

# THE THOROTON SOCIETY

Nottinghamshire's History and Archaeology Society



NEWSLETTER

ISSUE 75

SPRING 2014



*Kelham Hall from a print by kind permission of Mr. Jonathan Pass, Kelham Hall & Country Park*

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*The Thoroton Society of Nottinghamshire  
The County's Principal Historical Society*

*Visit the Thoroton Society Website at: [www.thorotonsociety.org.uk](http://www.thorotonsociety.org.uk)*

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## OFFICERS

President:	Rosalys Coope, PhD FSA
Chairman:	Professor John Beckett BA PhD FRHistS FSA
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Treasurer:	John Wilson BPharm MPhil FRSPH
Membership Secretary:	Judith Mills BAHons MA PhD (email: membership@thorotonsociety.org.uk)

## SUBSCRIPTION RATES

Individual Ordinary membership	£24.00
Associate member (at the same address)	£ 6.00
Student/Under 21	£ 6.00
Individual Record Section membership	£15.00
Combined Ordinary and Record Section	£34.00
Institutional Ordinary membership	£24.00
Institutional Record Section	£20.00

## RESEARCH GROUP

Meets twice a year. Contact for details: John Wilson (email: wilsonicus@btinternet.com)

## RESPONSE GROUP

The Society seeks to respond to matters of historical and conservation concern which arise in the County.

If members become aware of such matters please contact the Group Co-ordinator, Barbara Cast - contact details above

## VICTORIA COUNTY HISTORY

A group of researchers continuing the VCH of Nottinghamshire. For information and to join the group contact the County Editor, Philip Riden at philip.riden@nottingham.ac.uk.

## PUBLICATIONS

The Society publishes an annual Transactions volume which is distributed to all members.

The Record Section volumes are published from time to time and are distributed to members paying the extra subscription for this Section and are available for purchase by other members and the general public.

Quarterly newsletters are circulated to every member.

## LECTURES

Lectures, unless stated otherwise in the programme booklet, are held at the Nottingham Mechanics, 3, North Sherwood Street, Nottingham, NG1 4EZ, commencing at 2.30 p.m. with the bookstall open from 2 p.m.

## MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

We are delighted to welcome the following new members:-

Ruth Imeson  
Laxton History Group

*DEADLINES for Newsletter items 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: editor@thorotonsociety.org.uk*

*Items can be handwritten or typed in Word format, either suffix .doc or.docx. Pictures diagrams and maps are all most welcome to illustrate an item. Images can be submitted on CD, DVD, as an email attachment or sent for scanning. Preferred size 300dpi JPEG. Images will be adjusted to suit the publication.*

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# *Dr. William Stiff a.k.a. Phillimore*

*By Terry Fry*

In his after lunch talk to members of the Thoroton Society at Kelham Hall, Noel Osborne mentioned that the father of William Phillimore Watts Phillimore was Dr. William Stiff.

In April 1855 Dr. Stiff was appointed Resident Medical Officer and Superintendent of the General Lunatic Asylum, Nottingham (now the site of King Edward Park on Carlton Road). He was highly regarded, receiving a pay rise of £150 p.a. in 1864, and remained in office until his death in November 1881. Then, the Asylum Committee said it 'had lost a faithful and zealous officer, the Asylum a true friend'. He had changed his name to Phillimore in 1873 by Royal Licence. He was also President of Bromley House Library in his final year.

The photograph below shows him and his wife and three children in the garden of the Superintendent's house on Windmill Hill (now Lane), which was specially built for him sometime in the early 1870's. (Oaklands Mill is to the right). Before that he had to make do with a cottage next to the Asylum mortuary,

which may have influenced his decision to change his name! With his top hat and full set of whiskers Dr. Stiff/Phillimore resembles President Abraham Lincoln - or is it W. G. Grace? One of the boys in the photo is thought to be William Phillimore Watts Phillimore, the famous genealogist and founder of the Phillimore Publishing Company, of whom Noel Osborne spoke so eloquently.

The boy was born at a house on Villa Road, Nottingham on 27 October 1853, the son of William Phillimore Stiff and Mary Elizabeth Stiff née Watts. She was the daughter of Benjamin Watts of Brigden Hall, Bridgnorth. The Stiffs and Phillimores were both old families of clothiers resident for many generations in Cam, Gloucestershire. (Dr. Stiff's great grandfather, Thomas Stiff, had married Ann Phillimore at Cam). When he died in April 1913, W.P.W. Phillimore was buried at Bridgnorth, suggesting an important connection with his mother's family.



# Nottingham Celebrates Napoleon's Defeat in 1814

By Terry Fry

There will be many events this year commemorating the outbreak of the Great War in 1914. By contrast exactly a hundred years earlier amazing celebrations accompanied the end of the long-drawn-out Napoleonic Wars in 1814.

On 15 April the *Nottingham Journal* reported the enthusiastic delight of everyone on hearing of 'Bonaparte's dethronement' on 4 April. Crowds turned out to welcome the coach, decorated with laurel and flags, which brought the good news. Church bells rang for two days, a huge bonfire was lit in the Market Place, and the incessant firing of guns was deafening. The *Nottingham Date Book* noted 'Ninety gentlemen of the first respectability dined together at Thurland Hall and others, both Whig and Tory, at the principal inns. At night there was a pretty general illumination'. But not for everyone. The *Journal* reported that Mr. G. Hopkinson of Long Row did not illuminate his shop so three balls were fired through his window. For the same 'offence' someone else fired a shot through the keyhole of Mr. White's house in Stoney Street.

However there was another and universal illumination of the town, following the definitive treaty of peace in June. The Council agreed to foot the bill for illuminating the Exchange building, the Guildhall and the Police Office. (The total cost was at least £159, or possibly £8,000 to £9,000 today). The 'transparencies

so masterly painted by Bonnington [Richard Bonnington Senior] which ornamented the front of the Exchange eclipsed everything else', according to the *Journal*. Bonnington was paid £30. The complete scheme was arranged by Edward Stavelly, the Town Surveyor and Architect.

The front windows of the Exchange were decorated with fifteen transparencies, showing images of Wellington, Nelson, King Alfred, Blucher, the Prince Regent, Louis XVIII and others. Smith's Bank was more adventurous and showed a Cossack on horseback thrusting Bonaparte into the jaws of a monster. The *Nottingham Journal* office bore a prosaic figure of Britannia but the *Nottingham Review* amused spectators with a transparency showing 'John Bull burning the Income or rather the Inquisitorial Tax'. The Castle was brilliantly lit at every window, with flambeaux (torches) on the parapet wall matching over 200 flambeaux on the Exchange. These, together with the masses of candles being lit, must have presented a great risk of fire, especially as nearly the whole population spent most of the night on the streets or in pubs.

Sadly the celebrations proved to be premature and Napoleon had to be beaten again at Waterloo in June 1815. But there were no public celebrations in Nottingham that time.

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## Balloonacy - Terry Fry

Following my article *Balloonacy* in Issue 73 of the *Newsletter* last autumn it is a pleasure to record that a plaque referring to James Sadler's ascent was unveiled on 30 November 2013. It was erected next to the entrance to the Fellows, Morton and Clayton pub on Canal Street. The Nottingham Civic Society paid for it to be put up, but footing the bill for its manufacture was the East Midlands Balloon Group.

The wording on the plaque is:-

This site, formerly known as Company's Wharf, was the location of Nottingham's first successful balloon flight on November 1st 1813 by James Sadler (1753-1828)



# Stanford Hall Users Group

The Stanford Hall Users group was created when the estate was sold by the Co-operative College in 2001 after a continuous period of ownership since 1945. The theatre had been available throughout the period for use by local groups, some professionals and others and developed into a much loved venue. Unfortunately in the latter stages the electrical installation fell below standard and with new health and safety requirements other aspects also needed attention.

The theatre closed in 2004 needing a renewal of its licence. Two new owners did not succeed in re-establishing a new purpose for the state buildings until the proposal by the Defence Rehabilitation Centre was made in late 2012. Planning application has been granted by Rushcliffe Borough Council and a final decision whether to proceed with the Centre is due to be made by the Government in 2014.

The Stanford Hall Users Group hopes to convince the new owners that there is a need for the theatre for performances to the public and to encourage them not to ignore its potential as a valuable resource within their scheme. The Group has a web site where signatures of support can be placed on a petition and the more signatures the greater influence the Group can have. Thoroton members are asked to consider lending their support to the Group. <http://www.change.org/en-GB/petitions/to-protect-stanford-hall-theatre-and-wurlitzer-organ-please-sign>

More information about the proposal to make the Hall into a Defence Rehabilitation Centre can be found at <http://www.stanfordhallredevelopment.org.uk> where there is an excellent history of the Hall and estate as well as details of the DRC itself.

