

# THOROTON NEWSLETTER



No 45: Autumn 2006

## AUTUMN LECTURE PROGRAMME

**Tuesday 10 October: The Keith Train Lecture, in association with Nottingham Civic Society: *'Health and Hygiene in Nineteenth-Century Nottingham'* – Bernard Bielby**

This lecture will take place in the Cathedral Hall at 7.30pm.

The following lectures will begin at 2.45pm at the Nottingham Mechanics, 3 North Sherwood Street, Nottingham. A bookstall is available from 2.15pm.

**Saturday 21 October: *'Geoarchaeology in the Trent Valley Using New Technology to Investigate the Buried Past'* – Keith Challis**

Keith Challis is Geographic Information Systems and Remote Sensing Manager for Birmingham Archaeology. His interests include the use of GIS for archaeological and geological deposit modelling, and for landscape analysis and cultural resource management. Keith has worked in the archaeology of the medieval English countryside, particularly rural settlement and land use, in the Vale of York, Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire, and on-going research and survey at Laxton. He has published over 24 papers, including in *Transactions* vol 106 (2002) on Laxton and Bilsthorpe.

**Saturday 11 November: The Nottinghamshire History Lecture: *'Men Behaving Badly?' – Gentlemen, Rogues and Fellows in Seventeenth-Century Nottingham'* – Jennie Jordan**

Jennie Jordan is a doctoral student in the School of Arts, Communication and Culture at Nottingham Trent University. Following a successful symposium in 2005 she is sole editor of the proceedings to be entitled 'Desperate Housewives: Politics, Propriety and Pornography; Three Centuries of Women in England'.

**Saturday 9 December: *'The Christmas Story in Stained Glass'* – Peter Gibson**

Peter Gibson, FSA OBE is former Secretary and Superintendent of the York Glaziers' Trust and an established world authority on stained glass. He is an independent stained glass consultant working in the UK and abroad, and has given more than 9,000 lectures worldwide. Peter has worked on stained glass since his teens, mainly based at York Minster, as well as in twelve other cathedrals and more than 2,000 parish churches. His published work includes *The Stained and Painted Glass of York Minster* (1992) and *The Restoration of the Stained Glass of York Minster* (1980).

## THE ANNUAL LUNCHEON

You should have received with your copy of this *Newsletter* details and a booking form for the Annual Luncheon. This year on we are back at one of the Society's favourite venues – the Great Hall at Southwell Minster. As well as a super lunch, we are to enjoy a most interesting after-lunch talk on the Southwell Charter of 956. Book early to avoid disappointment!

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~ The Thoroton Society of Nottinghamshire ~  
~ The County's Principal Historical Society ~  
Visit the Thoroton Website at: [www.thorotonsociety.org.uk](http://www.thorotonsociety.org.uk)

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## REPORTS ON EXCURSIONS 2006

### 27 May – Creswell Crags and Hardwick Hall



On a rather overcast and unpromising morning we set off to Creswell Crags, where we were met by the resident archaeologist and his assistant, and divided into three groups. Those of us in the second group had time for coffee and a visit to the museum and to watch a small film, before donning hard hats and walking along the valley to the Church Hole Cave. We climbed the steps to the cave where we listened to a fascinating talk about the people who lived in the valley 13,000 years ago. We had the excitement of seeing the drawings of animals such as deer, birds and

bison scratched into the walls and ceiling.

The weather had brightened considerably by this time. Leaving Creswell for Hardwick Hall [*pictured above*], (and eating a packed lunch on the way), we arrived in time to explore the Old Hall, wonder at the intricate plaster work still remaining, look around the New Hall, and explore the gardens, including a lovely orchard whose trees were in full blossom. To conclude our trip we enjoyed a cream tea in the kitchens of the New Hall. This was a delightful outing, and our thanks go to Leslie Cram for his organization.

**Penny Messenger**

### 25 June – Willoughby House, Nottingham

Thoroton members have been exploring some notable City buildings over past years, and Willoughby House on Middle Pavement was recently the focus for a visit. Members were met outside the house by Pete Smith, well known to the Society for his expertise on historic buildings, and the finer details of the street facing architecture were explained. Within this fine building, Pete spoke of the history of the house and its associations with Wollaton Hall, and pointed out the architectural features. Members were intrigued to see original wallpaper from the house's earliest periods revealed behind the upstairs shutters. The garden was also made accessible and, from there, the most interesting rear elevation could be viewed [*pictured right*].

We were very pleased to have Denise Ellis of Franklin Ellis, Architects, on hand to tell us about the house's restoration and its conversion for high-class retail use. She led a group into the caves under the garden, while other members followed Pete to the upper levels. We are most grateful to Paul Smith for allowing us to visit the house, now a very fashionable shop – one or two gentlemen were quite taken with the clothes on sale! We are especially grateful to Henry who was on hand to welcome us, and to Christian, the manager, who joined us during the visit. And thanks also, of course, to Pete and Denise.



**Barbara Cast**

## 10 June – Ashby de la Zouche and Ticknall

Fugitives from the World Cup, around three dozen of us set off on one of the hottest days of the year. At Ticknall we were welcomed by Sue Brown and Janet Spavold, pottery enthusiasts, local history researchers and joint authors of the excellent book *Ticknall Pots and Potters*. Across the churchyard we viewed St George's church [pictured right], and stood by the remains of St Thomas à Becket, Ticknall, only partly blown up by gunpowder to give space for the building of the present larger church!

