

**THE THOROTON SOCIETY OF
NOTTINGHAMSHIRE**

THE COUNTY'S HISTORICAL SOCIETY
FOUNDED 1897

ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS
for the year ended 31st December 2013

**THE THOROTON SOCIETY OF NOTTINGHAMSHIRE
OFFICERS JANUARY TO DECEMBER 2013**

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Barbara Cast BA Hons (3)*

Little Dower House, Station Road, Bleasby, Notts NG14 7FX

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Archaeology - Keith Challis BA MPhil MSc MifA FRGS (0)*

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Judith Mills BA MA PhD (3)*

**Ex-officio members of Council*

Number in brackets indicates attendance at Council meetings (maximum 3)

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John Beckett, Barbara Cast and John Wilson

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Keith Challis BA MPhil MSc MifA FRGS

David Crook MA PhD FRHistS FSA OBE

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John Wilson BPharm MPhil FRSPH

(Honorary Treasurer, Record Section)

THE THOROTON SOCIETY OF NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

TRUSTEES REPORT FOR YEAR ENDED 31st DECEMBER 2013

LEGAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

The full name of the society is the Thoroton Society of Nottinghamshire and it is governed by a constitution known as the 'Rules of the Thoroton Society of Nottinghamshire'. These rules are registered with the Charity Commissioners under number 237755.

OBJECTS OF THE SOCIETY

Under the rules of the Society, its objects shall be to promote and foster the study of the history, archaeology and antiquities of Nottinghamshire for the public benefit and to promote and foster public knowledge, understanding and appreciation of Nottinghamshire's history generally.

ADDRESS FOR ENQUIRIES

Barbara Cast, Honorary Secretary, Little Dower House, Station Road, Bleasby, Nottinghamshire NG14 7FX

TRUSTEES

The members of Council are considered to be the Trustees of the Society. Details of membership of Council are shown on page 3.

MAIN ADVISORS

Bankers - HSBC Bank plc, 26 Clumber Street, Nottingham NG1 3GA

FUNDS

The General Fund can be used for the general furtherance of the aims of the charity. In order to achieve the aims of the Record Section, the Society has the power to print original historical materials, records and manuscripts. The income from the Maurice Barley, Nora Witham, Myles Thoroton Hildyard and Neville Hoskins Funds is used for lectures. The Coddington Fund is to be used for the William Senior Record Series volume, the Centenary Fund for the Heritage Gateway and the Davis Bequest to digitise the Nottinghamshire Bibliography.

REPORT OF COUNCIL FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st DECEMBER 2013

INTRODUCTION AND CHAIR'S REPORT

This year's annual report reveals once again the remarkable range of activities with which the Society is involved. I am particularly pleased to see that this year has brought with it some significant developments in the Society's work, notably the e-Bulletin which goes to all members with an email address and which can bring more up-to-date information about events than is possible through our usual newsletter. My own personal highlight was the Michael Wood lecture at Newark Town Hall in August. Special lectures of this sort take some planning, but we hope to do another one soon as part of an occasional series. We are also now working much more closely with the Nottinghamshire Local History Association, and this will be reflected in a joint conference about the Home Front in Nottinghamshire during the First World War, scheduled for October 2014. This year has also seen the completion of a significant part

of the Southwell and Nottingham Church History Website Project, which many members have contributed to, none more so than Terry Fry.

As usual I should like on this occasion to thank the officers and council members for their work in ensuring that the Society runs as successfully and smoothly as it does. This year my thanks are tinged with a note of sadness, because our President, Dr Rosalys Coope, has decided to relinquish her office after five years in post. Rosalys has been connected with the Society for more than half a century, and her regular attendance at events has long been something we have been able to admire. Despite now being into her nineties she is not done yet! We hope that later this year we might be able to publish her work on Newstead Abbey as a volume in the Record Series.

Finally, my usual plea to members to keep the officers informed of how you feel about such things as the subject matter of lectures and the venues for excursions, and also to let us know of any planning or similar issue in your area so that we can if necessary make appropriate representations.

John Beckett, Chair of Council

PROCEEDINGS OF COUNCIL

The Council met for its scheduled three meetings at Lenton Grove, courtesy of the University of Nottingham. Council's responsibility is to oversee the Society's business, finance and development. Officers and representatives of the Society on various organisations report to Council at each meeting. Members of Council and its officers are elected at the AGM for a period as set down in the Constitution. The Standing Committee, appointed by Council and consisting of the officers, meets on a regular basis, taking responsibility for day to day work, detailed consideration of developments and the planning of the programme. It reports to Council each meeting.

Barbara Cast, Honorary Secretary

HONORARY TREASURER'S REVIEW OF THE YEAR TO 31ST DECEMBER 2013

The Society's affairs are sound, in spite of an excess of expenditure over income of £3,979. This is due to the use of some of our reserves for the purposes for which they were intended: £1,000 from the Coddington Fund, for digitisation of the William Senior Maps, and £2,000 from the Davis Bequest. The latter was used for the digitisation and updating of the Bibliography. We also published volume 46 in our Records Series, *Archbishop Drummond's Parish Visitation Returns*, the printing costs of which came to £3,319. We received no legacies or publication grants for papers in *Transactions* in 2013.

