

THE THOROTON SOCIETY

Nottinghamshire's History and Archaeology Society



Newsletter Issue 57 Autumn 2009

THE OUTINGS 2009 IN PICTURES



*St. Botolph's, Boston
(Familiarly known as Boston Stump)*



St. Helen's, Brant Broughton



*The award winning restoration of the boathouse
at Belton House*



Woolsthorpe Manor House

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

BOSTON STUMP, BRANT BROUGHTON and NORTH MUSKHAM

Alan Langton

Boston Stump celebrates the 700th year of its foundation in 2009, and our visit to this enormous, light and airy building took place on a delightful Spring day. The large group was divided into two to see and hear about the history and special features of the church, which includes the slender pillars of the nave, the 14th Century choir stalls with their fascinating misericords, the 17th century pulpit, the beautifully restored ceilings of the nave and chancel, and windows by Kempe and Hardman.

The bustle of a market and fair outside the church, which coincided with our visit, provided a realistic medieval feel to the occasion.

St. Helen's church at Brant Broughton, although originally a 13th century building, was heavily restored by Rector Frederick Heathcote Sutton and the architect George Bodley between 1874 and 1876; the result is what has been described as a spectacular 'medieval dream' with its clerestory

and fine angel roof, a spectacular font cover and an impressive organ for such a quiet village church. Jennifer Harvey's short talk was both informative and full of justified pride for the building where she worships.

Our visit to St. Wilfrid's at North Muskham was introduced by Valerie and David Mellors, two members of the Society. This well-cared for building dates from the 13th century, and evidence of the antiquity of the church includes part of the tower, some of the Norman arcading, the studded oak door, and a now-unused stone font bowl. Other features include the medieval remains in the present screen, a fine Jacobean table and altar rails, old rafters and beams with floral bosses, and a curious alabaster pyramid dated 1591 containing the terms of the will of one John Smith.

The day ended with a splendid 'Thoroton' tea at Ossington Village Hall.

NEWARK MUSEUM RESOURCE CENTRE

John Hamilton

On 19 June a small group of intrepid members found their way to our meeting place behind the main railway station in Newark. The Centre may be hidden at the back of an uninviting municipal facility in the depths of an industrial estate, but it could be described as an Aladdin's Cave on two floors.

We were made very welcome by Glyn Hughes, Senior Collections Officer, and several other officers of the Newark and Sherwood Museum Service. After a brief history of Newark Museum and the Resource Centre, we were conducted (suitably wrapped up, as the collections are kept cool for preservation) into the 'cave' itself. Here we were introduced to a sample selection of items; Newark agricultural smocks from the large collection of clothing, embossed bottles from the local brewers and monstrous dinosaur teeth. We saw a collection of bicycles and many other objects of everyday living from Victorian times onwards, as well as some of the books and photographs in the store.

Downstairs were many paintings of local scenes and local worthies, hiding behind their protective

curtains. Fragments of Roman mosaics and a couple of lead coffins of the same era were shown to us, part of the large numbers of archaeological remains housed there. We were able to browse freely around the store, picking out items of individual interest.

In total the Centre houses the museum's reserve collections of over 60,000 objects and over 14,000 photographs. There are over 700 pieces of art to look at, more than 300 items of costume, 30,000 items of archaeology, numerous documents, registers, poll books and early newspapers on microfiche.

We are most grateful to Glyn Hughes and his colleagues for the trouble they took over our visit. It was only a pity that more members did not take advantage of this opportunity. For those who wish to make use of these extensive holdings, the Resource Centre is open for visiting researchers on Wednesday and Thursday between 12.30 and 5 p.m; Friday 9 am to 1.30 pm and Saturday 9 am to 12 noon. An appointment is essential; telephone 01636-655777 and email museums@nsdc.info.

WOOLSTHORPE MANOR, BELTON HOUSE AND THE KING'S SCHOOL, GRANTHAM

David Crook

On a pleasantly warm, although a little overcast, day nearly fifty members of the Society enjoyed a visit to three interesting places in the Grantham area of Lincolnshire, two of them closely associated with the great scientist, Sir Isaac Newton (1642-1727).

The visit began at Woolsthorpe Manor, near Colsterworth to the south of Grantham, where Newton was born and brought up between 1642 and 1654, and to which he returned in 1665-7 to undertake some of his most original scientific research during a period of plague in Cambridge.

