

THOROTON

Number 15: Spring 1999



Nottinghamshire Living History Archive

The Thoroton Society, along with the Nottinghamshire Local History Association, is a consortium member of the Nottinghamshire Living History Archive. This is being led by Nottinghamshire County Council and established with a major grant from the Millennium Commission. Our Chairman, Professor John Beckett will serve on the Management Committee.

Over the three years of the project, ninety individuals across the county will receive financial support, on a competitive basis, to capture in sound and vision life in Nottinghamshire around the year 2000. The award winners will produce oral and visual reminiscences which reflect the life of their community, and their findings, together with photographs and other materials, will be distributed to community groups for presentation.

Further details will be available through the local press and local libraries, or direct from the Chairman. Professor Beckett hopes to have some relevant literature available at the AGM.

The Century Speaks: BBC Millennium Oral History Project, 1900-2000

BBC Radio Nottingham will be running a series of programmes between August and the end of 1999 which draw on the experience of the past 100 years through the voices of the people who have lived through it. This is part of a national BBC initiative being run through its forty local radio stations, and anyone interested in contributing should contact Jeremy Evans at Radio Nottingham on 0115 902 1975.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

What's in a Name?

As a long standing member of the Thoroton Society I would like to use the *Newsletter* columns to canvass opinion on changing the Society's name. We all have a great regard for Dr Robert Thoroton's contribution to the historiography of our county of Nottinghamshire, and we understand why the founders of our Society adopted his name as a byword for county history. However, I feel that today this is more of a bugbear than a boon.

Over the past few years we must all have lost count of the number of times we have had to explain to people what the Thoroton Society actually is and what it aims to do. To anyone without a detailed knowledge of the county's historical publications the name is meaningless. It neither locates us in Nottinghamshire, nor explains that we are concerned with the history and archaeology of our beloved county. Some enquirers seem to think of us as a 'closed' organisation, and that members have to be invited to join. This does not seem to be the image we wish to create for the future.

Perhaps we should consider something along the lines of *The Nottinghamshire Historical and Archaeological Society* or *The Nottinghamshire Society for History and Archaeology*. These are perhaps less elegant and antiquarian, but certainly explain more clearly and concisely our work and interests. I await the comments of other members with great interest.

[Name and address supplied]

NEW ADDRESS OF THE NEWSLETTER EDITOR FROM MARCH 1999

Dr Carol Allen, Hill View, Marston Montgomery, Ashbourne, Derbyshire, DE6 2FF, mobile tel. 07971 514091. Please send submissions for the second *Newsletter* of the year by 21 April 1999. The views expressed in the *Newsletter* are not necessarily those of the Editor, the Society or its Council.

~ The Thoroton Society of Nottinghamshire ~
~ The County's Principal Historical Society ~



REPORTS ON LECTURES

CHRISTMAS AT BOOTS IN THE 1920s **Katey Logan, Saturday 5 December 1998**

On 5 December we were treated to a lecture in festive mood by Katey Logan the Boots Archivist. Concentrating on Boots at Christmas in the 1920s, she showed us the enormous range of goods sold at that time. It was fascinating to see that items popular as Christmas presents then were very similar to those on offer today, but then children received a rabbit hot water bottle instead of Gromitt! The packaging of many of the toiletries brought back memories, such as the cross-stitch packaging of the Lavender Water.

For everyone who thinks Christmas has become too commercialised and starts too early, it was a surprise to discover that in the 1920s all the Boots shops had to have their displays of Christmas goods ready by the end of November. After an interesting discussion the meeting ended with celebratory mince pies and Dr Thoroton's elixir!

Jean Nicholson

THE NORA WITHAM LECTURE - THE FLINTHAM STORY

Sue Clayton, Saturday 9 January 1999

The lecture series for 1999 got off to a flying start with Sue Clayton's 'Flintham Story' on 9 January. Sue is secretary of the Flintham Society, of which Mr Hildyard is President, and she first outlined the development of the village. Electrification of the main line through Newark had brought a wave of commuters to the village, threatening to form an 'us and them' community: a threat which was allayed by subsequent events.

