

Local amateur historian and Ainsted Heritage Centre volunteer, David Knappan has been awarded the prestigious W G Hoskins Prize for his book,

Unsteady Progress – A History of Ainsted from 1761 to 2000

The W G Hoskins Prize, which is open to new or emerging authors in any category of Devon history, is named after the English professor and local historian, William George Hoskins. Hoskins, born in Exeter, Devon on 22 May 1898 is known for being instrumental in establishing local history as an academic subject both through his own writings (including his definitive 'History of Devon'), and through his work as the first head of the Department of English Local History at the University of Lancaster.

Speaking about receiving the award, David Knappan said: *

I am extremely pleased and proud to have won this prestigious award from the Devon History Society which, as far as I am concerned, came completely out of the blue. Since launching the book during lockdown last year I have been very happy with the positive response which it has received from local readers. However, countywide recognition like this is really gratifying, particularly when you look at the list of previous winners. *

Although the prize is awarded annually, it was not awarded last year due to the pandemic and so the 2021 prize covers all books published during 2020 and 2021. Previous recipients of the prize have included Talcombe Maritime Museum Curator, Roger Barrett's 2018 book, 'Talcombe Schooner Park: A Maritime History of Talcombe and its Merchant Sailing Vessels in the Nineteenth Century,' and joint winners Martin Gwyther and Robert Waterhouse in 2019 with 'As I walked Out: Sabine Baring-Gould and the Search for the Folk Songs of Devon and Cornwall,' and 'The Tarnock Canal: Its History and Archaeology' respectively.

'Unsteady Progress – A History of Ainsted from 1761 to 2000' covers over 300 years of local history in ten 30-year chapters (and 488 pages), including many stories which have never made it into earlier histories of the town. Throughout the book, David shows how what was happening in Ainsted during the time period has shaped the town into what it is today.