

**THE THOROTON SOCIETY OF
NOTTINGHAMSHIRE**

THE COUNTY'S HISTORICAL SOCIETY
FOUNDED 1897

ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS
for the year ended 31st December 2008

THE THOROTON SOCIETY OF NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

OFFICERS JANUARY TO DECEMBER 2008

PRESIDENT

Dr Rosalys Coope PhD FSA

VICE-PRESIDENTS

Maurice Caplan PhD, Adrian Henstock BA DAA FRHistS, Robin Minnitt,
Vernon Radcliffe MBE FMA

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Howard Fisher MA (2)	Trevor Foulds BA PhD FRHistS (3)
Ann Hope BA PhD (2)	David Hoskins (2) IEng AMICE
Dorothy Johnston BA PhD DipLib (2)	Philip Jones BSc MSc MA (3)
Alan Langton (2)	David Marcombe BA PhD (0) (until April)
Penny Messenger BSc MEd (2)	Peter Reddish (2)
Peter Smith (2)	Margaret Trueman BSc (2)

HONORARY SECRETARY

Barbara Cast BA (3)*

Little Dower House, Station Road, Bleasby, Notts NG14 7FX

HONORARY TREASURER

John Wilson BPharm MPhil MRPharmS FRSPH (2)*

HONORARY TRANSACTIONS EDITORS

History - Adrian Henstock BA DAA FRHistS (until April)

Richard Gaunt BA Ph D FRHist.S, FHEA (2) (from April)*

Archaeology - Keith Challis BA MPhil MSc MIFA (1)*

CONSULTANT EDITOR AND RECORDS SERIES EDITOR

Adrian Henstock BA DAA FRHistS (2)* (from April)

HONORARY CIRCULATION SECRETARY

David Bagley MA FLA (1)*

HONORARY PROGRAMME SECRETARY

Leslie Cram MA AMA FSA (2)*

HONORARY MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY

John Hamilton MA (3)*

117 Lambley Lane, Burton Joyce, Nottingham NG14 5BL

**Ex-officio members of Council*

Number in brackets indicates attendance at Council meetings (maximum 3)

AUDITORS

Jackson Bly, Chartered Accountants

TRUSTEES FOR THE CHARITY

John Beckett and Barbara Cast: Keith Goodman (until May) John Wilson (from May)

PUBLICATIONS COMMITTEE (TRANSACTIONS AND RECORD SECTION)

Jenny Alexander BA PhD
Professor John Beckett BA PhD FRHistS FSA (Chairman)
Keith Challis BA MPhil MSc MIFA
David Crook MA PhD FRHistS FSA OBE
Trevor Foulds BA PhD FRHistS
Richard Gaunt, BA Ph D FRHist.S, FHEA
Colin Griffin BA PhD
Adrian Henstock BA DAA FRHistS (Honorary Secretary Record Section)
Gavin Kinsley BA
David Knight BA DPhil MIFA
David Marcombe BA PhD
Chris Robinson BA PhD
John Wilson BPharm MPhil MRPharmS FRSPH
(Honorary Treasurer, Record Section)

Cover picture - Woodborough

THE THOROTON SOCIETY OF NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

TRUSTEES REPORT FOR YEAR ENDED 31st DECEMBER 2008

LEGAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

The full name of the society is the Thoroton Society of Nottinghamshire and it is governed by a constitution known as the 'Rules of the Thoroton Society of Nottinghamshire'. These rules are registered with the Charity Commissioners under number 237755.

OBJECTS OF THE SOCIETY

Under the rules of the Society, its objects shall be to promote and foster the study of the history, archaeology and antiquities of Nottinghamshire for the public benefit and to promote and foster public knowledge, understanding and appreciation of Nottinghamshire's history generally.

ADDRESS FOR ENQUIRIES

Barbara Cast, Honorary Secretary, Little Dower House, Station Road, Bleasby, Nottinghamshire NG14 7FX

TRUSTEES

The members of Council are considered to be the Trustees of the Society. Details of membership of Council are shown on page 1.

