

WILLIAM BINGLEY'S HISTORY OF HAMPSHIRE

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ABSTRACT

Unlike many other counties, there is no comprehensive, printed county history of Hampshire from the late 18th or early 19th centuries. There is, however, an extensive manuscript collection of notes now at the Hampshire Record Office, put together by the Rev. William Bingley (1774–1823) during the years 1803–1814. Although the collection has been used by local historians to research their own particular town or locality, it has not previously been researched in any depth to see either what it contains, which sources were used, or what it can tell us about historical writing during the early part of the 19th century. This paper aims to explore such issues in order to fill this gap in Hampshire's historiography.

INTRODUCTION

Hampshire lacks works such as Edward Hasted's *History and Topographical Survey of the County of Kent* (1778–79), Richard Polwhele's *History of Devonshire* (1793–1806), William Bray's edited *The History and Antiquities of Surrey* (1804–14) and the Rev. Thomas Rudge's *History of the County of Gloucestershire* (1803). However, the notes made by William Bingley (1774–1823), who arrived in Hampshire in 1802 aged 28 to take up the position of curate at the priory church at Christchurch, go some way to filling that gap. Bingley was already a successful author in the field of natural history. George Rose (1744–1818), the Member of Parliament for Christchurch, was impressed by Bingley's previous publishing experience and asked him to write a History of Hampshire. Bingley worked on the project until the work was abandoned in

1814. His relationship with his patron soon deteriorated, and in 1817 Bingley issued a printed Explanatory Address to the subscribers explaining why nothing had been published. He sold his notes to the collector Thomas Phillipps in 1820, and when the collection came up for sale again in 1979 it was bought by the Hampshire Record Office.

William Bingley was born and educated in Doncaster. He matriculated at Peterhouse, Cambridge, in 1795, and graduated with a BA in 1799 and an MA in 1803. He was ordained deacon at York in 1799 and obtained the post of curate at Mirfield, in the West Riding of Yorkshire, in the same year. He was interested in botany, topography and popular zoology. A holiday in Wales provided him with material for the two volumes of his illustrated *Tour of North Wales*, published in 1800 with a second edition in 1814. Other publications followed including *Animal Biography* (1802), while a collaboration with W. Russell junior resulted in the publication of *Sixty of the Most Admired Welsh Aired* in 1803 (Courtney and Kell 2004, 765).

George Rose, the Member of Parliament for Christchurch from 1790 until his death, was a wealthy man whose estate was Cuffnells, near Lyndhurst. Even George III was moved to jest that '... only a Secretary of State could afford to maintain Cuffnells' (Foster 2007, 59). Rose suggested, on Bingley's arrival in Christchurch, that in view of his publishing experience Bingley should write a History of Hampshire which would be mainly financed from subscriptions from local gentlemen and also from Rose's connections at Westminster (Fig. 1). Rose expected the work to take three years, and thought it might make a profit of £200 p.a. He



Fig. 1 Harrison's Map of Hampshire, 1788, [<http://www.geog.port.ac.uk/webmap/hantsmap/hantsmap/harris1/har1larg.htm>.]

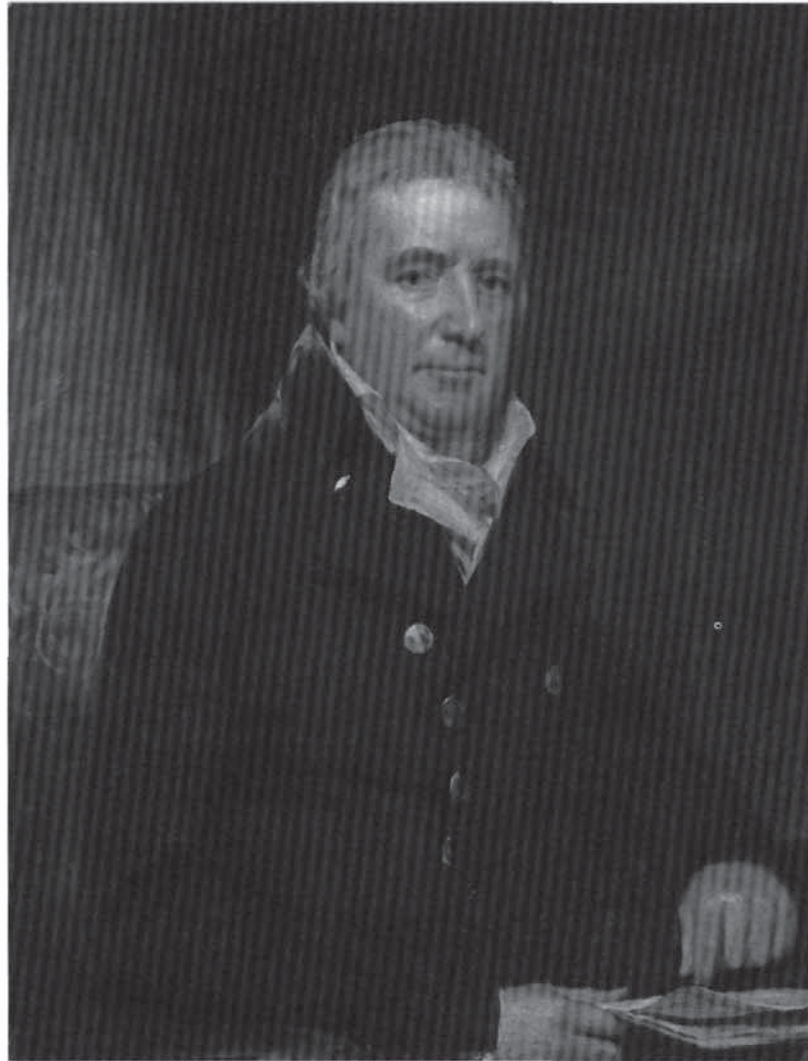


Fig. 2 Portrait of George Rose MP by W. Beechey, 1802. National Portrait Gallery. (Thorne 2004 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/24088>, accessed 27 January 2006])

agreed to pay Bingley £60 p.a., which Bingley later asked to be extended to four years (HRO 16M79/116, 198). It is noteworthy that in an open letter to the subscribers in 1817, Rose indicated that he had paid out £400 beyond his subscription, suggesting that he had paid the agreed sum for at least six years (HRO 16M79/116, 204) (Fig. 2). Bingley accepted the work, but in a letter to Sir Henry Mildmay

in November 1805 he wrote that the greatest part of his subsistence was from his literary work, and that he was out of pocket owing to a lack of subscribers. He went on to say that he needed '... support in the church' so that he would be '... a fixture in the county and thus a more responsible person than I can now be considered' (HRO 16M79/120, 9). It is clear that financial reward was his short-term aim.

