

THE THOROTON SOCIETY

Nottinghamshire's History and Archaeology Society



NEWSLETTER

ISSUE 67

SPRING 2012



Bromley House Garden

Photograph courtesy of Martine Hamilton Knight/Builtvision

~ The Thoroton Society of Nottinghamshire ~
~ The County's Principal Historical Society ~
Visit the Thoroton Website at: www.thorotonsociety.org.uk

SUMMER EXCURSIONS 2012

SATURDAY 19 MAY

LICHFIELD

LEADER: ALAN LANGTON

Once the capital of the kingdom of Mercia, Lichfield today is a compact city and mostly pedestrianised.

It boasts not only a fine cathedral begun in 1190, but also the house which was the birthplace of Samuel Johnson, the famous man of letters.

We begin with a tour of the Samuel Johnson house, followed by coffee in the Heritage Centre, where another tour is arranged. There is some free time for lunch and some members may like to visit the Erasmus Darwin House. In the afternoon we have a guided tour of the cathedral followed by tea in the Chapters Restaurant.

We plan to leave for Nottingham about 5.30 p.m.

SATURDAY 9 JUNE

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES

LEADER: Dr. DAVID KNIGHT

This outing, led by Dr. David Knight (who spoke to the Society in October 2010) aims to visit various sites in Nottinghamshire which have been the subject of recent archaeological work. It is hoped to see the remains of an Iron Age fort at Oxtun and the site of a deserted village at Norwell.

Following some free time for lunch at Newark, we will visit the Queen's Sconce at Newark before joining the new A46 road to Bingham. Here we are to have a tour of the extensive medieval and post-medieval earthworks surviving at Crow Close, accompanied by members of the Bingham Heritage Trails Association.

We shall have tea in Bingham and will be able to view a variety of finds obtained during an on-going test-pit survey of the village.

THURSDAY 2 AUGUST

MELBOURNE

LEADER: ALAN LANGTON

In the morning we hope to visit two significant churches. St. Helen's at Stapleford has a medieval tower and spire together with 14th century arcading, early tracery in the windows and two 16th century bells. In the churchyard is the famous Saxon Cross, perhaps the oldest Christian memorial in the county. Attenborough church, with its 500 year old tower and 14th century doorway and ancient door, boasts some fine carving and stone figures, as well as an Elizabethan altar table and a 600 year old font.

After lunch we have a tour of Melbourne Hall and its restored gardens, with their famous long yew tunnel and wrought iron 'Birdcage' feature. The house is still lived in and has some interesting furniture and portraits.

Melbourne church is a most impressive Norman building with huge pillars in the nave.

Our tea will be taken in the Hall restaurant.

THURSDAY 6 SEPTEMBER

DEENE PARK

LEADERS: PENNY MESSENGER and MARGARET TRUEMAN

This excursion into Northamptonshire will stop at Uppingham for coffee, with a visit to Stoke Dry, and then some free time back in Uppingham.

Deene Park, which we will visit in the afternoon, has been the home of the Brudenell family since 1514, and has a medieval courtyard, a Tudor hall, and a Georgian drawing room, together with paintings and artifacts relating to the 7th Earl of Cardigan (of the Charge of the Light Brigade fame).

There are also some fine gardens to see and tea will be served in the house.



THE REVEREND PETER THORNTON

By Geoffrey Oldfield

I was interested to read the item in issue 66 of the *Newsletter* about the monumental inscription in the Isle of Thanet church. The memorial was to the reverend Peter Thornton who was the Rector of Colwick and West Bridgford from 1793 to 1817. The patron of the living was John Musters who was the owner of much of the land in both parishes.

About thirty or so years ago a large collection of letters was placed in Nottinghamshire Archives and these were mainly from a Nottingham firm of solicitors, written to John Musters and included his replies. Adrian Henstock drew my attention to the deposit as I was then the secretary of West Bridgford Local History Society. I made a copy of all the letters in the deposit. They dealt mainly with the management of the lands owned by John Musters in the two parishes.

Some of these letters were reproduced in *Aspects of West Bridgford's History 2*, published in 2007 by the Local History Society and some of the letters concerned the late Rector. They start with one from Thomas Hildyard of Flintham Hall dated 29 December 1817. He had changed his surname from

Thoroton upon marrying a lady from another landed family named Hildyard. This letter was addressed to Mrs. Musters and sought to ask her husband if he would allow Thomas Hildyard to make a concession, as he was the administrator of 'poor' Peter's estate. Peter Thornton was his nephew. The issue arose because Thomas Hildyard's nephew, as Rector, had the use of glebe lands but, like other tenants, had a clause which meant no hay or fodder could be removed from the land. As he explained, 'poor' Peter had no arable land and so had to buy food for his horses as he could not grow any. John Musters gave his permission for the fodder which existed at the time of Thornton's death, to be sold.

