



No. 38: Winter 2004

ANNUAL LUNCHEON



This very popular event in the Thoroton calendar was quickly sold out: dining in such splendid surroundings as Belvoir Castle was an experience not to be missed – the luncheon was held in the magnificence of the State Dining Room. The food was excellent with a distinct Vale of Belvoir flavour, the company as ever was in top form, and the after luncheon speaker, Brian Howes (Head Guide at the castle) gave an entertaining and enlightening talk on its early history and the dynasties and political intrigues which had shaped it. The Thoroton and Nottinghamshire connections with Belvoir and its family were explored by Alf Bowley, who proposed the Thoroton toast, and by the President, who always adds the Hoskins touch to any event. These connections were further touched upon during Brian's talk. After the meal members had the benefit of a guided tour: it was a great privilege to have the place to ourselves and to learn more from the enthusiastic guides about its inhabitants – past and present – its rooms, furnishings and art works. This was a truly memorable Annual Luncheon – we shall have to find something to match it next year! *[Picture above: from left to right Neville Hoskins, John Beckett, Brian Howes]*

Assistant Secretary – Excursions

Council is looking for a member to act as Assistant Secretary – Excursions. Currently most of the work of organising and running our excursions programme falls to the Treasurer and the Programme Secretary. They have asked Council to appoint a new position to be entirely connected with the excursions programme, which will be appropriate for a member who regularly attends Thoroton Society excursions.

The person appointed will not be expected to organise and lead all the excursions, but will be required to undertake some of the administration that is involved, including attending the excursion (if possible). Further details can be obtained from Thoroton Society Treasurer, Keith Goodman, telephone 0115 9726590, or at his email address, thoroton@keithgoodman.com.

AGM 2005 AT LAXTON

A note for your diary – advance notice of the Annual General Meeting on 30 April 2005 – this year it will be held at Laxton. The meeting itself will be in the village hall, and members will be provided with the usual country-style tea. The highlight of the day will be the opportunity to visit Laxton Castle, the site of one of the most

important Norman castles in the county, and one which is the focus of archaeological investigation by Sarah Speight, Council member, and Keith Challis. Sarah will be on hand to explain the work that has been going on and the recent findings. It should be a good afternoon out! **John Beckett**

Congratulations to:

- Dr Sarah Speight, our Archaeology editor and CBA representative, who was married to Anthony Epworth on 23 October 2004.
- Steph Mastoris, who has left for Snibston for a new job in Swansea. His email remains the same at: stephmastoris@tiscali.co.uk

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SPRING LECTURES 2005

Saturday 8 January: The Nora Witham Lecture – Paul Bahn: ‘Palaeolithic Cave Art at Creswell Crags’



Upper Palaeolithic art has been known from the walls and ceilings of caves in France and Spain from the late 19th century. It was recognized for the first time in Britain in spring 2003 by a three-man team: consultant archaeologist Paul Bahn, Paul Pettitt of the University of Oxford, and Sergio Ripoll of Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia, Spain.

The site is Church Hole cave at Creswell Crags Nottinghamshire, already well known as a habitation site. Last April the cave was inspected further with the natural light of the season, and 80 further figures were identified to add to the 12 seen initially. The art has been executed by engravings and bas-reliefs and shows red deer, horses, bison, three species of bird, and possible female figures. The ceiling of Church Hole is the most richly carved in the whole of cave art.

Above: Engraving of red deer stag from Creswell Crags, copyright Sergio Ripoll.

Saturday 12 February: Virginia Baddeley and Jason Mordan: ‘A Pile of Horseshoes and an Entire Egg – Recording the Historic Environment at Nottinghamshire County Council’

Nottinghamshire County Council Planning Department began to record the historic environment of the county in 1974, which covers archaeological sites, historic buildings, parks and gardens and historic landscapes. It is used in the planning process for the protection of the historic environment and also in research and education. Virginia Baddeley is responsible for the archaeological side, and Jason Mordan for the buildings.

The lecture will include projected computer screens to demonstrate the make up of the database and ways that it can be interrogated. Together the historic environment records comprise some 20,000 entries, varying from the traditional details of buildings and archaeological sites to the exotic and unexpected.

Right: The horseshoes at Scarrington



Saturday 12 March: Maurice Barley Lecture – Adrian Henstock: ‘Beaumaris to Beaumont: the Planned Towns of Edward I in Wales, England and France’

Between 1267-1307 King Edward I planted numerous new towns on his far flung domains to act as instruments of political domination and to exploit their economic potential. Most were laid out on rigid grid-iron plans with the aid of professional town planners and even committees. In this illustrated lecture Adrian Henstock will present an overview of the process by examining the physical evidence afforded by several largely unspoilt towns, together with their exceptional archival documentation.