However his long-term goal was the position of incumbent at Christchurch.

It is difficult to assess Bingley's income. The incumbent at Christchurch Priory church from 1802 was Samuel Clapham (1757–1830), who had also held the vicarage of Great Ouseburn from 1797, to which he added the rectory of Gussage St Michael, Dorset, in 1807, holding all three benefices until his death. There were two curates at Christchurch; Bingley, who served the parish church and the chapel of Holdenhurst, and Thomas Windham, who held the perpetual curacy of Hinton Admiral. Windham also served the chapel of Holdenhurst but was independent of Christchurch, having secured benefices elsewhere. Samuel Clapham's stipend at Christchurch was £60 p.a. but it is not clear how much of this was paid to Bingley (Smith 2004, 28). In a letter to her sister Cassandra, Jane Austen expressed the opinion that £140 p.a. represented only a fairly prosperous curacy at the beginning of the 19th century (Gristwood 2005, 89). The full stipend plus Rose's contribution would only have given Bingley £120 p.a. However he was living in lodgings and was not married with a family, so perhaps his complaints were not entirely reasonable.

George Rose lost interest in the project as early as 1806 according to Bingley, who asked Bishop Brownlow North of Winchester for clarification of his position in regard to the work since Rose had distanced himself, and was no longer in communication with him (HRO 16M79/115, 7). Although Rose did not put an end to the project, perhaps Bingley should have abandoned the work at this point. He pressed on with the project, however, presumably hoping to force Rose to end the work and to reimburse him for his perceived financial losses. The core of the *impasse* was that Rose also felt cheated, as Bingley had not produced the History he had commissioned. Bingley visited London in October 1810 to collect material and may then have met his future wife, the widow of the late John Morgan Esq. of Charlotte Street, London. They were married at St George's Church, Bloomsbury on 25 June 1812 (Rootsweb.com, 23 January 2006). The end of the project came in 1814, when Bingley sent Rose a specimen

manuscript for two Hampshire parishes which unfortunately have not survived. Rose replied that, in his opinion, Bingley's employment as the writer of the History of Hampshire was at an end (HRO 16M79/115, 18). Rose's letter of 1817 to the subscribers, in reply to Bingley's *Explanatory Address*, survives in the collection (Fig. 3). According to Rose, the crisis in their relationship had come in 1811 when Bingley asked Rose to use his influence to secure his preferment in the church. Rose had curtly informed Bingley that '... his undertaking of the history had given him no claims whatever' (HRO 16M79/116, 200). He also noted that '... all would have been well if Bingley had not had unwarranted pretensions to preferment' (HRO 16M79/116, 202). Bingley left Christchurch for London in 1816 to take up an appointment at the Fitzroy Chapel in London Street, now renamed Maple Street. He continued to write books on botany, and also his *Modern Travels* (1819–1822), which consisted of six volumes of abridged material from the writings of other travellers. Bingley died on 11 March 1823 at the age of 49, and was buried at St George's Church, Bloomsbury. He was survived by his widow and a son who became a successful barrister.

Bingley's collection of notes has been examined in order to ascertain what it comprises, which sources were available during the early 19th century, and whether the collection contains anything of value to the modern historian. The collection consists of an impressive 131 items of variable size. The pages are not always numbered, but most of the notebooks and parish volumes have a list of contents. Bingley's handwriting is mostly quite legible, and the collection has been catalogued (www.3hants.gov.uk/archives/catalog.htm). His starting point appears to have been the compilation of information in a series of pocket-sized notebooks which he labelled A-Z (HRO 16M79/28–30; 40–60), A-P and AA-EE (HRO 16M79/61–80). The numbers 31–9 were not used. There is also a series of numbered notebooks containing similar material (HRO 16M79/81–109). All of these notebooks contain a miscellany of notes, extracts and copies of documents taken from a variety of records,

both historical and contemporary. Information taken from them was written up into 13 large volumes which deal with the history of every Hampshire parish, grouped by hundreds, as well as a wealth of other material on the towns and the county as a whole. The notes seem to have been written up as Bingley found the information, since topics are mixed together and not placed in chronological order. These volumes constitute the prototype of the History (HRO 16M79/1–13), and are not arranged in any particular order. Volumes one to four cover the rural parishes and volume five covers the Isle of Wight, while Winchester is covered by volume six. Notes on the forests are in volume seven, while volume eight contains duplicate material on some of the parishes. More general notes on the Isle of Wight are in volume nine, and the general notes for Hampshire are in volume ten. Volume 11 contains miscellaneous material of both an historical and contemporary nature, while volume 12 contains historical material from a wide variety of public records such as deeds, charters, grants and knight's fees. Notes on the history of Southampton appear in volume 13, and those on the parish of Warblington are written up quite separately in a slim notebook (HRO 16M79/26). One volume is missing from this set of parish histories – that dealing with the town of Christchurch, which was sold separately.

Bingley's collection is completed by a printed *Proposals and Prospectus* (HRO 16M79/110), the printed *Enquiries to the Nobility, Gentlemen and Clergy of Hampshire*, which was a questionnaire (HRO 16M79/113), reports, accounts, and letters regarding the progress of the work, a list of subscribers, and a printed *Explanatory Address to the Subscribers* which explained why the work had been abandoned (HRO 16M79/115). There is also a series of letters which reveal the disintegration of the relationship between Bingley and his patron, George Rose (HRO 16M79/116–117), and another from Bingley's correspondents, collaborators, and contributors to the work (HRO 16M79/118–121). The collection also contains notes on Hampshire made by Richard Warner (HRO 16M79/128–133) and three volumes of Bingley's sermon

notes and sermons (HRO 16M79/ 135–7). Bingley also wrote a manuscript draft of 'The facts of scripture history adapted to the capacities of children', which can still be found at the Bodleian Library, Oxford (BL MS D 92).

