

THE THOROTON SOCIETY

Nottinghamshire's History and Archaeology Society



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Professor John Beckett gives the Lecture on the life of TC Howitt at the Annual Luncheon – see report on page 2 and pictures on page 13

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

ANNUAL SOCIETY LUNCHEON 2018

This year was very special – we met for our lunch in the Council House, at the very centre of Nottingham. This was to commemorate the 50th anniversary of death of T. Cecil Howitt, the eminent Nottingham architect one of whose best known and admired creations was the Council House. We are grateful to Nottingham City Council for allowing us to dine in the splendid surroundings of the Ballroom – we were also very pleased to welcome Cllr Liaqat Ali, the Lord Mayor of Nottingham, to eat with us.

The lunch prepared and served by the staff of Eat Culture, the Council's in-house caterers, was very much enjoyed and we thank them for the care and support given to us – all 106 members and friends.

After lunch we raised our glasses for the toast to the Queen, proposed by John Beckett, followed by the toast to the Society proposed by John Hamilton who compared the lack of county history organisations in the part of England where he now lives to what we enjoy in Nottinghamshire. President Adrian Henstock responded to the toast with a description of the site of the Council House prior to its building.

Following our meal Professor John Beckett gave an illustrated talk on the life and career of Thomas Cecil Howitt which was extremely interesting and raised a number of comments and questions – unfortunately we ran out of time to hear them all!

A very memorable and greatly enjoyed lunchtime. We owe a great thank you to the staff of the Council House.

Barbara Cast, Honorary Secretary

EXCURSION REPORT

MIDDLETON HALL AND STOKE GOLDING CHURCH

THURSDAY 13TH SEPTEMBER

LEADER : ALAN LANGTON

Originally dating, perhaps, from Saxon times, from the fifteenth century until 1925, Middleton Hall was owned by the Willoughby family who also owned Wollaton Hall – hence the interest for members of the Thoroton Society. As usual, excessive death duties caused the estates to be sold off in 1924, and Middleton was not as fortunate as Wollaton: it rapidly fell into disrepair, and it was only when a group of local enthusiasts created the Trust in 1980 that it began to come back to life again. Our visit on 13th September gave us the opportunity to marvel at what has been achieved in only forty years by these dedicated men and women. The range of different buildings, surrounded by a moat, are now sufficiently skilfully restored to be able to see the full impact of the one-time significant Hall. We enjoyed coffee before being taken on tour by three committed volunteers, who showed a remarkable knowledge in their enthusiastic presentations. As well as an intriguing stone building dating from 1285, the fine Tudor oak framed building was created by the Willoughbys, as well as the Great Hall. Queen Elizabeth visited in 1575, and both Francis Willoughby and John Ray a century later were renowned ornithologists, and the first book on the subject was published in 1676. Thomas Willoughby was created Lord Middleton in 1712, and he was responsible for a new West Wing and a Walled Garden.

After a buffet lunch we travelled to Stoke Golding Church, where three more dedicated volunteers talked to us about the building and served us with tea. The church dates from 1340, with some considerable additions and alterations in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. It is a Grade 1 listed building in Decorated Gothic style, and an outstanding feature is the arcade between the nave

and the aisle, with shafted and filleted piers, moulded arches, and carved capitals. It also has an incised slab dated 1275, a double piscina, a font dated 1330, and a parish chest dated 1636. [The church also has a fine mass dial; see the picture – Ed]

This was a lovely day, dominated by exciting practical evidence of restoration, preservation, and voluntary commitment.

Alan Langton

Your Editor wishes to add the following snippet to Alan's excellent account of our excursion, in the hope that readers will enjoy it as much as the Editor did: An early owner of the manor of Middleton was one Hugh de Grandmesnil, who was a breeder of war horses and thus a very important member of the court of Duke William of Normandy. At the Battle of Hastings, Hugh de Grandmesnil was riding his horse and presumably awaiting the order for the cavalry charge, when his bridle broke, and he was unseated. The horse, now riderless, charged towards the English lines, on its own. A great cheer broke out from the English soldiers as the riderless horse charged towards them. On hearing the cheers, the horse turned around and galloped back to the French lines.

LECTURE REPORT

The Nottinghamshire History Lecture – 13 October 2018 Dr Amy Calladine – University of Nottingham

'Performing Penance in Early Modern Nottinghamshire: The Evidence of the Archdeaconry'

Amy completed her PhD thesis at the University of Nottingham in 2016. In it she explored ritual and ceremony in 17th century English towns, but she has now moved on to some interesting new work on the punishment of penance in Nottinghamshire, for which she has been using material in the University of Nottingham's Department of Manuscripts and Special Collections. Sexual deviance, character defamation, and misbehaviour usually arising from drink, regularly led to individuals being expected to appear before the Archdeaconry Court. Amy showed in the lecture how penance, which usually involved a ceremony in which the accused was made to stand in a white sheet, was largely about public humiliation, but between its heyday in the sixteenth century, and its greatly watered down final phase in the eighteenth century it gradually moved from public spaces such as the market places of Newark, East Retford, and Mansfield, as well as Nottingham, into the local church, and finally into the minister's own house, the rectory or vicarage. Although clergy were asked to provide evidence at Visitations, by the time of the last known penance in 1794 (John Bonnington at Sutton in Ashfield) the practice had effectively disappeared from the county. As with witchcraft it is difficult to get our heads around practices such as penance, which seem light years away from our modern world, but Amy's erudite and interesting lecture reminded us that it was once an offence to play football in the churchyard during Divine Service, while fornication and sexual deviance were treated as offences, albeit offences which were prosecuted in the church rather than the civil courts.



West Markham Church, where nine men were prosecuted in 1584 for playing football in the churchyard.

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John Beckett

MEMBERS' RESEARCH

Sir Thomas Hewett, a man of Nottinghamshire and beyond

If you ever wander in Sherwood Forest, particularly on the Green Drive near Major Oak, or in Clumber Park, or in other woods that were once part of Royal Forests, or visit one of the early eighteenth-century royal palaces, spare a thought for a Nottinghamshire man who was responsible for their development and maintenance over 28 years. This was Sir Thomas Hewett of Shireoaks Hall, near Worksop, a man who lived through five English monarchs and worked for four of them, and who attained his career peak in his 60s. Although he left a short account of his life on his tombstone in Wales Church, South Yorkshire, no detailed biography exists. This summary of the lives of Sir Thomas Hewett and his wife, Lady Frances, which incorporates new research, has developed from a research project about Shireoaks Hall and its owners which uses a variety of sources, including Nottinghamshire Archives and Nottingham University Manuscripts and Special Collections.

Thomas Hewett was baptised at Worksop Priory in 1656. Both his grandfather, Sir Thomas Hewett, and his father, William Hewett, died during his childhood so after his early years at Shireoaks (built c1615 by his grandfather) he moved with his mother Mary (William's first cousin) and only surviving sibling to Shrewsbury to be educated amongst his mother's relatives. This was the Prince family resident in a manor house now known as Whitehall. His sister Elizabeth later became Dame Langley and lived within the remains of Shrewsbury Abbey.

Later, Thomas attended Oxford University as his grandfather Hewett had done. Afterwards he became a Yeoman of the Guard for Charles II, a post no doubt useful for his Hewett relative, prominent politician Thomas Osbourne, later 1st Duke of Leeds, of Wimbleton and Kiveton Park, South Yorkshire, while he was held in the Tower of London for five years after being impeached.

After almost becoming High Sheriff of Nottinghamshire for 1686 Thomas travelled in Europe for nearly five years, during which time members of the Eyre family from Rampton lived at Shireoaks



Shireoaks Hall in 2016. It was partially demolished in 1812 with the top storey and north side removed.

© Megan Doole

Hall. Little is known of his activities while on the continent; however, he married Frances Betenson (1667-1756) in 1689, in Geneva, then a Protestant city state. He possibly knew Frances earlier, either from her childhood spent in Wimbleton (Eagle House) near one of the homes of the Duke of Leeds, or via her mother's (Albinia Wray) relations descended from early-17thC puritan gentry (at Glentworth and Barlings Abbey, Lincolnshire), or his distant relationship by marriage to Frances's step-father, Samuel Oldfield, who also had early-17thC puritan connections in Lincolnshire.