On 19 November 2013 the group sent a letter to Rushcliffe BC, ARUP, Camargue, Theatres Trust, English Heritage and Rushcliffe councillors, Kenneth Clarke MP, Philp Hammond MP, the media and supporters in which they stated:-

Stanford Hall Theatre - Decision Notice etc. 11 October 2013  
12/02070/HYBRID

‘We have carefully considered the relevant document and sought appropriate advice. We feel that the local authority and the applicant have come some way to facilitating probable restoration of theatre use. We warm to that and offer our thanks. We are heartened by this potentially positive outcome.

There is substantial improvement from the wording of the draft document “theatre” (sui generis) and “Theatre use” are words now used prominently throughout. We have offered immediately to participate in the feasibility study when that is called.

It is to be hoped, in the interests of our heritage, that a degree of positive cooperation can be engendered between the operators of the premises and the theatre user group. In that regard we look forward to meeting on site, as previously mentioned in Solihull - September 2012. It would seem utterly appropriate for liaison in the national interest of future generations.

None of us now involved will be here in 70 years time, but the theatre will and it should be in use. Future performers will relish the opportunity of playing on the stage just as they enjoy the Theatre Royal, Bristol, or the Haymarket in London. Theatre is in the blood of English people. So to do anything that would inhibit its normal operation could be seen as a challenge to its

listed status. It would be tragic if neglect were to cause decay if the theatre or organ were left uncared for. The technical installation is unique and parts of it need to be left unharmed, others need upgrading to theatre industry standards. Lighting and sound installations are specialised.

As a grade 2 star listed theatre, it is unique. The theatre stands as an example to future generations of 1930s style complete with a contemporary rising Wurlitzer. The theatre started life as a private venue for invited audiences, but its illustrious owner soon hired a professional manager, Jack Chesham who fostered public performances. Shortly after the war the theatre was used by The Midland Theatre Company before their move to Coventry Belgrade and then by the Lincoln Repertory Company for a number of years. After regular professional productions ceased, it was then used until its closure in 2004/5 by a number of dramatic and operatic societies within a wide area each putting on two to four productions in the year offering performances of plays and musicals, organ concerts, operas and cinema shows - some were arranged through Rushcliffe Borough Council (Arts); other productions were subsidised by Midland Arts, The All England Theatre Festival and occasional auctions shared the theatre. Because of its importance and history the local community misses this theatre. The disappointment in the area if the theatre closes for good would be immense. The petition wishing for the theatre’s restoration and reinstatement currently has 525 written - 842 online - 821 other online a total of 2188 signatures.

In law the owners or lessees of listed buildings are responsible for their upkeep in the present and future. Providing proper maintenance of the building and its contents such as the organ, theatre equipment and fittings, seating, carpeting etc. must be in their business planning as operators.

The 2003 Licensing Act covers the conduct of theatres. They have to be licensed in order to present performances to the public. A performance of any kind attended by a body of people ranging from lectures, cinema shows to plays etc. would likely be covered by the licensing requirements. The law requires a ‘designated responsible person’ to be appointed who has the necessary qualifications for the job of overseeing the theatre. These responsibilities are in general management, risk insurance, health and safety observance, fire and hazard precautions, public liability insurance etc.

Some groups within SHUG that have regularly performed at Stanford Hall Theatre are long established companies. All groups have been accustomed to paying their way. Viable planning is paramount or they would not have survived the years - some since 1954.

Any feasibility study, to be fair and realistic, will need to explore the interfaces between the owners or lessees and those presenting performances, performing groups expect to pay for the use of theatres. Because here the building’s operators are new, it is not unreasonable, to seek indications as to how much the cost of hire might be and what it covers. Then we would be able to present our plan.

We hope this letter assists in encouraging the authorities and the applicants to pursue the optimistic objective indicated in the feasibility study if the scheme goes ahead as planned.”

# Stanford Hall Images

These photographs were taken by the editor in 2007 when the buildings and grounds were owned by a developer who subsequently sold them. Work was being undertaken in the house at the time which explains the trucks seen at the main entrance to the building.



# Summer Excursions 2014

by Alan Langton

In addition to the four excursions which are already published on the Membership card, we have been able to arrange two other 'events' (rather than excursions), on the afternoon of Sunday, 8 June to Burbage Manor, and the other a repeat trip to Welbeck Abbey Staterooms on Thursday, 18 September. As always, applications for all outings will be posted separately before the excursions concerned.

The full list is now:

## THURSDAY 22 MAY - TUTBURY CASTLE and CHURCH, and HOAR CROSS CHURCH

Leader: Alan Langton

Our guide around the remains of this historic castle will be the well known Curator, Lesley Smith. The castle is now part of the Duchy of Lancaster; during the sixteenth century it was at different times the 'prison' of Mary Queen of Scots - who always complained of the damp and draughts. We have lunch booked in the refectory, after which we will have a tour of the eleventh century church of Saint Mary, originally a Benedictine Priory Church. After a short journey we are booked to visit the spectacular Victorian Bodley Church of the Holy Angels at Hoar Cross. John Betjeman described this church as *a perfect association of splendour and intimacy architecturally expressed*.

## SUNDAY 8 JUNE - OUTING TO BURGAGE MANOR

This is the first of two unscheduled events in the calendar: Burgage Manor was built in 1802 and was rented until 1809 by Lady Catherine Byron and her teenage son, Lord George Byron. It is now the home of Mr. Geoffrey Bond, a long and respected member of the Thoroton Society. Geoffrey has amassed one of the world's foremost private collections of Byron material, and he has most kindly invited members of the Society to a visit here with tours of the house and garden, together with tea. The numbers for this event will be restricted to 45 members.

## THURSDAY 26 JUNE - EGMANTON AND EDWINSTOWE CHURCHES AND RUFFORD PARK

Leader: Alan Lanhton

We enjoyed a lecture some months ago by Sarah Law, who explained to us the changes which have taken place between the original creation of Rufford Park and the present day. Sarah agreed to explain these changes to members in more detail on site on an occasion when we could visit Rufford. This excursion fulfills this offer, and it will be combined with visits to two historic churches in the area, Egmonton and Edwinstowe, both fine medieval churches. Egmonton now has a beautiful painted oak screen as well as some fine ancient features, and Edwinstowe is reputed to have been the church where Robin Hood and Maid Marion were married. We shall have lunch in the Saville restaurant at Rufford before meeting Sarah.

[Ed: There is an excellent view from Egmonton churchyard of the spectacular motte of the Norman Egmonton castle which is in the farmyard adjacent to the church and on which a team of mature students, including your editor, worked under Dr. Sarah Speight some years ago].

## THURSDAY 7 AUGUST - NEWBY HALL AND GARDENS, near BOROUGHBIDGE

Leader Alan Langton

This graceful country house was designed by Sir Christopher Wren. The restored interior has beautiful work by Robert Adam together with Gobelins tapestries and Chippendale furniture. After coffee, we have a tour of the house, followed by lunch in the Garden restaurant. There will then be time to explore the gardens, first created in the 1920s, and subsequently making a major award-winning contribution to 20th century gardening.

## THURSDAY 11 SEPTEMBER - DODDINGTON HALL AND STOW MINSTER, LINCOLNSHIRE

Leaders, Penny Messenger and Margaret Trueman

This excursion will go to Stow Minster first, a very large church with a fascinating history, set in a rather small village. Doddington Hall is a beautiful Tudor Mansion, built in 1595 by Robert Smythson. It has been occupied by the Hussey family for over 400 years. There are elegant Georgian rooms filled with striking porcelain and furniture and tapestries. We shall have tea in the tea room and the opportunity to wander around the formal Elizabethan walled garden. There is also an interesting wild garden and a kitchen garden, together with a tempting farm shop.

THURSDAY 18 SEPTEMBER - WELBECK ABBEY STATE ROOMS

This second unscheduled event is another chance for 20 members to visit these state rooms, together with the Chapel and Horse-manship Rooms. This has been arranged especially for those members who were unable to go on the visit last year, and they will be given first refusal - but there will be some spare places too. This is an early afternoon trip, and members will have to make their own way to the Harley Gallery, where we will be taken by mini-bus to the Abbey.

[ED: for members who are not familiar with the Harley Gallery complex there is a cafe/restaurant at the gallery and in the same yard a farm shop. Next door to the gallery is an extensive Garden Centre which also has a restaurant.

The *Thoroton Newsletter* often carries notices about exhibitions and events at the Harley Gallery - see page 22]

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# *The 1st Nottingham Local History and Archaeology Day*

This event will be held at the University of Nottingham Museum on Saturday, 21 June 2014 from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Attendance can be on a 'drop - in' or full day basis.

