

# THOROTON NEWSLETTER



No 51: Spring 2008

## SUMMER EXCURSION PROGRAMME 2008

### **24 & 25 May – Excursion to Swansea (Leader: Steph Mastoris)**

The excursion will leave Nottingham early on Saturday morning. Steph Mastoris, a Thoroton Society member who recently moved to be head of the National Waterfront Museum at Swansea, will take us around the Museum and on a walking tour of the maritime quarter on Saturday afternoon. After overnight in a local hotel we will have a coach tour of Swansea Bay, the Gower and lower Swansea Valley on Sunday morning. The excursion will arrive back on Sunday evening. The Museum (<http://www.museumwales.ac.uk/en/swansea/>) is part of the National Museum of Wales. There are three elements to the building: a former dockside warehouse, originally built in 1901, a suite of new exhibition galleries, and a central foyer connecting the two. Internal features and facilities were designed to the highest specifications to provide a home for the national treasures that tell the story of industry and innovation in Wales. Wales was one of the earliest and most heavily industrialized nations on earth. The country has reaped the benefits, but also suffered the consequences. At the National Waterfront Museum you can be plunged into poverty, wallow in wealth, dabble with danger, and even risk your health! Experience noise, grime, high finance, upheaval, consumerism and opportunity.

### **29 May – Excursion to Newstead Abbey (Leaders: John Beckett and Rosalys Coope)**

This half-day visit to one of Nottingham's best known country house is a must for members, as they will be allowed in free! It will begin with a three-part talk (each part very brief) about the house (Rosalys Coope), the families (John Beckett) and the Newstead Collections (Haidee Jackson, curator). There will be guided tours of the house, followed by tea. Providing the weather is fine, there will be an opportunity to visit the grounds in the immediate vicinity of the house, when John Beckett will explain some of his new findings about the way in which the estate developed from 1926. Newstead's most famous owner was, of course, the 6th Lord Byron, the poet, born 220 years ago in 1788. His influence can still be seen at Newstead, but the story of the house since he sold it in 1819 is just as interesting, and will be discussed on this excursion.

### **18 June – Nottingham University Manuscripts & Special Collections (Leader: Dorothy Johnston)**

During the evening of 18 June the University of Nottingham Manuscripts and Special Collections Department will welcome Thoroton members to view the collections in their new accommodation at King's Meadow Campus. The move from the Hallward Library on main campus was made in 2006. The new store, a converted television studio, provides about 8km of shelving to house some 3 million documents and 60,000 rare books. The University began the collection in the 1930s, and the national significance of its major family and estate archives has been recognized in the award of designation status by the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council. The collections include records of local business, trades unions, ecclesiastical and other organizations, literary and private papers, as well as archives of the University and its members.

Dorothy Johnston, Keeper of Manuscripts and Special Collections, will provide an introduction to the service. Visitors will be able to see some items on display in the Reading Room and look behind the scenes at the store, conservation and digitization facilities. Of special interest to the Society is the East Midlands Collection for Local Studies, which contains books, pamphlets and periodicals on the region's historic counties. Its older titles form part of the extensive Special Collections (Printed Books), held with the archives in the reserved store.

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~ The Thoroton Society of Nottinghamshire ~  
~ The County's Principal Historical Society ~  
Visit the Thoroton Website at: [www.thorotonsociety.org.uk](http://www.thorotonsociety.org.uk)

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## 12 July – Excursion to Grantham and east Nottinghamshire Churches (Leader: Alan Langton)



This summer excursion follows the theme of Nottinghamshire Churches, but takes in three counties. We visit first St Wolfram's church, Grantham, Lincolnshire [pictured left], claiming to have the finest steeple in England. A guided tour of the interior will show its original 14<sup>th</sup>-century stone work and Gilbert Scott's Victorian roof and rood screen. There is some fine Kempe glass contained in the windows. Ruskin is said to have swooned when he first entered the building! There will be time for lunch in Grantham before we visit Bottesford in Leicestershire. St Mary's church, with another fine steeple, is often known as the 'Lady of the Vale', and our guided tour will show us alabaster tombs of the de Roos and Manners families, predecessors of the Dukes of Rutland. At Colston Bassett, Nottinghamshire, we will be met by the Thorton Society's own guide, Adrian Henstock, an acknowledged authority on this

village and its two churches – the present building constructed in 1892 as a memorial to the wife and son of a former owner of the Hall; and its ruined predecessor, recently rescued from total destruction. We will end with a traditional 'Thorton tea' at Granby village hall.