The printed *Proposals for Publishing by Subscription a History and Description of Hampshire, including the Isle of Wight* was issued in 1805 (HRO 16M79/110). This was a prospectus prepared by Bingley, as subscribers were not forthcoming (Fig. 4). The *Proposals* included information regarding subscriptions, and a plan of the intended work. It stated that the History would comprise three volumes in quarto, and would be illustrated by an ancient map, a modern map and numerous engravings. The introduction was to consist of a general view of the civil, military and ecclesiastical history of the county from the earliest period until the present time. The body of the work was to be divided geographically into hundreds and parishes, with a general history of each hundred and a particular history of each parish. It was to include a description of the parish boundaries; a history and description of every military station, castle and religious house within each parish; an account of any antiquities; particulars of its manufactures and commerce; the state of its agriculture and husbandry; an investigation of its natural productions and biographical anecdotes and notices of its most eminent, deserving and distinguished characters.

Around 1812, Bingley must have realised that he needed more information on the topics he had chosen, as some parishes were covered more fully than others. He therefore issued the printed *Enquiries to the Nobility, Gentlemen and Clergy of Hampshire* – a questionnaire designed to obtain as much local information as possible which might have been hidden away in family papers, solicitors' offices and private libraries to which he had no access (HRO 16M79/113) (Fig. 5). The recipients were asked what manors were within the parish, who were the present lords, whether they had any information on the lords who were successive in the 19th century with the dates of their coming into the property, and whether this was by gift, purchase or descent. The next two questions

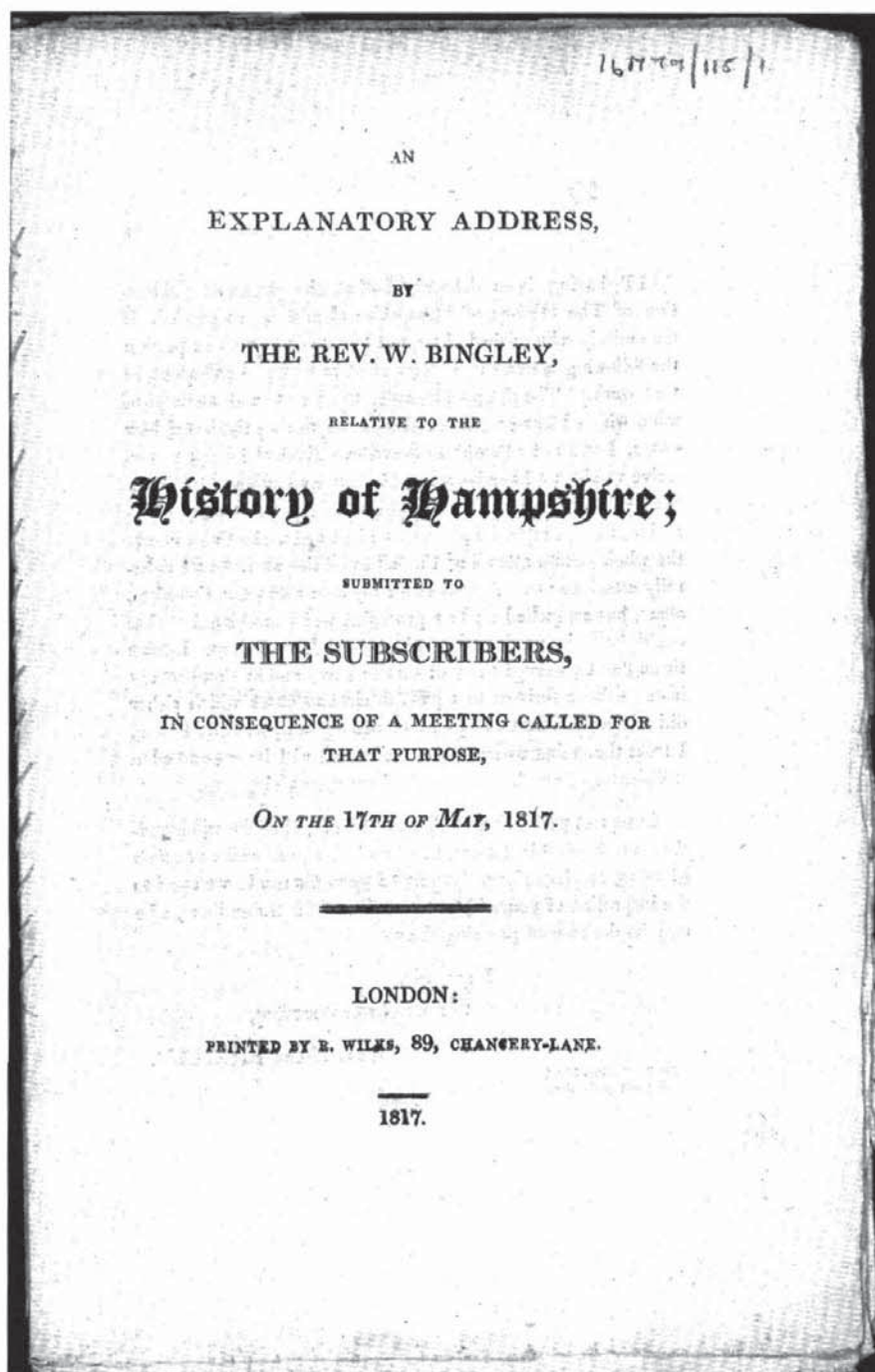


Fig. 3 Rev. W. Bingley, Title page of the *Explanatory Address by the Rev. W. Bingley relative to the History of Hampshire submitted to the Subscribers in consequence of a meeting called for the purpose on the 17th of May, 1817*, London (HRO 16M79/115/1)

PROPOSALS
 FOR
 PUBLISHING BY SUBSCRIPTION
 A
 History and Description
 OF
 HAMPSHIRE,
 INCLUDING
 THE
 ISLE OF WIGHT.

BY THE REV. W. BINGLEY, A.M. F.L.S.
 LATE OF PETERHOUSE, CAMBRIDGE, AND CURATE OF CHRISTCHURCH,

PLAN OF THE WORK.

It is intended that this work shall be comprised in three large and closely printed volumes in quarto; and that it shall be illustrated by an ancient and a modern map, and numerous engravings.

The Introduction will consist of a general view of the civil, military, and ecclesiastical history of the county, from the earliest period to the present time.

