



No. 40: Summer 2005

THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AT LAXTON

What an enjoyable and interesting event the AGM was this year, not least because the weather was kind. As usual, the business was despatched with brisk efficiency by the President and Chairman, to allow time to learn more about Laxton and, in particular, recent archaeological investigations at the castle. The Officers of the Society were re-elected without change, but Council said farewell to two members, Steph Mastoris, now in charge of a new museum in Swansea, and Chris Brooke, who is taking up a new post in Scotland. We were pleased that Steph was able to attend the AGM, and meet up with his many friends.

After the business, Stuart Rose, Clerk of the Gaits and Commons at Laxton (*pictured right*), gave a brief outline of the current situation for the unique and ancient farming system in the village, and of concerns for the future. The Chairman gave assurances of the Society's support for the healthy retention of the three-field system and the enhancement of this most precious of villages in the coming years. Following this Keith Challis, (*pictured below*), formerly of Nottingham University but now of the University of Birmingham, explained the archaeological work being carried out at



the motte and bailey castle. This consisted of surveying and recoding since, it being a scheduled ancient monument, it was not possible to carry out invasive investigations. Using the most modern techniques it was possible to get a good idea of how the castle might have looked and the activities that might have been undertaken there. The castle's relationship with, and influence on, the development of the village was also being explored.

After an excellent tea, members were able to visit the castle site or walk around the village and visit the beautiful and richly decorated church – if you were quick you could do both! Many members feel that Laxton is a village well worth affording special status and the necessary investment – it has so much to offer the visitor and the country's heritage. Our thanks go to the many people who made the day so successful, including our speakers and village guides, John Beckett, Stuart Rose, Sarah Speight, Keith Challis and Janet Cook; and to the ladies of Laxton WI, who were so helpful and provided the splendid tea.

Barbara Cast



PLEASE NOTE – THE OCTOBER AND NOVEMBER LECTURES HAVE CHANGED PLACES, AND THE PROGRAMME IS NOW AS FOLLOWS:

- SATURDAY 8 OCTOBER: THE NOTTINGHAMSHIRE HISTORY LECTURE, ‘*THEATRE AND PERFORMANCE IN NINETEENTH-CENTURY NOTTINGHAM*’ by JO ROBINSON.
- SATURDAY 12 NOVEMBER: ARCHAEOLOGY LECTURE, ‘*SOUTHWELL AND LINCOLN: THE EARLY HISTORY OF OUR CATHEDRALS*’ by PHILIP DIXON.

BOOKS AND BOOK REVIEWS

Transactions

The Society for Lincolnshire History and Archaeology has at its Jews’ Court Bookshop – telephone 01522 521337 – a number of back copies of *Transactions* which it is offering to Thoroton members at £7.50 each, or £100 for all nineteen. The years available are as follows:- 1921-3, 1927, 1933-6, 1941, 1942, 1946, 1948, 1951, 1952, 1954, 1956, 1962, 1965, and 1968. If you are interested, contact SLHA direct on the above tel. number, and ask for Ken Redmore.

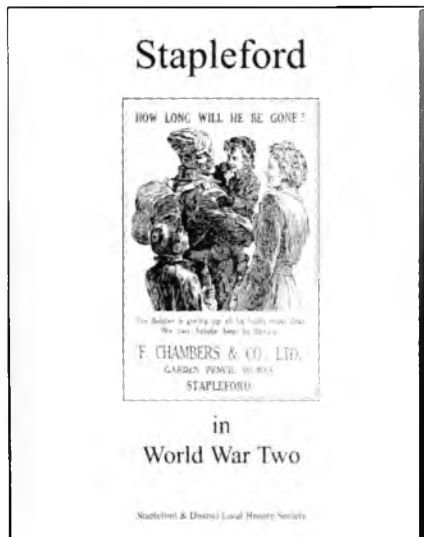
New book on Southwell Minster

A new book entitled *The Story of Southwell Minster* is being published this month. Written by John L Ottey, Canon Emeritus of Southwell, it can be ordered from any bookseller or purchased from the Southwell Minster Shop at price £10.95. The publisher’s details of the book say “this new work incorporates the results of the latest research and relates events at Southwell to the broader picture of England at this time.” (ISBN 0–9549919–0-7.)

The Wharnccliffe Companion to Nottingham. An A to Z of Local History: Abbatoirs to Yeomanry, by Geoffrey Oldfield. Wharnccliffe Books, £10.99.