*Picture: St Wolfram's church (west front), Grantham; courtesy of James Newman, Skyscrapernews.com*

## 6 September – Excursion to Wentworth Castle (Leaders: Derek and Ceril Little)

South Yorkshire's only grade I listed garden is at Wentworth Castle in Stainborough Park near Barnsley. The Castle is an impressive baroque and Palladian mansion standing high above the M1 motorway. It was built by Thomas Wentworth, who was a collateral descendant of Thomas Wentworth, first Earl of Strafford, and who was executed for treason on Charles I's orders. Thomas had failed to inherit the family estate of Wentworth Woodhouse, near Rotherham. The estate, lacking a direct heir, passed to the second Earl of Strafford's sister, instead of Thomas, the male cousin. Thereafter there was rivalry between the two branches of the family, not least in the splendour of their respective houses and estates. During the 20<sup>th</sup> century, after both estates had passed from family ownership into local authority hands, both became teacher-training colleges during the 1950s and 60s.



Wentworth Woodhouse is once again in private ownership and is not open to visitors; while the Castle remains an educational establishment, the Northern College of Adult Residential Education. Together with its park and gardens, it is now open to the public, under the care and restoration of the Wentworth Castle and Stainborough Park Heritage Trust.

*Picture: The South Lawn and Palladian Wing of Wentworth Castle*

**A REMINDER OF FORTHCOMING LECTURES**  
to take place at the Nottingham Mechanics, 3 North Sherwood Street,  
Nottingham, at 2.45pm. This venue has full disabled access and facilities.

**Saturday 8 March: The Maurice Barley Lecture**  
*'The Use of Laser Scanning in the Archaeological Recording  
of Historic Buildings'* – Malcolm Hislop and Michael Lobb

**Saturday 18 October: Archaeology Lecture**  
*'The Hatfield Trackway and Platform:  
A Neolithic Ceremonial Site in a Wetland Context'* – Henry Chapman

and organized since publication of the programme card:

**SATURDAY 8 NOVEMBER – NOTTINGHAMSHIRE HISTORY  
LECTURE**  
*'Eating and Drinking in Nottinghamshire Households 1540-1640'* –  
Mark Dawson

### **Our President on location!**

20/20 vision members will spot our President, Rosalys Coope, second from the right in this picture! She was caught on camera at the Tercentenary Dinner of the Society of Antiquaries, held at Armoury House, London, the headquarters of the Honourable Artillery Company, on December 5 last year. In the centre of the picture is the President, Geoff Wainwright (wearing medallion), and just left of centre the guest speaker, Sir Simon Jenkins. Members won't be surprised to see Rosalys is flanked by gentlemen, including Professor Maurice Howard (two to her right), and Professor Eric Fernie on her left.



### **OBITUARY: Geoffrey Mein**

Geoffrey, who was a life member, died recently. In his younger days he was associated with the archaeological work of the Society. Subsequently he moved away from the area to live at Usk, in Wales, but he retained an interest in the Society. In 1996 he unearthed his Society tie and attended the Annual Lunch at Southwell. At that time he had already been a member for more than half a century. A photograph of Geoffrey, with our chairman, was published in the Centenary booklet in 1997 (p32). A funeral and memorial service was held in Usk on 1 March.

### **GEOFFREY BOND, OBE**

Another of our life members, Mr Geoffrey Bond of Southwell, was appointed OBE in the New Year Honours for his services to heritage. He is Chairman of Papplewick Pumping Station, and Deputy Chair of the Museum of Law and the National Centre for Citizenship and the Law. Geoffrey also has many roles further afield, and members will recall his talk to the Annual Lunch following the year that he spent as Sheriff of London in 2003-4. He is currently chairman of MLA London, the strategic regional development agency for museums, libraries and archives. He is also, of course, a great Byronist.

