

THE THOROTON SOCIETY

Nottinghamshire's History and Archaeology Society



NEWSLETTER

ISSUE 63

SPRING 2011



The University of Nottingham's Department of Manuscripts and Special Collections holds an exhibition of historic maps from its collection at Lakeside from 22 April to 14 August 2011. Details of the exhibition and an associated talks programme are in the Lakeside ON brochure, its website or from the Department website or 0115-951-4565

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

FORTY MINUTES OF FAME 100 YEARS AGO

by Terry Fry

Andy Warhol once famously remarked that everyone should be famous for fifteen minutes. E.B. Alletson of Nottinghamshire shot from obscurity in County cricket to lasting fame in forty minutes of mayhem on 20 May 1911. It was a totally unexpected innings by a tail-end batsman whose exploits that day earned him a place among cricket's immortals.

Nottinghamshire were playing Sussex at Hove and doing badly. By lunch on the final day they had lost nine wickets in their second innings and were only a few runs ahead. Sussex had almost won the game, but in one of those delightful reversals found in cricket, Ted Alletson turned the match on its head. The Notts, captain, A.O. Jones agreed that he could 'have a go' and his team-mate George Gunn urged him to 'give the buggers a bit of stick'. Thus encouraged Alletson walloped the bowling all over the ground – and out of it – adding 142 runs to his total in 40 minutes.

His final score when given out was 189 scored in 90 minutes. 'It remains the most outstanding piece of fast scoring in the history of championship Cricket'. (Peter Wynne-Thomas, the archivist and librarian at Trent Bridge cricket ground.)

Altogether, Alletson hit eight sixes. One of them, a square cut, flew straight into the bar shattering bottles and glasses. In a single over from E. H. Killick, which included two no-balls, he hit 34 with three sixes and four fours. This remained the highest score in one over until Sir Gary Sobers hit six sixes off Malcolm Nash at Swansea in 1968.

In his next innings at Bristol. Ted Alletson hit 60 runs in half-an-hour, but never scored another first class hundred. The First World War ended his county career and he went back to coal-mining at Manton colliery. He was born at Welbeck and died in 1963, aged 79, his hour of fame an enduring memory.

THE NOTTINGHAMSHIRE HISTORY LECTURE

This talk in our Autumn 2011 programme will be given by Dr David Nunn and titled 'Nottingham and the Great War: the contribution of Trent Bridge School.'

Dr Nunn has published a book *Britannia Calls* based on his PhD thesis which looked at the contribution of Nottingham schools to the Great War. This talk is based on recent new research relating to Trent Bridge School in the war period.

APOLOGY

In the Winter 2010 issue (62) our President's name was consistently misspelt and should read Dr. Rosalys Coope. Our sincere apologies are offered for this error.

DEADLINES for items for the Newsletter are 1 February, 1 May, 1 August and 1 November of each year.

Copy should be sent to the Editor, Howard Fisher, 21, Brockwood Crescent, Keyworth, Nottingham, NG12 5HQ or by email to handjaf@virginmedia.com.

Items can be handwritten, typed or by attachment in Word file format, either suffix doc or docx.

Pictures, diagrams and maps are most welcome to illustrate an item.

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Any views expressed in the Newsletter are those of the author and are not necessarily shared by the Thoroton Society, its Officers or Council members.

SUMMER EXCURSIONS 2011

SUNDAY, 22 MAY

ASHBOURNE

Leader: Adrian Henstock

This is a part-day excursion. We will have a later start (about 11.00 am) for the run to Ashbourne, with coffee/tea and biscuits when we reach the church hall of Saint Oswald. Adrian will then take us on a short walking tour of the town, followed by a talk and tour of the church. A salad and trifle tea will then be provided in the church hall. We should leave for Nottingham about 5.00 pm.

The reason for Sunday and a late start is that the town should be quieter for walking around than on a weekday, and the church has a service until about noon.

SATURDAY, 11 JUNE

ILKESTON, BEAUVALE AND GREASLEY

Leaders: Derek and Ceril Little

This excursion will leave about 9.00 am for Ilkeston where coffee is arranged in the community hall, followed by a talk and tour of the church. There will be some free time in Ilkeston before we travel to the ruins of the old priory at Beuvale, where afternoon tea will be served for us. The visit will end with a call at Greasley church on our way back to Nottingham, arriving about 6.00 pm.

THURSDAY, 14 JULY

SCAMPSTON HALL AND BIRDSALL HOUSE

Leader: Alan Langton

These two properties are in Yorkshire, near Malton, and so this day-long excursion will start early (about 8.00 am).

When we arrive at Scampston, Lady Legard will meet us in the restaurant where we will have coffee, followed by a tour of the Hall and walled garden. Lunch is ordered in the restaurant before we move to Birdsall House. The Willoughbys of Wollaton moved to Birdsall in 1729, and the house boasts a fine collection of art and antiques. We will have tea and biscuits here before leaving for Nottingham. We should arrive back about 8.00 pm.