Subscriptions have held up and show a tiny increase over those of 2012, as our membership slowly increases.

Interest on our reserves with National Savings and Investments (NS&I) showed an increase to £508, up from £407 in 2012.

Our excursion programme was again very successful, showing a small surplus of £309 on the four excursions.

The Special Lecture given by Michael Wood made a surplus of £976. Michael was kind enough to take only expenses, but he requested that we make a significant donation from any surplus to the historical work going on in Laxton. Our Chair, on behalf of Standing Committee, and in his other role as President of the Laxton History Group, is in discussion with the Group with a view to supporting current and future work connected with the village and its field system.

Of other expenses, postage is slightly down from 2012, largely owing to the slightly smaller size, and hence weight, of *Transactions*. Cost of printing the Newsletter increased, mainly owing to the production of one issue of 32 pages. Sundry expenses, which in 2012 came to £72, were £623 in 2013. This figure includes the purchase of the Display Banners (£386) and the Sound System (£168).

Our Insurance is now through the British Association for Local History and is included in our Corporate Membership. The annual subscription is currently £65 but in 2013 we had to pay for the part-year from when our previous insurance expired and for the 2014 subscription: hence the £130 in the column for Insurance.

The Bookstall took £349 this year. This was, in part, due to a decision by Standing Committee to sell off some of our older book stock at reduced rates on the Bookstall at the Saturday meetings.

The General Fund of the Society at 31st December 2013 totalled £21,491. The total assets of the Society at the start of the 2014 financial year are £70,336. We also have a remaining stock of books and ties.

John Wilson, Honorary Treasurer

MEMBERSHIP

2013 was a mixed year for the Society's Membership. We successfully recruited sixteen ordinary members, six associate and three student members and also gained two new honorary members in Sir Neil Cossons and Sir Andrew Buchanan. Unfortunately, perhaps due to the recession finally hitting home, we also received a significant number of resignations and there were a larger than usual number of subscription non-payments, despite two reminders being sent. Similar losses have been experienced with institutional memberships. As a result, the overall numbers are rather reduced compared to 2012.

We hope that this is only a temporary dip and that the Membership will recover in the coming year.

Judith Mills, Honorary Membership Secretary

Comparative membership numbers	2012	2013
Individual members	234	218
Individual members with record series	79	78
Associate members	54	61
Life members	7	7
Student members	7	6
Honorary members	2	4
Record series only	4	4
Total individual members	392	378
Institutional members	10	12
Institutional members – with record series	65	62
Institutional members – record series only	5	2
Total institutional members	80	76
Final total	472	454

Total record series	158	146
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PUBLICATIONS

Transactions

Volume 116 (2012) was published and presented at the Annual General Meeting in April 2013. The journal was once again printed by 4word of Bristol who again provided excellent support to the editors and a subsequent fine looking volume.

The journal opened with a discussion of the career of Thoroton Society Council member, Dr Dorothy Johnson as Keeper of Manuscripts and Special Collections, University of Nottingham, a post she had held for twenty-five years

The well-illustrated issue included two archaeology articles and four history essays. Included in this year's volume were articles by a number of members of the Thoroton Society Council: Chairman Professor John V Beckett contributed an article on the first Bishop of Southwell, Dr George Ridding. Honorary Treasurer, John Wilson, contributed an article on the relationship between weather, sanitation and disease in early twentieth century Nottingham. Former editor Adrian Henstock, together with Peter Allen, contributed an article on the Porters of Bingham Hall and a new interpretation of a supposed site of a mediaeval village at Crow Close. David Knight contributed to the archaeological essay on the origins of Nottingham. Richard Goddard contributed an important article on the development of the mediaeval coal industry in the county. The annual history lecture this year was not included, as a fully written up version was not

ready at the time when the paper would be going to the press. It was arranged that the article could be submitted for volume 117 (2013): however it was still not ready by that point – it may therefore be submitted for volume 118.

By the end of the year 2013 the Publications Committee had seen the list of six history articles for issue 117 covering a range of topics on county history, covering topics from the middle ages to the mid-nineteenth century, and by the end of 2013 these were ready for submission to the printer.

Martyn Bennett, Honorary History Editor and
Keith Challis, Honorary Archaeology Editor

Record Series

The latest publication, Volume 46, *Church Life in Georgian Nottinghamshire: Archbishop Drummond's Parish Visitation Returns 1764*, was launched in May by the Bishop of Southwell and Nottingham. This is an edition by Howard Fisher of the returns from individual Nottinghamshire parishes in reply to questions asked by Archbishop Drummond of York during his Ecclesiastical Visitation in 1764.

During 2014 will be published the long-awaited interactive compact disc edition of estate maps created for the Earl of Newcastle during 1600-1640 by the surveyor William Senior and now preserved in the Welbeck Atlas. The disc comprises full colour reproductions of some seventy maps of estates mainly in Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire, Staffordshire and Northumberland. It will be accompanied by a printed volume containing both a detailed introduction and a catalogue of the maps listing the place names and other topographical features recorded on each one.

