

THOROTON NEWSLETTER



No 47: Spring 2007

SUMMER EXCURSION PROGRAMME 2007

12 May - Nottingham Arboretum. Leader: Claire Wells



The Nottingham Arboretum was opened with considerable panache in 1852. Enormous crowds came on special trains from Derby, Sheffield and Manchester. Local dignitaries attended, and the Refreshment Rooms did a roaring trade while the bands played on. Today, a resource centre and refreshment facilities are amongst projects which are still on the Council's back burner, but don't let that deter you. With an attractive public park with a lake, all you need is a broly or sunshade, comfortable shoes

for paths and grass, maybe a small notebook, and a keen sense of anticipation.

**2 June - (note change of date to that shown on the Programme Card) -
Peterborough Cathedral and Flag Fen Bronze Age Site**

Leaders: Rosalys Coope and Barbara Cast

A monastic church was founded at Peterborough by King Peada in 655 AD, destroyed by the Danes in 870, rebuilt as part of a Benedictine Abbey and reconsecrated in 972, burned down accidentally in 1116 and rebuilt in its present form between 1118-1238. The structure of the building remains essentially as on completion almost 800 years ago.

Illustration - The west front of Peterborough cathedral.

Attractions at Flag Fen include the results of archaeological digs since 1982, the Museum with Britain's oldest wheel, the Preservation Hall with the only Bronze Age timbers displayed as excavated in Europe (most of the wood dates roughly between 1350-950 BC), reconstructed Bronze Age and Iron Age round houses, prehistoric-type farm animals, and a Roman herb garden.



This year's AGM (papers enclosed with this Newsletter) will be held in Saint Mary's Church Centre, Arnold, on Saturday 28 April. As there are plenty of buses to Arnold, with some stops very near the church, a coach will not be laid on. If anyone has any difficulty reaching Arnold, please let me know and we will see what can be arranged.

Barbara Cast, Hon Secretary

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

14 July - Repton School and Church, and West Nottinghamshire Churches. Leader: Alan Langton

The Society's planned visit to Repton was inspired by the historical fact that in 656 AD the first Bishop of Mercia, Diurna, was consecrated here by the second abbot of Lindisfarne. Our visit will include guided tours of the ancient church with its Anglo Saxon crypt (possibly the oldest places of worship in England), as well as parts of the historic school which stands on the site. Trowell church of Saint Helen stands guard to the Erewash valley, and its chancel dates at least to the 13th century, with sedilia and piscina. A 17th century wall monument to William Hacker records a member of a famous family in Nottinghamshire: his cousin led Charles I to the scaffold. The visit to St. Leonard's, Wollaton shows memorials to an even more famous Nottinghamshire family, the Willoughbys. Most of the building dates to the 14th century, with an



unusual tower which stands on two open arches. The church possesses a pre-Reformation service book, finely illuminated. A Thoroton Tea will be served in the village hall. *Illustration: Repton church crypt; image supplied courtesy of the Canon Derek Buckley Collection and www.picturethepast.org.uk*

Thursday 13 September - Nottinghamshire Archives and viewing of the Stenton Papers. Leader: John Beckett

Professor Frank Stenton was President of the Royal Historical Society, Professor of Modern History at Reading University from 1912-46, Vice-Chancellor from 1946-50, and author of *Anglo-Saxon England* (1943). Lady Stenton was lecturer, later reader, in history from 1920 to 1959, general editor of the Pipe Roll Society from 1925 to 1962, and author of *The English Woman in History* (1957). The Stenton family

has a long association with the Southwell area. Their papers were bequeathed by Lady Stenton twenty-five years ago to Nottinghamshire Archives. They include records of the Liberty of Southwell and Scrooby, Sheriffs' papers and archives relating to Sherwood Forest, the Militia and Southwell Minster. Richard Stenton (who was Sir Frank's great grandfather) was sheriff of Nottinghamshire in 1788.

