

THE THOROTON SOCIETY

Nottinghamshire's History and Archaeology Society



The Quarterly Newsletter of the Thoroton Society
Issue 90 *Winter 2017*



The venue for our 2017 Annual Luncheon

The Thoroton Society of Nottinghamshire
The County's Principal History and Archaeology Society
Visit the Thoroton Society website at: www.thorotonsociety.org.uk

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS

Members will be receiving their subscription renewal notices via a separate mailing this year. As the subscriptions are being increased, it is most important that those members who pay by bank standing order complete the new standing order mandate enclosed with the renewal notice and take or send it to their bank, NOT to either the Treasurer or the Membership Secretary.

Cheques should be sent to the Membership Secretary, whose address is on the reply slip. We would encourage as many members as possible to use the online bank transfer method of payment, as this does save the Membership Secretary a bit of work.

For reference, the membership categories and subscriptions are as follows:

Individual Ordinary membership	£27.00
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Institutional Record Section membership:	
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ANNUAL SOCIETY LUNCHEON 2017

We returned to one of our favourite lunch venues this year on 4th November – the Olde Bell at Barnby Moor. Once again we met in the pleasant surroundings of the Neilson Suite and enjoyed a super meal together.

After lunch we raised our glasses for the toast to the Queen, proposed by John Beckett. Keith Coxon then proposed the toast to the Society in a unique way by reading the following poem to the Society written by Clare, his wife.

*The Thoroton Society is a historian's heaven,
I'm told it dates back to 1897.
We have lectures, trips and bookstalls too,
There's so much history waiting for you.
The Society gives us all so much pleasure,
May it continue to flourish, it's our local treasure.*

Our President, Adrian Henstock, responded to the toast with his thanks and gave an interesting outline of the area around Barnby Moor and Retford, focussing on the Great North Road, formerly the main highway from London to the north and on which the Olde Bell, a former coaching inn, stood.

Following our meal Malcolm Dolby, a well-known local historian and formerly of Bassetlaw Museum, gave an illustrated talk on East Retford, a Planned Mediaeval Town. He described how the town was created, its relationship with its neighbour, its political history and its archaeology. A most intriguing talk which was greatly appreciated.

Once again we enjoyed an excellent lunch. The Chair, John Beckett, thanked Malcolm for his talk and also the staff of the Olde Bell for their very efficient and pleasant service.

Next year we are planning to commemorate the 50th anniversary of T Cecil Howitt's death by holding our lunch in Nottingham Council House of which he was the architect.

Barbara Cast, Honorary Secretary

EXCURSION REPORT

TICKENCOTE CHURCH, JOHN CLARE'S COTTAGE AND HELPSTON CHURCH

TUESDAY 12TH SEPTEMBER 2017

LEADER: ALAN LANGTON

This rather unusual excursion for the Thoroton Society attracted over thirty people, although there were four absentees because of illness. As usual for our outings, the sun shone on our journey through Leicestershire and Rutland. At Tickencote in Rutland we discovered a gem of a church which sadly may well cease to be used for worship before long. The site has some Anglo-Saxon remains, but the main attraction of the building is the extraordinary enormous arch of decorated Norman architecture, dating from the early twelfth century. The chancel is original although the nave was restored in the eighteenth century, using the original stone work. Other features include the very rare six-partite Norman vaulting in the chancel, and age-blackened wooded effigy of a knight in armour (perhaps Sir Roland le Daneys), an original font, and a pre-Reformation bell, now standing in the nave.

We made a short journey to the village of Helpston to the beautifully restored cottage where John Clare (1791 to 1864) lived, now carefully looked after by the John Clare Trust. We had a helpful explanatory talk by David Dykes before being able to spend some time exploring the house and garden in our own time: our visit was private, and there were no other people present. A delightful ploughman's lunch was served by a team of volunteers. During the free time we were able to explore the garden, examine the detailed exhibition in the dove-cote, and enjoy the tranquillity of this peaceful place, all of which helped us to understand John Clare's love of the natural beauty of the countryside which is apparent in his poetry. A short walk over the road took us to the churchyard where John Clare and his parents are buried. We then had a very informative talk by Chris Topper, onetime churchwarden, and a tour of the building. Our homeward journey was again through beautiful Rutland countryside.

LECTURE REPORT

"1917 – NOTTINGHAMSHIRE'S WORST YEAR"

John Cotterill was our speaker for the Maurice Barley Lecture on 14th October: he explained why 1917 was the worst year for Nottinghamshire. John is a battlefield tour guide and, until 2014, was a serving soldier for 37 years in the Worcestershire and Sherwood Foresters Regiment and their successors, the Mercian Regiment. Since 1994 he has led tours to many battlefields including those of the American War of Independence, the Crimean War, the Great War and the Second World War. In addition John recruited and directed the volunteers who ran Nottinghamshire's "The Trent to the Trenches" Great War Centenary Exhibition.

John explained how 1917 was a year of loss and change. A massive four thousand men from Nottinghamshire died in 2017 alone which equated to one in a hundred of the county's population. And on top of that there were those who came back from the Great War that year who had life changing injuries of body and of mind. Every settlement in Notts. would have been affected by these losses and casualties. In 1916 conscription had been introduced, shortly applicable to married and single men up to the age of 50. About 38,000 conscripts joined the volunteers and regular military

and, of all these 60,000, 12,000 did not return. In this county many miners had previously volunteered due, in all likelihood, to the terrible conditions under which they worked in the mines.

We learned of the support given to the war effort by the well-known industries such as Boots, Players, Raleigh, and Ransome and Marles in Newark which changed from pre-war manufacture to making engine bearings. The Royal Ordnance factory at Chilwell, mainly staffed by women, was key in supplying the vast number of shells needed.

After the Battle of the Somme the attitude of soldiers had changed and, where they had sung upbeat songs such as "It's a long way to Tipperary", fatalism had crept in and the songs had morphed into bleak renditions such as "We're here because we're here".

