

# THOROTON



No. 34: Winter 2003

## ANNUAL LUNCHEON



The Society's Annual Lunch was held this year at the Saracen's Head, in Southwell. 110 members and their guests attended. Professor John Beckett proposed the loyal toast, and Mr Alan Langton proposed a very generous toast to the Thoroton Society and its officers. Mr Neville Hoskins replied on behalf of the Society. Mr Geoffrey Bond then gave a fascinating account of his current position as one of the two Sheriffs of the City of London. Apart

from having largely swapped Southwell for the Old Bailey during his year in office, he has to attend numerous functions (and eat even more meals!), but he travels everywhere in a chauffeur driven Rolls Royce and has a valet to remind him which of his many official outfits he is supposed to be wearing. Mr Bond, a life member of the Thoroton Society, fitted the Society's lunch into a busy schedule which will include a number of overseas visits on behalf of the City of London.

After the meal Professor Beckett thanked the staff of the Saracen's Head, and expressed particular appreciation of the work of Mrs Barbara Cast, the Society's honorary secretary, in organising the occasion. He also informed members of the Society that next year's luncheon will be at Belvoir Castle.

*Pictures – left: Mr Neville Hoskins, Mr Geoffrey Bond, Professor John Beckett; right: Neville Hoskins.*



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## OBITUARY: JOHN FOX

Members of the society were saddened to hear in August of the sudden death of John Fox. John had been a member for some years and was elected to the Thoroton Society Council in 1992.

Alan John Fox was born in Somerset in 1935, and after taking his MA degree at St John's College, Cambridge he taught in Africa. On returning to England he held a number of administrative posts in education before coming to Nottinghamshire as Director of Education to the County Council. He retired in 1992, having visited every local authority school in the county. Subsequently John led a busy life as a magistrate and a member of education tribunals, as well as book binding, gardening, and looking after his vintage car. He was well known for his talks to local history societies and similar bodies, and was joint author of *People of Vision*, published in 2000 by the Nottingham Council of Churches.

John was noted for his scholarship, his wisdom and clear vision. His modesty and easy going charm will be remembered by all who knew him. His wife Mary, whom he had known since schooldays, children and grandchildren would have been gratified by the congregation of over 400 who attended his funeral - details of which John drew up himself some years ago. **Geoffrey Oldfield**

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~ The Thoroton Society of Nottinghamshire ~  
~ The County's Principal Historical Society ~  
Visit the Thoroton Website at: [www.thorotonsociety.org.uk](http://www.thorotonsociety.org.uk)

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## NOTTINGHAMSHIRE PAST

This commemorative volume in honour of Adrian Henstock (see Newsletter No.33) was formally launched at County Hall on Friday 10<sup>th</sup> October. The Chairman of the County Council, Councillor. Reg Strauther, spoke in appreciation of Adrian's long service to the Archives, and the event was attended by a number of County Councillors as well as numerous friends and colleagues.

The subjects of the ten essays cover over six hundred years of the County's history and were chosen for the new light they were able to shed on a topic, perhaps because new material had become available, or because they explored less well documented aspects of their subject. Most of the contributors were able to be present; and it illustrates the regard and respect with which Adrian is held that these included Alan Cameron (former editor of *Transactions*) who had travelled down from his Scottish home, and David Crook (former editor of the *Record Series*) from the National Archive Office at Kew. This was a memorable occasion and a fitting tribute to Adrian.

Neville Hoskins

How does one celebrate Adrian Henstock's professional life and scholarship? The principal merit of *Nottinghamshire Past* is that, whilst serving something of the capacity of both a collective and individual tribute to the man, the breadth and diversity of its subject reflects the range of interests and influence of Adrian the scholar and historian. Who else could be celebrated through the eyes of a Duke (of Newcastle), 'an officer and an antiquary', the son of a Lincolnshire baronet become Suffragan Bishop of Nottingham and a late seventeenth-century Nottinghamshire 'gentlewoman'? The essays range widely across history, historical geography and archaeology to embrace both Lords of the manor and (in a title that bears no personal reflection on Adrian) 'The Wages of sin: sex, shame and retribution'.

