

**THE THOROTON SOCIETY OF
NOTTINGHAMSHIRE**

THE COUNTY'S HISTORICAL SOCIETY
FOUNDED 1897

ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS
for the year ended 31st December 2012

OFFICERS JANUARY TO DECEMBER 2012

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

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Judith Mills BA MA PhD (2)* from April 2012

**Ex-officio members of Council*

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

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John Beckett, Barbara Cast and John Wilson

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Cover picture - The Hutt, Ravenshead

THE THOROTON SOCIETY OF NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

TRUSTEES REPORT FOR YEAR ENDED 31st DECEMBER 2012

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 3.

MAIN ADVISORS

Bankers – HSBC Bank plc, 26 Clumber Street, Nottingham NG1 3GA

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, Nora Witham, Myles Thoroton Hildyard and Neville Hoskins Funds is used for lectures. The Coddington Fund is to be used for the William Senior Record Series volume, the Centenary Fund for the Heritage Gateway and the Davis Bequest to digitise the Nottinghamshire Bibliography.

REPORT OF COUNCIL FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st DECEMBER 2012

INTRODUCTION AND CHAIR'S REPORT

You will see from the pages which follow that the Society was busy through 2012, in the manner to which we have become accustomed over the years. In addition to the

excellent lecture and excursion programme, and regular publications including the website and Heritage Gateway, you will read below about archaeological and planning matters, about buildings, and about much, much more. My only minor regret is that the frustration I voiced last year on behalf of the officers about the lack of feed-back from members still seems to be an issue – please let us know about excursions you would like to see run, about matters we can cover in the newsletter, and about planning and building issues in your part of the county!

As is usual on these occasions, I should like to thank the officers and council members for the time and effort they put into ensuring the smooth running of the Society. This year Ann Hope stood down after more than thirty years on the Council, and we shall be losing Dr Dorothy Johnston in 2013 as she retired from the University of Nottingham at the end of 2012 and is moving to live in Oxford. We have welcomed on to the Council Andy Nicholson, our webmaster, Ceril Little, and Dr David Knight who has transferred from the Publications Committee to the Council. David is Head of Research at Trent and Peak Archaeology, which has moved from the university to new premises in Chilwell, and is now part of the York Archaeological Trust. Dr Judith Mills has become the Honorary Membership Secretary, and has, to the delight of the chair, also taken control of minuting Standing Committee meetings!

Even as we reflect on the year just past, we are already looking forward. In 2013 we shall be hosting a Special Lecture in Newark (18 July) by the historian and television broadcaster Michael Wood. 2014 will be a year of commemoration of the centenary of the First World War, and we are already planning a joint conference with the Nottinghamshire Local History Association. For 2015 we already have a lecture planned for the 800th anniversary of Magna Carta.

John Beckett, Chair of Council

PROCEEDINGS OF COUNCIL

Our three meetings in 2012 have again been held in Lenton Grove, courtesy of the University of Nottingham. Council's responsibility is to oversee the Society's business, finance and development. Officers and representatives of the Society on various organisations report to Council at each meeting. Members and of Council are elected for a period of three years at the AGM, which also elects officers. There is also a Standing Committee, which meets more regularly and is responsible for day to day work, detailed consideration of developments and the planning of the programme: its activities are also reported to Council each meeting.

Barbara Cast, Honorary Secretary

HONORARY TREASURER'S REVIEW OF THE YEAR TO 31ST DECEMBER 2012

The Society's financial affairs are again sound, with subscription income having risen slightly owing to the steady increase in membership.

The accounts this year show an excess of expenditure over income of £1,667. However,

£3,000 from the Davis Bequest was used to fund the on-going digitisation of the Nottinghamshire Bibliography. There is a further £2,000 still available from this bequest, which will probably be used in 2013.

Interest on our investment account with National Savings and Investments increased in 2012 to £407, up from £217 in 2011 and 2010. The interest rate is now 0.75%.

Book sales through the Nottinghamshire Archives were steady at £167, and the bookstall at the Saturday lecture meetings made a net surplus of £102.

This year, we received no publication grants towards the cost of publishing papers in *Transactions*. However, the Society received a small legacy of £500 from the will of the late Vernon Radcliffe during 2012. This sum is to be used to fund any future papers on the history of Newark which may be published in *Transactions*.