The body of the work will be divided geographically into hundreds and parishes. A general history will be given of each hundred; and a particular history of every parish. This will include a description, as nearly as it can be ascertained, of its boundary; a general account of the property; a history and description of every military station, castle, and religious house; and an account of the various Celtic, Belgic, Roman, Saxon, Danish, and Norman antiquities. It will also contain particulars relating to its manufactures and commerce; the state of its agriculture and husbandry; an investigation of its different productions in each of the three kingdoms of nature, of animals, vegetables, and minerals; and biographical anecdotes and notices of its most eminent, deserving, and distinguished characters.

Fig. 4 Rev. W. Bingley, *Proposals for Publishing by Subscription a History and Description of Hampshire, including the Isle of Wight* (HRO 16M79/110)

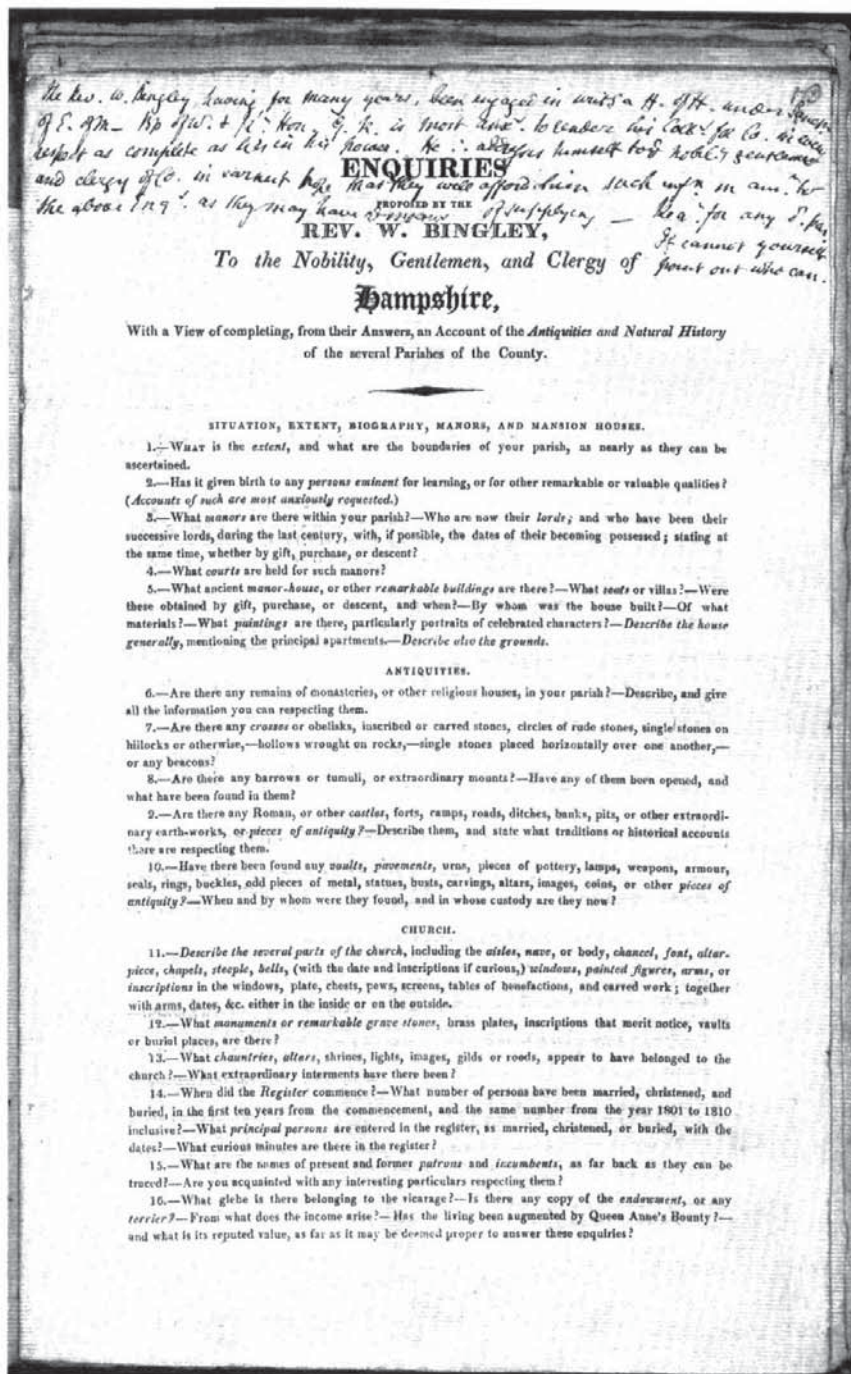


Fig. 5 Rev. W. Bingley, *Enquiries proposed by Rev. W. Bingley to the Nobility, Gentlemen, and Clergy of Hampshire, with a view of completing, from their Answers, an Account of the Antiquities and Natural History of the several parishes of the county* (HRO 16M79/113)

asked for details of the manorial courts, what ancient manor houses or other remarkable buildings there were, what aristocratic seats or villas and whether they were obtained by gift, purchase or descent and when this occurred. Further requirements were the identity of the builder of the manor house, the materials used in its construction and whether there were any paintings, particularly those of any 'celebrated characters'. This section concluded with a request for a description of the house, mentioning the principal apartments and a description of the grounds.

The subsequent section of the *Enquiries* dealt with antiquities. It began with questions on the remains of any monasteries or religious houses in the parish, any stone circles, crosses, obelisks, beacons, barrows or tumuli and whether any had been excavated and artefacts found. The next question asked for information on any Roman or other forts, camps, ditches, banks, pits or earthworks and any accounts of traditions associated with them or any historical accounts. Finally Bingley asked for material on any vaults, pavements, urns, pottery, lamps, weapons, armour, seals, rings, buckles, statues and other carvings, altars, images of coins with details of when they were found, by whom, and who owned them now. The section on the churches began with a request for architectural descriptions of the various parts of the parish church, its plate, furniture and details of any arms or dates, within or without the building. This was followed by questions regarding any monuments, grave-stones, brass plates, other inscriptions, vaults, burial places, chantries, shrines, lights, rood screens and extraordinary interments. Compilers were asked to look at the register to see when it commenced, and at details of marriages, christenings and burials during the first ten years from the commencement, and also for the years 1801–10, perhaps for comparative purposes. The names of present and former patrons and incumbents as far back as they could be traced came next, and any interesting information about them. The subsequent concern was the extent of the glebe belonging to the vicarage, any copies of endowment or any terrier, where the income

came from, whether it had been augmented by Queen Anne's Bounty, and its reputed value. The section concluded with enquiries concerning any chapel of ease, how it was supported, its value, the names of proprietors since the Dissolution, the value of the tithes, the endowment of any parochial library and a description of the parsonage. The following section was concerned with endowment details of any schools, when and by whom any hospitals or almshouses had been founded, whether there were any benefactions or charitable donations and by whom they were given, at what date, and whether they had been improved or lost. Bingley also wished to know what the poor rate was in the pound one year with another, and whether there was a workhouse, and if so how it was managed.