Comparisons will be made between towns including the superb walled boroughs of Caernarfon, Conwy and Beaumaris; New Winchelsea in Sussex founded adjacent to a strategic port; and the beautiful fossilised hill towns, known as ‘bastides’, in the Gascon region of the Lot and Dordogne in south-west France, such as Monpazier and Beaumont du Perigord. This is the latest in a series of lectures dedicated to the memory of the late Professor Maurice Barley of the University of Nottingham, a medieval buildings expert, who edited a work on medieval planned towns in England & Wales in 1976.

Wollaton Hall

Newsletter No.37 contained a note about Peter Smith's recent paper on ‘The Sundial Garden and the House-plan mount, two gardens at Wollaton Hall, Nottinghamshire by Robert (c1535-1614) and John (-1634) Smythson’. A copy has now been deposited in

Bromley House Library to join his earlier papers on Welbeck, Clifton Hall and Nuthall Temple. Society Members, if not members of the library, may consult them by prior arrangement with the Librarian, tel 0115 9473134. **Neville Hoskins**

Nottinghamshire Bibliography: Correction

The Society's Record Series Vol 42: *A Nottinghamshire Bibliography; Publications on Nottinghamshire History before 1998*, which appeared in 2002, contains the following error. Entry No 2527 refers to *Nottinghamshire History and Topography: A Select Descriptive Bibliography*, published by the late Michael Dobbin, a former Hon. Secretary of the Society, and the statement is there made that Mr Dobbin's own collection of Nottinghamshire books was ‘now owned by the Nottingham Subscription Library’. It has been pointed out that this collection is simply lent to the Nottingham Subscription Library at Bromley House, Nottingham, and continues to be owned by the Dobbin Family. The Society is happy to correct the error and apologizes both to the family and the Library for any embarrassment that this may have caused.

REPORTS OF EXCURSIONS AND LECTURES IN 2004

4 September – Sacred Sites of North Lincolnshire: David Marcombe & Kate Holland.



On a beautiful September afternoon Dr David Marcombe and Kate Holland showed us two sites considered to be 'central places', that is, places which have been centres of administration, justice, religion, trade and charity for many centuries. The history and archaeology of such places indicate they were of great importance. Dr Marcombe took us first to the chapel of St. Edmund in Spital-in-the-Street [*pictured left*]. (The hospital on Ermine Street.) The area had almshouses (dating from 1390) in Spital Green, the Quarter Sessions houses (built in 1592), the old coaching inn (now derelict) from 1680, and the chapel itself (now lovingly restored by Dr. Marcombe and his family). The area outside the chapel boasts a physic garden designed by Joe Nicholson, and adjacent is an orchard being re-planted with old varieties of apple and pear trees.

Kate took us next to Glentworth with its interesting small church and wonderful memorials to Sir Christopher Wray and his family, who had attempted to undermine the chapel of St. Edmund and the hospital foundation. After an excellent tea we visited the magnificent church of St. Mary's, Stow-in-Lindsay. This is an extraordinary cathedral-like structure which, while Saxon in foundation was enlarged in 1073 by Remigius, last Bishop of Dorchester and the first Bishop of Lincoln. He turned Stow into a monastery, but this was changed back by his successor. Many thanks go to David Marcombe and Kate Holland, for a most fascinating and stimulating day. **Penny Messenger**

24 September – Special Celebrity Lecture with Julian Richards

It was an eventful evening with many more attenders than expected! Julian Richards, *pictured right*, an archaeologist best known for his BBC2 series "Meet the Ancestors" (and not to be confused with the other Julian Richards at York University), spoke of his Nottingham upbringing and education, and the work which fuelled his interest in archaeology. He read Archaeology at Reading and got his first job in Berkshire, where he met his first skeleton entangled in the roots of a tree. Very aware that this was a person, his fascination with discovering more about people of the past grew, and the idea of "Meet the Ancestors" began to take shape.



Making such programmes is an extension of Julian's love of teaching. He stressed that the excavations featured were all already underway: nothing was done specially for television. Julian spoke of the fascination people had for burials, the fact that there were so many around, and that they were constantly being dug up. "The past is a fascinating place peopled by fascinating people" he said, explaining that he felt privileged to be able to convey to audiences that these remains were real people with real lives, and also that an understanding of the past can help us to understand the future. This excellent lecture was greatly enjoyed by all who attended. We thank the University of Nottingham for providing the venue for this joint venture. **Barbara Cast**

9 October: Peter Connelly – 'The Archaeology of Besthorpe Quarry: A Prehistoric and Romano-British landscape in North Nottinghamshire'

It is a daunting challenge to bring to life a series of ditches and gullies to an audience of historians. Fortunately, Peter Connelly ably guided us through the development of a Trent-side landscape from the Neolithic to the late Roman period. Politically, Besthorpe represents archaeological best practice with its combination of research and training funded by quarry operators LaFarge Aggregates. It is a site of continuing relevance, illustrating the impact of climate change on the community in the later Roman period. The arrival of a wetter climate sees ditches grow in size and corn ovens appear to dry off the crops. By the late 4th century AD the occupants had given up, pushed onto higher ground by the devastating floods that continue to hit the site today; Peter highlighted the 1795 event that saw the Rivers Trent and Fleet cover the area with 3 metres of water.