The programme of excursions, together with the Spring Meeting/AGM and Annual Luncheon, made a small surplus this year of £387. Deposits of £404 were paid in 2011 for the 2012 excursion programme, so overall a loss of £22 was incurred. This is negligible and indicates that the costings for the overall programme were accurate. The excursions to the National Archives were discontinued in 2012.

The Society's greatest increase in expenditure in 2012 was postage. This cost £3,105, an increase from £2,150 in 2011.

The General Fund of the Society totals £21,602. The total assets of the Society are £74,316 in the bank and NS&I accounts, plus approximately £1,900 in the stock of books and ties.

John Wilson, Honorary Treasurer

MEMBERSHIP

As in 2011, the Society's membership remains buoyant, gaining twenty-three Individual members, two Associate members and one Student member. Two new Institutions also became members. This is a significant increase over the year, which recognises the success of the Society.

Judith Mills, Honorary Membership Secretary

Comparative membership numbers	2012
Individual members	234
Individual members with record series	79
Associate members	54
Life members	7
Student members	7
Honorary members	2
Record series only	4

Total individual members	392 (381 in 2011)
Institutional members	10
Institutional members - with record series	65
Institutional members - record series only	5
Total institutional members	80 (80 in 2011)
Total record series	158
Final total	472 (461 in 2011)

PUBLICATIONS

Transactions

Volume 115 was published in time for the Annual General Meeting in April 2012. The issue was the first edited by Professor Martyn Bennett, who gratefully acknowledged the advice and support of the previous editor, Dr Richard Gaunt, and Professor John Beckett. The journal was once again printed by 4word of Bristol which continues to provide both excellent support to the editors and an excellent service to the society.

The journal opened with the great news that the 2010 Alan Ball Local History Award had been won by the County Council's Libraries, Archives and Information publication, Stuart Jennings's *'These Uncertain tymes' Newark and the Civilian Experience of the civil Wars 1640-1660*. The Rev Dr Jennings has contributed to past editions of *Transactions*, as well as being a graduate of both the city's universities and it was good to hear of the deserved success of his book.

The archaeology editor's section on activities in the county contained reports on eleven sites around the Nottinghamshire but lamented the fact that these all came from Nottinghamshire County Council and Trent and Peak Archaeology and he urged readers to press other archaeologists working in the county to send reports in. There were two substantial essays on county archaeology; Peter Allen's essay on the 'Settlement patterns of the parish of Bingham, Nottinghamshire from the Mesolithic to Modern Times' and Andy Gaunt and James Wright's 'Bothamsall Castle, Nottinghamshire, an Archaeological and historical Landscape Analysis'. These were followed by seven history essays covering diverse subjects including Trent Bridge School and the head gardener at Clumber. The bulk of the essays comprised four papers on the exercise of patronage in the county during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries written by Richard Gaunt, Stanley Chapman, Michael Austin and Michael J Kirton. Richard Gaunt had commissioned and collated the collection and introduced them with a brief commentary stressing that in this period patronage was 'raised to new heights'.

The annual history lecture article this year was contributed by David Nunn, a former teacher who has worked on schools and the call to patriotism. Philip Jones' essay on

Samuel Barker brought to life the work of Clumber's prize winning gardener of the early twentieth century. The volume closed with a further contribution to the important explorations of the history and architecture of Newstead Abbey by the society's president Dr Rosalys Coope.

Martyn Bennett, Honorary History Editor and
Keith Challis, Honorary Archaeology Editor

Record Series

The latest publication, Volume 46, was prepared for the press in 2012 and will be published early in 2013. This is an edition by Howard Fisher of the individual Parish Returns for Nottinghamshire submitted at the Ecclesiastical Visitation by Archbishop Drummond of York in 1764. The Returns constitute the answers by the clergy to a set of queries about the state of church affairs in their parishes, including residency and parsonage houses, curates and their remuneration, church attendances and the extent and effect of nonconformity. The Returns also name current churchwardens and provide information on secular issues such as charities, the extent of popular education and estimates of the population size of each parish. The volume is illustrated with fourteen views of Nottinghamshire churches executed between 1773 and 1792 by the Swiss-born artist Samuel Hieronymus Grimm.