The *Enquiries* continued with questions on what commodities were sold at markets and fairs, what trades were practiced and whether they were improving or in diminution, whether there had been, or were now, any manufacturers of linen, cotton or wool, and what quantity of any manufactured goods were sent to market. This interest in contemporary life was continued in the section on agriculture, with questions on the nature of the soil, how many acres of arable, pasture, meadow, coppice and waste-land, the average value per acre and the value of the production of wheat, oats, barley, rye, beans, peas, and the average weight of the hay crop. Bingley was also interested in the extent and dates of any enclosures of the waste, whether there were any hop gardens and the extent of any woodland, the type of timber produced, and how commercially successful the woodlands were. He asked whether the parish produced any minerals or fossils, whether there were any mineral springs, and whether any cures for illness had been recorded. There were also questions as to the presence of flora and fauna. Bingley received some replies to these questions but the coverage of such topics in the parish volumes is very uneven. The notes on the hundred of Bishop Sutton, for example, have material on agriculture only for Ropley and nothing at all for the parishes of Bighton, West Tisted, Bramdean or Headley. The notes

on agriculture for the hundred of Bosmere, however, were very full as they were contributed by Walter Butler, steward to the Duke of Norfolk. It is noteworthy that the water from two perennial springs on the eastern border of the parish of Warblington were reputed to be beneficial in the treatment of weak eyes! (HRO 16M79/26).

The pamphlet concluded with a section of enquiries which Bingley felt did not fit into any of the previous categories, such as the extent of religious dissent in the parish, and whether or not there was a meeting house. He also included a copy of a list of meeting houses in his notes, taken from a list of dissenters' meeting houses entered in the registry of the bishop of Winchester between January 1791 and January 1798. This list was compiled from the replies to the bishops' visitations, and a total of 77 meeting houses appear to have come into use during these years. Bingley asked for details on the financing and building of any bridges, any wakes, Whitsun ales, doles, annual processions or perambulations, singular accidents and events, injuries by fire or lightning, or any storms or whirlwinds. There were also questions on the games, sports, customs and traditions among the common people, and whether there were any manuscripts, books of arms, pedigrees, memoirs, surveys, plans, pictures or drawings in the parish or in any other parish. The appendix was to consist of any copies of original and unpublished charters, grants and other historical documents relating to the county, which Bingley was able to obtain by his research.

It is clear from the *Proposals* which topics Bingley intended to cover, that these topics decided the shape of the history, and thus which sources were to be used. It therefore seems that he had already decided on the structure of the history by the end of 1804, after giving himself a year to do his preliminary research. In choosing these topics he may have seen himself as following a tradition of the writing of local history by gentlemen, of which the model was Sir William Dugdale's *Antiquities of Warwickshire Illustrated* published in 1656. Early county histories were not interested in economic,

social or topographical history (Herbert 1994, 159), and Bingley's notes broke new ground by including topics not investigated in any depth by other serious contemporary Hampshire historians, including John Milner (1752–1826) and Richard Warner (1763–1857).

Milner had been very concerned with the royal and ecclesiastical history of Winchester. He only included the social history of the city, clearly as an afterthought, in the brief supplement in volume three of the reprint of the third edition of his *History and Survey of the Antiquities of Winchester* (Milner 1809, 267–74). However Bingley wrote about his own time and was concerned with the rapid growth in population which precipitated a crisis in the provision for the poor. He also covered the working life of ordinary people in more detail, including information on trade and industry at parish level. He was concerned with how ordinary people coped with difficulties in their lives, giving information on the management of the Havant workhouse and a history of the County Hospital at Winchester which included informative descriptions of the buildings, wards, and the management of the institution (HRO 16M79/6).

Bingley had set himself a huge task, and it is not surprising that the notes on each parish varied according to how prominent landowners had been in the life of the nation, and to what had survived in the local and public records. Much of his contemporary material was gleaned from his collaborators, but most local landowners declined to answer his *Enquiries* with descriptions of their houses, grounds and contents. One of the exceptions was Sir Henry Mildmay, who wrote to Bingley in December 1808 telling him that two engravings from Mr Gilpin's drawings of Mildmay's house, Dogmersfield Park, had been completed for the History. He also gave Bingley the name and address of an artist named Landseer who was about to publish some views of the Isle of Wight, suggested that Mr Rose might have a plate of Cuffnells, and intimated that Mr Garnett might give Bingley a plate of Leigh House (HRO 16M79/120). Sir Henry, however, did not supply any details of his property, and



Fig. 6 Stratton Park by J.P Neale, Seat of Sir Francis Baring, London, J.P Neale and Sherwood, Neely and Jones, 1820



Fig. 7 Cuffnells, Hampshire, by J Britton, Seat of the Right Hon. George Rose, London, Vernon and Hood, 1805. Reproduced by kind permission of A. Walmsley, (www.newforestexplorerresguide.co.uk)

all that is mentioned is the extent of the park. Another gentleman who did reply was Sir Francis Baring of Stratton Park, who wrote to Bingley in 1809. He had razed the previous brick house at East Stratton to the ground, and had built a fine new house in a more modern style (Fig. 6). His pride in his new mansion and its contents are obvious, as he wrote that 'The sum I have expended in re-building has been very considerable: my object has been to leave on the property the best specimens of modern architecture, sculpture and painting' (HRO 16M79/2). His architect was a Mr Dance, who he said had used ornamental architecture with a sparing hand in the Grecian style in a manner appropriate for a dwelling house. He went on to inform Bingley that 'I have some of the best performances of Reynolds, West, Lawrence, Opie, Northcote, Southerbourg, Peters and some others' (HRO 16M79/2).