Because of the inevitable long lead-in times in bringing *Record Series* volumes to production, discussions have been held within the Publications Committee of extending its future role to include both (a) single volumes containing editions of *several* shorter original archives relating to specific themes or periods (eg Mediaeval market towns or Victorian country houses, etc), and also (b) important monographs on either historical or archaeological subjects (or both) which are too long for inclusion in the *Transactions*. There have been precedents for such publications over the 110 years of the *Series'* existence. It is therefore intended to publish a monograph on the architectural history of the Byron family seat of Newstead Abbey since the Middle Ages. This will bring together a series of articles which appeared in the *Transactions* over many years written by the Society's President, Dr Rosalys Coope, but extended and revised in the light of recent research.

Adrian Henstock, Honorary Record Series Editor

Newsletter

There have been four quarterly Newsletters in 2013 as usual. Some issues have had rather more pages than we usually experience and have, therefore, attracted a rather higher printing cost; as a result I am seeking for the future to work on 24 page issues.

The last issue of 2013 had a slightly different lay-out because I have changed the DTP programme to Adobe InDesign which is more flexible and has more features than the programme I previously used; it is also a little more complicated to use but the advantages far outweigh the disadvantages.

The contents have been a mix of the long-established reports on the Society's activities, notices of future Society events and articles of interest which, I hope, has enabled the Newsletters to be an interesting read for members as well as a source of reference about the Society's activities. When received in time notices from other organisations relating to local history and archaeology are included, when it is thought they might be of interest to members.

When we attended the Great Nottingham History Fair at Mansfield we gave back-issues of the Newsletter to visitors to our stand and they certainly seemed to enjoy reading them.

I am always very grateful to those members who send me information and articles to include. Please continue to do so and I encourage anyone who has information or an idea for an article to contact me. Any help required will be most readily provided. Images continue to be of great use.

In addition to members sending me contributions I would like to thank Council for its ongoing support for the Newsletter; David Bagley who sees to the collection from the printer and then mails copies to members in addition to doing proof reading for me. My wife, Jackie, also does proof reading and, on occasions, is rather critical about my lay-outs! I am very grateful to her for this support. I should also mention Adlard Printers of Ruddington who are most efficient in the way they accept the PDFs I send to them, are quick to return a printers' proof and to do the actual printing on time with high quality. The production of the Newsletter is a team effort and I am very grateful for all the help and support I receive. I just hope members enjoy what is produced for them.

Howard Fisher, Honorary Newsletter Editor

PLANNING AND CONSERVATION IN THE CITY OF NOTTINGHAM

2013 was a fairly quiet year with more committed to paper than rising from the ground. The Odeon Site on Angel Row was cleared and building work for post-graduate student accommodation commenced, and this was soon looming in formidable fashion over Bromley House. Various stages of the extensive work for Nottingham Trent University on Shakespeare Street turning into Waverley Street were completed. The Dunkirk Fire Station has been demolished, part of the preparatory work for the University of Nottingham's STEM College (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics) for some 850 students. The Nottingham Girls High School's Performing Arts Centre is on course to open in 2015. A small refurbishment saw the former Nottingham University's Adult Education Centre on Shakespeare Street converted into *The Bard*, more student accommodation!

Infrastructure development continued: with Phase Two of the tram network, taking lines to Clifton via Wilford and to Chilwell via the QMC and Beeston; the widening of the A453; and the extensive upgrading of the Midland Station with associated track improvements. More recently it was announced that Gedling Council proposed commissioning a feasibility study for a fourth local crossing of the River Trent.

Almost as a matter of routine, major improvements to the Victoria and Broadmarsh shopping centres made local headlines. Work on the entrances to the Victoria Centre should commence soon but the Council is reluctant to allow the Victoria Centre to expand until the Broadmarsh conundrum has been sorted out. At a late stage, after an agreement between the owners (*Intu*) and the City Council, a starting date in the latter part of 2015 was announced for the Broadmarsh.

A planning application has been made to rebuild Basford Hall College on its own campus following local hostility engendered by a proposed land swap with the City Council. Central College Nottingham announced with a flourish, then went quiet, on plans for a new college on the dead area between High Pavement, Canal Street and the tram embankment. Planning approval was granted, with limited demolition, for the redevelopment of the art-deco Talbot House, Talbot Street, for even more student housing. However a recent visit revealed no signs of activity, an empty building and that fine facade boarded up.

The most interesting scheme came from Nottingham developers Blueprint for a sustainable neighbourhood based around the Trent Basin site on Nottingham's Waterside. Detailed planning for the first 41 houses out of an initial proposal of some 160 mainly three and four bedroomed houses has been completed. "Tall elegant houses fronting well designed streets with just a passing reference to Dutch Canal Houses" has been promised.

Completed work, overlooked earlier was *The Orchard* Hotel/Restaurant adjoining the East Midlands Conference Centre, and the St. Ann's Valley Centre, providing the area's library and health centre facilities.

The City Council is planning a Heritage Strategy for Nottingham with the twin purpose of protecting the historic fabric through refurbishment and re-use then promoting this achievement to attract investment and serious tourism.

