



The 1992 Annual General Meeting of the Society was no mere formality. It was the last to be chaired by Dr. Rosalys Coope who retired after nine years as Chairman of Council, tributes were paid to her contribution to the Society's activities, and to the way in which she carried out her duties, with authority but with unfailing good humour. She was presented with a cheque by Mr. Hildyard, on behalf of the members, as a token of their esteem.

Professor John Beckett was elected Chairman, and Neville Hoskins Vice Chairman, a new appointment proposed by Council, which also recommended that the administrative work of the Society should be carried out by a Secretariat of three. Taking over as Honorary Secretary is the Rev. E. P. Rowley, until recently Vicar of Elkesley, whose address is - 116 Lincoln Road, Tuxford, Newark, Nottinghamshire NG22 OHS. Mrs. Ann Hoskins becomes Circulation Secretary and Mrs. Barbara Cast will be Minutes Secretary.

## THE NEW CHAIRMAN.

PROFESSOR JOHN BECKETT, who took over the chairmanship of Council following the Annual General Meeting, has long-established links with the county. Born in London, he moved to Nottingham in 1957 and was educated at Peveril Secondary (Bilateral) School, and Bilborough Grammar School. He graduated in History at Lancaster University in 1971, and completed his Ph.D. at the same University four years later. Between 1974 and 1976 he was Lord Adams Research Fellow in the University of Newcastle upon Tyne, and he then spent two years (1976-8) teaching North American undergraduates studying in England, at Wroxton College, near Banbury. In 1979 he was briefly Lecturer in History at the University of Hull, and from the summer of that year, lecturer in History at the University of Nottingham. He has been in Nottingham ever since, and was promoted to Reader in English Regional History in 1987, and to Professor in 1990.

John Beckett has written half a dozen books and contributed numerous articles to scholarly journals, and chapters to edited books. His scholarly reputation owes much to his book *The Aristocracy in England 1660-1914* published in 1986, but his local interests are best known from his books *The East Midlands from AD 1000* (1988), *A History of Laxton : England's Last Open Field Village* (1989), and *The Book of Nottingham* (1990). His historical interests extend beyond Nottinghamshire to the wider East Midlands: he is a member of the Derbyshire Record Society Committee, and Chairman of the History of Lincolnshire Committee (which is actively publishing a twelve volume history of the County).

Last year he was appointed Editor-in-Chief of Nottingham's Centenary History project and heads an Advisory Board, charged with the production of a 'substantial and scholarly volume' to mark the centenary, in 1997, of Nottingham's elevation to city status.

John lives in Chilwell with his wife Christine and their four year old son Stephen. His interests, apart from History, range through music - he is a passable church organist - and cricket, but he admits to never having had much success with gardening !

And John's hopes for the next few years during which he will chair the Council ? To make the Society truly a County society, to maintain the scholarly standards of Transactions, to improve communications with members - hence this newsletter ! - and to try to attract some younger members to the Society.

## A LETTER FROM DR. ROSALYS COOPE.

I would like to thank all the members who so very kindly subscribed to the gift of a cheque presented to me at the Annual General Meeting to mark my retirement as Chairman of the Thoroton Society. It was a gesture which I very much appreciated. It has been a great honour as well as a great pleasure to have served as Chairman of our Society, so I truly do not feel that I have deserved further reward. However, I shall happily make use of your gift by using it to buy, not books as you might think, but plants. I am busy re-organising the garden at the moment and this is entailing the purchase of a good many shrubs and perennials. In this way your present will give visible and very lasting pleasure not only to me but also to the family and visitors to our garden. Thank you all again, very much indeed.

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## A NEW MEMBER OF COUNCIL.

Penelope Messenger was born in Lancashire, but brought up in Nottingham and educated at The Manning School, before gaining an Honours Mathematics degree at Liverpool University. She taught at Brunts School, Mansfield and Clifton Hall Grammar School before moving to Nottingham Girls High School where, as well as teaching mathematics, she looks after the archives, including a fascinating collection of photographs and old school magazines, some from the early part of the century. Having been introduced to the Thoroton Society she became a staunch supporter of its meetings and excursions. Her other interests include music, especially opera, geology, travel and theatre - a broad sweep which should help her to make an active contribution to Council's deliberations !

