

THOROTON

Number 23: Spring 2001



Thoroton in 2001

This Newsletter comes to members with papers for the AGM on 21 April, and we look forward to seeing you at Papplewick then. In 2000 we had an exceptionally busy programme. Things will not be quite so frenetic in 2001, but we hope you will enjoy the lecture and excursion programme, and that members will feel able to play a full part in the Society's activities.

Best wishes for a speedy recovery to Neville Hoskins, our Vice Chairman, who had a major operation shortly before Christmas; and to our Secretary, Barbara Cast, who has also recently been in hospital.

John Beckett

Nottinghamshire Living History Archive Showcase



Round One Fellows (left to right) Sarah Milne, Ruth Palmer and David Hopkins from the Manton Colliery Project, pictured with their Scheme certificates. See report, p.2.

[Photograph: Trevor Clayton]

Transactions

All being well, *Transactions* will be available as usual at the AGM. Do please pick up your copy, together with any others that you can deliver, and thereby save the Society postage costs. Some recent members have asked where they can see back numbers of *Transactions*. So for your information, courtesy of Mrs Joan Bray: There are full reference sets at the Local Studies Library (Nottingham), Newark, Mansfield, Arnold, Eastwood, Beeston, West Bridgford, Sutton-in-Ashfield, Worksop and Retford. Virtually complete sets are available at Bingham, Kirkby-in-Ashfield, Hucknall; and less at Bingham, Carlton and East Leake. The only large loan collection is at Local Studies, although there are fragments elsewhere.

~ The Thoroton Society of Nottinghamshire ~
~ The County's Principal Historical Society ~
Visit the Thoroton Website at: www.thorotonsociety.org.uk



**Nottinghamshire Living History Archive Showcase,
Boughton Pumping Station, 25 November 2000.**

Nottinghamshire local history received a real boost when Councillor Jim Napier, Chairman of the County Council, presented Millennium Fellowship Certificates to the first round of awardees on 25 November. This is a project funded with more than £300,000 from the Millennium Commission, and if the first year's work is anything to go by they have got a bargain. Twenty-nine amateur local historians received small grants, training, and support, to research projects ranging from Clifton Estate to Clipstone and Manton Collieries, to Worksop women, and many more. Collectively they put together 350 sound recordings and 150 moving images, and produced ten books. They brought together their findings at the Boughton Showcase, and those of us privileged to be there saw a remarkable collection of research, most of it by people who, a year or so ago, had no expectation that they would ever be published local historians!

The Nottinghamshire Living History Archive is one of 81 such projects across the UK, which has already made awards to about 14,000 individuals.

This number should rise to nearer 40,000 by 2004. Round 2 of the Nottinghamshire project is already underway, but there is only one more round to go. Surely there are Thoroton members with ideas about a project they would like to research and present in sound, picture, book or website? Successful applicants receive a grant of about £3,000, as well as training, and access to a range of equipment. If you would like to know more, talk to Jean Nicholson (9312998), our Programme Secretary, who is a Round 2 awardee, and is studying the village of Everton.

Come on members, you too can make a contribution to this history of Nottinghamshire! Perhaps a grant would enable one of you to become the next Dr Thoroton! Forget the ill-fated Dome: the Nottinghamshire Living History Archive shows that the Millennium Commission has been funding some extremely worthwhile community projects. For more details call the project co-ordinator, Samantha Holgate-Davey, on 01623-662672.

John Beckett

News from Continuing Education

The School of Continuing Education at Nottingham University has made a new academic appointment. Thoroton member Sarah Speight will take up the post of Lecturer in Archaeology & Medieval History from April 2001. Sarah's research will be into the history and development of the adult education programme in archaeology and medieval history. Archaeology in particular really began in the adult education movement, establishing its credentials here before being accepted into the mainstream of University life. Nottingham is well suited to this type of research, possessing as it does the archives of the first adult education department in the country, with course paperwork surviving from the 1940s.

Part of Sarah's brief is also to develop the School's existing seminar programme for the general public by expanding the archaeology content, and to broaden the range of practical and certificated courses on offer. As part of this, the School is offering a new programme of weekend and day courses this spring and early summer:

Archaeology and the Natural World

The programme includes weekend courses on pottery in archaeology, aerial photography & artefact analysis, photography for botanists and biologists. Pamela Marshall is also offering a four-day recording workshop using Wollaton Hall as a case-study. The courses start at the end of April and run into early June. For a brochure contact the Special Programmes Unit: tel. 0115 9516526, email: ce-residential@nottingham.ac.uk

Annual Subscription

Our Treasurer Keith Goodman is grateful to those members who kindly try to ease his lot by paying their subscriptions by standing order. However, a number of these are for the wrong amount, and this causes a lot of extra correspondence, and thus extra cost and more work.