Back at home the situation for civilians was getting worse too. Nottingham Corporation introduced rationing in 1917, made necessary by unrestricted submarine warfare (this was before its wholesale introduction by central government) and in addition available land was used for food production, including fourteen acres of the Victoria embankment dug up for allotments. On top of all this 1917 experienced terrible weather with snow in April and heavy rains in August, leading to a failed harvest. In March all schools were closed due to coal shortages.

People were more aware of the terrible events overseas – accounts were being sent back to families by their sons and these were often published for everyone to read. There were high profile deaths in the year too – Albert Ball in May, Professor Reginald Dolley (first head of history at University College) in July, and also in July the 19 year old son of Field Marshal Allenby and Philip, the second of three sons of John Chaworth-Musters to die in the Great War. Soldiers on leave came home fully equipped, including rifles, so everyone was immersed in the reality of war. Also very evident were the buildings requisitioned for hospital use, such as the former Bagthorpe workhouse which became a military hospital with a track into its grounds straight from Victoria Station. No less than twenty-four schools in the city had become hospitals and there were many other buildings, private and public in similar use. In January 1917 casualties began to be taken to the Albert Hall, mainly with trench foot.

The impact of the war on local people across the whole spectrum of society was beyond anything which could be imagined and stoicism had largely replaced the optimism of the earlier part of the war.

Meanwhile 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 4,000 Foresters fell, making it the regiment's, and therefore the county's, worst year.

Outcomes from the Great War included great changes for women due to them taking on roles unavailable to them before the war – in factories, on the land and in uniform. The war and the suffrage movement were the main factors which led to them gaining the limited vote in 1918. Generally, the experiences of the war led to a breaking down of the class system.

A most interesting lecture from a knowledgeable speaker, full of detail and with a number of moving vignettes relating the experiences of individual people.

Barbara Cast

MEMBERS' RESEARCH

[In the Winter 2016 edition of the Newsletter we published an article about a 'mystery chest' that Alan Wahlers had spotted at the office of the Nottinghamshire Building Preservation Society in Southwell. The chest had been donated to the Thoroton society by one Henry Ashwell, a Nottingham businessman. The following paper has been contributed by George Murfet, one of our newer members – Ed]

HENRY ASHWELL

Henry Ashwell (1828-1909) was one of nineteen children fathered by John Ashwell (1771-1838); twelve being from Henry's mother and seven from his step-mother. Henry's father was a fine example of what could, or couldn't, be achieved and was, at different times, an ironmonger, iron founder, farmer and accountant before becoming Chamberlain, and Sheriff, of Nottingham, a Justice of the Peace, Deputy Mayor and a thrice-time Mayor. His questionable career choices, all before the birth of Henry, were followed by bankruptcy, a £3,000+ cost to the Corporation and his enforced retirement from office. Uncles offered career opportunities but some chose to achieve merit in one field of employment rather than a variety.



Henry Ashwell was educated at the Proprietary School in Leicester, under the tutelage of Cyrus Edmonds, the headmaster, who later married one of his sisters. Thereafter, Henry spent two years at Horton College (Bradford) in preparation for the ministry, 'whilst imbibing dissenting ideas of religious freedom which guided him and to which he owed so much'. Eventually, his choice was an industrial career as, for his elder step-brothers, Thomas (1819-73) and George, both entering the textile industry as hosiery apprentices. In contrast, Henry was placed (at 14) with his uncle John Heard (1785-1865), one of Nottingham's most important Merchant Hosiers, but later was offered, and accepted with relish, the 'vests & pants' wet-processing business on Radford Road in New Basford.

According to company note-paper, the business had been established in 1820, although a bleach-works was reputedly in operation before that time. In 1852, Henry took-over its management, became a partner in 1854 and was sole proprietor by 1855. With great assiduity and astute management he advanced its potential, immediately engaging architects for factory expansion. His early years were funded by his uncle but by the late 1860s he bought (for £6,250) the freehold property; with Marriot Ogle Tarbotton (the Corporation Surveyor & Engineer) acting as 'Umpire'. By the 1870s the company had become a dye-works. Through shrewd investment and acceptable profitability, he ensured that wet-processing levels met the ever increasing production manufactured within the East Midlands.

Henry continued to buy land and property (e.g. Woodthorpe Grange) in his own right and, as proprietor, he made re-payments to his uncle as the profitability of the business provided both repayment and investment capital. In 1860, the company employed 70, in 1880 it reached 326 and

was more than double (673) in the future of 1920. I & R Morley and J B Lewis became customers and the use of 'Aniline Black' brought a trade-mark, 'Ashblak', that was marketed for 45 years.

Henry's youthful attraction to the ministry was followed by a deep interest in chapel work, especially foreign missions, of which he was a generous supporter. He was a Sunday school teacher for thirty six years and a founder member of the Derby Road Baptist Church (Nottingham), besides being a 'hearty supporter' of the Baptist Union. The Derby Road Baptist Church Jubilee Record 1847-97 notes that "he never considered his own ease and comfort when the work of the church was to be done". Many other wet-processors (bleachers) had similar passions "for building and filling the churches and chapels" and whilst bleaching and chapel work seem somewhat incongruous they provided a basis for friendship and trust which were seen as preferable to legally enforceable safeguards. As such, he belonged to Nottingham's Victorian elite and his business activities benefitted from the example he set.

The creation of the School Board saw Henry elected a member (1877) and serve on important committees; he became Vice-Chairman, introducing elementary science and awarding scholarships. In 1868, he spoke to the Chamber of Commerce about the deficiencies in technical education and, along with Mundella and Birkin, gave evidence before a committee of the House of Commons. When he retired from the School Board in 1887, the number of schools had increased from 3 to 27; but Henry watched with alarm the rapid progress being made in Germany and France in industry and the arts. Later, he became a Governor of the Nottingham High School.

