

THE THOROTON SOCIETY

Nottinghamshire's History and Archaeology Society



The Quarterly Newsletter of the Thoroton Society

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Excavating rampart deposits in the Outer Bailey of Nottingham Castle in advance of constructing the Visitor Centre.

© Trent & Peak Archaeology

The Thoroton Society of Nottinghamshire

The County's Principal History and Archaeology Society

Visit the Thoroton Society website@www.thorotonsociety.org.uk

Tributes to Robert Cecil Woolley Robinson, "Bobby" (6.3.1936 - 30.10.2019)

Melanie Duffill-Jeffs, manager of Bromley House Library, writes that she and the staff were saddened to hear of the passing of Bobby Robinson on the 30th October last year, after a long illness. Bobby was well known to Bromley House as a library member and the husband of former gardener Elizabeth Robinson. In 1999, Bobby was appointed 'Keeper of the Roof' at the library, placing upon him the responsibility to carry out occasional inspections of the library's 250-year-old roof and to advise on any repairs needed. Born in Leicestershire, Bobby grew up in South Africa and spent time in Kenya before moving to Nottingham after the death of his mother. He met Elizabeth not long after this and they celebrated their Golden Wedding Anniversary in August last year. Bobby had a love for history and the natural world. In 2007, he gave a lecture to library members on the topic of beekeeping and was a regular attendee of library events, while his health allowed. Members of the Thoroton Society for over 20 years, they both appreciated the talks and excursions. Remembered as a kind man, Bobby is survived by Elizabeth and his four children.

Elizabeth Robinson writes that in 1920, at the age of twenty, Bobby's father, Stanley Redvers Robinson, travelled from London to Rhodesia (Zimbabwe) to join the police force there. Just a few years later, Bobby's mother, Avis Woolley, became a nurse in Rhodesia. Stanley and Avis married in 1931, and went on to have five sons, Bobby being the middle son. In 1935 Avis came back to England with her two sons, unaware that she was expecting a third child - Bobby. She stayed with her sister, Esther, who was the district nurse for the area surrounding Bilstone, Market Bosworth, in Leicestershire. Being a midwife, Esther delivered Bobby and became his godmother aunt. When Bobby was eleven months old the family went back to Rhodesia where Stanley now worked in a copper mine.

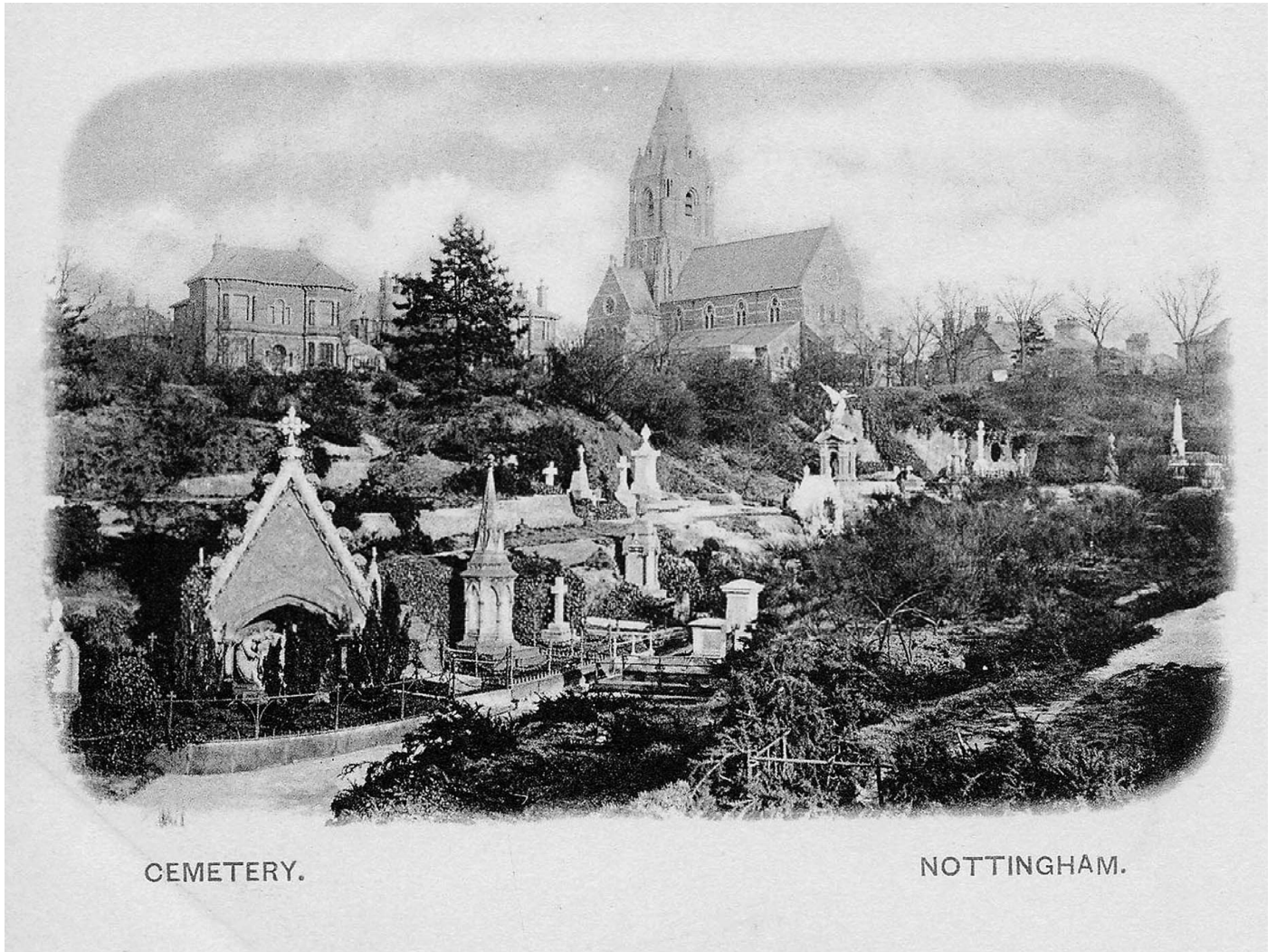
At the age of ten Bobby and his two older brothers were sent to boarding school in South Africa, five thousand miles away. The great distance meant that they could only go home twice a year. Other holidays were spent as guests of boys who lived nearer the school. On leaving school, Bobby went to Egerton Agricultural College in Kenya. On graduating he became a farm manager before buying a farm in Kenya with his parents.

