

THOROTON



No. 39: Spring 2005

LAXTON: HOST TO THIS YEAR'S ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

No one can doubt that Laxton is Nottinghamshire's most 'famous' village, with its surviving open fields and operating manor court. It is known worldwide, and visited from as far away as the United States of America and Japan. This year's Annual General Meeting will provide members with the opportunity to renew acquaintance with the village, and to see some of the results of recent historical and archaeological work. Keith Challis, who will be speaking at the AGM, has been engaged in work at Laxton's Castle site [*pictured right*], with our archaeology editor Dr Sarah Speight, and we shall hear at first-hand some of the preliminary findings. For those members no longer able to walk across the open ground to the Castle, our Chairman Professor John Beckett will lead a walk around the village to look at some of the historic farmhouses and buildings; and we hope that members will be able to visit the church.



MR PETER COOPE Peter Coope, husband of our Vice President and former Chairman, Dr Rosalys Coope, died on 24 January 2005. Members will remember Peter as a regular attender at the Annual Lunch, and the last occasion on which he attended a Thoroton Society event was the lecture given by Rosalys in December. We extend our sympathy to Rosalys and her family at this sad time.

OPERATION PLUM PUDDINGS: AN APPEAL FOR VOLUNTEERS

'Christmas in the trenches! What a time! It will astound everyone who hears about it, which everyone will do in good time', a Cumbrian soldier wrote home in 1914.

Two writers are appealing for information about this Christmas Truce between British and German troops in the trenches in 1914. Information is likely to be contained in personal diaries or letters of serving troops, and also in local

newspapers covering the winter of 1914-1915.

Anyone who has access to such information, or who is willing to search microfilms of local papers in their libraries, is asked to contact Alan Cleaver at Operation Plum Puddings, 24 Glenridding Walk, Richmond, Whitehaven, Cumbria, CA28 8SH (or via his e-mail, alancleaver@enterprise.net).

**With this Newsletter please find papers for the Annual General Meeting.
Do join us at Laxton if you can, for what is always an enjoyable occasion.**

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

REPORTS OF LECTURES

13 November 2004: The Nottinghamshire History Lecture: Dr Paul Elliott – ‘British Enlightenment Culture in a Regional Centre’: *Scientific Personalities, Ideas & Institutions in Nottingham c1700-1840*

Dr Elliott has concentrated most of his research activity in this region, so while 'enlightenment culture' was not a closed book to many of the audience, he was able to shed considerable new light on the subject. The number of societies in Nottingham alone - literary, philosophical, agricultural and scientific - makes one realize what there was to occupy people's lives before media, television and cinema. Many societies met in establishments such as the Nottingham Mechanics Institute and Nottingham Subscription Library, which also had their own special interest groups. The 18th and early 19th century saw a growing interest in scientific and technical advances, and was the heyday of itinerant public lecturers who thought nothing of transporting sheep's heads, working models of cranes and demonstrations of astronomical discoveries.

Some of these lecturers began by running private educational establishments: Charles Wilkinson, whose Nottingham Academy, founded 1777, occupied land between what is now Parliament Street and Foreman Street. In that year Robert Goodacre was born, who, aged 20 started a day school, also in Parliament Street, which later moved and became the Standard Hill Academy. Goodacre was particularly interested in astronomy, and was a prime example of the itinerant lecturer; in London, Yorkshire, Scotland, the Channel Islands and a 4-year tour of America; the logistics of this in the 1820s gives food for thought. Paul has assembled a mass of material - perhaps more from him in the future? **Neville Hoskins**