Frances was well-connected on her maternal grandmother's side to the Cecil family; however, it seems that the religious background of her Wray relatives had the most influence on her life. For example, her aunt's husband Sir Henry Vane, a supporter of religious freedom and briefly Governor of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, was beheaded in 1662 for high treason for his actions during the interregnum. It may be because of this and the involvement of Henry's son, her cousin Christopher Vane, in the Glorious

Revolution of 1688 that Frances was abroad in 1689. Likewise, Thomas's relative, the Duke of Leeds, was also a major supporter of the change of monarch.

Not long after returning from the continent, Thomas was commissioned as a deputy-lieutenant for Nottinghamshire (1693, renewed 1694, 1702), then in 1696 he was appointed to the post of Surveyor of the Forests North of the Trent for William III. He almost died in 1700 of an unknown illness, then in the same post for Queen Anne he surveyed and walled the new Clumber deer park (c1709) for John Holles, 3rd Duke of Newcastle. He was also employed by the Duke for two years as Surveyor of Birkland Wood, Sherwood Forest, creating the west-east straight 'ride' in the wood, while taking on the lease of a large house and farm in Kings Clipstone. This Duke of Newcastle was Warden of Sherwood Forest and also a relative by marriage of Frances Hewett. Around this time Frances was a correspondent of Lady Mary Pierrepont (later Lady Wortley Montagu) of Thoresby Hall, near to Clipstone, and some of Mary's letters to Frances have been published.

Thomas's career became busier as he was additionally appointed (1714) Surveyor of Forests South of the Trent which doubled his salary. And he took on an unpaid post on the Board of the Office of Works in 1715 where he encountered the architect Nicholas Hawksmoor, originally from East Drayton, Nottinghamshire. However, he lost all his civil service posts in 1716 after complaints of financial irregularities concerning sales of Sherwood Forest timber - his name was cleared in the 1730s.

He travelled to Italy again in 1717 at the age of 60, and in 1719 was appointed Surveyor-General of the Office of Works by the 3rd Earl of Sunderland, in overall charge of maintaining all eleven of the main Royal buildings plus many minor buildings and gardens, including renovations for George I of some of the main rooms at Kensington Palace which can still be seen today. Thomas Hewett had been a civil servant for about 20 years by this time, and he was an amateur architect; also the Earl of Sunderland, Charles Spencer, was married to the half-niece of Thomas's close Anglo-Irish friend Robert Molesworth of Edlington, near Doncaster, MP for East Retford in 1706-1708, and a leading Whig politician. This new role came with a knighthood at the age of 63 and a greatly increased salary – five times that of his previous double role. The additional income, along with a £500 legacy on the death of the Duke of Newcastle a few years before, made it possible to finance the creation of the water garden within a new parkland at Shireoaks Hall, including a great basin, a cascade, and a canal, probably inspired by Molesworth's construction of a water garden on his estate north of Dublin as well as those of other landowners closer to home (eg Chatsworth, Derbys. and Sprotbrough, Yorks.)

In his 60s Sir Thomas was a Magistrate for north Nottinghamshire for 7 years and for Middlesex for 3 years. He was elected a fellow of the Royal Society in 1721 and was appointed governor of a Thames water supply scheme. After mid-1723 it appears he was physically restricted by a long final illness but he was able to conduct his Surveyor-General role from Shireoaks via a messenger to communicate with a Deputy (Westby Gill from Rotherham) in London. He was proud of his family name but he had no direct male heirs (his closest direct female relatives were dead) so left a long and complex will which named as the main inheritors after his wife a succession of three male associates and their male heirs, before a possible distant Hewett cousin who was a man of religion. Most of the possible inheritors were descendants of the early-17thC puritan Thornhaugh family of north Nottinghamshire (Fenton, Osberton, and Carburton). A condition of inheritance was that the name Hewett must be adopted. This condition of surname change and the deliberate exclusion of female inheritors also had been features of the Duke of Newcastle's will.

After Sir Thomas died in 1726 his wife of 37 years decided to leave Shireoaks to spend most of her 30-year widowhood in Soho in the buildings which are now Hazlitt's Hotel, after which she was also buried in Wales Church. Among her sister's notable descendants is George Selwyn, the first Anglican Bishop of New Zealand, whose tomb is in Lichfield Cathedral.

Unfortunately, little is known about Sir Thomas's private architectural design work which was usually undertaken for friends and associates, and almost all has been demolished. Some was in Nottinghamshire: Headon Hall (1710) for Hardolph Wasteneys, Bt, possibly the Normanton gate posts at Clumber (moved from Shireoaks in 1910), a summer-house in Shireoaks Park (finished after he died), and stables near the lake at Thoresby (1726) described by Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough as an "extreme fine building ... looks extreme handsome." A few were further afield: a large private library in central London (1720), probably Hursley Park house and garden in Hampshire (1721-1724), another library (1724) at Shirburn Castle, Oxfordshire, and possibly others still to be attributed. Even with a great deal of new detail there are still unknown and intriguing areas of Sir Thomas's life; perhaps archives further afield will reveal more about this interesting man of Nottinghamshire.

Megan Doole

Sidney Giles, a Sneinton Poet, 1814-1846

Sidney Giles is one of the more obscure members of the Sherwood Forest Group of writers who met regularly at Richard Howitt's pharmacy on Lower Parliament Street in the 1820s – 30s. Virtually all we know of him is to be found in Spencer T. Hall's *Sketches of Remarkable People* (1873); and on Hall's recommendation alone I included him in *Exploring Nottinghamshire Writers* – without ever having seen anything he'd written.

Hall tells us he was born in Mount Street "of humble parents": Joseph Giles, a framework knitter and his wife Sarah Clark who by 1832 were living at 21, Windmill Hill, probably one of the now demolished properties which backed onto Notintone Place. (1)

Hall and Giles were close in age and among the youngest of the Sherwood Forest Group; both aspiring poets from a similar background, they became close friends. Whilst working in York, Hall wrote a sonnet addressed to Giles recalling their many rambles together "By St Ann's Well... From Gorsey Close... By Carlton Fields, to Colwick's sunny brow," to visit their friend Samuel Plumb, another Sherwood Forester. (2)

Giles must have acquired some education, probably by his own efforts, like Hall. In the late 1830s he sat on the committee of the Nottingham Artizan's Library, a place where working men could go to read the newspapers and borrow the odd book for a penny a week. He appears to have had his first poem, 'To the Trent' published in 1839 in the fourth issue of *Dearden's Miscellany*, a monthly literary and scientific journal produced in Nottingham. Alongside much better-known authors, he contributed regularly to the *Miscellany* until 1841 – about twenty poems in all. By then he had moved to Leicester where in the 1841 Census he gives his address as Regent Street and his occupation "Book-keeper".

Joseph Giles, his son Charles and three daughters, Priscilla, Isabella and Eliza were still living at Windmill Hill at the time of the 1841 Census, but Sarah Giles was in Leicester with her son who was preparing for his marriage to Jemima Cartwright at Gallowtree Gate Congregational Church on 8th June. Whether love, employment or a change of religious affiliation (Sidney and his siblings had been baptised at St Mary's) caused Giles to move to Leicester is unclear - maybe all three – but there he remained until his premature death in 1846.

Spencer Hall recalled visiting the Giles household in Nelson Street. At one literary gathering Sidney read a poem written in memory of his infant son, Charles, who had died in 1843 at 10 weeks, and Hall reproduced this poignant poem in his collection *The Upland Hamlet* in 1847.

Sidney died of typhus fever on 24th September 1846 leaving a widow and two small sons "but scantily provided for" (3). Hall was away at the time but when he returned he wrote an affectionate tribute to his friend for the *Nottingham Review* of 15th January 1847, and this epitaph:

Come, Nature's lover! Let thy tear
 Fraternal on this verdure fall:
 A poet's bones are mouldering here –
 His mind earth could not keep in thrall!
 O, truest love poor Sidney bore
 For all that's noble, pure, or kind;

And we may search the wide world o'er.
 But not a friend more faithful find.
 How warm his heart! His wit, how bright!
 His thoughts, what beams of morning light!
 Alas, that here so soon was run
 A course with so much hope begun!

Sidney Giles was buried in the chapel yard at Gallowtree Gate. It is unknown whether Hall's epitaph ever adorned the grave; the burials were removed to Welford Road Cemetery in 1923 where they are now marked by a single memorial stone. Jemima and the children emigrated to America five years later.