The vivid cast of scenes and characters is set firmly into the social and cultural context of the 'Nottinghamshire past' that they knew, and which Adrian's professional life, fund of good sense and deep scholarship has helped us to know too.

Richard A Gaunt

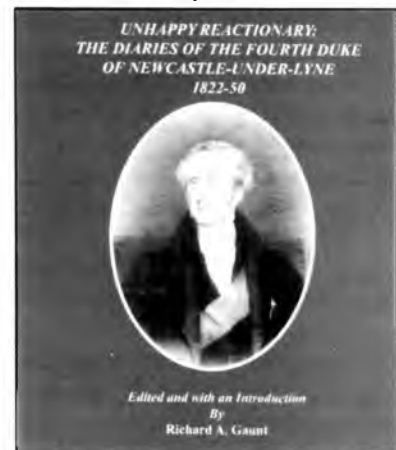
### *Unhappy Reactionary: The Diaries of the Fourth Duke of Newcastle-under-Lyne, 1822-50*

The latest volume to be published in the Society's *Record Series* is edited by Dr Richard Gaunt of the University of Nottingham. The edition comprises a selection of entries from the original eight diaries (which resurfaced only in 1966, having been lost for some 50 years) arranged in three main sections, dealing with the Duke's political affairs, and especially his electioneering in the constituencies in which he had influence, with his family and social life in Nottinghamshire, and with his estates and houses in and outside the county.

The 4th Duke was one of the most important figures of early 19<sup>th</sup> Century Nottinghamshire, owning both Clumber House and Nottingham Castle. He achieved notoriety during his lifetime as a right-wing reactionary aristocrat opposed to many of the contemporary changes and reforms which affected so many aspects of life in his period. It was his opposition to the Parliamentary Reform Bill in 1831 which led to an irate mob setting fire to Nottingham Castle in 1831. His diaries show him unswerving in his political convictions, but also a devoted family man devastated by the early loss of his wife, to whose memory he erected the enormous mausoleum church at Markham Clinton. The Diaries also reveal how he over-reached himself financially with his improvements at Clumber and elsewhere, and the purchase of both the Worksop Manor estate and another in Wales, circumstances which speeded up the carefully controlled development and sale of exclusive building plots in Nottingham Park.

The Diaries contain numerous points of interest to local historians – e.g. his occasional spats with the Duke of Portland, details of the demolition of Worksop Manor in 1844, and information about the purchase of a new ship, the *Lincoln*, from a boatyard in the Isle of Wight to sail on the lake at Clumber in 1838. The edition runs to 321 pages and costs £19.95 (plus £6 p&p), but is available to members of the main Society who do not subscribe to the *Record Series* for the reduced price of £15 (plus £6 p&p).

Adrian Henstock



### Purchase of back issues of *Transactions*

Back issues of *Transactions* for approximately the last ten years (with some gaps) are available for purchase via the Hon Editor, Adrian Henstock, usually at £10 per volume. Earlier and rarer volumes will have to be sought from antiquarian booksellers, eg those in Nottingham and Newark. A useful website listing books for sale by dealers all over the country (and beyond) is the Advanced Book Exchange at [www.abebooks.co.uk](http://www.abebooks.co.uk). By entering the word THOROTON in the title field, this currently lists sixty examples of either *Transactions* or *Record Series* available for purchase, mostly single volumes but also some sets.

Near complete sets of *Transactions* rarely come onto the market, but at present two sets are on offer:

Rivendell Books of 2 Kingscliffe Road, Grantham, NG31 8ET (tel 01476 403997) are offering a set of 96 volumes, 1897-1997, lacking five between 1972-91, for £750. Anthony W. Laywood of Knipton, Grantham, NG32 1RF (fax 01476-870198) are offering a set of 87 volumes, 1897-1983, also for £750.

