteers and refresher sessions to past volunteers

if they feel they need reminding. Please consider this call for help and get in touch with the secretary for more information.

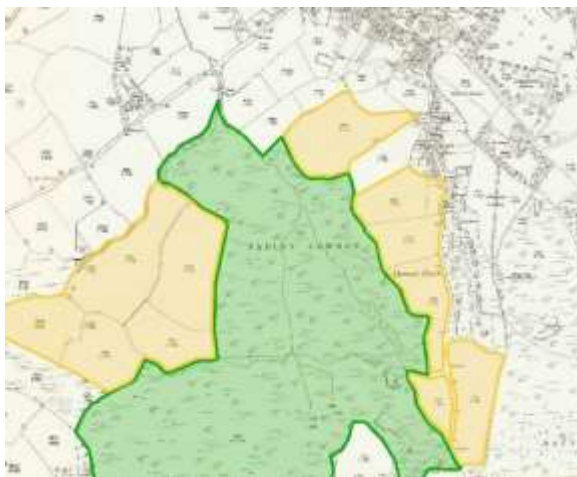
Chagford Open Fields



On 5th August a number of privately owned fields bordering New Street and Padley Common temporarily came into the possession of the Parish Council, as trustees of the Chagford Open Fields Charity.

According to ancient custom these fields are open every year to all parishioners from 5th August to 4th November, after which they revert to their usual owners. You can read more about this intriguing survival of a

practice that dates back into mediaeval times on the Chagford Local History website: <https://www.chagfordlocalhistorysociety.org.uk/commons-4/>



Left: Chagford's Open Fields, shaded cream, marked on a 1936 OS map. The green area is Padley Common

Above: the sign on the New Street entrance Ore Hill, the best-known Open Field

And you can also visit the fields!

What can we learn from the past?

For so many people – and that surely includes members of our history society –



learning about the history of their home patch is almost an instinctive curiosity. Just finding things out is a great satisfaction in itself. But learning about the past, knowing something of the changes that have taken place and perhaps understanding *why* these changes have occurred, can make us better equipped to understand, and actually have some control over, events happening now -

and changes in the near future. These two images, the first taken prior to the construction of the Market House in 1862 and the second in the early 1950's are a

century apart and the change is striking. Already by the mid-20th century the Square is becoming a car park, a sight all too familiar today.

Chagford is witnessing a significant boost to its population with the Bellacouch development and many changes in its retail and hospitality outlets. On the wider scale Chagford cannot escape from the looming climate emergency and global loss of biodiversity. The town will have to play its part in dealing with these crises and informed citizens are in a good position to influence the shape of the town and the direction of the Parish as it transitions towards a more sustainable future.



Women's History Event 18th September

On 18th September Devon History Society (DHS) and the West of England and South Wales Women's History Network are co-hosting a symposium on women in the 1920s. This will either be held as a live, in-person event at Exeter Central Library or on-line by Zoom if Covid restrictions still need to be enforced.

Full details of the programme can be on the **attached poster** or the DHS website (www.devonhistorysociety.org.uk). There will be a range of contributions about women in local and national politics, women in craft and literature, and women in Exeter's slum quarter. Because it's not yet clear about how it will be held the DHS is taking pre-bookings and will ask for confirmation once there is certainty about the venue. If you'd like to make a pre-booking please email Julia Neville:

j.f.neville@btinternet.com.



Chapel outing, 1920s

Photo: Bovey Tracey Heritage Trust

Dartmoor Heritage Festival

During July the National Park presented an online heritage festival, with four talks focusing on many aspects of the Moor's history, distant and more recent.

- An introduction to the history of Dartmoor in 10 objects
- Dartmoor and the defence of the nation
- Dartmoor in the age of the Black Death
- Challacombe: farming for nature in a historic landscape

You can still view all these talks on the National Park's YouTube channel:

<https://www.youtube.com/user/DartmoorNPA>



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On the next page you will find the membership form for 2021-2022.

www.chagfordlocalhistorysociety.org.uk

Chagford Local History Society - Membership renewal/application 2021-2022

Surname.....

First name.....

Address.....

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Post Code.....

Telephone.....

Email address.....

NB. We prefer to use email for member communications

Annual Subscription runs from the AGM in November and is currently £10 per person

As a member of CLHS I consent to the CLHS keeping a record of my name and contact details and sending me the following information:

- *Details and information about upcoming CLHS meetings, events, talks and news.*
- *Information about selected events, talks and activities promoted by other organisations about the history and life of Chagford, Dartmoor, Devon and related topics, which have come to the notice of the CLHS Secretary or other committee members.*

Signature.....

For further information about our Data Protection policy ask to see our "Privacy Statement" or view it on our website: <https://www.chagfordlocalhistorysociety.org.uk/data-protection/>

Please send your completed membership form with a cheque for £10 made out to the Chagford Local History Society to:

CLHS Treasurer, The Hey, Manor Road, Chagford TQ13 8AS,

OR bring your form and subscription to our first meeting on 28th October or the AGM on 18th November