He also became a member of the Basford Local Board, serving as an Overseer's Guardian until its absorption by the Borough of Nottingham - working to improve street paving and lighting, street cleaning, sanitation, sewerage and the cemetery. He was elected to the Nottingham & Leen Valley Sewerage Board as Vice-Chairman and by 1877 the streets of Bulwell were provided with sewers, with drains connected to houses.

The establishment of the 'New Unionism' of 1889 inevitably led to the foundation of employers' federations. Henry played a leading role as Chairman of the Masters' Association where his opinion carried weight with few wishing to oppose him; his industrial relations always being conducted in an easy atmosphere. In January 1904, he celebrated his golden wedding anniversary with over 300, many long-serving, employees in attendance. One with 62 years' service said "I have never known the time when we might not approach Mr Ashwell on any subject or when he would not listen to us with the greatest sympathy".

Being an octogenarian, and perhaps taking his eye off the ball, Henry was forced to accept the appointment of a receiver in August 1908 for a claim instigated against Henry Ashwell & Company that related to irregularities in processed and merchanted mercerised cotton yarns. At that time of adversity, many of the old employees came forward with their bank accounts and placed them at the service of Mr Ashwell but by the October, the limited liability company was re-named the Nottingham Dyeing Co. Ltd, and then the Henry Ashwell & Co. (1908) Ltd some two months later. However, it was all too much and Henry died one year later. In 1924, the company was renamed Henry Ashwell & Co. Ltd, to be taken over, in 1973 by its chief competitor, the Springfield Hosiery Finishing company, in Bulwell.

George J. Murfet

THE GIBBS FAMILY, CLOCK AND WATCH MAKERS OF NOTTINGHAM

Earlier this year, our Secretary, Barbara Cast, received a letter from Mr and Mrs Farrelly in Melbourne, Australia. The Farrellys own a large clock, 22 ins. in diameter, made by F. Gibbs,

Nottingham. Do we know anything about the maker? The clock had originally been purchased by Mrs Farrelly's uncle from an antiques shop in Melbourne, so they had no knowledge of the clock's earlier history.

Harold H Mather *Clock and watch makers of Nottinghamshire* 1979 Published by Friends of Nottingham Museums – gives the following:

GIBBS Frederick 1864-1877

Stoney Street 1864

Also at 4 Goosegate and 23 Goosegate, Nottingham



Mrs Farrelly's clock

The founder of the family business was Frederick William Gibbs. Born in Redditch in about 1837, he came from a large family, the fourth of six children. By 1851, Frederick was a watchmaker's apprentice, living with the family of George Jackson, a 'ribbon warehouseman' in Coventry as a lodger. George must have had means, as he employed a 20-year-old man as a servant. Frederick, presumably once he had served his apprenticeship, moved to Nottingham, again as a lodger, as in the 1861 census he is living with James Lonit, a maker of camera bags. Frederick soon made a success of his trade, married Martha in about 1863-4 and moved to his own home in Nottingham. By 1871 he had a six-year-old daughter and a son, Frederick Richard, aged 1 year. The family seem to have 'lived over the shop', as the address of the business is given as 4 Goose Gate, the same as their residence. The 1876 Post Office Directory also gives a business address as 10 Milton Street, presumably a second shop. By 1881 the business had expanded

and Frederick now employed a man and two boys. In 1891 the family were living at 119 Sherwood Street in Nottingham, and their son was now an apprentice watch-maker, presumably apprenticed to his father. The family also had a servant.

Frederick William Gibbs died in 1897 and is buried in the Church (Rock) Cemetery in Nottingham. His business had prospered and in his will he left the very large sum of £19,056 17s 4d to his son Frederick Richard and his daughter Fanny. By the 1901 census, Frederick Richard and his family were living at 32 Heskey Street in Nottingham. Frederick Richard and his wife had a son, Frederick William, aged 1 year. They also had a 15-year-old servant living with them. It would seem that the Gibbs family sold their shop at 10 Milton Street, as by 1902 the premises were occupied by 'Geo. Baxter, jeweller and watchmaker' (Wright's Directory of Nottingham 1902).



Advertisement in the *Nottingham Magazine*, November 1862 – image courtesy of Nottingham Local Studies Library.

Frederick Richard's business seems to have prospered, as by the 1911 census they were living in a substantial house, 'Castledene', in Alexandra Park, a fairly well-to-do area. Frederick

Richard died in May 1930 and was buried in the family grave in Nottingham's Rock Cemetery. It is possible that Frederick Richard's son Frederick William took on the business, making three generations. Frederick William died on 1st April 1978 and was cremated on 6th April 1978 at Nottingham's Wilford Hill Crematorium.

Large clocks by the Gibbs family seem to have been very popular in offices and schools. An example was for sale recently at £935.

Mather (above) states that 'A gold centred-seconds chronograph No 25872, English-type lever escapement, enamelled dial, case plain with cast floral band, was sold by Christies on 5th July 1971'. If the chronograph had a registration number, it implies that the quality of the work from the Gibbs workshop was of the highest order.

Obituary of Fredrick Richard Gibbs, Nottingham Evening Post 27th May 1930:

'For over 40 years a well-known watchmaker and jeweller at 4 Goosegate, Nottingham, the death took place, with distressing suddenness, last night at his home, Harby, Melton Mowbray, of Mr Frederick R. Gibbs. On retiring to bed last night, he was stricken with a heart attack and passed away before a doctor could reach the house.

Mr Gibbs's business was one of the oldest watchmaking and jewellery establishments in the city, founded as it was by Mr Gibbs's father 70 years ago.

Mr Gibbs, who was 60 years of age, was a life-long member of the Castle Gate Congregational Church, and he was a trustee of the Cullen Memorial Homes at Mansfield Road, Sherwood. He leaves three sons and a daughter.'