11 December 2004: Dr Rosalys Coope – ‘Newstead: The First Lord Byron’s “Great Dining Room”’

We were privileged to have as our December speaker Dr Rosalys Coope, Vice-President of the Society [pictured right]. Rosalys has studied Newstead Abbey for many years and is a renowned expert on this jewel of the Nottinghamshire countryside. Her subject on this occasion was the First Lord Byron's Great Dining Room. The lecture explored the room's many incarnations, from starting out as the refectory for the Augustinian canons, and being remodelled into a grand room by Sir John Byron in the 17th century. Changes have taken place over the centuries, and we were shown how the room had looked, and what remains today in what is now known as the Salon. Intriguingly, there is more to be found, and Rosalys will be back to Newstead seeking clues as to what might have happened to some of the more decorative features, which are currently lost. We look forward to hearing about any further finds. Many thanks go to Dr Coope, and also to Elizabeth and Margery who served us deliciously warm mulled drinks and mince pies to mark the festive season!



Barbara Cast

8 January 2005: The Nora Witham Lecture: Dr Paul Bahn - ‘Palaeolithic cave art at Creswell Crags’

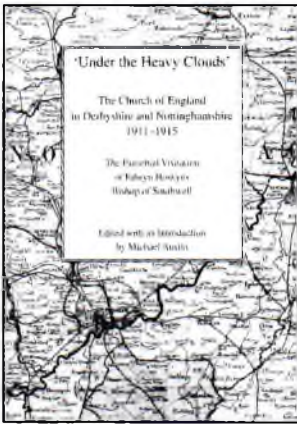


Dr Bahn spoke of Nottinghamshire 14,000 years ago in a glacial environment in which, without his fluency, we might have felt too alien. The story of the discovery of the first British cave art at Church Hole at Creswell Crags in Spring 2003 is of Paul's determination to find it, his forming a three-man team with archaeological friends Paul Pettitt and Sergio Ripoll, and the coincidence of the team starting at Creswell with the unpromising north-facing Church Hole cave.

The first discoveries were some dozen animals with outlines engraved into the limestone walls by flint tools. Another session examining every square inch of the cave in the light of Spring 2004 recognized some 80 bas-relief sculptures on the ceiling at the cave's front, the richest conglomeration of this type of art in all Europe. As found on the continent, the Creswell figures are all of animals - bison, horses, deer, and birds - with some abstract or stylised designs. Creswell Crags Museum and Education Centre is now working with the British Museum and other local and national organizations on new facilities to welcome visitors to see the cave art and the rich collections of excavated archaeological finds left by those who produced the art. These new facilities will not be available until at the earliest 2007, but Society members may arrange their own visits this year between 26th March - 10th April, 28th May - 12th June and 27th August - 11th September. Places are limited, so if you wish to visit contact the Creswell Heritage Trust on 01909 720378, or via their website www.creswell-crags.org.uk. **Leslie Cram**

NEW BOOKS ON THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

Members interested in the parish churches of the 19th and early 20th centuries will be interested in two recent publications. The first [see below] is edited by Michael Austin, who until his retirement in 1998 was a residential canon at Southwell. On the parochial visitation of Bishop Edwyn Hoskyns, 1911-15, it is entitled *Under the Heavy Clouds: The Church of England in Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire, 1911-1915* (Merton Priory Press, 2004).



Hoskyns was Bishop of Southwell when the diocese covered most of the counties of Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire, and the Visitation records reflect the problems and issues facing the Anglican church on the eve of World War I. The appendix provides outline information on every parish in the diocese. The volume (£14.95, or £16 by post) is available direct from Merton (email merton@dircon.co.uk; tel 02920 521956), all credit and debit cards accepted; or from any bookseller or Amazon.

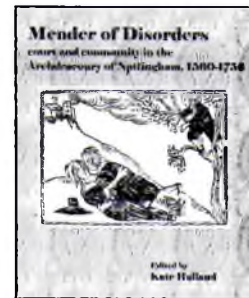
The second publication concerns the notes of Sir Stephen Glynne, a noted antiquary who travelled the country in the mid-19th century visiting churches and recorded his findings. Glynne's notes on Derbyshire churches have been published by the Derbyshire Record Society in an edition edited by Aileen Hopkinson, Vincent Hopkinson and Wendy Bateman. The original notes are at St Deiniol's Library, Flintshire, so this is a very welcome volume. Previously only extracts were in print from Glynne's notes. The volume is price £20 to

non-Derbyshire Record Society members (£22 by post), and is available most easily direct from the Derbyshire Record Society at 5 Oliver House, Wain Avenue, Chesterfield, S41 0FE.