After the death of his mother in 1964 Bobby decided there was no future in Kenya and came to Nottingham where his Aunt Esther was living. We met during his first week in England. Bobby was twenty-eight, and I was an eighteen-year-old student at Nottingham College of Art. We married in 1969, when Bobby was about to start his final year at Teachers Training College, Clifton. He started his career teaching science, but an opportunity to teach Environmental Science soon appeared. He went on to be Head of Environmental Science at Wilford Meadows School, a wonderful opportunity to combine his science and farming knowledge. There was a large teaching greenhouse, and Bobby grew bedding plants for all the Nottingham schools. Soon an animal unit was built with chickens, goats, sheep and geese. Bobby and I were beekeepers and he established hives at the school. We joined the Thoroton Society just before its centenary year, and we both appreciated the talks and excursions. Apart from the interesting destinations Bobby loved travelling through the countryside seeing how the farmer's crops were growing: were they lodged, or doing well? He was so impressed with the fact that the crop was all the same height, understanding the years of research that had brought that about. He loved the English countryside and never regretted moving here. Through the Thoroton Society he learned so much about our history. Perhaps because of his birthplace, Bobby had a particular interest in Richard III. A favourite excursion was to Leicester to see where Richard III's remains had been discovered, and the site of the Battle of Bosworth Field (by the time of our visit it was understood to have taken place a few miles from the site of the museum).

Bobby died peacefully, at home, with our four children here. He is buried in the meadow at Tithe Green, and an oak tree will be planted in his memory.

CONTRIBUTED ARTICLES FROM MEMBERS

A Place to Rest



Postcard Private Collection

On the afternoon of the 11th October 1831 a large group of people gathered in the Market Place in Nottingham and were confronted by the Nottingham Militia. This was the final stand of the Nottingham Reform Rioters, who on the same day had destroyed William Lowe's Silk Mill at Beeston and Nottingham Castle, the evening before.

Suddenly, a musket was fired, the ball from that musket struck Thomas Auckland in the shoulder, the musket ball passed through him and struck the side of a man's head who was standing behind.

The Nottingham Review, when they wrote about the event described Thomas Auckland as a 'tailor' and a 'Hero of Waterloo'. It is this latter statement that makes the story more interesting, the fact that this man had fought and survived the Battle of Waterloo and come home, yet here he was in his home town and was shot. Thankfully he survived. A 'Hero of Waterloo' - this is this type of statement or small snippet which also makes reading some of the graves in the General Cemetery and the Church Cemetery more interesting.

Often a headstone will say 'Sacred to the Memory of.....' or 'In Remembrance of.....' or similar words. But sometimes it will give us a snippet to indicate who the person was.

People like: William Frederick Waller, 'the Queen's Jester', David Musson Jackson, Twenty Nine years Governor of the Gaol and House of Correction (in Nottingham), Philip Myers, Founder of the Bathing Establishment in Pelham Street, George Madin, and Sergeant in the 33rd Regiment of Foot (Wellington's Own). He served in the action of Quatre Bras and Waterloo.

It is these little extras that draw people to explore cemeteries and then want to learn more about our own historic cemeteries here in Nottingham and those who are buried there.

Cemeteries are not morbid places full of dead people, but a unique glimpse into the past and the people who were part of Nottingham's history and in some cases our nation's history.

Nottingham has three historic cemeteries, Basford, the General Cemetery and the Church Cemetery or, as it is locally known, the 'Rock Cemetery'. Two of these are located within easy reach of the City centre.

Both the General Cemetery and the Church Cemetery were conceived out of necessity due to the population explosion that occurred in Nottingham in the first half of the 19th century.

The town population nearly doubled from nearly 29,000 in 1801 to 57,000 by 1851, due to people coming to the new industrial towns like Nottingham from the rural areas.

Nottingham's problem was that the town's boundaries did not expand to cope with the ever increasing numbers. Burgesses and landowners would not give up the land they owned, therefore the town's population was confined to virtually the same area as it had been in medieval times.

To put it in context – in the mid 1800s, 50,000 people lived where 10,000 had lived 100 years before. Much of the housing consisted of 3 to 4 storey, back to back houses set around courts and alleyways. Many houses were overcrowded with poor sanitation. Water was often drawn from a hand pump in the yard. When disease broke out, death was not too far behind. The cholera outbreak of 1832 and 1833 would see over 800 people affected and 300 would die.

Burial of the dead became a problem, as the town's cemeteries were filling up and there was a desperate need to find another place to bury the dead.

In 1836, the Trustees of the General Cemetery Company purchased land adjacent to Sion Hill, which we now refer to as Canning Circus. Initially, twelve acres of land were purchased for the sum of £6,000 with the intention of creating a 'Church of England' cemetery. However, by 1865, the area had increased to 20 acres to accommodate 'non-conformists' and 'dissenters'. Once the cemetery was completed and consecrated, the first interment took place on the 9th February 1837.

The concept for the Church Cemetery came about in June 1850, after land had been set aside for a new cemetery in Nottingham, in the 1845 Enclosure Act.

The Act created 130 acres of land to be used for public recreation. Initially, the area set aside for the cemetery was a former sand mine and quarry. The cemetery was to consist of four acres; however, once the Church Cemetery Company was formed in April 1851, the Company added a further nine acres to the site making a total of thirteen acres.

The cemetery's proposed layout was overseen by Edwin Patchitt, a local solicitor and clerk to the Church Cemetery Company. He used the former mines' unique features to create the cemetery we see today. Once the new cemetery was completed, it was consecrated and officially opened on the 18th June 1856, and the first burial took place two days later.

Both cemeteries continued to flourish as they passed into the 20th century; however by 1923, the General Cemetery Company was found to have broken Home Office guidelines for the burial of the dead and by 1927, the cemetery was officially closed by Act of Parliament.