Adrian Henstock

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## REPORTS ON LECTURES AND EXCURSIONS

**Saturday 6 September:** *Owthorpe and Colonel Hutchinson's Garden. Leader: Dr Chris Salisbury*



Our first stop was at St. Margaret's church (pictured left), which presents an unusual appearance, is in a field and is reached along a grass path. Chris Salisbury explained that the present building represents only the chancel of the original, and pointed out a date stone for 1629. The north wall is medieval, of liass stone, whilst the south is of better quality ironstone from the Belvoir ridge. The interior is Jacobean with an unusual roof structure and a painted wooden screen. It has been suggested that there is a lost crypt containing an upright female skeleton chained to the wall. The site of Col. Hutchinson's house is in a field immediately to the south of the church. It was demolished in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century and nothing remains of it.

The fishpond wood was reached along a public footpath which follows the line of a vista from the house towards Belvoir Castle. The wood was bought by Peter Birkin in 1999, and a small group of Friends of Fishpond Wood have since cleared 700 American poplar trees from the 6½ acre wood. The poplars had been planted by Bryant & May to make matchsticks. Our tour of the site explained the configuration of the ponds.

We returned to the village hall for tea, kindly provided by Hazel Salisbury and Helen Hudson. The Owthorpe History and Archaeological Society provided interesting display panels explaining the village's history. We are grateful to Peter Birkin for giving permission to visit the wood, and to Chris Salisbury for organising a most interesting afternoon.

**Howard Fisher**

**Saturday 11 October:** *Safe Sanctuaries - Fortification and Defence in Medieval Anglo-Scottish Border Churches. Leader: Dr Chris Brooke*

Dr Brooke gave a well presented and superbly illustrated talk, taking us back to the turbulent days when violence and murderous raids were a regular occurrence in the Border region. The local church, as one of the few stone built structures in the area, became a welcome sanctuary, and was sometimes built or modified to provide protection and safety for a short period.

Dr Brooke explained the division of the region into the Scottish and English Marches, and showed the location of the best examples of these interesting buildings. Towers had very thick walls, slim high level windows, vaulted stone ceilings (to reduce fire risk), and narrow, exceptionally steep stairs (often with an unexpected change of angle halfway) leading to a secure room with fireplace and garderobe. Some tower arches were blocked off with the only access from the nave being via a small high level narrow door.

Among the most striking examples were those in Burgh by Sands and Newton Arlosh, Cumbria. Burgh by Sands has a squat square west tower with lower walls of sandstone blocks. Over six feet thick, the walls at ground level are pierced by only two openings, that on the west face presenting to the exterior merely a five-inch wide slot nearly eight feet above ground level; on the north is a six-inch diameter gun loop, there is no external door to the tower or a tower arch. The only opening from the nave into the stone-vaulted ground floor chamber is protected by a substantial iron 'yet' (grille) complete with draw bar staples and bolts – see picture.



Guarding the Solway Firth is Newton Arlosh. The Bishop's licence to build the church specifically mentions 'hostile invasions by the Scots'. There is no external door into the tower. The south door into the nave is only 2' 7" wide; the thick wall between nave and tower at ground level was removed in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, but the high level door probably giving access to the upper floor via a ladder is still visible.

Not only parish churches show these defensive features: Dr Brooke showed illustrations of abbeys and priories including Lanercost, Blanchland, Tynemouth with gatehouse and barbican, and Lindisfarne still showing parapets and cross-bow loops. He confirmed there were similar defended churches on the Welsh Marches, and some few examples elsewhere. The lecture was well received and members exploring the north border country will, I am sure, examine churches with a different eye in future.

**Neville Hoskins**

### FORTHCOMING LECTURES

We do not have space to give details of the Spring 2004 lecture programme; please see your Programme Card (with this Newsletter) for details. We are particularly pleased to welcome Professor Christopher Dyer, FBA, Professor of Regional and Local History in the Centre for English Local History at Leicester University, to give the Maurice Barley Lecture in February.

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## REPORTS OF EXCURSIONS

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### **Tuesday 14 October: The Keith Train Memorial Lecture – *Nottingham's Medieval Alabaster - Mr Francis Cheetham***

This year's Keith Train Memorial Lecture was given by Francis Cheetham, a leading expert on English medieval alabaster. Some members may recall that he was for some time based at Nottingham's Castle Museum.