The event will bring together local history and archaeology societies from throughout the county along with archaeological units, museums and other regional archaeological work being undertaken throughout Nottinghamshire. This exciting day can be enjoyed by everyone including those with a general interest in what is happening in their area, people actively taking part in archaeological work and those wanting to get involved.

## **11am - 12.15 pm - Short talks on local archaeological projects.**

Five local societies present their work. The session will be introduced by David Knight from Trent and Peak Archaeology who will also give a short overview of work in the region.

Recital Theatre (No. 3 entrance next to the Museum). Free but tickets need to be booked through the box office (0115-846-7777)

## **12 - 4 pm - Stalls**

Local history and archaeological societies and regional archaeological units and organisations will display and discuss their work. See the wide and varied work that is being done and find out about opportunities to join in. Practice Hall (No. 3 entrance next to the Museum). Drop in event.

## **12 - 4 pm - Portable Antiquities Database and the Historic Environment Record for Nottinghamshire.**

Join the Finds Liaison Officer for Nottinghamshire and Nottinghamshire County Council to see what has been found in your area and bring objects for identification.

Drop in event. Museum.

## **12 - 4 pm - Hands on Sessions**

Archaeological material from Nottinghamshire.

Come and handle and find out more about a wide variety of archaeological material from Nottinghamshire including stone artefacts, pottery, coins, animal bones and environmental material dating from the Palaeolithic to the post medieval period.

Angear Visitor Centre, Djanogly Gallery 2, Learning Studio No. 1 entrance next to the Museum.

Drop in event.

*This day event is organised by the University of Nottingham Museum and supported by The Thoroton Society and the Society for the Promotion of Roman Studies.*

# Archaeology Now

The University of Nottingham presents a series of free talks and handling sessions that focuses on current archaeological work.

These talks allow professional archaeologists, related specialists and community groups to share their exciting work with us as it is happening and include local, regional, national and international projects.

All talks commence at 1 p.m. in the Djanogly Theatre at the Lakeside Arts Centre. Talks are free but seats do need to be booked through the Box Office (0115-846-7777)

Wednesday, 9 April - Anglo-Saxon and Viking-Age Societies in the Trent Valley, cAD400-1066.

Dr. Chris Loveluck, Department of Archaeology, University of Nottingham.

This lecture will examine the archaeological evidence for the nature of Anglo-Saxon and Viking-Age societies in the valley of the River Trent and its adjacent region, between the fifth and mid-eleventh centuries. Key themes discussed will be the formation of the different societies that we call "Anglo-Saxon" in the region; settlements, landscapes and lifestyles within the Kingdom of Mercia; the role of the Trent as a communication corridor for contacts and trade; the impact of the Viking Age; and the development of the towns and shires of the Trent valley in the tenth and eleventh centuries AD.

After the talk there will be the opportunity to handle and find out about Saxon artefacts from the Museum collections.

Wednesday, 14 May - War and diplomacy on Rome's northern frontier

Dr. Fraser Hunter, Principal Curator of the Iron Age and Roman Collections at the National Museum of Scotland.

There was a long and tangled relationship between Romans and locals on Britain's northern frontier - and both sides were changed radically by the experience. For a long time, Roman historical sources and Roman military archaeology were the main pieces of evidence used. In recent years, however, archaeology has given voice to the local side of the story. This talk will use the latest perspectives from archaeology to rewrite history, telling tales from the edge of the empire which are complex, intricate and fascinating.

Following the talk there will be an opportunity to look at Roman artefacts from the collections of the University of Nottingham Museum.

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## Appeal for Articles

It will not go unnoticed that this issue of the *Newsletter* is rather more slender than previous issues. The simple reason is that the Editorial CUPBOARD [for cupboard read folder] is BARE. There are no articles waiting to be published and very little has been passed to me of late.

I therefore appeal to members to let me have items of news, interest and information about what you are working on at present. I would particularly like our members in the north and east of the county to let me know what is happening in your part of Nottinghamshire. Use the *Newsletter* to give publicity to local events and thereby increase the footfall and success of any such event.

Thoroton has around 400 members and we know that the *Newsletter* is read by many more than this number which enhances its usefulness as a vehicle for publicity.

Articles can be on any local history subject and the *Newsletter* is keen to use those which are not suitable for the more academic *Transactions*. Please don't be reticent, don't imagine that no-one else is interested in your research, whether finished or 'in progress'. It is the function of local history, and thereby local historians, to share their work so adding to knowledge and one vehicle for this sharing is the journal you are reading right now!

The article in this issue about the Bestwood Winding Engine House (*On Our Doorstep*) is an example of where anyone can contribute. Is there any less well-known or under-visited site in your part of the county? If so why not write a few words to publicise it. Several volunteers run places which could do with extra income from increased visitor numbers.

Please seriously consider putting pen to paper for the next and future issues.

# On Our Doorstep

How well do we know our County? Do we appreciate what gems of interest there are in our own backyard? Are we obsessed with going further afield to satiate our hunger for knowledge and history?

This comment arises from a recent visit to the Winding Engine House at Bestwood. It was known to me that the colliery winding house had not been demolished along with the colliery after closure in 1967. I also knew that Bestwood Country Park was, at least partly, formed from the land on which the colliery and the associated iron works had stood. In its heyday the colliery occupied about as much land as does Wollaton Park.

The only remains of the colliery are the Headstocks, Winding Engine House and the Dynamo House.

The Winding Engine House is unique in that it is a four floored vertical unit, the steam driven engine being the only one remaining in England still in its original setting. The engine was built by R.J. & E. Coupe of Wigan and commissioned in 1876, it is a Duplex Vertical Winding Engine with two steam driven pistons ( hence duplex) it operated under steam pressure of 80lbs per square inch developing 1,500 horse power and has pistons of 36 inches bore by 72 inches stroke. The engine drives an 18 ft diameter drum split into two sections over which the ropes are wound at a speed of almost 30 mph.

The only other vertical winding engine to be seen is at the Beamish Museum and that one is older than Bestwood's but is smaller in scale and only has a single cylinder.

The engine operated under steam from installation to the closure of the colliery. It can now be turned by electric power.

The engine and building in which it is situated have been very carefully renovated by volunteers of a group founded in the 1970s and now, with the help of a Lottery grant, this impressive engine can be seen in pristine condition. It is well worth a visit. Accessibility is excellent, the building now contains a glass sided lift to access all floors and health and safety issues have been carefully addressed with excellent viewing facilities.

The site is open most Saturdays but if intending to visit it is best to ring 0115-976-2422 to ensure that there will be volunteers present to conduct a tour. There is no charge for visits.

There is a toilet in the Dynamo House - a former electricity sub-station - where there is also a cafe selling hot and cold drinks and snacks. The Dynamo House houses a display about the colliery and site.

Car parking is free in the adjacent Country Park car park and once on Park Road at Bestwood the site cannot be missed because the headstocks loom high above the tree line.

Do spare a couple of hours on a Saturday morning to visit this gem with its reminder of the rich heritage our county has had in the coal mining industry - there is precious little remaining to be seen of that once extensive industry, Bestwood's site is helping to preserve a part of Nottinghamshire's history and deserves our support.

*Howard Fisher*

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## Archives Update

There have recently been changes at both the Nottinghamshire Archives and at the University of Nottingham Department of Manuscripts and Special Collections.

Dorothy Johnston, Keeper of Manuscripts and Special Collections at the University, retired in December 2012. She also stepped down from the Thoroton Council, but remains in the area and is maintaining her membership of the Thoroton Society.

Mark Dorrington, Principal Archivist to Nottinghamshire County Council, left his post in October 2013. A month later he took up the position of Keeper of Manuscripts and Special Collections at the University.

The County Council appointed Ruth Imeson as Principal Archivist and we welcome Ruth both as Mark's successor, and as a new member of the Thoroton Society.

At the end of 2013 Chris Weir, long serving Senior Archivist at Nottinghamshire Archives, retired. Much of his work, particularly his outreach work, will be taken over in due course by Peter Lester.

Finally, as many may know, the first sod was turned in the autumn to start the extension works at Nottinghamshire Archives. For various reasons the work has yet to start, but it will soon be underway within the next couple of months.

*John Beckett*

# Meeting Reports

## **The Nottingham History Lecture, 8 November 2013: Lizbeth Powell - The Ties That Bind; The Emotional Landscape of Sir Thomas Parkyns of Bunny**



Before a very full audience, which included residents of Sir Thomas Parkyns' Bunny, Lizbeth Powell explored a set of potentially new and exciting ways of looking at the lives of early-modern people through the life and connections of Sir Thomas.