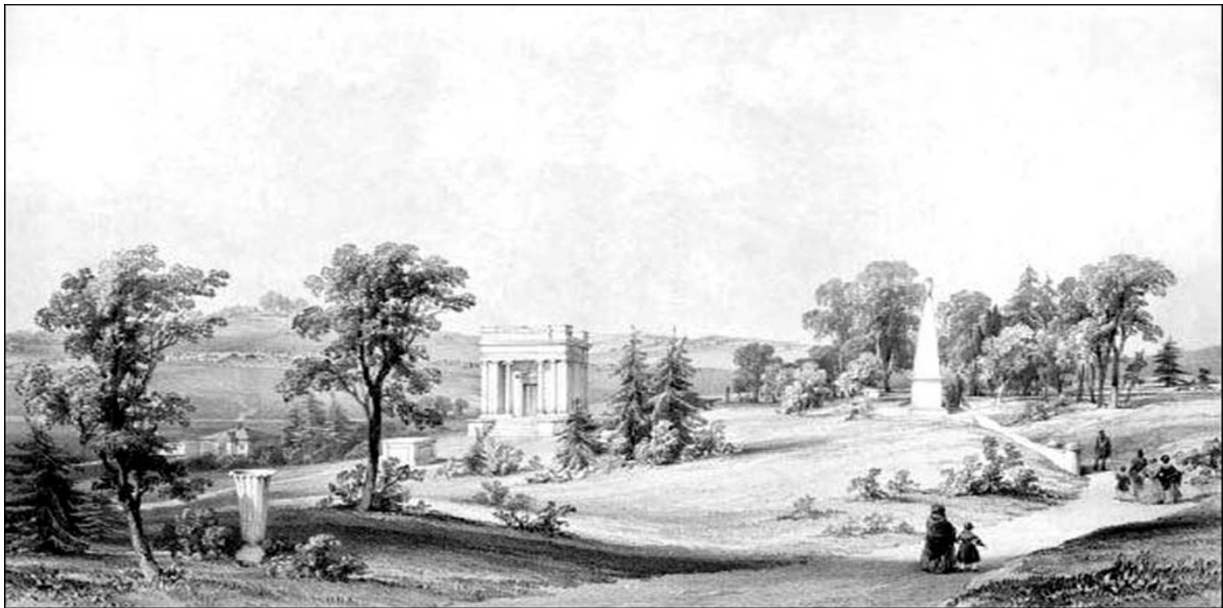
Following the Second World War, the company was declared bankrupt and ownership of the cemetery passed to the Crown. Eventually the ownership of the cemetery would pass to the City Council in 1956.

Ownership of the Church (Rock) Cemetery would also pass to the Council in the early 1960s.

By the time the Council had taken over cemeteries, the mortuary chapels on each site had fallen into a serious state of disrepair and the Council took the decision to demolish them.

As you walk around the cemeteries today, it is hard to imagine that there are 150,000 bodies buried in the General Cemetery and 43,000 in the Church (Rock) Cemetery. The cemeteries are now maintained by Nottingham City Council's Parks and Open Spaces Department and have become a sanctuary for flora and fauna. As you walk and stroll around them today, they are truly a.....

'Place to Rest In Peace'.



General Cemetery image thanks to the Local Studies Library

Kevin Powell

Information for Members

During the summer months, the Nottingham Civic Society offers a programme of 'Heritage Walks' around Nottingham and the General and Church (Rock) Cemeteries are featured in the programme.

Details can be found on the Society's website: <https://www.nottinghamcivicsociety.org.uk/>

In addition leaflets are available in the Tourist Information and Public Libraries at the end of May each year.

THE CASTLE RESTORATION

As mentioned in the Winter Newsletter I am hoping to publish during 2020 an update on the restoration and a History of the Castle. William the Conqueror recognised the strategic importance of Nottingham and one of his first actions was to secure his authority by building the castle and giving it to his trusted Knight, William Peverill. The prominent outcrop of Sandstone enabled the castle to dominate the surrounding countryside. Since then the Castle has been a dominant feature of Nottingham but many changes have taken place to the castle and it finally ended with the late 17th century Grade 1 Listed Building.

A book I would recommend to you for further information on the History of the Castle and Nottingham is:

Nottingham: The Buried Past of a Historic City Revealed.

By Scott Lomax.

ISBN 178159389-2

Richard Gaunt, the Thoroton Chairman-elect starts the ball rolling with his piece on the Transformation Project and this is followed by a report on the Lecture by Sara Blair-Manning, Chief Executive, Nottingham Castle Trust.

Paul Baker

Like a Phoenix from the Ashes – Nottingham Castle re-born.

Regular readers of the Thoroton Society's newsletter will know about the Nottingham Castle Transformation Project. The on-going work to transform the 17th-century ducal palace into a 21st-century state-of-the-art visitor destination has been part of the 'wish-list' of every history enthusiast in Nottinghamshire for a generation (or more). It is now, finally, becoming a reality.

Proposals for a serious re-structuring of the castle museum began in earnest over a decade ago. Following the success of the City Council in obtaining Heritage Lottery Funding to start developing serious proposals for change, in 2014, I was brought into the project, through the mechanism of an Arts Council England funded post as 'Curator of Rebellion' at Nottingham Castle'.

The post, and its evocative title, hint at one of the principal drivers behind the transformation programme. Armed with numerous comments about the disappointing 'offer' at the Castle, especially regarding Robin Hood, the City Council decided to make its principal poster-boy for Nottingham the centre-piece of the transformation programme. A purpose-built Robin Hood gallery, covering the old courtyard, which was once used as a staff car park, is now taking shape. The old arches, which were once used to accommodate carriages, have been tastefully converted into usable gallery spaces where visitors will be able to engage in 'training' with the long bow or 'fighting' Little John. The Robin Hood gallery will offer a different sort of experience – and on a different scale - than was previously available to visitors, thanks in large measure to the size of the project (costing some £30m in total, £14m of it from Heritage Lottery Funding), and the availability of modern interactive technology, including gaming tools and touch-screen interaction. However, the Robin Hood gallery is rooted in the original stories and tales from which the legend grew, and a variety of authorities (including Thoroton's very own Dr Judith Mills and Dr David Crook) have helped to advise on the gallery's content, at different stages of the project.

By contrast, the Rebellion Gallery, with which I have been principally concerned, will examine historic moments when the townspeople of Nottingham faced decisions about whether and how far to act in the pursuit of change, and the consequences which arose out of those actions. The gallery will concentrate on three major episodes from the mid-17th century onwards – the British Civil Wars (the king's Standard of war, as everyone knows, having been raised at the Castle by Charles I in 1642), the Luddite disturbances of the 1810s, and the Reform Bill Riots of October 1831. Further opportunities to explore contemporary challenges, and our responses to them, will be provided by a changing programme of on-gallery events. The Nottingham Castle Trust, which will be operating the site after completion, will be able to offer a programme of activities, workshops, and lectures, which enlarge upon and support the gallery displays. Fellow Thoroton Council member, Dr Hannah Nicholson, has been working on the Rebellion Gallery as a postdoctoral researcher since 2018; we are both now helping to advise on particular details and acting (rather after the fashion of television historical consultants) as fact-checkers for the scripting and interpretation of the gallery's exhibits. Mention should also be made of the willing assistance provided by Thoroton's *Transactions* editor, Professor Martyn Bennett, who has been a ready source of assistance in respect of the British Civil Wars.