Alabaster is a very fine-grained variety of gypsum, usually snow-white or lightly coloured and where occurring massive, was suitable for carving. When polished alabaster has a marble-like surface. With suitable deposits at not far away Chellaston in Derbyshire from the late 1300s down to the Reformation, alabaster carving was a major activity in the *English Midlands in an area centred on Nottingham*.

Mr Cheetham had a comprehensive gallery of slides showing examples of altar-pieces, and carvings of the life of the Virgin, the life of Christ, and of Saints. Nottingham seems to have specialised in panels portraying the head of St. John the Baptist.

These high quality carvings were not just for the English market but, having wide appeal, were exported across Europe, particularly to France, and can be found in countries as diverse as Iceland and Croatia. Mr Cheetham has listed around 2,400 carvings, and he illustrated his lecture with some examples from the Victoria & Albert Museum, for which he has written the guide, and from the more modest collection at the Castle Museum. **Ken Brand**

### **Saturday 8 November: The Nottinghamshire History Lecture – *Continuity and Change in the Agricultural Labour Force in Nottinghamshire: the Strelley Estate from the 1850s to the First World War – Dr Nicola Verdon***

Nicola Verdon was brought up in Norwell, so she knows the Nottinghamshire countryside well. In this lecture she used the outstanding set of labour records for the 200 acre home farm of the Edge family of Strelley covering the period 1857 to the 1930s to look in detail at who was working on the farm and how much they were being paid. Her trawl through the archive revealed the importance of family labour, with father and son combinations working the land from generation to generation. But the farm did not escape the cold winds of the agricultural depression. Despite the enforced loss of child labour as a result of the introduction of compulsory education, the most surprising finding related to women. Dr Verdon recently published a book on *Rural women workers in nineteenth-century England* (Boydell Press, 2002), and her particular interest in the work undertaken by women was clear in the second half of her lecture. In 1861 they were playing a significant role on the home farm, but in subsequent decades they were relegated to less important work than the men folk, they were paid 40% less for their efforts, and by the 1890s they had effectively disappeared from field work. The lecture will be published in the next *Transactions*. **John Beckett**

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#### **PLANNING PROCEDURES**

The Government is in the process of reviewing the whole system for listing of buildings, planning consents and the consultation procedure. Perhaps this is why the number of applications sent to the Society for comment has fluctuated so much over recent months. It seems appropriate to review our involvement and to seek help; members are asked to keep an eye on planning applications published in local papers and posted on buildings themselves; if you feel that the Society could usefully comment either through the C.B.A. or direct to a planning authority, please contact me.

There is also an opportunity for members with a particular interest in historic buildings to become even more involved and active in the consultation process; if you feel that this is something you could usefully do, please get in touch (tel. 0115 9781816).

**Neville Hoskins**

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#### **BROMLEY HOUSE GARDEN PARTY**

**20 June 2004**

Members have responded well to the request for volunteers to help with the Garden Party in Bromley House Garden next year, but there are many ways in which assistance would be appreciated. Some setting up will be needed in the morning, the door must be supervised during the afternoon, and afterwards there will be the inevitable clearing up. The bigger the 'pool' of volunteers the lighter each load and the smoother the day will go. Please contact Peter Reddish if you are willing to help (telephone 0115 9269334 or email : [ann@carmelgardens.fsnet.co.uk](mailto:ann@carmelgardens.fsnet.co.uk)).

#### **NEW MEMBERS:**

Mr & Mrs R Hawthorn, Dr S Burch, Mr P Riden, Mr & Mrs B Francis, Miss M Harper-Lee, N Turner, Mr A Woodcock and Ms D Dwyer, Mrs J M Carnill, K Challis, Dr D Amos.

**THANKS** Jean Nicholson would like to express her thanks to friends and colleagues who sent condolences after her husband Joe's death.

**ERRATUM** The Renishaw excursion report in Newsletter No.33 was by Claire Wells, and not by Keith Goodman.

Please send contributions for *Newsletter* No. 35 by 2February 2004 to Janice Avery, Department of History, University of Nottingham, Nottingham NG7 2RD (tel 0115 951 5929, fax 0115 951 5948, or e-mail [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.