## REPORTS OF LECTURES

**Saturday 8 December 2007 – ‘Young Lawrence’ by John Worthen**

Professor John Worthen [*pictured right*] of the University of Nottingham's D H Lawrence Research Centre, and editor and biographer of Lawrence, began his Christmas lecture by explaining the significance of the date. The first appearance in print of a work by D H Lawrence was on 7 December 1907. A short story, ‘The Prelude’, won its category in the Nottingham Guardian Christmas competition; it was submitted on his behalf by Lawrence's childhood friend Jessie Chambers.

Professor Worthen provided a fascinating account of Lawrence's early development as a writer during his student years in Nottingham and his period as a teacher in Croydon. The aspiring author read voraciously and experimented with a wide variety of literary genres, drawing on the style and technique of established authors. He consciously distanced himself from his Eastwood identity and Eastwood's mining culture. When his novel *The Trespasser* was published (1912), Lawrence received favourable critical attention for his accomplished literary imagery. From this point, however, his writing changed. Prompted by Hueffer, the editor of *English Review*, he turned to his Midlands working class background for inspiration and developed his own voice, encouraged soon by the influence of his German wife Frieda. Although in later years Lawrence himself rewrote his early literary history, portraying himself as just a collier's son, a more complex picture was drawn by Professor Worthen who speculated that Lawrence's pre-1912 writing would not in itself have given him lasting fame. The talk prompted a lively discussion, including questions about Lawrence's links with Nottingham High School.



**Dorothy Johnston**

**Saturday 12 January 2008 – The Nora Witham Lecture:  
‘Picture the Past’ by Nick Tomlinson**

The lecture on this occasion was given by Nick Tomlinson, the Project Manager of ‘Picture the Past’. The presentation was an interesting change from the Society's usual style of lecture, in that it concentrated on the technology involved in preserving, digitizing, and storing photographic images, slides, negatives, postcards and other records of the past, which had been taken in and around Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire, and the cities of Nottingham and Derby. The project was begun some six years ago, since when over 67,000 scanned photographs have been collated and catalogued. The project received a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund for the first three years, but is now dependent upon the continued good will of the two counties and cities.

Nick gave members ample evidence of the scope and complexity of the project, which was no doubt understandable technology to some of the attenders, but which opened the eyes of many others. His presentation was given in an easily absorbed way, and the meeting was kept alert throughout, amazed by the skill of the work involved. The ‘Picture the Past’ website was launched in 2003, and it now attracts some 10,000 visitors each month from all over the world - evidence of the interest and value it has created. Nick concluded his lecture by giving members easily understood instructions for accessing the website themselves. Clearly, judging by the questions asked, the information created much interest among the members present. **Alan Langton**

## Annual General Meeting – Norwell, 26 April 2008

This year's AGM will be held in Norwell Village Hall, a relatively new building with full facilities. There will be a chance to visit the church, and to learn more about, and perhaps go on, the recently recreated Heritage Trail. Norwell has an active Heritage group, and a great deal of effort is going into researching and writing the village's history (see page 6 of *Newsletter* No 50 for more information). We should find out more on the day – but if you would like to learn more about the church in advance of the meeting, you can check Norwell's entry on the following website: <http://southwellchurches.nottingham.ac.uk/n12/index.html>. Papers for the business meeting will be circulated to members under separate cover.

## The Myles Thoroton Hildyard Lecture

Council decided in 2007 that one of the annual lecture series should commemorate our late and long serving president, Myles Thoroton Hildyard, who died in 2005. Myles left the Society a small sum of money, and the interest is to be used to pay a fee for the lecture.

The first Myles Thoroton Hildyard lecture was given by Nigel Lowey on 9 February (see report below). Although the subject was St Pancras station, there was a connection – one of



the architects unsuccessful in the competition to build the Midland Hotel at St Pancras was T C Hine, who was, of course, the architect of Myles's house, Flintham Hall.

Myles's nephew Robert Hildyard [*pictured above with Thoroton's Chairman John Beckett*], who now lives at Flintham Hall, attended the lecture and spoke a few words about Myles and about the house. He said how pleased he and his sister Marianna were that the Society, which was always close to Myles's heart, should commemorate him in this manner. Robert said he hoped to join the Society, and to forge closer links through a future summer visit to Flintham. The President thanked him for his kind remarks. Robert Hildyard also confirmed that Myles was christened 'Miles', but at some stage adopted the spelling 'Myles'. We agreed that from now on, it would be Myles!