MAIN ADVISORS

Bankers - HSBC Bank plc, 6 Victoria Street, Nottingham NG1 2FF

Auditors - Jackson Bly, 110 Nottingham Road, Chilwell

FUNDS

The General Fund can be used for the general furtherance of the aims of the charity. In order to achieve the aims of the Record Section, the Society has the power to print original historical materials, records and manuscripts. The income from the Maurice Barley and Nora Witham Funds is used for lectures: the Crawford Bequest is to be used for expenditure connected with the history of Sutton Bonington.

REPORT OF COUNCIL FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st DECEMBER 2008

INTRODUCTION AND CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

In introducing this report I am pleased to be able to reflect on another full year in the Society's life. Lectures at the Nottingham Mechanics were, as ever, very well attended, and members and guests also enjoyed a number of well patronised excursions. I particularly enjoyed the visit to Newstead Abbey which I was privileged to lead and, in the unfortunate absence of our President through ill health, to tell the many excursionists what she would have said if she had been able to be there! During the year we saw two important changes in the way the Society operates. At the AGM Adrian Henstock began the process of stepping down as editor. After so many years in post (most members will not be able to recall when Adrian was not the editor!) it seemed to Council important that he should, at his request, be phased out! We elected Dr Richard Gaunt as the History editor with Adrian continuing in a consultative role, as well as retaining the task of editor of the Record Series. In the autumn, Howard Fisher took over from Janice Avery as editor of the Newsletter. Otherwise the officers have remained in post, and have undertaken a great deal of important work that has made it possible for the Society to flourish. I am immensely grateful to them for all their

hard work. In February we held the first Myles Thoroton Hildyard lecture, commemorating our long standing President who died several years ago. We were pleased to welcome to the lecture Mr Robert Hildyard, who is now the owner of Flintham Hall, and who is hoping to welcome the Society to the house in the near future. Mr Hildyard also kindly proposed the toast to the Society at the Annual Luncheon. Finally, we were saddened to hear, just before Christmas, of the death of Mrs Joyce Beilby who, with her husband Bernard, was for many years the Society's lanternist.

John Beckett, Chairman

PROCEEDINGS OF COUNCIL

The Council met on three occasions in 2008, on each occasion at Lenton Grove and again we thank the University of Nottingham for allowing us to meet there. Council oversees the Society's business, finances and development. Reports from Council members who represent the Society are given each meeting. The Standing Committee, chaired by John Beckett, takes responsibility for day to day and detailed work, including programme planning, and its activities are reported to Council each meeting. A further sub-group of Council is the Thoroton Response Group which makes representations on behalf of the Society on matters, national and local, relating to the historic environment and buildings of the County, any representations made being noted in the Newsletter: members of the Society are invited to draw the group's attention to matters of concern.

Barbara Cast, Honorary Secretary

HONORARY TREASURER'S REVIEW OF THE YEAR TO 31st DECEMBER 2008

The Society's finances remain healthy: the Records Section has again made a considerable surplus, which allows ample funds for the publication of the several books that are in preparation.

From January 2008, all sales to the public of both the *Transactions* and the Records Section publications have been through the Nottinghamshire Archives, which takes a commission of 25 percent. Books are on display and for sale over the counter in the Search Room at the Archives, and are also advertised on the Society's website. The system works well, and has resulted in an increase in sales of our publications.

A new bequest of £5,000 has been received from the estate of the late Dr John Davis, a former member of the Society. This bequest is to be used to digitise the Nottinghamshire Bibliography.

Over the last two years, the Society's reserves have increased considerably from £2,638 in 2007 to £2,576 in 2008 by way of interest on our deposits with National Savings and Investments. This level of interest will not be sustained in 2009. At the time of writing, the interest rate with NS&I is 1.2%, down from 5.3% at this time last year. However, our tax refunds under the Gift-Aid scheme have increased from £1,055 in 2007 to £1,263

in 2008: Members who pay income tax but have not completed a Gift-Aid form are urged to do so!

