

THE THOROTON SOCIETY

Nottinghamshire's History and Archaeology Society



ISSUE 56 SUMMER 2009

THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

WOODBOROUGH - 25 April 2009

IMAGES OF WOODBOROUGH



*Our Meeting venue
The Village Hall*

St. Swithun Church with detail



The Four Bells

A Scratch Dial



~ The Thoroton Society of Nottinghamshire ~
~ The County's Principal Historical Society ~
Visit the Thoroton Website at: www.thorotonsociety.org.uk

AGM 2009

Report by Barbara Cast

It was a really splendid day for our AGM on 25 April: the sun shone on us and everywhere was looking bright and spring-like. Over a hundred members attended the AGM where we were welcomed by Paul Reed, Chairman of Woodborough History Society, and also by our President, Rosalys Coope. The Chairman speedily dealt with the necessary business, which included a number of updates on recent and ongoing activities of the Society. These were on the Local History Project being undertaken by Sue Clayton on behalf of our Society and the Notts Local History Association; Denise Amos on the re-launch of the Heritage Gateway, the Society's prestigious portal to the history of the County presented in topic based pages, which has been redesigned and made even more user friendly by our Webmaster, Andy Nicholson; and I updated members on the activities of the Response Group in addressing national and local history policies of relevance to the Society's interests and made a request that members alert us to any items which should be addressed. John Hamilton, Hon Membership Secretary, spoke of the membership drive and the new membership leaflet, and Steph Mastoris gave the latest on the Senior maps project, due to be produced as part of the Record Series this year.

The Society also made two presentations; the first to Adrian Henstock, our recently retired long-serving Editor of the Transactions, who, members were pleased to hear, continues as Consultant Editor and Record Series Editor. The second presentation was to Janice Avery who for many years edited the Society Newsletter.

The election of officers and Council concluded the business, and we are pleased to welcome Howard Fisher as Newsletter Editor (however, he has been in the role for several editions now) and Pauline Miller as a member of Council.

After the business was completed David Bagley gave an illustrated history of Woodborough which gave members a good understanding of this attractive village. After the usual high quality tea from members of Woodborough WI, we visited the Church of St. Swithun, one of three of this name in the county but the only one so spelled, where David pointed out the most interesting points. Members were then free to walk the trail as set out in the Woodborough Trail booklet produced by WHS. All agreed that the afternoon had been thoroughly enjoyable and that Woodborough has proved a most welcoming and interesting venue: 2009's AGM again vies for the title of 'one of the best'.

THE AGM - A MEMBER'S VIEW

By Derek Little

Saturday, 25 April, a beautiful sunny day, and the AGM was held in historic Woodborough.

Paul Reed from the Local History Society welcomed us and mentioned their latest book, *Woodborough Heritage* and their website www.woodborough-heritage.org.uk. After a short address by our Chairman, John Beckett, we quickly dealt with official business. Sue Clayton spoke on 'The Future of Local History, and the greater necessity of LH Societies and the Thoroton Society to organise lectures, days out etc. now that the University and LEA no longer provided courses in LH.

Denise Amos mentioned the Nottinghamshire Heritage Gateway and its uses. Barbara Cast emphasised the need for members to report historic sites in danger to the Response Group. John Hamilton reminded us that membership of the Thoroton Society needed to be much more promoted amongst the younger generation. He had membership leaflets available to anyone who knew of suitable locations to display them such as local libraries.

Having been editor of the Transaction from 1976, Adrian Henstock's retirement was announced. 33 years, what a record! Many thanks to Adrian for his knowledge, advice and hard work over this long time.

Geoffrey Oldfield told us that, unfortunately, the Nottingham Industrial Archaeology Society had closed and reminded us that great care is essential when submitting grant applications because of administrative technicalities.

After David Bagley gave us an illustrated talk about Woodborough titled *Portrait of a Village*, showing us the three Manor houses, corn mill, village school and many framework knitters cottages, we adjourned for an enjoyable tea and refreshments with very tasty cakes, for which many thanks to the local WI.