During 2013 it is intended to publish the long-awaited compact disk edition of the estate maps of William Senior, 1600-1640, which will contain full colour reproductions of some seventy maps of the Earl of Newcastle's estates mainly in Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire, Staffordshire and Northumberland, and will be accompanied by a detailed introductory book.

Further progress has been made on the history and gazetteer of Lost Churches and Chapels within the county, and on the revised edition of the diary of Abigail Gawthorn of Nottingham, 1751-1810. An additional future volume is now also in preparation – the architectural notes on Nottinghamshire churches compiled between 1825 and 1874 by Sir Stephen Glynne.

Adrian Henstock, Honorary Record Series Editor

Newsletter

There have been four issues of the Newsletter during the year and I am most grateful to those who have contributed articles or other items of interest which have all helped to fill an increased number of pages and made my task a little easier.

The regular features, where those members who host our lectures contribute a summary of the talk as part of the hosting duty, Alan Langton supplies reports of the outings, with David Hoskins providing photographs for those occasions where I cannot be present, are greatly appreciated by me.

I look forward to the continued receipt of items from our members, and others, about all parts of our county for future issues. It would be much appreciated if we had more news and other items relating to the north of the county. There are very active groups in those areas and it would be good to be able to support them with news and other items, but I need to be informed about them. I do what I can to find relevant information but it would be much easier to receive it direct.

I am particularly grateful to my wife Jackie and David Bagley for the proof reading. David in particular does sterling work in collecting the issues from Adlard Printers in Ruddington and then putting them into envelopes and posting them. Adlards undertake the work with cheerfulness and, on the rare occasion where there has been a hiccup, it has been sorted out quickly and efficiently.

The kind words of members regarding the Newsletter are most encouraging and I thank those of you who have spoken them.

Howard Fisher, Honorary Newsletter Editor

PLANNING AND CONSERVATION IN THE CITY OF NOTTINGHAM

There is rather a mixed bag of projects on which to report in 2012. Overall, as was noted last year, the majority of planning applications in Nottingham involved extensions and additions to domestic properties.

The *e-on* office block, on the site of the former City Treasury building on Burton Street, was finished and occupied. The *Odeon* cinema has been demolished behind its façade; work on the replacement fourteen storey student accommodation is due to start soon. The Victoria Leisure Centre Transformation Project (Levitate Architects) and its associated landscaping were completed. The City Council – not without protests – proposes to demolish the adjoining historic Turkish baths to allow the construction of a new road to link Beck Street with Bath Street.

The imposing *South Reef* development (Levitate Architects again) on Canal Street, where work was halted by the ‘Credit Crunch’, has been sold; the new owners promise completion. Progress has continued on the bold new student facilities for Nottingham Trent University on Shakespeare Street/Waverley Street.

Two modest refurbishments that provide new uses for old, nigh derelict buildings were: the conversion of the neat 20 Park Row, former solicitors’ offices close to the Nottingham Playhouse, into ‘Browns Bar and Brasserie’ and the forgotten former Corporation Electric Light Generating Station at the entrance to St. Ann’s Well Road which has been transformed into the Nottingham Climbing Depot, its height allowing the construction of climbing walls.

After conversion, Lawrence House, ex City Council offices on Clarendon Street, has opened as student accommodation, with more planned for the Art Deco Talbot House, with additions, on Talbot Street, and Watson Fothergill’s warehouses for Cuckson,

Hazeldine and Manderfield (1897) on the corner of Stoney Street and Barker Gate in the Lace Market.

One interesting decision has just been announced. After judging a closed competition Gustafson Porter's design has been chosen to transform Trinity Square. This practice successfully redesigned the Market Square (2004-7). A start is expected later in 2013, at a cost of up to £500,000.

Construction work on the tram routes to Clifton and to Beeston and Chilwell continues; a new bridge from the line one terminus over the Midland Station is taking shape. Considerable disquiet is still being expressed about the loss of mature trees along the routes; a tree replacement programme is a condition of planning approval.

At long last, weather permitting, a start was being made on the widening of the A453. When completed this will give Nottingham much better access to the M1 and may well stimulate inward investment.