Geoffrey Oldfield’s latest book in this series contains many fascinating glimpses into Nottingham’s history. In his usual readable style, Geoffrey deals with 181 different subjects, ranging from those which have merited much serious research – the history of the Castle, for example – to those whose star soared but briefly. One such was the Catering Committee, formed in 1915 to feed evacuees from Lincolnshire driven inland by the German invasion, which requested that those who wished to avail themselves of our hospitality should bring their own knife, fork and spoon! The book is 182 pages long with 111 illustrations, many of them from the author’s camera. Geoffrey, of course, was made an Honorary Member of the Society in 2001 for his many years of service, and his new book contains many references to Thoroton publications.

Keith Goodman



District Local History Society’.

Stapleford in World War Two, edited by Barbara M. Brooke, Nigel Brooks and Alan Clayton (Stapleford and District Local History Society, 2005: ISBN 0-9538158-1-1) was launched on 7 May, the eve of VE Day, at the Maycliffe Hall, Stapleford. The book is based on interviews with more than seventy local people, and provides a unique record of the lives of ordinary men, women and children who were caught up in an extraordinary experience.

Six members of the local society, under Barbara Brooke’s guidance, wrote up the memoirs in a series of chapters, covering everything from wartime policing to transport, food rationing, and the community. In addition, there are two memoirs of the war. It is a fascinating collection, launched with appropriate music, and with several members of the society wearing contemporary dress! At 136 pages with 150 illustrations, this book is a snip at £5, or £8 by post from Barbara Brooke, 57 Westerlands, Stapleford, Nottingham, NG9 7JE. Cheques should be made payable to ‘Stapleford and

John Beckett

REPORTS OF LECTURES

Saturday 12 February: 'A Pile of Horseshoes and an Entire Egg: Recording the Historic Environment of Nottinghamshire County Council'. Virginia Baddeley & Jason Mordan

The 'pile of horseshoes' was illustrated in the last newsletter but the 'entire egg' puzzled most members: its significance was one of the many interesting facts revealed in Virginia Baddeley's part of this joint lecture. Virginia described the Historic Environment Records that the County Council has, commendably, been accumulating over 30 years. The records are maintained on a database and there are so far nearly 20,000 entries, covering a wide range of topics from archaeological and architectural to just odd – hence the 'entire egg' which was found in an 18th-century excavation at Upton, when Mr Lamb of Southwell reported the discovery of an urn during ploughing. In it were found 'Roman beads, a curiously enamelled bridle, twenty silver coins and an entire egg covered with a hard mummy'.



The record is currently available for inspection by visitors, by appointment only, at the NCC offices, Trent Bridge House, Fox Road, West Bridgford, Nottingham NG2 6BJ. Write, phone (0115 9772162), fax (0115 9772418) or email virginia.baddeley@nottscc.gov.uk. Eventually it will be possible to consult the record 'on line'. A few counties, including Somerset and Norfolk, already offer this facility.

Jason Mordan, responsible for the project's architectural side, confined his contribution to an explanation of the various aspects of the planning system, with particular reference to the niceties of listing, scheduling and conservation areas. He reminded members of the powers of the planning authorities – and their limitations when complaints are made about failure to enforce the regulations, possibly owing to legal reasons. Members were able to experiment with the laptop and examine a very clear map of the Bingham Conservation Area. Both speakers were plied with questions; it all made for an informative and stimulating afternoon. **Neville Hoskins**

Saturday 12 March: The Maurice Barley Lecture: 'Beaumaris to Beaumont: The Planned Towns of Edward I in Wales, England and France'. Adrian Henstock



Adrian Henstock has edited the Thoroton Society's *Transactions* for more than thirty years, and he is widely known as an authority on most aspects of Nottinghamshire's history. So this was a new venture on the part of the recently retired county archivist. Some years ago, when Adrian's in-laws moved to Anglesey, he developed an interest in the planned towns of north Wales laid out by King Edward I. The lecture took us from Caernarfon, Conwy and Beaumaris, to New Winchelsea in Sussex, and then to the fossilized hill towns known as 'bastides' in the Gascon region of the Lot and Dordogne in south-west France. The result was an absorbing lecture, fully illustrated, which greatly aided our understanding of new towns and castle building in the days of Edward I. It reminded us that this was a king with possessions in England, Wales and France, who saw them all as part of a single empire. Maurice Barley would have enjoyed it. **John Beckett**

Nottinghamshire Archives' Bishop's Transcript Project – Volunteers Wanted!

Nottinghamshire Archives is looking for additional volunteers to join its present group to assist with a new project – listing the Bishop's Transcripts. By a provincial constitution of Canterbury passed on 25 October 1597, the churchwardens of every parish were obliged, within a month after Easter every year, to send to the Diocesan Registry a transcript of the register entries for the previous year. In Nottinghamshire these parchment transcripts were sent to York, in which diocese the county then lay. In 1884 the Diocese of Southwell was created, and in 1936 the transcripts were transferred to the Minster. In 2003 they were deposited in Nottinghamshire Archives.