Saturday, 17 SEPTEMBER

STAMFORD

Leader: Alan Langton

This excursion will leave Nottingham about 8.30 am and coffee will be provided when we arrive at Stamford. We will have the services of a Blue Badge guide for a walking tour of this ancient town, described as a town of 'sustained architectural dignity'. There will be free time over lunch, followed by one or two arranged visits to some of the finest buildings, including the church of Saint Mary and the church of All Saints. Tea will be provided before we leave for Nottingham.

The timings listed here are approximate at the moment but they will be firmed up when the application forms are sent out later in the year.

Our excursion organiser, Alan Langton would like suggestions from members regarding places to visit, as well as offers from members to plan and organize an excursion in future years.

STUDY TOURS 2011

The *Realms of Gold* Study Tours 2011 brochure is now available listing tours in the UK, France, Italy, Poland and the USA.

All tours are led by experts in the area and history together with Dr. Pamela Marshall who will be well know to many Thorotonians.

For a brochure contact Realms of Gold Ltd., Mylnmede, Moor Lane, Potterhanworth, Lincoln, LN4 2DZ or 07989-243139 or visit www.realmsofgold.co.uk

MEETING REPORTS

THE ARCHAEOLOGY LECTURE 9 OCTOBER 2010

Dr David Knight – Understanding Nottinghamshire's Past: priorities for archaeological research.

A packed Nottingham Mechanic's Hall was treated to David Knight, Director of Research at Trent & Peak Archaeology, romping through the past 10000 plus years of Nottinghamshire's past in just under an hour.

David spoke on the Nottinghamshire part of the recently completed research strategy for archaeology in the East Midlands, an English Heritage funded endeavour, building upon the earlier research agenda for the East Midlands and aiming to guide archaeological work in the future by providing a priorities five-year action plan for research.



The strategy provides up to ten research objectives for each archaeological period, derived from wide consultation with regional archaeologists and comparison with national agenda.

By way of example David walked us through the strategy for Nottinghamshire period by period, drawing out such nationally important topics as the presence of Late Upper Paleolithic open sites in the Trent Valley, as attested by work at Farndon near Newark, and the industrial heritage of the exploitation of the Nottinghamshire part of the East Midlands coalfield.

There was also promise of good things to come, such as the much anticipated publication of the excavations in Nottingham undertaken in the 1960s and 70s, which is a research priority and will hopefully be supported by a fresh injection of funds and effort.

The full research strategy will be published in booklet form and on-line, and anticipation of its content provoked lively discussion around the subject of particular research priorities, a crisis in public funding in the wake of government cuts and the potential key role for community archaeology groups in putting the strategy in to action.

Keith Challis

THE NOTTINGHAMSHIRE HISTORY LECTURE 13 NOVEMBER 2010

Dr Katie Holland – Harmony and Good Company: the choir-band as a vehicle of sociability in Nottinghamshire

Katie Holland is well known to many in the local history community, and this excellent lecture was based on work she has recently completed for her Ph.D. thesis.

Choir bands of singers and players were a regular feature of Anglican worship in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and by a meticulous survey of churchwardens' accounts for the East Midlands, Katie has been able to trace a great deal of information about their activities. Farmers, graziers, blacksmiths, wheelwrights, labourers: almost anyone who could



play an instrument might be found in a choir band. mostly operating in west galleries, and often doubling up as a social band for weddings and other events outside of church life.

Often, as the lecture showed in some detail, they visited each other, perhaps travelling to an event in a neighbouring village, or doubling up in the west gallery on a Sunday, particularly in the summer months. Katie had found examples from across the county including Bingham, Harworth and Hawkesworth, but she also brought in some of the riches of her research elsewhere in the region, and illustrated the lecture with some

excellent pictures. This was a rural culture which had already passed its heyday when the Church of England moved towards organs (harmoniums in the initial stages) and robbed choirs, but the lecture told us a great deal about the willingness and ability of village communities to provide for their own entertainment, and occasionally to enjoy feasts and festivals with their neighbours.

John Beckett

THE NEVILLE HOSKINS LECTURE 11 DECEMBER 2010

Canon Michael Austin – Archdeacon George Wilkins of St. Mary's,

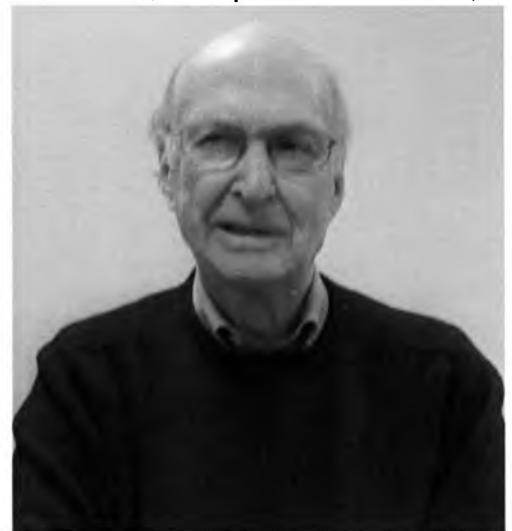
Archdeacon Wilkins was Nottingham's equivalent of Anthony Trollope's Archdeacon Grantly of the Barchester novels. Michael Austin referred to him, in *Newsletter* 61, as 'quite a character', and members who attended the December lecture – now known as the Neville Hoskins lecture in memory of our much loved and respected former president – were not disappointed.