## THE KEITH TRAIN MEMORIAL LECTURE

Keith Train was a Member of Council for many years, in turn Honorary Secretary and Chairman of the Society as well as being involved with the Nottingham Civic Society. When he died in 1985 it was decided to institute these Annual Lectures in his memory. They are financed by the two Societies, each being responsible in alternate years for finding a speaker. It is the turn of the Thoroton Society to do so this year, and on Friday, 23rd October, in the Arkwright Lecture Theatre on Shakespeare Street Professor J. Mordaunt Crook, Professor of Architectural History at Bedford and Queen Mary College, University of London will speak on "Antiquity's most Resolute Friend - John Carter and the Gothick Revival". John Carter was a nervous, irascible and eccentric architect, better known for his provocative writings on architectural matters and for his invaluable record of English mediaeval antiquities.

Professor Crook is a stimulating speaker, and this promises to be a most interesting lecture.

## ANNUAL LUNCHEON

Following the 'full house' success of last year's event the venue will be the same on Saturday, 24th October - the Great Hall of the Archbishop's Palace at Southwell Minster. The guest speaker will be Mr. Richard Craven-Smith-Milnes, known to many members as the Society has twice in recent years visited his home at Winkburn Hall.

## LISTED BUILDINGS.

The Society is represented on the City Conservation Area Advisory Committee and acts for the C.B.A. in matters relative to Listed Buildings in the County.

The Department of the Environment is conducting a review of that part of the list of buildings of special architectural or historic interest lying within the City boundaries.

Members of the Thoroton Society, along with members of the Nottingham Civic Society and the Nottingham Building Preservation Trust are helping the Planning Department to check the existing list and suggesting buildings which it is felt ought to be included.

## A NEW VENUE FOR LECTURES.

Nottingham's Roman Catholic Cathedral is having an interior face-lift in the New Year, so the Cathedral Hall will be needed for services. Dr. Caplan has been able to arrange for the lectures after Christmas to be held in the Y.M.C.A. Hall on Shakespeare Street, starting with the January meeting.

## BUDDING AUTHORS ?

The Editors of the Transactions are always keen to consider papers from new contributors. If you have something which you think would be appropriate - it need not necessarily be very lengthy - why not have a preliminary word with Hazel Salisbury or Adrian Henstock ?

# LECTURES - AUTUMN 1992.

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**Saturday, 10th October, 1992.**

**THE SHIRE HALL AND ITS HISTORY.**

A lecture by Ken Brand Esq.

**Chairman: Neville Hoskins Esq.**

The Shire Hall and the Old County Gaol provide links with old Nottingham. They have long been important elements in the life of town and county. At present the Hall lies disused and derelict, it could have an illustrious future as the county's, perhaps even the nation's, Museum of Law and Order. This illustrated lecture will relate the history of the site and endeavour to convey a feeling for its atmosphere.

Ken Brand has just completed ten years as editor of the Nottingham Civic Society's Newsletter. He has written on T. C. Hine, Watson Fothergill and other Nottingham architects and is the author of brief histories of the Park Estate and Mapperley Park. He is a member of the editorial board of the forthcoming Centenary History of Nottingham.

**Saturday, 14th November, 1992.**

**THE NOTTINGHAMSHIRE HISTORY LECTURE.**

**THE KING'S GAMBIT : CHARLES I AND NOTTINGHAM IN THE SUMMER OF 1642**

A lecture by Dr. Martyn Bennett.

**Chairman: Professor J. V. Beckett.**

By the time Charles I raised the Royal Standard in Nottingham the game-plan of the Civil War was already in play. Several patterns, of finance, of command structure and of legality and lawlessness had been established before the war officially began. The activists in the area had begun their work and the momentum had been built up. This lecture examines the mechanics of the commencement of hostilities by exploring the forces which brought Charles to Nottingham and England and Wales to a state of war.

Dr. Martyn Bennett came to study History at Loughborough University in 1978. He is now a lecturer in Early Modern History at Nottingham Polytechnic and has published several articles on the Civil War, his illustrated history of the war has recently been republished. Dr. Bennett is, along with Angela Brown, also of the Polytechnic, Director of the Nottinghamshire Quarter Sessions project.

**Saturday, 5th December, 1992.**

**CHURCHES AND CHURCH BUILDING IN THE EAST MIDLANDS DURING THE EARLY MIDDLE AGES.**

A lecture by David Parsons, B.A., F.S.A. **Chairman: Hazel Salisbury, B.A.**

Anglo-Saxon and early Norman churches in the area will be discussed in the context of the ecclesiastical organisations at the time. In the decades before and after the Norman Conquest the old Anglo-Saxon system of minster churches serving large areas was breaking down as more and more chapels were founded to cater for the pastoral needs of their immediate locality. These by c.1200 became the parish churches with which we are so familiar. In the late 11th and 12th centuries there was a need for much new building. Surviving Anglo-Saxon and Norman churches in the East Midlands will be presented as the architectural expression of a system undergoing change.