This paper forms a set of initial ideas derived from Lizbeth's doctoral studies, currently being conducted at Nottingham Trent University. At the outset, Lizbeth stated that her aim was to try and understand Sir Thomas through an exploration of his emotions. This idea is based upon an assertion by Keith Thomas that individuals in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were emotionally fully developed and sought fulfilment. That said exploring emotion is no easy task and the paper was largely confined to the attempt to use the written expressions of emotion which Parkyns has left us in his writings. Letters to family members, to friends, clients and associates such as John Bley of East Leake and London, formed the source material for this exploration. The changes in the way Sir Thomas felt about family members is charted through the way he dealt with debts owed within the family, but also the rather unpleasant way in which he tried to manipulate the emotions of his granddaughter in an apparently successful attempt to get her to sacrifice any ambitions that she might have, and become his housekeeper. Even so in other letters there is evidence that Sir Thomas did see his granddaughter in less utilitarian terms and cared for her emotional state of mind. Moreover, Lizbeth argued convincingly that the relationships in which Parkyns played a central role far exceeded the mechanical concerns of finance and real-estate.

The paper was followed by a lively question and debate session which reflected the audience's fascination with, and knowledge of, the 'wrestling' baronet as well as Lizbeth's innovative and

enlightening approach. A version of the paper will be included in *Transactions* Vol. 117.

*Martyn Bennett*

## **New Thoughts on the Construction of the Great Pilgrimage Cathedral of Santiago de Compostella, 11 January 2014. Dr. Jenny Alexander**

A change is as good as a rest and the lecture series departed from its usual emphasis on Nottinghamshire to do something more exotic by going abroad to the cathedral of Santiago de Compostela in north-west Spain in the company of Dr Jenny Alexander. Jenny is no stranger to the Thoroton Society having talked to us in the past on Thurgarton Priory and Lincoln cathedral. Much of her work has been concentrated on buildings in the East Midlands but, as part of a large project funded by the regional government of Galicia, Jenny was invited to bring her immense knowledge of masons' marks to bear on the many masons' marks found in the cathedral to carry out a survey of them in order to contribute to a greater understanding of the building.

Jenny began by explaining that in the 9th century the rediscovery of the relics of St James led to the building of a new church which was destroyed by the Moors in 997. In 1075 a new church was begun. In 1105 the five radiating east-end chapels were consecrated, and the rest of the church was said to have been consecrated in 1128. Work continued into the later 12th century. Documentary evidence was poor but two masons in particular were mentioned, Bernard the elder and Esteban (Stephen), of whom little else was known and equally which parts of the church they had built. Indeed the construction of the church has been much debated. The plan of the church was very



well thought out: not only was the nave and choir aisled but the transepts as well which created space for the vast number of pilgrims to circulate. The galleries above the aisles were thus wide and well lit. Jenny told us that modern pilgrims still follow a well prescribed route: first by placing a hand in a hole in the masonry of the magnificently carved 12th-century Pórtico da Gloria, then making their way through the church to the high

altar and up the stairs to go behind the statue of St James which is then hugged. The actual relics of St James are in the crypt where can be seen the substructure of the 9th-century church which itself is built on the site of much earlier Roman buildings and burials.

The number of pilgrims created problems for Jenny and she found she and her team could only work in the quieter winter months thus time was rather limited. She decided to concentrate on the east end where there were a mass of masons' marks but here there was a major difficulty in that internally the east end had been heavily 'baroque-ed', as she put it, in the 17th century which obscured quite a lot of the masonry. Nevertheless, she was able to tell that something had gone on here through breaks in the masonry and other construction oddities. External examination of the east end made difficult crowded as it is by other buildings confirmed her initial assessment. Rigorous recording of the mason's marks and developing computer techniques for their analysis enabled her to make a number of suggestions. Masons' marks indicate how the mason built and how he thought. She identified at least two masons. One employed a kind of 'flat-pack' approach and the other an entirely different one. Although she could suggest which mason had built what there were still problems in the build because of as yet unidentified factors which complicated matters and to join up the dots as it were some phases had to be surmised for the time being. More work would have to be undertaken. So Jenny's 'new thoughts' were that the building of the east end was not necessarily as smoothly continuous as previously thought and that perhaps there was an attempt to re-model the east end perhaps to improve the interior aesthetic and provide better lighting for the shrine and sanctuary. What may have been intended at Compostela was perhaps reflected by comparison with the east end of another pilgrimage church, the abbey of Ste Foy at Conques in France. A number of major churches built on the pilgrimage routes (caminos) to Compostela were imitations to a lesser degree of the church at Compostela and Conques abbey was such a one. The east end at Conques with only three radiating chapels was much more satisfactory: the external and internal aesthetic more harmonious and the interior space of the sanctuary comparatively very well lit.

Jenny's 'new thoughts' on the church of Compostela were fascinating and absorbing. A complex subject was very clearly explained which members appreciated and responded to accordingly with many questions followed by enthusiastic applause. Despite difficulties caused by unsympathetic cathedral clergy and the current problems of the Spanish economy, it is to be hoped that Jenny will be able to return to Compostela in the future to continue her work and Thoroton members will have a further opportunity to hear more of her 'new thoughts' on this great Romanesque church.

*Trevor Faulds*

**The Neville Hoskins lecture - 14 December 2013.  
"Emma and Edward, The Wilmotts and their World". Dr. Richard Gaunt, Associate Professor in Modern British History, University of Nottingham.**

Richard opened his presentation by telling us that he was pleased to have known Neville and proud to be giving this presentation

as an extension of the work that Neville has previously done, researching the background of his "second woman". Neville's interest had started around 1966 when he and Rosalys Coope encountered an unsigned book of sketches of rural life and set out to identify the places illustrated and, hopefully, the artist. Neville and Rosalys identified many of the places as being in North Nottinghamshire and eventually located a second sketchbook in the Bassetlaw Museum, this one being signed "EEW", although it was still unclear whether the artist was a man or a woman. Further searching finally showed that the artist was Emma Elizabeth Wilmot, the wife of a land agent working on the Duke of Newcastle's estate.



Richard then told us that he had picked up Neville's work when he passed away in 2005 and continued to research and document the lives of Emma and her family. Emma, the granddaughter of Erasmus Darwin and therefore related to the great naturalist, Charles Darwin, was brought up at Breadsall Priory before marrying Edward Woolett Wilmott in 1842. Edward was older than Emma, having previously been married to Augusta Matilda who had unfortunately died early of what was reported as a "lingering illness". After their marriage Emma and Edward moved to Sparken House in Worksop, where they set up the family home and produced four children, one of whom died in infancy. Edward's position as Land Agent to the Duke of Newcastle entitled him to a salary of £800 per year as well as the house, although he also owned another farm which brought in additional income from its tenant. Emma appears, therefore, to have been able to raise the family in some comfort and to indulge herself in her pastime of sketching scenes and events from their rural life.

Richard referred to Emma's sketchbooks as 'diaries without words', being a record of people and places of the time and also acting as a record of many buildings that no longer survive. The source of Emma's skill is not recorded but the two sketchbooks do show a developing expertise, with the quality of the pictures in the second, Bassetlaw, book being much better than the first. During their time at Worksop, Emma also became known as a patroness of several churches, the principal ones being at Worksop, Steetley and Thorpe Salvin.

Edward eventually had a disagreement with the Duke of

Newcastle, lost his job and their home, and went to work for the Davenport Estate before taking up a position as Agent to the Buxton Estate of the Duke of Devonshire. During his time at Davenport, Edward met Elizabeth Gaskell, the novelist, and we were asked to speculate whether she used him as a model for Mr. Horner in her novella *My Lady Ludlow*. When the BBC produced their television series *Cranford* they used characters from other Gaskell novels to supplement those in the original book and one of these, Edmund Carter, is now assumed to be Mr. Horner with a new name.

Whilst at Buxton, Edward and Emma established a new church at Burbage, still there today, with Edward as churchwarden. In 1864 Edward was sent from Buxton to Harrogate to recover from illness but eventually died and was buried in the churchyard at Burbage. Emma lived on to the grand age of 78 and when she died in 1898, she was also buried at Burbage, where a plaque still records the life and family of Edward and Emma Wilmot.

Richard closed his presentation with a number of unanswered questions from his research so far:

- What was the mysterious “lingering illness” that Edward’s first wife died from?
- Where did Emma learn to sketch so well and who taught her?
- Are there any more sketchbooks in existence that would help to fill the gaps in their lives?
- Was Edward really the model for Mr. Horner who became Edward Carter on television?

Richard’s research will continue and we were invited to help him by considering these questions whilst also perusing his book that reproduces many of Emma’s sketches.

David Hoskins

[Ed. Members will recall that Richard’s book, *Emma’s Sketchbook* was reviewed by Dr. Tom Smith in the Newsletter issue 72, Summer 2013 and that a picture from the book was used on the cover of that issue.]