However, Nottingham is much more than its radical reputation. The 'Power of Art and Making' is another major theme behind the transformation programme. Nottingham's famous medieval alabasters, its stone-glaze pottery (previously explored in an exhibition at the Castle which was co-curated by Thoroton's President, Adrian Henstock), and Nottingham's iconic Lace Collection, will all find a new, more prominent, home in the re-fashioned Castle. Building on the museum's unrivalled collections in the field, much thought has been put into the proper interpretation and display of the exhibits, which continue to act as a source of inspiration influencing modern fashion, art and design. The exhibits will hopefully remind visitors of the museum's origin as a source of inspiration for nineteenth century craftsmen in the city's lace and textile trades.

The long gallery, the centrepiece of Thomas Chambers Hine's masterly renovation of the Castle, between 1875 and 1878, will also be restored to its former glory. In the words of the project website, 'the Long Gallery will play host to hundreds of carefully selected objects, thoughtfully arranged for maximum impact, to inspire and encourage reflection, to enjoy and engage with in a myriad of ways. This gallery reveals what has inspired artists and makers for centuries, be it antiquity, beauty, or the everyday...The gallery mixes fine and decorative arts: paintings, sculptures, drawings, ceramics, textiles, and jewellery'. It will remain an important place to promenade and to be inspired.

Much has lately been made of Nottingham's unique system of caves which intertwine with the architecture of the Castle rock. In addition to the famous 'Mortimer's Hole', 'King Richard's Tower' and other famous features, visitors will be drawn to particular vantage points, at which they can learn about and explore the history and development of the site. Let us hope it puts paid to the ill-informed comments about Nottingham's lack of a 'true' Castle and leads to a better understanding of how geography, location, and political calculation led not only to the siting of the original Nottingham Castle, at the end of the 11th-century, but to its slighting, six hundred years later.

When Hine's transformed Castle was re-opened in July 1878, contemporaries described it as having risen like a phoenix from the ashes of the burned-out ruin which the Reform Bill Rioters had left behind. Let us hope that contemporaries are equally impressed when the Castle emerges once more, out of the carcass of scaffolding and protective sheeting which has protected it, during its second transformation.

Richard Gaunt



Nottingham Castle excavations in progress, showing drains and surfaces associated with the Ducal Palace courtyard.

The Archaeology Lecture, 12th October: Nottingham Castle Development and Archaeology

Sara Blair-Manning, Chief Executive, Nottingham Castle Trust

The Society was pleased to welcome Sara Blair-Manning, recently appointed as Chief Executive Officer of the Nottingham Castle Trust, to deliver the annual Archaeology lecture. Sara discussed the on-going Nottingham Castle Project, outlining its objectives and providing valuable insights into the new galleries and other facilities that would be provided for visitors to the Castle and its grounds.

Sara commenced her presentation with a review of the more significant discoveries that had been made during recent archaeological investigations and continued with a comprehensive review of the proposed new galleries and other visitor facilities. These include a new Visitor Centre inside the main entrance gateway, including interpretation facilities, shop and café; a Robin Hood gallery including a themed play area for children with story-telling and other activities; a Rebellion gallery including displays focusing upon the Civil War, Luddites, Chartists and the Reform Bill riots; a gallery containing a thematically organised selection of the museum's paintings; a series of cave experiences; and an exhibition focusing upon the lives of those who worked and resided in Brewhouse Yard. She also outlined the proposals for daily programmes of learning activities for schools and other groups and for temporary exhibitions focusing upon rebellion and other themes associated closely with the Castle. Sara concluded her lecture with an evocative flythrough of the castle around 1485. This showed clearly its relationship to the contemporary landscape and provided striking visual images of the castle defences and its rich variety of internal buildings.

The talk generated considerable interest from the audience, prompting many questions on the displays and other facilities planned for the site, and provided a valuable introduction to future presentations to the Society on archaeological work at the Castle. These will commence with a presentation by Gareth Davies of Trent & Peak Archaeology on the important archaeological discoveries that were made during construction of the Visitor Centre, in the Ducal Palace's sunken courtyard and at other locations around the Castle grounds.

David Knight

OTHER SOCIETY LECTURES.

The Neville Hoskins Lecture: Stanley Middleton, Nottinghamshire Author.

David Belbin, Chair of Nottingham UNESCO City of Literature.

The society welcomed David Belbin to give the Neville Hoskins lecture in December. He started by saying that he was speaking as an admirer and friend of Stanley Middleton as well as a fellow novelist. He began with a resume of Stanley's early life as the youngest of three children, born in Bulwell and eventually passing the scholarship to High Pavement Grammar School. He attended the Methodist Sunday School where he remembered the Minister's interest in the complexities of the English language and the high standard of musical concerts.

From High Pavement Stanley went to Nottingham University where he was awarded several scholarships and exhibitions, reading English with French as a subsidiary subject. At the end of his second year, he took his degree before joining the army. After the War in 1945 he became a teacher and taught English at his old school. Following getting married his writing career took off. He started writing at the dining room table in their home in Broomhill Road, Bulwell. After getting advice from the poet and novelist Cecil Day Lewis, his approach to writing changed to, as he said, 'just making it up as I went along'. When his first novel was published Stanley became Head of English at High Pavement Grammar School and he remained in that role until his retirement. He encouraged many boys to love literature and Shakespeare in particular. His pupils included the playwright Peter Mortimer and actors John Bird and Peter Bowles. In 1960 he published the novel 'Harris's Requiem' about a music teacher with aspirations to become a classical composer. Many found this book uncomfortable reading. Stanley Middleton's forte was in writing about richly complex characters, who cannot easily be described as stereotyped. Characters interested him much more than a plot to his books. He also in his books captured the notoriously difficult Nottingham dialect and the city's brittle and cynical humour. In 1974 he received the news that one novel 'Holiday' was to be short listed for the Booker Prize and with the support of A.S. Byatt he was awarded the prize. During his life Stanley Middleton wrote over 40 novels. Shortly before his death he completed 'A Cautious Approach', which to the last depicts his bold experimentation with flash backs and embedding of one scene or dialogue with another.

The lecture ended with a number of slides including a picture of the plaque erected on the front of 42 Caledon Road, on the day of Stanley Middleton's Centenary. The plaque was erected with support from the Nottingham University and the Civic Society. As David Belbin concluded, the plaque was a fitting memorial to a great writer.

Penny Messenger

Stanley Middleton Books recommended by the Editor: 'Holiday' (1974); 'Harris's Requiem' (1960); 'Entry into Jerusalem' (1983); 'Valley of Decision' (1985)

Maurice Barley Lecture, Jan. 2020: Wollaton Hall and New Hardwick Hall through 400 years.