Would members paying by standing order please check they are paying the correct amount, and if they find they are not, send in the difference, and amend their standing order for the future?

And a gentle reminder to other members whose annual subscription is still outstanding... Keith is eager to hear from you! Contact him at 59 Briar Gate, Long Eaton, Nottingham, NGT10 4BQ.

- **Ordinary Subscription £20**
- **Associate Membership £5**
- **Membership of Record Section for Thoroton Members £10**
- **Membership of Record Section for non-Thoroton members £15**



REPORT ON RECENT LECTURES

11 November 2000: Nottinghamshire History Lecture: "Neighbours from Hell?" The fourth Duke of Newcastle and the people of Nottingham' - Dr Richard Gaunt, University of Nottingham

The fourth Duke of Newcastle was not one of Nottinghamshire's more loveable characters. Although a devoted husband, and the father of numerous children (with whom he systematically fell out) Newcastle was a politician through and through. His electoral stranglehold on early nineteenth-century Newark hardly endeared him to the locals, and while his influence in Nottingham may have waned by the time his Castle was fired in 1831 as a protest against his anti-Reform views, he could still prove offensive. He first insisted on

compensation for the Castle firing, and then pocketed the money rather than rebuilding the mansion. All this, and much more, was revealed by Richard Gaunt, in an excellent lecture based on his recently completed PhD thesis. With apt quotations from Newcastle's personal diary and his numerous letters, Richard painted a deft portrait of the political activities and personal proclivities of one of the county's great landed magnates. Read the full story in the forthcoming *Transactions*.

John Beckett

8 December 2000: 'Nottinghamshire from its Origins to the Eve of the Black Death, c.1000 to 1340' - Dr David Crook, Public Record Office



Barbara Cast and David Crook

The last lecture of the 2000 series was given by Dr David Crook. His subject was one of the series of three looking at eras of Nottinghamshire during the last 1,000 years. David's period commenced around the beginning of the second millennium. He dedicated his lecture to the memory of Sir Frank Stenton, the eminent Anglo-Saxon and mediaeval historian who lived for many years in the Prebendal House at Halloughton, a house built in the time of David's subject period.

Starting with the key year of 877, and the 5 Boroughs set firmly in the Danelaw, Dr Crook traced early references to the shire and its changing fortunes during the Danish period. He explained the function of the wapentakes as assemblies of free men and the unique nature of the combined county court and sheriff of Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire. At the time of Robin Hood, the early 13th century, Eustace of Lowdham would have been Sheriff. The 2 shires shared a sheriff until the 16th century. Kings visited Notts often, partly because of accessibility, partly due to the important properties here. John and Edward II were particularly partial. Parliament was held at Clipstone Palace and it was then that Edward I's queen, Eleanor of crosses fame, took ill. Another royal association of the period which David highlighted was the death of King Edwin which probably occurred near Edwinstowe Chapel.

This lecture provided a high point on which to end the programme for the year, the century and the millennium. A wealth of interest and information was given on a defining period for this county. Particularly of interest to Society members was the section on wapentakes which tied together knowledge gained during the year's wapentake visitations.

Barbara Cast

13 January 2001: 'Nottingham Housing in the 20th Century' - Mr Geoffrey Oldfield

The first lecture of the 21st century was on a subject with which Geoffrey Oldfield is very familiar, as he worked on housing finance in the City Council's Treasurer's Department for many years. Starting with The Victorian Legacy, Geoffrey covered Homes for Heroes returning from World War I; Post-War Building 1946-54; Rebuilding of The City 1955-75, including St Ann's and the Meadows; and New Horizons after 1975, when the City Council's functions changed radically.

The lecture revealed a period of great change, housing within the City boundaries increasing from 55,000 in 1901 to 120,000 today, though the population is much the same: the average household in Nottingham fell in size from 4.33 in 1911 to 2.37 in 1991. The 20th century saw the emergence - and demolition - of high-rise housing. The role of the City Council has changed from

providing housing for the poorer working class, through phases of massive building programmes including 'prefabs', managing a reduction in the housing stock in the public sector under the Right to Buy policy, and the requirement to cooperate with housing associations, to improve the environment and provide sheltered accommodation.