So far as I know, Giles' poems were never formally reprinted, so I have published them as a Piecemeal Pamphlet: *Sidney Giles, Sneinton Poet*, available from Five Leaves Bookshop or from me for £2.60 including postage. Cheques please to Rowena Edlin-White at Willow House, 11 Frederick Ave. Carlton NG4 1HP or contact me on ro@edlin-white.net

- (1) White's Directory 1932
- (2) Anthologised in Giles' *The Forester's Offering* 1841
- (3) Wylie, *Old and New Nottingham* 1853

Rowena Edlin-White

Sidney Giles' house in Sneinton



Detail of the painting showing where Sidney Giles lived on the right-hand side of the road.

At the Research Group meeting on 29 September 2018, Rowena Edlin-White described her study of Nottinghamshire writers with particular emphasis on the Sneinton poet, Sidney Giles (1814-1846).

She mentioned that he lived at 21 Windmill Hill, Sneinton in a house since demolished to make way for the flats that comprise part of the William Booth Birthplace Museum in Notintone Place. Windmill Hill has since become known as Windmill Lane. Rowena's article about Sidney Giles appears elsewhere in this Newsletter.

I have an oil painting I inherited from my father showing the view down Windmill Lane with the houses that were there prior to the building of the William Booth Museum and its associated flats. The painting is signed J H BERRY 1932 and has an annotation in my father's handwriting 'WINDMILL LANE, SNEINTON, NOTTINGHAM showing Sneinton Church at the end of the Lane and the Wilford Hill in the background. Painted by J H Berry a native of Nottingham.' Little is known about J H Berry as he does not appear in Henry Cecil Hall's *Artists and Sculptors of Nottingham and Nottinghamshire: 1790-1950* (1953).

The painting gives Sneinton a very rural appearance enhanced by the horse and cart and the absence of any sign of building on the hillside beyond the church and may convey something of what the village looked like in the first half of the nineteenth century.

The scene as it is today (right) shows that the houses on the left are still as Berry saw them, with the Notintone Place flats behind the tree on the right. The houses look as if they may have been built since Sidney Giles' day.



Ted White

A Village at War: North Muskham 1914-1917

This glimpse of life in a rather ordinary Nottinghamshire village during the First World War, has been made possible by the discovery of a book of notes compiled between 1910 and 1917 by Frances Olive Lavinia Williams, wife of Walter Hanwell Williams (vicar of North Muskham 1905 - 1937), and to the generosity of the present owners in allowing these notes to be copied.

North Muskham is an elongated settlement about four miles north-west of Newark, sandwiched between the River Trent to the east and the old Great North Road (now the A1) together with the Great Northern Railway (now the East Coast Main Line) to the west. Topographically, this results in a village with no natural centre and with a rather dispersed community; factors which have often contributed to difficulties in administering the parish and could lead to a sense of isolation. In 1913 Mrs Williams wrote - *'It is a sweet and pleasant place, this little parish, consisting of one long straggling street with the Vicarage at one end, the exquisite though small church in the centre and one old big house, the Villa, at the other end. Many of the people who live in it are fine characters - simple, upright, honest folk in the main, but there are times when the dreariness is appalling and the hours, though filled with work so as not to be without occupation, are ghastly in their absolute stillness and loneliness.'* In addition, the presence in the village of a well-established Wesleyan Methodist chapel and five public houses would not have contributed much to the vicar's wife's comfort.

By 1914 the Williams' had spent nine years working hard in the community, including completion of the restoration of the parish church, yet an entry in the notebook reflects the attitude of the villagers to the Church at this time - *'There being no Clerk or Sexton, the Vicar's wife tolls the bell and takes all the expenses at the funerals and weddings. The reason for no applications for the office is alleged to be that there is not enough money to be got out of it!!'* Moreover, it would appear that the Vicar's views had not always gone unchallenged' - *'April 16, Vestry Meeting in the Church Hall at 7.30 (No disturbances at the Annual "Clergy Baiting" Meeting).'* Nevertheless, the first half of 1914 would appear to have been fairly unremarkable; the Williams' celebrated their twenty-first wedding anniversary, the Vicar bought his first car, the Rogation Service was well-attended, coal was 19/6d a ton and eggs 13 a shilling. However, by June - *'Much scarlet fever in the village - nine cases in six houses'* and *'Suffragists very busy with their fiendish work of burning down Churches - Breadsall, near Derby, supposed to have been set alight by them - complete Destruction. Also a Church near London burnt out: I trust under Providence, that our little Church will escape.'*

Little of note occurred during July, but - *'August 4, War declared by Germany and Austria on France, Belgium, Russia and England. At last, the long dreaded threat of the Kaiser has fallen upon us.'* In addition - *'All the banks in England closed for four consecutive bank holidays August 3 4 5 6. Friday 7th they opened with paper money - £1 notes and 10/- notes, also postal orders could be obtained without paying poundage and passed at shops as legal tender. The Stock Exchange is closed down for the present - no business done for fear of a panic. No money can be invested, no foreign interest can be paid in, no shares sold. No money on deposit can be drawn out for the present until the moratorium expires - September 7th.'*

It is not surprising that, given the location of North Muskham, the villagers would have had eyewitness evidence of the movement of troops and equipment, and the view from the Vicarage, situated as it was between the Great North Road and the Railway, would have been particularly good. - *'Ever since war was proclaimed the country has been alive with excitement All roads lead to Newark - soldiers, guns, ammunition wagons, ambulance waggons, horses, and all the horrible impedimenta of war have been rushing through the village by road and rail. Troops for the Front, Belgium, going secretly because we are riddled with spies, even here.'* Indeed, the War would appear to have been more successful in drawing the community together than anything which had been attempted previously - *'Mrs Cogan, of the Grange here, has offered her house as a hospital and the Admiralty*

have accepted it. We have lent beds, made bandages and garments and hemmed sheets, even on Sunday, to be ready whenever the poor wounded men arrive.' Mrs Cogan had become tenant of Muskham Grange, the largest house in the village, in 1912, and had not endeared herself to the villagers by keeping a pet hyena which had escaped several times, frightening the villagers and, on one occasion, killing four lambs. Although the Grange became known as 'Muskham Grange Military Hospital' it was never named in the official list of auxiliary hospitals and, as we shall see, was fairly short-lived.

A few weeks were to elapse before the arrival of any wounded Belgian soldiers, and in the meantime the weather was fine enough for the Mothers' Union to hold their meeting in the Vicarage garden, the harvest was very good - *'Food, as yet, not very high in price – Bread 3d a loaf; Sugar 3d a pound; Coal 18/6d a ton; Eggs 9 for 1/-; Potatoes 4/- a cwt.'* However - *'August 28 Five German battleships sunk without much loss to the English Navy, but the war news from the Continent is grave – great loss of life but very little news can be got through. Troops have been going through by rail for the last three days, to the Front. Louvaine burnt to the ground. God defend the right.'*

Eight men from the village had joined the Army or Navy by September 1914, - *'The list of Honour of those who have gone to the Front for whom we pray in Church grows weekly longer and longer. The War grows more and more terrible and the anxiety daily more and more strained to breaking point. God defend us, the Germans are at Ostend.'* But help of a more practical nature was soon to be required - *'The first two Belgian Refugees, women of the domestic servant class, arrived in this village this month and were given a home at the Grange. A small cottage in Chapel Yard, next to the Blacksmiths, has been taken and furnished and offered to a Belgian family of three until after the War is over. The people of Muskham contributing to the cost of their maintenance for the time.'* This family, a Mr & Mrs Myssen and daughter, Matilda, arrived at the end of October and were installed in the cottage - *'rent free, one pound a week, and coal and potatoes.'* The wounded soldiers also arrived towards the end of October - *'October 29 Thursday, Arrival of 29 wounded Belgian soldiers at the Grange at midnight.'*

Nothing is recorded for November; and, while four Special Constables were sworn-in early in the month, two to serve as 'water constables'. December would appear to have been lacking in War-news. However, the number of men from the village listed as *'serving their King and Country'* had risen to twenty-eight. The Williams' teenage son, Denys, returned home from boarding school, and, not surprisingly, Christmas provided the material for most of Mrs Williams' notes -

'Christmas Day 1914 Communicants numbered 50 during the day. There was Evensong with Carols at 5.30. Xmas Day this year was an ideal day – a beautiful white glistening frost lay upon everything. It was cold, sharp and fine weather. In the afternoon the Belgian Soldiers at the Grange had a tree laden with presents for them. December 30 Xmas Tree in the school for the Sunday School scholars and teachers – 51 children and 6 teachers.'