A chance remark some ten years ago led to a search for a hoard of glass photographic negatives, the work of the late Mr Fred White, proprietor of the village shop in the first decades of the century. His daughter Muriel suggested looking in the outbuilding behind the shop, where the searchers were confronted with a scene which made Tutankhamen's tomb look tidy! Mr White had been a compulsive hoarder and kept financial records, customers' shopping lists, correspondence, posters and even examples of the goods, from wartime toilet paper to worming powder, cosmetics and foodstuffs.

The scale and importance of the find, described as 'a down-market Calke Abbey', was realised and the idea of displaying the material led to the foundation of the Flintham Society, the acquisition of charitable status and buying a redundant schoolhouse to store the finds and show them to

the public. The whole village has become involved in the project, the educational objectives of the newly-formed charity are being achieved, and the Society's fame is gradually spreading.

This lecture was excellent both in content and presentation, and we all look forward to the visit to Flintham in July with enthusiasm.

Neville Hoskins

USELESS AND INSIGNIFICANT CREATURES - SPINSTERS IN 18TH CENTURY ENGLAND

Sandra Dunster, Saturday 14 November 1998

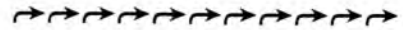
Sandra Dunster gave a fascinating lecture describing the lives of a number of upper class Nottinghamshire women, whose stories have previously been ignored. She ranged from Gertrude Savile, whose diaries have recently been published by the Record Section, to the unhappy Frances Thorney, described as flighty and capricious, as she was fond of lying on the grass, walking and even driving herself around, and ended her days locked away as a lunatic. These women's lives were filled with restriction and considerable boredom. Some acted as companions and nurses to various relatives, while Gertrude found time to embroider a copy of a Hogarth painting on a chairback. Many more such women existed than in the previous century, perhaps because more children survived infancy and the younger children's portion had to be divided amongst more. Limited financial prospects were a considerable disadvantage in a world where a substantial sum of money was required before an advantageous marriage could be contemplated. Those women who had money were allowed to spend only the interest, but did have the freedom to write a will.

Thanking Ms Dunster, Professor Beckett suggested a similar look into the lives of eighteenth-century bachelors may be equally interesting.

Penny Messenger

NEW YEAR'S HONOURS LIST

Congratulations to Thoroton Society Member Michael Arthur of Lambley, who received the award of MBE at Buckingham Palace in February, for his services to the quarrying industry, especially for his work in the training programme of the Institute of Quarrying of which he is Technical Directory and Secretary.



LOCAL REPRESENTATIVES FOR THE THOROTON SOCIETY

We are still looking for representatives in different parts of the county, who could send to the *Newsletter* any items of interest from their local paper, and alert the Society's representatives on local bodies if there is a concern about developments, conservation or archaeology locally. If you would like to volunteer please write to our Secretary Barbara Cast, The Old Police House, Main Street, Bleasby, Notts, NG14 7GH; or telephone Barbara on 01636 830506, who will explain what is involved. We look forward to hearing from you.

NEWS FROM THE COUNTY

'Historic Thoresby Hall is to be converted into a luxury hotel and leisure complex' read the headline from the Mansfield CHAD on 16 December last year, sent in to the *Newsletter* by Philip Jones. It has been announced after many years with an uncertain future, that this Grade I Victorian building has been sold to Warner Holidays. The Newark & Sherwood District Council said they hoped the new project would bring many local benefits and safeguard an important listed building.

BOOK REVIEW

Robert Malcolmson and Stephanos Mastoris, *The English Pig* (Hambledon Press 1998; price £14.95)

Steph Mastoris, long-serving Council member has, along with Sue Groves, just completed the 1609 Sherwood Forest Map (back in print by popular demand). He has now surprised everyone by becoming the historian of the English pig! This book has already featured in *The Times*, *Sunday Times*, and *Daily Telegraph*, and reveals his affection for an often loathed animal, as the book makes clear, despite its being of crucial importance to the cottage economy. It is an excellent read. Did you know

that pigs are thought to be intelligent, and are considered sociable and playful, like a sort of edible pet (page 105), and that domestic pig keeping went on as late as the 1940s? All this and much more is in Steph's new book, written in conjunction with Bob Malcolmson, a much respected Canadian social historian. Readers can enjoy the excellent pictures and quotations, but be warned, if you are squeamish, avoid chapter 5 on the killing of the pig - it is certainly not for the faint-hearted!