Wilkins was a Church and King Tory, which meant in effect that he was against anything that smacked of change. He was devoted to the maintenance of the Establishment, opposed to anything radical (like the extension of the franchise in 1832 or the building of Roman Catholic churches, quite apart from Evangelicals and nonconformists), and personally extremely disagreeable. In theory he should have been a very grey character but such were his antics that he came over as remarkably colourful – accused in no less an authority as the *Dictionary of National Biography* of marrying at Gretna Green! (He was not, but the author of the article was one of many people with a grudge against Wilkins.)

Michael Austin could do little more than pick out aspects of Wilkins's remarkable life story: his pluralism, his brief and rather underwhelming Visitations, his vicious pen when it came to writing tracts, and his frosty, if not arctic, relationship with J.T. Becher, were just some of the vignettes.

If the weather kept you away, some (but not all) of the lecture can be found in Stanley Chapman and Derek Walker, eds., *Minster People* (Southwell and District Local History Society, 2009: ISBN 978-0-9520503-5-3).

John Beckett



Michael Austin

THE NORA WITHAM LECTURE

Dr Rowena Edlin-White – A Spinster of No Occupation

The Society enjoyed this lecture. We were told that one of our members, Myra Chivers, has suggested that Dr. Edlin-White research the life of Myra's great-aunt, Mary Ellen Shaw, in the belief that she was an interesting woman who had devoted her life to the poor of Nottingham and had been unjustly forgotten.

Mary Ellen was the daughter of John Shaw the Registrar of Births and Deaths in the St. Anne's district of Nottingham. In addition to her work as a nursery governess to the children of several families, Mary Ellen assisted her father, and later his successor who was her brother-in-law, in his profession.

She had, rather than being 'of no occupation' worked hard from the age of sixteen, and in addition to paid work became an unpaid social worker in the poorest areas of the City. Dr. Edlin-White described this work and Mary Ellen's teaching at Sunday schools in the local Wesleyan chapel, and said that she devoted

her life to alleviating the misery and despair of the urban poor.

The Girls' Home Movement, a Mother and Baby Guild, extensive visiting in prison, workhouse and hospital were all preparation for her greatest achievement, Miss Shaw's Men's Bible Class. Supported by the duchess of Portland in 1900 Mary Ellen took on the problems of hundreds of poor working men in Nottingham and Mansfield.

Our speaker showed examples of Mary Ellen's diaries as a young girl and records from the Men's Bible Class. She also brought copies of her book on Mary Ellen, several copies of which were bought by members after the meeting and were signed by the author.

The lecture was very well received and caused a great deal of discussion afterwards.

Penelope Messenger

SPRING MEETING AND AGM 2011

Flintham is the venue for this year's Spring Meeting which incorporates our Annual General Meeting, and is to be held on Saturday, 30th April. We will be meeting in Flintham Church and, after the necessary business, will be hearing about the history of this attractive village. We will be having our tea at Flintham Hall, thanks to the generous welcome of Mr Robert Hildyard, the nephew of our former President, Myles Thoroton Hildyard. We hope to have time to look at the Hall and its grounds and the village of Flintham itself.

We have renamed this event the "Spring Meeting" in order to better describe what it actually is, because the AGM itself is a very small part of what is a very popular afternoon which takes us to different parts of the county each year. It is a good opportunity to visit new places or learn more about some of our favourite areas, as well as meeting other members. If you have never been before, come along this year and you will find it a very enjoyable event.

Barbara Cast, Hon Sec

BOOK REVIEWS

Several books are reviewed later in this Newsletter. Some other books have been received for review but space in this issue cannot be found for them. The reviews will be printed in the Summer issue. Apologies are offered to those authors reviewers and publishers for the unavoidable delay.

An Outline History of the Railways of Nottinghamshire by Michael Vann

Harby – Village Life in the Vale of Belvoir ed. Leslie Cram

A History of Nottingham by Richard Gurnham

Report on Membership Questionnaire 2010

Last summer members were asked to complete a questionnaire. The Standing Committee wished to find out more about the membership, and its views on the Society's activities and possible changes or extensions to these. This was the first time such a wide-ranging survey had been conducted by the Society. The Committee was highly gratified by the response from members and grateful to those who took the trouble to complete the forms. Here, as promised, is a report on the survey.