John Wilson

A KNEETON ENIGMA

The Kneeton feature is a turret-shaped, pillar-like structure, see picture below, standing in a steep gully beside a trackway leading down to an old Trent ford and a nearby ferry point over to Hoveringham. The turret feature which has been covered in undergrowth has now been cleared and opened up by the farm tenant at Hall Farm, is said to have been constructed to aid the turning of a draft horse after hauling a wagon into the adjacent threshing barn which is built on the edge of the



Hall Farm Kneeton - Centre far distance lies Ramsdale Hill in the pre-Conquest royal manor of Arnold, overlooking the Dover Beck Valley to its right. The threshing barn lies on the right of the picture; the barn beyond is a listed feature.

gully. This feature has been constructed out of the same stone material as the lower course of the threshing barn, the lower courses of adjacent building, walls and the church graveyard wall. The upper courses of the barn are larger than normal but uniform sized brick. Hall Farm was the site of a so-called mansion-type building demolished in the late 18th century.

What is of interest is that according to a 13th document, the site of Hall Farm must once have consisted of a fortified site of some description. The fortification could possibly be Anglo-Saxon, as the Nottinghamshire Heritage site index contains no record of a known post-Conquest fortified site at Kneeton. The document dated 1270 (1), mentions an "*Un(d)ercastelbylhenedes*" and

deals with a "selione" or strip of land under the end nearest the "castel" promontory. Hall Farm and the adjacent St. Helen's church are located on the top of triangular shaped promontory, the "byl" part

of the name. The English Place Name Society at Nottingham University have confirmed that O.E. *Castel* was in use pre-Conquest.

It cannot be said at the moment that the turret-shaped feature has any connection with the name of *Unercastelbylhenedes*; there is this coincidence however. A further possible co-incident occurs downstream in the neighbouring parish of Flintham. Here, 13th documents (2) mention a "*Castel en le Breekes*" and "*Castel Medue*," that have been documented in the Thurgarton Cartulary by Trevor Fowlds. Fowlds identifies the area as Ash Close where vague earthworks were visible close to where Long Hedge Lane descends the ridgeline to cross the Trent at Hazelford, (see Map 6 and Flintham text in the Thurgarton Cartulary). Once again the Nottinghamshire Heritage site index contains no record of a post-Conquest fortified site at Flintham. Further possible circumstantial evidence occurs in the later field names in the Ash Close locality of Bald House Slaid – 1775 (3), derived from M.E. Balled, rounded, and Roundhouse Plantation – 1887 (4). The Flintham ridgeline here according to field name evidence also contained a beacon site (Beacon Close). Unfortunately both Ash Close and Beacon Close fall within the area of RAF Syerston.



The turret shaped feature alongside the trackway leading down to the Trent crossing at Hall Farm Kneeton.

These two river crossings in conjunction with the neighbouring East Bridgford and Shelford crossings were, it appears, of immense strategic importance, part of the Anglo-Saxon civil defence of the Five Boroughs during the 10th century. In addition of course there is a motte and bailey type construction known from Pancake Hill at East Bridgford that possibly utilised Anglo-Saxon defences; late Anglo-Saxon pottery was found on site. Pre-Conquest routes known as the Ferdgate and Herryway, both meaning army road, came up through Leicestershire to this group of crossings. Hence the probable need to construct fortified sites here to defend and control the crossings. Modern academic research is now indicating that routes such as the Ferdgate and Herryway were used by advancing English armies and reinforcements and not by Viking forces as once thought.

The Domesday Book records that the three thegns who held Kneeton in 1066, Ælfsige, Wulfric and Wulfgeat, also held manors across the river in Epperstone and Woodborough. These two parishes contain the access routes off the old London to York road (A60&A614) down the Dover Beck Valley to the group of Trent crossings in the Kneeton area. The Kneeton ridgeline containing a toot-site, has sight lines across into the Dover Beck Valley. This

would have given the thegns the capability of not only controlling the fords but their access routes as well. Similar situations occurred in the Domesday entries for the Shelford/Stoke crossing, and the East Bridgford and Flintham crossings.

Watch towers were a known feature of Anglo-Saxon civil defence, but even if the Kneeton turreted feature is unconnected to the name of *Unercastelbylhenedes*, there is still much co-incident evidence in the form of the Domesday entries and minor place and field names in the area to be ignored from this little known part of Nottinghamshire's pre-Conquest history.

Notes

1, Unercastelbylhenedes – Kneeton - Nottingham University Manuscripts Dept. Ref No Mi D 594/1-1270

2, Castel en le Breekes. - Flintham - British History Online, Catalogue of Ancient Deeds, Vol 3, A5602 late 13c. Castel Medue – Flintham - British History Online, Catalogue of Ancient Deeds, Vol 4 A6129 1271.

3. Bald House Slaid – Flintham - Nottinghamshire Archives Ref No FT 1L, 1775

4, Round House Plantation - 1887 Ordnance Survey 1inch map.

Ivan Morrel

EXCURSION TO JOHN CLARE'S COTTAGE



Top: John Clare statue and memorial.

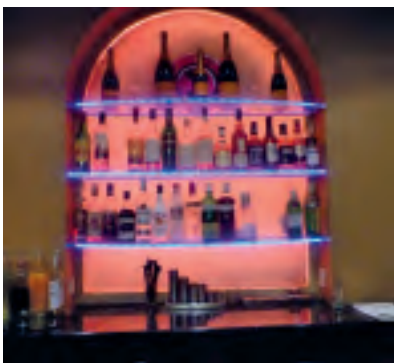
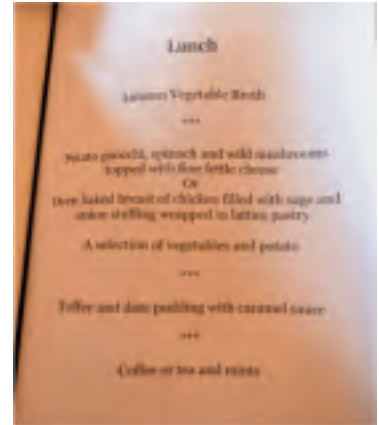
Middle: Tickencote Church and its interior.