The general reserves of the Society total £29,390. The assets of the Society total £78,129, of which £2,431 is stock of books and ties. The bank current account balances are £344 and £5,566 respectively and the remainder is invested with National Savings and Investments.

John Wilson, Honorary Treasurer

MEMBERSHIP

Comparative membership numbers	2007	2008
Individual members	204	211
Individual members - with record series	65	68
Associate members	53	58
Life members	13	14
Student members	6	5
Record series only	3	3
Honorary members	3	2
Total individual members	347	361
Institutional members	15	15
Institutional members - with record series	65	60
Institutional members - record series only	12	9
Total institutional members	92	84
Final total	439	445
Total record series	145	150

There was a small rise in total membership, the fall in the number of institutional members being more than offset by a rise in personal membership. This compares with a fall of over thirty members between 2006 and 2007, when the numbers of both personal and institutional members fell.

The figures exclude nine personal members who joined between 1st September and 31st December 2008 who will be included in the 2009 figures.

A membership drive has been underway this year with a new leaflet produced in August following the introduction of the Society's new corporate image. These have been distributed widely: leaflets have been supplied to the local authorities for distribution to all the City's and County's libraries, eighty in all, as well as a number of museums. Copies were also sent to nearly seventy local history societies in the county as well as a number of other institutions such as the National Trust. It is intended to ensure that supplies continue to be kept topped up so that leaflets are always available at a large number of venues throughout the county.

John Hamilton, Honorary Membership Secretary

PUBLICATIONS

Transactions

The 111th volume was published during the year and contained nine major contributions in addition to shorter archaeological reports. A major study of the flints and the mediaeval pottery found during field walking over cropmarks in the Retford/Blyth area was supplemented by two briefer excavation reports. These related to the mysterious 'market wall' which divided Nottingham's Market Square from early Tudor times onwards, and the line of the siegeworks thrown up around Newark during the Civil War.

Other papers discussed the significance of two fragments of pre-Viking sculpture in South Leverton church and the remarkable continuity of historical customs and practices on the Southwell prebendal estates at Norwell which lasted from Anglo-Saxon to modern times. A study of the activities of the mediaeval Guild of St George in Nottingham St Peter's Church during the century leading up to the Reformation described its annual Corpus Christi procession and sometimes riotous feasting.

Our President - Dr Rosalys Coope - contributed a further instalment of her long-term study of the architectural history of Newstead Abbey, this time covering the Byrons' conversion of the priory into a country house between 1540 and 1640. By contrast, industrial topics were covered by one article identifying the many water corn mills around Mansfield in the centuries before 1700, and another investigating the important but short-lived Georgian worsted-spinning firm of Davison & Hawksley of Arnold, with especial reference to its token coinage issued in 1802.

Adrian Henstock, Consultant Editor

Record Series

The Gedling 'Town Book' of parish accounts, 1665-1714, edited by Edward White, is nearing completion and should be published during the first half of 2009.

It is intended to publish the compact disc edition of the coloured estate maps of William Senior, 1600-1640, as three 'volumes', the first of which will be an introduction and reproductions of the Welbeck atlas in DVD format; this contains some 70 maps of the Earl of Newcastle's estates mainly of Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire and Northumberland. A DVD of the Chatsworth atlas will follow later and the final volume will be a reconstruction of the lost survey information from the Welbeck atlas presented as a conventional publication.

Further progress has been made with editing the estate accounts of the 2nd Duke of Newcastle relating to Welbeck Abbey and Nottingham Castle etc. during the 1670s and '80s, and also the projected history and gazetteer of Lost Churches and Chapels within the county.

