

# THOROTON NEWSLETTER



No 44: Summer 2006

## THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AT ROLLESTON

There was a sadness about this year's Annual General Meeting, with two major losses to the Society. Our President, Neville Hoskins, died on the last day of 2005 on what would have been his 80th birthday; and his predecessor as President, Myles Thoroton Hildyard, had died in August. Both these men had been long-standing, loyal members of the Society to whom much is owed, and there is much to celebrate about lives well lived and well remembered.

Members were pleased to elect as our new President Dr Rosalys Coope, an eminent architectural historian, who has clocked up over fifty years' association with the Society. Adrian Henstock, editor of Transactions, was elected as a Vice-President of the Society. The remaining Officers were re-elected without change, and we were pleased to confirm David Hoskins as a member of Council - keeping up the family association of service to the Society.

After the business of the meeting, our new President gave a fascinating glimpse of her entry into the world of Thoroton, back in the days when the male and mature were the leading lights of the Society - more about Rosalys on page 2 of the Newsletter. We then turned to the history of Rolleston, and were fortunate to be joined by Julian Ellis, a local resident and churchwarden of Holy Trinity Church, and by Frank Mitchell, who has lived in Rolleston all his life and has collected information and photographs of its history (*pictured right*).



Once again, members were provided with a very good tea in the brand new village hall, a splendid and well appointed building achieved by a great deal of voluntary local effort in raising money and accessing various funds. It was good to witness a lively community in action: one with a sense of its place in history, but still looking firmly to a vibrant rural future. During tea, Steph Mastoris, visiting from Wales, was on hand to give a preview of the next Record Series volume on the Welbeck maps. After tea Julian and Frank took us on a tour of Rolleston, which included the site of the old manor with its moat and stewponds, the remains of the cross in the Millennium

Garden, and the splendid church which is rich in carvings, including the remnants of a Saxon cross. We also viewed the house (*above, left*) at which Kate Greenaway stayed with her relatives on many occasions: Rolleston and district was the inspiration for many of her drawings and paintings. Many thanks to all those who made this another very enjoyable and interesting AGM.

**Barbara Cast**

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## DR ROSALYS COOPE, SOCIETY PRESIDENT

As is reported on the front page of this Newsletter, Rosalys Coope was elected as President of the Society at the Annual General Meeting in April. Many of you will know Rosalys well, and others will have heard her lectures to the Society. However, this is a good opportunity to tell members a little more about our new President. And so, in good journalistic style, I tracked Rosalys down to her home in Epperstone, and gained the following fascinating account of her richly interesting life.

Rosalys's association with the Society started with a friendship between her tutor and the Holland-Walkers (Mr Holland-Walker was at the time Secretary of Thoroton). When Rosalys married and moved to Nottinghamshire in 1951 she was introduced to Mr and Mrs Holland-Walker by her tutor, and she and her husband Peter were invited to their house for a meal. The outcome of this visit was that Rosalys became a member of the Society and was elected to Council in 1955. There she was - a young woman with two young daughters to care for - amongst the august and austere group of learned and, in the main, men who ran the Society in those days. Since that time, Rosalys has contributed a great deal to the Society, including being Chairman of Council, lecturing, and leading excursions.

But a little more about her personal history.

Rosalys's academic credentials are impressive for one who never took her School Certificate, due to an inability to grasp the rudiments of mathematics: 'uncommonly strange', as Rosalys herself said. After an education in a variety of schools, both here and in Switzerland, Rosalys was sent to Italy in 1938. She stayed in a villa in Florence with twelve other English



girls and had a 'lovely time in what was not a finishing school but a beginning school'. After this she joined her sister in Paris during the Munich crisis, and then came the War, and she endeavoured to 'do her bit', finally becoming a Wren. After spending some of the latter part of her naval career at Chatham, Rosalys was sent to Ceylon towards the end of 1944 when preparations were in hand for the invasion of Japan. She was there during 1945, and remembers everyone in the 'wrennery' listening to the news of the dropping of the atom bomb.