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## The Great Nottinghamshire Local History Fair

The County Council are holding their Great Nottinghamshire Local History Fair again this year at Mansfield Library on Sunday, 11 May from 11 am to 3 pm.

The Thoroton Society will again have a stand at the fair and it would be very good to have a few members there to help man

the stand.

Please let Secretary Barbara Cast know if you are able to be there to help for an hour or so. It was an enjoyable event last year and those attending were very interested in what we do as a Society.

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## Can we help children, parents and teachers by moving ... Way Beyond School?

This is the question put in a pamphlet by a member of Keyworth & District Local History Society, John Adcock, to be published in February 2014.

Any historian will agree with the pamphlet’s first premise that the early education acts had to take children from their homes to be taught in schools because, given the social and economic conditions of those times, there was no viable alternative.

And few would argue with the claim that in 2014 *those conditions have changed beyond all recognition*. But what may

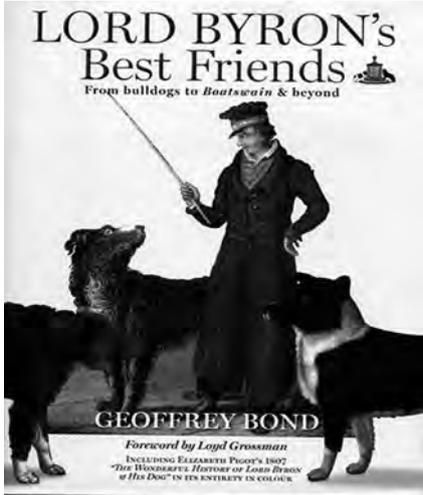
be contentious is the author’s idea that society has changed so much, and communication systems advanced so fast, that schools as we know them may be outdated. Plausible alternatives - one is offered in the pamphlet - can now give support to every child, parent and teacher, and replace schools entirely.

But see what you think!

**The 24 page pamphlet can be freely downloaded at:  
[www.waybeyondschool.co.uk](http://www.waybeyondschool.co.uk)**

# Bookcase

Geoffrey Bond, *LORD BYRON'S BEST FRIENDS: FROM BULLDOGS TO BOATSWAIN & BEYOND*, with a foreword by Loyd Grossman. (2013), £25.00, ISBN 9780951689110



This is the quintessential coffee table book. There is a running account of Byron's life, but this tells us nothing we did not know. It is the pictures, mostly in full colour and beautifully reproduced, which really make the book stand out, some of them from private collections not normally seen by the public.

If you are a dog lover (which the author is not) you will particularly enjoy the main part of the book (p.44 onwards) in which Geoffrey Bond looks at the various dogs associated with Byron through his lifetime, notably Boatswain, Lyon, various bulldogs and mastiffs, and 'Dogs Miscellaneous'. Bond argues that Byron found betrayal and mistrust among the people around him, and loyalty and affection from his dogs, hence his desire (unfulfilled) to be buried at Newstead beside Boatswain.

Overall, an excellent present for dog lovers, and particularly those who also happen to be interested in Byron and Newstead Abbey.

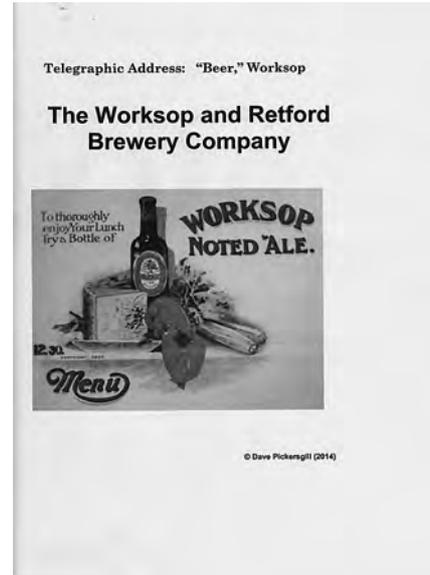
John Beckett

\* \* \*

## *THE WORKSOP AND RETFORD BREWERY COMPANY.*

Dave Pickersgill, (2014), a Kindle book. £1.75 from Amazon – search using 'Beer Worksop'.

This is the first time that a book only available in electronic format has been reviewed in the Thoroton Newsletter. There is no denying the tactile pleasure of holding a printed book (or journal) or of seeing a well stocked bookcase in a house and long may these pleasures last. However, the modern era is upon us and the every day use of electronic equipment is now part of our way of life. My wife owns a Kindle and I an iPad which we use for reading when travelling (saves weight in these days of restricted weight for luggage by airlines) and also at home. The sophistication of this equipment is staggering and the number of



books etc. which can be kept on them is amazing. There are some drawbacks – I wouldn't want to use one in the bath, for example, but in general the advantages far outweigh the disadvantages.

The ability to produce a book solely for Kindle means that publication can be made of work which otherwise would likely not be produced due to the costs involved for an unsupported author and this must be true for many local historians. There is an added feature in that the costs of colour printing are still quite high whereas in electronic form full colour can be used without additional expense. We will very likely see more and more use of this facility, something which we will have to become accustomed to since ignoring it will close the door on much local history work.

In the current example we have a 41 page booklet which carries many illustrations, where relevant in colour and there is no doubt that the use of colour increases the pleasure and understanding of the content. In this case, we would not have the same appreciation of the labelling and advertising techniques of the brewery were the images solely reproduced in monochrome.

Dave Pickersgill started research into the story of the Worksop and Retford Brewery Company to assist a couple of his friends who were writing a novel *Beer, Balls and the Belgian Mafia*, which will be published shortly. Over four years Dave visited depositories and museums in the region and amassed a lot of information. It is to our benefit that he has now turned those research notes into this fascinating history of a Brewery which many people in Nottinghamshire, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire and Derbyshire, along with South Yorkshire, will remember, if not from the actual product, but by recognizing labels, signs and stone carved logos on buildings which were once pubs and now have other uses.

Worksop and Retford Brewery was formed in September 1881 by the merger of Smith & Nephew's Cresswell Holme Brewery and the Priorwell Brewery Company. Cresswell was the owner of the Old Brewery in Retford. The new company adopted the symbol ( we would now call it a logo) of an Iron Cross on oak

leaves; the Iron Cross was a symbol depicting health and, of course, is familiar across Europe. This logo can still be seen carved into the stone façade of several buildings and is illustrated in this book.

The amalgamated brewery was well sited in Worksop because the town had numerous malting kilns and in 1890 malting was described as the principal trade of the town. In 1831 there were 40 maltsters in the town, 29 in 1860 and in 1875 Thomas Berry of Sheffield opened a gas-fired malt kiln on Sherwood Street and in 1880 the well-known name of William Stone, also of Sheffield, opened a large malt kiln on Gateford Road in the town.

The W&R Brewery published annual almanacs for several years ( some can be seen in the Bassetlaw Museum) and there were occasional advertising ditties such as:-

*From North unto South and from East to West  
Wherever you go it is always the best:  
Where'er you may taste it, its ne'er known to fail  
Then give me a tankard of Worksop's rare Ale!*

In 1939 W&R took over the Old Albion Brewery of Sheffield but they were themselves taken over by Tennants in 1959 which company in turn was absorbed into the Whitbread empire in 1962.

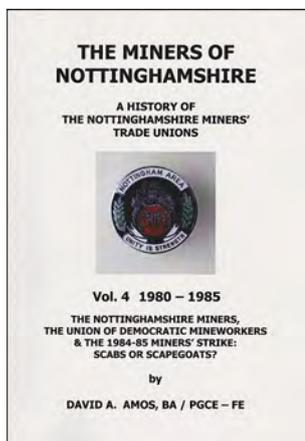
W&R was eventually wound up in April 1970 and their Priorswell Brewery complex demolished in 1962.

This is a story typical of many independent and regional breweries yet all these companies had elements of individuality and W&R was no exception especially in its creativity in marketing its products. The book carries a useful bibliography and is fully referenced. It is an excellent addition to the history of business in Worksop but will appeal to a wider audience who study pubs and brewing in their local area as well as a more general study of brewing in England. The book is highly recommended if you have the facility to download and read Kindle books.

Howard Fisher

\* \* \*

THE MINERS OF NOTTINGHAMSHIRE - A HISTORY OF THE NOTTINGHAMSHIRE MINERS' TRADE UNIONS, VOL. 4 1980-1985. David A. Amos, published by the Union of Democratic Miners, Mansfield, 2013. £13.99 all proceeds to local charities. ISBN 978-0-9570631-3-6.



