

THOROTON

Number 26: Winter 2001



Annual Luncheon

This year's Annual Luncheon was held at Thoresby Hall Hotel on 3 November 2001. A record attendance of 134 members and their guests gathered at the refurbished and recently reopened Hall. Guests of Honour were Sir Andrew and Lady Belinda Buchanan. Sir Andrew is Lord Lieutenant of Nottinghamshire. Following the lunch the loyal toast was proposed by Professor John Beckett, chairman of the Thoroton Society, and the toast to the Thoroton Society was proposed by Mr Peter Bloomfield. The President, Neville Hoskins,



From left: Ann Hoskins, Lady Belinda Buchanan, Sir Andrew Buchanan and Neville Hoskins at the Luncheon

replied on behalf of the Society. Mr Philip Jones then gave a brief account of the history of the Pierrepont family, and of the three different Thoresby Halls. Members were invited to tour the current Hall, built by Anthony Salvin, and grounds, and to see for themselves the renovation work carried out by the present owners, Warner Hotels. The Society is particularly grateful to the Honorary Secretary, Mrs Barbara Cast, for organising the luncheon, and to the staff of Thoresby Hall for making this such a successful occasion.

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~ The Thoroton Society of Nottinghamshire ~
~ The County's Principal Historical Society ~
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WINTER LECTURE SERIES

12 January 2002: The Tickhill Psalter, by Mr John Fox

Very few people in Nottinghamshire are familiar with the Tickhill psalter, one of the county's greatest medieval treasures. Produced at Worksop Priory in the early years of the 14th century, it has never been accessible to the public in the county, and it is now in the New York public library. The lecture, which is an appropriate topic during the Christmas season, will be illustrated with slides obtained from New York and will trace the history of the psalter, as well as showing its Christian significance.

9 February: The Nora Witham Lecture. 'The Smug and Silver Trent': representing the river, by Mr Nicholas Alfrey

The lecture will consider the ways in which the River Trent has been represented in art and photography since the end of the 17th century. The Trent has been described as a river without a strong visual character, running through a region without a clear identity; but does this do justice to the historical record? Work by a diverse range of artists from Siberechts to Amesby Brown will be examined, representing sites from Trentham Gardens to Trent Falls, to show some of the changing meanings of the river and the landscapes through which it flows.

Nicholas Alfrey is curator of the exhibition *Trentside* currently being presented at the Djanogly Art Gallery, University of Nottingham, until 16 December 2001.

9 March: The Maurice Barley Lecture. 'This great House so lately begun and all of free stone': William Cavendish's Italianate palazzo called Nottingham Castle, by Dr Trevor Foulds

William Cavendish, 1st Duke of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, demolished the buildings in the Upper Bailey of the medieval castle at Nottingham and had built an Italianate palazzo always called Nottingham Castle. Despite neglect in the 18th century, the fire of 1831, which destroyed only the interior, and the conversion of the masonry shell into the present museum, what we see today is essentially Duke William's 17th-century palace. Intensive research on the medieval castle has completely overshadowed the 17th-century building and, surprisingly, no study of the palazzo has ever been undertaken. In 1997 new research was begun which will overturn all preconceptions.

REPORTS OF RECENT LECTURES

13 October – Dr David Knight

'Excavations of prehistoric and Roman sites at Hoveringham Quarry'

David Knight gave an excellent lecture, which had been postponed due to the theft of his slides; but, armed with a new set, he was able to tell an enthralled audience of the exciting and unexpected finds revealed during these excavations. A long record of land use was revealed, stretching back into prehistory and through into the Roman period - some high quality Roman pottery was amongst the finds. One of the most interesting discoveries was the evidence of fairly intensive animal management with complex drove ways and corrals. Hoveringham is the "settlement of the hump dwellers", describing the means by which inhabitants avoided all but the worst of the constant flooding of the Trent. These excavations showed that prehistoric settlers had adopted the practice of settling on the gravel islands or humps long before the name was coined. Even gravel extraction is not all bad, giving the chance to discover more about the county's unrecorded past. We look forward to David's next lecture on his work of assessing the archaeology along the route of the Fosse Way in advance of roadworks.

