

THE THOROTON SOCIETY

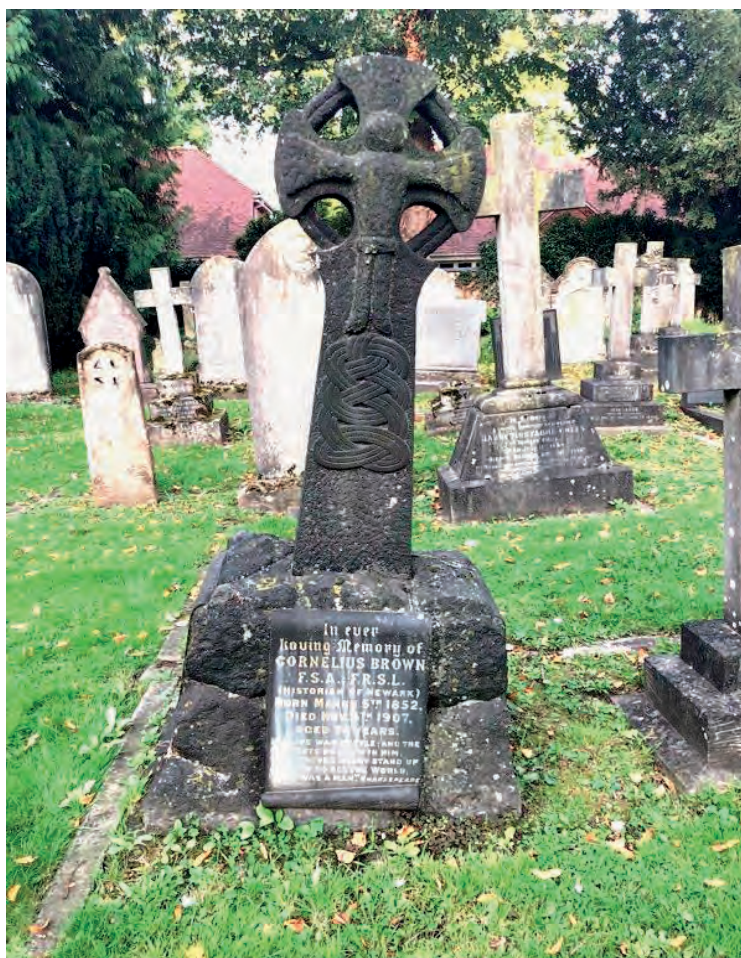
Nottinghamshire's History and Archaeology Society



The Quarterly Newsletter of the Thoroton Society

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The Memorial to Cornelius Brown on his grave. (see page 9)

(Photograph: David Crook.)

The Thoroton Society of Nottinghamshire

The County's Principal History and Archaeology Society

Visit the Thoroton Society website at: www.thorotonsociety.org.uk

A WORD FROM OUR CHAIRMAN

What will be the 'word of the year' 2020? I would make a good case not for 'coronavirus' or 'pandemic' but 'unprecedented'. It is the word which experts, pundits and politicians have habitually employed to explain our current situation and rationalise the response to it. Yet, as historians have been quick to point out, however different in context, scale and situation, there are plenty of historical precedents – literally 'an earlier occurrence of something similar' – for the events which we have endured this year. The 14th century Black Death was a global pandemic which reached us more slowly than COVID-19 because of the state of communications at the time, whilst the actions of the people of Eyam, Derbyshire, in the 1660s remind us that the human and psychological sacrifices entailed in lockdown are nothing new. In the midst of plague and illnesses which vaccinations had not yet resolved, London's 'Bills of Mortality' communicated the death-toll in a way all too familiar to regular viewers of the daily news bulletins and published data in newspapers and online media. Habitual reference to the 'Dunkirk Spirit' this year was fostered by the knowledge that our own monarch is a noticeable living connection with the wartime generation, whilst the exploits of Colonel (Sir) Tom Moore (a man whose name has rich historical connections), and the 75th anniversaries of VE- and VJ-Day, helped to connect our current experiences with past adversity. In times of trouble, we look to historical 'precedents' not for lessons which we can apply today but to remind - and perhaps console - ourselves that we have met comparable challenges of this before, have adapted, and in the long run, survived. As a society with a strong sense of historical context, I hope we will find opportunities to meet in the near future and consider what precedents future generations might draw from the year 2020.

Richard A. Gaunt, Chairman

A TRIBUTE TO STEPHEN BEST 1939-2020



On October 14th that distinguished librarian and local historian, Stephen Best, died at the Forest Care Home, aged 81. He had been suffering from Parkinson's disease and dementia. He joined Sherwood Street Central Library direct from Nottingham High School at the age of 17. By 1962 he had become a chartered librarian. He worked at several libraries including Carlton Road, Clifton and Gregory Boulevard and from 1964-68 he supervised Sherwood Library. But above all, he was known and appreciated for his time at the Local Studies Library on Angel Row which began in 1974. There many of us benefited from his remarkable knowledge, generosity and humour. Sadly his career declined after he contracted ME in the 1980s and he had to retire in 1989. (When I got ME he was a constant support.) Nevertheless he continued to research and write interesting articles for the Nottingham Civic Society Newsletter and the Sneinton Magazine. (Elaine Harwood acknowledged his help in answering queries about Sneinton for her book about Nottingham.) When he was in his prime, he did much more. Many of you may remember the sixty live phone-in broadcasts for Radio Nottingham on local history which he shared with Keith Train in the 1980s.

Stephen had many other interests. He joined the Nottingham Libraries Cricket XI and became a very good wicket keeper. He loved cricket as it used to be played and collected early Wisdens. But he would have nothing to do with the modern game - he called 'Stumps' on it! Collecting was one of his hobbies, starting with cigarette cards and train spotting; his knowledge of railways and trains was phenomenal. Other interests were the built environment, churches, trad Jazz, literature, cinemas and crosswords, at which he won encyclopedias. Not least he was always good company over a glass of wine in a pub. His former library

colleagues put together a publication titled 'Stephen Best at Eighty, An Anthological Fragment or Bestscift'. In it are not only a few of his articles reproduced, such as the study of ceramic tiles in Sneinton porches, but also examples of his idiosyncratic delight in names and words. They delighted his colleagues by revealing 'the outlandish, the bizarre and the incredible'. For instance, he loved writing cleriheus such as this one below:

William Booth,
Exclaimed 'Forsooth
The state of England does so alarm me
I think I'll found the Salvation Army'.

Stephen married Sue in 1980 and became stepfather of her two sons. (They also fostered children for several years.) Sue, Alex and Stuart and Stephen's brother Peter and five grandchildren survive him. We have lost a much-loved character, a true one-off.

Terry Fry

SOCIETY NEWS

From Correspondence with the Editor.

Twitter: The Thoroton Society made the move into the world of social media in October 2020. We can now be found on Twitter through the following link: <https://twitter.com/ThorotonSociety>. With our world becoming increasingly focused on digital content the Council felt it appropriate to offer a new outlet to promote the work of the society. The intention is to make regular posts relating to society events as well as the history, archaeology and conservation of Nottingham more widely. If you are also a Twitter user please do consider following the account and reposting our content. Our social media will be managed by James Wright – if you wish to let him know about any stories that you think we should be covering then please email:

james@triskeleheritage.com

James Wright

Book Offer: Yale University Press is delighted to offer members of The Thoroton Society a special price for the new Pevsner guide to Nottinghamshire. (See Pete Smith's book review in Book Reviews later in this Newsletter). Order your copy via their website (www.yalebooks.co.uk/pevsner) and enter code Y2117 at checkout for £5 off*. RRP - £45.00 | Offer Price - £40.00 *UK orders only | Free P&P | Code valid until 31/01/2021.

Nottinghamshire Photo Competition: Win a free copy of *Nottinghamshire* and another Pevsner guide of your choice in their photo competition. Send a photo of your favourite building in Nottinghamshire along with a short caption explaining why it's your top pick to the team at yalebooknews.co.uk to enter. **Entry closes on 31/12/2020.** <https://yalebooksblog.co.uk/2020/10/19/pevsner-nottinghamshire-photo-competition>.

