

# THE THOROTON SOCIETY

Nottinghamshire's History and Archaeology Society



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Professor Carenza Lewis delivers the 2017 Special Lecture at the State Chamber, Archbishop's Palace, Southwell Minster

*The Thoroton Society of Nottinghamshire*  
*The County's Principal History and Archaeology Society*  
Visit the Thoroton Society website at: [www.thorotonsociety.org.uk](http://www.thorotonsociety.org.uk)

## **ANNUAL LUNCHEON 2017**

The mailing this month includes your booking form for the annual luncheon. The date is 4<sup>th</sup> November. This year we are returning to a favourite venue, Ye Olde Bell at Barnby Moor, which we last visited in 2012. We thoroughly enjoyed lunching at this hotel and we are promised a super lunch once again served to us at £23 per person.

We hope that many of you will take the opportunity to meet with other members on 4<sup>th</sup> November and once again enjoy a special meal together.

**Barbara Cast, Honorary Secretary**

## **SPECIAL LECTURE**

### **Disaster Recovery, Archaeological Evidence for the Impact of the Black Death in England**

**Professor Carenza Lewis, University of Lincoln**

**The State Chamber, Southwell 22 June 2017**

The Black Death was a defining moment in our history. In the space of a few months during 1348 and 1349 something like half of the population died from plague. In some parishes it was more, perhaps 80 per cent. Whole families were wiped out. Communities were decimated. There is some (limited) documentary evidence, but for some years now Carenza Lewis has been collecting pottery evidence via the technique of Test Pitting – made famous by Michael Wood's television series 'The Story of England'. In the Society's bi-annual Special Lecture, held this year in the newly refurbished State Chamber at Southwell, 120 members and their guests were treated to a superb lecture which demonstrated how the technique of Test Pitting works, and what evidence it reveals that helps us to understand just how severely individual communities were affected by the plague in these years.



A plague pit excavated by Professor Lewis

Carenza Lewis had a traditional academic background, with a Cambridge degree in Archaeology and Anthropology, but she came into the public eye when in 1993 she joined Time Team, with Tony Robinson, Mick Aston, and several other archaeologists who became familiar faces on our television screens. She left the programme in 2005, and after a number of years at Cambridge, where she set up 'Access Cambridge

Archaeology', she moved in 2015 to the University of Lincoln as Professor of Public Understanding of Research. In that role, not only does she continue to involve individuals and community groups in archaeology, particularly in relation to her work on the Black Death, but she puts her message across in such an engaging way that the State Chamber audience was spellbound for an hour, with barely a cough to disturb the collective concentration.

I am grateful to our Special Lecture team (Barbara Cast, David Hoskins, John Wilson and Alan Langton) for their hard work in preparing the lecture and the reception which followed. The only sad note was that our Honorary Secretary suffered an accident in moving some chairs, and had to be rushed to Newark hospital by her husband to have the wound stitched. 'Very irritated to have missed the talk', she texted - once she had been bound up!

It was a special evening, informative and entertaining, and it showed us just how much fun, as well as how serious, archaeology can be when delivered with Carenza's panache and verve.

**John Beckett**

## **EXCURSION REPORTS 2017**

### **THE SITES OF THE PENTRICH REBELLION**

**THURSDAY 25<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2017**

**LEADERS : RICHARD GAUNT AND ROGER TANNER**

We had a glorious summer day for this excursion, which was so well supported that the coach was full, and eight people had to be disappointed. We were most ably led by Richard and Roger, who had prepared a very informative and interesting programme, with a nice mixture of talking and walking. We travelled to South Wingfield first where coffee was served in the Social Club and where an excellent exhibition has been prepared especially to mark this two hundredth anniversary of the Rebellion. Richard gave a talk about the possible causes of the rebellion. Making it clear that a combination of industrial problems, political unrest and social imbalance, together with the growth of Primitive Methodism, all combined to provide cause for public disaffection. After coffee we chose either to make a walking tour of some sites of the rebellion in South Wingfield, or the coach took us to look around the inside of South Wingfield church and the graveyard where evidence of names associated with the rebellion can be seen.

To cater for the large numbers, lunch had to be served in two venues – both local hostelrys which provided enjoyable meals and a welcome break for members. We next went by coach to Saint Matthew's Church at Pentrich, where we saw evidence of its Norman origin in the circular piers and font, and the lower part of the tower. We then had the chance to walk through some delightful fields to view the wide and dramatic expanse of the Amber Valley, through which the rebels had marched on their proposed journey to Nottingham. The whole ambitious enterprise had wrongly assumed that they would be joined by thousands of marchers from all over the country on their way to London. Sadly for them, the march came to an abrupt end at the Butterley Iron Works when they were met by troops. Our drive back to Nottingham followed part of the route of the marchers as they dwindled away to nothing by the time they had got to Kimberley. The subsequent trial of the leaders resulted in three of them being hanged, fourteen transported abroad, and six imprisoned. Altogether an excellent day, thanks to the sunshine and to Roger and Richard.

**Alan Langton**

### **LAMPORT HALL AND HALLATON CHURCH**

**20<sup>TH</sup> JULY 2017**

**LEADER : ALAN LANGTON**

Fortunately, by the time we arrived at Lamport Hall in Northamptonshire, the heavy rain which gave us a very wet journey had eased. The coach could not have squeezed through the pillars at the gate entrance without causing damage, and so the large group of 43 members and friends had to walk up the drive which enabled them to admire the imposing Hall façade and the ten acres of grounds as they walked. We were greeted with delicious coffee and home-made biscuits before being divided into groups to be taken on a tour of the building by three very excellent, knowledgeable and entertaining guides. Until 1976 Lamport was owned by succeeding generations of the Isham family, but when the renowned actor Sir Gyles Isham died without heirs, he bequeathed the property to a Preservation Trust. The present noble building replaced a manor house and was originally designed by John Webb in 1655, when Sir Charles Isham was rewarded with a baronetcy for his loyalty during the Civil War. The interior is in splendid condition, and is being maintained immaculately by the Trust. It has magnificent ceilings and fittings, with many portraits of members of the family, especially the

ladies. The Library is a stunning room, full of books, some dating back many years. Most rooms have delightful furniture. The garden is extensive, and is famous for the rockery designed by the tenth baronet, a Victorian eccentric who introduced the garden gnome to England. Sadly, the ground was too wet for us to go into the garden.

