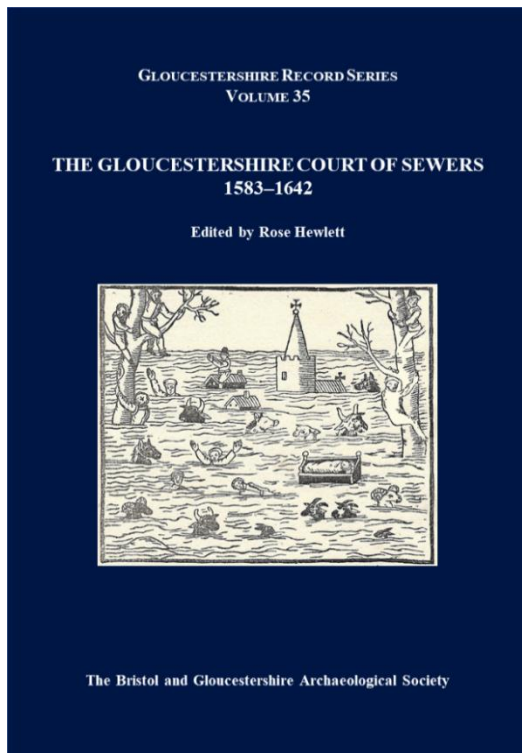


The Lower Severn Internal Drainage Board has a long history. The early records of its predecessor organisation, the Gloucestershire Court of Sewers, have recently been transcribed by Board Member, Rose Hewlett. ‘Sewers’ here are watercourses, natural or manmade. *The Gloucestershire Court of Sewers 1583-1642* has been published by the Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society

<https://www.bgas.org.uk/publications/books.html>.



Maintenance was a constant draw on labour, materials and finances, especially following the great Severn Estuary flood of 1607 and another significant inundation in 1636. It is interesting to read of the same issues faced today — the silting up of drainage channels, weed growth impeding water flow, and the erosion of defences by tidal action or animals wearing away their surface.

These remarkable Court of Sewers records open a window on communities of the Gloucestershire Levels, and their struggles against encroachments from the sea in a changing political climate. They touch all walks of life from the peasantry to the county’s elite. The extraordinary detail they contain about people and places make them a valuable resource for family and local historians. They are almost unique in their survival, and of

national significance in terms of land drainage and sea defence.

*Defending Gloucestershire's Coast 1583-1642*, forms part of the Gloucester History Festival <https://www.gloucesterhistoryfestival.co.uk/events/defending-gloucestershires-coast-1583-1642/> and can be viewed without charge.



Rose Hewlett presenting a copy of *The Gloucestershire Court of Sewers 1583-1642* to Matthew Riddle, Chairman of the Lower Severn Internal Drainage Board