In July 2012 the 'Nottingham Growth Plan' was published, with backing from both of Nottingham's universities, it is almost a certainty that words will become actions. There are a number of proposals that will be future planning applications. Two areas for development will be the Southern Gateway, land between the Broadmarsh shopping centre and the Meadows, and the Waterside Regeneration Area, which extends from Trent Bridge to Colwick on the northern bank of the River Trent. BioCity, Pennyfoot Street, is likely to expand, and MediPark will be established near the QMC and the University of Nottingham. Mention is made of a clean energy Business Park on former allotment land in Bulwell and the Clean Tech Centre close to the University of Nottingham's Innovations Park.

Finally two buildings mentioned last year's report as 'still awaiting a secure future', 41 Pilcher Gate and County House/Judges' Lodgings on High Pavement remain in that uncertain state.

Ken Brand, City Planning Representative

RESPONSE GROUP

The Thoroton Response Group continues to make 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 usually noted in the Newsletter. In 2012 these have included comment on the Bassetlaw District Council's Blyth Conservation Area Appraisal: Bassetlaw is one of the few district councils which is still actively working on conservation and heritage: activity by the others seems to be sadly curtailed by the financial pressure on local authorities. All the MPs for the city and county were written to urging stronger action to halt the lead thefts that had been rife earlier in the year. We also made vain attempts in support of campaigners hoping to save Trent Lock Basin but the City Council and the powers that be which were written to were not to be moved. There was also a letter sent on the consultation on changes to VAT and listed

buildings and support was offered to those seeking to save Bingham Manor House.

Members of the Society are invited, nay urged, to draw the group's attention to matters concerning them. There are instances where our input has made a real difference to the outcome for our county's heritage.

Barbara Cast, Coordinator, Response Group

ARCHAEOLOGY

2012 has been a busy and productive year for archaeology in Nottinghamshire. Numerous archaeological investigations have been carried out across the County by a variety of archaeological contractors, the Nottinghamshire County Council Community Archaeology Team and community groups, and in this report brief details are provided of the most interesting of these.

A46 Road Improvements - Post-excavation work on investigations for the Highways Agency by Cotswold Wessex Archaeology is nearing completion, and is due for publication this year. A talk at the October 13th meeting of the Society by Neil Macnab of URS (consultants on this scheme) provided an excellent overview of this work, which (moving from south to north) identified the following key sites:

Owthorpe: Iron Age enclosed settlement, including three roundhouses and scattered pits and post-holes.

Stragglethorpe: Late Neolithic/Early Bronze Age ring-ditch, interpreted as a funerary barrow. A pit in the approximate centre of this monument may represent the location of a grave robbed in antiquity. Seven crouched inhumations were recovered during digging of the ditch fill, including one associated with a virtually intact Late Neolithic/Early Bronze Age pottery Beaker.

High Thorpe: Iron Age settlement, comprising multiple ditched enclosures, at least one roundhouse and scattered pits and post-holes.

Near *Moothouse Pit*, overlooking Saxondale: Anglo-Saxon cremation cemetery. This was located on the crest of a hill overlooking the Roman small town of *Margidunum*, from which Stukeley had sketched a view of the Fosse Way running northwards. This comprised a cluster of pits containing cremation urns, inside which were found six adult and eleven child cremations. The pits were located principally to the west of the road, next to and apparently respecting two small Roman rectilinear ditched enclosures interpreted as possibly shrines or mausolea.

Saxondale roundabout: complex multiperiod landscape revealed over extensive area investigated prior to roundabout construction. This provided evidence of successive Iron Age and Roman ditched field systems integrated with rectilinear Iron Age and Roman enclosures that may have provided foci for occupation or other specialised functions (e.g. livestock corralling), pits, water-holes, etc. A group of Iron Age roundhouses was recorded in the north-east segment of the stripped area. Activity continued into the post-Roman period, with evidence for Anglo-Saxon cremation burials.

Immediately north of Saxondale and parallel with the A46, the only length of Roman Fosse Way that was recorded during these investigations was exposed. In addition to a

metalled surface with evidence of repairs, one side-ditch was revealed.