A good buffet lunch was enjoyed in lovely sunshine at an inn in Brixworth, a village with a church with Saxon evidence. Our final stop was at the Leicestershire Village of Hallaton, where we were given a very informative illustrated talk by John Morison. This fine church dates back to Norman times, with a Norman font and tympanum of Saint Michael slaying the dragon, Norman arches, some Kempe windows, and a thirteenth century tower and spire. Altogether another excellent excursion.

**Alan Langton**

### **THE VILLAGE OF KINGSTON-ON-SOAR**

At the Thoroton Society AGM on the 29<sup>th</sup> April 2017, the following presentation was made on the history of the village of Kingston on Soar, followed by a visit to the church where the historic Babington Monument was examined by the members. [*Photographs appeared in the Summer Newsletter no 88 – Ed.*]

Kingston on Soar lies in the westernmost extremes of the county of Nottinghamshire and is one of a string of Soar Valley villages dominated by the River Soar. It has had a chequered history, being administered by the nearby village of Ratcliffe on Soar until it achieved independence circa 1536.

Not much is known about its early history but the Celts built a shrine at the junction of the Soar and Trent, leaving behind votive offerings. The Romans were in the area circa 49AD and remained in the vicinity until circa 410, leaving behind evidence of metalworking until the source of iron and coal gave out. The first true residents were the Angles, with a cremation site dating from circa 550AD containing 200 funeral urns being found in the grounds of Kingston Hall in 1842.

Domesday records three Saxon owners in 1066 who were quickly dispossessed, the manor falling to William I. There followed 500 years of amalgamation with nearby Ratcliffe on Soar in which Saewin, a King's Thane, administered the holding. The church at Ratcliffe was the mother church, no church or chapel being recorded at Kingston in Domesday.

By the time of William II the area was held by Hugh Lupus, Earl of Chester, who obtained the lands by dubious means associated with the accession of, firstly, William II and then Henry I.

A chapel existed at Kingston by 1100 but this together with Ratcliffe and Thrumpton was vested in the priory of Norton by 1135. Transferred to the priory at Burscough circa 1354-1380, it was subject to two disputes with the Pope over the appointment of a priest, leading to the church being attacked on the 9<sup>th</sup> October 1381 by the Bishop of Exeter. The attack was instigated by a disaffected member of the Picot family who was at that time advisor to the Bishop.

Whilst the church was in ecclesiastical hands the manor remained in the possession of the Picot family who held it until 1313. The Picots were violent but the residents of Kingston were unruly, being accused of harbouring outlaws and not obeying their lord. Peter Picot was accused of not implementing his *View of Frankpledge*, which was his vow to keep order, and was fined for the activities of the residents at Kingston. This may have had an effect as, shortly after, Peter was accused of murdering one William Bon and persecuting Simon le Cook but he went with Edward I to Scotland and achieved a pardon due to services there. The Picots disappeared in the mid to late 14<sup>th</sup> century, to be replaced by the Bassets and Shirleys as lords.

The Manor at Kingston, located in the fields opposite the church, is not mentioned before 1422 when it was reported as being in the possession of the Babington family. It was to have a short life as the Babington family were embroiled in the Babington plot of 1586 and the manor was attainted, coming to first into the possession of the Earl of Shrewsbury and various other owners before being restored to the Babingtons. However, the manor house was not occupied and was reported as being dilapidated in 1593 and in ruins by 1610. In 1812 it was stated that nothing remained but a stone gateway.

The Babington family were Catholic but with Kingston only having a chapel, all burials were at Ratcliffe. However, at the dissolution in 1536 and with their cousins the Sacheveralls enthusiastically embracing the Protestant faith in that place, the Babington family built the first church at Kingston between 1536 and 1538, where they could celebrate the mass in peace. Kingston then became a parish in its own right. The Babingtons' church was odd in that it effectively faced north-south with the gap between the chancel and the Babington chapel filled with the Babington monument. This limestone monument was intended to be the resting place of the Babingtons but no evidence is forthcoming of any burials. Nor is there any evidence for a tomb despite Katherine Babington specifying in her will that one should be installed. The monument is huge, with a canopy on four columns richly carved and originally painted. It contains no less than 30 coats of arms embracing all the noble families of Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire and Leicestershire in what is clearly an attempt to garner intercession for the Babington souls. The columns carry the rebus of the Babington family which is a child holding a barrel (Bab{e}-n-tun).

The church was rebuilt in 1832, retaining the largely north-south aspect and again in 1900 when it was formed into the conventional east-west alignment. The church contains some alabaster furniture in the form of a font and reredos made from alabaster from mines at Fauld, Staffordshire and Kingston. These two mines were in the possession of Lord Belper, then the occupant of Kingston Hall.

The manor lands were owned by a variety of absentee landlords until 1842 when they came to the Strutt family who later became the Lords Belper. They built a new hall on the rising ground opposite the old manor site. This was constructed between 1842 and 1846 and was made from Derbyshire limestone carried by canal down to a wharf on the Soar. The 1881 census records 17 servants and 4 gardeners. The hall is now private apartments.

After the Second World War the Belpers instigated Kingston Show, a country fair which was popular until it was discontinued in the mid-1960s.

As stated above, the Belpers were involved in all the gypsum mining activities in the area, Lord Belper being the chairman of British Gypsum. He opened Kingston mine in 1880 which had its own railway to the wharf on the Soar and later was connected to the Midland Railway at Kegworth Station. The line was steeply graded and several horses were killed when wagons ran away. This line and the mine closed in 1971. In 1926 he created the Kingston Fine Arts company, making alabaster ornaments and tablets for churches. This company closed in 1936. However, the principal industry was farming. The Nottingham Agricultural College occupied the southern part of the village having a "bull-farm" in the field close to the railway. The rest of the parish was farmed by the Beeby family who still retain the farm next to church. In 1990 the college withdrew from the village to re-establish further south and the college farm and lands were put over to housing. The Lady Belper School was created in 1815 from lands donated by the Belpers. The school closed in 1966.

Kingston retains its rural setting largely because in it in the Soar flood plain. The village was severely flooded in the winter of 1946/7 and the road to Kegworth has been frequently closed when the Soar is running. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century a boarded high level path was created down Station Road to

permit Kingston residents to reach Kegworth dry-footed. This deteriorated and was removed in the 1990s despite much protest.