Ken Brand, City Planning Representative

THOROTON RESPONSE GROUP

The Thoroton Response Group continues to make representations on behalf of the Society on matters, national and local, relating to the historic environment and buildings of the County, any representations made being usually noted in the Newsletter. In 2013 these have included a letter of concern to the previous County Council administration about the threat to Kirkby Hardwick; to the newly elected County Council Leader

regarding the downgrading of the archaeology section over the previous period with a hope that the new administration would address this serious shortfall in expertise; and to Newark and Sherwood District Council regarding the Church Street site in Southwell.

Members of the Society are encouraged to draw the group's attention to matters concerning them. There are instances where our input has made a real difference to the outcome for our county's heritage.

Barbara Cast, Coordinator, Response Group

THOROTON RESEARCH GROUP

The Research Group met twice in 2013. At the April meeting, Sheila Leeds gave a talk on current progress with the Victoria County History project in Nottinghamshire. A small group of volunteers is working on the project under the guidance of Philip Riden.

Professor Johan Koppenol of the VU University in Amsterdam had contacted the Society. He is researching the life of a Dutchman, Jacob Cats, a 17th century poet, who was known in England as Sir James Cats, the Dutch diplomat. He was an investor in the company of Sir Cornelius Vermuyden, the Dutch engineer, who drained the Hatfield Chase area. Cats lived in England, near Finningley, and at one time apparently bought the manor of Finningley. There are no details of the English phase of Cats' life in Dutch archives, hence the query to the Thoroton Society. The group was able to assist Professor Koppenol with information.

There is a monument in store at Nottingham Castle, which one member is trying to identify and to establish where the monument was originally placed. It may, perhaps, be to Huntingdon Plumtree, a physician and atheist, and might originally have been in St. Mary's Church.

Another member of the Research Group is investigating the family of Thomas Hawkesley, the water engineer.

Work is ongoing on the history of Mary Ward College at Keyworth and in particular the branch of the Loreto Nuns who founded the College. The College is now the site of the British Geological Survey.

At the September meeting, there were two talks. One, by Ted White, looked at the Boots' magazine 'Comrades in Khaki' which was published during the First World War. The second talk, by John Wilson, was about his research into the mass dial on the wall of Holy Trinity Church, Lambley. Both talks were reported in detail in the Winter 2013 issue of the Thoroton Newsletter.

John Wilson, Coordinator, Research Group

THE THOROTON SOCIETY WEBSITE

Website statistics for 2013 show that each month an average of 1563 unique visitors to the Thoroton Society website viewed an average of 7,447 pages. These figures reveal an increase in use when compared with 2012. Although many of our visitors are unsurprisingly from the UK we also have many others from the United States, Canada, the EU, Australasia and Germany.

The most important development for the website during the year was the launch of the *Nottinghamshire Bibliography Online*, a single web-based means of access to all bibliographical sources for the history of the City of Nottingham and County of Nottinghamshire, including published books, journal articles, unpublished theses/dissertations and 'grey' literature such as archaeological reports and local authority conservation appraisals. Interestingly, although all the entries in Michael Brook's 'A Nottinghamshire Bibliography' are included in the online version, a PDF edition of the original publication continues to be the most popular document downloaded on the website.

Most people find the website by using an internet search engine, with Google being by far the most popular. The search terms people used are of interest. Most are fairly predictable (e.g. "Thoroton Society", "henry kirke white", "michael wood talk at newark" and the very specific "tram lines outside Griffin and Spalding Nottingham") but the following curiosities caught my attention: "thoroton black death" (I didn't think we were contagious!), "ian who lives on mill lane bestwood nottingham" and, most intriguing of all, "in a straight line from centre of mansfield nottinghamshire going west for 285 miles where would we be?" Where indeed?

Andy Nicholson, Thoroton Society Webmaster

THE NOTTINGHAMSHIRE HERITAGE GATEWAY

Last year, 2013, was a very good year for entries onto the website. Eight entries, including the most recent on Laxton, were added. We have had only positive feedback regarding the site and it was mentioned as a very useful site by Bygones (Nottingham Post). Once again we have tried to put a mix of ideas on the site and link them into National events; for instance the Sports section coincided with the Olympic Games and Albert Ball to the centenary of the beginning of the First World War. The importance and diversity of industry to Nottingham has been emphasised by entries on Lace, Brewing and Retailing. Another important concern of the team is to guide people to the 'heritage resources of Nottinghamshire' and as far as possible entries cover the whole of the county eg Metal Box Company, Mansfield.

One of the key purposes of the site is to 'provide a history of Nottinghamshire written by leading experts in the field'. Of the eight entries last year only two were written by people other than the team and this is something that we would like to address. This coming year we hope to achieve a similar number of entries and, once again, to coincide with the First World War, an entry on the Sherwood Foresters is underway; a follow up to Retailing in Nottingham and an entry on hospitals in Nottinghamshire (past and

present). So if there is someone who can help in any way on these or any other subjects please get in touch.