This is a substantial A4 book of 283 pages plus an un-numbered index. It is fully referenced with a useful bibliography, 22 appendices and some illustrations. It is volume 4 in the series on the History of the Nottinghamshire Miners' Trade Unions and deals primarily with the 1984-85 Miners' strike as it affected the Nottinghamshire coalfield and the consequential formation of the Union of Democratic Mineworkers (UDM). The book is perfect bound, the choice of font and

its point size makes for a rather heavy appearance which doesn't make for a particularly comfortable reading experience; the font size could have been reduced which would have made for a rather more elegant appearance and easier reading. I accept that this is a personal observation and one about which I have a bee in my bonnet but which arises from the wish to have a pleasurable visual as well as intellectual experience in reading a book!

The author is very well placed to write such a history having worked as a miner from 1974 to 1998 at Annesley colliery including eight years as a coal-face electrician. He became a Branch Official for the UDM at Annesley and occupied the positions of Branch Secretary and Branch President during his period in office. He can, therefore, provide an insider's view of the background to the strike, the course of the strike and the subsequent effects it had within the industry, the county and on the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM). Dr. Amos left the coal industry at the end of 1998, obtained a BA in 2002 and PhD in 2012. The UDM has published the book and also gave support to David Amos during his studies.

The book text carries several references to 'this study, and 'this thesis' which suggests that it is based on the author's MA and PhD dissertation and thesis respectively. Indeed, the book reads very much like an academic project and is fully referenced throughout. As a consequence it is a book which represents a valuable addition to coalfield studies but which will prove heavy work for a reader who is not accustomed to academic reading and writing. I feel the text could have been tightened-up and re-worked to make for an easier read without losing the importance of the work. On the other hand, as volume 4 in a series of histories it is a serious study which probably is the reason it is presented in this way. This reviewer is not familiar with the previous three volumes in this series and whilst the Bibliography mentions Volumes 1 and 2 (Alan R. Griffin 1955 and 1962) there is no apparent mention of volume 3.

When this reviewer came to live and work in the East Midlands from his Yorkshire home in the early 1960s Nottinghamshire had many collieries although the 1960s saw the closure of some of them. My work involved the occasional visit to pits and during the 1984-85 strike the effects of picketing were observed as various collieries were driven past. During the strike I had direct experience of interaction with picketing, both from police intervention (being stopped by policemen from the Met. on the A610 exit from the M1 in the early hours of one morning and being closely questioned for several minutes about where I had come from (London) and where I was going (home) and needing to produce documents to establish identity) and from the need to visit collieries during the strike. I recall clearly interchanges at Hem Heath (Staffordshire) and at a couple of Nottinghamshire pits when I needed to pass through picket lines to keep appointments with particular individuals. Having stopped and got out of the car to explain in detail why I was there I was met with courtesy and good humour. This was not the experience of working miners as is made quite clear in this book. In addition I also had to visit the homes of miners, both striking and working, in Nottinghamshire and South Yorkshire, so was able to understand a little of what both sides were going through during this period.

David Amos considers the background to the strike and the effect the strikes of the 1960s and 70s had on the Nottinghamshire miners, the rise of the left in the NUM, particularly after the retirement of Joe Gormley, and the causes of the decision of the majority of the Nottinghamshire miners to continue working

throughout the 1984-85 strike. The lack of a national ballot, the attempts to create a complete strike through the Rule 41 'Domino Effect' and the attitude of Yorkshire flying pickets in the early days of the strike before the Nottinghamshire ballot was held, all had a serious effect. It must also be remembered that although the Nottinghamshire coalfield mostly worked throughout the strike it did maintain the overtime ban which had been in existence prior to the start of the strike.

As I finished reading the book and started to write this review it coincided with a report in *The Times* of 29 January that the Labour Party was demanding an apology from the Conservatives for the way that Margaret Thatcher had treated the miners during her time in office. This arose as a result of the release of Cabinet papers indicating that the Thatcher government had secretly planned the closure of 75 collieries nationally (including some in Nottinghamshire) with the loss of 65,000 jobs as opposed to the 20 which were publicly stated at the time.

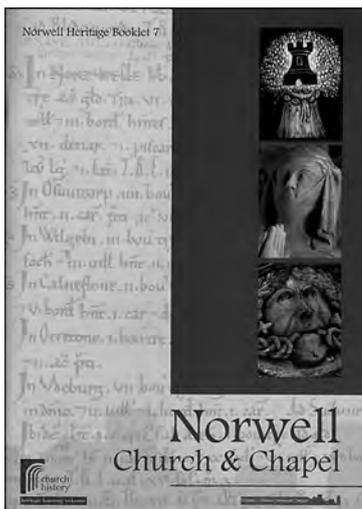
This work by Dr. Amos is a most important addition to the recent history of Nottinghamshire. In particular, the county's coal industry, evidence of which has been almost eradicated from the landscape which, to me, is a great shame because the industry played such an important part in the county from the days of the licensing by Beauvale Priory of bell-pits at Robinetts, Cossall and which led to the building of important houses (Wollaton Hall) from the proceeds of coal mining, the establishment of railways through to the loss of the mines within living memory.

The book is highly recommended to anyone wishing to understand more about the period it covers and also to the casual reader interested in the mining industry and of Nottinghamshire in general.

Howard Fisher

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**NORWELL CHURCH AND CHAPEL: Norwell Parish Heritage Group, 2014. ISSN 2040-2406**



£4 from the Norwell Parish Heritage Group.

This is a well bound A5 publication with soft covers and 54 pages with numerous illustrations and is a very informative book on several levels.

In the Introduction the authors state that the booklet aims to:

*interpret the architecture and recount the history of the parish church and of the two former Methodist*

*Chapels in Norwell.*

Norwell is a small rural community to the north of Newark and has a population of around 450 which is about the same as it was in the years 1250 and 1700.

The book is described as containing two parts: the first contains information on the church buildings and is presented in such a way as to be of use to both the church historian as well as the occasional visitor to the church.

The details contained in this booklet describe well the development of the building from its early years to the present. It has to be said, however, that in the opinion of the reviewer, there are too many assumptions not supported by any evidence. Having experience in the research into local churches in line with the Southwell Diocese Church History project, too much unsupported speculation can mislead those referring to such information and paint a less than true picture. It is appreciated that gathering evidence is usually quite a difficult exercise and some assumptions are, unfortunately unavoidable, but in this instance there are too many of these to be entirely comfortable. That said, the information has been well researched.

The many images included in the booklet are of excellent quality and the majority are relevant to the script.

The second part of the book explores the growth (and decline) of religious life in the village and many of the people who were involved. Religious practices through the ages are considered and provide an interesting aspect to the village and, in particular, the interaction of the church with Southwell Minster.

Of significant interest is the picture that emerges when considering church attendance through the years and the changes forced on the Christian community which could be said to reflect the wider experiences of the church throughout the country.

The picture painted of the progress of Non-conformism is very well described. It portrays a community drawn together by a religious faith very different from that of their predecessors and, for people of a certain age, brings back happy memories of days spent within the Methodist movement. The illustrations of the village and its people at that time clearly show the community spirit encouraged by both Non-conformist and the Anglican traditions. The authors also describe only too plainly the demise of the religious life of the village, citing the abysmally low attendances of the recent past.

In the Conclusion the authors describe a broader guide to aid those visiting the church, be they parishioners or casual visitors especially when using the glossary provided.

It is clear that the stated aims of the authors have been achieved admirably and congratulations are due to the compilers of this splendid and informative booklet.

Alan Butler.

## Dame Agnes Mellers - Famous Name in 2014

by

Barbara Cast

As members will be aware, your officers try to include in our annual programmes the commemoration of significant Nottinghamshire people or events which have centenaries or other anniversaries in the year in question. Often it is a lecture, a visit or an invitation to someone to talk about the person or event in question at the lunch or Spring meeting. Sometimes, however, it is not possible to include a major commemoration and we are then likely to give some prominence in the *Newsletter*. 2014 marks the death of Dame Agnes Mellers some 500 years ago. In last year's programme we celebrated the major achievement of Dame Agnes by a lecture on the founding of the Nottingham High School. But what of Dame Agnes herself?

Not a great deal is known about Dame Agnes' early life, the first reference to her being in 1488 when she was already several years married to the Nottingham bell-founder, Richard Mellers. There are records of the Mellers' foundry casting bells for various churches in the East Midlands - for instance he supplied a bell for St. Peter's in Nottingham in 1499. However, he breached the act requiring the sale of bells by weight and in 1507 had to obtain a Royal pardon. He died the same year.