CENTENARY HISTORY OF NOTTINGHAM

A decade ago our chairman, Professor John Beckett, edited for publication *A Centenary History of Nottingham*, in conjunction with celebrations of the granting of a city charter in 1897. The first copy of the book was given to The Queen when she visited the city. The book included major contributions from several Thoroton officers and members. It sold out almost immediately, and has been difficult to acquire ever since (even on E-Bay!). Now, local history publisher Phillimore has reprinted the book, with a few minor errors corrected, and it is once again in local bookstores, including Waterstones. When originally published the reviews were universally favourable, and the book is now established as the most authoritative account of the city's long history. Professor Beckett was consulted by other groups wanting to set up similar projects in their cities - notably Liverpool, which is bringing out a major new history to celebrate its status as European City of Culture in 2008. So, if you missed out last time, you have a second chance to own the book, and at a bargain price: the original was published at £50, while the new edition comes in at £30.

Nineteenth-century poverty in England and Wales

The National Archives (TNA) is seeking expressions of interest from local history societies, to collaborate on a project to catalogue a proportion of the 19th century English and Welsh Poor Law material held at TNA. These records are mainly the original incoming correspondence to the Poor Law Commissioners/Poor Law Board from the various Poor Law Unions. They are a fantastic resource for local historians - if only they were catalogued in such a way that researchers knew what was in specific volumes! The correspondence relating to the Southwell Union for the period 1834-1871 has already been catalogued by a team of volunteers at The

Workhouse, Southwell, and will be available to search (free) on TNA website from mid-April 2007. Depending on external funding, TNA is proposing to 'scan' sets of Poor Law correspondence for other Unions so that volunteers with computer access can work on them at home (after suitable training). Philip Jones, who has been involved with the project at Southwell, has agreed to act as co-ordinator for the Thoroton Society in this initiative.

If you are interested in taking part, please contact Philip by email at philedjones@yahoo.co.uk, or by post at 40 Regina Crescent, Ravenshead, Nottingham NG15 9AE.

Local History, with special reference to Roads

Tony Newman is Research Co-ordinator for the Roads & Road Transport History Association, founded in 1992 as a clearing house for historical research in the subjects of its title. One of its objectives is to bring together academic, museum, specialist and enthusiast bodies. Its website is at www.rrtha.org.uk. Tony is currently trying to find written items that may so far have had a limited circulation in a particular locality, but which deserve greater connection with the strands of national transport history. He has already circulated 80 organizations, with such encouraging results that the Board of the Association has authorized him to carry out a further survey. He would be interested to hear whether any Thoroton members have produced (or are currently working on) anything on the history of any bus, char-a-banc or coach operators, road haulage contractors, removals businesses or similar activities. Such details ~~may form only part of a wider local history, or a small section of a museum~~, but could prove to be vital pieces of a larger 'jigsaw' puzzle. Tony Newman can be contacted by email at agn4rrtha@btinternet.com

Study Day at Edwinstowe and Rufford - 15 May

'Rufford Revealed: The History of the Gardens from Cistercian Utility to Edwardian Opulence'

Beneath this popular Nottinghamshire Country Park lie layers of garden history. A study day on Rufford, organized by the Leicestershire and Rutland Gardens Trust, will reveal the hidden narrative through presentations and a guided walk. The venue: South Forest Conference Centre, Edwinstowe, and Rufford Country Park. Speakers include Glyn Coppack and Pete Smith (English Heritage) on, respectively, the

Cistercian period, and the formal and landscape period; and Philip Jones (Thoroton Society), on the Victorian and Edwardian gardens. The cost is £30. For further details and to request a booking form please contact Lucy Alcock, Country Parks Community Liaison Officer, Rufford Country Park, Ollerton, Nottingham, NG22 9DF, or you can email her at: lucy.alcock@nottsc.gov.uk

OBITUARY: OWEN WOOD

Members of the Society will be saddened to hear of the death, a few days short of his 101st birthday, of Owen Wood. He was a long time member of the Society and took part in excursions until quite recently. Shortly after his death I was contacted by an advertising company who were trying to get in touch with him. They were working on a new advertising campaign for Muller yoghurt, and were recruiting 100 people aged from 1 to 100 as 'lid-lickers'. Lid lickers are positive people with a love of life and a can-do attitude were to star in the Muller TV ads, and they were wondering if Owen would join them as the 100-year old. I think that it is something that would have appealed to him, but sadly this brief moment of fame eluded him.