Dr Denise Amos, Heritage Gateway

SOCIETY EVENTS IN 2013

Excursions

2013 has been a wide-ranging and interesting year for excursions, with pleasing and enthusiastic participation from members. There is a small group of regular participants on the excursions, for whom the experience is always much enjoyed and much appreciated. In addition there are always some members who attend different outings which clearly appeal to them more than others. We have been sorry at the deaths of Alf Bowley and Dr Sears, both of whom have been regular supporters of the excursion programme over the years. Alf was a contributor to the organisation of some excursions, and will be much missed.

The first visit of the season to Brodsworth Hall on 11th May took us back in time to see high Victorian splendour once enjoyed by wealthy industrialists which, after all their money was spent, became a heritage building, used by the Army during the Second World War. The way in which English Heritage have cleverly combined a vision of the original magnificent house together with its transformation by the Army was fascinating. After lunch we had the chance to tour the splendid gardens, expertly restored to their former glory. From Brodsworth we travelled to Rotherham Minster where we enjoyed an enthusiastic talk by the verger, not only about the history of the building from its Norman origins, but also about many delightful features including the poppy head carvings.

On 15th June, the Ashfield Heritage Trail, splendidly organised by Derek and Ceril Little, visited sites which casual travellers could easily pass by without realising their historical value. Excellent information was provided by Denis Hill, the Heritage and Development Officer for Ashfield District Council. The first stop was Annesley Old Church, the ruin of which has been tastefully restored as a nature reserve. At Jacksdale we had coffee and a tour of the remains of the former iron industry site. Lindley's Mill at Sutton in Ashfield, built in 1820, has been carefully restored, hidden down a side street. After an excellent lunch at Teversal, we visited the fine church of Saint Katherine with its box pews and Norman arch. Our final stop at Skegby enabled us to view the 17th century Quaker House and the oldest residential cruck-built cottage in the county. On 8th August we visited Little Moreton Hall, a fine example of Elizabethan timber-framed architecture, carefully preserved by the National Trust. An excellent guide gave us an hour's tour of the rooms with their plasterwork, painted panelling and glazing, together with discoveries now restored after several centuries of being hidden from view. From here we went to the famous nineteenth century Roman Catholic Church of Saint Giles at Cheadle, which is a Pugin masterpiece. As we listened to a very moving account of its history by John Smith, a long-standing member of the church, we were able to let the beautiful design and decoration of the building soak into our vision, and

sense the religious devotion which created the building in the first place.

On 10th September forty members of the Society were able to visit Welbeck Abbey, originally a Premonstratensian abbey, dissolved by Henry VIII, before being transferred into the hands of Charles Cavendish in 1597 and designed as a country house by Robert Smythson. Members toured the Riding School of 1622 and the Byzantine style Chapel of 1891. The overall appearance of much of the interior is Victorian, with a special exhibit – the overmantel depicting St George and the Dragon in the ante-room.

All in all, a most enjoyable and entertaining season of excursions.

Alan Langton, Honorary Excursion Secretary

Lectures and Presentations

Once again, our year started with the *Nora Witham Lecture* and Michael Bolton giving us an insight into 500 years of Nottingham High School. Having been founded by Dame Agnes Mellers, the school has now grown into a widely respected educational establishment. In February, our Chairman, John Beckett, accompanied by our Newsletter Editor, Howard Fisher, gave us a well-illustrated presentation on the Lost Churches and Chapels of Nottinghamshire. This *Myles Thorton Hildyard Lecture* looked at buildings in both the City and the County, many of which still exist but now have alternative uses, having been converted from their original purpose.

The winter season closed with the *Maurice Barley Lecture* and Elizabeth Williamson telling us how Sir Nikolaus Pevsner had treated his early volumes in the *Buildings of England* series as an experiment, obviously successful, leading to a series of well-respected books covering the whole country. Our speaker had also been responsible for editing many of the second editions of Pevsner's books, sometimes even being able to consult the original contributors. The *Spring Meeting* was held in the almost modern village hall at Ravenshead and closed with Council Member, Philip Jones, giving us an illustrated history of the village followed by a short tour, including the church of St Peter with its radical architecture.

Our Summer Special Lecture was held in the Ballroom of Newark Town Hall where historian and television broadcaster Michael Wood used extracts from his television programmes to supplement an excellent presentation on Laxton and Kibworth, describing their place in the *Story of England*. The two locations stand out because of their uniquely preserved and documented history. The evening closed with refreshments organised by officers of the Society served in the Council Chamber amidst great socialising and hubbub of members.

The new winter season opened with the *Archaeology Lecture*, given by David Strange-Walker of Trent & Peak Archaeology. David made full use of computer technology, showing us the results of his latest 3-D laser surveys of a number of cave sites underground in Nottingham. Members found it fascinating to be able to view the full splendour of Mortimer's Hole and Willoughby House from the comfort of their chairs.

Our Annual Luncheon was held in the splendid Carriage Court at Kelham Hall, where another excellent meal was accompanied by Noel Osborne, Chairman of Phillimore Ltd, speaking about the life of WPW Phillimore who was one of the founding members of the Thoroton Society and who went on to establish the publishing company that now bears his name.