Environs of Margidunum: silts and clays indicative of a large ancient lake that had subsequently dried out were exposed, with lithic artefact scatters around the edge suggesting Mesolithic and Neolithic lakeside activity. This lake had silted by the Iron Age, as witnessed by the cutting of lake deposits by Iron Age and later features. The Iron Age saw the first development of a bounded landscape, with major linear boundaries in the form of pit alignments and the development of Iron Age and Roman field rectilinear field systems. Iron Age roundhouses were integrated with the earlier fields, while evidence for Roman settlement was focused principally along the Fosse Way. Excavations south of *Margidunum* revealed extensive Roman roadside activity in the form of stone buildings, wells and other structural remains, with rich collections of pottery, metalwork and other finds. One of the stone buildings had acted as a focus for a small inhumation cemetery, but none of the major cemeteries that might be expected to have been associated with the Roman town were located. Activity continued into the post-Roman period, with evidence for at least one sunken-floored Anglo-Saxon building.

Farndon Fields: excavations on the site of a Late Upper Palaeolithic open-air site recorded during earlier fieldwalking uncovered two *in site* lithic scatters and evidence of two knapping events attributable to the period from c.11,000 cal BC. Traces were also recorded of a possible hearth. A pattern of repeat visits by itinerant Upper Palaeolithic hunter-gatherers is implied.

A453 Road Improvements - Excavations by Wessex Archaeology on behalf of the Highways Agency in advance of dualling of the A453 exposed a major Late Iron Age and Roman settlement on an elevated site overlooking the southern outskirts of Clifton. The site included a rectilinear ditched enclosure containing at least one roundhouse, with associated pits and traces of an extensive field system. Features have yielded rich collections of pottery and other artefacts and were sampled for associated environmental remains.

East Leake

Excavations by Trent & Peak Archaeology on behalf of Cemex Ltd revealed an Early Bronze Age ring-ditch, probably defining originally the boundary of a funerary barrow but preserving no traces of associated burials. This was recorded alongside an extensive Anglo-Saxon inhumation cemetery, with pits containing pottery vessels and occasionally other grave goods, including glass beads and artefacts of iron.

Nottingham Tram Extension

Excavations by Trent & Peak Archaeology on behalf of NET2 and Vinci Construction UK prior to extension of the Nottingham Tram network focused principally upon the archaeological remains surviving at the Clifton Park and Ride development and in the outer precinct of Lenton Priory. A watching brief was conducted along other parts of the route. Excavations at **Clifton** revealed extensive archaeological remains dating principally from the prehistoric period. These included scatters of Mesolithic and Neolithic stone artefacts, a Late Neolithic/Early Bronze Age ring-ditch, interpreted as probably the boundary of a funerary barrow, a rectilinear system of pit alignments and linear ditched boundaries interpreted as evidence for division of the landscape in the Iron Age, scatters of pits and other features indicative of Iron Age and possibly Late Bronze Age occupation and, most significantly, a large, roughly oval single-ditched

enclosure interrupted by multiple entrances. A Neolithic date was suggested initially on the grounds principally of its typological parallels with Neolithic causewayed enclosures, but discoveries of small quantities of later Iron Age pottery in the fully excavated enclosure ditch suggest a date in the latter half of the first millennium BC. The function of this enclosure remains unclear, but the paucity of associated finds, the lack of compelling evidence for internal structures associated with domestic activity, multiple entrances and hillslope location overlooking a former wetland zone would be compatible with its use principally for the corralling of livestock. Excavations in the outer precinct of the **Cluniac Priory at Lenton** revealed a densely occupied site that was once occupied by a medieval market. The latest features comprise 14th to 16th century rubbish pits, a stone-built cess pit and possible timber-framed stalls. During this period, the outer precinct may have been deliberately levelled several times to provide a suitably flat market site. Prior to this activity, 14th and 13th century ditches following the line of Abbey Street were identified, together with tenement-type plot boundaries and scattered post-holes. A number of coins dating to the reign of Edward III suggest intensive economic activity at this time. The earliest phase of activity is represented by a sequence of ditches, possibly forming part of a routeway following a different course to that of Abbey Street. The pottery from these ditches suggests infilling in the mid-12th century at the latest, and on present evidence these features could belong to the very earliest phase of the Cluniac priory (built initially in 1106-7). Important finds from these early ditches include fragments of medieval leather shoes.