**Ray State  
Ratcliffe on Soar**

## **MEMBERS' RESEARCH**



### **WHO'S YOUR TRAM?**

#### **(Part Two)**

Further to the first part of this article published in the spring newsletter, four more notable citizens of Nottingham city and county, whose names appear on our trams, are commemorated here in part two.

Tram no. 213 has been named Mary Potter to commemorate the nun who overcame her own frailty and poor health to help others who were affected by poverty and sickness, and especially those who were close to death. She was born in south London in 1847, a sister to four elder brothers, but their father went to Australia in 1848 and never returned, leaving the family in difficult circumstances. When she was 19 she was briefly engaged to a friend of her brother but the liaison did not

last long as Mary decided she had a vocation to enter a convent.

Mary joined the Sisters of Mercy in Brighton in 1868, hoping that the benign climate of that area would benefit her health and enable her to cope with the rigours of convent life, but two years later she left, having been advised to find an institution more suited to her spiritual needs and physical limitations. Despite the over-protective attitude of her mother, Mary was inspired to plan the foundation of her own order, which would focus upon prayers for the dying, and she conducted a long correspondence with a Monsignor John Virtue to clarify the issues and difficulties that she was experiencing; the letters still survive. Despite the Monsignor's discouraging attitude, in 1877 Mary secured the support of the Bishop of Nottingham and opened her convent in Hyson Green, dedicated to the care of the poor, the sick and the dying, and attracted many young women to join her. They became known as the Little Company of Mary.

The bishop, however, did not agree with all the aims and procedures of the order, and limited Mary's contact with the nuns. She now had plenty of time to write and published a considerable body of works, but in 1878 her health was compromised by breast cancer, from which she recovered after a double mastectomy. Mary herself went to Rome in 1882 to seek the Pope's blessing for her order and in spite of continuing frailty lived there for several years and worked hard to overcome all sorts of problems to establish the Calvary Hospital, where not only were patients treated but also nurses received training. The Little Company continued to flourish in the UK, and in 1885 five sisters travelled to Sydney, Australia, and inspired the spread of the order there.

Mary Potter died in 1913 after a lifetime of struggle and hardship, and was buried in St Barnabas' cathedral. But her contribution lives on; the Pope declared her 'Venerable' in 1988, and the Mary Potter Centre on Gregory Boulevard bears her name as does a conference room at Nottingham Trent University – and, of course, tram no. 213.

George Green is featured on tram no. 230, whose father built and operated the windmill in Sneinton, where George was born in 1793 and lived for much of his life. He had very little formal education, working in the mill as he grew up and taking it over when his father died in 1829 but without

much enthusiasm as he found the whole business tedious. By then he had been living for six years with his common-law wife Jane Smith, the daughter of the mill manager, who presented him with seven children. Fortunately the success of the mill had brought his father considerable wealth, half of which passed to George after Green senior's death and enabled him to support his family comfortably and to pursue his own particular passion.

He had begun to study mathematics seriously in 1828, though it is not clear how he acquired the basic knowledge to do this, and in that year actually published, at his own expense, an *Essay on the Application of Mathematical Analysis to the Theories of Electricity and Magnetism* which was sold to 51 people, including the distinguished mathematician Edward Bromhead. He was sufficiently impressed to contact George and encourage him to press on with his work, but George did not take him seriously at first and it was not until 1833 that he responded to Bromhead's offer to secure him a place at Cambridge University.

George's intellectual prowess was evident to his tutors and after his graduation he stayed on at Gonville and Gaius College to continue his studies and publish papers on optics, acoustics and hydrodynamics. He was also elected to the prestigious Cambridge Philosophical Society. But his academic career was cut short by illness in 1840; he returned to Nottingham and died there the following year. His works would have died with him if Lord Kelvin had not resurrected them in 1846 and brought them to the attention of contemporary scholars.

George Green was buried in a churchyard close to the family's mill, which was restored to working condition in 1986 and contains an exhibition celebrating the life of its former, distinguished owner. The George Green Library at the University of Nottingham and a plaque in Westminster Abbey also serve to remind us of this remarkable mathematician, as does tram no. 230.

Tram no. 233 bears the name of another individual with an interest in mathematics, Ada Lovelace, who was the daughter of Lord Byron and Annabella Milbanke, born in 1815. The couple, however, separated after a very brief marriage, leaving Annabella to bring up Augusta Ada (to give her full name) without the support of a husband. Ada's talent was recognised at an early stage by her mother; also wanting to ensure that Ada avoided her father's lack of self-discipline, she ensured that her daughter received tuition in mathematics and science from several distinguished academics, in a strict programme that was most unusual for a girl from an aristocratic background.

At the age of 17, Ada met Charles Babbage, a mathematician and inventor many years her senior, who was impressed by her ability and arranged for her to study advanced mathematics with a London professor. Babbage himself was in the process of developing a calculating machine and also another, more sophisticated one known as the 'analytical engine'. Ada was intrigued by these innovative devices and took more than a passing interest in the latter, eventually translating from French an article that had been written about it for a Swiss publication – and adding many of her own ideas. Her translation, together with her extensive notes, were published in 1843 in an English scientific journal but it was not until much later that her ideas on coding and other concepts were fully appreciated and she came to be regarded as a pioneer programmer.

Ada had married William King, later the Earl of Lovelace, in 1835 and bore three children to him. Both loved horses and the high life and mingled with many celebrities from the worlds of science and literature, but William still encouraged Ada to press on with her academic work. In later years, she tried to invent a scheme for winning games of chance; success, however, eluded her and she became mired in debt from gambling. After a bout of cholera, from which she partially recovered, her physical health and mental state deteriorated and she died in 1852, to be buried next to the father she had never known in the church of St Mary Magdalene in Hucknall. Her academic legacy was not

recognised until the 1950s but thereafter she received many posthumous honours and an American computer language was named 'Ada' to celebrate her contribution.

The name of a remarkable man who started life as a slave is to be seen on tram no. 234: George Africanus. Born in Sierra Leone in 1763, he was brought to this country at the age of three and presented as a gift to a wealthy businessman, Benjamin Molineux of Wolverhampton, who gave him the name of George John Scipio Africanus. Taught to read and write, he became an apprentice in a brass foundry owned by the Molineux family and after gaining his freedom he moved in 1784 to Nottingham, where the family had some connections, settling near the city centre. Four years later he met and married Esther Shaw, and together they established and ran the 'Africanus' Register of Servants', an early employment agency, though at first George probably had to supplement the family's income by working as a labourer or a waiter from time to time. Esther bore him seven children but only one daughter survived beyond early youth.