The following week, Lizbeth Powell, a PhD student at Nottingham Trent University, gave us the *Nottinghamshire History Lecture* covering the emotional landscape of Sir Thomas Parkyns of Bunny. Lizbeth showed us how Sir Thomas had taken his role of country squire very seriously and become a benefactor and upholder of family life in the village of Bunny.

Later in November our Council member, Pete Smith, gave the *Keith Train Lecture* arranged by the Civic Society on his favourite theme of Even More Georgian Townhouses.

As always, the year closed with the *Neville Hoskins Lecture* when another Council member, Dr Richard Gaunt, showed us the results of his latest research into the lives of Edward and Emma Wilmot, a topic originally researched by our past and present Presidents, Neville Hoskins and Rosalys Coope. Richard's work has now been summarised into a book which forms a worthy tribute to all of those involved.

David Hoskins, Honorary Lecture Secretary

VICTORIA COUNTY HISTORY IN NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

A small but very effective research group has continued to work over the last twelve months on parish histories for the southern half of Rushcliffe wapentake and a number of places to the north of Nottingham, including Mansfield. The completion of a full-length VCH volume for Rushcliffe within a couple of years is now a realistic prospect. When published, this would be the first Nottinghamshire volume to appear for over a century, and would sit well alongside Volume III (Bolsover and Adjoining Parishes) for Derbyshire, published in December 2013 (Vol. II appeared in 1907). The group meets on alternate Tuesdays at Nottinghamshire Archives, whose continuing support for the project is much appreciated. As always, new members would be very welcome to join in the work.

Philip Riden, County Editor, VCH

ARCHAEOLOGY

Highlights of Nottinghamshire archaeology in 2013 - 2013 has been another busy year in the County, with a wide variety of archaeological investigations by archaeological contractors, the Nottinghamshire County Council Community Archaeology Team and a wide variety of community groups. Brief details of the main projects are provided in

this report, with thanks to Ursilla Spence of Nottinghamshire County Council for her assistance in compiling this list of current projects.

A453 Road Improvements - Wessex Archaeology staff have maintained a continuous watching brief during construction work on behalf of the Highways Agency in advance of dualling of the A453 from Clifton to the M1. No major discoveries have been made in Nottinghamshire this year, but post-excavation analysis of the major Late Iron Age and Roman settlement that was located in 2012 on an elevated site overlooking the southern outskirts of Clifton continues.

Bingham - The programme of test-pitting in Bingham's historic core, which was conducted by the Bingham Heritage Trails Association with funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund, has now been completed. One of the test-pits in the grounds of Robert Miles School revealed a basal layer of laid stone, cut by a substantial post-hole, and was extended in 2013 to an area of 4x7m. This showed the stone layer to continue across the entire trench, except where it was cut by a substantial post-hole. The stone layer may represent a cobbled yard, associated perhaps with a demolished rectory, while from documentary evidence the post-hole may mark the location of the rectory flag-pole.

East Bridgford - Nottinghamshire County Council Community Archaeologists assisted members of the East Bridgford Local History Group during test-pitting aimed at investigating the origins of the village. Work focused upon the village's historic core along Main Street, including five pits close to the church. Finds are still being processed, but preliminary analysis indicates a spread of Roman, medieval and post-medieval pottery. Several pits yielded structural remains, including post-medieval building material in the Rectory garden, evidence of demolition and disused drains relating to post medieval buildings at Cuttle Hill, and a wall foundation in the garden of The Manor that might represent a building shown on Sanderson's map of 1835. A test-pit on Walnut Tree Lane revealed successive yard surfaces overlying redeposited clay and stone incorporating a medieval sherd and sealing a pit containing a fragment of possible 15th century pottery.

East Leake - Trent & Peak Archaeology has concluded excavations on behalf of Cemex Ltd of the Early Bronze Age ring-ditch reported in 2012, and a team is conducting fieldwork in advance of the next phase of quarrying. Evaluation work has located an extensive Middle Iron Age settlement with a complex arrangement of ditched boundaries, pits and other features associated with a rich collection of pottery and other material. Further excavation of this site is in preparation.

Farndon: Ice Age Journeys - Fieldwalking and test-pitting by FARI members and other volunteers have added significantly to the corpus of lithic artefacts retrieved from this nationally important Late Upper Palaeolithic site and to our understanding of the spatial extent of early hunter-gatherer activity around Farndon. These activities have been supplemented by an auger survey conducted by British Geological Survey staff with the aim of elucidating the sub-ploughsoil stratigraphy and topography. Fieldwork will continue over the winter months and promises to shed further light upon the extent

and character of Upper Palaeolithic activity across the terraces and floodplain of the River Trent to the south-west of Newark.

Kings Clipstone: King John's Palace - Mercian Archaeological Services have continued archaeological investigations at King John's Palace. This has included test-pitting, topographic survey and geophysical survey in the vicinity of the surviving building, with the aim of elucidating the extent and character of the site and its relationship to the neighbouring landscape.

Kirkby-in-Ashfield: Mowlands - Geophysical survey and trial trenching by Pre-Construct Archaeology on the site of a major housing development on the outskirts of Kirkby revealed ditches and other structural remains indicative of an extensive Romano-British settlement. Further archaeological work is planned to evaluate further this site.