David Parsons is Senior Lecturer in Architectural History and Mediaeval Studies in the Department of Adult Education and Archaeology at the University of Leicester. He specialises in pre-Conquest church architecture both in this country and on the continent. Since the mid 1970s he has been co-ordinating a programme of research at All Saints' Church, Brixworth, Northamptonshire. He is archaeological consultant to the Diocese of Leicester.

Your contributions to the Maurice Barley Lecture Fund have enabled Council to arrange for the first one to be held in the new year. Details will be included in the Winter lecture programme.

## SUBSCRIPTIONS INCREASE IN 1993.

Council has for some months been increasingly concerned with the Society's financial state. All costs have risen at an alarming rate, especially the printing of the 'Transactions', and though considerable economies have been made, the accounts continue to show an annual loss which could not be sustained. It was, therefore, proposed at the Annual General Meeting in April, that the ordinary subscription rate should be increased to £16 per annum, and associate to £4 per annum, with effect from 1st January, 1993. It is hoped that this will avoid the necessity for another increase in a short while. The new rates will be broadly in line with similar societies, and, given the quality of the prestigious Transactions still represent good value.

Subscriptions form the largest proportion of the Society's income, a sub-committee will look at the possibility of raising revenue from other sources, and extending our Institutional membership.

Did you know that Universities and Libraries all over the world are members of the Society? More than forty in America and Canada, but also in Japan, Australia and other far-flung corners of the globe. Individual members live in Sweden, Switzerland, France and the Netherlands as well as in many places in this country.

### A BOOK REVIEW.

MAY DAY IN NOTTINGHAMSHIRE, by Frank Earp, 31 pages, £1.95, published 1991, by the Heart of Albion Press, Wymeswold.

The author says that 1st May was once one of the most important days in the calendar, and that the origins of the May Day Festivities go back to pre-Christian times. He suggests that there is evidence to show that neolithic and bronze-age man marked sunrise on 1st May with alignments of monoliths and mounds.

From rather flimsy evidence for May Day in neolithic Nottinghamshire, the author skips to Roman times, when the fifth month was named after the Roman Goddess 'Maia', the goddess of growth and increase. He then jumps another 12 centuries to records of the 16th century, showing that May Day was kept in many places. Present day ideas come from Victorian illustrated accounts, there are also some 20th century photographs of May Day festivities in the County. The main part of the book consists of details, with map references, of the ten original permanent Maypoles in Nottinghamshire. Wellow, near Ollerton being the sole survivor.

The author asks anyone with additional information about Nottinghamshire Maypoles to contact him through the publishers.

P.B.

### YOUR PHOTOGRAPHS WANTED

Whilst informal records of the Society's earlier days are very scarce, an interesting record of excursions, lectures and social activities exists, especially for the 1980's, with much less for the last few years. New member of Council, Penny Messenger, has agreed to look after this aspect and asks that you let her have copies of photographs taken on outings etc. Those showing PEOPLE are particularly valuable, and if their names are attached, that is even better. So take your camera, and if you have any prints of activities over the last two or three years they would be most welcome.

Some of the existing volumes will be shown at the winter lecture meetings and you will be able to see what an interesting and valuable record they form.

When the formation of a county historical society was suggested in January, 1887, those who expressed an interest included four dukes, two earls, one countess, five lords, one bishop, three baronets, two knights bachelor, two kings of arms, twelve landed gentry, twenty four clergymen and the Mayor, Sheriff and Town Clerk of Nottingham! Of 81 names, only 22 were ordinary mortals and only two were women, Mrs. Chaworth-Musters and the Dowager Countess of Carnarvon.

Council has for some time been aware of the need for better communication with members, and this Newsletter is the result. It is intended in future issues to summarise decisions taken at Council meetings, publicise forthcoming activities and give 'profiles' of Officers and Members of Council. While a 'letters to the Editor' column is not envisaged, your views on its content, or on any aspect of the Society's activities will be welcome.

Write to Neville Hoskins at 12 Forest Road East, Nottingham NG1 4HH.