John Beckett

PUBLICATIONS

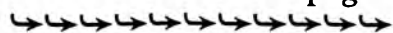
WOLLATON HALL AND THE WILLOUGHBY FAMILY by Pamela Marshall

Two years ago the Nottingham Civic Society published the results of work they had sponsored on Nottinghamshire's most famous great house in *Wollaton Hall: an Archaeological Survey*. It was planned to follow this by another work, and this new volume *Wollaton Hall and the Willoughby Family* charts the changes made from the original design of the house to the form it took in the Georgian period, which is largely retained today. The author shares her interest and her research not only into the fabric of the building, but also in the building project itself, and the effect the house had on the life of the Willoughby family, as its building almost ruined them! The volume presents everyday life and special occasions of a gentry family from the late Elizabethan to the early modern period. Their concerns often have a familiar theme, including economic recession, pressing debt, marital discord and worries over the children!

This second volume is also dedicated to the late Maurice Barley, who instigated the Wollaton Hall Research Project ten years ago. The drawings are by David Taylor. It is expected the book will be launched at the Maurice Barley Lecture on 13 March. Copies are available in Civic Society Shops and by mail from Ken Brand, 6 Tavistock Drive, Mapperley Park, Nottingham, NG3 5DW, tel. 0115 985 8821.

ANNUAL OPEN LECTURE: RETFORD AND DISTRICT HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

English Medieval Treasures by John Cherry, MA, FSA, Keeper of Medieval and Later Antiquities at the British Museum. Retford Town Hall, Wednesday 24 March, 7.30pm. Admission £3.50



Programme for 1999

In response to many requests the Society is pleased to announce two evening lectures this Summer which we hope members will find both convenient and interesting. These will take place in the Department of History at Nottingham University; see below for full details.

Saturday 24 April: Annual General Meeting, Farnsfield Village Centre

Friday 14 May: 7.30pm, Department of History, Lenton Grove, University of Nottingham
Nottinghamshire's Missing Past: The Characterization of Nottinghamshire's Archaeology
Dr John Samuels, Consultant Archaeologist

Saturday 15 May: Afternoon visit to St Edmund's Chapel, Spital le Street, and Glentworth Church, Lincolnshire

Saturday 12 June: Day Visit to the Cathedral Close and Library, Lincoln

Friday 18 June: 7.30pm, Department of History, Lenton Grove, University of Nottingham
The Dissolution of the Monasteries in Nottinghamshire
Dr David Marcombe, School of Continuing Education, University of Nottingham

Thursday 29 July: Afternoon visit to Flintham Museum

Saturday 11 September: Visit to Woodthorpe Grange

Saturday 2 October: 2.30 for 2.45pm, YMCA, Shakespeare Street, Nottingham
The Archaeology Lecture (Title and speaker to be announced)

Tuesday 12 October: 7pm, The Friends' Meeting House, Clarendon Street, Nottingham
THE KEITH TRAIN LECTURE
New Nottingham: New Spiritual Needs. Anglican Church Building in Victorian Nottingham
Professor John Beckett, Professor of English Regional History, University of Nottingham

Saturday 13 November: 2.30 for 2.45pm, YMCA, Shakespeare Street, Nottingham
THE NOTTINGHAMSHIRE HISTORY LECTURE
The Reformation in Nottinghamshire
Dr David Hickman, Post-doctoral Research Fellow, Department of History, University of Nottingham

Saturday 4 December: 2.30 for 2.45pm, YMCA, Shakespeare Street, Nottingham
Lace, Laura and Lawrence
Steve Imms, Nottingham Girls' High School

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE WOMEN'S HISTORY GROUP Everyone is welcome at the group's informal meetings. The cost is £1.50 and most are held at the Brewhouse Yard, starting at 7.30pm. Contact Suella Postles (0115 915 3603) or Jenny Swindells (0115 981 2432) for further information and details of secure parking.

31 March: *Three Valiant Ruddington Women of the 19th Century:* Margaret Lawson

28 April: *19th Century Serving Women:* Barbara Maddison

26 May: *Indian Kathak Dancing:* Joy Foxley