One hundred and twenty-eight replies were received, exactly 40% of the membership. Most were from a single member, but nine were completed jointly by a member and an associate member. Few respondents answered all the questions, so the totals given, and the percentages, are for the number who responded to each question.

The Membership

As expected, the majority of members are over 60 years of age. There were no replies from members under 25 and only three between 25 and 39. There were two students, 33 working and the remainder retired. Men outnumbered women by 67 to 47.

A majority of respondents had been members for more than ten years, and twelve had joined within the last twelve months. The majority (78) were Ordinary members, whilst 26 had Ordinary and Record membership, and 15 had Ordinary and Associate membership.

Importance of Society activities to Members

Respondents were asked to score various aspects of the Society with the importance to them of each item, on a range from zero (no importance) to 5 (most important). This should indicate what members feel that they are getting for their money.

Based on replies giving the top two ratings – 4 and 5 (see table) - members rate the Newsletter as the most important part of their membership. Ranked next and still very highly come the Transactions, lectures and making representation on Nottinghamshire's heritage. The other activities/publications – excursions, meeting other members, Record Series, the AGM and the Annual Luncheon are grouped closely together as somewhat less important to members as a whole.

NB these figures are not a comment on how well the Society undertakes these activities. That is dealt with below under the individual activities.

Table

Activity/publication	No: rating most or very important	% of all those replying
Newsletter	97	81
Transactions	87	72
Lectures	86	72
Notts. heritage	84	74
Excursions	50	42
Meeting others	48	44
Record Series	46	47
AGM	46	38
Luncheon	45	39

Transactions

Almost all respondents (96%) regarded the Transactions as 'excellent' or 'good'. One fifth read all the articles, and almost 60% read 'most of them'. A number of respondents made suggestions as to a variety of topics which might be covered in future issues.

Newsletter

Opinion of the newsletter was very high, with 94% rating excellent or good. There was a suggestion that the Newsletter could include more local history news.

Record Series

Only 29% of respondents were subscribers to the Record Series, but most rated it excellent or good. A number of respondents, who do not take the Records Series, stated that they referred to Record Series books in libraries or the Archives, several had sufficient reading material so did not subscribe, and one member had run out of shelf space! However, several new members knew nothing about the Record Series.

Lectures

Lectures are seen as one of the most important parts of the Society's 'offering' to members - see Table. Some 70% of those replying have been to at least one lecture in the last year. As to their quality, the lectures are given a ringing endorsement by members with 97% rating them as good or excellent. The reasons given for not attending (more) lectures in order of importance were: travel difficulty, venue or time inconvenient; topics not of interest; work; other activities.

Comments were few and to no clear pattern. But a significant minority (27 out of 83 replies) would like to see lectures continuing through the summer.

Excursions

Excursions are seen as less important than lectures, for example. Nevertheless the response at 96 replies was still high (lectures 119) Most respondents (91%) felt that the number of excursions was about right and almost everyone rated them excellent or good. Comments, when not laudatory, were largely of an administrative nature.

AGM and Luncheon

Half of those responding to the questionnaire attended neither event. Of the half that did, virtually all attended the AGM, with fewer attending the luncheon. Reasons for not attending were mainly inconvenience of travel, time or place, with a quarter giving lack of interest. Expense is not seen as a problem. Members are overwhelmingly satisfied with the formats and only one comment was made.

Possibility of a research project

Over half the members who responded to this question (56 out of 94) were in favour of this suggestion. The most popular formats were a group activity at set times (24 responses) and individually with occasional meetings (26 responses). Many were interested in using their computers for research.

Other activities that the Society could offer

There were only 10 answers to this question, with only local history courses appearing more than once. Others included visits to the National Archives at Kew in conjunction with Sue Clayton; an annual summer garden party; walks or rambles with a historical link; and visits to archaeological digs.

Overall opinion of the Society

Almost all respondents rated the Society as excellent (48%) or good (48%).

Suggested changes or improvements to the Society

24 comments were received. Some are full of praise, and the only comment to recur was the need for more younger members.

Acknowledgement: I am most grateful to our Treasurer John Wilson for his help in analysing the replies and producing this report.

John Hamilton, Membership Secretary.

SOCIETY FOR LANDSCAPE STUDIES

Spring Field Weekend – Saturday 14 May and Sunday 15 May, 2011
CONTRASTING LANDSCAPES IN NORTH NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

SATURDAY, 14 May: The whole day will be in the area of Norwell, Norwell Woodhouse, Willoughby, Ossington and Egmonton. Norwell itself had a long association with the minster at Southwell. Its landscape history has been extensively researched by the Norwell Parish Heritage Group. Willoughby, with its remains of a deserted village, is part of the parish of Norwell. Egmonton was one of the 132 Nottinghamshire manors of Robert de Buisli and we will see the remains of its motte and bailey castle.