Geoffrey gave a fascinating picture of changing styles of building and construction methods - did you know many houses in Clifton were built by a 'no fines' policy of pouring rough concrete into shutters to make walls, due to the post-war shorttake of bricklayers? Millions have been spent on refurbishing Council stock to make it fit for the higher standards of living expected today. The audience was spellbound throughout the lecture, which aroused much interest.

John Fox



East Bridgford Local History Group, *Images of East Bridgford: the Twentieth Century in Photographs* (East Bridgford Local History Group, 2000). Copies available from Mr W. Whitaker, 21 Walnut Tree Lane, East Bridgford, Nottingham, NG13 8NN (tel. 01949 20982). Price £6 including p&p.

The East Bridgford Local History Group was established in the summer of 1999 with the intention of producing a history of the village in the 20th-century. This proved a little too ambitious! But, with a grant from the Millennium Festival Awards for All Scheme, they have produced an excellent collection of (well captioned) photographs illustrating many themes of 20th-century life. East Bridgford has been transformed in the twentieth century, and particularly since 1945, from an agricultural village to a commuter suburb of Nottingham. Orchard and pasture have disappeared under roads and houses. Consequently this book is a timely record of what has changed in the village since, as the authors note, 'East Bridgford today would be unrecognisable to our forefathers'. We must hope the Local History Group can go on to fulfil its 1999 ambition, but meanwhile this is an excellent way of recording change in East Bridgford over the past century. **John Beckett**

Cornelius Brown online

Project Gutenberg aims to make copyright-free information, books and other materials available to the general public by publishing the texts electronically on the Internet. Inspired by the project's philosophy, Thoroton member Andy Nicholson has embarked on a long-term project to make older material on Nottinghamshire local history that is rare outside of local studies libraries and second-hand bookshops accessible on the Internet. Andy has chosen Cornelius Brown's *A History of Nottinghamshire*, originally published in 1891, as a pilot to evaluate the issues and problems involved in converting hard copy to electronic text.



Cornelius Brown at work

Brown (1852-1907) was a journalist and historian, author of a wide range of publications on Nottinghamshire history, including the magnificent and still definitive two-volume work, *A History of Newark* (1905 and 1907). *A History of Nottinghamshire* was written with a general audience in mind and provides an historical account of the notable towns and villages in the county, the great county families and the English Civil War in Nottinghamshire. The book grew out of a series of articles Brown wrote for the Notts Daily Guardian in the late 1880s, and although popular in style, is informed by the work of leading contemporary historians such as W H Stevenson, John Raine and J T Godfrey and also key secondary sources such as the PRO Calendars and HMC reports published in the late nineteenth century.

Digitising old texts is a very slow process. Using a tattered, loose-bound, well thumbed copy of Brown's book I scanned every page into OCR (optical character recognition) software which converted the page images into text that can be tidied up and edited in a word processing package. In parallel, I also assembled a rich collection of old illustrations, photographs and drawings and scanned them too. Text and images were then combined to create a series of linked webpages by using a webpage editor called FrontPage 98 and then uploaded to a webserver: the book is now available to anyone with an Internet connection.

I have now started work on adding sections from other texts to the website: Leonard Jack's *The Great Houses of Nottinghamshire and the County Families*; Robert White's *Worksop, the Dukery and Sherwood Forest*; and, Lascelles and Haggar's *Commercial Directory of the Nottinghamshire* (1848). Watch this virtual space! **Andy Nicholson**

Project Gutenberg: <http://promo.net/pg/>

Cornelius Brown's History of Nottinghamshire: <http://www.cthulu.demon.co.uk>

**STOP PRESS: THE ANNUAL LUNCHEON WILL BE ON SATURDAY 3 NOVEMBER
AT THE THORESBY HALL HOTEL - BOOKING DETAILS TO FOLLOW.**

Contributions for the next *Newsletter* should be sent to Janice Avery, Department of History, University of Nottingham, Nottingham, NG7 2RD, by 20 April 2001 (e-mail janice.avery@nottingham.ac.uk, tel 0115 951 5929, fax 0115 951 5948).
The views expressed in the *Newsletter* are not necessarily those of the Editor, the Society or its Council.