There were several further letters about Thornton and his relations; he never married. He had six brothers and sisters, one of the sisters became the wife of the Archbishop of Canterbury. Further details of Peter Thornton are given on page 45 of the above mentioned book, in an article contributed by Sheila Leeds who summarises the lives of West Bridgford rectors.

◆◆◆

MEETING REPORTS

SATURDAY 12 NOVEMBER 2011

THE NOTTINGHAMSHIRE HISTORY LECTURE

DR. DAVID NUNN: TRENT BRIDGE SCHOOL 1909-19: A DECADE OF LOYALTY, SERVICE AND ENDURANCE



Trent Bridge School opened in 1909 and after only five years it was caught up in the chaos of the First World War. At Easter 1915 it was sequestered to become a military hospital, and the children transferred to Queen's Walk on double shifts', whereby one group of children used a school in the morning and another in the afternoon. This was unsatisfactory as a way of educating the children, who spent their 'off' time participating in the war effort through handicraft classes to contribute to war production, supporting charities, cultivating allotments, and attending the 1916 Patriotic Fair.

Since the school opened only in 1909 few of the children were old enough to serve in the war, and David's real heroes were the four

members of staff who enlisted. He was able to tell us something of their families and background. Bernard Courteney Laws died at the front, but both Ernest Smeeton and Harry Beedham returned to the school after war

service.

With several ex-pupils of the school in the audience it was particularly poignant that David Nunn gave this lecture on Armistice weekend.

John Beckett

◆◆

SATURDAY 10 DECEMBER 2011

THE NEVILLE HOSKINS LECTURE

DR. CLIVE CHEESMAN, RICHMOND HERALD, COLLEGE OF ARMS: EARLY CORPORATE IDENTITY AND HERALDRY IN NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

Dr. Cheesman opened his presentation by outlining his own connections with Nottinghamshire, and therefore his suitability as a Thoroton speaker, through grandparents and great-grandparents who had lived in Thurgarton but moved to London in search of work. He also outlined the historic importance of the River Trent as the traditional boundary between 'Northern' and 'Southern' England when Royal households and their servants, such as the Heralds, needed to split the country for administrative purposes.

The College of Arms, through its Heralds, is the historic custodian of all arms granted to people and, more recently, corporate bodies as a means of identification. Historically, arms were personal and a graphical means of identifying knights and their supporters on the battlefield. The oldest recorded grant of arms to a corporate body was to the Worshipful Company of Drapers in 1439. This was soon followed by many of the other historic livery companies, mostly based in London, but, unfortunately, none in Nottinghamshire.

The most familiar use of heraldry by corporate bodies is the use of Civic Arms by city and town councils, the two main examples in Nottinghamshire being the City of Nottingham and the town of Newark. The Arms of the city were granted upon achieving city status and the design was derived from devices used in the Borough Seal up until that time. This idea of deriving Arms from traditional seals became a relatively common practice amongst corporate bodies, some of the best examples being those of religious houses such as Newstead and Thurgarton. Similar bodies often used seals, later

translated into Arms, that reflected their patrons or founders, hence the apparent overlap with some historic family Arms.

One of the busiest periods for the granting of Arms to corporate bodies was during the Heralds' visitation of 1614, when they toured the country weeding out duplicate or unauthorized uses of heraldic devices and encouraging the registration of Arms – at a cost – to prevent usage by others. As part of their work on this tour the Heralds also encouraged the creation and recording of new Arms from historic seals in use at the time, thus adding even more to

their income! From this work came the later practice of Bishops impaling the family Arms of benefactors with those of the house or abbey with which they had become associated and creating many of the famous Diocesan Arms that we see today.

Dr. Cheesman closed by emphasizing the diversity of Arms now in use throughout Nottinghamshire with the County and City Councils, most District Councils and even some Town Councils having Coats of Arms but many of whom now choose not to display them, favouring instead a simple modern badge, often using one of the devices from the Coat of Arms.

This interesting presentation will have left many members intrigued and wanting to explore the background of familiar emblems and badges so often seen in very mundane locations such as the sides of buses, taxis and refuse lorries. Neville would have been very satisfied with this excellent presentation featuring one of his favourite subjects.

David Hoskins

◆◆



SATURDAY 14 JANUARY 2012

THE NORAH WITHAM LECTURE
GORDON TAYLOR: WILLIAM BOOTH 1829-1912: FREEMAN OF NOTTINGHAM – CITIZEN OF THE WORLD

Gordon Taylor, retired archivist for the Salvation Army, gave an information packed talk to the Society. It was unfortunate and unsettling for our speaker that Network Rail made one of its major interruptions to people's lives on that day! But the talk went on, albeit rather late.