Lambley: Holy Trinity Church - Excavations by Trent & Peak Archaeology inside the tower and the west end of the nave revealed two phases of earlier nave construction, predating the 1170-1190 tower arch.

Mansfield: Portland Street - An ongoing watching brief by Pre-Construct Archaeology on behalf of Mansfield District Council has revealed small pockets of archaeology, including medieval and post-medieval pottery, other artefacts and floor deposits.

Mansfield: Two Oaks Farm - Evaluation excavations by Pre-Construct Archaeology on behalf of Mansfield Sand and Gravel Company revealed ditches forming part of an extensive post-medieval field system and isolated pits of uncertain date. The pits yielded organic material that has been submitted for radiocarbon dating as part of the assessment process.

Newark: Bantycok - Excavations by Pre-Construct Archaeology on behalf of British Gypsum in advance of quarrying revealed pits, ditches and other features dated by associated pottery and other material to the Iron Age. This represents a continuation of an extensive Iron Age settlement recorded during earlier phases of quarrying, and provides further evidence of intensive Iron Age activity at this location.

Newark Castle - A ground-penetrating radar survey by Trent & Peak Archaeology for Newark and Sherwood District Council, in association with the Friends of Newark Castle and the Newark Town Centre Hidden Heritage Group, identified a probable length of twelfth century curtain wall. The survey also established that the undercroft may have extended farther to the west than was previously supposed.

Newark: Castlegate-Bargate - Archaeological monitoring of ground investigations and a ground-penetrating radar survey by Trent & Peak Archaeology on behalf of Severn Trent Water was undertaken during evaluations in advance of the Newark Sewer Strategy. The ground investigations (window samples) identified buried occupation deposits to the west and south of the historic core and redeposited Holocene gravel

horizons north of Newark's historic core, within the floodplain of the River Trent. The radar survey identified small voids indicative of loose, large rubble adjacent to Newark Castle and a potential length of the Castle ditch.

Newark: Magnus Buildings - Test-pitting by Pre-Construct Archaeology on behalf of Newark and Sherwood District Council revealed high densities of medieval artefacts, particularly pottery, and structural remains. The character of the site remains to be established, but the presence of such high densities of material on a site on the outskirts of medieval Newark's historic core is of considerable interest. Archaeological evaluations are continuing, and it is hoped that further fieldwork will clarify the extent and character of the activity that is represented.

Newark Market Place - A desk-based assessment, ground-penetrating radar survey and pilot laser scanning of cellars by Trent & Peak Archaeology for Newark and Sherwood District Council, in advance of stanchion erection, assessed the potential for extended cellars beneath Newark Market and identified some cellars extending south of the Toni and Guy shop. This work was run as a community venture, presented at a public meeting and resulted in the foundation of the Newark Town Centre Hidden Heritage Group.

Newington - A strip, map and sample investigation by Pre-Construct Archaeology on behalf of Hanson Aggregates in advance of sand and gravel extraction has revealed a series of palaeochannels but as yet no associated archaeological remains.

Nottingham - Tram Extension: Excavations by Trent & Peak Archaeology on behalf of NET2 and Vinci Construction UK prior to extension of the Nottingham Tram network have focused this year principally upon the archaeological remains surviving in the outer precinct of Lenton Priory. Construction work has been monitored archaeologically along the entire length of the tram route by a continuous watching brief, which will continue until all ground disturbances have been completed. This has uncovered a variety of artefactual, structural and environmental remains that together have added usefully to our understanding of Nottingham's archaeological resource. These include Victorian burials in Beeston's historic core, a post-medieval wall demarcating the churchyard associated with St John the Baptist at Beeston and peaty deposits indicative of former wetlands now traversed by University Boulevard. More extensive archaeological work is proposed in the vicinity of the prehistoric site excavated in 2012 on the site of the Clifton Park and Ride facility, and it is hoped will provide further evidence for the spatial extent and character of that site.

The Origins of Nottingham: Work has continued on an assessment of the archives compiled during excavations by the Nottingham City Museums Field Archaeology Section from 1969 to 1980 in the Pre-Conquest Borough (specifically at Drury Hill, Woolpack Lane, Goose Gate, Fisher Gate, Boots Garage and Halifax Place). This English Heritage funded project is being conducted by Trent & Peak Archaeology in collaboration with Nottingham City Council Museums and is aimed at securing, consolidating and enhancing the archives compiled during excavations on the sites prior to further synthesis. Further English Heritage funding has been obtained this year

to assist with long-term conservation and storage of the metalwork from the six sites forming the focus of this study and to prepare a detailed database of the pottery obtained from the important medieval kilns at Goose Gate.

HER and UAD: The above project has run in parallel with another collaborative project, conducted with funding from Nottingham City Council, which was aimed at preparing a Historic Environment Record (HER) for the City of Nottingham. This work, which involved staff from Trent & Peak Archaeology and Nottingham City Council Museums, has now been completed, and serves to complement the archive project described above and the City's Urban Archaeological Database (UAD).