The death of Owen means that the search is now on for our oldest member. If you are over 85 years old or have been a member of the Society for over 40 years, can you get in touch with me so that I can compile a list? I promise that I will not publish anything without your approval. **Keith Goodman**

REPORTS OF LECTURES

**Saturday 11 November 2006: The Nottinghamshire History Lecture:
*Men Behaving Badly? Gentlemen, Rogues and Fellows in
Seventeenth-Century Nottingham* - Jennie Jordan**



Jennie Jordan (pictured left) is currently writing up her PhD at Nottingham Trent University on 'Becoming a Man: Prescriptions of Manhood and Manliness in Early Modern England'. She is also convenor of a successful early modern social history forum called FORWARD. In her lecture Ms Jordan presented some of her research which was quite wide-ranging. Seventeenth-century men were concerned with order and stability to maintain their patriarchal authority in their everyday lives, whether at home or in society outside it. How this was carried out could cause a great deal of anxiety, as men were required to exert control over themselves in order to gain control over their wives, children and others. Marriage was seen as the ultimate state of social acceptance, and unmarried men were regarded as not fully able to participate in society. The test of manhood was the ability to provide for a wife and family, and failure to do so could subject a

man to various (largely economic) penalties. Great efforts were made to get a man to acknowledge and support his illegitimate children, in order not to burden the (often meagre) resources of the local parish. Drunken husbands were vilified, particularly in contemporary popular ballads, as this was an obvious demonstration of lack of control, and being drunk was 'the shipwreck of the mind'. The lecture was illustrated by examples of the charmingly primitive, often amusing, woodcuts found with the printed ballads of the time. These aroused a great deal of interest, and the many questions after the lecture demonstrated how Ms Jordan had gained the audience's attention. **Trevor Foulds**

**Saturday 9 December: *The Christmas Story in Stained Glass* -
Peter Gibson**

This last lecture of the 2006 programme attracted a large audience. We were transported by a series of excellent slides on a journey not only through many ecclesiastical buildings of Europe, but also through the New Testament accounts of the Nativity story. We were handsomely treated to a delightful and moving journey, as well as to living examples of the photographic skills and religious faith of the presenter, Peter Gibson, FSA, OBE. Peter has lived most of his life under the walls of York Minster and, like his father before him, has lovingly cared for and restored the stained glass of York, as well as that of twelve other cathedrals and over two thousand parish churches. We followed the journey around some of the windows of these buildings, and were able to observe the spiritual message and nuances provided by the many craftsmen across the ages in their depiction of the Biblical accounts of the Annunciation and the Nativity. **Alan Langton**



Peter has been justifiably awarded a range of honours for his significant work by countries throughout Europe, as well as being awarded the Freedom of the City of London, and the St William's Silver Cross of the Archbishop of York. The Thoroton Society has been most privileged to have enjoyed such a memorable afternoon.

Alan Langton

This year's Nottinghamshire History Lecture will be on 'The Medieval Stained Glass of Nottinghamshire - Society, Patronage, Liturgy and Iconography', by Dr Allan Barton on 10 November.

Saturday 13 January 2007: Archaeology Lecture
The Newark Iron Age Gold Torc - Rachel Atherton and J D Hill

A full house got the year off to an excellent start with a fascinating lecture on the Newark gold torc, given jointly by Rachel Atherton (right), Portable Antiquities Scheme (PAS) officer for Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire and curator at Derby Museum, and J D Hill, an Iron Age specialist and director of research at the British Museum. Also on hand was Maurice Richardson, the metal detectorist and keen amateur archaeologist who found the torc in a ploughed field near Newark in 2005 - not surprisingly, the most spectacular find of his thirty-five years in archaeology. Rachel outlined PAS's work, which deals with the reporting and identification of casual finds of archaeological objects, 92% of which are made by detectorists. The Newark



torc, a gold and silver alloy neck band weighing 700g (nearly 2lb), was made around 100 BC in the Snettisham area of Norfolk. Excavations following its discovery suggest it was buried adjacent to a ring-ditch and a rectilinear ditched feature, which looked enticingly like a small Arras-type square barrow; however these interesting features produced no finds on excavation.