The outside of the house, a typical farmhouse of that period, is virtually unaltered since his day, but none of the original furniture remains there and a new staircase has altered some of the internal layout. The upstairs room in which he was born contains a tablet commemorating that fact over the fireplace. Another room contains a display illustrating Newton's work on the light spectrum, while the window looks out over the garden, which contains a direct descendant of the tree from which fell the apples which led him to understand gravity.



The group moved on for lunch to Belton House, a large mansion built for the Brownlow family at the end of the seventeenth century. This gave the opportunity to explore not only the house itself but also the magnificent gardens and extensive park, including the recently restored nineteenth century boathouse at the edge of the lake.



The Old Hall, King's School

Finally, we visited the old free grammar school in Grantham, together with the nearby schoolmaster's house.



The Master's House

Built before 1528 and little altered since then, it is now the library of The King's School.

There, members heard a talk from David Crook about the school and its important place in Isaac Newton's life, and gave an account of what is known of Newton's time there between 1655 and 1660. There was also the opportunity to see the place in the stonework of the building where he, among many other pupils, scratched his name.



The visit concluded with a fine tea provided by the school catering manager, the highlight of which was a magnificent lemon drizzle cake made with potato, which provided a memorable end to a very good day.

(See also colour images from this visit on the front and back pages of this issue. Newton was born prematurely on Christmas Day 1642. His father died shortly before the birth and his mother, Hannah Ayscough, raised him at Woolsthorpe before she moved to North Witham upon marriage to Rev. Barnabas Smith. Isaac remained at Woolsthorpe with his grandparents. His mother returned in 1653 after Smith died, together with her two daughters by him, and she ran the estate until her death.)

BOOTS 1849-2009 DISPENSING FEEL GOOD FORMULAS

WEDNESDAY 9 SEPTEMBER - SUNDAY 22 NOVEMBER

Weston Gallery, D.H. Lawrence Pavilion, University Park, University of Nottingham

The Autumn exhibition contains much of local interest. It celebrates 160 years of Boots' history, drawing chiefly on the Boots Archive and Museum collections, complimented by University archives. It has been curated by the archivists at Boots in partnership with The University's Manuscripts and Special Collections department.

The first Boots shop opened on Goose Gate in Nottingham in 1849. Originally a small herbalist store providing affordable family remedies, the business grew through the vision and drive of Jesse Boot to become a household name with local pharmacies across the country. Now a global brand, Boots has retained a strong association with Nottingham's community - both as a major employer and through its long tradition of charitable giving.

The display charts the company's origins and growth. It explores Boots' pharmacy heritage as well as the development of its beauty brands. The company was a pioneer in employee welfare, and the exhibition focuses on the people, recording social and sporting events, descriptions of working conditions and recollections from past employees.

The story of Jesse Boot's philanthropy to Nottingham is linked to the history of the University of Nottingham. University archives show Boot's close interest in the development of the campus and the public facilities which followed his gift of the Highfields estate to the city.

A series of talks and events will be held to accompany the exhibition. A special workshop will be held for members of the public who would like to share memories of working at Boots. For further information see the Lakeside Arts *On* brochure, or contact Manuscripts and Special Collections at the University: tel: 0115-951-4565 or email mss.library@nottingham.ac.uk

Lunchtime talks 1pm - 2 pm. Admission Free but book places in advance on 0115-846-777

Venue is the Performing Arts Workshop.

Wednesday 23 September: *A Family Business*. Sophie Clapp (Boots Archives) will provide a history of Boots and the Boot family using images from the company archive.

Wednesday 14 October: *Unlocking the Past*. Discover how the Boots archive collection is used to support present day business activities. The Boots Archive team will discuss how the Boots heritage is kept alive and will bring along some unusual items from the collection.

Wednesday 11 November: *Boots: A Business Within the Community*. Boots' record of community giving spans over two centuries, Charlotte McCarthy (Boots Archives) outlines some of the many donations made by Boots to the people of Nottingham. Oonagh Turnbull, Head of Corporate Social Responsibility, Boots UK will also highlight some current local initiatives.

Thursday 8 October: *Collecting Memories of Boots*. A Workshop for adults (over 18 years) 1.30 pm - 4.30 pm. Venue and booking as above.

Do you have memories of working in Boots factories or shops, or as a Boots customer? Join writer Andy Barrett and Sophie Clapp for afternoon tea and some 'memory collecting'. Afterwards, your recorded anecdotes will be transcribed and added to the Boots Company Archive for posterity.