Sue and Janet led our group around numerous pottery sites and showed us an impressive display of their finds, including much of the highly decorated 'cistercian ware', mis-named through its supposed link with Kirkstall Abbey. Pottery was only one of the links explored: lead and salt mining, coal, water supply, cottage industry, family history, probate inventories, geology and other topics were at their fingertips, not to mention the diplomatic skill needed when negotiating permission to dig!



At Ashby we viewed Saint Helen's church with its memorials to various Lords Hastings and that redoubtable widow Selena, Countess of Huntingdon; the School and Castle [left], its Elizabethan brick tower presaging further excitement for English Heritage's excavators; and 'the seedy side of Ashby', narrow alleys off Market Street derived originally from burgage plots, terraces of housing near the vanished spa building, and a former Baptist chapel now recycled as a printer's. We then had a very welcome and ample high tea at the Methodist Chapel.

This was an outing enjoyable at many different levels, and for many different reasons: a group of knowledgeable enthusiasts had welcomed us, given us their time, and imparted at least some of their own inspirations.

**Robin Phillips**

## 20 July – Ashover Village and Church, Derbyshire

This excellent visit on a hot and hazy evening started at the Fabrick Rock viewpoint, where Adrian Henstock pointed out the location and geology of Ashover, and introduced us to the poetry of local historical character and 'jack of all trades' Leonard Wheatcroft (1627–1706). Then we drove down to the village hall – a modern impressive complex that helped Ashover win a national prize for villages with the best community spirit. We walked through the attractive seventeenth-century stone-built village and into the churchyard with the ancestral tombs of Florence Nightingale. We passed the school where recent developments revealed stones marked with Bronze Age art, to the chapel built by John Smedley (the Victorian textile king famous for his 'hydro') – one of six for his particular brand of Methodism. Then it was back through the village and past the 'Red Lion' pub – recently re-christened the 'Old Poet's Corner' – perhaps after our friend Wheatcroft! After a short walk down a steep path once used as a coffin way leading from remote corners of Ashover's vast parish such as Dethick and Lea, we returned to the church which was opened specially for us, revealing a rare lead font and a fine Nottingham alabaster monument to the Babington family. A few well-chosen words from Wheatcroft ended a most enjoyable summer evening. This event was an experimental one, involving members' own transport and without refreshments, but the formula proved popular with attenders.

**Janet Roberts**

## BOOK REVIEW

### *The Archaeology of the East Midlands:*

#### *An Archaeological Resource Assessment and Research Agenda*

(ed) Nicholas J Cooper (Leicester Archaeology Monograph, 13) Leicester, 2006; £19.95 (paperback)

This well produced volume reports on the work of the first two stages of the East Midlands Archaeological Research Framework, which is sponsored jointly by English Heritage and the local authorities of the region. Its objective is to provide an effective decision-making structure for future archaeological research, and it is part of a wider English Heritage remit to develop a network of regional research frameworks across the country.

Nine chapters assess the present state of research from the Palaeolithic up to the present time, each contributed by an expert in the field. Each chapter includes a discussion of particular problems and an assessment of the archaeological resources available to resolve them, and concludes with a research agenda, which in the case of

Steven Willis's chapter on the Late Bronze Age and Iron Age amounts to nine full pages. The opening chapter by the editor and Patrick Clay deals with the 'National and Regional Context of the Regional Framework', and the final two chapters with environmental archaeology, and another by the editor on 'Cross-Period Research and the Foundation of a Research Strategy'. There is an extensive bibliography and a useful index. One reason given for this very creditable work is the need to re-establish links between all the various groups involved in archaeology, which became increasingly fragmented in the 1980s and 1990s. It aims to direct their interests towards the most promising and productive research agendas. So it needs to be widely read, and it deserves to be. **Gavin Simpson**

### DEATH OF DR JEFFREY MAY

Readers, particularly those with an archaeological bent, will be saddened to hear of the recent death of Dr Jeffrey May, for many years a member of Nottingham University's Archaeology Department. Although most of his local work was in Lincolnshire (particularly Dragonby), and Derbyshire – where for many years he was archaeological editor of the Derbyshire Archaeological Journal – he was well known to the archaeological fraternity in Nottinghamshire.

### TECHNICAL PRINT SERVICES (TPS)

Technical Print Services have gone into liquidation. Since 1992 they have printed Thoroton *Transactions* and also the *Record Series* volumes. At the end of June they announced that the firm could not continue. We particularly regret having to say goodbye to Paul Roper, the long-serving member of staff who has liaised with Thoroton officers for many years. Adrian Henstock is currently looking for a new printer. More news on this as and when we have it.

### DR SARAH SPEIGHT

Archaeology editor Dr Sarah Speight has stepped down as editor of *Transactions*, and is to be replaced by Keith Challis. Keith will be well known to members, as he has spoken to the Society on a number of occasions. He last addressed us at the Annual General Meeting at Laxton in 2005. More news on this topic in future Newsletters.

### NOTTINGHAMSHIRE ARCHIVES PROGRAMME OF EVENTS

Nottinghamshire Archives is holding a free Heritage Open Day on 9 September, and a series of lunchtime talks (£2.50 per person) from September to December. Advance booking is required (email [archives@nottsc.gov.uk](mailto:archives@nottsc.gov.uk) to check availability, or tel 0115 9581634). There will be displays in the Search Room between now and February, including 'Pickbourne on Kirkby' (based on William Pickbourne's diaries); Dream Palaces: Nottinghamshire Cinemas; and Religious Festivals. View their website at [www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/archives](http://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/archives) or ring the above number for further information.

Please send contributions for Newsletter No 46 by 1 November 2006 to Janice Avery,  
email: [janaver1@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:janaver1@yahoo.co.uk). The views expressed in the Newsletter are not  
necessarily those of the Editor, the Society or its Council