JD Hill (left) described his initial disbelief that the torc was genuine, and gave the science team at the British Museum two weeks to prove it was a fake. However, analysis and detailed examination proved it to be an authentic middle Iron Age object, almost identical to an example from Sedgeford in Norfolk. Probably both were products of the same craft workshop, and part of a later prehistoric tradition of intricate neck ornaments intended to convey the status of the wearer and their community, rather like a modern mayoral chain. The Newark torc probably found its way from Norfolk, where it has many parallels, to a Newark field via many generations of gift giving, perhaps moving several miles from its original owner's community with each generation. Exactly why such torcs were buried is unclear; it might have been a religious

offering made at a time of change and uncertainty in Britain, when many similar objects were deliberately interred. Thanks to a grant from the National Heritage Memorial Fund, this magnificent piece of Iron Age art has been acquired by Newark and Sherwood District Council, and will eventually go on display in one of the town's museums.

Keith Challis

Saturday 10 February: The Nora Witham Lecture
Non-Conformity in South Nottinghamshire - Howard Fisher



Howard Fisher's research into the nonconformists in the Wolds villages of Keyworth, Normanton-on-the-Wolds, Stanton-on-the-Wolds, Plumtree, Widmerpool and Wysall, has taken him into the records of Wesleyan and Primitive Methodists, Baptists and Congregationalists. What he has found made a fascinating lecture in which he considered buildings, people, schools, and the whole culture of nonconformity. It transpired that the Indian Knights curry house in Keyworth was the original Congregational chapel in the village. It was replaced in 1903, and like many of the other chapels in the area, cost money the members could ill-afford. Problems with the Anglicans, problems paying the minister, problems with members who strayed from the rules, and problems with the Band of Hope, all figured in the lecture - but it was not just about what went wrong. The role of the Sunday Schools in providing education, at least before the 1870s, the social life of the chapels, the importance of framework knitters in the congregations of Primitive Methodist chapels, and other fascinating little vignettes about life among the Wolds nonconformists, all figured in the talk, which we can hope to see written up for our *Transactions* in the near future.

John Beckett

WOLLATON DOVECOTE MUSEUM

Towards the end of 2006 there was an ominous flutter in Wollaton's village dovecote museum, when it seemed the Elizabethan building might have to close after twenty years as a museum. Nottingham Civic Society announced its withdrawal of support, since the Corporation had closed down its shop at the Castle entrance, from which takings were earmarked for the dovecote. However, the wings of alarm have been stilled: a new tenancy agreement has been signed and Nottingham City Council, which owns the 1572 Grade II listed building, accepted responsibility for its maintenance and insurance. The dovecote is forging ahead with plans for a continued future. The museum will

open on the Sundays of 13 May, 10 June, 8 July, 12 August and 16 September, as well as on Heritage Weekend (8 & 9 September), with craft demonstrations. The parish church and bell tower of St Leonard's will be open to visitors on 13 May (2-4pm), and performing the ceremony at the Dovecote will be Dr David Marcombe from the University of Nottingham. The 'Wollaton Weekend' will begin on Saturday 12 May with a visit by the Newstead Abbey Singers at 7.30pm; tickets cost £5, including wine: contact Mrs Maureen Jones on 0115 9282567. Mrs Jones, the Museum's energetic curator since its inception, will be retiring after this year. **Emrys Bryson**

CALL FOR AN ASSISTANT SECRETARY

If anyone could spare a few hours to assist the Hon Sec with some of the Society's business, this would be most welcome. It would mainly be to help with the AGM and Annual Luncheon arrangements. Expressions of interest to me, Barbara Cast, Hon Sec, hard-worked and short of time, at bjcast@aol.com, or telephone 01636 830284.

Please email contributions for *Newsletter* No 48 by 1 May 2007 to Janice Avery at: ianaver1@vahoo.co.uk. The views expressed in the *Newsletter* are not necessarily those of the Editor, the Society or its Council