After his death Dame Agnes devoted herself to works of piety. It appears that a major and forward-thinking interest of hers was education and it is said that she 'ardently desired' to establish a free grammar school in Nottingham. To assist her in achieving her aim she managed to obtain the interest of Sir Thomas Lovell,

an eminently powerful man of the time, including being Governor of Nottingham Castle. Henry VIII issued letters patent in 1512 to *our beloved councillor, Thomas Lovell, knight, treasurer of our household, and Agnes Mellers, widow* which granted permission for a school's foundation in Nottingham for the *education, teaching and instruction in good manners and literature*. Thus Dame Agnes attained her ambition, also making sure that there was endowment to maintain the school into the future.

She also drew up rules for the school management, appointed guardians and a schoolmaster. Being deeply religious herself she ensured that the schoolmaster *shall dayly when he kepys scole cause the Scolers every morning in thair scole hows ... to say with an high voice the hole Credo in deum patrem, etc.* The same year as the school opened, 1513, Dame Agnes made her will and by May 1514 was dead as the proving of her will at that time attests. As well as further providing for her school, her will provide payments to twenty of the poorest churches for which her husband had made bells, probably indicating her wish to atone for any sharp business practice he may have been involved in.

Nottingham has much to thank Dame Agnes Mellers for over the generations - her school is still going strong.

## Watson Fothergill and Sandrock House, West Retford

by

Jean Nicholson

Although buildings designed by Watson Fothergill have been recorded in Mansfield and Newark it has generally been assumed that almost all of his work was in the immediate area around Nottingham.

However, an entry of 1907 in the scrapbook of Edwin Wilmshurst, Bailiff of Trinity Hospital, West Retford, suggested that in the early years of his career, Fothergill Watson, as he was then called, was willing to travel and work further afield.

Wilmshurst wrote:

*The porch and back garden I have myself added much improving the house which was badly designed inside by Nottingham Architect Mr. Fothergill Watson.*

This was further confirmed when the account for the work done

was found in the Hospital Archive dated 1882; it also records the payments made:

1884	January 11th	£15. 0.0
1885	April 21st	£13.10.0
1886	May 21st	<u>£13.11.0</u>
	Total	<u>£42. 1.0</u>

Fothergill Watson signed that he had received the final instalment on 21st May. Fortunately further confirmation regarding Fothergill Watson's work can be found in his diary now in the University of Nottingham's Manuscripts Department.

More notebook than diary very few entries are preceded by a date and many of the notes are very brief. Sometime after 26th October 1876 he records:

*Retford sashes glass in swing door  
Wall of Bank  
St. John St.*

(Watson Fothergill's diary notebook).  
Trinity Hospital Archive  
J. M. Nicholson

Unfortunately no more information has been found about these buildings but this entry is followed by

*Retford Trinity Hospital Worth Steward*

John Henry Worth had taken over as Bailiff to the Hospital from William Barker in 1853. Worth was a shrewd businessman and administrator who continued the work of rebuilding and improving the estate started by William Barker. The appearance of Bridgegate today owes much to John Henry Worth's foresight and energy. Gradually the old mud and stud cottages and barns were replaced by the elegant brick houses seen today.



By 1876 the houses belonging to the Hospital which stood next to the Galway Arms were in such a ruinous condition that Worth decided to have them pulled down and to replace them with three houses built around a crescent which was to be known as St. Michael's Place. The first to be built was Sandrock House. Fortunately the

old houses and barns were photographed by John Ashley of Grove Street who was paid ten shillings:

*For taking copy of some of the decayed buildings in West Retford.*

The photograph gives some idea of what Bridgegate must have looked like before Worth started his improvements.

On 26 January 1877 Fothergill records in more detail:

*The house for the Trinity Hospital Estate was to cost no more than £500 and was to be let for £30 per annum.*

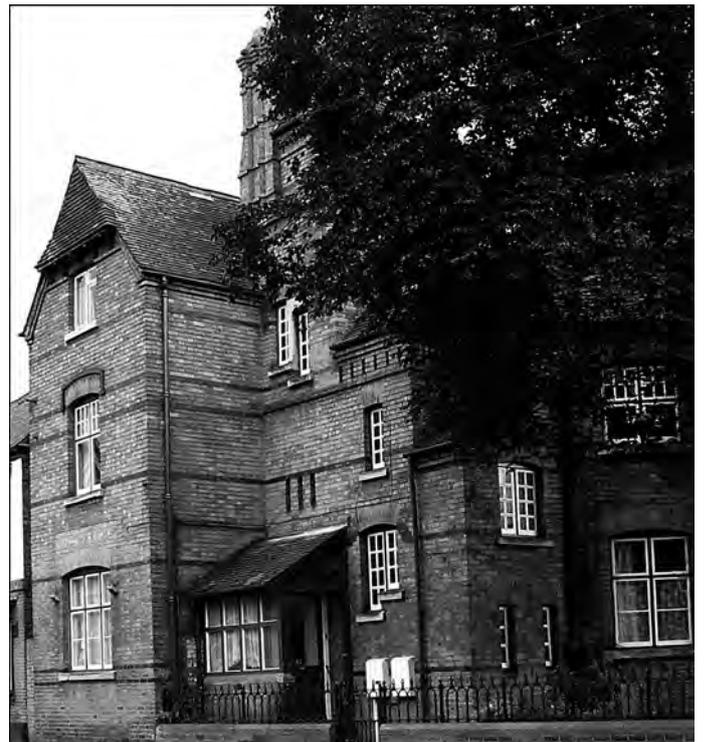
He also notes that the work could not be done properly for less than £700.

On 17 May John Wilson, builder of West Retford, submitted a tender for £578 and on 16 January 1879 Mr. F. Watson of Nottingham was paid £20 in part payment.

Sandrock House was duly built. It exhibits many of the features of Fothergill's distinctive style. It is possible that in order to keep down costs to within the budget some of the internal fittings were not completed according to Fothergill's specification. It may also explain why Fothergill did not design the other two houses, Tower House and Crown House in St. Michael's Place. These were designed by Bertram Ogle, architect of Retford. However, Ogle appears to have copied Fothergill's style so that the three houses complement each other. They also provided inspiration for many of the houses built in Retford between 1877 and 1914.

References: University of Nottingham Manuscripts Department

*Photographs by William Nicholson*



Clinton St. Nottingham, Xmas 1882.

J. F. Worth Esq. for the Trinity Hospital Estate

to Fothergill Watson, Architect.

1875

The Estate Generally.

£ s. d.

April 24 <sup>th</sup> # 25	To surveying the site of the proposed Crescent, also the old buildings, also to taking levels for the laying out of the site, and to laying down the measurements and levels to a scale.	5	18	.
April-May	To designing general scheme of roads and adjusting the levels and preparing for setting them out on the site.	7	.	.
May 6 <sup>th</sup>	To setting out the position of new Roads and marking out the various levels in order that the filling up material might be deposited in the right positions for the new Roads. To numerous attendances on the site about the new Roads.	3	18	6
Oct. 9 <sup>th</sup>	To tracing of general block plan of proposed Crescent showing position of suggested Villas.	2	2	.
		<hr/>		
		18	18	6

1878

March 15 <sup>th</sup>	To roughly measuring old houses with you, to making finished etched drawing and plans of alterations to submit to Local Board and to take measurements for blacksmiths shops.	3	3	.
April	On the Local Board of Health having approved of the drawing submitted, to taking exact measurements of the plan of each floor and each elevation of the old houses.	2	7	0
Aug. 25 <sup>th</sup>	To specially attending upon you with drawings of the old houses as altered, added to and generally			
	Carried forward	<hr/>		
		2	9	.

Brought forward 24 0 -

recd. at your request to altering the drawings in several respects.

Aug. 24<sup>th</sup> To tracing of altered plans to submit to the Local Board. And postage 2 2 -

" 30<sup>th</sup> To plan and tracing of Blacksmith's shop for Local Board. 1 1 -

Sep. 28<sup>th</sup> To professional services rendered in preparing the working drawings, details, and specifications of the additions and alterations to the old houses and forwarding to you and postage. @ 3½ p.c on the amount of builder's Tender £354. 1 1 -

13 8 1  
42 1 1

Credit by payments

1884 January 11<sup>th</sup> 15. 0. 0

1885 April 21<sup>st</sup> 13. 10. 0

1886 May 21<sup>st</sup> 13. 11. 0

42. 1. 0

Received the balance of this acct.  
 £13. 11. 0  
 Jotherpil Watson  
 21<sup>st</sup> May 1886

# Articles Noted

Apologies for dating the first entry in the Winter issue as 2003 when it should have read 2013!

THE LOCAL HISTORIAN, volume 43 No. 4; October 2013

The 'Local State' in Regency Britain.

Malcolm Chase

The 'Irish Gent' and his strumpet: the story of Hercules Burleigh.