Once home, Rosalys decided that her chosen career would be working in an art gallery, and she wrote to the Director of the National Gallery who at that time was Kenneth Clark (later Sir). His advice was to take a degree in the History of Art at the Courtauld Institute and, having applied and without having matriculated, she was accepted, due mainly to her experience of art in Italy. One of her tutors was Anthony Blunt, and through his teaching she became interested in architecture, in particular French, and spent some time in France following her graduation, specialising in 16th and 17th-century French architecture. However, Rosalys's first job back in England was as personal assistant to Kenneth Clark.

She then met her husband to be, Peter Coope, they married, and two daughters, Helen and Clare, were born. When the girls went to school Rosalys decided to continue her academic career and work for a PhD, which she gained through her writing on early 17th-century French architecture.

Travelling to and from France was not the easiest way to continue studies, so Rosalys looked for something nearer home, and, due to a series of lucky incidents, her eye lighted on Newstead Abbey. The lucky incident included the interest the then Chief Librarian, Mr Tighe, was taking in Newstead, which was at that time in his care. He was documenting the history of the building in the Middle Ages, but had little knowledge of its history post-dissolution, and was looking for someone to work on this period. Rosalys volunteered - and the rest is, as she says, history. Later, responsibility for Newstead moved to the Museums Department and she worked with the first curator, Pam Wood, having gained the permission of the Arts Director, Brian Loughbrough, to be involved. Well, I said it has been, and still is, an interesting life full of incident and academic achievement - to hear Rosalys tell it herself brings it all to life. And, as a Society, it is pleasing to know that we have another eminent and erudite President to join and enrich the tally of her distinguished predecessors.

**Barbara Cast**

### **THE LUNCHEON IN 2006**

There has had to be a change of plan for this year's lunch arrangements. Boughton Pumping Station had been booked for our venue but, due to the pumping station's difficulties, an alternative has had to be sought. We will be returning to the Great Hall in Southwell after an absence of some years. And there will be a change of date - **please note in your diaries that the annual lunch will be held on Saturday 18 November**, and not the first Saturday in November, as in your programmes. The price of eating out creeps up and up, and containing costs at a fairly low level is becoming more difficult. Alternative social events may have to be considered - do let me know your ideas: please email Barbara Cast at [bjcast@aol.com](mailto:bjcast@aol.com)

### **Sutton Bonington Local History Society**

In her will, Mrs Catharine Crawford of Sutton Bonington left a sum of money for charitable purposes. This sum her husband, Dr David Crawford, was keen to see used in connection with the Sutton Bonington Local History Society's collection of historical material, of which he and his wife had been two of the principal collectors and compilers. As a result the money was given to the Thoroton Society, and it was agreed that it would be used to employ an archivist to catalogue the collection, which had been deposited in Nottinghamshire Archives (ref: DD SB).

The collection falls into three sections: archives, Sutton Bonington Local History Society papers, and research papers.

The archives date from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. They include copy deeds and sale particulars, parish council papers, and of particular note a school admission register (albeit not in the official format) for the period 1875-1926. Unfortunately the

school is not specified, and comparison with other school records already deposited in the Archives has failed to identify it.

The Society papers concern the setting up of the society and its activities while the final section contains Dr and Mrs Crawford's research notes. These include subjects such as local families, place names and streets. The largest section is of photographs that provide a superb record of the village. In many cases the information has been analysed; for example, 'Repopulating Sutton Bonington 1928-9' was undertaken by Dr Crawford using the rate book for 1928 (DD SB 3/36/3).

Nottinghamshire Archives is very pleased to have received this collection and the financial assistance towards its cataloguing. Not only does the archive reveal much about the history of a small Nottinghamshire village, but also how the records can be used and interpreted.