Norwell is situated on heavy clay soils, making travel difficult. Until the 19th century Norwell had poor communications with the outside world even though it was situated less than two miles from the Great North Road and less than three miles from the navigable River Trent. Communications improved when Parliamentary Enclosure brought a direct link to the Great North Road. Then, in the railway age, Norwell found itself near to what is now the East Coast main line, being served by the nearby station at Carlton-on-Trent.

SUNDAY 15 May: The whole day will be spent within the Forest of Sherwood. We will examine the designed landscape of Thoresby Park and the area known as Bilhaugh. It is Birklands in which the Major Oak is found. However, it is the area adjacent to Birklands, namely Bilhaugh, that we shall be exploring. In an inventory of 1609 28,900 oaks were counted in Bilhaugh and 21,000 in Birklands.

Thoresby Park is to the north of and adjacent to Bilhaugh. The River Meden flows into a lake which is over one kilometer in length and both are striking features of the landscape of the park.

The cost of each day will be £5.00.

In the first instance those who are interested in participating in one or both days should register their interest by emailing Brian Rich at: brianrich457@btinternet.com or by phoning him on 01538384713.

Full details of where and when to meet and of eating and other arrangements will be sent out later.

AT LAKESIDE

TO 27 February 2011 - REVOLUTION PAPER – Mexican Prints 1910 – 1960. This is a British Museum touring exhibition at the Djanogly Art Gallery.

TO 10 April 2011 – ROMAN SEXUALITY – an exhibition which includes the *Warren Cup* co-curated by Claire Pickersgill of the University of Nottingham Museum, Dr. Paul Roberts of the British Museum and collaboration with the Department of Manuscripts and Special Collections, University of Nottingham.

BOOK REVIEWS

A TIME OF UNHAPPY COMMOTION

By Michael Austin – ISBN9-1-898937-75-3



This book by Canon Michael Austin, with what might appear to be rather a mysterious title, is a work of much scholarship which has involved the author in considerable research. As a one-time residentiary canon of Southwell

Minster, and with a copy of the Southwell Chapter Library bookplate on the front cover, one could wrongly assume that the contents might refer to mysterious shenanigans in the Minster itself.

Such a conclusion would be a serious mistake. The book, with a wealth of information from previously unused sources is concerned with the twenty-three parishes in the Rural Deanery of Southwell during the middle years of the nineteenth century. These parishes, which underwent a solemn 'visitation' in 1855, are used in meticulous detail by Michael Austin to demonstrate his thesis that what was happening in the Rural Deanery of Southwell was a small example of what was generally true in England as a whole at the time. (Full details of the visitation are included in the final section of the book).

During this period significant social changes were taking place in England and were having a profound effect upon the structure of society and particularly upon the relationship of Church and State. In its 250 pages, and the many footnotes and references on each page, the book examines in depth how the rapid transition from an agricultural based society to an industrial one during these years, from landed gentry control to more localized administration, from upper class dominated congregations to a wider social involvement, from pluralist and often absentee clergy to more dedicated and locally involved clergy gradually took place, and changed radically what had come to be taken for granted. The old order of society and accepted institutions

and the concern for the poor and disadvantaged classes of society was stirring the conscience of those in charge.

The result of all this change was a situation where sparks could be seen to fly, where privilege was being questioned, and where the previously assumed stability of Church and State could no longer be assumed to be the norm for ever. The author seeks to demonstrate these changes and to lead the reader thoughtfully through the arguments, the discussions and the angst which such change produced. We see in detail the outspoken views and standpoint of significant figures such as George Wilkins (Archdeacon of Nottingham) and John Becher (Vicar General of Southwell). George Wilkins is quoted as saying 'the need to defend the rights and privileges of the Church of England by law established, and the need to protect it against zealous reformers'. John Becher, a magistrate and poor law reformer as well as Vicar General, for example, is described as 'that clergyman who plumes himself as being the despot of the town'.

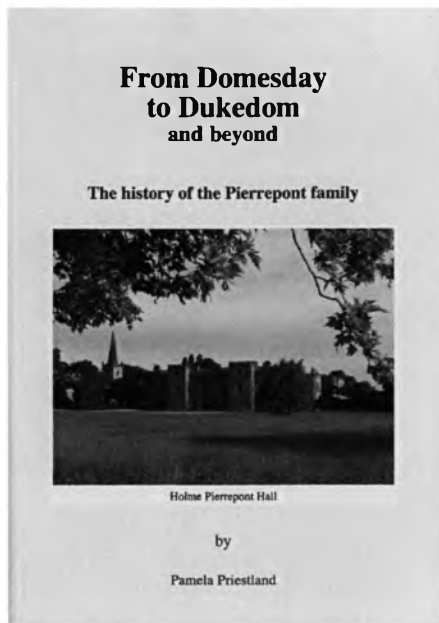
In the cut and thrust of the material of Michael Austin's book we see the valiant efforts of the influential leaders of the Church of England struggling to protect what had been from what almost seemed to be about to overwhelm it. It was almost like King Cnut attempting to halt the flood of the incoming tide. Canon Austin covers what were controversial issues such as the local government of the local church, church rates, dissenters, family pews, church attendance, patronage, curates' salaries, Tractarian influences, the Church's involvement in education and its involvement in the care of the poor and disadvantaged in society, and the relationship between the squire and the parson. For George Wilkins the 'time of unhappy commotion' had developed because 'the objectionable influences of popular opinion has carried us out of the course of those high principles which ought to regulate our feelings and our teachings'.