Barbara Cast

10 November – Dr Linda Lees

Nottinghamshire History Lecture:

'Lewd and Dissolute Women: Women & Crime in 17th century Nottinghamshire'

The early seventeenth century was a male dominated society. Women were expected to be chaste, silent, and obedient to their husbands, so when their conduct was unbecoming they risked the wrath of the law courts, both civil and ecclesiastical. 'Scolds' could be cucked, ducked, or restrained by a 'Scold's Bridle', all designed to make them mend their ways. Linda Lees, this year's Nottinghamshire History lecturer, admitted she might have ended up before the courts herself as a scold! However, she reassured the audience that she was rather less likely to have committed the domestic violence, which led to some fairly horrific punishments for women - imposed, of course, by a male judiciary. Dr Lees' trawl of the church court and Quarter Sessions records for Nottinghamshire revealed a remarkable story of women forced to defend their honour against claims of inappropriate conduct. Her lecture kept the audience enthralled and will make fascinating (if somewhat gruesome) reading in the forthcoming *Transactions*.

John Beckett

Financial Support for Research and Publication

This Society has always had, as one of its main objectives, the study of the history and archaeology of Nottinghamshire and has encouraged and supported high quality research by providing a platform for reporting results through its lecture programme, publication in the Transactions and, on occasion, the Record Series.

The Society's Council has been considering its research policies and has resolved that the Society should take support for research one stage further by offering discretionary grants to suitable candidates to enable them to pursue a certain line of research leading to publication. The amounts offered would be around £100-£300 up to a certain amount each year as funds allowed and Council decided.

Grants would be available to Society members and, at Council's discretion, to students in full-time education. Details of the research project, including objectives, methods of research, use and reproduction of original papers and time would be required, before considering any grant. Candidates would be expected to lecture and/or write up the research results for a Society publication following the project's completion, subject to the Society's acceptance. Contact John Beckett or Barbara Cast for applications or informal discussion on possible projects.

Special website for members of societies and associations

The www.ukbookworld.com website, set up with the help of www.uksocieties.com is Britain's major internet site helping members of literary and historical societies find old and out of print books for sale in Britain. The website holds a selection, changing daily, of over half a million books published between 1600 and 1990 offered for sale between £5 and £5,000 by some 600 British booksellers in many subject areas, including Nottingham, Nottinghamshire, history, local history, archaeology, and antiquities.

Reduced price on 2001 CD-ROM price guide for old and out of print books

The Clique, longest-established specialist publisher of information on old, rare and out of print books, now issues an annual CD-ROM series of price guides. The 2001 edition contains catalogue prices of over 400,000 books in all subject areas published between 1600-1990. Members of British literary and historical societies and associations can obtain copies of UKBW 2001 Windows CD-ROM for £48 rather

than the normal retail price of £60. Further details from The Clique, 7 Pulleyn Drive, York YO24 1DY, tel. 01904 631752, website www.clique.co.uk

On the Trail of the Pilgrim Fathers

A new account of the Pilgrim Fathers and their journey to the New World, together with a visitor guide to sites of interest in England and the US, has been produced by J Keith Cheetham. It was given its launch in Worksop Library earlier in the year. Priced £7.99, it can be obtained from bookshops or from the publishers - Luath Press Ltd, 543/2 Castlehill, The Royal Mile, Edinburgh EH1 2ND - www.luath.co.uk

Graham Beaumont

Many of you will know Graham Beaumont, who has lectured to the Society on a number of occasions and led at least one tour. Graham retired from the County Council in November after 28 years as 'Conservation Guru'. We wish Graham well in retirement, and hope it will give him a chance to sort out all those slides!