George was involved with the 'Watch and Ward', which was a local force formed to prevent civil disturbance, thus establishing his credentials as a responsible member of the community. He also owned his own home by 1829, using it as his business premises, and soon acquired other properties for rent which meant he was now qualified to vote. Thus an African slave became a successful entrepreneur and a full citizen, but his story was forgotten for many years and not brought to light until the late 1990s. His grave was eventually discovered in the grounds of St Mary's church and a plaque commemorating his life erected in 2003.



Janet Wilson

## NOTTINGHAM'S FIRST LOCAL NEWS STORY

Nottingham's earliest weekly newspapers are believed to be The Nottingham Mercury, which was first printed in 1714 – by John Collyer in Long-row - with the Weekly Courant - printed by William Ayscough in Bridlesmith-gate - following in 1715. The Mercury gave 'A General View of the Affairs of Europe, but more particularly of Great Britain' while the Courant contained 'A Faithful Account of all Publick transactions both Foreign and Domestick.' Neither of these were what we would understand as 'local' newspapers, despite being printed in Nottingham. They were concerned with national and international affairs and were effectively reprints of London papers. In the early days the only regional content was in the form of 'Advertisements' tacked on at the end. These were mostly for buildings to let, and lost or stolen items; horses, dogs, a surgeon's plaster-box and 'betwixt Nottingham and Derby a yellow silk gown'. Copies of these newspapers, with some gaps, are held in Nottingham Local Studies Library. The earliest extant report of a local event was printed in the Mercury on Thursday May 31<sup>st</sup> 1716. This was of a church service and parade held in the town on the previous Monday. The article is printed in full below but it may be helpful to give a brief résumé of the national and local situation at the time.

For centuries there had been a struggle between the Crown, Church and People for supremacy. The Act of Settlement of 1701 is seen as the defining moment when Parliament gained control. The Act required that the monarch had to be a protestant descendant of King James I. Parliament now effectively controlled who wore the crown and by association, as the monarch was its Supreme Head, the Church of England. The death of Queen Anne in 1714, without issue, again raised the problem of succession. The closest 'legal' heir was Georg Ludwig, Duke of Hanover who was



crowned King George [the First] in August 1714. A lot of people, not just the Catholics and Scots, didn't approve of this turn of events and in 1715 there was a Jacobite rebellion in Scotland and Northumberland. In December of that year Prince James Stuart (the Old Pretender) had landed in Scotland, but he was too late. The Duke of Argyll, for the Hanoverians, was in the ascendancy and James Stuart returned to France in February 1716.

Nottingham had been an early supporter of the Glorious Revolution of 1688 but, nearly 30 years later, not everyone had been convinced. Just two months before this parade took place Nottingham's Mayor, Thomas Hawksley, had been removed from his post and sent to the House of Correction. His alleged crime is that he went down on his bare knees in his own house, the *Eagle and Child* on Chapel-bar, and drank a toast "Success to the House of Stuart". This is probably the main reason that the parade was arranged, King George's birthday being a convenient excuse.

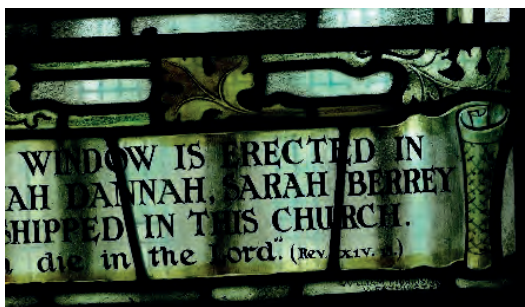
### THE NEWSPAPER ARTICLE

'Monday last being the Anniversary of the Birth of His Sacred Majesty King George, the Artillery Company of this Town, who at the beginning of the late horrid Rebellion, associated and Armed themselves at their own proper Charge, in defence of their King, Religion and Country, pursuant to the trust reposed in them by his Majesty's Gracious Commission for that purpose, and have ever since been improving themselves in the Exercise of Arms, &c. had a mind to shew a distinguishing Honour to such an Auspicious day; having provided themselves with Fuzes, Bayonet, Sword, &c. all New and Clean; and not only the Officers, but every private Gentleman (containing about 100 besides some that were on journeys) were all Clothed in Scarlet, with Gold Laced Hats, and Gold Trimmings on their Coats, white Stockings and Gloves, and Orange coloured Cockades on their Hats. Betwixt Nine and Ten in the Morning on Beat of Drum, they appeared on the new Pavement in the Market-Place, in three Ranks, with the Officers at the Head of them; after which the Ensign attended by the Sergeants, Drums, and a Detachment from the Middle of the Battalion, fetched the Colours from the Captains House in the usual Form, who being returned, they marched in good Order through several Streets, the Town Music Playing before them, Drums beating and Colours flying, and having lodged the Colours and Arms in the County Hall, they went to Church, (where they had a particular place reserved for them, that they might not be incommoded by the prodigious Crowd of Spectators that Attended them in their March, and which the Church was full). After prayers the Reverend Mr Beardsmore, a person always well affected to the present Government, Preached an Excellent Sermon on Gal. 4. 18 - *It is good to be always zealously affected in a good Thing*. It is needless to mention how the Reverend preacher applied his Subject to the day, and those bright Examples of Zeal, that made up the Principal Part of his Audience, seeing there is some Hopes he may be prevailed upon to print the Discourse. Sermon being ended, the Right Worshipful the Mayor and the Loyal Part of the Corporation in their Formalities, with several Gentlemen and Clergymen out of the Country, marched with the Captain at the Head of the Company, through several streets again, into the Market-place, where they were drawn up as before, and gave several Volleys, after which having a Handsome Dinner prepared at the Prince of Wales Arms, they retired thither, and after Dinner, expressed their Loyalty by Drinking his Majesty's Health, with the Prince, Princess, and the rest of the Royal Family &c. About 8 o'clock in the Evening, the Drums beat to Arms again, and having marched round the Market-place, they were drawn up before a large Bonfire before the Tavern Door where they dined, where the Loyal Healths before mentioned were repeated, and at every Health a Volley; the Officers treated the whole Company with Wine. The whole was performed with all imaginable order, and several Gentlemen that were Spectators, and have been in other Places on like Occasions,