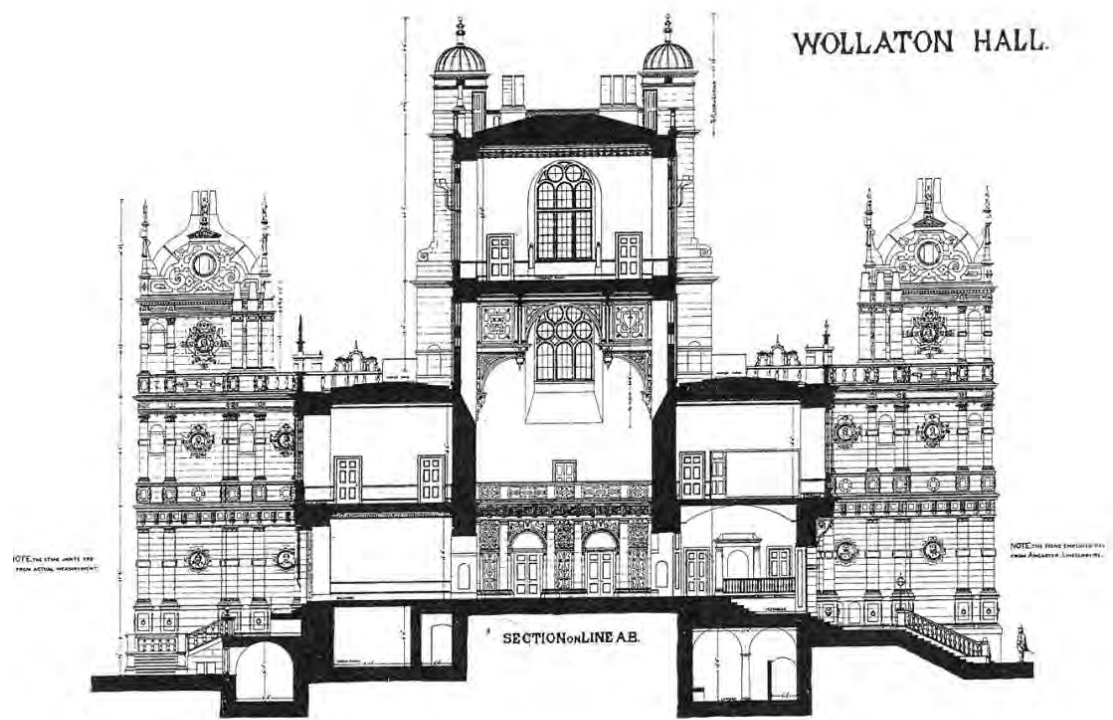
Pete Smith

This first lecture of the 2020 season attracted a full house of members and friends to hear Pete Smith's lecture. He is a long-time member of the Society's Council, and a past organiser of some of the Society's visits to historical places, especially those in the care of English Heritage, where he was the Senior Architectural Investigator before he retired. He is also the co-author with Rosalys Coope of their recent highly praised volume on Newstead Abbey.

Pete now works as an Independent Architectural Historian. His interest in historic places, and expert knowledge about them, became very apparent in this lecture about the two great architectural masterpieces of Robert Smythson locally, Hardwick Hall and Wollaton Hall. Pete's lecture was well-furnished with slides of the plans of the buildings, which are famous for their symmetry and the amount of glass in their construction. We saw images produced by artists and topographical illustrations of both Halls at different times of their history, together with quotations by various people who, over the years, have expressed views and opinions about both Halls. Pete's meticulous knowledge about individual aspects of the architecture of the Halls indicated interesting areas of similarity and difference between the two buildings. Pete also made observations about the influence which Smythson's work on both Halls has had on the design of later country houses.

The lecture produced several questions from members of the audience. It was a most enjoyable afternoon, in which the enthusiasm and personal enjoyment of Pete's work shone through.

Alan Langton



New Hardwick Hall



BOOKCASE

Book Reviews

Homes and Places: A history of Nottingham's Council Houses

This book is a history of how the slums of the nineteenth century were replaced by council houses over the last 100 years since 1919. This great surge in the building of council housing over 100 years is fully recorded in this book. The development of huge garden city estates pushing out the city boundaries is just part of the recognition of one of the largest and fastest building of council housing by Nottingham between the wars and continuing since the late 1940s. This book gives us both a history of Nottingham's council housing but allows the reader to comprehend both a geographical (through maps) and a photographic history of the development of the housing in Nottingham. It is a book that relates a story of past developments and offers hope for the future as we continue to have a housing crisis in the UK. In 1919 in Hansard Dr Addison MP stated "I think there is no dispute in any quarter that this matter is of the utmost importance. From all points of view, not only of the physical well-being of our people but of the social stability and industrial content we are now dealing with an actual shortage of housing and with what may further describe a concealed shortage." In Nottingham a hundred years later Council Housing is popular and it is widely recognised that it has improved the lives of countless people. This book is a very good factual account, beautifully illustrated with photographs, maps and sketches that allows the reader to get a comprehensive history of Nottingham's Council Housing.

This book is available from Five Leaves Bookshop in Long Row, Nottingham. NG1 2DH

Paul Baker

Reds, Rebels and Radicals of Derbyshire, Leicestershire and Nottinghamshire

Author: David Bell. ISBN: 978 -1-910170-63-2 Published by Five Leaves Publications.

This is a book that shows what is expected from a Red, a Rebel and a Radical and the men and women included in this book include a mutineer; a couple of suffragettes; a man who led a rebellion in 1817; an early Quaker; a volunteer in the International Brigade in the Spanish Civil War; a woman who fought for the abolition of slavery; the founder of the first newspaper in Newark; an activist of the Windrush generation; The Beast of Bolsover, and Henry Treece the author of the Historical Novel "Bows against the Barons" where Robin Hood is a radical hero and which was mentioned by me in the Winter Thoroton Newsletter. They are all heroes worth celebrating for standing up and fighting against cruelty, unfairness and bigotry. I read this book over a weekend and found it difficult to put down. The individuals all have in common a moral stance and often the physical courage and confidence to take on the power of the establishment.

David Bell was born in 1939 and became in 1960 a Primary School Teacher in Leicestershire. In 1989 he escaped from the classroom to become an author. This book is an enjoyable read that allows one to get a comprehensive understanding of the men and women included in this book. Fully recommended to members as a book full of interesting historical stories.

Paul Baker

Sneinton People.

Author: Dave Ablitt.

(ISBN: 9781910170670. Paperback, (Five Leaves, Nottingham: September 2019)

Dave Ablitt lived in Sneinton Dale for many years during which time he was active in many community affairs including the Sneinton Environmental Society. At that time, it was a dynamic voluntary group, involved in many projects including the restoration of Green's Mill pictured on the front cover.