We walked down to the church with its Norman font and beautiful Morris and Co. window glass, where David Bagley gave us a short talk and answered questions.

A most interesting, entertaining and informative day, rounded off with a most pleasant evening in which to make our various ways home.

THE NOTTINGHAMSHIRE HERITAGE GATEWAY

By Denise Amos

The re-launch of the Nottinghamshire Heritage Gateway on Wednesday, 29 May 2009, held in the lovely surroundings of Bromley House went very well. There was not a great crowd but those who came seemed to enjoy the event and expressed interest and suggested new ideas for the website. Those who came were from an eclectic background - previous contributors, those representing repositories and members of The Thoroton Society as well as the Nottingham Evening Post.

Barbara Cast introduced the session and then Andy Nicholson went through the new format of the website, which is now a stand-alone site from the Thoroton site. He showed how the new site was put together and demonstrated using entries - coal mining, Newark and Robin Hood in the general format but emphasised that not all entries could fit into a set style and so had to be adaptable.

We now have thirteen places, eight themes and three events on the website with two more in the near future.

Appreciation was expressed to those (other than the team of John Beckett, Andy Nicholson and Denise Amos) who have put together an entry for the site. We are always looking for new contributors and urge anyone who might feel that they have an expertise about a particular topic to get in touch with Denise Amos who will gladly help out with method.

Several of the entries are hit regularly and are very popular. The Robin Hood entry by Sarah Stephenson, is a particularly useful entry which we hope will attract more hits.

Denise Amos spoke of the need to introduce this useful tool to schools and children and Emily Tabassi from Nottingham City Museums offered to take some flyers and introduce it at a teachers' forum which she will be attending soon. www.nottsheritagegateway.org.uk

PAULINE MILLER

Pauline was elected to Council at the AGM and she will be an energetic and enthusiastic addition to Council; she introduces herself:-

'I was the only girl of my generation in the family not to go into teaching, my work taking me into marketing and newspapers. Brian and I spent some time in Canada exploring North America with our young daughters - resulting in the next two generations developing a passion for geography.

My grandparents inspired my interest in local history. Grandfather described 19th century Nottingham when we saw traces of roads and houses in the Lace Market. My Grandmother always referred to the Council House as the

'Exchange', describing the redevelopment of the Market Square and claiming that Goose Fair was never the same after relocating to the Forest.

Juvenile inattention to sermons at St. Mary's led my eyes to the architecture. I bought an 'I-Spy' book of churches and decided that St. Mary's was Perpendicular - whatever that meant.

And the rest, you might say, is history.'



Ed: Pauline and her husband Brian are very well-known for their knowledge and expertise on St. Mary's in the Nottingham Lace Market. Pauline edits the church's newsletter.

INTERNATIONAL FAMILY AND LOCAL HISTORY CONFERENCE

A four day conference is to be held at the East Midlands Conference Centre from 28-31 August 2009, being organised by the Halstead Trust, a non-profit making educational charity relating to the study and research of local history, genealogy and heraldry.

The title for the Conference is 'Open the Door and Here Are The People' and is aimed at all levels of knowledge and expertise. The format will be four or five simultaneous day-time streams of talks and workshops and attendees can either pick and mix or concentrate on a particular theme. Speakers after dinner include Richard Holmes who is also giving a day-time talk on the Western Front and Kate Williams who presented the recent TV documentary on Queen Victoria.

The full conference fee is £369 covering accommodation, lectures, meals and evening events. Partial and day-visit attendance can also be made at appropriate fees. Details at www.openthedoor.org.uk/booking.html

THE MAURICE BARLEY LECTURE, 14 FEBRUARY 2009

A NOTTINGHAMSHIRE HISTORIAN,
ARTHUR COSSONS (1893-1963)

'Unsung hero' was the phrase that came into my mind most often during a fascinating lecture by Sir Neil Cossons on his father, a lecture which kept an audience of more than a hundred listening intently through a February afternoon.