**EXCURSION TO THE AREA INVOLVED IN THE PENTRICH REBELLION OF 1817, 25<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2017**

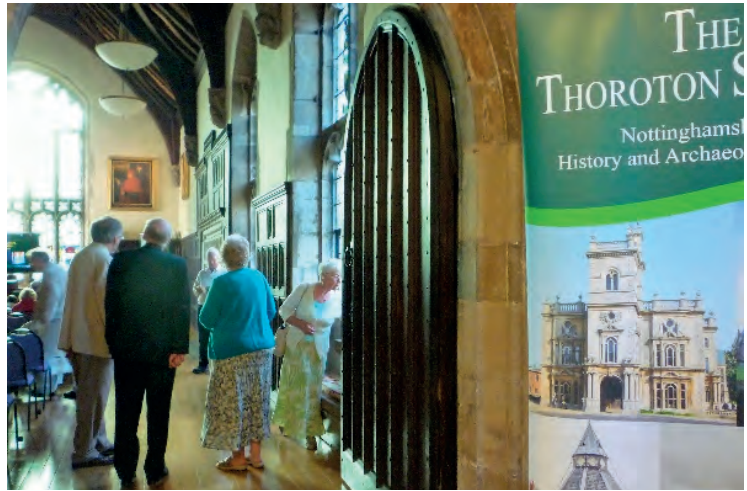


Top line: Coffee, displays & talks in S. Wingfield Social Club; on the way to All Saints' church.  
Second line: All Saints', outside & inside.  
Third line: Waiting for lunch at the Dog Inn, Pentrich.  
Left & below: St Matthew's church, Pentrich; interior with unusual wall painting & 'Wm Morris' window. (Name in bottom right hand corner of dedication.)





**THE 2017 SPECIAL LECTURE, WITH PROFESSOR CARENZA LEWIS, 22<sup>ND</sup> JUNE, IN THE STATE CHAMBER OF THE ARCHBISHOP'S PALACE, SOUTHWELL**



did the Company the Honour to say that taking all together in respect of their Clothing and Expertise of Exercise, they never saw a finer or more regular Appearance’.

In Bromley House library there is a bound copy of the sermon preached by the Vicar of St. Mary’s, the Rev. Samuel Berdmore, which was also printed by John Collyer. In the introduction the Rev. Berdmore names the principle attendees at the service. They included the High Sheriff and the Deputy Lieutenant of Nottinghamshire as well as the new Mayor, Samuel Watkinson, and the Officers of the Artillery Company. The Officers were all Aldermen, so had been colleagues of the former Mayor Hawksley. Their Captain was John Collin who had been the Mayor himself in 1713-14. By writing that it was “the Mayor and the LOYAL part of the Corporation” that marched back to the market place says something about the author of the newspaper article and the proclivities of the printer. Perhaps they were one and the same as John Collyer was known for his Whig sympathies. The location of the *Prince of Wales Arms* is uncertain but this may have been the formal name of the *Feathers* (3 ostrich feathers?) situated on the corner of, what is now, Friar Lane and Wheeler-gate. The conduct of the Company after the church service was either reassuring or intimidating, depending upon your point of view. It was probably intended to be a bit of both. The sight of a hundred uniformed men, marching, banging drums, eating, drinking, lighting a bonfire and firing volleys into the air would certainly have been arresting. Even if you could not hear the toasts the ‘Orange coloured Cockades in their Hats,’ would have left you in no doubt as to their fealties.

On a final note, the fact that the soldiers had provided themselves with ‘Fuzes’ would seem to indicate that some, at least, were carrying old-fashioned, matchlock muskets. The more reliable wheel-lock, snaphaunce and flintlock actions had been available for well over a hundred years. These may have been obsolete weapons but, if you were hit by a musket ball, the niceties of the type of lock would seem rather academic.

**Keith Fisher**

## **ANNIVERSARIES**

### **300 years ago - 1717**

Abel Smith, of the Smith banking family, was born on 14<sup>th</sup> March 1717. He was a grandson of Thomas Smith, who founded the Nottingham Smith’s Bank.

‘The Common Seal of the Corporation of Nottingham was affixed to a Petition, praying that His Majesty would be pleased to grant a Charter of Incorporation to the Company of Linen Drapers in the Borough’. Thomas Trigge was mayor; John Radforth and Joseph Walters were sheriffs – *Nottingham Date Book*

### **200 years ago - 1817**

August 3 ‘A very unseemly and indecent Contest took place this day (Sunday) in the General Baptist Chapel, Stoney Street, between the pastor, the Rev Robert Smith, and a portion of the members of the Church, for the possession of the Pulpit, which ultimately led to a disruption in the church. Mr Smith and his supporters afterwards removed to a chapel they built in Broad-Street; and the Rev Wm Pickering became the minister at Stoney-Street’ – *Nottingham Date Book* [Does any member know anything about this situation at the Stoney Street chapel? - Ed]

## 100 years ago - 1917

The Thoroton Society's *Transactions* included a Notice to Members. 'The Annual Subscription of 12/6d [62p] is due on the 1<sup>st</sup> of January in each year. Members are reminded that a punctual payment saves much trouble to the Treasurer, whose work is honorary'. [*Current membership please take note – Editor & Treasurer*].

On 31<sup>st</sup> December 1917 there were 271 subscribing members, three honorary and three associate members. The strain of the war had taken its toll on the activities of the Thoroton Society and other such organisations. A proposed visit to Lynby [sic] and Papplewick was abandoned owing to the impossibility of making the necessary arrangements. The Annual Meeting was held on 28<sup>th</sup> March at Bromley House, when Major T.W. Huskinson read a paper entitled "Rural Economy of the Past". 'The research in connection with the Roman *Tesserae* at Barton still claims the attention of the Sub-Committee appointed some time ago to deal with this interesting relic of the Roman occupation'.

The Society was involved in the Patriotic Fair held in the Great Market Place during the week 28<sup>th</sup> May to 1<sup>st</sup> June. Mr Harry Gill was chiefly instrumental in compiling an excellent guide to the City, which met with a ready sale.

