

# THOROTON

Number 21: Summer 2000



## Sir Neil Cossons O.B.E.

Sir Neil Cossons, formerly director of the Science Museum, became Chairman of English Heritage on 1 April this year. He has been appointed for a five year term of office, in succession to Sir Jocelyn Stevens. Sir Neil, born and brought up in Beeston, was made an honorary member of the Thoroton Society after speaking at the Centenary Dinner in 1997. He was previously Director of the Ironbridge Gorge Museum (1971-83) and of the National Maritime Museum (1983-6) before he went

to the Science Museum in 1986. On July 7 the University of Nottingham conferred on Sir Neil the honorary degree of Doctor of Science. The Thoroton Society's chairman, Professor John Beckett, was the public orator.

Later in the day Sir Neil met with representatives of local history and other local amenity societies to tell them something of his hopes for English Heritage in the next five years (see below).



*Sir Neil and Thoroton Society President Myles Thoroton Hildyard at the Centenary Dinner, County Hall, September 1997*

### First Task for New Chairman

Sir Neil Cossons's first task at English Heritage is to Chair a Steering Group reviewing government policies relating to the historic environment. The findings of the review are intended to shape government policy on the heritage for the next ten years. The consultation document was published on 26 June, and can be

accessed through English Heritage's Web page <http://www.english-heritage.org.uk> or by calling 01793 414586.

Responses are required to be with the Review group by 4 August, and anyone with an interest in the heritage is encouraged to comment.

**John Beckett**

---

~ The Thoroton Society of Nottinghamshire ~  
~ The County's Principal Historical Society ~

---



## Millennium Celebration Events: a further round-up



Attendees at the Newark Roadshow, Newark Town Hall, looking at the Exhibition organized by Jean Nicholson and Margaret Trueman.

Newark Roadshow, 31 March

### Bassetlaw Wapentake Visitation, 13 May

This was a memorable occasion, blessed with fine weather. Malcolm Dolby set the scene at our meeting place at the foot of Beacon Hill, after which we visited the mausoleum of the later Dukes of Newcastle at Milton, and admired Westmacott's sculpture of Georgiana, wife of the 4th Duke. Coffee was provided during Don Gilbert's talk at West Markham Church, and lunch was taken at Retford, where the more energetic followed the town walk, or visited the museum.

Stopping briefly at South Leverton to view the Priory, a mystery building - is it a hall house of 12th century origin? - we then visited Littleborough, with North Leverton windmill in the distance. Michael Jackson's talk at the Norman church was most illuminating. After viewing the site of the Roman causeway nearby, the ferry crossing, and the chateau at Gate Burton, we travelled on to Gringley Beacon (later an Armada Beacon), the possible meeting place of Oswaldbeck Wapentake. The view from the beacon is extensive and well worth the climb. After passing the canal tunnel at Drakeholes, Mattersey Priory, and the inland port of Bawtry, we had a splendid high tea at Worksop.

Thanks go to Jean Nicholson for her meticulous planning, to Malcolm Dolby, and to Michael Jackson whose coach commentary highlighted many features, including the importance of the communication system of roads, rivers and canals.

**Margaret Trueman**

### Broxtowe Roadshow, 23 May

The inclement weather did not deter 43 people from making their way to Broxtowe Roadshow, hosted by Mansfield Museum as part of National Museums and Galleries Month 2000. Few artefacts were in evidence for the panel of experts to identify, but this was amply compensated by the excellent exhibits of local material provided by the Old Mansfield Society, Old Warsop Society, Sherwood Archaeological Society and Warsop Vale Local History Society.

The latter society, based in a coal mining community whose history stretches back little more than a hundred years, had been in existence for only two months, during which

time it had published *The Hundred Year History of Warsop Vale and Warsop Main Colliery (1889-1989)* - and sold its first 450 copies - a remarkable tribute to the Society's community spirit!