Pevsner Photograph Exhibition: There will be a future exhibition of the super photographs in the new Pevsner edition, 'Nottinghamshire', at the Lakeside. (See Pete Smith's Review later in this Newsletter). I will make sure once dates are known for this exhibition that members are informed.

Nottinghamshire Local History Association Event: 2020 marks the 400th anniversary of the journey of the Pilgrim Settlers to America. To commemorate the strong connections between our county and this internationally significant event, Nottinghamshire Local History Association have linked up with Nottinghamshire County Council to present a programme of talks by recognised experts in the field. The events are free and booking for the talks will be via Eventbrite. An email will be sent to you with a link for each talk. Please do remember to check your junk/spam folders as the email may land in there! All queries should be directed to James Wright, Programme Secretary for Nottinghamshire Local History Association: james@triskeleheritage.com

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS 2021

Annual Subscriptions are due on 1st January 2021. Many members have bank standing orders for their annual subscription. I will not need to contact members whose subscriptions are paid in this way. Other members may pay either by cheque or bank transfer. I will send as many subscription requests as possible by email this year, to reduce postage. For those members for whom I have no email address, I will send a letter by post. Please pay your subscription promptly. Most of the costs of running the Thoroton Society are taken up by our publications and it helps greatly in the Society's financial planning if subscriptions are received on time. Cheques posted before the end of the year will be banked during the first week of January.

New member: Welcome to Mr Simon Keith who has recently become a Member of the Thoroton Society.

John Wilson, Hon. Treasurer and Membership Secretary

FROM BARBARA CAST My Role following Retirement

As members may be aware, I was due to retire from my role in the Society at this year's AGM after about a quarter of a century of enjoyable (well mainly) service. My retirement coincided with John Beckett's – but there was no collusion! And, unfortunately, we were not able to meet with you all at the AGM. But I haven't completely hung up my pen – I still retain the title Honorary Secretary for formal purposes – but the work I was responsible for in organising the Spring Meeting and AGM, the annual lunches and my involvement in our Special Lectures and Events have been taken over by the Events Group under the leadership of David Hoskins, now Vice-Chair of Council. My administrative role has been heroically taken up by Rosemary Muge and the Annual Report will be produced by our Newsletter Editor, Paul Baker. And, of course, the Standing Committee chaired by Richard Gaunt, the new Chair of Council, will continue to keep the business of the Society in sound health. I am continuing to scribe and coordinate the Response Group, also keeping up to date the register of events and anniversaries relevant to our county, and coordinating the Geoffrey Bond and Thoroton Research Awards. I will also be pleased to continue to act as recipient of email enquiries which come my way and which I will deal with, often by passing them on to those most likely to know the answer (with special thanks to Andy Nicholson our Webmaster for his support).

Barbara Cast
barbaracast@btinternet.com

The Thoroton Response Group

Some members will be aware that the Society does, from time to time, make representations of concern to various authorities – often those with planning functions – on matters relating to the history or archaeology of our county. Over the years a number of concerns have been brought to the attention of such bodies and it is interesting to consider some of the outcomes of the Response Group's efforts on your behalf. In the main, the areas on which representations are made fall into:-

- Planning applications on listed buildings, those in conservation areas or any others considered of historic or archaeological interest.
- Draft conservation area plans or appraisals of, or amendments to, existing conservation areas.
- Government, local government or other policy documents relating to the built, historic or archaeological environment, or any policies or plans which may affect these or to any part of such areas in Nottinghamshire.

Some matters which the Response Group has addressed have been long-running, such as the Robin Hood Hotel in Newark (with this there were some fairly minor wins and some losses). Also, the issue of

moving the Central Library – back on the agenda due to the Broad Marsh “Conversation”. Other matters have involved one letter to the appropriate authority – not always resolved as we would wish, but one such with a happy ending related to the Majestic Cinema on Woodborough Road which was scheduled for demolition; we were recently informed that it has now been Grade 2 listed and an appropriate future hopefully assured. Last year we challenged the City Council’s policy of charging to inspect artefacts held in museums – we received a measured response but our request for a rethink fell on deaf ears. This year a major issue was an application for a solar farm on the land around the historic conservation village of Halloughton, just outside Southwell. Although fully supporting green energy schemes – in the right place – the Society set out the major drawbacks of installing such constructions on the beautiful sloping fields around the village (containing evidence of their long existence), and with the proposal to site the entrance to this ‘farm’ scheduled to be opposite the Grade 11* Manor Farm House with its important 13th century prebendal tower, and next to the Church of St James where lie in its peaceful churchyard Sir Frank and Lady Doris Stenton and also Philip Lyth, well known to many historians. The outcome is awaited. Most recently we followed up concern regarding Radford Boulevard Board School on which a notice regarding its demolition was affixed. A quick letter of concern was answered with the good news that the demolition related to the modern extension only and that our representation would help to ensure that this fine Hine Junior building would be put on the Nottingham Local List. To be followed up now are the final details of access to the about-to-be-opened Nottingham Castle and also a response to the consultation on the future of Broad Marsh.

The terms of reference for the group also include that “Members of the Society be encouraged to inform the group of issues of concern relating to any of the above, including sites or buildings in danger”. May we reiterate that encouragement – let us know of any threats to our historic county.

Barbara Cast, Response Group Coordinator

Geoffrey Bond and Thoroton Research Awards

Since the award was established in 2015 there have been 23 applications of which 13 were successful in receiving awards. There have been three articles arising from research projects in Transactions so far, with hopefully that on the Saracen’s Head Elizabethan wall paintings appearing soon – it is currently with the editors – and another on the Wollaton Cottages. Six have had reports published in the Newsletter. The three successful 2019 applicants were due to report on their research by 30th September. However, because of the pandemic and the difficulty of accessing all the necessary documents, they have been allowed a further 12 months to complete. Some of them may manage to complete before the full period has elapsed. These researchers are Scott Lomax with an analysis of Nottingham horn cores; Victoria Owen with bioarchaeological research on St Nicholas Church graveyard plus documentary research on residents; and Val Wood researching nursing in the County. There is also the project of Bassetlaw Christian History on the 400th Mayflower anniversary and the local church histories. This was initially delayed because of the indisposition of the lead researcher and then again because Covid 19 caused the cancellation of the Pilgrim Settlers commemoration events. It is also hoped that this project will be also completed before the end of the year.

Barbara Cast, member of the Research Awards Adjudication Panel

THOROTON SOCIETY EVENTS

After the Government introduced restrictions on the numbers that could meet or attend events, the Society abandoned the remainder of the 2020 programme and cancelled all events scheduled for October, November and December. Emphasis has now been placed on producing a programme for 2021 that is as flexible as possible and still allows us to maximise availability to members. Because of continuing uncertainty over the duration of the restrictions, this may mean some events not taking place under face-to-face conditions and moving to alternative delivery media and may also necessitate some events being changed

at short notice. This uncertainty also means that it is not practical for us to produce a separate programme card for 2021. Our best endeavours, as at the beginning of November 2020, are set out below:

Provisional Programme for 2021

Lectures

Sat 9 January	Prof John Beckett	The Antiquities, Archaeology & History of Nottinghamshire 1897-2022
Sat 13 February	Nigel Lowey	George Gilbert Scott
Sat 13 March	Dr Richard Gaunt	Topic tbc
Sat 9 October	Gareth Davies	Nottingham Castle Archaeology (Postponed from 2020)
Sat 13 November	Dr Richard Bullock	Elizabethan & Stuart revenue collection (Postponed from 2020)
Sat 11 December	Pete Smith	Country Houses & the Motor Car

Excursions

We are proposing that the 2021 programme should be a series of local (to Nottingham) visits that can be accessed by personal transport rather than by coach or public transport. Arranged so far are:

Wed 19 May Wollaton Hall Gardens

Wed 22 September Newstead Abbey & Gardens

Further visits will be scheduled for June and July; actual dates will be publicised when they have been agreed.