## NEWS

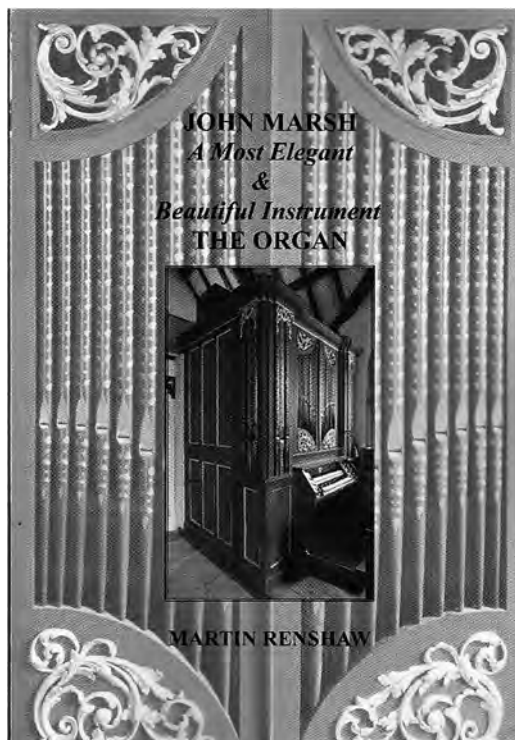
### St. Mary's Church, Bleasby – a remarkable organ

On Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> July members of BIOS, the British Institute of Organ Studies, came to Bleasby for a special day conference entitled "A most elegant and beautiful instrument – John Marsh's house organ 'rediscovered'".

It has long been known locally that the organ in St Mary's church is very old, built in 1783, was much travelled and had been in a family called Marsh since it was built, the Reverend John Marsh having recorded its history in his farewell address to his Bleasby parishioners given in 1874. But organ experts did not know what had happened to it after its first owner, John Marsh, died in 1828. It was

only fairly recently that we in Bleasby became aware that this John Marsh, the Revd Marsh's grandfather who had designed and owned the organ, was a celebrated 18<sup>th</sup> century composer, a musician, author and polymath, who kept a regular and detailed journal, had family connections in Southwell and had actually played the Minster's organ when he visited the town - his journal records his low opinion of the Minster's organist of the time.

John Marsh was a gifted and largely self-taught musician who composed much music including for the organ, for voices and for orchestral ensembles. He was adept at organisation as well, taking on the subscription concert programmes in Chichester and Canterbury. His journal is a wonderfully detailed account not only of his life and interests but also of 18<sup>th</sup> century English provincial life. They have been painstakingly edited by Brian Robins in two volumes under the title "The John Marsh Journals" and are published by Pendragon Press. In time for the Organ Conference another publication was prepared entitled "A Most Elegant and Beautiful Instrument: John



Marsh's Organ". This was written by Martin Renshaw, organ maker and restorer whose mother, unknown by him, lived as a child in Bleasby and would have heard this organ, on which he did such a lot of work, regularly on Sundays.

The story of the organ is that it was a house organ, made and specially designed to the specifications of John Marsh for his newly inherited Nethersole House in Kent – he records that it fitted very nicely into an opening made between the hall and parlour – as it had a console at each end, it could be played in two rooms at once. It has now only one console, but this is an original. On his death it became the property of his son Edward Gerrard Marsh and it moved around with him to three far-afield vicarages ending up, on his death, in Bleasby Vicarage in 1863. The Revd John Marsh, Edward's son, gave it to St Mary's in 1869 and so it became a church organ, a lovely looking instrument and with a sweet tone.

The outcome of the BIOS conference was that our organ was declared unique and largely in its original state – “a remarkable survival”. It is also the best documented organ in Britain (because of the journals, Revd John's address and the records of organ manufacturers and restorers). It is probably one of the most travelled organs too, having been moved seven times before settling in Bleasby Church. As one of the organ experts said “There are old organs and organs that move around a lot but there are very few that move around a lot and survive to be old!” The next step is to have it listed – with its connections to John Marsh and its mainly original state, it is likely to be a grade 1.

There are CDs of John Marsh's music available as well as some in published form.

**Barbara Cast**

### **Archaeology at Kelham Hall**

We are delighted to announce that we will be working on an exciting new HLF-funded Community Archaeology project alongside Involve Heritage CIC and partner organisations at Kelham in Nottinghamshire, entitled 'Kelham Revealed!'. The project builds on the work we did between 2014-16 on the 'Kelham in the Civil War' project - see *Transactions of the Thoroton Society 2016 volume 120*) and

<http://www.mbarchaeology.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/The-role-of-Kelham-in-the-English-Civil-War.docx> )

It will see us widen the research scope to explore the origins and location of the Medieval village at Kelham, the church, the early halls, further work on the Civil War and the abandonment of the early village and the building of the new one sometime around the mid-late 16th century. Our scope is to research from prehistory through to the 17th century. We will be undertaking map and documentary research, landscape studies, geophysical surveys, test-pit excavations and building surveys within the village itself, plus landscape work within the grounds of Kelham Hall, something which has never been undertaken previously due to access. The new owner of Kelham Hall has entered into a Partnership with us for the project, and fully supports and encourages our work there - a hugely exciting opportunity for local people to be involved in!

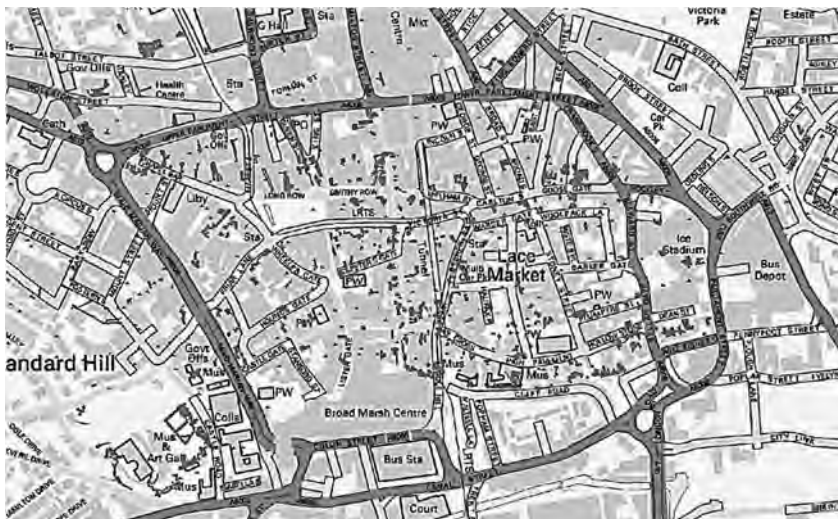
The project will culminate in the creation of a Community Heritage Room within Kelham Hall, which will showcase our discoveries through maps, historical information, artwork and artefact displays. Work on the project is due to start in September, and further details of day/time/venue will follow for those interested. If you would like to sign up to be involved in the project, please email [matt@involveheritage.co.uk](mailto:matt@involveheritage.co.uk) More information on the project can be seen at <http://www.involveheritage.co.uk/projects/kelham-revealed/>

**Matt Beresford**



## Nottingham: the Place of Caves

The city of Nottingham, largely built upon a bedrock of soft sandstone, contains a unique and rich subterranean heritage reflecting much of the story of Nottingham over a period of more than one thousand years.