'December 31 All the bell ringers being either enlisted in Kitchener's Army, or else busy building huts for the soldiers to live in at Belton Park, the Church bells were, for the first time for many years, silent.' *'A Happy New Year to us all, and may Peace soon be declared.'*

'A great flood today, the Trent overflowed its banks and miles of land on either side is submerged.'

1915

The first week of 1915 brought continuous rain and flooding, but - *January 10 A good number of soldiers in Church. The Royal Engineers are billeted in the two Muskhams, for a fortnight, to build bridges across the Trent (about 340 men all told). And, 'Early in January one of the nurses at the Grange ran away with two of the Belgian soldiers. She was traced to Taplow, Bucks, and was believed to be a spy. The soldiers also appear to be implicated as they were caught speaking German and were too curious about the Great Northern Railway line and the tubular bridges.'* Presumably, the 'tubular bridges' were the ones the Royal Engineers were practising building across the Trent. Also,

this month there is the first mention of wartime air-activity - *'January 19 German zeppelin raid on the Norfolk Coast – over Yarmouth, Lynn and Sandringham. Four killed at Yarmouth, two at Lynn, much property damaged.'*

Little, except parish duties, is recorded for February, but - *'February 17 Horrible day. Coal 22/6 a ton, Eggs 9 for 1/-, Bread 7½d a loaf. Much illness in the village owing to the rain and floods. A flying machine was seen hovering over Simpson's works one night last week, Feb. 12th, but it was too dark to see what nationality it was.'* Simpson's was a large factory in Newark.
'March 1 Very windy day and cold. Visited in the parish all afternoon and morning. The village just now is at a very low ebb, nearly all the young men have gone to the Front, and only old men and the young wives and children are left behind. Several of the railway platelayers are going on elsewhere to become signalmen, so the population is going down rapidly. This terrible war has much to answer for. It will be years before the village can settle again. Coal now 24/- a ton, and very hard to obtain. Only seven Belgian soldiers left now at the Grange.'

'March 17 Thursday. The most severe snow storm for the last sixty years. The drifts were so deep that carts could not get to Caunton for three days. Many lambs were buried in the snow. The mail cart had to be dug out at South Muskham and no papers came into the village that morning.' But news of the first local casualty was received around this time - *'On March 12th, Lieut. Col. Laurie of Carlton on Trent was killed in the battle of Nieuve Chapelle, France.'* And, by March 26 - *'All the Belgian soldiers gone now from the Grange, save one. Two of the soldiers, who have been discharged from the Army, have brought their wives and have settled down in the Village to live.'*

More people left the village during the Spring - *'Soon we shall have very few left – the war and moving on to get work is fast emptying the Village. The war news seems to grow more and more terrible. We hear of our poor men, prisoners, being burned alive, and shot when wounded. Surely God will avenge such fiendish sins as these – we wait and cry with the Saints of old 'How long, O Lord, how long'?*

However, casualties were not confined to the battlefields - *'May 22 Terrible Railway accident, three trains collide at Gretna, Carlisle. Over 158 soldiers killed and 300 burned and injured.'* Also - *'Last Monday, May 31st, the zeppelins came to London – several victims, six so far, and several fires.'* But June was to provide more local interest - *'June 4 Thirteen wounded English soldiers arrived at the Grange, mostly arms, hands, and one or two of them poor 'gassed' victims. 'June 13 Sunday, started open-house for the wounded soldiers from the Grange, from 4.30 to 6 p.m. every Sunday this month and next. From all accounts the men are very badly fed and not too well treated over there now, poor souls.'*

June continued very hot and dry - *'No rain for nearly six weeks, no hay and very little garden produce, no strawberries. On Thursday last, the anti-aircraft guns were rushed through here up North. Hull and Newcastle, Gravesend and Sittingbourne have all suffered severely from the air-raids of the Germans.'* And a national hero was killed in an accident - *'June 19 Lieut. Warneford V.C. killed while trying a new Forman biplane. Killed ten days after receiving his V.C. for destroying a zeppelin – only twenty-three.'*

The only entry for July 1915 concerns the repair of the churchyard wall, and the first week in August finds - *'All the Vicarage servants away for a week's holiday.'* And - *'August 15 Registration of every British subject tonight between the ages of 15 and 65. In this household there are four.'*

But reminders of the War soon reappeared - *'Several armed aircraft flew over here this week, there being German raids on the Coast with much damage and serious loss of civilian life.'* And - *'August 19 Eight anti-aircraft guns rushed through the Village on their way to Newark. They remained all night on the watch for zeppelins just outside the Ossington and near the Midland Station, but fortunately no foreign aircraft appeared.'*

'August 26 Recruiting March of the 14th Battalion of the Sherwood Foresters through this Village.'

September passed without comment, and only domestic and parochial notes occupy the early weeks of October, but - *'October 21 Went round visiting the mothers of the soldiers at the Front. There are now ten wounded British soldiers at the Grange. Weather beautiful, cold and dry, war news daily more conflicting. The Notts and Derbys terribly cut up in France – Col. Fowles, Captain Handford and Lieut. Handford killed, Major Beecher and Lieut. J V Edge wounded, eighty men killed. When will it end?'*

'November 1 All Saints Day. Took the soldiers (9) from the Grange to the whist drive in the Church Hall. November 8 Lantern Lecture on the War by Professor Dolby of the Nottingham University, crowded room, all the wounded soldiers there. Very good lantern Slides.' Also, in November a committee was formed to organize Christmas parcels for local men involved in the War - *'Collected from house to house, for Xmas presents for the soldiers and sailors gone from this Village, the sum of £10. Decided to send each man a nice parcel. 'St Thomas' Day, took out my little presents to the sick, widows, and my Bible Class girls'*

'The horrors of war deepen, there can be no Xmas joy this year, sadness is everywhere. There is hardly a young man left in the Village now.'

'Have just sent out 43 parcels to our men at the Front and elsewhere, containing – For those abroad - Notepaper, Soap, Peppermints, Tobacco, Cigarettes, Gingerbread, Foot comforts, Vermin killer, Xmas card, Calendar.

For those at home - Large cake, plum, Gingerbread, Tobacco, Cigarettes, Chocolate, Peppermints, Xmas card, Calendar.

Only the very old and young are left with us now and the village grows smaller weekly.

Since August 1914 nearly 75 people have gone - soldiers, soldiers' families and death have moved them away - we are slipping back to isolation and loneliness quickly.

My little book, begun in 1910 - 'rough notes and odd jottings', is getting nearly full.'

1916

'31 December 1915 January 1& 2 1916 - Three days of Prayer - Penitence and fasting and intercession for the War. Celebration and Matins at 8 a.m., Litany at 12, Evensong at 7.

January 14 Earthquake shock, accompanied by a rumbling noise, felt all over the village about 7.30 p.m.'

'Food is getting very dear now - Bread 4½d a small loaf, Beef 1/- a lb. Sugar 4d a lb. Eggs 7 a 1/- Fresh Butter 1/7d a lb. Coal 24/- a ton, and scarce.'

'The village is very empty and very quiet in these days - nearly all the young men are called up in groups to serve the Country. This week Charles Richmond his wife and family (five in all) leave the village for good, he having obtained work in Nestlé's Milk factory in Salisbury.'

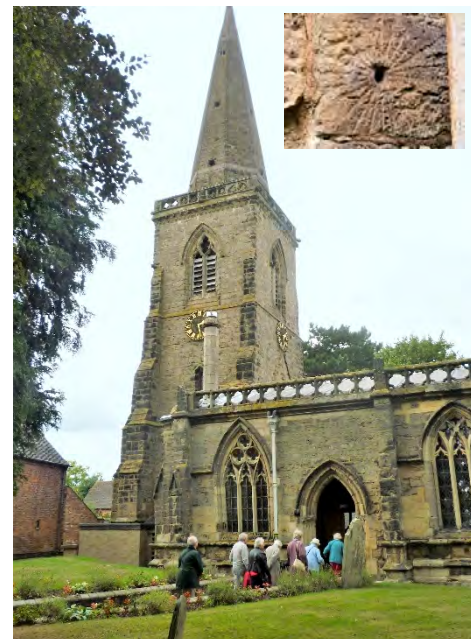
'All windows have to be closely secured at night now, to avoid danger of Zeppelins, and all motor-cycle and carriage lights must be lowered.'