Bottom: the kitchen in John Clare' Cottage; St Botolph's Church, Helpston; members near the hagioscope in St Botolph's.

Pictures courtesy of Keith Goodman and Trevor Lewis



THE ANNUAL LUNCHEON AT THE OLDE BELL, BARNBY MOOR



ANNIVERSARIES: 100 YEARS AGO

The Great Escape – from Sutton Bonington!

During the centenary commemorations of the First World War, *The Times* is running a daily column reprinting a war-related activity first covered one hundred years ago. On 26 September 2017 it reproduced a story from 26 September 1917 headed 'Escape of 23 War Prisoners'. It was about the escape of German officers from the internment camp at Sutton Bonington.

The Times reported the story with a certain sardonic humour. The German POWs had dug a tunnel and collected supplies ready for the break out, but having



German Officers at Sutton Bonington – image courtesy of University of Nottingham

escaped they then struggled to put much distance between themselves and the camp. Six of them were caught near Nottingham, two were found asleep in a wood 'worn out by their walk', and three were arrested when they aroused suspicion by asking the way to the nearest railway station. Captain Muller was caught when schoolchildren found him blackberrying in Tollerton woods, six miles from the camp. Two more were found in East Leake 'playing at cards while crouching beneath a hedge'.

These two men do not seem to have been trying all that hard to make their way back home, and apparently confessed the whole story. The escapees had tunnelled a distance of 50 yards over a three months period. Having escaped they divided into groups of four and started out on different routes towards the coast 'where they hoped to get away by tramp steamers'.

Eighteen of those who escaped had been recaptured by 28 September 1917, and four more were taken at Chesterfield by Derby police on 30 September.

The story is, of course, well known. The Midland Agricultural College had been preparing to move from its premises in Kingston on Soar to the main building and men's hostel newly built at Sutton Bonington. That building had a date stone of 1915. Before the move could take place the buildings were taken over to house German officers, who were generally well treated when they were captured as prisoners of war. In 1915 Sir Arthur Conan Doyle complained that they were quartered well away from ordinary soldiers, often in country houses or in the officers' quarters of barracks. These were comfortably furnished, and servants were found for them from among the soldiers held as POWs. One of the prisoners, named in *The Times*, Captain Muller, had been in command of the *Emden*, a German raiding cruiser which had bombarded Madras in September 1914, and was subsequently sunk off the Cocos Islands on 9 November.

When the Sutton Bonington escape was reported, special constables were called out 'and every measure was taken to apprehend the escaped prisoners'. With night patrols and road blocks, as well as special constables at strategic points, the prisoners were prevented from making much headway. Lieutenants J. Stadelfaauer and P. Bastgem were recaptured in Derby after a week on the run – perhaps an inappropriate term since they had travelled just twelve miles from Sutton Bonington. Three men caught in West Bridgford on 25 September 1917 had among their possessions sardines, milk, bacon, ham, cheese, prunes, sausages, biscuits and dried toast. They might not have got far in their search for a packet boat to take them to Germany, but they were not going to starve. In fact, in the course of the First World War, only one German officer made it back home.

John Beckett

200 YEARS AGO

On November 24th 1817, a claim was made for 3s. 4d. for 'Clerk attending this evening at the New Theatre in Bottle Lane, with the Mayor and Alderman Soars, to disperse a Company of Comedians, unlawfully acting a play for hire....'

A footnote adds that it was an early 'little theatre'. 'A room had been fitted up as a theatre by a number of boys and girls who gave public performances there, with printed bills of fare, in spite of their parents' disapproval. A passionate love-scene was in progress when the Mayor's appearance put a stop to the proceedings, and caused great consternation. In view of their youth, the offenders were bound over.' - *Records of the Borough of Nottingham Vol VIII 800-1835*

The incident was reported in the *Nottingham Journal*, November 29th 1817. 'The parties were in the middle of the fifth act of 'The Busy Body' and old Sir Francis Gripe was very lovingly hugging and kissing Miranda when the Mayor appeared and put a stop to their proceedings. The command operated like a thunderclap on all present'

But, did the theatregoers get their money back? [*My thanks to Terry Fry for this juicy bit of gossip – Ed*]

400 YEARS AGO

'It was agreed that Richard Bullivant, the Armourer, in respect of his extraordinary pains in dressing and scouring the town's armour, shall now have twenty shillings yearly wages more be added, to make it up to forty shillings a year, so that, hereafter, he bring no bills to put the town to any further charge about the keeping or scouring thereof' – *Nottingham Date Book*.

800 YEARS AGO

The 'Charter of the Forests' of King Henry III was issued on 6th November 1217. On 11 February 1225, at the same time as issuing the final and definitive version of Magna Carta, Henry likewise issued a new version of the Charter of the Forests. Thereafter 'the Charters', as they were called, were always linked together.

THOROTON RESEARCH GROUP

There were eight members present at the latest meeting of the Research Group, which was held on Saturday 30th September.

The Group discussed two major anniversaries in 2018 (other than the end of the Great War!) which were the Spanish 'Flu pandemic of 1918-19 and the Representation of the People Act 1918 which gave votes to (some) women for the first time. We were informed that a group at the University of Nottingham were researching the local impact of the Spanish 'Flu outbreak, and the Nottingham Women's History Group were carrying out a major piece of work on 'votes for women'. There was probably little that the Group could contribute, other than looking at the two later, and minor, peaks in influenza in 1924 and 1925, and possibly something on the Women's Anti-suffrage League.