To promote the projects of this Society, record its works, and influence public opinion, he and his colleagues founded the *Sneinton Magazine* which ran to over 100 editions. It contained a wide variety of subjects including local history and reminiscences.

Here, in this short book, Dave reprints interviews of local celebrities in the 1980s, capturing both their essences and that of the district at the time.

There is the beloved John Tyson, vicar of St. Stephen's Church who combined establishment conventionality of the Anglican High Church with affection for Soviet Socialism, nuclear disarmament and other left wing and radical causes.

Next is John Hose, born, bred, and then living in Sneinton. His extraordinary life is summarised succinctly. Trained as an architect, disposer of bombs during National Service, demobbed to be a farmer, he then became a forester. Whilst continuing at that practical work in the Sherwood Forest area he rose to be President of the Agricultural Workers' Union and as such represented our country on the E.U. Agriculture Committee.

Then John Tidmarsh, curator of the William Booth Birthplace Museum in Notintone Place. John's summary of his life from birth in Durham to prison, alcoholism, drug addiction, and reform, illustrates the fine work of the Salvation Army at its best. It is a frank and unsentimental account of a troublesome life.

By contrast there is Charles Alcock, a veteran of World War One, reminiscing about Sneinton since 1897. His wartime memories are timely reminders that there were many who survived and had to cope with life after armistice.

Another contrast is provided by Edgar Pownall of the scrap dealers who then lived in Bakersfield or - as Paddy Tipping naughtily calls it 'Upper Sneinton' (Old Sneinton being 'Lower Sneinton'). Here too are memories back to his father founding the scrap business in 1880 and Edgar's other business ventures when scrap dealing was in recession.

Lastly a further contrast - the shorter time spent in Sneinton by Iradge and Sandy Afsar, he a refugee from Iran, she his English wife. Both had to flee and arrived 'homeless, weary and facing an uncertain future'. Their views about a wide range of topics are fascinating.

Dave is a lifelong socialist and trade unionist and makes no secret that this eclectic mix is portrayed from that point of view. It is none the worse for this. His introduction summarises a number of important influences on the character of Sneinton at that time.

Oral history is now a respected branch of historical research. This is as good as the best. It is well worth reading, even if you may not agree with some of Dave's angles or conclusions.

**Tom Huggon,
President, Nottingham Civic Society.**

SOCIETY NOTES.

FROM THE CHAIRMAN

An update on Laxton, Nottinghamshire, England's Last Open Field Village.

On 29 January 2020 contracts were finally exchanged for the sale of Laxton by the Crown Estate Commissioners to the Thoresby Estate Trust. The terms and conditions will come into play as of 25 March, i.e. Lady Day, and the day on which rents are traditionally paid. (Ironically, Lady Day was always the occasion in the past when enclosure agreements came into place!)

It has taken many months to sort out the details, and to make sure that the new owners know exactly what they have committed themselves to do. Thorotonians will be aware that Hugh Matheson of the Thoresby estate, who has been the driving force in making this transaction happen, is a firm and committed supporter of Laxton. Several years ago he lectured to the Society on how he saw Laxton evolving, and he now has the opportunity to put this into action. Laxton is, in effect, 'returning' to Thoresby, given that the estate originally sold the property to the Ministry of Agriculture in 1951, and they sold it on to the Crown Estate in 1980.

There are likely to be changes at Laxton, largely focussed on developing the heritage of the village for the benefit of visitors, who have always come from both the locality and much further afield. I will keep members informed.

Professor John Beckett

(Turn now to the back cover of this Newsletter to see two photographs)

FROM THE HON. SECRETARY:

Papers for the AGM and Spring Meeting 25th April 2020:

These will be circulated in due course but this is to remind you that the venue is Colston Bassett Village Hall at 2pm on the 25th April. Please put the date in your diary and we look forward to seeing you there.

Thoroton Special Event:

June 26th in the State Chamber of the Archbishops Palace, Southwell.

Concert by the City of Lincoln Waites playing medieval instruments, singing and talking about the instruments and music.

Further details and booking form will follow with AGM and Spring Meeting papers.

Geoffrey Bond/Thoroton Society Research Award 2020:

Can we remind researchers that awards are available for people undertaking research into Nottingham and Nottinghamshire archaeology or history?

Applications are invited from individuals or societies and these will need to be sent to the Honorary Secretary of the Thoroton Society by 1st September 2020 at barbaracast@btinternet.com

Details of the terms and conditions are available on the Thoroton website at www.thorotonsociety.org.uk.

It is hoped that a variety of individuals and groups will apply for this useful financial support for their research in 2020 and we would urge all researchers to consider whether they could be helped in their endeavours by a grant.

Barbara Cast.

Note from Editor: It is Professor John Beckett's last AGM as Chairman and Barbara Cast's last AGM as Hon Secretary on the 25th April, after many years in these positions. They are of course continuing to be members of the Thoroton Society but it would be good to have a splendid turnout for this, their final AGM as President and Secretary.

FROM CORRESPONDENCE WITH THE EDITOR

- Following John Wilson's request on Page 16 of the Winter Edition for further information on Banks, **Valerie Henstock** sent in the following information about her research on Banking in Nottingham:

A couple of years ago I was researching the history of Fraser Brown, solicitors, and I came across the name of Moore, Maltby, Evans and Middlemore's bank. Both firms stem from the person of Francis Evans (1755-1815), a Nottingham attorney. The businesses were complementary, attorneys being the proto-bankers of their clients. Evans, as Clerk to the Cromford Canal Co., was particularly involved with the sale of its shares and, becoming dissatisfied with the service of John and Ichabod Wright and Co., set up his own banking arm, opening on Wheeler Gate in 1802. Evans was also advisor to the Nottingham Canal Co. and speculated by purchasing land on its proposed route through Lenton. He was to be disappointed as the first route was amended but he built himself a house on the land, initially called Lenton Shrubs, but known as Lenton Grove, now the University of Nottingham's History Department and workplace of our chairman Professor John Beckett.

Not much is known of Evan's partners, George Moore of Appleby in Leicestershire, William Richard Middlemore of Nottingham and James Maltby of Mansfield who were all described as 'gentlemen'. Middlemore's widow, Susanna has a memorial plaque in Orston church and was an early member of Bromley House Library.

The initial partnership was dissolved in 1815, a terrible year for the bank which brought the deaths of Moore, Evans and Middlemore. Thomas Moore, the son of George, took his father's place and Frederick Robinson of Widmerpool joined him and Maltby to carry on the firm. In 1836 Maltby had gone and they converted to a joint stock bank trading under the name of Moore and Robinson's Nottingham Banking Co. The 1844 directory listed them at Beastmarket Hill. By 1869 the bank had split and Moore and Robinson continued to trade at Beastmarket Hill while the Nottingham and Notts. Banking Co. moved to Thurland Street.