SPECIAL BOOK OFFER TO THOROTON SOCIETY MEMBERS

A collection of talks and guides on the records of the Archdeaconry of Nottingham has been published by Nottingham University's Department of Manuscripts & Special Collections, and is available to Thoroton Society members at £7.95 (usual price £9.95).

Mender of Disorders. Court and Community in the Archdeaconry of Nottingham, 1560-1756, edited by Kate Holland (University of Nottingham, 2004) was launched on 29 October at the University's Arts Centre, when to mark the event Dr David Marcombe gave a



special lecture entitled 'Bonfires and Broomsticks: the strange case of John Minet of Askham'. This lecture described events in Nottinghamshire parish in the late 16th century when a 'cunning man' fell out with his neighbours and the church authorities, ending up before the consistory court in York. The fascinating investigation demonstrated the wealth of detail about individuals and communities that can survive in the cause papers associated with ecclesiastical court records, particularly in the verbatim evidence of witnesses.

Mender of Disorders will help those who want to understand how Nottingham's own Archdeaconry court was run and how the records of the court's supervision of parish life have left a wealth of evidence for local historians today. It contains the texts of talks given at the University in early 2004, in association with an exhibition in the Weston Gallery and a one-day workshop on the court records. These events came out of a programme of conservation and cataloguing work, supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund, which has made key records in the archive available for study. *Mender of Disorders* is available from Barbara Andrews of the Manuscripts and Special Collections Department, Hallward Library, University Park, University of Nottingham, Nottingham NG7 2RD. (Tel: 0115 9514565; or email mss-library@nottingham.ac.uk). £7.95 (special price); please add £2 for postage and packing.

DR ROBERT THOROTON AND CAR COLSTON

Members will know of the Southwell Diocesan Church History Project (which can be viewed at <http://southwellchurches.nottingham.ac.uk>), and as each church is researched, all kinds of new material is emerging. Research on Car Colston, for example, has revealed that during restoration work on the chancel of St Mary's church in 1845, Dr Thoroton's coffin was exposed, and was the subject of some 'outrageous behaviour'. The coffin, made of red Mansfield stone, was

opened and Dr Thoroton's skeleton removed, and the skull put in the village shop as a curiosity! On hearing of this the vicar, the Rev. John Chaucourt Girardot, immediately ordered the remains to be collected and replaced in the coffin, which was then re-interred. In 1863 the coffin was again dug up, but this time was placed in the church, where it was inspected by the first generation of Thorotonians on their initial excursion which took place in May 1897.

OBITUARY: DR C R SALISBURY (1929-2004)



Chris Salisbury died at the end of November after a short illness borne with dignity and courage. He was well known for his kind and genial nature, and for his stimulating lectures and publications which widened our knowledge of the region's prehistory and history. In the 1960s Chris became involved in the exploration of Nottingham's caves and was a founder member of the Nottingham Historical and Archaeological Society. Around this time his interest in the gravel quarries of the Trent Valley began. Although the archaeology of the flood-plain gravels had for some years been investigated by the Trent Valley Archaeological Research Committee, Chris focused on the most recent deposits laid down by the river in which sub-fossil trees and wooden artefacts were

frequently found. Chris first investigated Colwick's gravel pits, where many sub-fossil oaks were exposed. His attempts to date the sequence of river channels led him to begin a programme of dendrochronology sampling, and to the establishment of the Tree-Ring Dating Laboratory at Nottingham University, eventually contributing vital data for the 4th and 3rd millennia BC to the national reference chronology for oak.

