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# THOROTON

Number 6: December 1994

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## *A Message from the Chairman . . .*

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I hope those of you who were able to be present enjoyed the splendid lecture Dr Sarah Speight delivered to the Society on a wet afternoon in November. It was fascinating to find about all those castles - some of them hardly visible - in the county, even if your chairman had his knuckles wrapped for the claims he has made over Laxton's motte and bailey castle. Certainly members will now have plenty of excuses for looking over walls and hedges in the hope of discovering one or two more to add to Dr Speight's list. What made the lecture so enjoyable was that it was delivered by a younger scholar with a great deal of style and wit. Thank you, then, to Mr John Plumb, Director of Leisure Services for the county, for offering some years ago to sponsor this annual lecture given by a younger or, from now onwards, a new scholar, just coming into academic work.

The Society also had use for the first time of new amplification equipment designed to help members with hearing difficulties, and we shall soon also have the use of a laser pointer to enable speakers to highlight particular aspects of pictures that they are showing. These are investments Council has considered it right to make. Together with the equipment we are able to borrow from the University's Adult Education Department (next door to the YMCA) we hope that the result is an improvement in our presentation, and that members will find the occasional inconvenience of outside noise (fire engines etc) can be overcome. And please bear with our lecture secretary when awful things happen like bulbs blowing in overhead projectors: Jean Nicholson did not realise when she took on the job that one of the requirements was to be an electrician!

*John Beckett*

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## NOTTINGHAMSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL LECTURE

Over the past few years we have run an annual lecture sponsored by the County Council, as part of the Society's winter lecture programme. Normally the lecture is given at the November meeting.

It was originally planned to be a lecture by a young scholar with the intention that, assuming the work was of sufficient quality, it would be published in *Transactions*. Unfortunately there are not as many young scholars about today as we might hope, and consequently we have proposed to Mr John Plumb, Director of Leisure Services for the county, that we change the description from 'young' to 'new', following the practice of other societies which are finding that much of the best research is currently being done by people working part-time and often using their own resources because few grants are available to young scholars immediately after their first degree.

Mr Plumb has agreed to this change. We shall still seek wherever possible to ensure that the lecture will be given by a young scholar, but we shall no longer be limited solely to asking a 'young' person to be the lecturer.

With these changes in mind, next year's County Council lecture will be given by Mr Steph. Mastoris, who will be presenting to the Society, for the first time, the very important work on the 1609 Crown Survey of Sherwood Forest, of which the full transcript, with maps, will be published in the Record Series during 1995.

Dr Angela Brown who, due to illness, was not able to give the lecture in 1994, will now be the lecturer in 1996.

## KEITH TRAIN LECTURE

The ninth Keith Train lecture was given on 11 October 1994, in the Friends' Meeting House on Clarendon Street. The lecturer was Dr Ivan Hall, formerly of the Department of Adult Education at the University of Hull, and now a consultant to English Heritage. His subject was 'The Mystery of the Adam Fireplace: mass production of decorative ornament in architecture in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.'

The 'mystery' of the Adam fireplace turned out to be less of a mystery, and more of a proliferation. The genuine items, Dr Hall argued, have generally been disfigured by white paint or similar substances replacing the array of colours intended by Adam, but even more intriguing is the fact that the great majority are fakes. Not genuine fakes, in the sense of being deliberately passed off as the real thing; rather, mass produced bits and pieces which could be carefully added to an existing fireplace to give an illusion of reality. The upcoming middle class villa or elegant town house owner could easily do the faking themselves, selecting the required items from the eighteenth century equivalent of mail-order catalogues, and then attaching them to the appropriate 'base' fireplace. If money permitted, the whole could then be smothered in gilt, and lo and behold a 'genuine' Adam fireplace had been run up for next to nothing in a style which, when well executed, could easily be mistaken for the real

thing. This was, as Dr Hall gleefully pointed out to a slightly stunned Civic Society audience, no more nor less than the contemporary equivalent of middle class d.i.y.

The middle classes in late eighteenth century England were of course enjoying the spin off benefits of what is recognized as a consumer revolution, partly prompted by Wedgwood, although his attempts at mass producing fire places flopped. Yet so good were the fakes that even those with the money to do better joined in the fun, among them the Duke of Portland at Welbeck, and the Clifton family at Clifton Hall. The moral of this story was not to be too critical of off-the-peg fireplaces, ceiling roses, and cornices - what we buy from B&Q, Do-it-All or wherever today, the Georgians obtained through catalogues.