Contributions from members included:

- Elizabeth Robinson described work on the Garden at Bromley House;
- John Wilson talked about the two heliochronometers at Rufford Abbey, one which had been installed in the Rose Garden in 1919 in memory of King Edward VII and the new one (2009).
- John also described a study of the Gibbs family of clock and watch makers of Nottingham and a preliminary investigation of church dedications and patron saints in the east Midlands;

- Andrew Hamilton had 'discovered' a large painting of Wollaton Village by Jan Siberechts, dated 1697, at Birdsall House. He discussed the painting in the light of current research into the early Wollaton cottages;
- Keith Fisher described his ongoing work on graffiti on lead roofs;
- Trevor Lewis informed the meeting that 2019 was the 200th anniversary of the opening of the Mansfield to Pinxton Railway. There would be events and an exhibition to commemorate the opening of the railway and its history.

Finally, the Meeting discussed the possibility of having a Thoroton 'blog', attached to the Society's website. *[Editor's note – If we were to have a 'blog' on the Thoroton Website, would members read it and contribute to it? Please let John Wilson have your views at wilsonianus@btinternet.com, or see John at a Society meeting.]*

Dates for next year's meetings will be published in the Society's programme card for 2018.

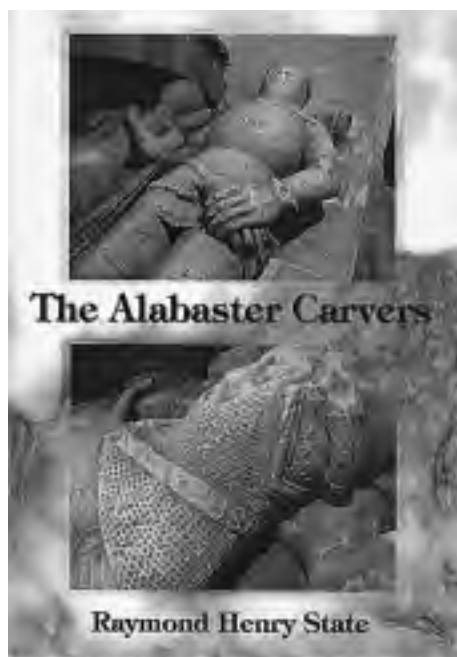
BOOKCASE

THE ALABASTER CARVERS

By Raymond Henry State

Melrose Books 2017 ISBN 9781912026128. £39.99

The East Midlands, is of course well known as the primary location for the quarrying and carving of alabaster (a form of gypsum) in the mediaeval and post-mediaeval period, although Nottingham itself, State argues, was not a centre for large effigy carving, focusing instead on smaller panels. The products of this important industry were exported throughout Britain and across Europe; today, its primary surviving relics are funerary monuments and effigies which adorn a great number of cathedrals and churches up and down the country. This major new work of synthesis brings together a huge range of both physical and documentary evidence for the quarrying, trade, commissioning and carving of alabaster monuments and the lives and work of 'the kervers'.



The opening chapters outline the locations of the quarries, the nature of the industry, and establish the chronological development of tomb production from a relatively small-scale output in the middle ages rising to a peak in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century. The work then moves on to present the main types of monument, with a discussion of their changing form, style and symbolism and the social and religious context of their production across the period from the later middle ages to the post-Reformation period.

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This is supported by an impressive series of appendices, which together make up the major part of the book, providing a detailed list of known craftsmen working in each region across the period between the fourteenth and seventeenth century and a gazetteer of over 2,000 known alabaster monuments ordered chronologically and geographically with a wealth of supporting information. This monumental work – in every sense – will be an essential guide for anyone seeking to understand these fascinating and beautiful witnesses to the mediaeval and early modern past.

Dr Chris King, University of Nottingham

BURGAGE MANOR REVEALED: A Community Archaeology project exploring the Burgage in Southwell - Southwell Community Archaeology Group

£5, available from Southwell Library, King Street, Southwell or by post (+ postage) by contacting info@southwellarchaeology.org

This account of the investigation carried out by the Southwell Community Archaeology Group, under its chairman John Lock, to discover more about the past of the Burgage is presented in a beautifully produced book full of richly coloured photographs, plans, maps and diagrams which bring the text to life.

After a foreword by John Lock tracing the background to the project and acknowledging the contributions made by many individuals and groups, the story is continued in more detail with introductory notes about the Burgage and some of its associated buildings, the indications of interesting material beneath its surface and reproductions of the various surveys that guided the planning of the digs.

The excavations in several trenches on the Small Green and the Main Green and test pits in various nearby gardens are described concisely and clearly, with helpful illustrations. In the next section we are given a vivid overview of some of the more striking finds from the excavations, such as the Southwell green glaze pot, of which a sufficient number of fragments were found to enable an expert to reconstruct much of it, some pieces of clay pipes whose makers could be traced and a metal seal from the 13th century bearing the image of an eagle with wings outstretched.

The next section is devoted to 'new understandings of the story of the Burgage' and summarises the adjusted perspectives that the results of the project have brought to the history of this area, from the 12th to the 19th centuries.

In the final part of the book tribute is paid to the involvement of the community, from primary school children to the team of dedicated diggers – and it is evident that all participants and visitors enjoyed the enterprise immensely and that good humour prevailed even when conditions were wet and muddy.

This slender volume is full of fascinating information set out with exemplary clarity and plenty of illustrative material. This reviewer would, however, have welcomed definitions of 'burgage' and 'burgage plot', terms which are central to the project, and also an indication of what kind of survey produced the greyscale plan accompanying the photograph of the excavations on the Small Green. Finally, it is clear that this admirable book could only showcase the main features of the excavations and their results; it whets the appetite for a more detailed presentation of the project which, it is to be hoped, will be forthcoming before too long.

If you live in Southwell or just enjoy visiting, this is a volume which will enhance your knowledge of part of the town and your admiration of its community spirit. It is warmly recommended.