**John Beckett**



### 9 February 2008 – The Myles Thoroton Hildyard Lecture – Nigel Lowey, 'St Pancras'

Nigel Lowey [*pictured left*] is not a historian, but he is an excellent speaker! Anyone who knows or uses St Pancras Station will have appreciated this tour through the history of Barlow's Shed from the 1860s when the station was first developed, to the renovations of the last few years which have turned it into the Eurostar Terminus as 'St Pancras International'. On the way we had a guided excursion through the magnificent Sir George Gilbert Scott hotel, sadly vandalised by the tasteless (in every way) employees of the unlamented British Rail, who eventually caused such damage and decay that the building had to be abandoned in 1985. It is due to become apartments and a luxury hotel, probably in 2010. St Pancras is a local station for East Midlanders, with

the bricks made in Mapperley, and the ironwork by the Butterley Company at Ripley. It has served the East Midlands ever since, but with High Speed 1 (2 hours 10 mins to Paris) leaving from one side of the station, and East Midlands Trains and First Capital Connect from the other, it is now an international terminus we must share. Thank goodness for John Betjeman, who led the successful campaign to save St Pancras (when it was threatened in the wake of the demolition of Euston), and for William Barlow, whose ingenuity made the project possible on the site available; and to the railway politics of the 1860s which made a new station next to King's Cross necessary.

**John Beckett**

## Book Review

**Catherine A. Smith, *The Renaissance of the Nottinghamshire Market Town 1680-1840* (2007)**

In the decades after 1660 major English towns were refashioned and often rebuilt. Thoroton noticed this happening in Nottingham in the 1670s, and a decade ago the process was unpicked by Adrian Henstock in *A Centenary History of Nottingham*, ed John Beckett (1997). Cathy Smith's book complements this work by expanding on her Nottinghamshire History Lecture to the Thoroton Society in 1991 to show how the renewal process in the smaller towns of the county was just as real, but it came later, mainly from the 1770s or thereabouts. The large towns, notably Mansfield and Newark, and to a lesser extent Worksop and East Retford, saw the most change, with Bingham and Ollerton much less affected. Dr Smith examines urban development (in terms of population, building and economic change including the

appearance of mills and other 'industrial' functions to supplement the staple interest in agricultural processing). There is discussion of social emulation, household goods, property ownership, clubs and societies, residential segregation, street improvements, new buildings (including public buildings such as town halls), and the broader issue of urban 'improvement'. Although at times the book reads a little too much like the thesis on which it is based, it makes an important contribution to our understanding of urban change in Nottinghamshire between the 1660s and the mid-19th century, and also provides an interesting comparative context in which to view the separate histories of Nottinghamshire's market towns.

**John Beckett**

### **NOTTINGHAMSHIRE LOCAL HISTORY ASSOCIATION INVITES YOU TO 'A SMALL WORLD': THE PARISH AND ITS COMMUNITY SATURDAY 29 MARCH 2008**

This one-day event will begin at 9.40am at the Village Hall, Ravenshead, with lectures on 'Parish Origins and Development', 'Norwell – The Experience of a Church Village', 'Opening up the Parish Chest' and 'The Urban Parish and the Urban Poor'. The NLHA's AGM will take place at 12.15pm, and there will be a bookshop. The Village Hall will remain open during the lunch break for attenders wishing to take their own refreshments; alternatively, there are several public houses and eating places in the vicinity. The fee is £6.50 for NLHA members, £7.50 non-members. For further details or to reserve a place, contact Miss D Pearce, Rhed Cottage, Station Road, Ollerton, NG22 9BN, tel 01623 870515.

**Please send contributions for Newsletter No 52 by 1 May 2008 to Janice Avery, email: [janaver1@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:janaver1@yahoo.co.uk) (text in Word files, pictures in pdf or jpeg files). The views expressed in the Newsletter are not necessarily those of the Editor, the Society or its Council**