Other Events

Sat 24 April Spring Meeting & AGM, at Epperstone

Sat 25 June Special Event, Concert by City of Lincoln Waites, Southwell (Postponed from 2020)

Sat 6 November Thoroton Lunch at Welbeck Hall, West Bridgford. (Postponed from 2020)

Contact with members

Although our principal medium for contact with all members is still the Newsletter, this does not appear with sufficient frequency to cope with changes to our programme at short notice. Recently, much use has been made of the Society's website and the e-bulletin which is currently sent to approximately 70% of members. We would urge any members who have access to email, and have not already registered, to register their email addresses with the Membership Secretary at Membership@thorotonsociety.org.uk so that they can be added to the distribution list for the e-bulletin. Those members without access to email may wish to consider whether there is a trusted relative or friend who may consider giving consent for their details to be added to our distribution list and who could then pass on any information sent out. We may also be able to consider a limited number of information messages being sent out as text messages to mobile phones. Finally, there are contact details on past programme cards and in the Newsletter, which can be used to check in advance whether any event is going ahead.

David Hoskins Chair, Events sub-committee

ARTICLES CONTRIBUTED BY SOCIETY MEMBERS

A PLAGUE ON ALL YOUR HOUSES!

It is currently an overworked subject and we may need a change of diet but, when it comes to plague, we as historians, can appreciate the long view. The Corona pandemic has taken centre stage recently but the following, more local, references may be of interest to us in Nottinghamshire:

On 1st August 1832 Maria Baldwin, a visitor to Orston Hall near Bingham wrote to one of her correspondents:- 'I am grieved to say the Cholera is spreading very rapidly in towns and villages very near this place..... it is generally feared by medical men the alarming disorder will still increase more in the Autumn, from the season and likewise the infection likely to be brought by the numbers of Irishmen who are allowed to come to England to be employed during the harvest; the Magistrates are very strict in this neighbourhood in ordering all Beggars to be taken up, which is highly proper, as one, a woman, was seized in a village near Newark a few days ago with the Cholera, she was immediately put into a cart and taken away.' The Nottingham Date Book at the same time records: - 'that dreadful scourge, the Asiatic cholera, appeared in

Nottingham early this year.....in August the epidemic broke out with alarming violence. In the seven days ending the 24th of that month, 41 new cases were reported to the local Board of Health and 18 deaths'. The disease 'prevailed in its most fatal form in imperfectly drained and ill ventilated localities.' The death rate peaked at the end of September and then tailed off in November. In all 600 people recovered and 330 died. [Later figures from the Sanitary Board's report were 1100 and 289 respectively]. A Cholera burial ground was hurriedly established on land donated on Beck Street and the Nottingham Board of Health spent £749 plus £200 given to patients for food, blankets etc. We are today urged to 'follow the science' but it is clear from the above sources that the spread of the disease was, at that time, attributed to poor housing and to persons outside polite society. Nottingham was most fortunate to have a local engineer, Thomas Hawksley (1807-93) whose idea of a pressurised water supply greatly contributed to the improved health of its inhabitants. This, together with housing and road improvements, meant that the next time cholera visited the city the numbers dying were appreciably lower.

Hawksley oversaw the construction of over 150 waterworks nationally and is remembered with gratitude by the populations of Birmingham and Liverpool as well as his native city. The first significant modern example of a plague was as a result of the lifting of the siege of Newark in 1646. The people, who had been caught up in a six months 'lockdown' when sanitary conditions in the town were exacerbated by greater numbers than usual, fled to their homes in villages in the area and gave their friends and relatives the kiss of death. The parish registers for the months following show peaks of burials, some villages resorting to plague pits. The rector of Sibthorpe notes in his burial register: 'In the year 1727 we had a violent shock of an earthquake which was felt in most parts of the kingdom, after which a most grievous sickness ensued (called the New Distemper because unknown before), which swept away an abundance of people of all ages and sexes for which no cure was to be had. The parish in a great measure escaped the contagion. In London the Bills of Mortality for several weeks were very great, some amounting to 900 and above.'

In the light of this it is understandable that Thomas Gilbey, an 18th century vicar of Gamston near Retford, memorialized in his parish register this recipe to protect against the plague:

'Take a pennyworth of dragon water, a pennyworth of olive oil, methradate a penny and treacle a penny. Then take an onion and fill it full of pepper, and when you have scraped it, then roast it and after that put it to the liquor and strain and drink it in the morning. And if you take the same at night, lay soap and bay salt to your feet and sweat upon it and, with God's help, you shall recover.' N.B. Don't try this at home!

Valerie Henstock

Editor's Note: 53,000 people in England and Wales died in the 1831/32 outbreak: the victims were mostly from the poorest sections of the population in the insanitary districts of industrial towns.

ANOTHER PICTURE OF NEWSTEAD ABBEY

Whilst the painting of Newstead Abbey which has been purchased in memory of Dr Rosalys Coope languishes, unrestored, at Newstead due to Covid-19, yet another eighteenth century image of the Abbey, a drawing this time, has come onto the London art market (**Fig. 1**). The gallery, Artware, attribute this pen and wash drawing (16 x 47cm) to Peter Tillemans with good reason. It is remarkably similar in style and technique to the pen and wash drawing by Tillemans now at Newstead, though with significant architectural and vegetative differences (**Fig. 2**).



Fig. 1. Peter Tillemans (attrib.) A Panorama of Newstead Abbey, Nottinghamshire, c. 1734. © Artware.



Fig. 2 Peter Tillemans. The west front of Newstead Abbey, Nottinghamshire, between 1720 and 1726. NCMG

The drawing now at Newstead (**Fig. 2**) must date to sometime between 1720, the date the Conduit was moved from the cloister to before the west front of the house, and 1726 the date of Buck's drawing, which shows that a number of small alterations had taken place in the intervening years. The new drawing (**Fig. 1**) illustrates further changes made to the west front around 1730 and must therefore date to sometime between 1730 and Tillemans' death in 1734. Tillemans was employed at Newstead in the 1720s and 30s not only to produce pictures of the Abbey but also to teach the 4th Lord Byron how to paint. Tillemans last and largest oil painting of the west front of the Abbey was left unfinished at his death and was completed by the 4th Lord before his own death in 1736. This new drawing was almost certainly created by Tillemans as a study for this late oil painting and was most likely taken in 1733 or '34.

The architectural changes clearly visible in the later drawing include the removal of the prominent external chimney stack to the north of the porch and its removal to the east side of the hall, plus its replacement with a third tall bay window, an exact replica of the late-medieval bay window, probably built for Prior William Sandall between 1504 and 1526, to its north. There is slight shift in viewpoint between these two drawings and the shading indicates that they were taken at different times of day – early afternoon for earlier drawing (Fig2) and late evening for the later one (Fig. 1) - whilst the foliage on the trees suggests that both drawings were taken at mid-summer. But the most obvious difference is seen in the growth of these trees. Those on the right hand side of the image – screening the service range – have increased in height significantly, as one might expect after the maximum 14 years. These trees and the shift in viewpoint must explain why the pyramidal kitchen roof, so prominent in the earlier drawing, is hidden from view in the later drawing. Similarly the trees on the left of the picture have put on so much growth that the small building seen on the extreme left in the earlier drawing (clearly seen in an engraving of 1749) has been engulfed by them. The only other significant difference is in the low curved front walls which are more clearly delineated in the new drawing. It is extremely unusual to find two such accurate and similar drawings of before and after alterations to a country house by the same artist and it is to be hoped that the Nottingham City Museums and Galleries will be able to raise the funds to acquire this drawing for the Newstead Collection so that these drawings can be reunited. The City has previously taken every opportunity to acquire important and significant works which relate directly to the house and the family's history. This newly discovered drawing by Peter Tillemans, one of the most important topographical artists of his day, is one more important piece in the jigsaw which is the history of Newstead Abbey. The paintings and drawings in the Newstead Collection by Tillemans, Samuel Buck, the 4th Lord Byron, S H Grimm, Cornelius Varley and Thomas and Maria Wildman have all contributed hugely to our understanding of how this house developed. The discovery of this new Tillemans drawing is also a hopeful reminder that new information is still waiting to be found or as in this case identified. For further details see - *artwarefineart*.