The scope of Canon Austin's research is to be congratulated, and his work to present such a mass of information in a readable and understandable way will be appreciated by those who study the book.

Alan Langton

FROM DOMESDAY TO DUKEDOM and beyond – The history of the Pierrepont family.

*Pamela Priestland ISBN 978-1-872356-12-9
Published by Ashbracken, Radcliffe-on-Trent 2010*



This book is A4 sized with choice of hard or soft covers and is a hefty item of 464 pages. It is very well printed by a Nottingham firm of printers and has 370 illustrations, many in colour, a most useful Glossary, sources fully listed, each chapter referenced and a full index. Within the text are family trees and there are maps of places associated with the family.

The writing style is fluid but it is not the easiest of books to read because of the profusion of names although the family trees do help to follow the various family members' details. The book is very well researched with a great deal of detail included and it is very clear that this has been a labour of love on the part of the author.

The Pierreponts were a family of great influence in Nottinghamshire with large estate holdings in the county but they also had much influence in the Government of the country. There were strong ladies involved with them; a daughter whose broken marriage laid the way for modern divorce, another who introduced smallpox inoculation to Great Britain and a bigamous duchess. The sums of money talked about throughout the book are enormous as are the debts racked up from time to time.

The family is generally accepted as starting in Southern Picardy at the castle of Pierrepont, a name derived in the time of Charlemagne

from an adjacent stone bridge. The family were supporters of William in 1066 with de Pierreponts fighting with William at the Battle of Hastings. In 1272 Henry Pierrepont married and his wife, Annora, brought with her lands around Holme (Pierrepont). The couple acquired much more land in Nottinghamshire. The Holme estate became known as Holme Pierrepont in the Tudor period. The author traces the family in great detail and, of course, they are inexorably linked with Thoresby and Holme Pierrepont. Much detail is provided about these two properties and their associated estates.

An excellent feature of this book for me, is that it includes information about how the family treated its tenants and ordinary workers, both those who worked in the houses and on the estates. Of necessity this information is not always available but it says much for the author's detailed research that she has included information where it is available, much, of course, from wills which are quoted in great detail. I frequently find myself much more interested in the ordinary folk of history than the gentry and aristocracy but such information is relatively little documented; from this book we can learn something about the conditions of ordinary people in our county.

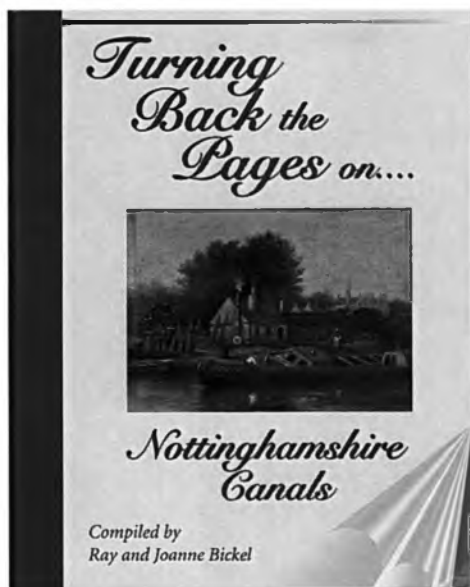
This is an expensive book, but one which adds substantially to the history of Nottinghamshire, not only the Pierrepont aspects but also, through their relations with other great families of the area, of the county in general. In addition we gain an understanding of the way aristocratic families gained their titles, spent their money – often extravagantly on foreign travels - and generally lived their lives.

A book which is recommended reading for anyone with an interest in the people of the county, grand and less grand, but it is, as the title suggests, a history of a family. A grand family, a most important family of Nottinghamshire and one whose legacy to the present day still stands in two of the magnificent buildings of our county.

The book costs £25.00 in soft cover and £30 in hard cover plus £8.00 p&p from Ashbracken, 14 Cropwell Road, Radcliffe-on-Trent, Nottingham, NG12 2FS. Tel; 0115-933-2430 and email: neal@ashbracken.com. Cheques should be made payable to Radcliffe Local History Society.

Howard Fisher

TURNING BACK THE PAGES ON
NOTTINGHAMSHIRE CANALS
Compiled by Ray and Joanne Bickel
ISBN 978-0-902751-66-8



The topic chosen by Ray and Joan Bickel for their book is both interesting and timely: interesting because, although there have been other books dealing with local canals, this one deals with the subject in a more focused way; timely since its publication will precede a hopefully fruitful 'walking' season for the coming spring and summer. It is likely to be attractive to various groups of people such as walkers, photographers, nature lovers as well as, of course, the boating fraternity and local historians.