'January 31 Monday Visit of German Zeppelins over the village between 7.30 and 7.45 p.m. but, as the houses were nearly all darkened, no damage was done – they came back over our house about 11.30 and explosions could be plainly heard in the distance. 59 Killed, 81 injured in the raid, - Derbyshire, Leicestershire, Staffordshire, Lincolnshire, Norfolk and Suffolk all suffered. Six or seven Zeppelins came over.'

'February 2 Wednesday. Evensong in Church in the dark. It reminded me of the Early Christian Worshippers in the Catacombs – we all clustered under one shaded lamp near the screen, keeping one ear open for the roar of possible Zeppelins, but none came. Never before, I venture to think, have Muskhmites had service in the dark. In future Evensong on Sundays is to be at 6 p.m. and a messenger be kept at the Bathley (telephone) Crossing, to run down and give us warning should more Zeppelins come. The 'Bathley Crossing' was the Great Northern level-crossing on Bathley Lane,

[CONTINUED ON PAGE 14]

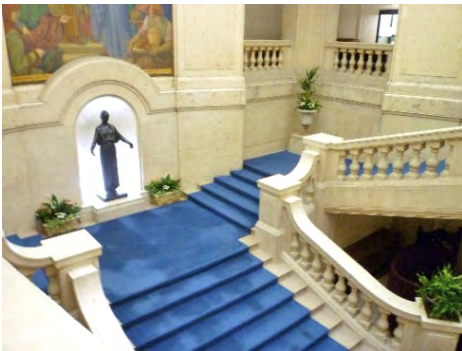
EXCURSION TO MIDDLETON HALL AND STOKE GOLDING CHURCH,



The Hall; from left to right, 3 rows + 1
 Painting of the Hall's West Wing; the
 Great Hall; the John Ray building; the
 Tudor Barn; table display and standard;
 Francis Willughby's volume of birds;
 exhibition about Robert Peel and the
 police; members enjoying lunch; the
 Jettied Building; pottery featuring
 Robert Peel.

The Church; anticlockwise from left
 Members entering church; inset, a mass
 dial; interior with 14C arcade; carved
 capital with 2 'green men'.

THOROTON LUNCHEON AT THE COUNCIL HOUSE, 3RD NOVEMBER 2018

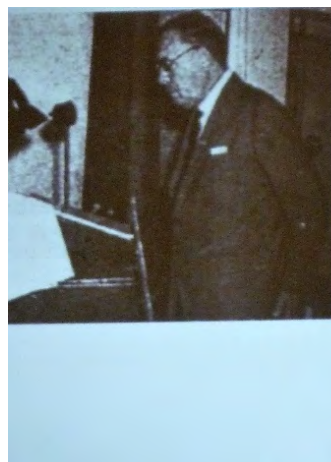


Top row: the glory of the Council House, showing the Grand Staircase and the interior of the Dome.

Second row: members enjoyed their lunch, which was served as a buffet this year.

Third row: the ceiling of the Ballroom, where Members ate their lunch; TC Howitt's model of the first design for the Council House; some of the City's collection of silverware.

Right; a screen shot showing a picture of TC Howitt at the Royal Institute of British Architects and a modern picture of the Council House.



where the signalman would have received the earliest news of any prospective zeppelin activity.

'The last of our village lads join up on Tuesday, February 8th. We are now left with three old men in the choir, there are no more young men in the village now save two farm-hands, four munition makers, our son who is too young to attest yet, and a few married men with children. The soldiers have been fetched away from the Grange and we hope the place is closed down now and that no more poor soldiers will be allowed to come as they were so badly fed and treated, and the house was not well-conducted as a soldiers' hospital ought to be.'

'February 24 Very heavy snowstorm. Many trees and shrubs broken by the weight of the snow. Country very pretty to see today. No papers came, so we are bereft of War news. At the Parish Council Meeting it was decided to call a public meeting to see if any women will offer their services on the land as there are so few men left here to help the farmers. Twelve women came forward to work.'

Again, parochial duties and the weather are the only topics noted during March and April.

'May 20 Put the Church clock on one hour to "New Time" according to Act of Parliament.'

'May 23 Our son Denys enlisted as Driver in the A.S.C. Motor Transport and went to Grove Park E. C. As his brave young feet went down the drive, and his gay smile lingered in my eyes, I wondered "shall I ever see your dear face again". He is only eighteen and very delicate.'

'June & July Wet cold months' and June provided *'nothing of importance to chronicle.'*

July 2 Mr Holland called up to the Colours. July 4 Mr Shepherd called up – the first two married men to go.'

'July 11 The first of our village lads to be killed in the great drive at the Front – George Talbot, aged twenty years. Edward Gascoigne wounded in the arm.' *'July 17 Memorial service for George Talbot. Three men of the Royal Engineers came to give the Last Post.'*

'August 16 Air raid on Blackheath - Denys in the midst of it. His motor was struck several times with shrapnel but he was not hurt, Laus Deo. Three bombs exploded close to him.'

In September the War was to move nearer home - *'September 3 Air raid on Retford. The gas works, a church and three houses damaged, also several persons injured. The same night, thirteen Zeppelins invaded England – one was brought down near Enfield, London, all the crew perished.'*

'Lighting restrictions very severe in this village - we grope in darkness – indoors and out. Bread 9d a loaf, Butter 1/10d, Eggs 2d, Coal 26/- a ton, Meat 1/3d.'

'September 7 Denys returned home on seven day's leave, but developed jaundice as result of a chill. September 13 Denys and I went back to Dunmow and I remained with him until he was better again. It was good to be with him.'

'September 24 Harvest Festival Sunday. During the night (Saturday) the Zeppelins visited the village and dropped a fire-bomb in the Trent, close to Thompson's house – near the ferryboat. We all went down to view it after early celebration - there it lay just at the water's edge - a malignant black bag - oozing some objectionable gas. The Military people were sent for to destroy it. The Zeppelins were visible and came over the village between twelve and one o'clock. They came and returned but all the village escaped with safety, Laus Deo. Only a few hundred yards from our Church.'

'October 1 Put back all the clocks one hour, to the original time. Heard the Zeppelins out again. Sat up until 1.30 a.m but no harm came.

Evensong at present, until further orders, at three in the afternoon.

All the village is wrapped in darkness now. Not a chink of light is allowed to be seen from any door or window and the nights are very long.'

November found the villagers again collecting for the troops - *'Christmas Fund Collection for Sailors and Soldiers £20.15.0d. Contents of Christmas letter to men in England – Christmas Card and seven shillings. Contents of Christmas parcel for men overseas - 1 card, 1 tin of Oxo, 1 pair of laces, 2 cakes of soap, 1 tin of sweets, 1 tin of peppermints, 2 handkerchiefs, 2 pairs good socks.'*

'December 18 Denys came home on six days leave, it was a joy indeed to have him and he got a good rest in bed which he needed much. He looked thin and tired but was happy to get home. God bless him in all his ways and keep him safe.'

'December 31 There is nought to chronicle but the diabolical massacre of War – oh the weariness and terror of it all!'

1917

The early months of 1917 would appear to have been a particularly depressing period.

'January 1 May the Lord our God give us Peace this coming year, and grant that our Sons may be given back to us alive and safe and soon. Dear God how soon?'

'January 23 Denys came home on extra leave before going up to London.'

'January 26 Denys went up to join the O.T.C. at Grove Park S.E. for Motor Transport Commission - six weeks course.'

'The most severe frosts and coldest winter known for over twenty-two years. The Trent is full of lumps of ice and many pumps are frozen up. Coal very difficult to obtain and very dear, 25/- a ton for the commonest kind.'

'February 18 William Adamson and Arthur Worthington called to the Colours, that leaves us now with only four boys in the Village.'

Moreover, food was becoming more expensive and rationing was introduced for some items - *'Eggs 5 a 1/-, potatoes £10 a ton. Rations – 4 lbs Bread, 2½ lbs Meat, ¾ lb Sugar, per head per week.'*

March 22 No flowers out yet but snowdrops. The longest winter I ever remember, and our soldier lads are without fires in their billets, day or night. God grant the War is over soon or we shall lose our reason, the terror, the terror of it for our loved ones. Oh Lord God is it not enough? Is there no pity? Stretch forth thy Mighty Hand and help us, we humbly beseech Thee.'