Sadly, due to a mix up over arrangements, members of the Thoroton Society were not given as much notice of this lecture as should have been the case. It was not, for example, on the programme card. We hope to ensure that this does not happen again, and in the meantime Dr Hall has promised to write up some of his material for possible inclusion in our *Transactions*, so members may not entirely miss out on what was a splendid lecture enjoyed by all who were able to attend.

*John Beckett*

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## HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

This winter the Nottingham branch of the Historical Association is hosting a number of lectures relevant to the history of the county, of which members might like notice. Meetings are held in the Adult Education Centre on Shakespeare Street in Nottingham, beginning at 7.30 p.m. and ending by about 9 p.m. The following may be of interest to members:

27 January. Wendy Bowen: 'Between Evangelical and Tractarian - George Wilkins, Vicar of St Mary's Nottingham (1817-43): a rehabilitation'.

10 February. Martyn Bennett, 'A Woman in Office: Jane Kitchen, Constable of Upton (near Southwell) in the Civil War, 1644'.

3 March. Ian Arthurson, 'How many men had Martin Swart? The Battle of East Stoke (1487) reconsidered'.

Meetings are free and open to the public. Further information can be obtained from the local secretary of the HA, Dr Ian Arthurson, on 0602-228021.

A recent, and welcome addition to Council in her capacity as joint honorary editor of *Transactions* was Dr Carol Allen, her first 'public appearance' was when she took the chair at Gareth Watkins lecture in October.

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## PROFILE OF CAROL ALLEN



Carol Allen was born in Derby where she went to school, and worked in industry, in accounting and statistics until 15 years ago. She met her husband Roger, then a student apprentice and now a sales manager in engineering, at Raleigh Industries in Nottingham where they both worked in the Quality Control Statistics Department. Since then they have lived in Nottingham, Birmingham, Cardiff, Derby and Warwickshire. They now have a Victorian house close to the town and river in Burton upon Trent.

In 1979 Carol decided to change her career, and has never looked back! She read archaeology and ancient history at Nottingham University, going on to complete research for her PhD on Bronze Age pottery of the East Midlands, in 1988. In 1991 she was elected a Member of the Institute of Field Archaeologists, and last year completed an MA in medieval archaeology. She says that none of this could have been achieved without Roger's help, particularly as he does the ironing!

After completing her research, Carol worked as an archaeologist for English Heritage for two years, but her main interest lies in adult education and she has worked as a part-time tutor for several universities, including

Nottingham and Keele since 1983. She is now a free-lance archaeologist, undertaking post-excavation work on prehistoric pottery for a number of archaeological units, and she also organises and tutors the Certificate in Archaeology course for Nottingham. In the summer she takes educational tours around archaeological sites in locations such as Wiltshire, Orkney, Ireland, Dartmoor and Rome.

In her spare time Carol is a Soroptimist, sits on the local PCC and church social committee, is a member of several archaeological societies, and teaches as a volunteer in adult basic education. Her interests include fell-walking, classical music, visiting museums and art galleries, and talking to the cat!

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## Twenty Years' Archaeology Recognised

Dr Chris Salisbury, who is to be the speaker at the first lecture in our 1995 programme, on Saturday 14 January, has recently received two major awards for his work on the archaeology of the Trent Valley.

Chris was presented with the Pitt-Rivers Award, sponsored by the Robert Kiln Trust, for the 'Best archaeological project by a voluntary body or individual' and the Silver Trowel Award sponsored by the Nationwide Building Society as 'Archaeologist of the Year'. These were in recognition of his work at Hemington, which members were able to visit in September '93, and of which Chris wrote in Newsletter No 4. Since 1985 no fewer than 40 fish weirs, 127 stone anchors and most importantly, 4 bridges

have been discovered within a short distance of each other. Dendrochronology has ascribed dates of 1096, 1112, 1215 and 1240 to the timbers of the bridges, at a hitherto unknown crossing of the River Trent.

Chris has been working in the Trent gravels for over twenty years, his earlier discoveries at Colwick are recorded in Volumes 83 and 85 of *Transactions*, and earned him second place in the BBC 'Chronicle' Amateur Archaeologist of the year awards.