A CENTURY OF FATHERHOOD

Testimony Films, based in Bristol, are seeking stories for a television series charting A Century of Fatherhood to be shown on BBC4 in 2010. They particularly seek stories from the older generation reflecting their role as fathers as well as hearing from fathers who left their families to fight in the Second World War and from the children they left behind. A further interest is in fathers of the 1960s to find out how the sexual revolution affected traditional family life.

Testimony Films has a track record of making oral history documentaries, they interviewed Harry Patch about his WW1 memories when he was 98. For further information visit www.testimonyfilms.com and anyone interested in contributing should contact research1@testimonyfilms.com (Ed: Harry Patch sadly died 25 July 2009 he was born 17 June 1898)

THE LECTURE PROGRAMME

TUESDAY, 13 OCTOBER 2009

THE KEITH TRAIN LECTURE

Follies: Emblems of Foolish Luxury, by Andrew Plumridge.

Andrew is the founder of The Follies Fellowship and his talk is a look at the eccentric world of follies. 7.30 pm at the Cathedral Hall, Wellington Circus, Nottingham.

The Keith Train Lecture is always given in association with the Nottingham Civic Society.

SATURDAY, 17 OCTOBER 2009

THE MYLES THOROTON HILDYARD LECTURE

Gold in the Wars of the Roses, by Dr. Barrie Cook FSA

Dr. Cook is the Curator of Medieval and Early Modern Coinage - Coinage of Medieval and Early Modern Britain and Europe, in the Department of Coins and Medals, the British Museum. He has wide experience in curating exhibitions and his publications include *English Medieval Coin Hoards 1: Cross and Crosslets, Short and Long Cross Hoards*, with M. M. Archibald, (London, British Museum Occasional Paper 87, 2001).

Among the recently selected top ten treasures of the British Museum is the Fishpool Hoard, the biggest find of gold coins ever made in Britain. It was discovered on 22 March 1966 on a building site at the village of Fishpool. (*Ed: now Ravenshead*).



Picture courtesy of the British Museum

The hoard comprises 1,237 coins, four rings, four pieces of jewellery and two lengths of chain and was probably deposited sometime between Winter 1463 and Summer 1464, during a rebellion against the Yorkist King, Edward IV (reigned 1460-83) on behalf of the Lancastrian Henry VI, in the first decade of the Wars of the Roses (1455-85). Most of the coins were English nobles, half-nobles and quarter-nobles. Also included are 223 foreign coins. The face value of the hoard when deposited was about £400, equivalent to around £300,000 today. Since March the hoard has been a star item in the British Museum's new Medieval Gallery.

SATURDAY, 14 NOVEMBER 2009

THE NOTTINGHAMSHIRE HISTORY LECTURE

Stevenson Revisited: a Fresh Look at Nottingham's Borough Records 1400-1600 by Judith Mills.

Judith Mills MA, is on the verge of completing a three year research project into the history of the town of Nottingham between 1400 and 1600. This research, which was funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council, will lead to a PhD. An article based on research carried out for her MA was published in the Transactions of the Thoroton Society in 2008.

In 1882 the Corporation of Nottingham published the first volume of extracts from its extensive collection of Borough Records which date from 1155. The first four volumes of the series (1155-1625) were edited by W. H. Stevenson who, in the introductions to these works, commented on aspects of Nottingham's history, focussing on its institutions and the formation of the Council. Judith's research has looked again at both the published extracts and the large quantity of unpublished documents, paying particular attention to the people of Nottingham, their relationships to the town's institutions and to each other. By focussing on Nottingham people, their civic and business relationships and family networks, Judith's talk will give a new focus to the history of the town between 1400 and 1600.