Adrian Henstock, Honorary Record Series Editor

PLANNING AND CONSERVATION IN THE CITY OF NOTTINGHAM

Much of the discussion on planning in Nottingham has been overshadowed by the ongoing debate about the suitability of the proposed development of the former Odeon site, which stretches from Angel Row across to Maid Marian Way. Conservationists and others were shattered when the City Councillors, "acting on the advice of their officers" granted approval for the scheme just before Christmas. There were only slight adjustments to the fenestration on the Angel Row façade; the height remained. This decision was contrary to the advice given in the new 'Urban Design Guide for Nottingham City Centre' prepared by leading specialists, presumably at some cost, over the last year. The guide states quite clearly "There should be no further tall buildings in this area" (Maid Marian Way). I understand all the many letters of objection from Bromley House members were counted as one letter! At the same meeting rather controversial plans for a new car park at the Midland Station were approved.

There was an appeal against the Council's decision to turn down the demolition and replacement of 20 Park Row. The good news is that the government inspector refused the appeal. 20 Park Row is the low building on the corner of Park Row and East Circus Street. It is not listed and the Council does not have an up-to-date list of 'Buildings of Local Interest', so a great deal of hurried research has been done to make a case. In brief the existing building is a low rise pleasant enough link c.1850 between taller houses on Park Row and the Hine terraces on East Circus Street. The proposed replacement, according to informed witnesses, was alleged to reflect the facets of the taller buildings. Gosh, beauty really is in the eye of the beholder!

Earlier in the year, after a public enquiry the Planning Inspector granted planning permission for the 14 storey development on Brook Street subject to Section 106 obligations being put in place (These include affordable housing, fine legal points, landscaping etc).

There has been no recent news about 41 Pilcher Gate, Mr. Sherwin's House of c.1689 but altered later. Several months back, pre-crunch, there was still a funding gap of £200-£250,000 before work could start on a good scheme by Franklin Ellis Architects for Metropolitan Housing. There is full support from English Heritage.

In the autumn 'The Judges' Lodgings' on High Pavement were on the market for c. £1million. At the time it was reported that a firm offer had been made. The present financial upheaval clouds any news of later developments. As these listed buildings had been empty for some time, they were approaching 'buildings at risk' status.

The most recent news about the repair of the Wilford Suspension Bridge involves written support from local MPs. This bridge has been closed by Severn Trent since 22nd July on 'health and safety' advice and, when questioned about a possible re-opening, the company was initially evasive and talked of "awaiting structural engineer's report". However Severn Trent has at last made clear that they do intend to reopen the bridge. Concerns are now over the timetable they have proposed about the likely reopening, with work starting in 'Spring 2009' and taking six months, all might well slip again, in

view of all the slips in timing there have been already since the bridge closed more than 6 months ago.

No 1 Nottingham Science Park, a modern building and its associated boardwalk landscaping, was formally opened with a self styled 'Picnic in the Park' in September. This development in the Science Park, facing the southern entrance to Nottingham University, is worth a visit. Adjoining is the Toyota Training Centre, run by Castle College, Nottingham

A revised scheme for The Christian Centre, Talbot Street/Wollaton Street has been granted planning permission. The Civic Society objected to its "bulky, dominating" appearance. Even Councillors considered a blank wall to Wollaton Street "bland" and "monolithic". It has a very high needle-like spire, which I consider would clash with that of St. Barnabas when viewed from certain locations.

As hinted the 'credit crunch' has had effects locally, although not all delays can be attributed to it. The development of the land around the British Waterways Trent Basin into what would have been the equivalent of a mini suburb of 2,000 flats and houses has been abandoned by developers Isis. One development on the city's eastern waterside, 'River Crescent' Phase 1 at Colwick, has been completed. It is a scheme of "luxury apartments" with significant eco-friendly features. One of these luxury apartments has been sold recently for £1million - another first for Nottingham!

The Trinity Square redevelopment is now complete although the commercial take up of shops is slow. (I don't like these buildings at all, although the opening there of a Waitrose store in December is clouding my thinking!). To the rear is a hard landscaped pocket park, this bleak 'square' has seating designed to resemble the former tombstones of Holy Trinity Church. Over on Shakespeare Street work on transforming our old meeting hall at the YMCA is complete. Originally the creation of shops was planned but now it has been transformed into a "Fitness Suite". Nearby the architectural appearance of the finished Cymbeline House almost defies description, but not enough to deter Tesco opening another convenience store there.