The Nottingham Caves Survey

Phase 2 of the Nottingham Caves Survey commenced in the winter of 2013, with several packages of work to be undertaken. The first is the development of a smartphone app, which will allow location-based virtual access to many of the city's caves via an Android or Apple smartphone or tablet. This will be followed by a community-based rapid assessment of hitherto unexplored caves. All of the information generated from this work will be presented in a series of synthetic reports and publications.

Nottingham Castle

A ground-penetrating radar survey by Trent & Peak Archaeology for Nottingham City Council identified part of the Castle ditch. By attempting to relocate known cave features, the survey determined the complexities of undertaking similar surveys on this site in the future.

Rufford Country Park: Ornamental Gateway - Nottinghamshire County Council Community Archaeologists supervised a community excavation on the site of a wrought iron gateway that was erected in 1734 at the end of tree-lined avenue known as the Broad Ride. The gates, which are currently in storage, were damaged during World War II and were dismantled in the 1960s. The aim of the investigation was to ascertain the condition of any surviving *in situ* structural remains, with a view to reinstating a new ornamental gateway at the same location. Excavation revealed two large sandstone blocks on the site of the original gate posts and between them the remains of a gravelled surface. Short lengths of brick wall, originally capped with stone and preserving several regularly spaced brick piers, were revealed to either side of the stone blocks, extending beyond the edges of Broad Ride.

Southwell: Burgage - An extensive programme of archaeological investigations and documentary and cartographic research has been conducted by Southwell Archaeology members in collaboration with staff from the University of Nottingham Archaeology Department and Matthew Beresford of MB Archaeology. This project, funded by an All Our Stories award from the Heritage Lottery Fund and supported by University of Nottingham researchers funded by an AHRC Connected Communities grant, has focused upon the Burgage, and has included extensive test-pitting and geophysical survey. Work is continuing on analysis of the finds retrieved during test-pitting, while further fieldwork is planned.

Southwell: Workhouse - A complete laser scan survey of the exterior of the Workhouse was undertaken by Trent & Peak Archaeology staff in August 2013 on behalf of the

National Trust, as part of a project led by Dr Chris King of the University of Nottingham. The survey forms part of a programme to use digital technologies to help visitors interpret the Workhouse and should lead to more extensive survey of the building in 2014.

West Bridgford School: Air Raid Shelter - Sixth form students from the West Bridgford School excavated the remains of a World War II air raid shelter in the school grounds. The work was supervised by history teacher Ailish D'Arcy, with the assistance of Nottinghamshire County Council Community Archaeologists. A small area at the northern end of the shelter was excavated by hand, and revealed a rubble spread and *in-situ* walls, together with pieces of metal, plaster and wood. The walls had been constructed of reinforced concrete and were 30cm thick. Information from an ex-pupil indicated that the structures had originally been covered with turf on the outside and were provided with two entrances. The pupils had sat inside on wooden benches, which were placed down either side of the shelter.

Widmerpool: St Peter and St Paul - A watching brief by Trent & Peak Archaeology on a new northern extension to the church and a service trench revealed four *in situ* articulated skeletons. These were of shallow depth, with no associated coffins or upstanding post-medieval or modern grave markers, and probably represent burials of modern date. In the west side of the tower, an unmarked late 18th or early 19th century brick burial shaft was exposed.

David Knight, Archaeology Rapporteur

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE LOCAL HISTORY ASSOCIATION

The adverse winter weather which hit Nottinghamshire in March 2013 led to an unprecedented event - the cancellation of the traditional Spring Day School at Ravenshead. Fortunately, the event was rescheduled to the autumn with the original line-up of speakers: Chris Weir, Valerie Henstock, Peter Hammond and Victoria Preece.

The membership of the Association's committee underwent some changes, including the election of Christine Drew and Richard Gaunt (the latter succeeded Philip Jones as the liaison with the Thoroton Society). The 'Notts Historian' was published twice during the year and the association now has an extensive newsletter and a stronger news presence, co-ordinated by Sarah Seaton. The Association is developing changes to its website and is planning ahead for the Autumn Day School (on World War 1), a joint event with the Thoroton Society, in October 2014.

Richard Gaunt, NLHA Representative

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE BUILDING PRESERVATION TRUST

This year the long-awaited restoration of the dovecote in the village of Thoroton was completed. It was formally declared open to the public on the Heritage Open Days. The event featured on local TV's BBC East Midlands Today.

Notable buildings in the City awaiting restoration and re-use considered by the trust include the former Costume Museum in Castle Gate, now being converted to residential use, Severns House scheduled for retail use and 41 Pilcher Gate, now sold, it is hoped, to a sympathetic developer. In the County, Stanford Hall is to be developed by the MOD as a rehabilitation facility for members of the armed forces. Interest in the fate of Newstead Abbey has been rekindled by the World Monuments Fund. Following their input, a steering group hoping to form a Newstead Abbey Friends Group has been established. This was reported in the Thoroton Society Newsletter No. 74, winter 2013. There remain concerns about other county buildings such as the Robin Hood Hotel, Newark, Blidworth Windmill, the Manor House, Bingham, Rolleston Water Mill and the proposed new development in Church Street, Southwell .

Information about the Trust, with illustrations of past activities, can be seen at www.nbpt.co.uk

Ceril Little, NBPT Representative