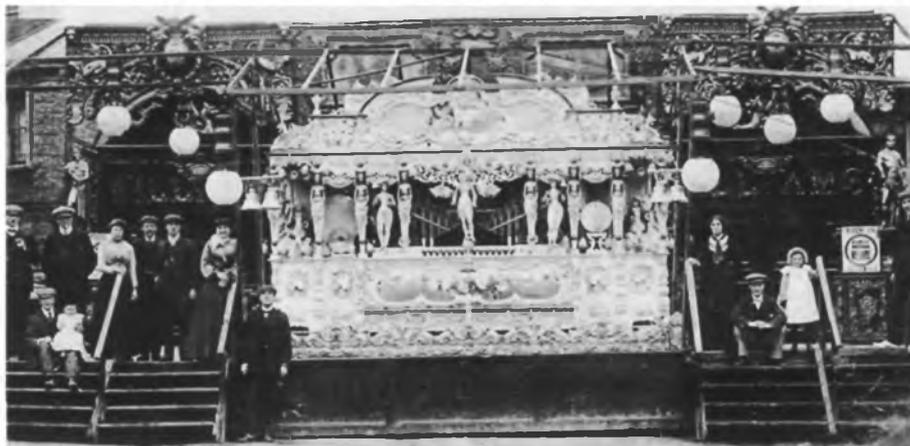


SATURDAY, 12 DECEMBER 2009 THE CHRISTMAS LECTURE

Animated Photographs and Living Pictures: the beginnings of cinema on Nottinghamshire by Bob Massey.

Bob Massey is a professional member of the ALD and ABTT, running his own Theatre Consultancy Company with the design of nearly 2000 performance venues world-wide. He is Technical Manager of the Bonington Theatre, Arnold and teaches part time in various local colleges. His themes range from Technical Theatre subjects to Computer Maintenance, Local History and Air Force history. His interests include the history of air forces of World War Two, Film History and the History of Arnold. He writes the Local History column in NG Magazine and has had articles published on Air Force history, Stage Lighting and Theatre history.

With the introduction of the moving image into this country in 1895 it soon became a spectacle in travelling fairs and shows. Taken up by the great showmen of the time the new wonder of the age reigned supreme at Goose Fair, the Wakes at Arnold and other travelling exhibitions before the First World War. This success prompted the showmen and others to make their own films. From these early beginnings the British film industry developed the form of narrative drama which led the world in 1900.



Randall-Williams' Bioscope

VCH NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

The Victoria County History (VCH) started in 1899, and with a burst of local enthusiasm produced two Nottinghamshire volumes in 1906 and 1910. The proposed topographical volumes (parish histories) were partly researched but never written up, and they remain incomplete. In the East Midlands only Rutland was finished, but in recent years work has resumed in Derbyshire, Leicestershire and Northamptonshire, and now Nottinghamshire Libraries and Archives have taken an initiative designed to revive work locally. For the next two years, working in partnership with the Thoroton Society, the Nottinghamshire Local History Association, and the University of Nottingham, they are going to provide support for Mr. Philip Riden (currently VCH Derbyshire county editor, and previously at VCH Northamptonshire) to work for one day a week setting up one or more research groups to start work on parishes in the

county.

An open meeting is being called at Nottinghamshire Archives on Tuesday, 15 September 2009 at 6.30 pm to explain the project and what is intended. We are inviting representatives of research and local history groups, the WEA, interested individuals, and key county council personnel to come and hear about the VCH, the Nottinghamshire project, how to become involved, and what to expect! The meeting will be hosted by Mr. Mark Dorrington, Principal Archivist, and addressed by both Mr. Riden and Professor John Beckett, who is both Chair of The Thoroton Society and Director and General Editor of the VCH. If you, or a member of your group, would like to attend, please email or phone Jean Stanbridge: jean.stanbridge@nottscc.gov.uk; 0115-950-4524

THE THOROTON RESPONSE GROUP

by Barbara Cast

One of the most recent representations made by the Thoroton Response Group on the Society's behalf concerned the announcement of museum closures by the City Council. A letter was sent to the Leader and the appropriate Portfolio Holder, as well as the Chief Executive and responsible officers.

In it attention was drawn to the wider importance of museums, especially in a city which is trying to increase educational attainment.

We said *'in view of the City Council's commitment to improving the educational opportunities of its young people, the value of a vibrant and wide ranging heritage offer cannot be overestimated. Not only does it broaden the possibilities for learning but also gives a sense of the continuity of City life and pride in its past; important for community cohesion and respect, which we know that the Council is aiming to promote. Hardly less important is that the tourist industry cannot expect to attract visitors to the City if it has limited and ill resourced venues.'* We went on to commend work achieved and supported,

especially at Wollaton Hall, but we said *'there is so much more which is of interest in Nottingham - it has such a tremendous history which is largely untapped in interpretative terms - it is a City of Caves, of Lace, of radicalism, of brilliant architecture, of industry'*.