But what happened here? Peter presented a story of cattle farming moving from subsistence into big

business. This was a meeting place of animals and animal handlers, a processing point for the wholesale buying and selling of herds. Keyed into the growing Romanised population represented by Lincoln, Brough, Ad Pontem, the Fosse, etc, Besthorpe facilitated the dietary needs of the carnivorous east midlanders. But this was no great killing-field: although butchery took place, Besthorpe was a distribution point rather than an abattoir; and it is cheaper to redistribute your cattle if they are still walking. This was the story of middle-men, entertainingly told by a speaker used to conveying complex detail. This important work reinforces the seminal role of the Trent in our region's development. With it continuing to 2012, we can expect many more insights from the Manchester team. The Society has a visit scheduled to the site for July 2005. Do go – you will be overwhelmed by its scale, and by the emerging narrative of a gricultural enterprise. **Sarah Speight**

GEORGE F. CAMPION

In Newsletter 37 John Beckett asked whether anyone in the Society remembers George Campion. Bernard Beilby has come up trumps! Here are his reflections:

'The first time I met George Campion was in 1938 when he was director of excavations for the Thoroton Society Excavation Section. They were exploring the caves in Broad Marsh/Drury Hill. Entrance was gained through a small hole in a brick wall at the back of the Royal Oak Public House in Broad Marsh.

'Although George had been a director of the Campion Motor Cycle Company, like his father E.W. Campion, archaeology had been a life long interest and he took early retirement so that he could devote more time to his hobby. He did a great deal of work in the caves of Nottingham as well as at Lenton Priory, Thurgarton, and many other sites, including rescuing two Bronze Age canoes from the River Trent. In a cave on Fletcher Gate we excavated a well and before it was refilled he buried a box containing a glass jar with newspapers, coins, etc. at the bottom. He was a genius at finding artefacts, particularly complete medieval Nottingham pots, though his interpretation of the finds often left a good deal to be desired.

'In his Antiques Restoration Laboratory in Castle Place Campion had a huge collection of green glaze pots which he had left in his will to the Castle Museum, but as a result of their lack of interest he sold them to Birmingham Museum. Amongst his collection was a sword allegedly found by his father in a stone coffin in front of the High Altar at Lenton Priory: personally I thought it was more likely to be 17th/18th century.

'During the war years Campion kept the interest in archaeology alive at a time when it was largely a non-professional hobby. When we all returned from the Services he soon gathered a group of like-minded people around to do the hard work. We regularly met in his workshop on Saturday morning, often watching him repairing valuable antiques. Pre-war Campion had excavated a medieval plague pit where he contracted a serious illness resulting in him losing all sense of taste and smell. After his death in March 1955, aged 66, his son-in-law Herbert Holdsworth inherited his notes and records, but did not long survive him, and these have since disappeared.

Bernard W. Beilby

BOOKSTALL

Byron Barrett, who sadly died last year, was for many years the 'guardian' of the bookstall books. Between meetings the books were stored in his garage together with a green baize cloth to cover the table. After the books were reclaimed and stored in Shakespeare Street this cloth somehow disappeared. However, Byron had very generously donated a sum of money to the Society, and with a part of this legacy we have bought a new and splendid velvet cloth in 'Thoroton' green. I hope members will come to admire this and remember Byron whenever they visit the bookstall at future meetings.

Penny Messenger

Southwell and the Slave Trade!

Thoroton member Bob Hardstaff, whose book on the Southwell Domesday Survey was published last year by the Southwell and District Local History Society, has written another, on a rather controversial subject, which is due to appear in December.

Entitled *Human Cargo and the Southwell Connection*, its subject is the Slave Trade, now viewed with abhorrence, but in the eighteenth

century a major part of the history of places such as Liverpool, Bristol and, somewhat surprisingly, Southwell. Much of the money which enabled Southwell's affluent families to maintain their lifestyle and to build some of their still-existing houses was derived from voyages of vessels like the Jason Galley whose 16,000 mile trip in 1743 Mr. Hardstaff has examined in great detail.

John Beckett

Please send contributions for *Newsletter* No. 39 by 1 February 2005 to:
Janice Avery, 43 Derby Road, Beeston, Nottingham.

The views expressed in the *Newsletter* are not necessarily those of the Editor, the Society or its Council.