The Origins of Nottingham - Work commenced on an assessment of the archives compiled during excavations by the Nottingham City Museums Field Archaeology Section from 1969 to 1980 in the Pre-Conquest Borough (specifically at Drury Hill, Woolpack Lane, Goose Gate, Fisher Gate, Boots Garage and Halifax Place). This English Heritage funded project is being conducted by Trent & Peak Archaeology in collaboration with Nottingham City Council Museums and is aimed at securing, consolidating and enhancing the archives compiled during excavations on the sites prior to further synthesis. This work is running in parallel with another collaborative project, conducted with funding from Nottingham City Council, which is aimed at preparing a Historic Environment Record for the City of Nottingham. This involves staff from Trent & Peak Archaeology and Nottingham City Council Museums and will complement the archive project described above.

Southwell - Excavations by Pre-Construct Archaeology at **Platts Orchard** revealed Anglo-Saxon inhumation burials, including one that on the evidence of an associated iron strap hinge may have been buried in a wooden chest. At the **Minster School site**, continuing PCA excavations revealed further Anglo-Saxon inhumations and Roman structural remains, including preserved mortar floors that have been preserved *in situ*. No further work has been conducted on the high status Roman stone building exposed during earlier excavations on the site. Also at **Southwell**, an extensive programme of test-pitting was commenced by Southwell Archaeology members, in collaboration with staff from the University of Nottingham Archaeology Department and Matthew Beresford of MB Archaeology. This project, funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund, has yielded significant quantities of Roman, medieval and later finds, particularly pottery, which will contribute significantly to our understanding of the early development of the town.

Mons Pool, Besthorpe - The third and final season of excavations by Salford University on behalf of Lafarge Aggregates Ltd in advance of gravel extraction included a two-week field school. Excavations revealed further structural remains of this extensive Late Iron Age and Romano-British nucleated settlement and field system, together with important traces of Neolithic activity in the form principally of pit scatters, polished stone axe fragments and other lithic artefacts.

Bingham - Test-pitting within the historic core of Bingham by the Bingham Heritage Trails Association, in liaison with Trent & Peak Archaeology and with funding provided by the Heritage Lottery Fund, revealed a wealth of data for the early development of Bingham. This includes extensive Roman, early to late medieval and later pottery and, in some pits, structural remains of post-medieval and later structures. This has been conducted alongside a historic building survey, including dendrochronological dating of selected structures.

Willoughby Deserted Medieval Village - Nottinghamshire County Council Community Archaeologists and members of the Norwell Parish Heritage Group continued their geophysical survey of the extensive complex of village and field earthworks that mark the site of the deserted medieval village at Willoughby near Norwell. This revealed a complex pattern of building foundations along the hollow way that defines the southern boundary of the settlement, suggesting a major focus of settlement in this area. A pronounced magnetic anomaly in an earthwork enclosure on the southern edge of the site may indicate the site of a pottery kiln on the outskirts of the village. This work, combined with an earlier topographic survey, documentary research and the collection of pottery, stone roof tiles and other material from inside a well-preserved moated enclosure, has extended significantly our understanding of this site. Details are contained in a booklet published this year by the NPHG with funding provided by the Heritage Lottery Fund.

Laneham - Test-pitting by Nottinghamshire County Council Community Archaeologists revealed medieval yard surfaces inside currently empty plots in the medieval village, plus medieval and later pottery and other finds that will assist study of the village's development.

King Johns Palace, Clipstone - Following earlier Time Team excavations, Nottinghamshire County Council Community Archaeologists excavated two trenches across a boundary ditch around the palace. This revealed a deep medieval boundary feature. This was accompanied by a review of the finds from previous work, which has demonstrated both Roman and Anglo-Saxon pottery. Analysis continues of the finds retrieved during this work.

Hawton - Evaluations were conducted by University of Leicester Archaeological Services of a potential windfarm site. Earlier geophysical survey had located an enclosure complex that on morphological grounds was thought probably to signify late prehistoric or Roman activity. Evaluation trenches revealed no structural remains in areas to be affected by development.

Topographic surveys have been conducted by Nottinghamshire County Council Community Archaeologists on several medieval and later earthwork sites in the County, including the Civil War monument of **Sandhills Sconce in Newark**, ridge and furrow in **Archers Field, Broxtowe** and flood meadows at **Girton**.