We urged the Council *'to be visionary and seek to enhance the City's cultural heritage, to preserve and celebrate the long and proud history of Nottingham, Nottingham's people and their achievements through the centuries'*.

We have received a response from the Portfolio Holder but without any commitment to change policy in this area.

The other matter responded to was English Heritage's survey entitled *Conservation Areas at Risk* and if you have comments you wish to make on your local conservation area go to www.englishheritage.org.uk/conservationareas.

As yet, members have not raised matters which they wish the Response Group to consider - please, if you have concerns regarding building or land use changes in the county, let us know.

HERITAGE WEB SITE

The Heritage web site goes from strength to strength.

It receives frequent requests from all over including from the BBC, academics, and interested

parties relating to all sections of the subject base.

The site has become so useful in promoting history and our county.

NORWELL PARISH HERITAGE GROUP

John Beckett

The Norwell Group, convened by Elizabeth Jones, is a shining example within Nottinghamshire of what can be achieved by a small group of committed volunteers working intensively on a parish project, with a relatively small amount of financial support from the Heritage Lottery Fund.

On 16 May the group launched the first three of a proposed (initial) five booklets on the history of aspects of the village. These cover the village buildings, mills and trades, and each is a model in itself, combining detailed historical research with clear explanation and excellent illustrations. Local and wider contexts are also explained in each case. I particularly enjoyed the study of Norwell trades, not just because of clear description, but because it shows how a village only a mile or so from the Great North Road, remained largely self-contained in terms of necessary crafts and skills, until the agricultural depression of the later nineteenth century.

Each booklet costs £4, and we hope to have them available on the Thoroton book stall at autumn lectures. Alternatively, copies are available at £4 each plus postage. Please contact the Secretary, NPHG: 01636-636365 or email at emjones.norwell@btinternet.com.

Powerhouses of Provincial Architecture, 1837-1914.

ed: Kathryn Ferry (2009)

ISBN 978-0-901657-37-4

Review by Terry Fry

This attractive book is published by The Victorian Society and is based on its symposium held in January 2008 at the Society of Antiquaries in London. Six experts look at the way architects with considerable local influence give a distinctive character to urban landscapes in the Victorian and Edwardian periods. Ronald Perry writes about Sylvanus Trevail's whirlwind career in Cornwall where he took on 300 commissions in 30 years, including the Atlantic Hotel at Newquay, then shot himself at the age of 52. Pevsner said that he was one of the more original Victorian architects. That could also be said of Watson Fothergill: a Provincial Goth as Ken Brand calls him in his informative chapter on those familiar, but still remarkable, buildings of Fothergill's in Nottingham.

Kathryn Ferry praises John William Cockrill for transforming Great Yarmouth 'from a fishing port to one of the most attractive seaside resorts'. For

Sarah Whittingham, the Pride of Bristol is Sir George Herbert Oatley, whose outstanding Wills Memorial Building for Bristol University graces the front cover.

David Summers introduces the work of George John Skipper, a Norfolk architect who designed outstanding buildings in Norwich, such as the Royal Arcade and Surrey House. Unfortunately, his beautiful Hotel Metropole at Cromer was demolished in the 1960s and replaced by 'a building devoid of any architectural merit'. Sound familiar? Geoff Brandwood writes about the many fine churches built by the Lancashire partnership of Edward Paley and Herbert Austin, especially the very best; St. George's, Stockport.

All these men resisted the lure of London and invested the provinces with their talent. Like many eminent Victorians they drove themselves hard and, with the exception of Trevail, until late in life; Skipper was still working at the age of 91.

This is a well-produced book, enhanced by many good photographs and a suitable bibliography.

Plenti and Grase: Food and drink in a sixteenth century household

Mark Dawson, Prospect Books, 2009

Members will recall Mark's lecture to the Society last autumn and, of course, the article based on the lecture which was published in *Transactions*.

Mark's book is now published and available at Waterstones and from Amazon at £30.

By the time this Newsletter is read the book should also be available at Wollaton Hall.

CORRECTION

In the Spring issue of the Newsletter we gave an email address for the Oxfam shop at Sherwood.

Unfortunately this was incorrect and should have read: oxfamshopf1510@btconnect.com.

Our apologies for this error and we hope no-one was inconvenienced by it.