Arthur Cossons was born in 1893, served in the Medical Corps during the First World War, and then trained as a teacher. In 1922 he arrived at Church Street Boys' School, Beeston, and from 1932-58 he was headmaster of the school. He taught children by day and adults in the evening - our member Michael Jackson recalled being taught by Arthur at a WEA class in Edwinstowe. Arthur became a noted specialist on turnpike roads, and together with W. E. (Bill) Tate, he worked closely with Professor J. D. Chambers.

In 1937 Arthur married Evelyn Bettle, a young English teacher at his school. When she left, partly to bring up the couple's two children, Neil and Hilda, Margaret Cooper (who was at the lecture) took her place.

Arthur Cossons was an inveterate collector. Neil Cossons brought a number of exhibits for Thorotonians to view, and was delighted to find that members of the audience knew the fate of the museum collection that his father put together in his final years.



Sir Neil Cossons with his sister Hilda who attended the lecture with him.

The lecture was part memoir, part obituary, and part an exercise in filial piety! But Arthur Cossons came over as a man of great integrity, who pursued his adopted post-war career in school teaching and local history with a single minded enthusiasm that rubbed off on generations of children at Church Street school, not least among them being his son Neil, whose own distinguished career followed from his father's encouragement and enthusiasm.

John Beckett

DELVING THE SOCIETY'S ARCHIVE

by Barbara Cast

The Peverel Research Group was associated with the Thoroton Society for many years. This group was formed to enable people interested in archaeology to work together on practical projects. These included actual excavation but also such useful activities as indexing sites and finds.

In its 1949 report there was included information on digs in Lambley and Hoveringham, the former being a mound in what was called the Millin Field of Church Farm. In the Hoveringham/Thurgarton area gravel working was in operation and workmen had dredged up a small pot containing Roman coins, identified by the British Museum as of Carausius 287 AD. Unfortunately bits of the pot and some other coins were thrown back into the gravel pit, as the report says 'these now rest at the uncomfortable depth of 40 ft and will perhaps never be recovered'. Further archaeological investigations and surveys were undertaken in the area by Messrs. Houldsworth and Wildgoose, including on the site of the lost settlement of Horspool, once part of Thurgarton Parish, and the investigators concluded that the humps and hollows they had found were the remains of this ancient hamlet.

Any views expressed in the Newsletter are those of the authors and not necessarily those of the Editor, The Thoroton Society or the Society's Council.

THE ARCHAEOLOGY LECTURE, 14 MARCH 2009

Dr. David Walker - RECENT ARCHAEOLOGICAL WORK IN THE CITY OF NOTTINGHAM.



Dr. David Walker

A packed lecture hall at the Nottingham Mechanics Hall gave an enthusiastic welcome to Dr David Walker of Trent & Peak Archaeology who delivered the annual Archaeology Lecture. Dave's lively and entertaining talk began with an outline of the urban topography of pre and post conquest Nottingham, to set the scene for his summaries of the results of three recent excavations in the City; at Garner's Hill, Western Street and Clumber Street.

At Garner's Hill, on the site of the new Nottingham Contemporary, excavation focused on a slim wedge of surviving archaeology. Although badly affected by later disturbance excavation was still able to identify and record early medieval drains, a probable

part of the wall of the later medieval Town Hall, demolished in the 1740s, and a number of caves, styled *Oubliettes* by Dave because of their possible function as dungeons for the abandonment of felons held in the gaol which formed part of the medieval Town Hall.

A tiny excavation at nearby Western Street uncovered dramatic evidence of medieval pottery production, including a sliver of surviving kiln, kiln furniture, potting clay and huge quantities of wasters; the team recovered 165kg even though only keeping the best bits. Dave speculated that the fragmentary kiln may have been a cave kiln and through links with earlier adjacent excavations built a convincing picture of an emerging industrial quarter focused on the north-east part of the medieval town along the York Road.

The final site mentioned by Dave was the disappointing story of aborted excavations on Clumber Street (medieval Cow Lane) where demolition works revealed a number of cave entrances, whose enticing evidence is to be forever lost as they are now blocked without record; such are the vagaries of the planning process.