Pete Smith FSA

EARLY MEMBERS OF THE THOROTON SOCIETY: CORNELIUS BROWN



Cornelius Brown in his study
(photo provided by Andy Nicholson)

Cornelius Brown (1852-1907) is best known in Nottinghamshire as the historian of Newark. He joined the Thoroton Society in 1898, became a member of Council in 1900, a life member in 1902, and a Vice President in 1903. He died, aged only 55, in 1907. His magnum opus was his two-volume history of Newark (1904, 1907), but he also wrote other books, and articles for *Transactions of the Thoroton Society*. He was known for the lively way in which he led Society excursions, especially those which took place in and around Newark. When, in 1899, preparations began for starting the Victoria County History in Nottinghamshire, Brown was recommended to William Page, the General Editor, as one of the county's leading local historians.

Cornelius Brown was born on 5 March 1852 at Lowdham. His father was described in the 1861 census as a baker and grocer, and in 1871 as a baker. Cornelius was described in the 1871 census as a reporter, but by 1881 he had moved to Southwell, and was described as a newspaper proprietor. By then he had married Hannah Wright (born London, 1849) and they had three children: Percy William (b. 1879), Herbert (b. 1880) and a third child, Ethel (1883-1968) born in 1883. In 1881 as well, Brown had a servant, and two residential guests, his mother in law Mahala Wright (b. 1816) and a cousin, Zillah Ashton. In 1891 the household consisted of Cornelius and Amelia, the three children, and two servants both aged 15, an indication that Cornelius was doing well. The family was living in The Friary on Appletongate, Newark. In 1901 the family had moved to 1 Magnus Street, Newark. Herbert was still living with his parents and working as a banker's clerk. Ethel was living in the household but without a recorded occupation, and there was an 18-year-old servant. Brown himself was described as a 'journalist and author'. When he died in 1907 a probate of his will was granted to his widow and his son Percy, now described him as a gentleman. Trained as a journalist on the *Nottingham Guardian*, in 1874, aged just 22, he became editor of the *Newark Advertiser*. He was also a historian, hence his membership of the Thoroton Society from 1898 and of Bromley House Library. His *History of Nottinghamshire* was published in 1891, and when in 1899 arrangements were being made to launch the Victoria County History in Nottinghamshire, he was regarded as one of the obvious contributors from within the county. Charles Gerring, a local bookseller with a shop on Victoria Street in Nottingham, wrote in June 1899 to the VCH General Editor, H. Arthur Doubleday, recommending that 'there are three names that occur to me at once that might be helpful as workers: Mr Cornelius Brown of Newark, Mr T.M. Blagg of Newark, and Mr J Potter Briscoe FRHS, of the Free Public Library in Nottingham'. Brown was an active member of the Thoroton Society, leading excursions, and contributing papers to *Transactions*. A paper on Beauvale written by Brown in 1889 and subsequently revised for publication was read on an excursion in September 1907. Other papers by Brown on Worksop Priory and Newark church also appeared in *Transactions*.¹

As a vice-president of the Thoroton Society he was always willing to lead excursions in the area around Newark, and whenever the Society visited Newark he generally acted 'as guide and lecturer in his own inimitable way'. Without any doubt, Brown's major work was his *History of Newark*, curiously subtitled 'the life story of an ancient town', which he claimed took him fifteen years to research and write. It appeared in two volumes, of which the second was published only after his death on 4 November 1907, although he did correct the proofs.² It was typical of its genre in late Victorian England, but nonetheless important as a contribution not just to the history of Newark but also to urban histories more generally. Volume 1 covered 'earliest times' to the incorporation of the borough; and volume 2 covered the period from the reign of Edward VI to Edward VII. It was a chronological account written monarch by monarch - a method typical of the period, while the research on which it was based was largely in the London repositories where Mr R Westland Marston was the contracted agent. T.M. Blagg of Car Colston, another leading Nottinghamshire local

historian, was also profusely thanked for his help. For the depth of his scholarship, Brown was elected a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries, and a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature.³ Honours were welcome but he had no illusions that such promotions might lead to financial gain. Those local historians who enter on such an enterprise do not usually look for financial reward, and if they do, they usually look in vain. The recompense comes in other ways, and no doubt the author of this history of Newark will for the rest of his days feel a sense of satisfaction in the thought that he has been enabled to set forth the historic fame of a town that incited and justified his best efforts. Brown died in Newark in November 1907 after a short illness, but even today his name is inextricably linked with the history of the town. His history was reprinted in 1995, and more recently has been digitized and is available free on the internet. Although it is now dated in terms of urban history, the evidence it contains and the knowledge it conveys reminds us that Brown was a journalist at heart, with an understanding of how town histories were written.

John Beckett

1. Cornelius Brown, 'Beauvale Priory' *Transactions of the Thoroton Society* 11 1907 35-9; 2. 1905 (83-9) 4(1900) 67-72; 3. Cornelius Brown, 'A History of Newark-on-Trent, Being a Life Story of an Ancient Town', 2 volumes 1904,1907; 4. Douglas P Blatherwick, 'Cornelius Brown, the Nottinghamshire Historian', *The Nottinghamshire Magazine* Vol1 No2 (December1932)

THE REVEREND STEVENS AND THE 1858 THIEVES WOOD POACHING AFFRAY

Poaching was common in Nottinghamshire during the nineteenth century. Day poaching was endemic and accounted for by far the most of prosecutions, but it was night poaching that bothered the landowners and the authorities the most. Gang night poaching, by groups of men numbering anything from 6 to 30 – occasionally even more – was responsible for catching game in far greater quantities; moreover, it frequently resulted in fights between poachers and gamekeepers. These affrays reflected badly on the forces of law and order because they often resulted in gamekeepers and watchers getting seriously hurt, occasionally killed; and because it was obvious to the public that the poachers could not be controlled or deterred. (1) Most affrays resulted in few, if any, poachers being caught. The night poaching affray of August 1858, at Thieves Wood near Mansfield, did result in poachers being prosecuted. It also led to a clergyman being brought to trial at the 1861 Nottingham Assizes. (photograph of St Mary Magdalene Church, Sutton-in-Ashfield on the back page of this newsletter.) William Brooke Stevens was the incumbent of the Church of St Mary Magdalene in Sutton-in-Ashfield. That he was well thought of by his parishioners is evident from the size of the memorial over his grave in the church graveyard. (Photograph on back page of the Newsletter). In addition, inside the church, there is a stone pulpit is inscribed with the words: 'This pulpit is erected by friends and parishioners in memory of William Brooke Stevens, incumbent of this parish, who died Oct 22 1866 aged 54'. (Photographs on back page of the Newsletter).