The brief history provided of each of the canals appears to give a good background although, without specific references, it is difficult to judge their accuracy. There is little doubt, however, that considering the detail included in all the other sections, one might assume that similar diligence was paid to the history sections.

The photographs included are, in the main, well reproduced, especially when one considers the age of many of them. In some cases there might have been some advantage in including more recent images since there appears to be none dated after 1989, with the majority considerably earlier.

Also, it might have been advantageous to include maps with a little more detail so that some correlation between the photographs and the actual locations would have provided assistance to those unfamiliar with the area, but these omissions do not seriously detract from the overall work.

The journeys on which the reader is taken along the various canals are well presented and form a logical route with useful notes along the way. For instance, the section on the Nottingham canal provides good information to assist the reader in tracing their way through the route. The information provided will certainly assist in avoiding the missing sections. It also draws interesting comparisons between the past and present canal side buildings and other 'furniture'. It comes as something of a surprise to discover the size of some of the sailing barges that used the canal in the nineteenth century and this, together with the details of the area from the River Trent to the Lenton district, could be of significant interest to the historian. One boat of particular interest is the 'Francesca', Trevithick's pleasure steamer that operated along the canal to Trent Lock from 1903 until the outbreak of the First World War.

Similar benefits can be found in the sections on the other canals dealt with by the authors. There are many examples of areas of significant interest and, although rather small in scale, the maps provided allow the reader to traverse the waterways from the comfort of an armchair. These descriptions do, though, provide an incentive to leave the comfort of the chair and plan and execute walks along each of the routes.

This book is a very pleasing publication and will aid the enjoyment of the many people who either tramp or navigate the waterways, whatever their motivation for so doing. It may also provide a spark of enthusiasm for those not yet converted to the delights of the various canals in the Nottinghamshire system.

The book can be purchased from all the major libraries in the county and from the Nottinghamshire Archives, or by post by sending a cheque for £ 10.50 which includes the £3.00 p&p cost, payable to Nottinghamshire County Council from Libraries, Archives and Information, Communities Department, 4th Floor, County Hall, West Bridgford, Nottingham, NG2 7QP.

Alan Butler

THE THOROTON RESEARCH GROUP

The report on the members' survey elsewhere in this issue indicates that a significant number of members would be interested in a research project or a research group.

Accordingly, a meeting has been arranged in the Thoroton Room at Bromley House Library, Angel Row, Nottingham, at 10.30 am on Saturday, 26 March 2011.

The purpose of the meeting is to discuss setting up a research group and to give members an opportunity to talk about their current research work, if they so wish.

Some ideas for the meeting to consider include:

- the setting up of a database of members'

research interests and publications

- helping members to get their research published.

Any member interested in joining the Research Group and who would like to attend the initial meeting are requested to contact our Treasurer, John Wilson, either by email at wilsonicus@hotmail.co.uk or by telephone on 0115-926-6175. Please also contact John if interested in the group but unable to attend the meeting.

John is particularly keen to hear from members who would like to have five minutes 'floor time' at the meeting to describe their current areas of interest.

MEMBERS

It is with pleasure that we welcome the following recent new members to the Society:

Mr. M. J. Beniston
Mr. I. Douglas
Mrs. D. Little
Dr. D. Nunn

Mrs P. M. Cook
Mr. & Mrs. K. Fisher
Mr. & Mrs. R. Love
Mr. R. Richmond

Mr. & Mrs. R. Cowley
Mr. M. F. Fox
Mr. H. Matheson

With sadness we record the death of Mrs. S. Bower, Laurence Craik, Robert Parker and David Smalley.

LAURENCE CRAIK

Laurence was for many years from the 1960s Reference Librarian at the old Nottingham Central Library in South Sherwood Street, later transferring to the Arts Library in the present building in Angel Row.

By virtue of his job he had a very extensive knowledge of a wide range of subjects, but was especially interested in history and rare books.

He lived at Southwell and following his retirement was for several years the honorary Librarian of Southwell Minster's Historic Library which house numerous rare books as well as the historical archives.

At the Society's Centenary he volunteered to compile author and subject place indexes to all the articles in the 100 annual volumes of the *Transactions* in addition to the 40 volumes of the *record Series* and the *Annual Reports* of the defunct *Thoroton Society Excavation Section, 1936-40*. This was an enormous undertaking which he accomplished with his usual thoroughness, successfully breaking down archaeological topics into appropriate periods or subjects, etc. His *Centenary Index* was published separately by the Society in 1997 and is a permanent memorial to Laurence's scholarship and dedication.

Adrian Henstock

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE LOCAL HISTORY ASSOCIATION

The Association is holding one of its full day events on 26 March 2011 at Ravenshead Village Hall from 10 am to 4.15 pm.