Work on two further apartment blocks, 'South Reef' on Canal Street and 'Picture Works' on Queen's Drive, after delays are said to be "on schedule". The former has 237 flats and the latter 128 over ten storeys; each has commercial units/offices on the ground floor.

The long promised rebuilding and enlargement of the Broadmarsh Centre has inevitably been put back yet again, although the developers Westfield are still talking of not too long a delay. Close by the rebuilding on the People's College site of what is now known as Castle College is on hold whilst the merger plans of the City's Further Education Colleges are resolved.

There was a strong possibility that work might start on an initial office block on Nottingham's proposed Eastside regeneration area to the rear of the BBC building on London Road. Outline planning permission for this eventual £900m development

scheme was granted last April but, as with some of the above schemes, in the current financial climate when or will it happen?

There has been much discussion on the future of the Victoria Baths; three schemes have been submitted by the designated architects; all retain the tower. Option A, which retains two existing pools and the sports hall is the Civic Society's preferred choice.

The decision on the expansion of the Eastcroft Incinerator is due early in 2009.

There was an interesting 'story' that the City Council might relocate some of its scattered offices into one of the office blocks on Station Street to be vacated by a smaller sized 'Capital One'. This resulted in speculation about the fate of existing offices in the Council House, the Guildhall and elsewhere.

Ken Brand, City Planning Representative

COUNTY PLANNING AND CBA PLANNING REPORT

The year has been rather quieter than previous years but, nevertheless, there have been some very interesting cases to consider as well as more routine matters. Large projects have been considered but it remains to be seen how the present recession and national financial situation will affect such developments in the immediate and mid-term future. I comment on some of the interesting and major proposals which have been dealt with this year.

I mentioned in my last report the development proposals for the Robin Hood site at Newark where a new Tesco supermarket is proposed on the bus station car park with associated demolition and development work of the Robin Hood Hotel part of the site. It very much looks as though consent for this application will be given now that revised plans for retaining the bus station within the development have been submitted.

A further development in Newark relates to the Mount School site where opposition has been made to part of the revised plans, although the project as a whole received our support. The development is for sheltered housing on the site.

A site visit was made to Kirklington Hall to assess the application relating to the former Rodney School. This building is an important one for Nottinghamshire and the architects, Oglesby and Limb Ltd. of Newark, have designed an imaginative renovation which is sympathetic to the building and will, in association with the contractors, Jessops, result in the reinstatement of features of the building which were hidden and, in part, damaged by the previous occupants, BP and the Rodney School. The work is being undertaken for Kedleston (UK) Ltd who will use it as a residential school for special care children. The attention to detail can be gauged from the fact that original eroded metal window catches are being remade to pattern and where plain glass has replaced leaded windows this will be replaced by original pattern leads.

There was a controversial proposal to resite the lych gate at Emmanuel Church,

Bestwood, to reflect the church authority's concern about vandal damage. This was opposed on the grounds of historical accuracy but the local authority has granted consent to move the gate.

41 Pilcher Gate was once again under consideration and, whilst there remain some reservations, the current proposals were not opposed since they do largely address the importance of this Sherwin house and will return it to domestic use.

A proposal to convert the water tower at Rufford to a single bedroom holiday let was supported with a reservation about the replacement of the eroded storage tank on the roof with a light. It was hoped that some form of tank could be retained. This development, if it proceeds, will ensure the tower's maintenance. Indeed, my report to CBA with photographs has resulted in this case appearing in the annual review of CBA's listed building casework in 'Archaeology' magazine and in the section's Newsletter.