William, who was to become one of the most prominent men of the 19th and early 20th centuries, was the son of a Derbyshire couple, Samuel and Mary Booth, and was born at 12 Notintone Place, Nottingham and christened at St. Stephen's Church, Sneinton, on Palm Sunday 1829. He spent most of his young life in Sneinton, excepting the six years that he lived in Bleasby. Mr. Taylor gave us a picture of William as a young man who described Goose Fair as a carnival of delights and who wandered by the River Trent and through the Meadows with a rod in one hand and a book of poetry in the other. What education he had was gained at the Halifax Place Academy (now the Lace Market theatre). The cost to be a day pupil was four guineas a year and William's school career ended when the family fortunes declined. He was then apprenticed to a Unitarian pawnbroker. His father died when he was fourteen.

Not liking the formality of the Church of England, William started going to the Wesleyan Chapel and said that it was his 'heaven upon earth'. He was impressed by a visiting revivalist preacher and inspired to become one himself, being converted and starting to preach amongst the poor whilst still in his teens.

Mr. Taylor told us that William's aim as a very young man, was self-improvement. Having been 'let go' once his six year apprenticeship was over, he was unemployed for a year and decided to try his fortune in London. Again he went into the pawn broking trade but soon also became involved with various groups of non-conformists. During this time he met and became engaged to Catherine Mumford who was to have such a profound effect on his life, encouraging him to study and helping to further his religious career. He was trained as a

potential Methodist minister but found his true calling in revivalist campaigns and itinerant preaching. He found popularity wherever he went; for example he preached to great crowds in Parliament Street Chapel.

Catherine shared his ministry when child-bearing allowed, and when he was ill she would step in and preach on his behalf – she also provided William with sermon outlines. Their joint work took them to Nottingham for a while and then to various parts of the country where their following continued to increase. However the style of some of their colleagues was not popular with everyone!

We learnt that the Christian Mission, as it was called, had its first headquarters in a former pub in Whitechapel. The Mission became the Salvation Army in 1875, the Volunteer Army being an earlier name suggestion. William became the Army's first general and all other officers adopted quasi-military titles. The Foundation Deeds state that women would have equal status in the Salvation Army.

The Booths continued to travel around the country, with many visits to Nottingham, including a 'Council of War', when Catherine presented flags to Basford, Radford and Leicester. In 1886, William came to Nottingham by train and commented, '125 miles in two and a half hours, what would our forefathers have said to that?' There were also successful trips abroad for William or his Pioneers.

William never felt he could do enough for the poor. The Salvation Army Mission Hall became a food and shelter hall. He formed a colony in Hadleigh, Essex, to give agricultural training to unemployed people. There were also a city colony, hostels and women's rescue homes.

William Booth was given the Freedom of Nottingham in 1904, and there were other honours bestowed on him. He died in 1929.

Gordon Taylor's talk was most interesting and richly illustrated and left us wanting more.

Barbara Cast



BOOK REVIEWS

Georgian Diary 1780: George Hodgkinson Junior; Apprentice Attorney of Southwell, Nottinghamshire.

Michael J Kirton (editor). Southwell and District Local History Society, 2011.

ISBN 978-0-9520503-6-0

£10.00 from the Society's Treasurer, see www.southwellhistorysociety.co.uk or from the Minster shop.

Most historians dream of unearthing an undiscovered cache of letters and diaries. It was Mike Kirton's good fortune to strike gold at the first attempt. Working in the Stenton Archives at the University of Reading library, Mike discovered four (hitherto unknown) volumes of diary by the Southwell attorney

George Hodgkinson junior (1761-1822).

The Hodgkinsons of Southwell are already familiar to Nottinghamshire

historians from two previous books drawing upon material held at

Nottinghamshire

Archives: *Georgian*

Southwell (1986) by

the late Philip Lyth and

Bob Hardstaff, which

utilized the daybooks

maintained by

George's father (also

an attorney and also

named George) for the

years 1770-71 and Bob

Hardstaff's edition of

George junior's diary

for the year 1781

(published by

Southwell and District

Local History Society in

2000). Armed with his

new discoveries and a wealth of information

about the Southwell of Hodgkinson's day, Mike

Kirton has now extended the story of the

Hodgkinsons back a year by producing a

splendid edition reproducing the entirety of the

diary for the year 1780. Further work, offering

a selection of material from the volumes for

1782-4, is in progress.