**Nottinghamshire Archives**

## REPORTS ON LECTURES AND EXCURSIONS

### 11 March: The Maurice Barley Lecture: '*Vernacular stone in the buildings of Nottinghamshire*' - Graham Lott, British Geological Survey, Keyworth

Using excellent images with PowerPoint and digital projection equipment, Graham presented a subject not central to the knowledge of many members: that of taking the quarries giving building stone in the county from west to east, where they were located and when they were open, and giving examples of buildings using the stone. This information has been brought together by Graham in his BGS publication *The Building Stone Resources of the UK*. With later buildings it was shown how a variety of different stones were often used depending on load-bearing capabilities, freestone which broke equally easily in any direction and was used for carving and sculpture, the stone colour for decoration etc. Southwell Minster was built of Mansfield White Magnesian limestone, this being the original choice for the Houses of Parliament. Graham's examination of churches suggests to him that the stone chosen for replacements was usually what the builder had in his yard at the time, rather than what matched the original. We were reminded of the excellent library of the BGS, open to the public by prior appointment, and their book and gift shop selling everything geological from hammers to semi-precious stones. At the end we dispersed with our summer project set for us - to find the first Nottinghamshire example of the use of Colleyweston slate.



**Leslie Cram**

### 6 May: The Gardens of Robert and John Smythson at Wollaton Hall - Pete Smith



The group met to accompany Pete Smith on a tour of Robert and John Smythson's gardens. The morning had been lovely, but on the dot of 2.30pm the rain started to fall and continued throughout our tour, just stopping as the tour ended. This necessitated us moving from tree to tree for shelter whilst Pete explained the features we were looking at: but it did not in any way spoil our enjoyment of Pete's deep knowledge of the gardens.

Although Wollaton Hall is currently wrapped in scaffolding and sheeting whilst the extensive restoration work is being carried out, we could relate the garden features to the house, especially as Pete had thoughtfully provided copies of plans and pictures. The gardens we now see are, of course, nothing like those shown in the Smythson plans, the Ha-Ha did not feature in their layout, and the stables, wash-house and brewery are long gone. A most interesting aspect was the lower garden layout of what Pete called the 'house mound', laid below the present terrace, and which could have been used for performances with the audience standing on the terrace. The Camellia House had been dismantled as part of the restoration work, but Pete gave us a word picture of the building and its method of operation. He allowed us to gain a good mental picture of how good the gardens would have appeared as planned by the Smythsons, and the visit helped to contextualise his earlier talk to the Society.

**Howard Fisher**

## NORWELL PARISH HERITAGE GROUP

The group was formed in November 2005, largely in response to the interest in Norwell's local heritage generated by the Festival of the Beck, and the work done for the Southwell & Nottingham DAC Church History Project. The primary aim is to record the past and present heritage of Norwell Parish for the benefit of present and future generations. The parish includes Norwell, Norwell Woodhouse and the deserted hamlet of Willoughby. It also has the distinction of including five, or possibly six, moated sites.

The group applied to the Local Heritage Initiative\* for a grant to support the production of a Heritage Trail, five topic booklets about the heritage of the parish, and resources for children to raise their awareness of their local heritage. Local Heritage Initiative has generously awarded £24,970.

The project is due for completion by 2009. Between now and then the group will run a series of open meetings related directly, or indirectly, to the parish's heritage, with training sessions and workshops for members to develop skills to produce material of as high a quality as possible. The grant will also allow the purchase of equipment needed to build up archives, both actual and digital, for a permanent and accessible record.

Each household in the parish, along with the village school, will receive a copy of the materials produced. The group is very grateful to Coddington History Society, which has also received a Local Heritage Initiative grant, and whose members have willingly shared their expertise. This is a challenging but enormously exciting project for the Norwell Parish Heritage Group.

*\*The Local Heritage Initiative (LHI) is a national grant scheme that helps local groups to investigate, explain and care for their local landscape, landmarks, traditions and culture. The Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) provides the grant but the scheme is a partnership, administered by the Countryside Agency with additional funding from Nationwide Building Society.*

### Register of Nottinghamshire Events and Special Dates - 2006

What happened in the sixth year of any Nottinghamshire decade? - we read in the last Newsletter that the 200th anniversary of Henry Kirke White's death falls this year. Also this year we have the end of the Civil War - 1646 - and the date of 956 when the charter of King Edwy was drawn up, granting land to fund the building of a minster at Southwell. Albert Ball was born in August 1896. Many more things happened, so please forward information, on this or any year, to Hon Secretary Barbara Cast. Dates could be of births, deaths of notable Nottinghamshire people, battles, celebrations, when buildings of note were erected etc. Write or email [bjcast@aol.com](mailto:bjcast@aol.com).