Bingley's notes also contain a brief description of the Grange at Northington, which had been built at the expense of Sir Robert Henley under the direction of Inigo Jones (1573–1652). There is a description of the house and the beauty of the grounds, but unfortunately nothing on the interior (HRO 16M79/2). However there is a description of George Rose's residence, Cuffnells, near Lyndhurst, although it was copied from a piece in *The Gentleman's Magazine* indicating, perhaps, that Bingley was never invited to the house. It revealed that high land rose immediately in front of the building, and that Mr Rose had managed this inconvenience by laying out a handsome approach which wound to the house under this rising ground (Fig. 7). The interior of the residence was arranged more for domestic comfort than for splendour, and there was a valuable collection of books bequeathed to Rose by the Earl of Marchmont, who died in 1792. There were also several valuable portraits of William III, Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough, and other 'remarkable' personages. Rose's connections with royalty were highlighted by the information that George III and his family visited the house on their way to Weymouth in 1801, and also when returning from Weymouth to London in 1805 (HRO 16M79/1). These descriptions

are of interest as neither Cuffnells nor Stratton Park are in existence today. It is a pity that more landowners did not reply to Bingley's *Enquiries*, as his notes on agriculture are very uneven with many parishes having nothing written on the subject at all. Bingley did not use Charles Vancouver's *General View of the Agriculture of Hampshire* (1810), as it was indeed a very general account and it would have been very time-consuming to extract what little material there was at parish level.

In many ways, Bingley's methodology can be compared to that of Edward Rowe Mores (1730–78), whose projected history of the parish of Tunstall in Kent also did not result in publication during his lifetime. Rowe had it made ready for printing and it was published by John Nichols in 1780 (Carter and Ricks, 1961 li). Like Bingley, Mores's publishing success lay elsewhere. He also prepared *A Dissertation upon English Topographical Founders and Founderies*, and printed it himself in 1778, the year of his death. This work was also purchased by John Nichols, who added an appendix of his own and distributed this first study of English type-founders, which remains an essential text on early printing presses and types (Makala 2004, 89). Perhaps for both men county history was not their primary interest, and this was partly the reason for their failure to publish.

SOURCES

William Bingley compiled his notes for his proposed History of Hampshire at a time when the antiquarian approach remained the model for the county history. This raises the question of what kind of local and national records he used for his information, and which other sources. Bingley constantly complained that his parochial duties and perceived lack of financial resources made it difficult for him to travel around the county in search of information, but of course this may have just been an excuse not to do so. Around 1812 he compiled his printed *Enquiries*, which was an attempt to fill the gaps in his material, but some of the letters from his many correspondents and collaborators were



Fig. 8 Section of Taylor's Map of Hampshire 1759 showing the Hundred of Bosmere (<http://www.geog.port.ac.uk/webmap/hantsmap/hantmap/taylor4/ty62.htm> accessed 15 April 2007)

from Hampshire gentlemen who had assisted him from the beginning. He was receiving letters from Sir Henry Mildmay from as early as 1805, and a letter dated 8 October 1807 contained an offer for Bingley to visit his house Dogmersfield Park, near Odiham, to use Mildmay's complete set of Sayle's *Topography*, which he had in his library (HRO 16M79/120, 17).

Another correspondent was Walter Butler, a solicitor practicing in Havant and also deputy steward to the Duke of Norfolk, who owned land on Hayling Island. A letter from Butler to Bingley dated April 1813 included material that Butler was collecting himself on the hundred of Bosmere. (HRO 16M79/120, 25). Butler published his own edited *Topographical Account of the Hundred of Bosmere in Hampshire, comprising the parishes of Havant, Hayling Island and Warblington* in 1817 (Fig. 8). He generously stated in the preface that '... the following pages were compiled for the use of an intended History Of Hampshire, undertaken by the Rev. William Bingley, under the patronage of the Right Honourable George Rose; but as the work was laid aside, the editor was induced to publish a few copies to circulate among his friends' (Butler 1817, viii). There are no notes on the parishes of Havant, Warblington or Hayling Island in Bingley's small notebooks, so it seems likely that Butler provided much of the information in the first place, and that Bingley copied it straight into the parish volume. Industrial activity was increasing at the beginning of the 19th century and Bingley took account of these changes, mentioning salt-making at Hayling Island (HRO 16M79/4). The parish of Warblington, which included the fishing community of Emsworth, seems to have been of particular interest to Bingley. He mentions ship-building, rope-making and the manufacture of the patent plough during the late 18th century (HRO 16M79/26). He also noted that although in the early 18th century it only had two or three oyster smacks and a few fishermen's huts, Emsworth had become a considerable sea-port. There were two good ship-building yards in 1778, and upwards of 200 sailing ships of 50–200 tons constantly employed in the corn trade to Le Havre de Grace and the Mediterranean.

Bingley's interest in nature is apparent from his list of the types of fish either caught, or occasionally found, in the harbour at Emsworth. He also mentions a pearl belonging to Mr Holloway which was found in an oyster fished at Emsworth. Sharks had been seen in the harbour from time to time, and a seal was shot there in 1805 (HRO 16M79/26). Bingley also mentions the fossils he found in a chalk pit at Portsdown, and that the sea anemones found at Emsworth differed from those found on the rocks on the Isle of Wight. In the county volume he listed the minerals that could be found in Hampshire (HRO 16M79/10).

In order to assemble his notes, Bingley also used local records. However he did not use any parish records due to his rather sedentary approach to the project. Visiting a parish can be useful in terms of using evidence from physical remains. Farms, mills and houses could have revealed evidence of rural life and early industry while urban houses, corporate buildings, wharfs and docks would have performed the same function for the towns. At the beginning of 1813 he wrote to his patron saying that Warner's papers, which Rose had given him as a starting point, were now of little use, and that he needed to visit several parishes of the county where information was lacking, and to examine the registers of the diocese (HRO 16M79/115, 13). His notebook on the history of the diocese, however, only contains a list of the bishops and their achievements (HRO 16M79/27).