At this time, Mrs Williams was obviously feeling the strain - *'Have been too ill to write much in this little book for several weeks, worry and overwork the doctor says.'*

'April, The first week has been the coldest since records of weather have been kept – snow, hail, wind and severe frost. Many birds frozen to death.'

April 8 Easter Day. Cold but fine, no Church decorations owing to there being no flowers, not a single daffodil out yet.'

'May 1 Denys sailed for France.'

By the end of May the weather had improved and Mrs Williams appears to have recovered. -

'May 23 Beautiful weather now.' And *'May 26 Planted Vicarage field with carrots, turnips, potatoes and beans. Eggs 6 a 1/-, Butter 2/2d a lb., Sugar hardly to be obtained, Bread very poor quality, very black and indigestible. Mutton 1/8d to 2/- a lb.'*

'Mr Gardner is collecting all waste paper in the Village and the proceeds of sale to go towards the Xmas parcel fund for our men.'

'June 13 Great aeroplane raid on London, 97 killed and over 400 injured. The bombs dropping plainly heard here about 10.30 and onwards in the morning.'

'July 12 Thursday. Denys gassed while moving the guns, and taken to Boulogne hospital, his eyesight affected. The separation is so terrible.'

'Completed the little War Chapel in the Church this month, the East end of the South Aisle, where we may say our prayers for our dear ones so far away and in danger.'

Nothing is recorded for August, October or November, and both September and December have only one entry each - *'September 16 Put back clocks to 'old time'.*

'December Sent off soldiers' parcels – socks, soap, OXO, sweets, notepaper, books, handkerchiefs and cards.'

The book ends - *'1918 What is in Store? Is it Peace or War?'*

Of the North Muskham men who served in the Great War about twenty-five per cent were killed, but Denys, the Williams' son, survived and came home; eventually to marry and lead a normal life. When the livings of North and South Muskham were combined, in 1919, the Vicar and his wife moved into the more conveniently situated South Muskham Vicarage, where they remained until Canon Williams retired in 1937.

Madge Brown

ANNIVERSARIES

100 years ago

The weather of September 1918 was very wet. At Nottingham Castle, 4.22 inches (107.3mm) of rain were recorded. There was rain every day in Nottingham except the 19th. Temperatures were also low for much of the month. However, some areas of the British Isles had up to 300% of their average September rainfall, making this the wettest September recorded to date. The weather in Europe was appalling, with the Western Front thoroughly soaked and the ground turned to mud. By this stage of the Great War, the Germans were in retreat and the Allied Powers' offensive was pressed hard. On 27th September, Allied troops broke through a 20-mile section of the heavily fortified Hindenburg Line. This was the beginning of the end and on 4th October the German government made a request for an armistice.

140 years ago

On 3rd June 1878, the first telephonic communication in Nottingham was established between the Castle Museum and the Police Station on St John's Street.

On 3rd July 1878, the Midland Counties Art Museum at Nottingham Castle was opened by His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, accompanied by the Princess. On the evening of 2nd July, the Prince and Princess alighted at Daybrook Station and proceeded to Bestwood Park, where they were the guests of His Grace the Duke of St Albans. The following morning, they went in a carriage procession to the top of Mansfield Road in Nottingham, there to be met by a grand procession of city worthies which had travelled from the School of Art on Waverley Street and along Forest Road to await their Royal Highnesses. The whole procession journeyed through the town, to wild enthusiasm and bands playing, to the Castle, where His Royal Highness formally opened the Museum.

On 4th November 1878, the electric light was first used for street lamps in Nottingham, on the occasion of F. Maccabe's entertainment at the Mechanics' Hall, five lamps being outside the hall.

160 years ago

'The commencement of the year was a season of great commercial depression and deep distress amongst the working classes.' By 5th February 1858, 'there were 804 inmates in the union workhouse, and 5,191 persons were receiving out-door relief'.

On 24th May 1858, Nottingham postmen first appeared in uniform.

170 years ago

March 1848: 'The revolution in France produced great distress among the lace hands of Nottingham extraction at Calais and Basse Ville. The mayor and other gentlemen, sympathising with them, commenced a public subscription which amounted to about £600. With the assistance of government, a considerable number of the men and their families were conveyed to Australia'.

180 years ago

20th January 1838: 'The most severe frost since 1814. The thermometer stood in the evening at 6°[F]. The Trent was frozen over and numbers walked across it.'

190 years ago

23rd September 1828: Death of Mr Richard Parkes Bonington, artist, who had been born at Arnold. Born in 1801, he had shown great talent as an artist and had been taken at the age of fifteen to Paris,

where he studied at the Louvre. He subsequently went to Italy, where he contracted consumption. He returned to England and died in London.

Details from the Nottingham Date Book

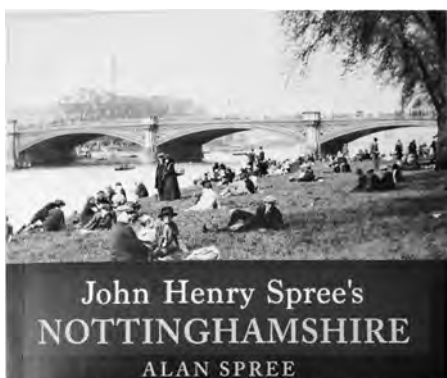
BOOKSHELF

John Henry Spree's Nottinghamshire

By Alan Spree

Amberley Publishing Ltd 2018 £14.99 ISBN 978-1-4456-8027-9 www.amberley-books.com

John Henry Spree (1869-1932) was a prolific publisher of post-cards with over 1,000 to his credit. He operated first in East Sussex and later in the East Midlands. This fascinating book contains 220 images taken in Nottinghamshire during the period 1915 – when he moved from Hastings to Nottingham – until his death in 1932. Each image has a brief, but informative, caption.



John Henry Spree was born in Canterbury in 1869. He married Esther Jane Glazier in 1891, at Westfield in Sussex. He and his family moved to St Leonard's on Sea, where after working on the railways he took a job as a photographer in Hastings. In 1915 he and his family moved to Nottingham, where he started his own business as a photographer in Lenton. The business was unsuccessful, so he obtained a job with another photographer, and began to produce and market postcards which sold well. He had his own car, a Bull-nose Morris, and toured the East Midlands looking for scenes to photograph. The postcards were sold through various retailers, including WH Smith. The postcards themselves are sought after by collectors. The book includes an article about John Henry Spree's life, and details of his photographic techniques.

The compiler of this book, which your reviewer highly recommends, is Alan Spree, John Henry's great-grandson.

YOUR SOCIETY

Who wants to be a ... Membership Secretary?

I've been Honorary Membership Secretary of the Thoroton Society since 2012 and have thoroughly enjoyed every minute of it – well almost every minute! Being an officer of a society like Thoroton is a great opportunity to find out about our wonderful county, not just through our events but by meeting others who are equally excited about its history and archaeology.

Unfortunately, other responsibilities mean that I have to give up the role from the next AGM and we really hope that someone is willing to take over from me. The main tasks are:

- Keep the Membership list up-to-date. I use an Excel spreadsheet for this.
- Received membership applications, bank the cheques and add new members to the membership list (there's usually about 20-25 a year).
- Send out the annual renewal letters in November and pay in the cheques received in January – this is the busiest time of year.

- Produce mailing lists for the annual newsletter (4 a year); AGM paperwork (1 a year); mailing Transactions (1 a year) and the Record Series (as and when published). This is all done automatically using Excel.
- Attend Standing Committee meetings (5 a year) and Council meetings (3 a year).

Although I am no longer able to take on the work of Membership Secretary, I will be around and very happy to explain everything, answer questions at any time, and will leave copious handover notes, so you will always be supported.

I'd encourage anyone who is interested in people and history to think seriously about taking on this interesting but not over-demanding work and actively support the Society. Please contact me by email at membership@thorotonsociety.org.uk

Judith Mills

The annual **Programme Card** is circulated with this issue. Please note the various dates in your 2019 diary or calendar!

Members will soon receive their annual **Membership Renewal** forms by separate mailing. Please pay promptly, as otherwise a considerable amount of time is spent in chasing tardy payers.