John Beckett

The Milestone Society

Further to Winter 2000 *Newsletter's* report, the Milestone Society has now been formed; it aims to identify, record, research, conserve and interpret for public benefit milestones and other waymarkers of the British Isles. Its objectives: to publicize and promote public awareness of milestones and waymarkers; to enhance public awareness and enjoyment of milestones and waymarkers and to inform and inspire the community at large of their distinctive contribution to both the local scene and to the historic landscape in general; to organise practical projects at regional and local levels; to protect, preserve and restore through the planning process, representing their significance to appropriate authorities locally and nationally; and to establish regional groupings. Yearly membership is £10 single, £12 couple. Details from Brian Barrow, Larkrise, Wicken Rd., Clavering, CB11 4QT.

The Thoroton Room

Fay Weldon visited Bromley House in July when she was to have officially opened the Thoroton Room; but the Board took the architect's advice to have a structural test on the floor, and it was found to be sadly wanting in its potential strength for the purpose for which it is intended - a lecture room for up to 50 people. So it's back to the drawing board! Instead of the opening, a relaxed evening was enjoyed in the garden, when Fay talked about her forthcoming autobiography. The garden party was similarly blessed on an equally glorious day, and Fay met many of the 150 members attending.

Julia Wilson

British Archaeological Association

Meetings are held at 5pm at the Society of Antiquaries of London, Burlington House, Piccadilly, London W1V 0HS. Non-members are welcome, but are asked to make themselves known to the Hon Director on arrival.

5 December 2001: 'Nonsuch Palace Revisited' - Professor Martin Biddle

2 January 2002: 'St George for Merrie England: meanings and metaphors of a patron saint' - Dr Samantha Riches

6 February 2002: 'English Castles as Pleasure Palaces in the 13th and 14th centuries' - Jeremy Ashbee

Annual Conference 2002: The BAA conference will be held in Rochester on 27th-31st July and will concentrate on the 3 As of Rochester Cathedral (art, architecture and archaeology) and its neighbouring buildings including the Castle. For more information contact Anna Eavis, Kemble Drive, Swindon SN2 2GZ; anna.eavis@rchme.co.uk

"Keep Archaeology Free"

This was the slogan of the Council for Independent Archaeology's campaign against Article 3 of the Valetta Convention signed by the Government on 20th March last. All organizations involved with archaeology were urged to write to MPs regarding the threat to independent and amateur archaeology perceived by the signing of this article. The Council for Independent Archaeology identified the threat as to "effectively outlaw community archaeology" and "put the past in the hands of faceless bureaucrats". The article states that parties undertake "to apply procedures for the authorization and supervision of excavation and other archaeological activities". This is seen as leading to the creation of a system of licensing for archaeology, threatening the long tradition of independent fieldwork and removing local people's responsibility for and engagement in the study of their past.

On reflection amongst archaeological representatives on Council, the Society alerted all Nottinghamshire's MPs to the concerns being expressed. Helpful and interested responses were

received from Patrick Mercer of Newark and Retford, Alan Simpson of Nottingham South, and Paddy Tipping of Sherwood. All three had sought information from Tessa Blackstone, Minister of State for the Arts, who responded with the Government view.

She says: "In broad terms, current measures in place in the UK already meet the Convention's requirements. The Government does not believe that additional legislation, requiring a licensing system, is necessary to fulfil Article 3. Much archaeological work is already controlled through existing mechanisms. There may be scope for developing a voluntary code of conduct for those wishing to undertake archaeological work outside the existing systems of control. In England, English Heritage will be taking forward consultations with appropriate bodies representing all parts of the archaeological community on any necessary improvements to the operation of existing systems of control and on the development of a voluntary code of conduct."

Barbara Cast

Tea at Lectures

One or two members have asked us to reinstate tea after Saturday afternoon lectures. Tea had to be dropped when there were no volunteers to make it, but if there are now a few people (the Society makes no distinctions in terms of gender!) willing to be on a rota we could provide refreshments. Speak to the Chairman, John Beckett, at a future lecture if you would be willing to be involved.

The good news is that seasonal refreshments will be available at the December lecture, courtesy of Jean Nicholson. Look out for the shortbread pigs!

More pictures from the Annual Luncheon



Guests enjoying the occasion: Terry Fry and Alf Bowley deep in conversation



Mr Philip Jones speaking about Thoresby and the Pierrepont family