Janet Wilson

YOUR SOCIETY

Geoffrey Bond Research Award 2017

Once again this year we received a number of very good and worthwhile applications for research awards. The selection panel, chaired by John Beckett, decided that this year's allocation of

£2,000 (£1,000 from Geoffrey Bond's generous grant and £1,000 from Thoroton funds) should be shared between two applicants.

£1,500 has been allocated to Southwell Community Archaeology Group for its community archaeology project to research, compare and document the wall-paintings in the Saracens Head, Southwell, and £500 goes to Bassetlaw Christian Heritage for its project to identify, research and document information on the unique part the Bassetlaw area played in Christian history and which is held in document form in archives and churches, and also orally.

There is a requirement for those receiving grants to provide articles on the outcomes of their research for the Newsletter and, subject to editorial processes, there may be future articles in the Transactions.

We are grateful for Geoffrey Bond's support in enabling such worthwhile research to be undertaken relating to our county and we look forward to next year's applications. It is hoped that more individuals and groups will apply for this useful financial support for their research in 2018 and we would urge all researchers to consider whether they could be helped in their endeavours by a grant. The conditions of application are on the Society website at www.thorotonsociety.org.uk/bond-awards.htm

Barbara Cast, Honorary Secretary

FORTHCOMING LECTURES

Neville Hoskins Lecture, Saturday 9 December 2017 Revising Pevsner's *Nottinghamshire* - Clare Hartwell, Yale University Press

Since Pevsner's lonely peregrinations around the county in 1948, the demise of the coal industry and new building in Nottingham are but two instances of change. This is arguably balanced by continuity in rural settlements, where research in places such as Norwell, Newark and Southwell has extended the history of domestic architecture in urban and village contexts back to the C13 and before. While medieval church architecture continues to receive scholarly attention, in some cases knowledge has been lost since the C19. An emerging theme is the re-evaluation of the church restorers and historians of the era. Avenues of research into subjects such as post-enclosure farmsteads suggest themselves as new places are visited, while the phenomenon of the Dukeries continues to provide a rich resource, with much more to give, witnessed by the recent Thoroton Society publication on Newstead Abbey. With this and so much more published or in preparation, the body of research continues to grow. Now, as in Pevsner's day, the distillation of all this knowledge cannot be done without the kindness of owners and custodians and the help of the scholars and researchers who continue to investigate the county's rich traditions and resources.

The Norah Witham Lecture, Saturday 13 January 2018 Vote 100: Commemorating the Centenary of the Representation of the People Act 1918 - Val Wood

This talk will explore the impact of the act which enfranchised women from the age of 30 and men from the age of 21 and afforded women the right to stand for election to local city councils and National government. In the period immediately following, many women sought representation on local councils in Nottinghamshire from 1918 onwards, yet the first Parliamentary seat was not won until 1945 in when Florence Paton was elected in Rushcliffe. In the city of Nottingham, it was only in

2010 that the first woman MP was elected. However, this is but one aspect of the post suffrage story and the talk will look more closely at the events during the inter-war period from a provincial aspect. What happened, for example, to the Liberal women who were so prominent in the fight for suffrage in Nottinghamshire but failed to form an identity for themselves after the vote was achieved? Also, we consider how women themselves felt about the vote and how feminist causes changed post 1918 and 1928 when women were fully enfranchised. In the conclusion there will be a discussion of why it is important to commemorate the centenary.

Saturday 10 February 2018
The White Book of Southwell - Michael Jones

The White Book of Southwell is the principal surviving collection of the medieval deeds of Southwell Minster, deriving its name from its white vellum cover. Mainly compiled between c. 1350 and 1460, it records, chiefly in Latin, 620 individual documents from c. 1100 onwards. These range widely from papal bulls and royal charters, privileges granted by many Archbishops of York to the Chapter at Southwell, individual canons (or prebendaries) and the parishes where the Minster held lands or exercised pastoral care. The majority date from c. 1200-1460 and concern properties which the Chapter administered through its courts, for which some rare proceedings are preserved.

Because of their variety, the White Book is important not simply for ecclesiastical history but for broader social and economic trends either side of the Black Death. It provides, besides much on the careers of individual clergy, vivid material on many medieval Nottinghamshire families both important and obscure. It also furnishes a remarkable amount of little-studied linguistic data including strong evidence of earlier Anglo-Scandinavian influences on Nottinghamshire. Known to every generation of Nottinghamshire historians since the days of Dr Thoroton, publication will make this important source readily accessible for the first time to a wide audience.

Myles Thoroton Hildyard Lecture, Saturday 10 March 2018
The First Siege of Newark, 1218 - Dr David Crook

In the second half of his reign, King John (1199-1216) was heavily dependent on the administrative and military support of aliens from his former continental dominions, conquered by the French king Philip II in 1204, and from Flanders. Some of the most prominent were involved in local government, among them Philip Marc, Sheriff of Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire from 1208 onwards. During the French invasion of 1216-17 in support of the English barons who rebelled against John and his young successor Henry III, they held many of the important royal and episcopal castles, which they tried to retain after the end of the war in 1217. The Bishop of Lincoln's castle at Newark was held by Robert de Gaugy, a Flemish lieutenant of Marc, who refused to return it to the bishop. An army to besiege it was assembled at Stamford in July 1218, and the names of those summoned to serve are known. The army marched to Newark and the castle was surrendered by Gaugy after a siege of eight days, about which information is given by chronicles and royal letters. It was important as the first of several such sieges to take place between 1218 and 1225, when the last castle held by an alien was surrendered to the king.

2018 PROGRAMME OF EXCURSIONS

18th May: Broughton Castle (near Banbury) and Earls Barton Church

14th June: Barton on Humber and Thornton Abbey

12th July: Marston Hall, Stragglethorpe Church and Brant Broughton Church

13th September: Middleton Hall (near Tamworth) and Stoke Golding Church

Full details and application forms will be distributed with the Spring Newsletter for the first two excursions and with the Summer Newsletter for the last two excursions.