Dave finished with the promise of better things to come for Nottingham's Caves in outlining a new initiative by Trent & Peak Archaeology, supported by the East Midlands Development Agency, to survey and record all of the known caves in the City, with a view to developing those that are appropriate as a future heritage attraction for visitors to Nottingham.

Keith Challis

PROGRAMME SECRETARY REQUIRED

After serving as Programme Secretary Leslie Cram is stepping down and a replacement is required. Here Leslie sets out the duties of the role to assist anyone considering taking on the job.

The Programme Secretary works with the Standing Committee to put on six lectures and four excursions each year. The job does not call for a professional archaeologist or historian but for someone with wide interests in these fields, who has a creativity to spot something which is new for the programme and an empathy with different speakers and other officers within the Society to provide the information that they need and when they need it.

The Programme Secretary job description has been recently produced which ties in with

the Thoroton Year Diary of who does what and when. The usual means of communication is with up-to-date information technology. Most lecturers and excursion venues use email and the *Newsletter* takes copy in digital form.

I took over the job in 2003 soon after retiring from working in museums and archaeology and have greatly enjoyed using my experience for the benefit of the Thoroton Society. I am leaving the job now because I said I would spend my retirement doing new things, one of which is getting published my Aunt Ada's work on a Bronze Age barrow in Yorkshire.

EAST MIDLANDS HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT RESEARCH STRATEGY WORKSHOP

A report by Leslie Cram

This workshop was held in the School of Geography, University of Nottingham on Wednesday 1 April 2009 from 10 am to 5 pm. It followed an initial meeting on 7 May last year. David Knight from our own Trent & Peak Archaeology at Nottingham University is the EMHERS Project Manager and the project is funded by English Heritage. An Archaeological Consultant has kept the project together and in mid April circulated the first results of the day for any comments with a final publication to come by September this year.

Participants had sent in their names beforehand and there had been special attention to invite local societies as well as professional organizations and consultants. A 23 page document was circulated in mid-March setting out draft objectives as a basis for discussion at the workshop.

On the day there was a tea and coffee bar during all breaks and the University offered a range of opportunities for lunch. A list of the 122 participants was handed to each on arrival. Most of these were professionals who came from the wide area of Northamptonshire to Derbyshire and Worcestershire to

Lincolnshire. Fourteen came from local societies including myself representing the Thoroton Society. The day gave three sessions of an hour to discuss the draft objectives and finished with a session when all gathered to hear summaries of the deliberations. The objectives were set out in nine time periods from Palaeolithic to Modern. Participants chose which periods to attend.

I went to two of the Palaeolithic sessions and enjoyed hearing problems being discussed similar to those I had worked with from the Thames Valley gravels before I retired. An emerging issue is recognizing a lower or middle Palaeolithic stone artefact when you see one. It may appear to be just an aberrant flake if one's experience has been limited to handling later material. I also attended one of the Mediaeval sessions from my interest in stone sculpture of this period and whether this merits having a corpus compiled similar to that put together for Anglo-Saxon and Romanesque sculpture. The discussions were all conducted with enthusiasm for the subject and respect for the views of others.

We look forward to David Knight coming to lecture to us on the project next year.

ODEON SITE, ANGEL ROW

A comment from the Thoroton Response Group

Members will probably have heard that, despite a lot of well-founded opposition and contrary to the Council's own commissioned Urban Design Guide for the City Centre, Nottingham City Council has approved a massive development on the former Odeon Cinema site which, most worryingly, overlooks the historic Bromley House Library and its unique garden.

The design guide, produced by Urbed, a leading consultancy on urban planning, states

'There is an existing cluster of taller buildings on Maid Marian Way, which impact on many views into the city centre,' and carries on 'There should be no further tall buildings in this area ...'.

Why the City Council, with all its financial concerns, should pay good money to experts only to ignore their advice is baffling - but then, bringing investors into the City has long been a prime aim, whatever the cost to the City's history or environment.