The 404 boxes of Bishop's Transcripts are arranged by parish in two alphabetical and then chronological series. All the records have been cleaned but need putting in alphabetical order by place and then in chronological order. The work will be undertaken on Thursday mornings between 9.30am–12 noon in the Archives' meeting room, with an archivist in attendance to assist and advise. In accordance with the County Council's new *Guidelines for Managing and Working with Volunteers* there will be a brief application form to complete, an agreement to sign, and a short induction. If you are interested in volunteering for this project, please contact Nottinghamshire Archives, County House, Castle Meadow Road, Nottingham, NG2 1AG (telephone 0115 950 4524, or email archives@nottscc.gov.uk).

Victoria County History – Derbyshire

Thoroton members are probably aware of the Victoria County History (VCH), established in 1899 to provide a comprehensive history of every parish across the country – even though Nottinghamshire has only two volumes, both published before the First World War. Under a new initiative, part-funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund, a number of counties are pressing forward with a project entitled ‘England’s Past for Everyone’. Among those involved is Derbyshire, where a Trust was formed some years ago and has been raising finance ever since. Work in Derbyshire began on a part-time basis two or three ago years with Mr Philip Riden, who is a Thoroton member, as the team leader. Funding came from the Trust, but on 5 May this year the EPE project was officially launched in London, and a new arrangement is now in place, with funding for the county editorship from the Derbyshire Trust and the Heritage Lottery Fund. The team leader will be based in the History Department at the University of Nottingham. We shall be reporting progress in future newsletters.

Wollaton Village Dovecote Museum

This year the Museum’s exhibition concentrates on the end of World War II. Local people are asked for their photographs, souvenirs, maps, equipment, uniforms and stories, and for memories of refugees, rationing and restoration – the home front as well as the armed forces. Curator Mrs Maureen Jones can be contacted on 0115 9282567. The Museum will be open between 2-5pm on Sundays June 12, July 10 and August 14, and on the Heritage Weekend of September 10-12.

In Brief

Legal Service – Each year we are invited to send a representative to the annual Legal Service held in St Mary’s, Nottingham, on a Sunday late in January. The past two years we have been unable to find a representative. Would any member of the Society be willing to offer to represent us at this annual event? Offers to the Chairman or Secretary please.

Clumber Park – John Fletcher has a new book out on the Dukes of Newcastle and their Nottinghamshire estates, in particular Clumber Park. It is coming out from ‘Country Books’ this summer at £9.50 (ISBN 1 898941 95 5). It is hoped that copies will be available at future lectures.

Register of Events – see circular with this Newsletter. Please complete and return the form so that we can plan future programmes around centenaries, anniversaries and the like. Coming up later this year is the 200th anniversary of Trafalgar, and the 500th Anniversary of the Gunpowder Plot (on the day of our luncheon) – any known Nottinghamshire connections?

Nottinghamshire Heritage Gateway – Entries are being added on a regular basis. Don’t forget to check the website occasionally at www.thorotonsociety.org.uk/heritage.

Southwell Diocesan Church History Website – Volunteers are always welcome, especially for the north of the county, where it has proved difficult to recruit researchers. If you are concerned about the commitment that would be required, training is now being offered to volunteers. For more information contact the Newsletter Editor at janaver@waitrose.com, or the Chairman. For the latest progress on the Project, check the website at southwellchurches@nottingham.ac.uk.

Nottinghamshire Chapels – Chairman John Beckett and Council Member Howard Fisher are working on a project on churches and chapels in the county, which should eventually become a volume in the Thoroton Record Series. They are in contact with various people who are recording and photographing chapels, but if you would like to become involved in this project please contact the Chairman.

Microphones – At the AGM members approved by a substantial majority on a show of hands Council’s proposal that we should look at a better sound system for use at the YMCA during the winter lecture programme. This will be taken forward, hopefully in time for the October lecture. We hope the system will include a roving microphone, which will be useful during the questions session at the end of lectures.

New Membership Leaflet – At the AGM members approved an increase in the annual subscription from 2006. As a result, we shall redesign the membership leaflet and other documentation used in the public arena. Membership numbers have been steady over recent years, but that is no cause for complacency – and we hope our literature will get to those parts of the county that we cannot usually reach!

<p>Please send contributions for <i>Newsletter</i> No. 41 by 1 August 2005 to Janice Avery, email: janaver@waitrose.com (text only please, no pictures, diagrams or maps). The views expressed in the <i>Newsletter</i> are not necessarily those of the Editor, the Society or its Council.</p>
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