Any questions at this stage to Alan Langton on 0115 926 9090 or a.langton18@btinternet.com

NEWS

Southwell Community Archaeology Group

The group was established in 2008 to bring to public attention the threat by development of the heritage at the former Minster School Church Street. The 'Save Roman Southwell' campaign, of which the group was part, has with the generous gift of the land to the Dean & Chapter meant that this threat has lifted. Our engagement with the site continues and we are the link between the Dean & Chapter and the Heritage Trust in matters relating to archaeology.

We are a Charitable Incorporated Organisation and continue to develop professional links in the archaeological community whilst providing a wide range of interesting and enjoyable activities for members. These include small scale test pit excavations, field walking, post excavation work, landscape and other surveying and a programme of talks.

At our recent Archaeology and Heritage event displays and illustrated talks focused on the findings of our HLF funded Burgage Manor Revealed project and other activities we are engaged in. We have produced a book which contains the main points of interest and is available at a cost of £5. [see book review above – Ed]. The afternoon session facilitated by Professor Dixon provided an opportunity for Professor Bowden, Ursilla Spence & Matt Beresford to share their current understanding of the Church Street assemblage.

We continue to record the vernacular buildings of Southwell and have received a Thoroton Society Geoffrey Bond Research Award to study the Elizabethan Wall Paintings at the Saracens Head. A long-term project has been established to better understand Southwell and in its place in the landscape with fieldwalking in the area of the Charter. We continue to have strong links with the University of Nottingham and Nottingham Trent University, Brackenhurst.

With the support of the Dean and Chapter an opportunity has arisen to carry our survey and other archaeological activity on the land comprising Vicars Court. It brings together many professional disciplines and given the Scheduled Ancient monument area extends to part of the land will require the appropriate consents and supervision. Our hope is that this work will lead to a better understanding of the site - the reason for the group's establishment in 2008.

info@southwellarchaeology.org.uk <https://www.facebook.com/southwellarchaeology/>

<http://www.southwellarchaeology.org.uk>

John Lock

East Midlands History and Heritage

The free publication *East Midlands History and Heritage* started life in late 2014 as a cross collaboration between several universities in the region. Since then its reach has extended significantly to include all nine local universities, county history societies and key heritage group. We've also had financial support from such organisations as the Friends of the Centre for English Local History, Marc Fitch and, of course, Nottinghamshire's Thoroton Society. EMHH is a not-for-profit organisation. It's here to provide a high-quality publishing outlet primarily for local historians,

local history and heritage groups, and for post-graduate students. We take articles of between 1,500-2,000 words on any topic from any period, so long as the subject matter has a strong local connection. We try, wherever possible to offer a regional balance. Recently, we've published stories on medieval graffiti in Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire, archaeological field walking in Leicestershire, the nineteenth-century rural poor of Lincolnshire, and, taking us up-to-date, the impact of the 1947 floods, and the development of the East Midlands Airport in the 1960s. Quite frequently, the authors come with special knowledge. David Stewart, a head teacher in a local special needs school, wrote a good piece on the local impact of the Mental Deficiencies Act, 1913. The Lowdham Grange story in latest issue is written by the son of a former officer at the institution. There are specialist articles, too, on source material: Matt Bazley, who works for Northamptonshire Archives, recently wrote a paper on using manorial records to research the impact of the Black Death.

To cover the costs of design and printing we rely on the financial support of our patrons: organisations like Thoroton, although, as you might imagine, we are constantly seeking new sponsors. The magazine is distributed 'free' through our local networks: history groups, libraries and archives, and museums. We publish around 8,000 copies of each issue. Where necessary, we offer advice on research and on writing-up, so that the final copy marries with the needs of our target audience. Originally, we'd planned to publish only the first two issues of the magazine in hard copy to establish the brand, and then become a web-based magazine to keep down costs. Two things happened, however, to change this. The first was that the public reaction to the magazine was, and continues to be, extraordinarily positive; the second was the steady growth in affiliation. Feedback, directly or received through our distributors, suggests that we have certainly located a strong demand. This was reflected, not only in complimentary comments on the publication but requests for further copies, and the anticipation of future issues. We were concerned that becoming a web-based distribution would severely curtail the readership. Given that the primary objective is to give greater access to a good quality history of the region, the move to a web-based production was abandoned. That's why your continuing support is appreciated.

We'd really like to encourage as broad an authorship as possible. Next year, like many publications probably, we're planning another special to mark the end of the Great War, but instead of stories on the war itself, we would very much like to focus on its subsequent impact. It's an attempt to try to do something just a little bit different. We thought, for example, about the medical and social impact of the return of disabled soldiers (I know, for example, that there was a severe shortage of artificial eyes). Remembrance might also be a key theme: memorialisation was not limited to Celtic crosses or obelisks, but to buildings: some grand, like Nottingham General's Nursing Home, and some small, like my local village memorial hall. Bequests, too, formed part of such sites of memory and mourning. Bigger legacies might include the Homes for Heroes campaign, or the political unrest and settlements that followed 1918. Whatever your interests, we'd encourage you to do is to get involved with this project.

Nick Hayes (editor), Nottingham Trent University

'Lace Unravelling'

If you haven't already done so, take a look at the article entitled *Lace Unravelling Roadshow* in the Nottingham Castle Transformation update for October 2017, and the section in Nottingham Castle Museums & Art Gallery, Behind the Scenes Blog at [www.nottinghamcastle.org.uk/behind the scenes](http://www.nottinghamcastle.org.uk/behind-the-scenes), entitled *Unravelling Nottingham New Lace Project: Lace Unravelling*.

There seems to be heightened interest in the historic links between the lace industries of Nottingham and Calais.

Philip Emerson

THE THOROTON SOCIETY

OFFICERS

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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

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. 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

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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