The affray in question took place in Thieves Wood, which lies about 4 miles from the church, on the A60 south of Mansfield; these days it is a popular site for walkers. In 1858 it was part of the Berry Hill estate, and Sir Edward Walker's gamekeepers and night watchers were on the lookout for poachers every night. The affray was first reported on 14th August. It involved five keepers and watchers with at least one gun, and twenty or more poachers. When the two parties came upon each other the poachers fought by throwing stones at the keepers. According to the report, 'Getting excited, they called upon each other, in the most foul and abusive language, to fall upon them [the keepers] and murder them out of the way'. (2) The newspaper recorded that head gamekeeper Hurst threatened to shoot and the poachers 'slunk away'; however, 'many are known and will soon be apprehended'. Rounding up suspects after the event was a common way of catching poachers. Many of the local poachers were known to the gamekeepers, and keepers or watchers would inform the police that they had recognised certain men. On this evidence the police would go to their houses, usually at night, and apprehend them. By the 26th August it was reported that police had been to houses in Sutton-in-Ashfield at 3am and taken ten men into custody; they were then walked under guard to the lock-up at Mansfield. Some of them had been taken quietly, but as the search went on people became aware what was happening, and a sizable crowd had gathered by the time the last of the wanted men was apprehended. (3) By 2nd September 11 men had appeared before Colonel Coke at the Mansfield Petty Sessions. Gamekeeper Holmes had been badly injured in the face in the affray, and this instance of serious

violence meant that all the men were to be tried at the Michaelmas Quarter Sessions in October. They were: James Radford, George Wilkinson, Joseph Searston, Joseph Willoughby, Joseph Oxley, Samuel Dennis, William Shore, Alfred Morley, Charles Shaw and William Marsh. They all came from Sutton-in-Ashfield. (4) A Quarter Sessions trial was by jury, with the sentencing was done by the presiding judge. All were found guilty and received sentences of 12 or 18 months. After the trial it was reported that more than 200 people were at the railway station at Sutton-in-Ashfield waiting to hear news of the verdicts and sentences. When they heard that most of the men had got 18 months, 'the screams of the women and the indignation of the men were terrible to hear'. Wives and families were waiting there and such long sentences were not expected. (5) After this there was no further news about the event until the report, in the Nottinghamshire Guardian of 7th March 1861, from the Nottingham Assizes.

At the Nisi Prius Court, the Reverend William Brooke Stevens was accused of slander. (6) William Lee, the plaintiff, was one of the keepers on the Berry Hill Estate. The prosecution claimed that the Reverend Stevens had said in a public speech in 1858, that 'the rash and reckless swearing of William Lee had secured the conviction, at Nottingham Quarter Sessions, of men for 12-18 months for assaulting game-keepers, and that these men, or at least half of these men, were innocent.' The supposed slander was in reference to the affray at Thieves Wood in August 1858. The defence said that one of the men imprisoned had since died and left a widow and three children, and the rest of the wives and children had been 'on the parish'. Reverend Stevens said that it was difficult for the poor to get justice. As part of the defence case, eight men appeared in court as witnesses. Joseph Searston, Samuel Dennis, Henry Haughton, James Ratcliffe, and William Shore, all said that they had been convicted but were innocent. (7) John Turner, who had not been convicted, said that he had been one of the poachers at the event; to laughter in the courtroom he said that he had given up poaching – until next season. John Dove said, 'I was one of the poaching party... I have not been apprehended and six besides myself were never tried'; he also said that he had given up poaching, to more laughter in the court. (8) Summing up, the judge said that the question was, 'Had the plaintiff given rash and reckless evidence? Did he cook his testimony...to inculcate a number of men whom he could not honestly and truly have known by eyesight?' The verdict was that the witness had indeed done this, and that Reverend Stevens was not guilty of slander. During the period of over two years between the affray and the slander case, the whole affair must have been a topic of hot gossip in the neighbourhood. It seems likely that Stevens's stand in this issue and his public statement that the gamekeeper witness was lying, must have made him quite a public hero. This may explain why he is the only incumbent of the parish honoured after his death with a large and ornate gravestone, and a pulpit funded by public subscription and built in his honour.

Notes 1 The Game Laws Returns to Parliament show that in the years 1857-62, Nottinghamshire had as much poaching (per head of population) as some of the southern and eastern agricultural counties which were thought of as the great poaching areas. 2 Nottinghamshire Guardian (NG), 14 August 1858. Since the poachers were not reported as carrying guns, they must have been poaching for ground game (rabbits and hares) using nets. Only if they were poaching winged game, would it have been necessary for a good number of them to have carried guns. Most night poaching in Nottinghamshire was for ground game. Poachers usually used stones as their weapons in affrays; some of these could be very large, were often collected in advance and carried in the bags or pockets that by the end of the expedition would be filled with game. Large stones thrown at close range could be lethal. 3 NG, 26 August 1858. 4 NG, 2 September 1858. Some of these names can be recognised from other reports of poaching affrays or lists of convictions in the Criminal Registers. James Radford was convicted of poaching at Mansfield Petty Sessions in December 1851; George Wilkinson convicted of night poaching in 1836; Samuel Dennis was convicted at Nottingham Assizes in 1855, after being involved in an affray at Newstead Abbey; and William Shore was sentenced to one year's imprisonment at Nottingham Assizes in 1862. 5 NG, 28 October 1858. Judges could hand out sentences of up to seven years imprisonment, with hard labour, for violent night poaching. Transportation for 10, 15 or 20 years had previously been available, and before 1857 some of the worst offences of violent night poaching had resulted in transportation. However, this had ceased by 1858. Although longer sentences could be given, in practice judges were reluctant to do so. Some poachers convicted in violent night poaching affrays got sentences as light as three or six months. 6 A Nisi Prius Court tried civil offences. It is not clear whether or not this court had a jury or if the judge was the sole arbiter. Nisi Prius Courts could have juries. The report sounds rather as if there was no jury. 7 Not all these names are the same as those earlier reported to have been captured. However, James Ratcliffe was probably the same person as James Radford. 8 The laughter in court demonstrates that public attitudes to poaching were not the same as to other crimes. Poaching is often referred to as a 'social crime', meaning crime that many of the population thought was not morally wrong in the same way that robbery, for example, was. Day poaching was certainly a social crime; however, night poaching in gangs was not regarded so tolerantly by many people. But everyone in court would realise that these men saying they had given up poaching, did not really mean it.

Rosemary Muge

PLAQUE TO DOROTHY WHIPPLE UNVEILED AT LAST!

On 26th September, in an appropriately-distanced ceremony, a blue plaque was unveiled to the author Dorothy Whipple at 35, Ebers Road, Mapperley Park, Nottingham, the house where she lived and wrote from 1926 to 1939. The plaque had been crowd-funded by Helen Lewis and Bromley House Library, supported by Nottingham Women's History Group (NWHG), and was enthusiastically welcomed by the present owners of the property. Although the event was on a much smaller scale than originally planned, it was a great pleasure to see the plaque in place at last. I first became aware of Dorothy Whipple nearly ten years ago whilst researching my book, *Exploring Nottinghamshire Writers*. Persephone Books had recently rediscovered her and had begun to republish her novels and short stories.

Dorothy Whipple was born in Blackburn but came to Nottingham when her husband, Henry Whipple, was appointed Chief Education Officer for the city. She later described their time in Nottingham as "the fullest years of my life." It's been a long campaign to get a blue plaque for the woman who in the 1930s was called, "Nottingham's best-known author."⁽¹⁾ In 2012 NWHG had a *faux* blue plaque event – we made cardboard plaques for a dozen or so women we believed should be commemorated and attached them to the appropriate buildings. The only one outside the city centre was Dorothy Whipple's and I personally tied the plaque to the lamp post outside the house on Ebers Road, where it remained for some time and was noticed with interest by the new owners of the property. Meanwhile NWHG put on Whipple talks and walks – and a hilarious 'Tea and Whipple' event with the best china and dainty cakes! We read her books and passed them round and, last year, a talk on Dorothy Whipple made the main stage at Newark Book Festival. Nearly all Whipple's novels are set in either her native Blackburn or in Nottingham and many places can be recognised locally. For example, *They Knew Mr Knight* appears to begin somewhere in the vicinity of Ebers Road in 'Trentham' and the first fatal meeting between Mr Blake and Mr Knight occurs soon afterwards in the Victoria Station. The film of the book was actually shot there and is worth a look. But my favourite Whipple novel still remains the first I ever read – *The Priory* – which was inspired by Newstead Abbey, where the Whipples rented one of the lodges as a weekend retreat and Dorothy was able to write in peace. .