Locations of known caves under the centre of Nottingham  
Map courtesy of Scott Lomax

Ever since Asser wrote in 893, in his work *The Life of Alfred*, that Nottingham could be described as *Tigguo Cobauc* (which translates from archaic Welsh as 'place of caves'), part of Nottingham's identity has been entwined with the hundreds of manmade caves, some of which are up to 150m in length. Caves have been hewn into the soft rock from the early medieval period through to modern times. The caves are important because they reflect the development of the city and have been used for so many purposes, thereby offering an

insight into Nottingham's social and economic past over a period of more than a millennium. Some of the most commonly known uses include: beer cellars; wine cellars; commercial cellarage for other produce; domestic cellars; malt kilns; tanneries; catacombs; passages; sand mines; gaol cells/dungeons; Victorian follies; air raid shelters.

There are some less commonly known uses, although these were often a secondary function for caves, including the growing of mushrooms and the carrying out of scientific experiments. In the 19th century tests were undertaken in a number of Nottingham's caves to assess the rate of development of tadpoles by reducing their exposure to light. In the 1970s the University of Nottingham measured cosmic rays in a cave at Brewhouse Yard which is now known as the Cosmic Ray Cave.

Despite their importance in Nottingham's past relatively little is actually known about a number of aspects relating to the caves. In terms of function it is often possible to establish what a particular cave was used for, especially if it is located under a current or former place where beer was sold. Occasionally features within the cave offer clues, especially in the case of tanneries, malt kilns and beer cellars. We can often state a cave may have been used for storage but the type of produce stored is not always clear.

Another aspect of our knowledge that needs developing is establishing the age of individual caves. In most cases we do not know how old a cave is, although it is sometimes possible to date them quite broadly and documentation sometimes provides some clues. Some caves have dates inscribed within them, but these are very rare.

The largest, and most problematic, gap in our knowledge relates to knowing how many caves there are in the city. Although approximately 800 caves are recorded in the Nottingham City Historic Environment Record, which is continually updated, it is likely that hundreds more caves exist beneath the city's streets. This is a common issue in archaeology; we do not have a full record of archaeological remains, and cannot expect to do so. However, with some effort it is possible to identify

sites where caves exist even if they are no longer accessible or indeed visible (having been blocked or built over) and make educated predictions as to where other caves are likely to be. Cataloguing the caves began in the late 1970s when efforts were made by Nottingham City Museums Field Archaeology Section to record, with an index card system, those in the city centre, primarily focussing on the Lace Market.

In 1989 the British Geological Survey (BGS) published its Register of Nottingham Caves, the first published record of caves in the city, using the City Council's records, as well as other records including those held by the University of Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Archives. The BGS also visited a number of caves. The Register at first contained a total 419 cave records, and was later updated to include a total of approximately 460 caves.

Between 2008 and 2010 Nottingham City Council compiled records for a further 90 caves and a few more were found when the City Council developed its Historic Environment Record in 2012 and 2013. The Nottingham Caves Survey Project identified another two (and recorded in detail approximately 80 caves) and a few other caves were revealed during development between 2013 and 2017. In most cases caves were only added to the council's records when they were found during development.

Not knowing where caves exist is a serious issue because it means often caves are not being taken into consideration as part of the planning process and large numbers of caves have only been found during construction work. For example, in 2013 three caves were unexpectedly found in Radford during residential development. Had the site been within the city centre then the potential for caves would have been considered but there were no known records of caves in this particular area of Radford and so no investigations were undertaken prior to construction commencing. At this advanced stage it is often too late to alter the design of a new building and so the caves are usually filled with concrete, sometimes without an archaeologist even being informed.

The best way to ensure a cave is protected is to know about its existence. By knowing where caves exist, or by having a strong evidence base to predict where caves are likely to exist, then these important historic remains can be fully considered at the earliest stages of the planning process, in order to ensure development takes place without causing any damage to the cave.

To this end I have been making public appeals and carrying out new research into caves, using archival sources. It is the first time that detailed documentary research has been undertaken with the specific aim of locating caves, and it has achieved very good results. Through this work I have identified 153 more caves since 1 July 2016. 111 of these were identified, and added to the Historic Environment Record, between April and July 2017 alone. I still have approximately 400 archive documents to work through so this figure can be expected to rise greatly in the coming months.

Anyone who is aware of a cave which they think might not be known to the City Council is encouraged to contact me at [Scott.lomax@nottinghamcity.gov.uk](mailto:Scott.lomax@nottinghamcity.gov.uk)

**Scott Lomax**

## **YOUR SOCIETY**

### **Alan Langton BEM**

Congratulations to our Excursion Secretary, Alan Langton, who has been awarded the British Empire Medal for his services to the community in Mapperley and Arnold, Nottinghamshire. We hope to be able to publish a photograph of Alan receiving his medal from the Lord Lieutenant of Nottinghamshire in a future issue.





Alan was a teacher, having taught at Eastwood Hall Park School and Carlton le Willows School, before being appointed to the Headship of South Wolds School at Keyworth in 1981. He retired from this post in 1994 after thirteen very happy years there. Alan was licenced as a Reader in the Diocese of Southwell in 1963, and has served the parish of Saint Mary's Arnold for fifty-four years, working with seven different vicars during that time. In 1986 he was one of the founders of the Rotary Club of Arnold and Mapperley, where he is still a member. He has also been the local representative for the Leprosy Mission in the area, and helped to help raise large sums of money for this international cause over the last thirty years.

After retirement, Alan founded the 'Arnold Golden Eagles', a group especially for older citizens where they could find out more about the workings of the various health, council and social service organisations that affect their lives. This group is a sub-group of the Arnold Area Forum, which Alan has represented on the county-wide Older People's Advisory Group (OPAG), the object of which is to try and ensure that

local issues of older people are heard by the County Council when the latter are formulating strategies for the county.