Deaths

It is with sadness that we note the death of the following members:

Dr Margaret Skelly

Beth Tate 1928 – 2018

Beth lived to be 90 years old, yet her energy, curiosity and empathy were limitless.

Born 1928, Beth grew up in Protestant Belfast but her two GP parents always employed Catholics and made sure Beth and her sister Joan were taken to school through the Catholic areas to appreciate how hard life was for some. This led Beth ultimately to become a Social Worker in the Probation Service and then a Magistrate. Her life in war-torn Belfast has been documented and is now held by The Imperial War Museum.

She travelled widely with her husband Professor Brian Tate and was interested in historic buildings, music, poetry and politics. A fierce royalist and member of the Anglican church she also supported Jeremy Corbyn's maxim, "For the many, not the few".

In her last year she found time to host an Irish Halloween party to raise money for the street children of Sierra Leone and her house was used by the BBC to film "Jamie Johnson Plays Football."

The weekend she died Beth had been due to fly to Belfast to feature in a film about her beloved uncle, C.S. Lewis. Sadly, she didn't make it.

NEWS

New war memorial at Trent Bridge Pavilion

On 4th September a new First World War memorial was unveiled on the Pavilion at Trent Bridge Cricket Ground. It is fixed to the right of the steps and consists of three sturdy English oak carved planks surmounted by one very large poppy and its leaves. Above it is a carved wooden rifle. To the left it states, 'If the cricketer has a straight eye let him look down the barrel of a rifle' (Sir Arthur Conan Doyle). Adjacent, to the left, is a small slate plaque bearing the names of the six men who played cricket for Nottinghamshire but made the ultimate sacrifice in the War. The design is by Martin Somerville. A brief biography of each man follows:

Alexander Crawford

Born 24th May 1891 in Warwickshire but moved to Nottinghamshire and was educated at Nottingham High School and Oundle. Qualified lawyer. A right-handed batsman and right-arm fast-medium bowler, he played briefly for Warwickshire then eleven times for Nottinghamshire in 1912. At the outbreak of war, he joined the Lincolnshire Regiment but in early 1915 he was commissioned into the Notts and Derby Regiment (Sherwood Foresters) before transferring to the West Yorkshire Regiment. Promoted to captain and sent France in February 1916 but killed in action on 10th May 1916 at the age of 24. He is buried at St Vaast Military cemetery, Pas de Calais.

Ralph Hemingway

Born 15th December 1877 near Macclesfield, the youngest of ten brothers. Attended Rugby School



before becoming an architect in Nottingham. A right-handed batsman, he played thirty matches for Notts between 1903 and 1905. In August 1905 he opened the batting with George Gunn against the South Africans and scored 85. In his last match for the Gentlemen of the South he took the catch of WG Grace.

Ill-health forced him to give up cricket at the age of 27; nevertheless, he became a second lieutenant in the Notts and Derby Regiment in 1914. Sent to France in June 1915 and wounded in September, he was killed on 15th October 1915 aged 37. His body was never recovered but he is commemorated on the Loos

Memorial, Lille.

Harold Hodges

Born on 22nd January 1886 in Mansfield Woodhouse, the fifth of seven sons. Won Blues for rugby and lacrosse at Oxford and played twice for England at Rugby. After studying at the Sorbonne, he became a school teacher. He played three matches for Notts in 1911 and 1912.

In 1914 he joined the Monmouthshire Regiment and was sent to France in February 1915. In May he was seriously wounded but recovered in England, then returned to his battalion. Now a captain, he was transferred to the South Lancashire Regiment and Mentioned in Dispatches twice. Killed on 22nd March 1918, aged 32, whilst helping a junior officer to escape. His body was later recovered, and he is commemorated in Roye New Cemetery, Somme.

Charles Pepper

Born 6th June 1875 in County Cork but came to England as a boy. Initially a professional cricketer of Rye CC he came to Nottingham in 1900. A right-handed batsman and right-arm medium bowler. He played for Notts against the West Indies in July 1900 and in seven County Championship matches in 1900 and 1901. Between 1902 and 1904 he was a professional for Darlington CC.

Charles enlisted as a private in the Notts and Derby Regiment (Sherwood Foresters) but was soon promoted to sergeant. He arrived in France in April 1916 and survived until 13th September 1917 when he was killed by a shell whilst standing next to his CO in Flanders. They are buried side by side at La Clytte Cemetery, Belgium. He was 42 years old.

William Riley

Born 11th August 1888 at Newstead Colliery Village. Began working in the local coal mine at the age of 12. Played for Newstead Colliery CC. A slow-medium left-arm bowler, he played seventy-eight first-class matches between May 1909 and July 1913, plus two more for Notts. in August 1914. He

took 235 wickets at an average of 23.39, but is perhaps remembered as the non-striking batsman when Ted Alletson scored a record 34 runs against Sussex in 1911.

William joined the Royal Garrison Artillery in February 1916 and served with the 13rd Siege Battery as a gunner. Went to France in May 1916 and was killed by a shell splinter on 9th August, two days before his 29th birthday. He is buried at Coxyde Military Cemetery, West-Vlaanderen, Belgium.

Harvey Staunton

Born 21st November 1870 at Staunton Hall, Nottinghamshire and educated at Bromsgrove School and Cambridge University, where he was awarded a Blue at Rugby. Became a curate, serving Pleasley Hill and Plumtree; also chaplain to Notts. County Asylum and rector of Broughton Sulney from 1907 to 1911. A right-handed batsman, he played sixteen first-class matches for Notts between May 1903 and July 1905, including the defeat by the Gentlemen of Philadelphia.

In 1910 he went to India as a missionary, becoming the chaplain at Nagpur. During the War he served in Mesopotamia as a Chaplain 4th Class in the Army Chaplains' Department. He died of a fever in Arzizieh on 14th January 1918 and is commemorated in a grave at North Gate War Cemetery, Baghdad.

Several Notts cricketers served and survived, including Arthur Carr, George Gunn, Vincent Cartwright and William Barber.

At the start of the war the two Pavilions, i.e. the present building and the Ladies' Pavilion where the Hound Road stand is today, were handed to the military authorities. The Pavilion VAD Hospital was established, staffed mainly by female volunteers and funded by donations. It expanded from 36 beds into a 200-bed convalescent facility, which was one of the UK's best-equipped physiotherapy and orthopaedic units. Between October 1914 and March 1919, when it officially closed, the hospital treated 3,533 patients, but some wards were still open when the County Championship resumed in 1919.

Throughout the war years the pitch itself was used for various events. In 1915 a cricket match took place between the City Police and the Special Constables; in 1916 to Radford, Basford and District Athletic and Cycling Club held races; in July 1917 there was a sports carnival including a lady munitions workers' Donkey Derby; in May 1918 a crowd of 4,000 watched a cricket match followed by a concert and three months later more concerts were included in a Fete in aid of the Patriotic Fair. Between April and September 1918 five baseball matches were played by American soldiers from military camps in the area.

Terry Fry

Roman Villa discovered at Broughton Castle

Thorotonians who went on the excursion to Broughton Castle this year will be interested in the recently published find of a large Roman villa on the Broughton estate. The land is owned by Martin Fiennes, the heir of Baron Saye and Sele. Apparently, in 1963, the local tenant farmer had discovered a burial containing the skeleton of a high-status woman, when he hit and damaged her sarcophagus with his plough and subsequently retrieved a human bone. A local historian and metal detectorist, Keith Westcott, heard this story and did a field-walk over the site, discovering a piece of Roman hypocaust tile. In April of this year, Oxford Archaeology carried out a trial dig at the site. They recovered various artefacts, including a Roman coin with a depiction of Romulus and Remus being suckled by the she-wolf. Samian pottery was found and also the tusk of a boar.

The villa is described as 'huge'. A geophysical survey indicate that it was not far short of the dimensions of Buckingham Palace! The site lies at the head of a triangle between the Fosse Way, Akeman Street and Watling Street, so is a very important Roman area.

John Wilson

Geoffrey Bond Research Award 2018

Once again, this year we received a number of very good and worthwhile applications for research awards from the generous amount provided by Geoffrey Bond and by an equal amount from Thoroton funds. The selection panel, chaired by John Beckett, decided that this year awards would be made to three applicants.