The Nottinghamshire Archives stand attracted a large number of people wishing to look at maps and documents of the area, and testing their skill with a quill pen. Many useful contacts and links were forged, and special thanks go to Liz Weston, curator of Mansfield Museum, and to her team for ensuring that the evening was a great success.

**Philip Jones**



## Reports on Wapentake Visitations

### Thurgarton, 3 June

A coachload of members and friends joined in a tour of many of the interesting places in Thurgarton wapentake on a mainly fine day. Lambley's fine church, mostly of 14th century work by Ralph Lord Cromwell, was the first call, then on through Woodborough, admiring in particular the church's gargoyles and carved gable crosses. Tim, Calverton's curate, met us in St Wilfrid's which has some wonderful Norman carvings depicting nine months of the year - it was a rare chance to see these, and least half the party braved the narrow ladder to the bell tower to view them. We then drove on to Oxton, heart of the wapentake, where some of our party climbed to the Iron Age camp of Old Ox and the adjacent tumuli. We rejoined the slightly damp remainder to drive on to Southwell and lunch. After a brief visit to the Minster, our next call was the Old House at Bleasby. Built about 1500 as a hall house, members learned of its subsequent history whilst standing in its pleasant gardens.

Epperstone was next on the agenda, and after a lavish tea in the village hall we admired the attractive cottages, dovecote and church before setting off for Gonalston and the Heriz monuments - and then to one of the highlights of the day, a rare chance to view the captivating Halloughton prebendal house with its medieval tower. We visited Hoveringham and its neat Victorian church, splendidly adorned with early Norman tympanum and 14th century tomb, before finally going on to Thurgarton Priory Church and the ghostly echoes of a half-forgotten splendour which had rivalled Southwell. This was an action-packed, whistle-stop tour of only part of Thurgarton wapentake, which was interesting and enjoyable. Thanks to all those who welcomed us at the various stages, and to our enthusiastic driver, Andy, who found the trip at least as fascinating as the rest of us did.

**Barbara Cast**

### Bingham, 24 June

After a brief unscheduled visit to the Corporation bus garage to repair a broken microphone, Adrian and Valerie Henstock - the Richard and Judy of the wapentake scene - slipped into their very professional and informative continuous commentary on the passing

scene in the Bingham wapentake. Plunging through the narrow lanes beyond Radcliffe-on-Trent we passed through Shelford, Gunthorpe and the site of the old ferry crossing, East Bridgford and the site of *Margidunum*, and on to Car Colston, where we made the first stop of the day. Here we saw Dr. Thoroton's tomb, and then had coffee.

The next stop was Whatton with its Burne Jones window and corbels, then on to Bingham for lunch. Bingham was in festival mood with music on the square. We had hoped to spend a pleasant lunch lingering over a glass of wine while listening to the music. Instead most of the party dived into the nearest pub seeking warmth, and leaving the music to be enjoyed by a single lonely spectator - reputedly the group's mother.

Suitably refreshed and warmed, it was back to the coach. En route we had our view of the wapentake meeting place - a depression in a cabbage field passed by at 60mph - before our next call at Langar church to inspect the Chaworth and Scrope tombs. Then it was on to the ruined church at Colston Bassett, before finally making our way to Hickling. Before we settled down to tea inspected the church and the remarkable Anglo-Saxon coffin lid, and it was a delight to see many gravestones with carvings of the Hickling Angel.



*Excursionists caught in long grass at Car Colston church, with Adrian Henstock giving instructions on how to escape!*

After tea we returned to Nottingham, bringing to an end a most enjoyable and informative day. Thanks go to Adrian and Valerie Henstock for their knowledgeable and helpful commentary.