Bromley House Library has most of Whipple's books, including two autobiographical volumes, *The Other Day*, and the rare *Random Commentary* compiled from her notebooks after her death, which is due to be republished by Persephone Books this year. (See photographs on back cover of the Newsletter)

Rowena Edlin-White

1. From an undated news-clip from the *Evening Post* referred to by Mark Patterson *Evening Post* Sept 2, 1999

BOOKCASE: REFLECTIONS AND REVIEWS

Clare Hartwell, Nikolaus Pevsner and Elizabeth Williams,

***The Buildings of England, NOTTINGHAMSHIRE*, Yale University Press, 2020**

Clare Hartwell is to be congratulated on the production of the second revision of Nikolaus Pevsner's *Buildings of England* volume on Nottinghamshire published by Yale University Press. This volume brings the county into line with its neighbouring counties some of whom have had this new and larger format for many years; Leicestershire and Rutland 1984 and Lincolnshire 1989. Comparisons of the three Nottinghamshire volumes in price – 3/6 – £12.50 - £45.00, page numbers 248 – 448 – 812 and weight 209g – 435g – 812g tell their own story of the massive increase in information provided by this new volume. (see photograph on the back cover of the Newsletter.)

The single most important improvement is the use and the superb quality of the colour photographs taken by Martine Hamilton Wright. Especially noteworthy are the almost aerial photographs of the Bishop's Palace at Southwell and Bunny Hall. My only worry is that visitors to the county will be under the impression that the sun always shines in Nottinghamshire! This volume also boasts more plans and useful engravings and other topographical illustrations within the text. Clare's experience of carrying out this revision could not

have been more different than Pevsner's. Whilst Clare was inundated with offers of assistance and new information by local historians and specialists, many of whom are members of the Thoroton Society, Pevsner on the other hand, with only one part-time researcher, carried out all the field work with no local assistance, enduring miserable weather, loneliness, rationing and an unreliable motor car (which he drove very badly) according to his biographer Susie Harries. It was a working method he was never to repeat. His resulting lack of enthusiasm for the county is reflected in the volume published in 1951 and particularly in the Introduction whose first paragraph can best be described as 'damning with faint praise'. I am surprised to find that Clare has retained this unenthusiastic beginning, clearly marked as his by its parenthesis, without some further explanation. Personally, it is the statement that the county has 'none of the most spectacular...post-medieval country houses' which really rankles. Especially as he goes on to refer to Wollaton Hall in the text as 'The most important house in Notts and one of the most important in England', which of course it is. Decisions like this concerning when to retain Pevsner's original wording must be difficult and can occasionally result in unfortunate losses. Take for example the description of St John's Perlethorpe, the finest Victorian estate church in the county, after Clumber, where the section 'the same story of the great Victorian nobleman who feels it his duty to build a goodly church for his tenants after having built a magnificent mansion for himself' has been removed. It may not be precisely descriptive, but it is an unusual example of Pevsner in less formal mode, a rare thing in any of this series.

Perhaps the loss of such informal passages is an inevitable part of the transformation of the whole 'Buildings of England' series from a handy guidebook to the scholarly reference work that it has become. But it is not helped by the fact that this impressive church – 'Anthony Salvin's best church' according to Jill Allibone – is given a short and lacklustre description which fails to do justice to this fine Victorian estate church, especially when it is contrasted with the sometimes hugely expanded descriptions of medieval churches found in this new volume. As well as the inclusion of much new information it is good to see some common errors have finally been recognized. In the entry for the Stable Block at Wollaton Hall, for example, the date '1794' has at last been replaced with the correct date '1743'; a date which has always been clearly visible on the courtyard rainwater heads. Where Pevsner got hold of the date '1794' I cannot imagine.

No review of a new Pevsner would be complete without pointing out at least one mistake. In the Introduction Clare has included Michelgrove (a demolished house in Sussex of 1536) as a precursor of Wollaton's central hall plan, though it is now known that it was originally a courtyard house whose court was only infilled as the hall in 1769 (VCH, Sussex, 6, pt. 1). Occasionally there is a seeming reluctance to use a building's common name, which is annoying. For instance, the assemblage of service buildings built for the 5th Duke of Portland at Welbeck Abbey is always referred to as 'The New Works', but not here. Similarly, the now demolished 'Folly Castle' at Newstead Abbey is referred to as 'a spectacular Gothic castle', which it was, but without referring to it by name. One further example of this can be found in the entry for 'The Belvedere', a demolished garden building at Clifton Hall simply referred to in passing as 'The classical summerhouse'. This very substantial and nationally important structure designed by the Palladian architect, Lord Burlington, deserves a fuller entry, especially after the publication of Giles Worsley's article *Sir Robert Clifton's Belvedere* in the Georgian Group Journal as long ago as 2001. But these are mere quibbles which should not for one moment detract from Clare's achievement.

Unlike Pevsner, she has, I suspect, found herself attempting to precis the often complex researches of other historians keen to be included or asking for a more detailed entry. As someone who was approached informally, many years ago, about the possibility of my taking on this task, one which I obviously did not take up, I can only wonder at the enormity of the undertaking and congratulate Clare on the colour-filled result.

An online launch of this volume took place through Yale University Press and Five Leaves Bookshop in Nottingham in September in which Clare Hartwell discussed her work in the county in conversation with David Stewart. A recording of this event is available on YouTube.

Pete Smith FSA

Richard A. Gaunt, ed., *Church, Land and People*:

Essays presented to John Beckett (Thoroton Society Record Series, 50, 2020)

Professor John Beckett has been a member of the Thoroton Society since 1980 and chaired the Council from 1992-2020. Here he reflects on this volume of essays which was presented to him in the summer.

I have been aware of the concept of a *festschrift* throughout my academic life. The dictionary definition is 'a collection of writings published in honour of a scholar', and I have myself in the past contributed essays to similar volumes prepared for other scholars including my doctoral supervisor, Professor Geoffrey Holmes. Somehow it had never occurred to me that one day I might myself be the beneficiary of such a volume, but Richard Gaunt, whose doctoral work I supervised in the late 1990s, thought otherwise. Furthermore, he persuaded many other friends and colleagues to contribute, in strict secrecy, with the intention of publishing the volume in conjunction with my valedictory lecture, planned for 24 June 2020, but indefinitely delayed because of Covid19.

The range of contributions is considerable and reflects my own interests in the East Midlands since I arrived at the University of Nottingham as a junior lecturer in 1979. I think I am correct in saying that of the contributors to the book, only Professor Michael Turner of the University of Hull - where I had previously been employed - was already well known to me, although I had probably met Philip Riden at conferences, and Michael Jones I knew from my first day in post. I seem to recall that our first meeting was in the Hallward Library at the new books stand, and that Michael was carrying a large tin of paint. I subsequently met Stanley Chapman, David Marcombe, and Dorothy Johnston as work colleagues, Adrian Henstock via Nottinghamshire Archives, and everyone else through different aspects of my academic interests.

By publishing the book through the Thoroton Record Society, Richard Gaunt has focussed the authors primarily on Nottinghamshire, perhaps sliding occasionally into the East Midlands more generally. I did not come to Nottingham in 1979 expecting to develop local and regional interests of the sort emphasised by the book. Admittedly I had local interests, having been brought up and educated in the city before I went to Lancaster University and, subsequently, posts in Newcastle, Banbury, and Hull. I had also taught adults, through the WEA, and in continuing with this work when I had managed to find my way around the University, I developed a particular niche in the history of the East Midlands and joined the Thoroton Society. I met Maurice Barley, who turned out to be a neighbour, and who gave me considerable help in career development, as well as appointing me in 1984 as his Amstrad PC tutor! Some of the interests I built up were, unsurprisingly, related fairly specifically to Nottinghamshire. In the 1990s I played a significant role in the Thoroton Centenary celebrations (1997) - with vital support from the late Neville Hoskins - and at the same time I was editing the *Centenary History of Nottingham* (published in 1997). Contributors to that project, who also wrote for the *festschrift*, included Trevor Foulds, Martyn Bennett, David Marcombe, Adrian Henstock, Ken Brand, and Stanley Chapman.