One of his most important discoveries was three medieval bridges at Hemington, Leics, one dated to the 11th century and the others the 13th, which were probably successive crossing points for the London to Derby trunk road, the precursor of the A6. For this, Chris was named Archaeologist of the Year in 1994 at The British Archaeological Awards; he also won the Pitt-Rivers award for best amateur project. He then re-examined the evidence of the 19th century discovery of bridge piers, allegedly Roman, from the riverbed at Cromwell, showing that the bridge was an 8th-century Mercian structure, considerably later than the nearby Fosse Way and the Roman villa at Cromwell.

Chris retired as a GP in 1992. He was appointed a research associate in the Archaeology Department of the University of Nottingham. He most recently investigated the surviving landscape features of the Owthorpe estate of the Governor of Nottingham during the Civil War, Colonel John Hutchinson. Chris founded the Owthorpe History & Archaeology Society to further this study, and discovered six acres of fishponds and other earthworks. He assembled a considerable archive of material on the estate and the family, but unfortunately the future of Fishpond Wood was still undecided, and the publication of his archive hardly begun, at the time of his death. Gavin Simpson

Exhibitions at the Weston Gallery, D H Lawrence Pavilion, Lakeside Arts Centre

Many Thoroton Society members are already regular visitors to the exhibition gallery in the DH Lawrence Pavilion, on Nottingham University's campus (off University Boulevard), where for several years displays have been mounted of material from the Manuscripts & Special Collections in the University Library. These have given the wider public a glimpse of the extensive University collections and their relevance for Nottinghamshire's local historians.

The latest display in the University's programme is **Lawrence in Nottinghamshire: Creation and Re-creation (2 April – 15 July 2005)**, curated by John Worthen, formerly Professor of Lawrence Studies in the University's School of English. It marks the 75th anniversary of the death of the local writer, and offers a retrospective with a particularly local focus, concentrating on Lawrence's early years and Nottinghamshire associations which shaped his life and work. You will be able to hear his family and his friends talking about him; see pictures of those who remembered him, as well as previously unseen pictures of Lawrence and his family; and explore how Lawrence re-created friends, family, local people and local events in his writing.

A series of free Wednesday lunchtime talks from 1–2pm will be held in association with the display. Advance booking is recommended as gallery space is limited – tel Box Office on 0115 846 7777. Details are as follows:-

13 April: D H Lawrence: 'Creation and Re-creation', by John Worthen, curator of the exhibition.

18 May: 'Lawrence and the Dialect: the Colliery Plays', by Hilary Hillier, formerly Lecturer in the University's School of English Studies.

1 June: 'On not being DHL: Lawrence and local writers', by Peter Preston, Director of the University's D H Lawrence Research Centre.

The Gallery is open Monday to Friday, from 11am–4pm; and Saturday/Sunday/Bank Holidays from 12pm–4pm.

GEORGE F CAMPION: Further memories of Campion from a Thoroton Society Member

I was introduced to Campion in 1949 at his laboratory in Castle Place, where amongst other objects he showed me a perpetual motion machine which looked like the workings of a large clock. I don't know if it was made by him or for him; needless to say, he said it was a failure. Another time he showed me what he said was a lock-up; a small room cut into the sandstone with a door straight off the street. It had a small window fitted with iron bars. I think it was on Malt Mill Lane. Campion also showed me around caves in Hollowstone and the surrounding area. He told me that when he excavated a burial pit, the smell and gases were so awful that he lost his sense of taste and smell. Two of my school friends originally found the two Bronze Age canoes that he rescued from the River Trent. Barrie Waite

Please send contributions for *Newsletter* No.40 by 1 May 2005 to Janice Avery, email: janaver@waitrose.com (text only please, no pictures!), or tel 0115 9430346). The views expressed in the *Newsletter* are not necessarily those of the Editor, the Society or its Council.