## BOOK REVIEWS

### *Society, Religion and Culture in Seventeenth Century Nottingham* edited by Martyn Bennett

Martyn Bennett will be known to Thoroton members through occasional lectures to the society, and for his Record Series volume of the Upton Constables' Book. Martyn has edited this collection of essays written by staff and former postgraduate students from Nottingham Trent University's early modern social history symposium, FORWARD. It brings together the results of recent research on a wide range of social phenomena, such as Kirsteen Macpherson-Bardell's essay on witchcraft, crime, the road to civil war, and literary culture. Essays on religion by Ken Gibson and Stuart Jennings look at the career of minister Richard Bernard and Protestant dissent in the county up to 1662. The late Anne Mitson's essay on credit networks in rural communities points the way to the funding of the agricultural revolution, whilst Linda Lees explores the crime women committed in the county. The book provides fascinating insights into the county's history during the 17th century, and sheds interesting light on the national story during this most exciting of periods. With a preface from the Thoroton Society's Chairman, the book is well worth a read! Unfortunately it needs to be read from a library copy, since Edwin Mellen Press has priced it at £69.95p.

**John Beckett**

***Lost Houses of Nottinghamshire* by Philip E Jones**

(Nottinghamshire County Council, 2006. Price £5.99;

Available from Thoroton bookstall, Nottinghamshire Archives and public libraries)

Philip Jones, a member of Thoroton Council, has written this short illustrated book for Nottinghamshire County Council. Despite its title, the book is actually about more than sixty of the larger country houses that have disappeared from the county over the past six centuries, and this gives it a certain nostalgia value. Many of the houses discussed here have been 'lost' since 1918, and the fact that they are described as such suggests a sense of mourning which would have been missing if the book had been titled 'Demolished Houses of Nottinghamshire'. Although some of the houses were lost long ago, including the splendid Haughton Hall, the majority have come down since 1918 because they were redundant and unsaleable on a market awash

with such properties. We might yearn after Nuthall Temple - as I do each time I join the M1 at junction 26 - or the glories of Clumber, let alone many of the smaller houses illustrated in the book; but their loss has been a product of market forces in a world which no longer includes servants. Country houses were a unique British phenomenon, but they were also about the land and estates that went with them, and when these were sold the house often became untenable. Perhaps we should be thankful for those that did survive! The book will be on sale on the Thoroton bookstall, and is an easy read with lots of illustrations, some of which I had not previously seen.

**John Beckett**

***NOTTINGHAM TRANSFORMED Architecture and Regeneration  
for the New Millennium* by Kenneth Powell**

(Photography by Martine Hamilton Knight. Merrell, £24.95)

Author Kenneth Powell is one of the country's finest architectural writers, and he records in a very easy manner the regeneration and development that has taken place in the City over the last quarter of a century. His text is enhanced - graced, perhaps - by the fine photography of Nottingham architectural photographer Martine Hamilton Knight.

After an introduction covering briefly the history, architecture and present state of Nottingham, six chapters (The Lace Market, Canal Corridor, City of Business, City of Learning, City of Culture, and City of Leisure) examine and assess over sixty major projects. There is a foreword by Sir Paul Smith and an afterword by Cllr Jon Collins. Well-known schemes up and running are featured, as well as others in the pipeline, with designs coming from both national and local architectural practices. Where appropriate a few buildings outside of the City's boundary are included. This is a handsomely produced book that will give pleasure and delightful surprise to many, whilst being an inspirational resource for developers and planners.

**Ken Brand**

Note: The book was the best selling non-fiction book at Waterstones during the first week of May.