Geophysical surveys have been carried out for Nottinghamshire County Council by

Cranfield University on the site of the **Battle of Stoke Field** and at **Sturton le Steeple** along the proposed line of the Roman road from Littleborough to Doncaster. The former relocated a burial pit adjacent to the A46 that was recorded initially by Mike Bishop, but the Roman road eluded detection.

David Knight, Archaeology Rapporteur

THE THOROTON SOCIETY WEBSITE

Website statistics for 2012 show that each month an average of 1,350 unique visitors viewed a total of 6,800 pages. These figures show an increase in use when compared with 2011. The most popular times for viewing the website over the year were early afternoon and 11pm to midnight.

The electronic version of Michael Brook's 'A Nottinghamshire Bibliography' continues to be the most popular document on the website and is downloaded around 430 times a month. The most viewed sections are 'Events' and 'Publications'.

Our visitors come from all corners of the world with a large number hailing from the United States, Australasia, Canada, Germany and the European Union. Most people find the website by using an Internet search engine with Google being, by far, the most frequently used with over 90% of the searches. The search terms people used are of interest. Most are fairly predictable (e.g. "Thoroton Society", "Transactions of the Thoroton Society", "Drury Hill Nottingham") but the following oddities got my attention: "*is there a microfisch of the nottingham observer 1958?*", "*what happened to the bendigo statue off the pub*" and, most intriguing of all, "*tea dances at anlaby tea gardens hull run by the fords in the 1920s.*" I do hope they all found what they were looking for!

Andy Nicholson, Thoroton Society Webmaster

THE NOTTINGHAMSHIRE HERITAGE GATEWAY

The Gateway has been on-line for eleven years and there are over 45 entries on the site. 2012 has seen the NHG put up more information on Nottinghamshire, this time on Puritanism and Non Conformity, Evacuation during World War II, Almshouses and Lord Byron. This year will see two more subjects on Sporting Heritage and Breweries in Nottinghamshire. Of course there are plans for other entries but these are still in their infant stages. The team are pleased that the Gateway is used extensively by members of the public and is a rich source of information on the history of Nottinghamshire. We often get emails asking for more information on a particular subject, only recently material which was used in the Tollerton entry and the leather entry were requested to be used in the Southwell Diocese Church History and in a book being produced on the Freemen of Nottingham.

I say this every year and have little response from Thoroton members but we would love to hear from anyone who has a particular knowledge on a subject and would be prepared to write something for us – with help if necessary. This year I am appealing

particularly for anyone who can help putting together something on the lace industry in Nottinghamshire. This is one of the last major industries of Nottingham that has not been addressed and I would love to remedy this.

Dr Denise Amos, Heritage Gateway

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE BUILDING PRESERVATION TRUST

The recently completed restoration of Thoroton Dovecote has occasioned much discussion regarding the problem of finding insurance to cover the Dovecote public open days on fifteen days a year.

Other matters discussed by the Trust include the ongoing attempts by the developers who have acquired the Robin Hood Hotel buildings in Newark to not conserve the buildings fully, but only to retain the facade. Also there are hopes that a use can be found for Bingham Manor House, possibly as an Arts and Community Centre for the town. It has also been brought to the Trust's attention that Cultural Consultants, Barker Langham, have plans for the possible restoration of Blidworth Windmill as a Community Facility. We await the outcome of these projects and campaigns, offering advice and support as appropriate.

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

Ceril Little, NBPT Representative

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE LOCAL HISTORY ASSOCIATION

The Association published two issues of *The Nottinghamshire Historian* during the year. Two day schools were held at Ravenshead, in March and October. The topics for the day schools were 'New windows on our past : recent archaeological discoveries in Nottinghamshire' (March) and 'The power.... and the glory : notable churchmen in Nottinghamshire' (October).

In partnership with Nottinghamshire Archives, the NLHA ran a Youth Heritage Conference 'Make History Happen!' at the Lakeside Arts Centre on 18 July. The aim of the conference was to bring together young people aged between 16 and 21 years old who were interested in heritage and archaeology.