Elsewhere in the county, I have greatly enjoyed working at Laxton and, in terms of the diocese of Southwell and Nottingham (more or less the county), with Chris Brooke on the Church History Project. Into this category as well should come my history of the University of Nottingham, published in 2016. My local history interests expanded beyond Nottinghamshire. I wrote a book on the East Midlands in a series edited by the late David Hey, and chaired the History of Lincolnshire Committee for thirty years. My work as chair of the Board of Midland History also brought me into contact with local history across the Midlands, and 2005-10 I was able to broaden my interests further as Director of the Victoria County History. During those years I was able, with the support of Philip Riden, to promote new VCH work in Nottinghamshire which should soon appear in print. I also published a book, *Writing Local History*, which was geared to discussing local history at a national level. Even further afield, during my time with the VCH I promoted two international conferences on local history with contributors from across the English-speaking world, and Japan. All this expanded the range of my interests, but there have always been new subjects to interest me, and new ideas to promote. The Church History Project is still live, as is some ongoing work on the lost churches and chapels of the county. A recent project on the First World War has left me with work to write up on the Chilwell explosion of

1918, the Sutton Bonington Prisoner of War camp 1916-19 and returning soldiers in 1918-19. Another local project, jointly with Paul Elliott, has led to a book, shortly to be published, on Nottingham's green spaces.

I think of local history as eclectic. Many of my own contributions have been similar, moving from topic to topic rather than adopting the more rigid position of many academics in terms of space and period. Much the same can, I think, be said of the festschrift contributions, starting in the seventeenth century and moving forward to more recent times, and covering topics from the Civil War, through Robin Hood, the dukes of Newcastle, the village of Norwell, and so on to end with one of my earliest interests in land ownership, in this case the Nottinghamshire yeoman. The author of that chapter, Michael Turner, and I came face to face for the first time when we were interviewed for a lectureship in Hull in 1978. Michael was appointed to the post, but they found a temporary position for me, and that was where our collaboration started, with books, academic articles, and all sorts of other output. But it was also fun. When we met in Hull or Nottingham we would find something to laugh about. I have always enjoyed the humour linked to working with other people, including Ken Brand on the Centenary History project, when he insisted on referring to himself as Baldrick to my Blackadder, or Chris Brooke, who has a truly astonishing knowledge of Scotch whisky. Years ago, when Trevor Foulds was working with me on Laxton, we often found it necessary to sustain ourselves at a local curry house, and David Marcombe and I went on numerous weekend field trips during the halcyon days of the MA in Local and Regional History.

I also think of kindnesses, of help, and sometimes of support through difficult times or just support now long forgotten. I doubt very much if Sir Neil Cossons remembers an occasion when he was Director of the Science Museum. One evening he showed me, and my (then) small son Stephen, around the museum. Stephen did not forget it! I have also met with great kindness from the farmers of Laxton who encouraged my work and always invite me to Jury and Court days. I am a trustee of the Visitors' Centre. And, finally, the kindness of Richard Gaunt in promoting this festschrift and keeping everyone to time, let alone succeeding me as chair of Thoroton Council! The festschrift reflects my academic interests through my career, and each chapter addresses a specific topic. In Nottinghamshire local history, whether through the Thoroton Society, or the Notts Local History Association, or the Saturday Morning seminar series, I have been privileged to meet a great many people who share my fascination with local history. Many of them have never written a single word, which I used to consider a terrible sin (based on a throwaway remark in one of W.G. Hoskins' books) until I started to understand how they contributed by asking questions, offering to do some research, tracking down publications and so forth. I learnt, particularly during my VCH days, that many are committed to local history but prefer to support others who are the 'writers'. There is, I believe, space for us all, which is why I became involved with the Thoroton Society in the first place, and why I have done what I can to promote research through the Thoroton Research Group, and the Geoffrey Bond research awards. There is no shortage of work to be done, as W.P.W. Phillimore outlined in his address to the inaugural meeting of the Thoroton Society in June 1897! In retirement I hope to be able to do something towards filling the gaps.

John Beckett

Church, Land and People – an appreciation.

For me, this festschrift for Professor John Beckett has been a high point of the Covid19 lockdown. Living now in the south-west of Wales, it was wonderful to receive this substantial volume of fascinating essays by some of the friends and acquaintances from my time in Nottinghamshire and my membership of the Thoroton Society.

Having first met John in the early 1980s, I was especially pleased by Richard Gaunt's fascinating introduction that provided me with a more rounded understanding of John's background and professional career. This, and the extensive bibliography of his publications (by Denise Amos and Andy Nicholson) re-enforce for me not only the great breadth, depth and quality of John's learning and output, but also the considerable number of regional and national organisations to which he has contributed. This, of course, has also benefited our Thoroton Society immeasurably during John's years as a Council member and Chair. I

think few county historical organisations are lucky enough to have had such a high-profile academic within their ranks.

What is also clear from this book is the great help and encouragement John has given to so many historians, both professional and amateur (including me), and this is where the thirteen essays presented here again show the range of John's impact in furthering our understanding of Nottinghamshire's history. It is impossible to describe here in detail the wealth of information available in these substantial articles, but I am impressed how many reflect more than one of the themes of church, land and people that make up the title of the festschrift.

The essays by Michael and Elizabeth Jones and by Chris Brooke deal most directly with the 'church' theme. The former focuses on the administration of the parish of Norwell between 1664 and 1725, using a rich body of sources, most notably the 'Town Book' that records the business conducted by the parish officers. The latter essay celebrates the Southwell & Nottingham Church History Project that was established in 2000 to document the 314 Anglican churches within the county. The information on the project's website is shown to be of use not only for everyday historical, archaeological and architectural research but also for complex statistical analyses to tease out patterns and test hypotheses on causes and effects. Several other essays include religious and ecclesiastical themes, most notably in David Marcombe's account of an 1800s portrait of the merchant Cranmer Kenrick, which explains his lineage from Archbishop Cranmer, and in Adrian Henstock's perceptive comparison of social and economic change in Bingham and Ashbourne around the 1840s. Here the clergy as well as the major landowners in both towns were significant forces in religious and other issues that divided or unified local public opinion.

Three of these four essays also focus on the 'people' theme of this festschrift, along with other contributions from Martyn Bennett, David Crook, Trevor Foulds and Richard Gaunt. Bennett explains how personal rivalries and factions both within and between royalists and parliamentarians influenced the conduct of the Civil War in Nottinghamshire and the rest of the Midlands. Crook shows how the legacy of the Civil War in Nottingham influenced the characterisation of Robin Hood in the text of a play performed there on the day of the coronation of Charles II. Foulds documents the difficulties Henry, the 2nd Duke of Newcastle, experienced in finding suitable marriages for his five daughters, while Gaunt deals with the other end of the social scale in describing the various fortunes of the early 19th century workers (and a government spy) involved in the Pentridge rebellion of 1817.

Architectural and landscape design, enclosure and road transport feature in the remaining five essays and explore the theme of 'land'. Dorothy Johnston describes the first phases of the 3rd Duke of Portland's development of Welbeck park between the 1760s and 1780s. Ken Brand explains the impact of the enclosure of Nottingham's commonable fields between the 1830s and 1850s on its public, commercial and domestic buildings, while enclosure is dealt with in a more general way in Michael Turner's examination of its effect on copyhold tenure. Finally, the essays by Philip Riden and Stanley Chapmen provide much fascinating evidence of communications and transport both within and beyond Nottinghamshire between 1600 and 1850.

This exemplary festschrift presents much new research on Nottinghamshire, and taken together provide a glimpse of the huge impact Professor Beckett has had on understanding the history of his home county.

Steph Mastoris

Norwell Parish & People
Norwell Heritage Booklets (ISSN 2040-2406)

Norwell Parish & People is the ninth volume in the Norwell Heritage Booklet Series, edited by Michael Jones, and based on research done by the Norwell Parish Heritage Group. Drawing on a number of sources including Norwell's *Town Book*, which documents how village officers administered the parish between the 1660s and 1830s, this volume focuses on everyday life in Norwell. The volume begins with an overview of the old order, outlining the local and parish power structures present in the village, many of which had been in operation since the 13th century. As in all parishes across the country, the church was central to everyday

life in Norwell, and in this volume, we learn of the role that the clergy and churchwardens played in the village. Ranging in focus from the prebendaries, some of whom became amongst the highest serving men in the country, to churchwardens and those who helped keep the church in good repair, this chapter shows how, at all levels, the church and the clergy were responsible for not only the spiritual life of parishioners, but also contributed much to economic life. For much of the period maintaining law and order was the responsibility of the parish.