AT ST. MARY'S, NOTTINGHAM

Saturday, 10 October 2009 at 7.30 pm
Orchestra of the Restoration and the Choir of
St. Mary's

Tickets from the Nottingham Playhouse box office at £15 (£13), £12 (£10), £5 (student standby at the door £3)

THE RESPONSE GROUP - 2

On behalf of the Society we responded to the findings of English Heritage's *Conservation Areas at Risk* survey by writing to all those local authorities in Nottinghamshire who had been found to have conservation areas suffering neglect or degradation. The main causes for concern identified by English Heritage were changes made by owners, such as UPVC windows and doors and poor, unsympathetic or neglected environmental and highway works by the responsible councils.

Our letters dated 1 July were sent to Bassetlaw with two CAs at risk (no response to date, Gedling also with two CAs at risk (no response to date), Mansfield with four CAs at risk (no response to date), Newark and Sherwood with 5 CAs at risk and Nottingham City with 12 at risk.

We set out our concerns and asked that the authority do all in its power, including the use of Article 4 Directions and careful consideration of environmental and highway factors, to preserve our delicate and finite heritage for future generations to appreciate and enjoy.

The Leader of Nottingham City Council responded and referred to the City Centre Urban Design Guide which was produced 'to promote and enhance our historic city core'. He says that 'securing good quality development appropriate to its [the city's core] context is an underlying principle of the document'. He also speaks of the Streetscape Manual setting 'the standard for changes to the streetscape within conservation areas and elsewhere' and recent CA appraisals and management plans. These measures are said to demonstrate 'commitment to place-making and the importance attached to the city's heritage.'

The Leader of Newark and Sherwood shares the Society's concerns and comments on the limited financial input that the LA can make available to owners of CA buildings and informs us that their Principal Conservation Officer is enquiring about the specifics of the problems identified by English Heritage. We are promised to be informed of the outcome.

Barbara Cast

The Annual Lecture for the Friends of St. Mary's is to be given by Professor John Beckett on Sunday, 18 October at 7.30 pm after 6.30 Choral Evensong. The subject is *The Lost Churches of Nottingham*. Members of The Thoroton Society will be most welcome.

Professor John Beckett represented The Society at a packed Southwell Minster on Sunday 19 July for the retirement service and presentation to Bishop George Cassidy, Bishop of Southwell. Bishop Cassidy is retiring to Somerset after ten years as Bishop of Southwell. In a farewell sermon the Bishop talked of the challenge of the post in the social and economic condition in which we live, and wished the Church of England in Nottinghamshire well in the years to come.

David Crook's latest contribution to the history of Nottinghamshire is: *A Petition from the Prisoners in Nottingham Gaol, c 1330: Grace and Grievance*, ed. Mark Ormrod, Gwilym Dodd and Anthony Musson (Woodbridge, 2009) pp. 206-21.

The Nottingham Mechanics holds a Heritage Open Day on Saturday 12 September 2009 from 10.00 am to 5.00 pm. This is in conjunction with Heritage Open Days and there will be displays, demonstrations and talks covering the organisations which use The Mechanics for their events. The day will be formally opened at 10.30 am with a talk on the history of the Nottingham Mechanics Institute and there will be guided tours of the building throughout the day.

Bramcote History Group extends an invitation to its Local History Societies' Fair at St. Michael's Church Centre, Church Street, Bramcote, at 8 pm on Monday, September 21, 2009. Admission is £2 and for Bramcote History Group members, £1.

The Nottinghamshire Local History Association holds its next day event at Oxtun Village Hall on 24 October 2009 when the theme will be *Castles*.

We extend a very warm welcome to the following who have joined the Society since the last Newsletter:

Rev. R. W. Breckles

Mrs. P. Cooke

Mr. J. Cruse

Mrs. P. M. Gurney

Mr. A. Kirk

Mr. R. Malinsky

Miss N. Peterson-Tait

Mrs. J. Shaw-Browne

Mrs. C. Wilkins.

The deadline for items for the next Newsletter is 1 November 2009. Items should be sent to the Editor, Howard Fisher either at 21, Brockwood Crescent, Keyworth, Nottingham, NG12 5HQ or email: hf773@btinternet.com. Pictures are very welcome.

Any views expressed in the *Newsletter* are those of the authors and not necessarily shared by the Editor or The Thoroton Society's Council or the Society itself.



Introductory talk at Boston



Talk in front of Newton's apple tree, Woolsthorpe



In the rain at King's School, Grantham



Gardens at Belton House



A Thoroton Tea in the Old Hall Library at King's School