A young local man who as a student helped Chris in his excavations, Kevin Blockley, went on to graduate as an archaeologist and has just gained the Wedgewood Award for his work on the nave floor of Canterbury Cathedral.

## \* \* WINTER LECTURE PROGRAMME \* \*

**Saturday 14 January 1995**  
**EXCAVATIONS AT HEMINGTON AND**  
**THE RIVER TRENT**  
 by Dr Chris Salisbury  
 Chairman: Nancy Mulholland BSc

Dr Chris Salisbury, a former GP has devoted much of his time to studying history and archaeology along the River Trent. The discovery of a bridge at Hemington was the result of much painstaking research. Members saw the early excavations when they visited the site with Chris and Hazel a few years ago.

Dr Salisbury's lecture will be an opportunity to bring us up to date on the latest findings at this interesting and important crossing point on the River Trent.



**Saturday 11 February 1995**  
**The Norah Witham Lecture**  
**NINETEENTH CENTURY LEENSIDE:**  
**A NOTTINGHAM SLUM**  
 by Rev E P Bailey, MA  
 Chairman: Rev Patrick Rowley

Most Nottingham residents have heard of Narrow Marsh and the dreadful conditions which prevailed in the nineteenth century, but what was this area really like and how did the people living there improve their lot?

Peter Bailey took this area as the subject of his MA dissertation and from the wealth of material he has gathered will bring a new perspective on the subject in his lecture 'Nineteenth Century Leenside: A Nottingham Slum'.

Rev Peter Bailey is Nottingham born and bred. He was formerly Religious Programme Producer for Radio Trent. He is now Chaplain to the Bilborough Group of Schools.



**Saturday 11 March 1995**  
**The Maurice Barley Lecture**  
**VERNACULAR ARCHITECTURE AND**  
**THE LOCAL HISTORIAN**  
 by Professor D Hey  
 Chairman: John Severn, MA, FRIBA

Maurice Barley is probably best remembered for his work on the history of houses, and particularly of the 'vernacular' farmhouses and cottages of the English countryside. His books *The House and Home* (1963) and *Houses and History* remain classics on the subject. However his interests extended over a wider field and many will remember and appreciate his interest in local history.

David Hey is Professor of Local and Family History at Sheffield University. He is author of *The Oxford Guide to Family History* (1993) and co-editor with Barry Cunliffe of the Longman Regional History series which includes our chairman John Beckett's 'The East Midlands from 1000 AD'. Professor Hey's lecture 'Vernacular Architecture and the Local Historian' should be a fitting subject for the 1995 Maurice Barley Lecture.



*All lectures are held in the YMCA, Shakespeare Street, Nottingham, beginning at 3.00 p.m. Members are invited to patronize the book stall, and have a cup of tea after the lecture. Non-members too are welcome.*




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Another member has gone into print, Owen Word's 'St Mary's Church, East Leake' can be found on the bookstall at lecture meetings. Its twenty four pages trace the history of the church from Saxon times, and including as it does an admirable plan of the present building it enables a visitor to study the evidence for the appearance of the earlier structure. "More than just an ordinary guide book."

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A letter to the Nottingham Daily Guardian in 1897 was very critical of the appointments to the Council of the fledgling Thoroton Society. Written by 'Antiquary', (and reproduced in Newsletter No 5) it drew this reply from an equally anonymous 'Patience'.

Sir,- It is to be regretted that 'Antiquary', being, according to his own admission, a well-wisher of the newly constituted Thoroton Society, has made use of the words 'left out in the cold'. A suggestion of *mala fides* and exclusive dealing, with its almost inevitable result, bitter feelings and suspicion, is not of hopeful augury for the success of any society. I am not in the secrets of the founders of the society but, clearly, the first thing to do was to get it satisfactorily started, with some guarantee for the preliminary expenses and so forth, and the first council would naturally be formed from those who had given in their names as being willing to aid in the foundation of the society and meet the

initial outlay. I am sure that the working antiquaries whose names are mentioned in 'Antiquary's' letter will be gladly welcomed as members, if they are not already so, and that in due time they will find their appropriate places on the council. Obviously an antiquarian society which did not contain many working antiquaries, both among its members and on its council would not have much archaeological prestige. With regard to the council as at present constituted, the names of some at least of the members are sufficiently well known to justify their selection. They satisfy some or all of the conditions enumerated by 'Antiquary' himself; while as to the others, is it certain or probable that they are ignorant or indifferent because they may not have rushed into print to air what they know? I am not aware that the James Ward and Mr M I Preston or Mr S Gelf ever wrote much on antiquarian subjects, but they showed their interest in them by making large and valuable collections of books, prints etc illustrative of the history

and antiquaries of the town and county. Is it too much to hope that before long 'Antiquary' himself, with his mask laid aside, will be found on the council, working zealously along with his colleagues for the ends that the society has in view. I am, sir, &c,