Stanford Hall again came under consideration with new applications to affect the theatre and build a retirement village and care home as well as convert the Hall itself back into a single residence with a new entrance driveway. As part of this work an extensive range of Victorian lean-to greenhouses will be reinstated. The Abbott's wing, created by the CWS for residential purposes will be demolished and replaced with a single storey garage unit. The great reservation about the proposals relates to the lido which is, as far as I am aware, unique to the County if not the East Midlands. It would be a great shame to lose this in the building of a spa for the retirement village. At present the only features which would be retained are the three Art Deco style diving boards and the grottos and the pool itself would be lost. I believe English Heritage has similar concerns and it is to be hoped that some way of saving the lido can be found.

Concern was expressed about external changes proposed for 13 St Peter's Gate in converting the former bank for retail purposes.

I made a site visit to Highfields Farm, Costock. This is a very interesting house which was originally built in 1729 by Sir Thomas Parkyns as a Dower House to Bunny Hall. It was subsequently given over to agricultural use as a farmhouse, mentioned as such by Throsby in 1790. In the early part of the C20th the old farm buildings were demolished and replaced with the existing and at the same time the house roof was replaced and restyled. A Trent & Peak survey in connection with the current application has revealed the old roof timbers are still extant. In 1910 the estate was sold to Sir Albert Ball's development company and around 1920 the occupier was Alfred Norbury, grandfather of the present tenant. The estate is presently owned by Saint-Gobain, the owners of British Gypsum who placed it for sale. The application, which has been approved by Rushcliffe BC, is to turn the house and some surrounding land into a new Convent for the Sisters of the Holy Cross whose current home is at Rempstone. The Dower House will become guest accommodation and the accommodation for the sisters will be created by partial demolition of the agricultural buildings and new build. The architects, Fowkes McIntyre of Nottingham, have produced imaginative designs which will enhance the Dower House whilst making a new convent for the Sisters. The only

reservation was about proposals to replace the current roof with one matching the original; I felt that this was not appropriate and the LA have not allowed that part of the application which relates to the roof.

I attended a joint CBA and Association for Industrial Architecture day school at the Empire and Commonwealth Museum in Bristol at the end of November. The Museum, although in course of relocating to London, is situated in the original part of Temple Meads Station and the indoor lectures were held in the evocative atmosphere of Brunel's boardroom. This is one of a series of similar events which are now to be held regionally, the next one is at Ipswich in February 2009. The day was most instructive and well worth the early start for the 6.10 am train from Derby!

I also attended a consultation event at Worksop Priory where the Prince's Regeneration Trust is becoming involved in considerations for developing the site in conjunction with the Church. Funding has been made available by the County and English Heritage for feasibility studies to be undertaken.

It will be seen from this report that each application received is considered with an open mind and with the best interest of the building within the historical context of the County paramount in thought. Inappropriate proposals are vigorously opposed and others are opposed in part whilst accepting the greater element. At the end of the day, some element of pragmatism has to apply and if a proposal will substantially save a building which otherwise would be lost then concessions have to be considered. This is not to say that we do not fight our corner, we certainly do, although we do not win every case.

I am most appreciative of the continuing co-operation of the County's Local Authority Planning Departments in submitting cases for our consideration, either direct to the Thoroton Society or through the CBA. The ongoing support and encouragement of the Council for British Archaeology's staff at York is essential to this work and the professionalism of the CBA people is an outstanding element in the preservation of our built heritage in England and Wales.

Howard Fisher, County and Council for British
Archaeology Planning Representative

ARCHAEOLOGY

Members will of course be aware that the vast majority of archaeological endeavour within the county is funded from the pocket of commercial developers, aggregate companies and the public purse. Over the past months archaeology has been hit hard on a number of fronts; by the credit crunch and ensuing recession with its growing impact on commerce and development, by proposed changes in legislation affecting archaeology within the planning process and by changes in funding through the principal distributor of government funds, English Heritage. These then are difficult times for archaeology within the county, and for us all.