In 1901 Capital and Counties Bank acquired Moore and Robinson and in 1918 Lloyds swallowed Capital and Counties. I believe the premises of the late Lloyds Bank on the corner of St James's street and Beastmarket Hill occupy the same site as the original building of c.1840.

Thank you, Valerie, for this very interesting reply to John Wilson's request for any information.

- Correspondence with the Friends of Nottingham Museums since the last Newsletter has enabled their programme of lectures on the next page to be made available for Thoroton Members. Founded in 1977, Friends of Nottingham Museums offers support, to the museums and galleries established by the City Council, by raising funds to help purchase items for the collections and to assist in volunteer projects and work at events. There are monthly meetings at Nottingham Mechanics, commencing promptly at 2 pm. Non-members are welcome (charge £3). For further information tel. 0115 9221734.

Friends of Nottingham Museums - Speakers for 2020 from March:

March 21 st	Cal Warren	The Castle Project so far.....
April 18 th	Arkwright Trust	The Lumsdale Valley
May 16 th	Stephen Flinders	Catherine Crompton's Diary
June 20 th	John Benn	The History of Anatomy
July 18 th	Simon Brown	The National Justice Museum
September 19 th	Chris Mathews	Nottingham Council Housing
October 17 th	Sara Blair-Manning	CEO Nottingham Castle Trust
November 21 st	Bob Massey	The Fair on the Square
December 12 th	James Wright	Castles of Nottinghamshire

Paul Baker

ANNIVERSARIES

150 YEARS AGO

12 January 1870 – A grand Ball was given at the Mechanics' Hall by the Mayor of Nottingham, James Oldknow Esq. The last civic ball was given by T. North Esq. in the year 1845.

6 February 1870 – The factory of Messrs Bayldon and Co, Yarn Spinners, Canal Street was destroyed by fire and the premises of Mr A. Pyatt, timber merchant and those of Mr W. Harris, Steam Saw Mill, being adjacent, were much injured. This was a most extensive conflagration, and at one time threatened an immense amount of property. The damage was estimated at about £14,000.

Other serious fires broke out in March 1870 at the Nottingham Manufacturing Company, Station Street and in April 1870 at premises previously occupied by Messrs Adams and Co, St Mary's Gate. Another 'tremendous conflagration' took place in June at the four-storey premises of Mr W. Bridgett, silk and cotton spinner, on Woolpack Lane.

16 June 1870 – The Wilford Bridge and Collieries were opened by Lady Clifton. Boring had commenced in the Brickyard Spinney on 1 May 1867. The richest seams of coal were found at a depth of 267 yards from the surface. Building of the bridge had been started by Sir Robert Clifton some years before but had been delayed.

8 October 1870 – Death of Alderman Birkin of Aspley Hall. He had been Mayor four times and was a director of the Midland Railway Company.

29 November 1870 – The first School Board election for Nottingham took place. This was a closely contested election and resulted in the defeat of the 'sectarian' or 'church' party.

180 YEARS AGO

10 January 1840 – Commencement of the penny postage of letters. Under the old system the postage to London was 10d; to Birmingham 8d; the Manchester 8d; to Derby 5d; and to Mansfield 4d.

23 April 1840 – The cornerstone of Holy Trinity Church was laid, with the usual ceremonials, by John Smith Wright Esq. [presumably the church that once stood in Trinity Square, Nottingham, which was closed in 1956 and then demolished]

8 June 1840 – Opening of the Nottingham Mechanics' Exhibition, which occupied the Noble Suite of the Exchange Buildings. The exhibition was one of the most attractive ever witnessed in Nottingham. Its prominent features were a superb collection of paintings, statuary, antiquities, architectural models and specimens of natural history. The exhibition continued open until Wednesday 4 November.

16 July 1840 – A large public meeting of ratepayers, convened by the mayor, was held in the Town Hall, on the subject of a proposed new union poorhouse. The proposition for such erection was very strongly condemned. This was the commencement of an agitation that led ultimately to an important change in the political aspect of the town. The New Poor Law, it must be borne in mind, was extremely unpopular with probably nine-tenths of the local population. Its stringent enactments, the compulsory in-door test, the separation of man and wife, the parting of mothers and children, the “skilly” diet, &c were all so different from the former Elizabethan system, that they were looked upon as most obnoxious, and directly it was intimated that the Board of Guardians contemplated the erection of a new House, the utmost indignation was expressed. The Guardians, however, who were chiefly of the Whig party...felt it their duty to persevere. The only piece of land they could secure for their purposes was the site subsequently known as Sherwood Rise. The land was subsequently purchased from Lord Chesterfield, but the Town Council at a special meeting on 18 September, agreed to offer them the site on Back Commons as a substitute. Here, the new Union Workhouse was erected in 1841 at a cost of £17, 500, for 1,150 paupers. The remembrance of the pertinacity with which the Whig Guardians adhered to their project...contributed greatly to an entire change in the political complexion of the Board, but also to the success of Mr Walter at the next Parliamentary election.

22 July – Her Majesty Queen Adelaide visited Nottingham on her way from Belton House in the county of Lincoln to Harewood, near Leeds. The Royal cortege, consisting of three carriages, with an escort of Dragoons, along the Flood-Road [now London Road?], Canal Street and over the Navigation Bridge to the Railway Station, was attended by an immense body of spectators. At the Station, which had been decorated for the occasion, the Royal Party, consisting of the Queen Dowager, her sister the Duchess Ida of Saxe Weimar and their attendants, were received by the mayor and Colonel Kennedy. Her Majesty remained in the station for about half an hour before moving along the platform to take her seat in the carriage, to loud cheers from many spectators who had been given tickets for the occasion.

1840 – During this year, an Act of Parliament was passed to enclose about 18 acres of land, called the “Lammas Field”, lying between the Park and Derby Road, in the parish of St Mary. On this piece of land have been erected the Catholic Church, with houses for the Bishop and priests; a Nunnery with schools attached; St Thomas’s Church; The Particular Baptist Chapel and schools; the Scotch Baptist Chapel; the Albert Hall; the People’s College; and a reservoir and works in connection with the Waterworks Company.

200 YEARS AGO

January 1820 – A protracted frost was succeeded by a thaw, accompanied by a south-west wind. An inundation of the meadows was the consequence, and the water rose so high on the east side of the London-Road as to flow into the houses of the Sneinton Hermitage, which had not been so visited since 1795.