PATIENCE

Editor's note: *One of those whom 'Antiquary' described as 'left out in the cold', T M Blagg, was a founder member at the age of 22, and was elected to Council in 1901; in 1903, aged 28, he became the youngest-ever Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries and was a frequent contributor to Transactions. He became Secretary of the Record Section in 1934 and held the office until his death in 1948. At the Society's Golden Jubilee Celebrations the previous year he had, as the sole surviving founder member, been guest of honour.*

## ELECTIONS - THE 1995 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Due to teething problems, at the last Annual General Meeting of the Society the electoral procedures were not entirely constitutional! Please excuse your Council for taking its time to understand and implement the new constitution. To try to make sure we do everything in the proper order in 1995 members can expect to find with their papers for the Annual General Meeting a form which will include Council nominations for the offices in the Society and for members of the Council (in some cases retiring members being re-elected). The form will also include a tear-off slip inviting members to propose officers and members of Council. In this way we hope to be working in a slightly sounder fashion than we were in 1994!

## CENTENARY OF THE THOROTON SOCIETY IN 1997

Several members wrote in with suggestions for how we might celebrate the Centenary, and at the last meeting of Council it was agreed to establish a sub-committee to consider the centenary year and events which the Society might want to promote. Neville Hoskins will be chairing the sub-committee, and members with ideas (and offers of help) are invited to communicate either directly with Neville, or with Jean Nicholson, who will act as secretary of the sub-committee. Jean's address is 38 Green Lane, Lambley, Nottinghamshire.

TRENT & PEAK ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST

will hold its

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

followed by

A PUBLIC MEETING OF ILLUSTRATED TALKS

on

THURSDAY 16TH MARCH 1995

4.00 pm Members only are invited for the Annual General Meeting

7.30 pm All welcome for an evening of short illustrated talks on recent archaeological work by the Trust in Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire. To be held at the Arts Centre, University of Nottingham

Trent & Peak Archaeological Trust (originally the Trent Valley Archaeological Research Committee) was formed in 1967 to carry out archaeological research on the gravels of the river Trent. From modest beginnings the Trust has now expanded to a full-time staff of 17, with additional part-time specialists and field-workers, and with local volunteers helping on selected projects. Working principally in Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire, the Trust also undertakes projects further afield and has worked recently in Europe. However, the emphasis remains on archaeological research within the region, and it is here that the Trust's strengths and expertise lie.

Funding, largely from English Heritage and Local Authorities, enables the Trust to carry out a wide range of research projects. Currently these include a survey of Anglo-Saxon Derbyshire, a detailed survey of the nationally-important historic settlement and field systems at Laxton, a survey of the industrial buildings of Newark, an archaeological assessment of the Trent floodplain and gravel terraces, and an assessment of the potential of Mesolithic archaeology in the Pennines.

The greatest part of the activities of the Trust, however, currently centre around rescue archaeology paid for by developers. Most of this work consists of evaluation, and the preservation by record, of sites due to be destroyed by new development. The range of such projects is great: from desk-top surveys to large-scale excavation; from Late Upper Palaeolithic to the English Civil War and beyond.

Many of the Trust staff have particular areas of expertise, and teach in both the archaeology department and with the University Department of Adult Education, including the certificate courses in Archaeology and Heritage Conservation.

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John Fox's review of Vol 4 of the *Sylloge of Coins of the British Isles* in issue No 5 pointed out how little was known of Mr R Henry Norweb's early life in Nottingham. For a 'local lad' not only to 'make good' but to become an Ambassador for his adopted country is quite a story. The Norwebs have been in the news recently, because Mrs Norweb has now died and

their collection dispersed, several items have been sold through British auction houses. If you have any information on the Norweb family in Nottingham around the turn of the century please ring John Fox on 0115 981 7981. The book is available for reference in the East Midlands Collection at Nottingham University.

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