### **Geoffrey Bond Research Award**

Just a reminder that 1<sup>st</sup> September is the date on which applications for a research grant from the Geoffrey Bond and Thoroton Society fund. So any of you researchers who are finding that you need some financial support for your research activities, please send in an application. The details are on the Society's website and were also in the last edition of the newsletter.

**Barbara Cast, Hon. Secretary**

### **PREVIEWS OF THE AUTUMN 2017 LECTURES**

**Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> October 2017**

**'1917: Nottinghamshire's Worst Year'**

**John Cotterill - Battlefield Historian**

In 1917 the Great War had stalemated. Unrestricted submarine warfare had led to rationing, introduced by Nottingham Corporation before central government, and the embankment had been dug up as allotments. No less than twenty-four schools in the city had become hospitals and stoicism had largely replaced the optimism of the earlier war. The impact on local people, across the whole spectrum of society, had, in some cases, been beyond anything we can imagine. In 1917 Squire Chaworth-Musters from Annesley lost the second of his three sons who would die on active service. Two of the five Binch brothers from Calverton were already dead and two more would follow them. Women were in uniform in increasing numbers with the first non-medical female personnel joining the British Army in 1917 in the newly formed Women's Army Auxiliary Corps. Dorothea Crewdson from Nottingham, one of the very few women to be awarded the Military Cross for bravery in France, was



Our lecturer, John Cotterill

working in a hospital in Wimereux and Nottingham's most famous Great War casualty, the ace aviator Albert Ball, fell to his death in 1917, before his 21<sup>st</sup> birthday. Excitement was caused by the mass breakout of German prisoners of war from Sutton Bonnington. The county's Yeomanry of the South Notts Hussars and the Sherwood Rangers Yeomanry were in Palestine, fighting their way towards Jerusalem. But most Nottinghamshire men were serving in the local infantry regiment; the Sherwood Foresters with 140,000 men passing through their ranks during the war, of whom 11,000 died.

By 1917 they had expanded to 32 battalions and 17 of these were locked in combat on the Western Front. 1917 for them comprised offensive after offensive as Britain became the majority partner in the war. Arras was followed by Messines which was followed by Passchendaele which was followed by Cambrai. In these four offensives over 4000 Foresters fell, making it the regiment's, and therefore the county's, worst year.

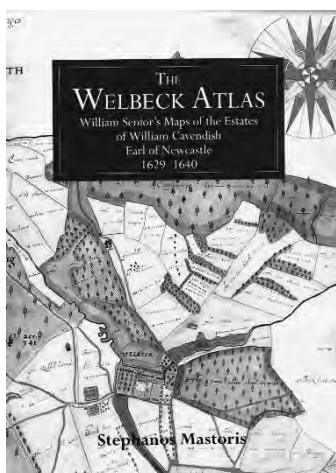
### **Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> November 2017**

#### **'Print and Politics in the Nottinghamshire Constituencies c.1790-1832'**

**Hannah Nicholson, University of Nottingham**

Elections which took place prior to the First Reform Bill of 1832 have often been described as being almost theatrical in nature. Canvassing, and the rituals associated with elections, typically involved large sections of the community, regardless of whether they were part of the electorate or not. Print was also an integral part of any election campaign. In the run up to polls opening, great quantities of handbills, addresses, broadsheets, songs, newspapers, and pamphlets were printed and circulated around constituencies. This was especially important in larger borough constituencies, such as Nottingham, which had a comparatively high number of voters.

This lecture will examine the range and style of printed political canvasses produced for elections in the Nottinghamshire constituencies of East Retford, Newark, and Nottingham between 1790 and 1832. It will also consider who was responsible for the creation and distribution of this literature, who might have read it, and assess the extent to which print helped increase political awareness, participation, and engagement in Nottinghamshire during this period.



#### **BOOKCASE**

The Society is delighted to report that the Welbeck Atlas, William Senior's Maps of the Estates of William Cavendish, Earl of Newcastle 1629-1640, has now been published as volume 47 in the Thoroton Records Series. The book includes an innovation, in so far as Thoroton is concerned, in that there is, in a pocket inside the back cover of the book, a credit-card sized USB stick from which the full set of maps can be uploaded into a computer. Copies of the book have been distributed to all subscribers to the Record series. Members of the Thoroton Society who are not subscribers to the Records Series can obtain a copy of the book at £20 from Rob James, [rob.james1805@btinternet.com](mailto:rob.james1805@btinternet.com). Non-members can obtain a copy at £30, again from Rob.

The book is selling well. Get yours whilst stocks last! We hope to publish a review in a future *Newsletter*.

## **THE THOROTON SOCIETY**

### OFFICERS

President: Adrian Henstock BA DAA FRHistS

Chairman: Professor John Beckett BA PhD FRHistS FSA

Secretary: Barbara Cast BAHons Little Dower House, Station Road, Bleasby, Nottingham, NG14 7FX

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Treasurer: John Wilson BPharm MPhil FRSPH email: [wilsonianus@btinternet.com](mailto:wilsonianus@btinternet.com)

Membership Secretary: Judith Mills BAHons MA PhD email: [membership@thorotonsociety.org.uk](mailto:membership@thorotonsociety.org.uk)

### SUBSCRIPTION RATES

Individual Ordinary membership £25.00

Associate member (at the same address) £6.00 Student/Under 21 £6.00

Individual Record Section membership £15.00 Combined Ordinary and Record Section £35.00

Institutional Ordinary membership £25.00 Institutional Record Section £20.00 (non-UK £24)

### RESEARCH GROUP

Meets twice a year. Contact for details: John Wilson email: [wilsonianus@btinternet.com](mailto:wilsonianus@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](mailto: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. They are also 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.

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

Copy should be sent to the EDITOR, John Wilson, 38 Stuart Close, Arnold, Nottingham NG5 8AE

email [wilsonianus@btinternet.com](mailto:wilsonianus@btinternet.com)

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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## EXCURSION TO LAMPORT HALL AND HALLATON CHURCH



Top row: Lamport's gateway; the Hall and grounds.

Second row: church in grounds of the Hall; the inn at Brixworth, where we lunched.

Third row: Saxon church at Brixworth, outside and inside; Hallaton church.

Fourth row: members in the church, awaiting the lecture from John Morison.

(Photos by Janet Wilson)