Philip Jones, NLHA Representative

SOCIETY EVENTS IN 2012

Excursions

The four excursions in 2012 have all been well supported by members of the Society. They have provided a range of interesting venues and some very worthwhile experiences of different historical places. The first outing in May was to Lichfield where we enjoyed not only a very well conducted tour of the cathedral but also had the chance

to see inside the Samuel Johnson House and the well presented Heritage Centre of the town. An enjoyable tea was provided in the Chapters Restaurant. The archaeology excursion in June, enthusiastically led by Dr David Knight, took us to an Iron Age fort in Oxton, a deserted village site at Norwell, the Queen's Sconce at Newark and the site of a mediaeval village at Bingham, where Adrian Henstock has done much work. Members on the August outing visited Stapleford, Attenborough and Melbourne Hall, a seventeenth century house set in delightful gardens and parkland. The churches at all three places had special interesting features, perhaps the most outstanding being the Norman church at Melbourne. The last outing of the year, to Deene Park, was ably organised by Margaret Trueman and Penny Messenger. The visit to the ancient Stoke Dry church en route proved most worthwhile and we were made most welcome for our tour of Deene Park, originally a mediaeval manor house, saved and restored by Edmund Brudenell since 1962.

Alan Langton, Honorary Excursion Secretary

Lectures and Presentations 2012

The year started again with the *Nora Witham Lecture* and, after a delayed arrival due to railway signalling problems, Gordon Taylor told us about the life of William Booth, founder of the Christian Mission, now the Salvation Army. William was born in Nottingham and, after a limited education and apprenticeship as a pawnbroker, he moved to London where he founded the Mission which now has a world-wide following, providing shelter and support to many less fortunate people. In February, our friend and Council member, Pete Smith, delivered the *Myles Thoroton Hildyard Lecture*, reprising his 2004 presentation by giving us an insight into more of the town houses that are such a feature of the Nottingham landscape. Pete made particular reference to the restoration of No 17 Castle Gate, the location of our summer social evening, as well as featuring many other hidden gems around the city.

We closed the winter season with the *Maurice Barley Lecture* when Dr David Taylor updated us on further investigations that had been carried out to the west front of Lincoln Cathedral. David had worked with Maurice in his early career but this presentation covered more recent work that explored the voids found in the structure and established a more detailed understanding of the sequence of building. The *Spring Meeting*, at the end of the wettest April in recent times, was held at Oxton on a rare dry day! Our treat was a viewing of the new digital version of the film of Oxton life and history, introduced by Margaret Cooper and featuring our Honorary Secretary! This was then followed by a tour of the village church led by Colin Ashmore.

Our Summer Social Evening was held at 17 Castle Gate where Philip Trease and his team from Weavers Wine Merchants introduced us to six very nice wines - and the interior of a building not normally seen by the public. With the assistance of Pete Smith we were privileged to be allowed to tour the building, from the top bedrooms to the deepest cellar, including the unrestored rooms and the clues to the status of their users!

The new winter season opened with Elaine Harwood giving the *Keith Train Lecture* for

the Civic Society on the theme of Post-War Architecture. The Thoroton Society *Archaeology Lecture* was given by Neil Macnab covering the work that had been carried out prior to construction of the new section of the A46 trunk road. A number of extremely interesting finds had been made which helped to further understand the use and occupation of areas along the route by a number of different groups of settlers. Remarkably, there was even a site used for flint knapping with enough evidence to support a very realistic sketch of its transitory prehistoric use.

Our Annual Luncheon was held at Ye Olde Bell at Barnby Moor where we enjoyed an excellent meal which some members said was the best for some time. We were then entertained by Rebecca Speight of the National Trust, who marked the centenary of the death of one of its founders, Octavia Hill, with an insight into the life and works of this remarkable woman.

Later in November, Sarah Law, a PhD student at Nottingham University, gave us the *Nottinghamshire History Lecture* covering the landscape of Rufford Abbey. She showed us a number of historic drawings that showed how the landscape had been designed and changed to suit the whims of its various owners. The year closed with the *Neville Hoskins Lecture* when Professor Martyn Bennett revisited the story of King Charles raising his standard in Nottingham and how further studies had changed his view of events since he last spoke about them, twenty years ago.

David Hoskins, Honorary Lecture Secretary