Before the Rural Police Act of 1856 made the establishment of rural police compulsory, the parish constable was responsible for keeping the peace. The role was often an unpopular one, and duties could be onerous, however 'with very few exceptions Norwell was not a place where law and order was a problem'. Similarly, providing for the poor and needy also fell to the parish, and as this volume details, support came from both official and unofficial sources including neighbours and charities, as well as overseers of the poor. Other chapters focus on the transport in and around the parish, in particular the maintenance of highways, byways, and waterways, as well as the challenges posed to the rural economy by pests and vermin. The volume concludes by outlining the changes to the system of parish system of organisation, showing how from the end of the 18th century, the old order, which had existed for centuries began to break down, replaced by an increasingly centralised system of government. This is a welcome addition to the Norwell Heritage Booklet Series, and provides an interesting insight into community life in one of Nottinghamshire's small rural parishes.

Hannah Nicholson

OBSCURE ANNIVERSARIES, WINTER (December to February inclusive)

1920-21

Christmas day 1920 was very warm, equal to 1896, with maximum temperature at Killerton, Devon of 15.6C. There had been much rain from about 20th December 1920 until near the end of January 1921. However, February 1921 at Hodsock Priory was very dry, with only 0.05ins (1.3mm) of rain falling between 1st February and 24th February – *British Rainfall 1920, 1921*.

1900

There were heavy falls of snow between 26th January and 16th February 1900. The very deep snow in February was followed by heavy rain, leading to some flooding. – *British Rainfall 1900*.

1880-81

7th January. Destruction by fire of the handsome and complete lace factory of Mr Fearfield, of Stapleford. The damage was estimated at £50,000.

1860-61

3rd January. This morning, great excitement prevailed in York Street and the neighbourhood, caused by the extraordinary conduct of the male and female inmates of the Workhouse; some of the men having threatened to set fire to the building before the day was over. A messenger was dispatched to the residence of Mr Patchett (the chairman) and Mr Turner (the vice-chairman) of the board, information also being given to the Police. On the arrival of these gentlemen, several of the paupers were ordered to be confined and placed under low dietary, whilst nine were conveyed to the House of Correction, and three women and one man at once discharged from the Union.

4th January. The nine inmates of the Union were brought before the borough Magistrates upon the charge of riotous conduct and insulting the Master of the Workhouse. The evidence given by Mr White being corroborated by Mr Patchett and Mr Turner, the whole of the prisoners were convicted; eight of them being committed to the House of Correction for two months with hard labour, and the other for twenty-one days.

2nd February. Early this morning when some heavy drays were passing over the Midland Railway bridge, London Road, the ground was observed to give way. An examination was made, and it was found that the large iron girders of the central arch had snapped asunder, causing the surface to lower about fourteen inches.

1840-1841

January. In the course of the excavations for the yards & of the new poorhouse, human bones were uncovered in great numbers, along with fragments of stonework, part of a pavement of glazed tiles, several brass rings, a large stone coffin and other antiquities. They were found principally in removing the soil from the top-end of the yard near to Woodborough-road. Tradition had long pointed out this as the site of the ancient church and burial ground of St Michael but in the absence of documentary proof, the fact had been received with a degree of suspicion. Such doubt was now dispelled. The church is understood to have been demolished in the reign of Edward III. The bones, considering they must have lain in the soil for at least five hundred years, were surprisingly perfect.

1810-1811

10th February. Death of the Hon Henry Cavendish at Clapham. He was a distinguished philosopher and chemist, and presented the munificent sum of £6,337 to the Nottingham General Hospital.

February. Such was the reduced state of trade and the high price of corn, that half-famished workmen, belonging to nearly every branch of the local manufacture, were constrained to sweep the streets for paltry support. They were so employed by the overseers of St Mary's, the workhouse being too full to receive their families and no other employment presenting itself.

1790-1791

1st December. The Peverel Court was held at the Coffee-House, Lenton, for the first time, having for a century previously been held at Basford.

10th December. The death of John Davison MD, aged 78 years, during fifty of which he had practised physics in this town, with credit to himself and advantage to the public.

24th December. The greatest flood known near Nottingham for many years. A man named Samuel Marshall, of Broad-marsh, unfortunately lost his life in it. He was sent to extricate some sheep in "Holme Grounds", and when he arrived near Lady-bay Bridge, he could no longer discern the road, the water having completely covered all traces of it. Pressing on, however, with his horse and cart, he perished. The horse was found drowned, standing in the shafts; but the body of Marshall was not recovered for several days.

20th February. Mr Willimott, of Sutton-upon-Trent, having sent a boat up the river, laden with one hundred quarters of wheat, unfortunately met with a great loss. As the boatmen were making preparations to go through the arches of the Nottingham bridge, after fastening the rope to the windlass, and shifting their sails, to prevent them dropping into the water, the north-east wind blew so strongly that one side of the vessel dipped below the surface and caused her to capsize. As she lay bottom uppermost, the bed of the river received all the cargo.

23rd February. John Plumptre, Esq, of Plumptre House, died at his London residence, Jermyn Street, Westminster, in his 80th year. He was the son of John Plumptre Esq, by Annabella, eldest daughter of Sir Francis Molyneux, Bart, of Teversall. His remains were deposited in the vault at St Mary's. The Plumptre family, up to this date, had been residents in the town from the time of Edward I, and the deceased gentleman and his father had been its representatives in several successive Parliaments. The old family mansion in Stoney-street had been demolished in 1860.

- All extracted from the *Nottingham Date Book*

John Wilson

THE THOROTON SOCIETY OFFICERS

President: Adrian Henstock BA DAA FRHistS

Chairman: Dr Richard Gaunt: richardgaunt@nottingham.ac.uk

Vice-Chairman: David Hoskins: dhoskins@talktalk.net and 0743 611 4158

Hon Secretary: Barbara Cast BAHons. email:

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

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email: membership@thorotonsociety.org.uk

Honorary Administration Secretary: Rosemary Muge: rosemarymuge@gmail.com

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 Coordinator, 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, 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 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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PHOTOGRAPHS RELATING TO THREE ARTICLES

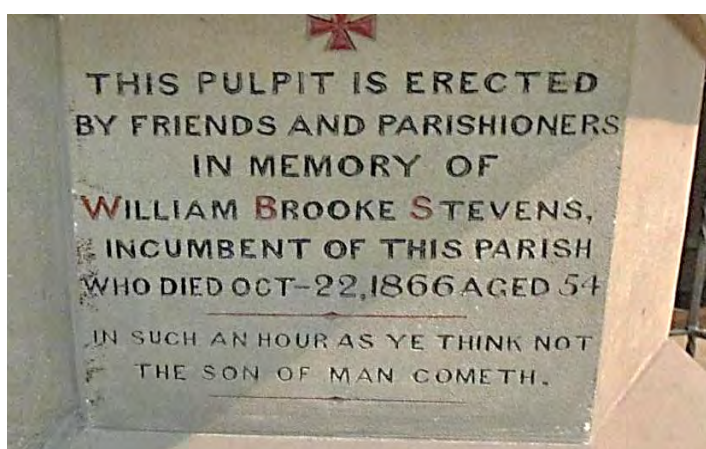


Left: St Mary Magdalene Church, Sutton in Ashfield

Right: Grave of Rev. WB Stevens

Below left: Pulpit in the church

Below: Inscription on the pulpit



Right: Blue plaque to Dorothy Whipple

Below right: David Belbin (Nottingham UNESCO City of Literature), Helen Lewis, & Rowena Edlin-White at the dedication of the plaque to Dorothy Whipple – see article on page 12

Below: The Buildings of England – see review on Page 13