7 February 1820 – The accession of George IV to the throne was publicly celebrated in the Market Place. The Mayor and Corporation, in deep mourning for the late monarch, drank the new Sovereign’s health out of their gold cup, then passed it to the officers of the 9th Lancers. Two six-pounders were brought from the Barracks by a detachment of the Royal artillery and at one o’clock a Royal salute of 21 guns was fired, accompanied by a *feu de joie* of pistols by a troop of Lancers on horseback.

16 February 1820 – This (Wednesday) being the day of the funeral of the late King, the shops were closed and there was a general suspension of business. There was Divine Service at the churches and principal chapels.

13 March – Trial and conviction of Thomas Wilcox for highway robbery. March 29th was the day of execution. On the right of the criminal sat the Rev Mr Bryan and on the left a brother, to whom he bore a most striking resemblance. Wilcox joined in prayers and the singing of a hymn. He then rose from his knees and called heaven and earth to witness that he was innocent of the crime for which he was about to suffer. The corpse was buried at Sawley. There was an impression in the minds of many that the prosecutor, although a man of unimpeachable integrity, was mistaken in his [Wilcox's] identity.

12 April 1820 – Bromley House was purchased by auction, for the sum of £2,750, for the use of the Nottingham Subscription Library.

July 1820 – A distressing casualty at the Salutation Inn, Houndsgate, placed the lives of the whole family in imminent danger. A quantity of arsenic, mixed with oatmeal for the destruction of vermin, was accidentally used to thicken broth of which all the family partook at dinner. Dr Payne attended quickly, and all save the head of the family, Mr John Green aged 76, recovered.

25 August 1820 – The extensive cotton works of Messrs Robert Hall and Son at Basford were totally destroyed by fire. It was conjectured that the cause had been the spontaneous combustion of some cotton waste. Messrs Hall were insured, but not to the full extent of the damage.

10 October 1820 – A public meeting of the ratepayers was held in the Guildhall, to consider the propriety of applying to Parliament for an Act to amend and enlarge the provisions of the existing Act for lighting the town.

11 November 1820 – Tidings of the withdrawing of the Bill of Pains and Penalties against the Queen reached the town this morning by express and created very general joy. The abandonment of the Bill was regarded by the numerous friends of Queen Caroline as a most distinguished triumph. Amongst much rejoicing, an effigy of Theodore Majocchi, the most notorious of the witnesses against the Queen, was carried in procession around the Market-place and then burnt.

250 YEARS AGO

13 January 1770 – This day, Saturday, another instance of the little regard entertained by the magistracy for public decency was exhibited in the flagellation of a female, who had been detected in stealing pocket handkerchiefs from a draper's shop. She was fastened to a cart and whipped all the way from the Weekday Cross to the Malt Cross in the Market Place.

18 April 1770 – For many years, the bakers of the town had been permitted by the Corporation to stack their oven-fuel upon Tollhouse Hill. At the date indicated the stacks were totally destroyed by fire. The conflagration was so great that people flocked to the town from surrounding villages. The mayor offered twenty guineas as a reward for the conviction of the supposed incendiary.

15 November 1770 – The highest flood since the year 1736. Houses in Narrow-Marsh were flooded to the height of several feet. The excess of rain caused about twenty tons weight of the rock on Malin Hill to fall into the abyss below, to the great terror of the neighbourhood but fortunately without loss of life.

December 1770 – A clock was given to the Corporation by James Woolley, the 'Loscoe Miser', an eccentric individual who was famous for his very good clocks, his peculiar system of farming and his extraordinary care of his money.

THE ANNUAL GREAT NOTTINGHAMSHIRE LOCAL HISTORY FAIR.

This will be held at Mansfield Central Library on Sunday 3rd May commencing at 11am. In addition to the Society's stand, there will be numerous local history groups showcasing their activities. Explore local history displays and learn more about the county's rich heritage. Entrance is free. We hope to see Members there on the day.

Rob James

NEW MEMBERS OF THE THOROTON SOCIETY SINCE THE LAST NEWSLETTER.

We are pleased to welcome the following new members who have joined us recently:

Mr Michael Cox

Mr Brian Mills

Mr Robert Sparham for the Field Detectives

Mrs Lauren Warren

Mrs Sybil Dale

Mr David Mason

Ms Judith Lewis

Mrs Vivienne Fry

Mr David Barton

Mrs Sylvia Barton

Dr Stephen Rogers

John Wilson

NEWS WITH REFERENCE TO THE SUMMER THOROTON NEWSLETTER.

- The aim is to continue news on the Restoration of the Castle during 2020 and there will be an article on the Nottingham Caves by Scott Lomax
- Following on from Nick Molineux's article on Six Saxon Pots in the Winter Newsletter, we will be continuing a Saxon theme in the Summer Edition with Nick Molyneux contributing more information about the pots and other Articles on Saxon Nottingham.
- There will be a report by Richard Gaunt on the recent Thoroton Lecture: 'Lucy Hutchinson's Memoirs', given by David Norbrook on the 8th of February.
(Also of interest to members might be the following: at the University of Nottingham (22nd -24th June) - Lucy Hutchinson, 1620-1681: The English Revolution and Women's Writing)
- There will also be reports of the two Excursions to Broughton House and Brixworth Church on May 19th and to Hanbury Hall and Great Witley Church on June 11th. The details and booking arrangements are given on the two different coloured sheets included in the mailing of this Newsletter.
- All contributions to the Newsletter are welcome but please note but that there is a restriction to the length of articles that can be included and therefore longer research items will be passed on to the Editors of Transactions for their consideration for publication.

Paul Baker

THE THOROTON SOCIETY

OFFICERS

President: Adrian Henstock BA DAA FRHistS

Chair: Professor John Beckett BA PhD FRHistS FSA

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

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Treasurer: John Wilson BPharm MPhil FRSPH email treasurer@thorotonsociety.org.uk.

Membership Secretary: John Wilson Pharm MPhil FRSPH email: membership@thorotonsociety.org.uk

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: treasurer@thorotonsociety.org.uk.

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 Coun 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**, Paul Baker MA FRGS. email: editor@thorotonsociety.org.uk

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

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

THE THOROTON SOCIETY IS A REGISTERED CHARITY No. 237755.

LAXTON PHOTOGRAPHS



Jury Day. A week prior to the meeting of the Court, shown below, the nominated jurors survey the field which has been in fallow and is about to be drilled for winter wheat. Shown here is the bailiff, Robert Haigh, hammering in one of the stakes.



The Manor Court meeting 2018. Alistair Millar, steward of the manor, appointed by the owners, and a solicitor with Tallent's, Southwell, is seen here on the left chairing the meeting. To his right are Robert Haigh, the Bailiff and Stuart Rose, Clerk of the Gates and Commons. In front of them various members of the Jury.