Ian Hancock

Dr. George Stuart Hawthorne of Liverpool and his 'infallible' treatment of Asiatic cholera 1848-1849

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The establishment and organisation of civil defence operations in Berkshire 1936-1945

Natalie Burton

Prisoners of war in Britain in the 1940s

Phoebe Merrick

Review article: 'Ye have the poor always with you'.

Kate Thompson

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The railwaymen who went to war: stories held at the National Railway Museum

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Bell Founders and School Founders: the Mellers family in Early Tudor Nottingham

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200 Years Ago – 1<sup>st</sup> November 1813 First Balloon Flight from Nottingham

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The Nottingham Street That never Was...

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That Was a Week That Was!

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Medicine To The Mind A Quintet of Libraries Part 2

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Ken Brand

Eccentricities of Nottingham Town Councillors

Ken Brand

# Snippets

## **Bassetlaw**

Bassetlaw District Council have recently launched an interactive heritage mapping web page which shows all the heritage assets in the district aside from unscheduled archaeology although links to Nottinghamshire County Council/HER are included. There are historic maps and the site has been made easy to use and clicking on an asset brings up basic information about it.

The web link is: [http://www.bassetlaw.gov.uk/planning\\_and\\_building/conservation\\_heritage/bassetlaw\\_heritage\\_mapping.aspx](http://www.bassetlaw.gov.uk/planning_and_building/conservation_heritage/bassetlaw_heritage_mapping.aspx)

## **Festival of Archaeology**

The CBA Festival of Archaeology for 2014 runs from Saturday 12 July to Sunday 27 July with over a thousand events across the UK.

Details are on the web site: [www.archaeologyfestival.org.uk](http://www.archaeologyfestival.org.uk)

## **At the Harley Gallery 25 May to end of 2014**

The Harley Gallery at Welbeck is currently showing Edward Harley: The Great Collector. An exhibition illustrating the life of Edward Harley 2nd Earl of Oxford, glimpses his obsessive and opulent world through objects from The Portland Collection, including the Arundel Cabinet and Shakespeare's second folio.

An opportunity not to be missed.

As the only space dedicated to exhibiting objects from the fine and decorative art collection which belonged to the Dukes of Portland at Welbeck, The Harley Gallery provides a rare opportunity to glimpse into the world of this aristocratic family. From opulence and obsession to debt and despair, this new exhibition follows the fortunes of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl of Oxford (1689-1741). Showing at The Harley Gallery from 25 May 2013, this exhibition explores Edward Harley's background, family and marriage through his spectacular collections of fine and decorative art and books. Edward Harley was a dedicated but extravagant collector. He bought at inflated prices when the desire to possess overrode any sense of the value of the piece or the extent of his resources. In 1738 he found himself in great debt and had to sell his family home and his collections.

The son of Robert Harley, one of the most powerful politicians in the country, Edward Harley married Henrietta Cavendish-Holles - the wealthiest heiress in Britain. Harley filled his family home at Wimpole Hall with a hubbub of activity – writers, poets, artists, bibliophiles would be regular visitors. He was a dedicated collector; his collections were extensive and extravagant as he passionately sourced the rarest and most beautiful things. Harley was surrounded by the finest thinkers and the finest things.

Besides magnificent silver, curios, paintings, and other works of art, he collected English miniature portraits dating from the early 1500s to his own time. These likenesses were intended as precious, jewel-like treasures to be kept in cabinets, brought out to be admired, and then returned to safety. They could be love tokens and gifts, souvenirs between friends and family members. Being so small, they were easily portable. Some were to be designed to be worn by a loved one as a pendant or bracelet.

Many of Harley's miniatures came from branches of his and his wife's families; others were purchased because of the distinction of the artist or the importance of the sitter. They are the work of the greatest masters in the medium.

Harley rapidly added to the library started by his father, and his collection included pivotal works such as Shakespeare's second folio and Jonathan Swift's Gulliver's Travels. Through Harley's dedication, the library at Wimpole Hall grew at an astonishing rate, with some 12,000 books in the collection by September 1717.

By the beginning of the eighteenth century books and pictures were needing special accommodation in more and more houses. They were to become an essential part of country-house life. It was not until the second half of the seventeenth century that rooms called libraries became more common in country houses. Informed buying of art and literature was virtually non-existent until Charles I and other members of the court circle built up their collections in the 1620s and 30s. It required leisure, knowledge and money and house design grew to accommodate the collections with libraries, picture galleries and cabinet rooms.

By the end of his life in 1741 Edward Harley had amassed the largest private library in Britain, but his passion for collecting ranged far beyond books and manuscripts. Edward Harley's library contained 50,000 printed books, 7,639 manuscripts, 14,236 rolls and legal documents, 350,000 pamphlets, 41,000 prints; "the most choice and magnificent that were ever collected" (Collins).

His wealth gradually dwindled, yet Harley continued to add to his collections, often driving up the price of objects in his lust for ownership. In this obsessive collecting, Harley bankrupted himself and spent much of his wife's fortune, eventually selling his family home and his collections to pay his debts.

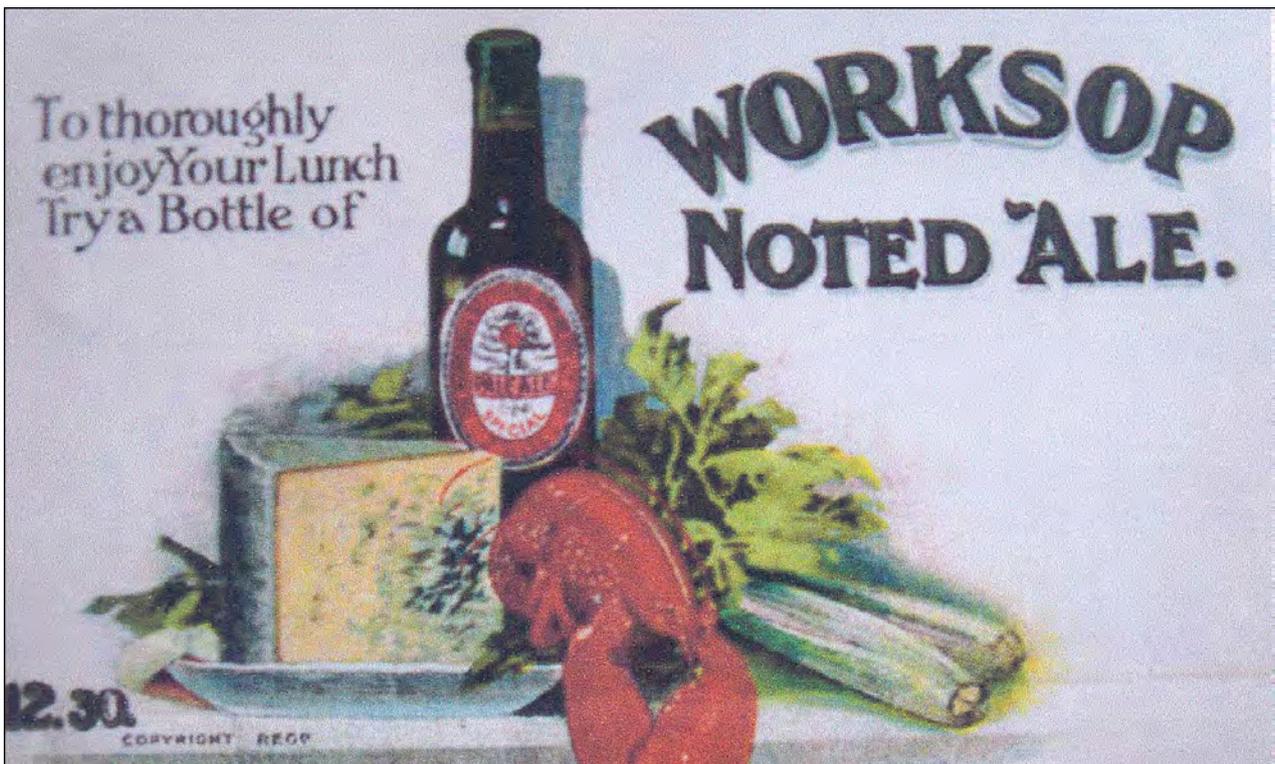
The great library, started by his father and described by Dr Johnson as excelling any offered for sale, was dispersed in 1742, but the celebrated Harleian collection of manuscripts was one of the founding collections of the British Library. Harley was also a patron of contemporary writers, including Alexander Pope and Jonathon Swift and of artists and architects.

# More Annual Luncheon Pictures





*Moorgreen Colliery - The Last Eastwood Pit c1984. Image from Dr. David A. Amos' book, The Miners of Nottinghamshire which is reviewed in this issue of the Newsletter.*



*Worksop and retford brewery Company poster from Dave Pickersgill's book about the Brewery which is reviewed in this issue of the Newsletter.*