There is some evidence that Bingley perused the bishop's register, as he made a list of dissenters' meeting houses. However evidence of the use of local records is otherwise very limited (HRO 16M79/11). He also had a copy of a printed pamphlet *The Second Report of the Hampshire Society for the Education of the Infant Poor, on the plan of the Rev. D. Bell and in the Principles of the Established Church* among his papers (HRO 16M79/105). In addition there was printed material which covered the entire kingdom, relatively easy to find in the libraries of local gentlemen, from which local information could be extracted. George Rose's extensive library at Cuffnells would have been very useful, but unfortunately Bingley's patron

did not allow him to use it. The Record Commissioners were in the process of publishing official crown documents such as the *Taxatio Ecclesiastica* and the *Calendarium Rotulorum Patentium* (1802), and many others, throughout the decade in which Bingley was compiling his notes (Mullins 1958, 1–2) and it is likely that he found many published sources at the British Museum, as it contained such books as *Bede, the Venerable Works* (1563), Camden's *Britannia* (1590 or 1596), Leland's *The Itinerary of John Leland in or about the year 1535 to 1543* (1549), and Stowe's *Summary of the English Chronicles* published in 1566 (Sears-Jane and Johnson 1956). He also used Fuller's *History of the Worthies of England* (1662), Dugdale's *The Baronage of England* (1676), South's *Life of Wykeham* (1678), Tanner's *Notitia Monastica* (1787), and *The History of the Exchequer* (1769) by Maddox, and many other books. Bingley may have used later editions of these works, but it is not obvious from his references that he did so. In making this collection of notes he was also re-inventing the availability of the records for others to use.

When Bingley came to assemble his notes on the towns of Hampshire, he could begin by using the manuscript and printed works of other local historians. Right from the commencement of the work he had a copy of Speed's manuscript on Southampton, which Warner had copied. One example is the entry on whether the corporation or the inhabitants were responsible for the upkeep of the bank of the saltmarsh (HRO 16M79/13). He also used the Southampton city archive, and notes taken from it can be found scattered throughout the Southampton volume. For example, the archive provided him with material regarding the institutions of the city such as the laws of the Guild, which he copied to produce 77 pages of notes. The many printed works used by Bingley included Cotton's abridgement of the parliamentary records to find a payment of £200 by the mayor and burgesses to the king, in 1414, for a fee farm and £40 to the 'priors alien'; in return the king granted them 40 marks p.a. and a licence to purchase land to the yearly value of £100. When writing his brief account of God's

House he used references from the Dodsworth manuscript c. 1638, Dugdale's *Monasticon Anglicanum* (1655), Tanner's *Notitia Monastica* (1787) and Englefield's *A Walk Through Southampton* (1801) and he drew heavily on Milner's *History and Survey of the Antiquities of Winchester* (1798–1801) when compiling his notes on Winchester. He also used some local sources from various types of records and printed materials. For example, his notes on Winchester Cathedral included such diverse sources as the inventory of the Cathedral, the *Sarum Breviary* and the *Monthly Magazine* of November 1813 (HRO 16M79/6).

Bingley's copious notes on the Isle of Wight are in the parish volume five, with a more general history in volume nine. Two books had already been published on the history of the island; these were Sir Richard Worsley's *History of the Isle of Wight* (1781), and Richard Warner's *History of the Isle of Wight, Military, Ecclesiastical and Natural; to which is added a view of its agriculture* (1795), much of which was copied from Worsley (Hicks 1994, 169). Bingley regarded Worsley as the more reliable source, but used the information on agricultural practice from Warner. He also used a few references from Warner's *Topographical Remarks on the South-Western Parts of Hampshire* (1793), including one on whether the island had once been joined to the mainland. A history of the Isle of Wight could have been written from these notes but it had been written already, and very recently. This seems to indicate that Bingley felt compelled to include a set of notes for the island in order to complete his prototype parish history volumes. He covered Winchester and Southampton in the same way, although a good history had already been published by Milner, and the history of Southampton had been covered in Speed's unpublished manuscript. It perhaps shows how thorough was Bingley's methodology, but he could hardly have published his *History* without including the island and principal towns of the county.

Although local sources, both manuscript and published, were useful, the majority of Bingley's sources were from the national and public records. In the initial stages of the work



Fig. 9 Part of a row of Georgian houses in Charlotte Street (now Bloomsbury Street), where William Bingley and his family lived after moving to London from Christchurch. (Photograph by Jill Clayton)

he freely took notes from other writers where they had used these sources, referencing them when he did so. For example, Warner's *Domesday* was used for some parishes but by no means for all of them. In the later stages of the work, Bingley realised that he needed to visit the public records in London himself in order to fill the gaps in his notes. He visited London for several weeks in 1810, and again in 1814 for five months, as he now had a house in London

(Fig. 9). His research took him to the British Museum and the Tower of London, where many of the records were kept at the time, and he was able to access both manuscript and published material.

At the back of Bingley's small notebook on heraldry, he noted that the Harleian manuscript included the visitation book of Hampshire, and that both this and the Cotton Library manuscript could be found at the British Museum. He

noted that '... there was an index in the Herald's Office, of the records in the Tower relating to Monasteries, Religious Houses, Universities, Honours, Manors, and Charters of Incorporation according to the names of places in the College of Arms' (HRO 16M79/107). He also recorded that the Duchy of Lancaster's Office had some records, and that in the Record Office there was a rough index of records relating to the county of Hampshire. The British Museum would have provided Bingley with a rich range of sources, as it contained the Old Royal Library given to the museum by George II in 1757. By 1805 the books were scattered throughout the British Museum but were available through the index. Bingley would also have used the 1609 catalogue of the Lumley Library, which had been incorporated into the King's Library (Sears-Jane and Johnson 1956). There was also a catalogue of the manuscripts of the King's Library (Casley 1734). Bingley did not record a visit to the Queen's House in the Mall to use the library collected by George III, and it is unlikely that he did so. The evidence for this view is that none of the shortlist of documents in the catalogue index relating to Winchester was used by him.

Bingley also used some parliamentary papers. His notes on the poor rate, friendly societies and charitable donations were taken from an *Abstract of Returns made by the Ministers and Churchwardens, of Charitable Donations for the Benefit of the Poor, Following an Act of George III*, published after the Gilbert Act of 1786 (HRO 16M79/94). These returns were commissioned by parliament in an attempt to discover what was happening in the counties with regard to poor relief, as this was mainly provided by private individuals. He also took notes from the *Observations on the Poor Returns of 1803*, published by the House of Commons, which included an overview of the provision and expenditure for the poor in Hampshire (HRO 16M79/111). His volume on the Hampshire forests included notes taken from the *Reports of the Commissioners from the Surveys of the New Forest from 1608 to 1783*, and the regulations and acts of parliament relating to the forests (HRO 16M79/7). His brief notes on Wolmer forest included a

description of a visit by Queen Anne and how, sitting on a bank smoothed for the purpose, '... she saw with great satisfaction the whole herd of red deer, consisting of about 500 head, brought by the keepers along the vale before her' (HRO 16M79/7).