While it is probably too early to judge the impact of recession on commercial archaeology, anecdotal evidence suggests that archaeological contractors working

within the county are feeling the pinch through a combination of increasing pressure from clients to cut costs, falling order books and the inevitable greater competition between archaeologists seeking to hold on to a share of a declining market. The Institute for Archaeology, the professional body for archaeologists has responded to recession by keeping a careful eye on developments; their latest report is alarming, with evidence that, across the UK, 345 archaeological jobs have been lost in the quarter from 1st October 2008 to 1st January 2009, representing 8.6% of the jobs in commercial archaeology and 5.0% of the entire UK archaeological workforce. The implications for the maintenance of a skilled and enthusiastic workforce in what has always been a poorly paid profession need hardly be spelt out.

English Heritage, the government agency charged with the care and maintenance of England's historic environment, has played a significant role in funding archaeological excavation and research since its creation in 1983. Over recent years its budget for funding archaeology, always too small and with constant competitive demands, has been significantly supplemented by monies from Defra in the form of the Aggregates Levy Sustainability Fund (ALSF), a levy on aggregate production introduced in 2001 and which between 2002 and the present has provided English Heritage in the order of four million pounds additional funding each year. Nottinghamshire has always done well from this fund, largely because of the initiatives of Trent Valley GeoArchaeology, of which more later. Unfortunately in 2008, after public consultation, Defra slashed the proportion of ALSF monies available to archaeologists through English Heritage to a modest one million pounds a year, of which half is ring-fenced for English Heritage's new responsibility for maritime archaeology. On top of recession this further funding cut will undoubtedly impact on the progress of archaeological research including in Nottinghamshire.

A further uncertainty affecting archaeology and heritage more widely is the demise, for now at least, of the Government's promised Heritage Protection Bill. The Bill, which promised reform to the over complex parallel system of scheduling and listing as well as, at last, the creation of a legal obligation on local authorities to maintain authoritative historic environment records, was removed from the Queen's Speech at the last moment, meaning that it will not be put forward in the present parliamentary session. English Heritage and the profession as a whole are putting on a brave face, but this is without doubt a setback for the integration of heritage issues with planning reform and is further bad news for archaeology.

So what of the good news? Members may already be aware of the activities of Trent Valley GeoArchaeology, a loose confederation of archaeologists, planners and other interested parties set up largely at the initiative of our former County Archaeologist, Mike Bishop. Since its inception TVG has been instrumental in co-ordinating archaeological research in the Valley of Nottinghamshire's premier river and the results of its efforts, ranging from a history of the aggregates industry in the Trent written by Dr Tim Cooper of the University of Sheffield, (*Laying the Foundations: A History and Archaeology of the Trent Valley Sand and Gravel Industry* CBA Research Report 159) to the excellent *Trent Valley Landscapes* by David Knight and Andy Howard (Heritage Marketing & Publications Ltd), funded by the ALSF, may be viewed on its website (www.tvg.org.uk). Since Mike's retirement David Knight, who also directs Nottingham

University's Trent & Peak Archaeology, has taken over as the convener of TVG and the organisation continues to prosper albeit in a more challenging funding environment.

David's role in TVG is particularly apposite as he and archaeologist Carol Allen, a former editor of our own *Transactions*, are leading the development of a new research strategy for the archaeology of the East Midlands. This endeavour, funded by English Heritage from their somewhat reduced archaeology budget, builds on the excellent Research Framework for the East Midlands coordinated by Nick Cooper at Leicester University and available in print as Leicester Archaeological Monograph 13. The strategy, which attempts the nigh on impossible by trying to reach a consensus on the priorities and approaches for future archaeological research in our region, includes widespread professional and public consultation and this society will be represented and will put forward the views of members.

Keith Challis, Archaeology Editor and Representative

THE THOROTON SOCIETY WEBSITE AND THE NOTTINGHAMSHIRE HERITAGE GATEWAY

The website has undergone a thorough re-design following Michelle Ventura's branding work for Thoroton Society publications. The opportunity was also taken to fundamentally change the way the site is built by using Cascading Style Sheets to determine page layout (rather than tables): this will make it much easier to change the look of the site in the future and using style sheets also leads to smaller page sizes which will load a lot quicker.