**Keith Goodman**

**Reports on the Rushcliffe Roadshow and Broxtowe Wapentake Visitation will appear in Newsletter No. 22.**

**and still to come...**

**Newark Wapentake Visitation: Saturday 9 September**

**Visitations must be booked in advance. Write to Barbara Cast, The Old Police House, Main Street, Bleasby, Notts, NG14 7GH, enclosing an sae, for further details.**

**Roadshows - no booking necessary:**

**Sunday 10 September, 2pm: Bingham - Flintham Museum and Village Hall**

**Wednesday 4 October, 7.30pm: Thurgarton - Brackenhurst College, Southwell**



## OBITUARY

### **DORIS MARY CANNELL, Educator and Historian, 1913-2000**

Mary Cannell could not abide her first name, and most who knew her think of her only as Mary, a lady of great style, elegance and energy, who continued her work until the very end. Of Manx stock, Mary was brought up in Liverpool where she gained an honours degree in French and History. She then obtained a postgraduate Diploma in Education, taught in England and France, and lectured in the British Army Formation College after the war. In 1960 she was appointed Deputy Principal of Nottingham College of Education, and organized much of its amalgamation with Nottingham Polytechnic (now Nottingham Trent University).

Although Mary quite rightly stuck to her self-identification as 'educationalist', a most remarkable feature of her life was the shift on her retirement towards serious scholarly work on the biography of Sneinton mathematician and physicist George Green (1793-1841). She attended a lecture by Professor Lawrie Challis, chairman of a group intent on restoring the ruined windmill closely associated with the name Green. This initiated a Green quest which lasted into the new Millennium, as Mary researched, wrote, lectured and published on her theme in a manner charming, engrossing and reliable. As well as lecturing in Britain she was invited to Canada and the USA, and in 1993 published *George Green, Mathematician and Physicist* (Athlone Press). This did not diminish her publications or lectures, or her enthusiasm for things Green. Her book was offered prestigious re-publication in the USA by SIAM's Classic Reprint Series, and will appear shortly with the help of Lawrie Challis.

Mary joined the Society on commencing her historical research - details were reported in *Transactions* XCVI pp.13-14 and XCVII p.11. She was made Fellow of Nottingham Trent University and the University of Nottingham, awarded an honorary degree from the Open University, and yet another from NTU (November 2000). She remained intellectual and independent until the end, and will be greatly missed by her many friends and colleagues.

Ian Inkster

### **COUNCIL FOR BRITISH ARCHAEOLOGY, EAST MIDLANDS**

- **5 August:** A walk around Newark's buildings, with Robert Howard
- **30 September:** One-day School at Calver, Derbyshire, on the Peak District Landscape
- **25 November:** Reports Meeting at North Wheatley Village Hall

Further information on the above from Jen Eccles, The Barracks, Blyth Road, Ranby, Nr. Retford, DN22 8JH.

### **NOTTINGHAMSHIRE LOCAL HISTORY ASSOCIATION**

- **28 October:** Autumn Day School, Woodborough Village Hall. 'Health, Hope and Charity: It's the poor that gets the blame.'

For further details contact David Ross-Ellis, 128 Sandhill Street, Worksop, Notts, S80 1SY.

### **THOROTON SOCIETY TRANSACTIONS**

The Society has acquired a run of *Transactions* from 1946-82. If you are short of one or two for your collection, contact Ann or Neville Hoskins on 0115 9781816.

### **AUTUMN LECTURES**

- **Tuesday 10 October:** The Keith Train Lecture  
7.30 pm, Friends' Meeting House, Clarendon Street.
- **Saturday 14 October:** 'Excavations of an Iron Age and Romano Settlement at Gonalston' - Dr David Knight. 2.30pm, YMCA, Shakespeare Street.

This third *Newsletter* for 2000 is being distributed earlier than usual. Please send contributions for *Newsletter* No.4 by **Tuesday 31 October 2000** to Janice Avery, Department of History, University of Nottingham, Nottingham NG7 2RD (tel. 0115 951 5929, fax 0115 951 5948, or email [janice.avery@nottingham.ac.uk](mailto:janice.avery@nottingham.ac.uk)). The views expressed in the *Newsletter* are not necessarily those of the Editor, the Society or its Council.

**Visit the Thoroton Website at: <http://www.cthulu.demon.co.uk/thoroton/htm>**