Bassetlaw Christian Heritage has been awarded £1000 to continue its project to research and document material of all kinds relating to local dissidents which may be held in archives, local churches or orally. This is being undertaken in the lead up to the 2020 commemorative year which will mark the 400th anniversary of the Mayflower Pilgrims' voyage to America in 1620. As you will be aware, many of the leaders of the Mayflower Pilgrims came from villages in the Bassetlaw area.

A project to be undertaken by archaeologist Tom Keyworth has been awarded the sum of £635. This will comprise an investigation at Lodge Farm, Burton Joyce, involving an auguring survey of the ditchfill at the site and further environmental examination and recording of the organic samples.

Research by Jenny Sissons on the county's mediaeval monastic sites has been awarded the sum of £350.

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 which will be due on 1st September 2019.

Again, we urge all researchers to consider whether they could be helped in their projects by a grant. The conditions of application are on the website at www.thorotonsociety.org.uk/bond-awards.htm

Barbara Cast, Honorary Secretary

Celebrating 200 years of the Mansfield and Pinxton Railway

"A more exhilarating scene was probably never exhibited in the town of Mansfield, than was occasioned by opening the new Railway from the Cromford Canal... The morning was ushered in with the ringing of bells and a bonfire was made in the market place. About one o'clock the proprietors and friends of the undertaking began to assemble at the Swan Inn, and about two o'clock they proceeded on horseback attended by hundreds of foot people, along the Alfreton Road, about a mile and a half, to where it comes into contact with the Railway, at the beautiful five-arch bridge, constructed under the direction of Mr Jessop, the Engineer, where they met ten waggons laden with coal, from the Pinxton Colliery, surmounted by workmen and colliers, carrying branches of laurel. There the assemblage amounted to some thousands, covering not only the road, but in great measure the fields by the roadside.

*The procession then moved towards town, Mr Mason having presented the proprietors with a flag for the procession, bearing the motto '**by perseverance we have obtained**', this was carried in front, the Friendly Societies having also attended with their flags and a good band of music Having arrived in the Market Place, about three o'clock, which, notwithstanding the heavy rain falling at the time, was thronged with people, the band struck up 'God save the King', which was followed by loud huzzahs from the population assembled, who thus testified to their satisfaction at the accomplishment of this arduous undertaking."*

(Nottingham Journal, April 17, 1819 describing events of April 13 in Mansfield)

A brief history of the railway

After many years of debate, from the 1790s, of how to connect Mansfield to the growing network of canals it was finally decided to make that connection via rail to the Cromford Canal at Pinxton, rather than constructing an additional canal. Work commenced on the rail in 1817 and concluded in 1819, when it opened for business on Easter Tuesday. Initially it was used to transport heavy goods, such as coal into Mansfield and stone, sand and malt out of the town. As the years went by, passenger travel was introduced and in 1849 the Mansfield & Pinxton line, which had recently been purchased by the Midland Railway Company, upgraded and extended into Nottingham, where it joined the main network. At this point steam locomotives were introduced on to this upgraded line and continued to transport goods and passengers until they were superseded by diesel power. However, during the mid-1960s the passenger services were withdrawn but coal and other goods continued to be transported.

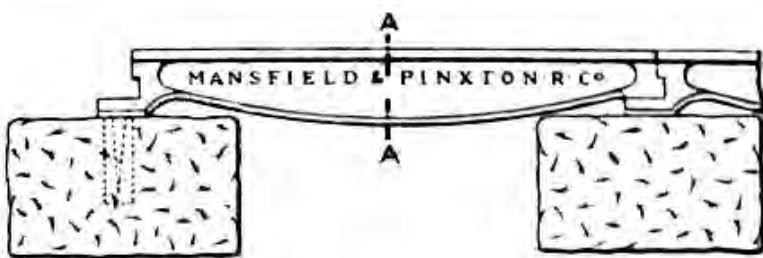
Fortunately, as the commercial side of transportation started to decline after the closure of many local collieries in the 1980s & 90s, the passenger service was re-introduced as the Robin Hood Line. This continued use of the train line makes it one of the oldest continuously running lines in the United



Kingdom and possibly the oldest in England; some railway historians believe it to be the sixth oldest in the world. The original line was enabled by the construction of a viaduct (the “beautiful five-arched bridge” mentioned above), which is still standing and accessed by the public daily and is recognised as the oldest railway viaduct in the country.

Features of the original railway

- The waggons of the Mansfield & Pinxton Railway were pulled by horses, though some accounts also refer to bullocks and oxen. The waggons are likely to have resembled those used on the Belvoir Castle Railway which opened 2 years earlier.
- The individual rails were only a yard long and were not laid on sleepers but fixed by a nail driven into a wooden plug in stone blocks placed in line with the rails. The rails were made of cast iron in a “fish-bellied” shape to provide extra strength.



The construction of the rails, showing the method of anchorage and the fish-belly shape of each rail

- It is reported that horses pulled the waggons up to Kirkby Summit, “whence they came down of their own weight to Mansfield”. What we lack, tantalisingly, is any account of the braking system or how the horses were then deployed.

- Only goods were originally transported. 1832 saw the introduction of a passenger coach each Thursday.

- The estimated building cost was

£22,800. The major subscribers were the Duke of Portland and Richard Arkwright who each contributed £5,000.

The funding application

In 2017 the Kirkby & District Archaeological Group (KDAG) shifted its focus from a vanished medieval house (the lost manor of Kirkby Hardwick) to a dramatically different theme: a still visible, local achievement of the Industrial Revolution. The Mansfield & Pinxton Railway is not widely known about, even locally, but the imminent 200th anniversary of its opening was seen to provide an ideal opportunity to celebrate its special claims to historical importance.

A Steering Group was established with the aim of applying for a Heritage Lottery Fund grant to:

- hold a series of events/activities fully involving local people to celebrate the anniversary and bring the railway into the limelight
- mount interpretation panels at seven points along the line to create a permanent reminder of its existence
- research the later history of the railway to complete the 200-year story
- carry out archaeological research to discover aspects of its original route and construction
- produce a series of written materials to widen the public knowledge of the railway

The Steering Group brought together heritage groups from all parts of the railway (Old Mansfield Society; Sutton Heritage Society; Pinxton & S. Normanton History Society, as well as KDAG) along with several knowledgeable railway enthusiasts, under the chairmanship of Denis Hill, who was for many years Heritage Officer at Ashfield District Council. The Heritage Lottery Fund application was submitted in May 2018, and we learnt in late July that we had been successful. The HLF had made a grant of £89,600 to fulfil a detailed Project Plan.

The Celebration

A major focus of the project is the actual anniversary date: **Saturday, April 13, 2019**. We are hoping to incorporate several aspects of the original opening, as described above: the procession, the flags, the church bells, the feasting, the entertainment – though the bonfire in the Market Square may be rather less achievable. More modern features of the celebration will include memorabilia (mugs, pens, etc), talks, and walks along the railway route, interaction with schools, a travelling exhibition in Mansfield Museum (February 2019) and other venues, and the creation of models and a video. The project has a two-year timescale and some aspects, such as researching the history and installing interpretation boards, will extend well beyond the anniversary date.

Participation

We have appointed a Project Officer (Denis Hill) who will oversee the project from start to finish, but the detailed work on the various aspects of the celebration will be in the hands of working groups. Recruitment is underway! Many different skills are needed in terms of organising, writing, mapping, researching, designing, oral history recording, publicity and creative ideas. We would welcome anyone who is interested in contributing. Training can be provided in a number of these areas.

It is evident from the opening paragraphs that the arrival of the railway created massive crowds and enthusiasm. Even if you can't be part of the planning we hope you will note **Saturday, April 13, 2019** in your diary and join in the celebrations which will be well publicised nearer the time.

Anyone who wishes to be involved or kept informed should contact **Denis Hill** on 0744 353 6811 or email denishill1066@gmail.com

Trevor Lewis & Denis Hill

THE THOROTON SOCIETY

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SUBSCRIPTION RATES

Individual Ordinary membership £27.00

Associate member (at the same address) £6.00

Student/Under 21 £6.00

Individual Record Section membership £16.00

Combined Ordinary and Record Section £38.00

Institutional Ordinary membership £27.00

Institutional Record Section £22.00 (non-UK £26)

RESEARCH GROUP

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

RESPONSE GROUP

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

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

VICTORIA COUNTY HISTORY

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

PUBLICATIONS

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

The Record Section volumes are published from time to time and are distributed to members paying the extra subscription for this Section. 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 wilsonicus@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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