LAXTON OPEN FIELD HISTORY DAY

Sunday, 28 June from 12.00 to 4.30 pm at Crosshill Farm, Laxton (NG22 0SX)

A family day out with all proceeds going to the St. Michael's Church Fabric Fund

Tickets in advance £4 from Mike Jackson on 01777-8700942

Talk by Professor John Beckett on the Laxton Manorial System

Guided walks to the castle and open fields

Teas

Demonstration of horse ploughing fallow land by Tom Cliffe

Display and guide at the Church

BOOK REVIEW

Monument, Memory, and Myth - use and re-use of three bronze age round barrows at Cossington, Leicestershire. John Thomas; Leicester Archaeology Monograph 14.

This monograph gives details of the findings from the excavation of three bronze age barrows at Cossington in Leicestershire and demonstrates the changed use and emphasis of the monuments through the period of construction and later bronze age and into the iron age and Anglo-Saxon periods, each group of people using the barrows as a focus for their own rites, indicating the continuity of memory and/or mythology through many centuries and cultures.

Details of finds are also discussed: these include a fine bronze age composite bead necklace, found lying where it was placed, around the neck of a bronze age woman.

Copies are available from ULAS, University of Leicester, LE1 7RH at £17.00 plus £2.50 postage (cheques to University of Leicester).

Barbara Cast

PUBLICATIONS UPDATE

The Gedling 'Town Book' of parish accounts, 1665-1714, edited by Edward White, is nearing completion and should be published during the first half of 2009.

It is intended to publish the DVD edition of the coloured estate maps of William Senior, 1600-1640, as three 'volumes', the first of which will be an introduction and reproductions of the Welbeck atlas; this contains some 70 maps of the Earl of Newcastle's estates, mainly Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire and Northumberland. A DVD of the Chatsworth atlas will follow later and the final volume will be a reconstruction of the lost survey information from the Welbeck atlas presented as a conventional publication.

Further progress has been made with editing the estate accounts of the 2nd Duke of Newcastle relating to Welbeck Abbey and Nottingham Castle, etc. during the 1670s and 80s, and the projected history and gazetteer of Lost Churches and Chapels within the county.

Adrian Henstock

ANNUAL LUNCHEON 2009

Please note that the correct date for the Luncheon is Saturday, 7 November 2009. We will be embarking on the Princess Endeavour for a lunch date with the River Trent. This very well appointed luxury boat is our venue for the Society's social event this year - you will be under cover and well insulated from November's chill air. Full details and booking forms will be included in the next Society mailing.

NEW MEMBERS

We warmly welcome the following who have joined us since the last Newsletter
Mr. T. Barber and Mr. D. Mellor

BOOK LAUNCH

The Centenary Lounge in Keyworth Village Hall was the scene on 29 April 2009 for the launch of the latest book published by that well-known firm of *Reflections of a Bygone Age*. This publishers books will be known from their *Yesterday's Nottinghamshire* series of books using old postcards to illustrate how places and people looked in the past.

Brian Lund who, together with his wife Mary, owns this publishing house, is known nationally as a collector of postcards and promoter of postcard fairs as well as being editor of *Picture Postcard Monthly*, an international magazine devoted to the postcard collector.

The book launched is a hardback, limited edition of 150 numbered copies written by Brian and showing the villages of Keyworth and Plumtree from old postcards and also series of cards produced by Brian over the years. It is a fascinating study, enhanced by historical facts relating to postcards. Did you know that postcards were an Austrian invention of 1869 and that plain postcards were first made available by the British Post Office in 1870 and it was not until 1894 that picture postcards became available in Britain?

Keyworth and Plumtree The Postcard Album is available at £25 from the publisher; tel: 0115-937-4079 and, being a limited edition, is a collectors item. 74 A4 pages and 116 illustrations.
ISBN 978 1 905408 20 7.

Howard Fisher

MORE FROM THE AGM



Left to Right: John Wilson, Treasurer; Rosalys Coope, President, John Beckett, Chairman; Barbara Cast, Secretary



John Beckett made a presentation to Adrian Henstock to mark his retirement after 30 years of Editing the Transactions



Barbara Cast presented Janice Avery with flowers to thank her for her years as Newsletter Editor



Steph Mastoris demonstrates progress on the historic maps to be produced as DVDs in the Record Series.