Analysis of the website log files shows that during 2008 there was an average of 23,500 pages served per month and an average of 5,000 visitors to the site per month. The most popular parts of the site continued to be the Nottinghamshire Heritage Gateway sections with John Beckett's section on researching Nottingham's history consistently being the most popular. Other popular research pathways were World War 2, Goose Fair, the Civil War, Folklore and Newark. The log files also reveal that the electronic version of Laurence Craik's *Centenary Index to the Transactions, Record Series and Excavation Section* was downloaded on average 60-70 times a month over the year. Users of our website come from all corners of the globe with many hailing from the USA, Australia and New Zealand; more exotically we have visitors from Poland, Mexico, Peru and Finland.

Search terms people use on search engines like Google, Yahoo and Live Search are quite interesting. Most are fairly predictable (e.g., "Adrian Henstock", "Thoroton Society", "Nottinghamshire heritage" etc) but there are some oddities: "Robin Hood's stamping ground" and "fish consumption in 19th century Britain" caught my eye!

The year ended with the launch of a new website to host the Nottinghamshire Heritage Gateway and all the pages have now been moved from the Thoroton Society website to their new home: www.nottsheritagegateway.org.uk

Andy Nicholson, Society Webmaster

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE BUILDING PRESERVATION TRUST

The Trust is proceeding with the restoration of the only building it currently owns, the dovecote at Thoroton: this will entail a new glover and re-thatching. Trust consultants are closely involved with plans to restore part of the north range of the Saracen's Head in Southwell. The work of the Trust also includes commenting on planning applications and monitoring developments at buildings considered to be at risk and recently these have included Kimberley Brewery, Colwick Manor Farm, Kennels and Kings Clipstone, Calverton Folk Museum and Oxton Ice House.

Information about the Trust, with illustrations of past activities and news of future plans, can be seen at www.nbpt.co.uk

Barbara Cast, NBPT Representative

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE LOCAL HISTORY ASSOCIATION

The Association held its usual two day-schools in 2008 and began to consider its future direction.

Philip Jones, NLHA Representative

SOCIETY EVENTS IN 2008

Saturday January 12: *Nora Witham lecture*, Nick Tomlinson - Picture the Past.

Saturday February 9: *Myles Thoroton Hildyard lecture*, Nigel Lowey - St Pancras.

Saturday March 8: *Maurice Barley lecture*, Malcolm Hislop and Michael Lobb - The use of laser scanning in the archaeological recording of historic buildings.

Saturday April 26: Annual General Meeting, Norwell Village Hall. Attendance 91

Thursday May 29: Excursion to Newstead Abbey - leader John Beckett. Attendance 74

Wednesday 18 June: Excursion to Nottingham University Manuscripts and Special Collections - leader Dorothy Johnston. Attendance 43

Saturday July 12: Excursion to Grantham and east Nottinghamshire Churches - leader Alan Langton. Attendance 44

Saturday September 6: Excursion to Wentworth Castle - leaders Derek and Ceril Little. Attendance 55

Tuesday October 7: *Keith Train Lecture* in association with the Nottingham Civic Society, Catherine Arnold - Necropolis Nottingham.

Saturday October 18: *Archaeology lecture*, Henry Chapman - The Hatfield Trackway and Platform: a Neolithic ceremonial site in a wetland context. Attendance 54

Saturday November 1: Annual Luncheon, Saracen's Head, Southwell. Attendance 96

Saturday November 8: *Nottinghamshire History Lecture*, Mark Dawson - Eating and drinking in Nottinghamshire Households 1540 - 1640. Attendance 74

Saturday December 13: *Christmas Lecture*, John Morehen - John Blow, Son of Newark: A Tercentenary Tribute. Attendance 61

Leslie Cram, Honorary Programme Secretary