During the 18th century, antiquarians had become increasingly aware that insights regarding the past could be acquired by investigating features in the landscape. Accordingly, Mr Philip Crocker suggested, in his letter of November 1810, that Bingley should look at the barrows behind the Pheasant Inn at Winterslow (HRO 16M79/120, 25), and Mr Jefferson's letter of May 1812 informed Bingley that he possessed an antique metal figure found at Silchester (HRO 16M79/120, 39). However there is no real evidence that Bingley engaged in any archaeological fieldwork. While Sir Richard Colt Hoare (1758–1838), the owner of Stourhead, was preparing *The Ancient History of South Wiltshire*, he was able to finance William Cunnington's fieldwork until Cunnington's death in 1810 (Rogers and Crowley 1994, 417). Colt Hoare was able to enjoy riding around the countryside on horseback exploring ancient sites and supervising the work that he was financing (Colt Hoare 1819, 5–6). He also had the advantage of local knowledge. He visited Arbury (Avebury) in 1723 and wrote that the stones from the Sanctuary had been taken by Farmer Green for his building at Beckhampton, while further damage was sustained when Farmer Griffin ploughed half of it up the following year (Colt Hoare 1819, 76). Bingley, however, was a newcomer to Hampshire and did not have the same life-long familiarity with the historical background of the county.

Bingley also collected anecdotes, perhaps to introduce a note of levity into his work. One anecdote concerned Sir [Percival] Brocas of Broxhead Manor, in the hundred of Bishop Sutton, near Headley and was recounted to him by A. Nicholson. Sir [Percival] was obliged to perform a penance in 1612 by standing at St Paul's Cross in London in a white sheet with a stick in his hand. He had been convicted before the High Sheriff's Commissioners of having fathered 70 children, of which only

one had been born to his wife. This gentleman duly performed his penance, but with 30 men clothed in scarlet in attendance, and then proceeded to the Lord Mayor's house where he demanded a dinner (HRO 16M79/3). This punishment, designed to expose him to public ridicule and humiliation, clearly did not have the desired effect. Another was an account of the last night that Charles I spent as a prisoner at Hurst Castle. He heard the guards, who were to take him to Windsor, arrive very late at night and thought that he was about to be murdered in his apartments (HRO 16M79/1, 8–11). He was right to be concerned, as he was executed at Whitehall Palace a few weeks later on 30 January 1649. Some of the more informal material was gleaned from articles in the *Gentleman's Magazine* established in 1731, which covered a wide range of news and topics.

Most local historians were naturally interested in injecting new ideas and information into their work. Bingley may have followed in the footsteps of previous writers as far as content was concerned, but he also produced some information that was original at the time, some of which is not available elsewhere today. There is an entry attributed to 'G', who was an occasional contributor to the work, concerning the parish of Headley. The entry refers to a building which either no longer stands, or which does still exist but its original function has been forgotten. The entry refers to the sale of the 'ancient' poorhouse called Vintners being sold to Mr John Caiger for £130 in 1774:

'... this sum, plus a large contribution from the parishioners was used to erect, in the following year (on a more convenient spot and at a proper distance), a regular set of substantial stone tenements, with every convenience suitable for the parish poor and that the premises are holders by copy of inheritance from the Bishop of Winchester, who was previously applied to on the occasion' (HRO 16M79/3).

These may have been a row of cottages now called Old World Cottages, near the bottom of the present Beech Hill Road, which was known for many years as Parish House Bottom. (John Owen-Smith, *pers. comm.*). The name does

suggest that this may have been the location of this forgotten provision for the poor, perhaps superseded by the Gilbert Workhouse built in 1795.

CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, Bingley used many of the same sources that other local historians were using during the late 18th and early 19th centuries. He also followed the same format. He was, however, very different, in that he wrote about contemporary material not included by other Hampshire historians, gleaned from his collaborators and contributors, journals and newspapers. His choice of material casts light on the interests of the clergy at the turn of the century, and was biased in favour not only of his own interests, but also those of his patron, the gentlemen of Hampshire, and beyond. When considering the work of William Bingley it is important to remember his lack of previous experience in the field of history, and that he did not travel around the county and visit every parish. This resulted in omissions in his work. For example, despite his interest in the poor he did not mention the Gilbert workhouse at Headley, built in 1795. He could hardly have failed to notice it had he visited the parish.

It is, however, clear that Bingley intended to write a serious, full History of Hampshire, properly referenced, and his volume of general notes on Hampshire and the Isle of Wight are evidence that he could have linked the histories of the parishes and written a comprehensive account of the county as a whole. One reason for his failure to do so lies not in the quality of his notes, but perhaps in the fact that he did not begin to write sample parish histories until eleven years after accepting the work. Had he done so earlier, he might have realised the difficulty of the task which he had set himself, and the length of time he ought to have allowed himself for completing the work. In fact many other local historians failed to publish their endeavours for a variety of reasons, for example D. E. Davey (1769–1851), whose substantial manuscript collection is now at the Suffolk

Record Office. Bingley did, however, have the good sense not to suffer the fate of many other local historians, including Charles Sandoe Gilbert whose history of Cornwall (1817–20) was the cause of his bankruptcy (Walker 1994, 88).

The main value of Bingley's notes lies in the unique picture that they give of Hampshire in the early 19th century. *The Victoria County History of the Counties of England: A History of Hampshire and the Isle of Wight* (1900–12) covered the history of Hampshire as a whole for the first time, but did not cover social history or religious dissent in any depth. As new volumes were written for other counties during the twentieth century, economic history was included. Local government and education sections followed, and the narrow focus of the manors section was modified to include other landed estates. There were also new sections on Protestant non-conformity and Roman Catholicism. In this way, Bingley's approach was gradually adopted by the standard work for local history over a hundred years after his death (Bainbridge 2007, 1–13). It must be said, perhaps, that he was not the best person to write a History of Hampshire, but the fact remains that he was the only person who attempted the task. Thus Bingley's achievement is surely that his vast collection of notes might easily have formed the basis for a History of Hampshire at the time. The collection can be used today in conjunction with the *Victoria County History* and the work of other Hampshire historians, and it is especially useful for the local historian who wishes to research the county and its culture as

it existed in the first two decades of the 19th century.

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