The title of the day is ***IT'S NOT WHAT YOU KNOW ... Patronage in 18th and 19th Century Nottinghamshire.***

Speakers are Dr. Richard Gaunt (Keeping it in the Family: Political Patronage in early 19th Century Nottinghamshire); Canon Michael Austin (Church, Class and Patronage); Professor Stanley Chapman (Patronage and Power in 18th Century Newark) and Mike Kirton (The 18th Century Country attorney: Professionalism and Patronage).

The cost for the day is £6.50 for members of the NLHA or £7.50 for non-members.

Advance booking is preferred through David Anderson, 35, Sycamore Road, East Leake, Loughborough, Leicestershire but paying at the door on the day itself is also possible without pre-booking.

Tea and coffee making facilities are available for those taking their own lunch, alternatively there are pubs and restaurants in close proximity to the venue.

NOTTINGHAM CAVES SURVEY

The Nottingham Caves Survey is in the process of recording all of Nottingham's 450+ sandstone caves.

The Survey has a web site where information about the newly surveyed caves can be found together with information about the caves, fly-through videos and virtual tours.

The web site is well worth a visit at <http://nottinghamcavesurvey.org.uk/index.htm>

THE NOTTINGHAMSHIRE INDUSTRIAL ARCHAEOLOGY SOCIETY

Thoroton members will know that this Society is no longer active.

Geoffrey Oldfield, who was a founder member of the society in 1976, has advised that he has donated a complete set of the NIAS Journals to the Nottinghamshire Archives and says that Nottingham Local Studies Library also has copies though, perhaps not a complete set.

The journals were issued between 1977 and October 2005 and as well as containing information about the activities of the Society they are also a very useful source of information about the county's industrial buildings from detailed surveys as well articles of general industrial archaeological interest. An example from an early issue is *Brick and Brick Making for the Industrial Archeologist*.

THE THOROTON SOCIETY WEB SITE

Our web-site is managed by Andy Nicholson and provides a great deal of information about the Society its activities. Recently the national magazine *The Local Historian* (issue November 2010) listed the Thoroton web site as being 'particularly good news section, a model of its kind'.

Such accolades reward the work of those who do much voluntary work for us.

THE NOTTINGHAMSHIRE HERITAGE GATEWAY

Denise Amos advises that four additional entries were made on the site in 2010 and that there are three more to be added.

Denise asks that anyone who is prepared to write an article for the site should contact her at denise@boobyer.fsnet.co.uk

In a similar way to the Thoroton web site the Heritage Gateway site has recently been in receipt of accolades:

'This is wonderfully, clearly designed and easy to navigate, as well as having extremely useful content'. Elizabeth Williamson, English Heritage Commissioner.

'... the site is clear, easy to navigate, and informative ... Ideally websites like this should be available throughout the country'. Local History News.

'Nottinghamshire Heritage Gateway has been included in Intute 'a free online service providing you with access to the very best Web resources for education and research, selected and evaluated by a network of subject specialists'.

Visit the site at www.nottsheritagegateway.org.uk or through a link from the Thoroton web site: www.thorotonsociety.org.uk

THE RESPONSE GROUP

In January we have sent letters to Nottingham City Council expressing great concern about the proposed restriction of public access to Newstead Abbey and to Nottinghamshire County council regarding its proposed reduction in services provided by the Conservation service, Libraries, Archives and Rights of Way services.

In both cases we have acknowledged the financial restraints imposed on the authorities by central government but have pointed out how much these cuts will adversely affect members of the public and the importance of the services to the county. In the case of Newstead we consider this is a great asset to the City and County and should be developed more for tourism, thereby earning money towards its upkeep.

This year is the 80th since Sir Julian Cahn gave Newstead Abbey to the City it is a great shame that the anniversary cannot be celebrated in a better way than restricting public access to such an historic and wonderful place.

THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES VISIT

As previously reported The Thoroton Society has taken over the organisation and support for the visits to The National Archives at Kew, having been recently organised by the Flintham Museum and before them, by the University of Nottingham Continuing Education Department. Sue Clayton continues to be the person who does all the work, liaising with TNA and the coach company.

The first visit under the Thoroton aegis took place on Thursday, 10 February 2011 and proved most useful and beneficial to all who took the trip.

The route to The National Archives passes close to Kew Gardens and some people have used the trips to spend a day at the Gardens which are, of course, excellent to visit at any time of the year and particularly so in the warmer months when there is a great deal of colour in the flowers and shrubs.

Future visits are arranged for 10 May, 15 September and 22 November 2011.

Booking slips are available at Thoroton Open Meetings or direct from Sue on 01636-525111 or fwww.flintham.museum@googlemail.com



Dr Rowena Edlin-White who gave the Nora Witham Lecture on 8 January 2011, showing her display material at the meeting. (see report inside)



The Book Stall at Thoroton meetings always has a display of books to be bought.

Peter Reddish and David Hoskins who ensure the sound and projection at our meetings operates perfectly.