The diaries of attorneys do not always make

for fascinating reading and like the Tallents of

Newark a generation later, the frustratingly

elliptical nature of some of the entries means

that the allusions can be lost to readers lacking

a detailed knowledge of the social and

intellectual context of the community to which

they relate. To offset this problem, the editor

has (with the invaluable assistance of Canon Michael Austin, an expert on the ecclesiastical history of Nottinghamshire in the period) supplemented his text with a series of biographical appendices and introductory essays which help to locate the diaries (and the diarist) in their appropriate context. This helps

the uninformed reader to understand what a

sentence like

'Attended the

Ecclesiastical Court,

at which there was a

good deal of business

in the fornicatory way'

really means! Whilst

there is some degree

of repetition within

these essays both as

to theme and content

(a revised version of

chapter 2 will, for

example, be

published in

Transactions for

2011), Kirton has

sensibly decided to

produce an

augmented text with

rather more

explanation as

opposed to a plain

diary transcript. One

might quibble that the

editor is sometimes

keener to explain (at length) the importance of

'national' figures who make fleeting

appearances in the diary – this was a year of

continuing conflict in the American colonies,

unrest in London and a general election – for

whom the sources are rich and plentiful as

opposed to those harder-to-reach local figures

who appear far more regularly and whom one

might reasonably expect to know more about.

To take one less obscure example, a reader

might like confirmation that the 'Mr. Burbage'

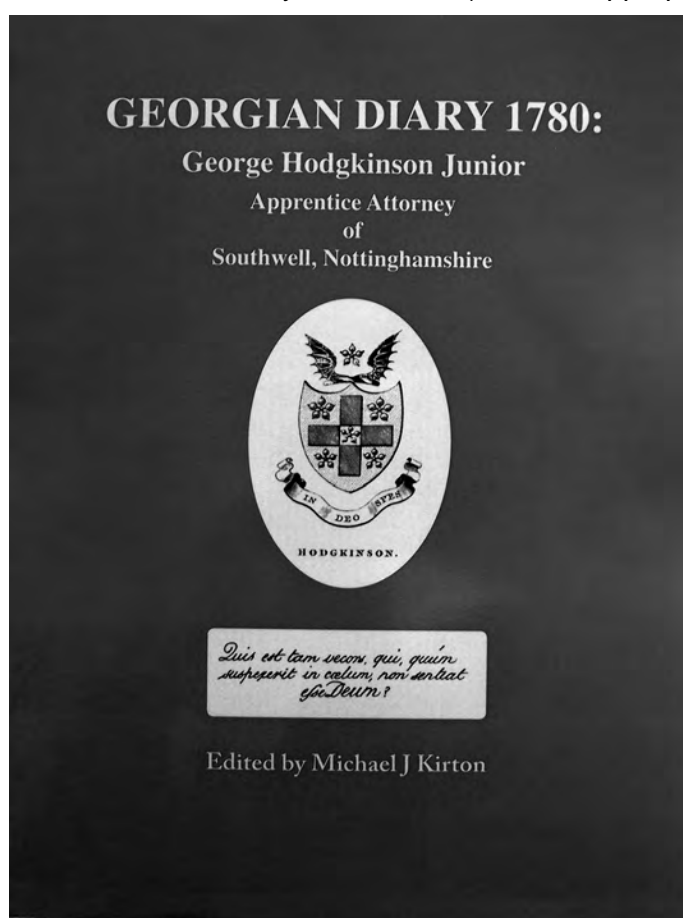
mentioned on p162 as charging Hodgkinson

senior for advertisements was the co-owner of

The Nottingham Journal. The diarist's frequent

references to articles in the Nottingham press

might also have been checked against the



(readily available) originals and referenced where appropriate rather than taken on trust. Occasionally, an allusion or personality has eluded the editor (Daniel as opposed to David Parker Cole on p140, Sir John Ingleby as opposed to Mr. Juggleby on p154, the popular card game 'commerce' as opposed to the diarist's 'commas' on p169, the word 'flattering' rather than 'flattening' on p171). This reader would also suggest that the diarist's frequent recourse to *Jacob's Law Dictionary* (e.g. p76) makes the editor's sudden deciphering of 'Jac. La. Dict.' as 'Jackson's Latin Dictionary' (on p101) problematic.

However, these are few and generally minor issues to raise and ones which in no way detract from the importance of the editor's handling of the text: a matter of some importance given that the original diaries are not readily accessible in Nottingham. Hodgkinson himself emerges as an industrious young man of his type and social class not much given to introspection; a rare insight into young George's personal beliefs appears on Monday 31 July in commenting on some favourable international news: 'which happy event may be attributed (next to that overruling hand) to that judicious measure of blocking up Brest' – George was nothing if not practical in his thinking! Similarly, Geoffrey Tallents of Newark – who occupied an analogous position to George junior as an apprentice attorney

working alongside his father during the early 1830s – appears a facsimile in terms of young Hodgkinson's pre-occupations of shooting, travelling, dining and socializing: 'Prepared the necessary preparations for the destruction of the feathered tribe tomorrow [Hodgkinson noted on Thursday 31 August] of which there are a very large breed this season'.

The Southwell and District Local History Society (of which Mike Kirton is currently the Chairman) is to be congratulated on continuing to produce volumes which combine original research with readability at an affordable price. If Hodgkinson isn't likely to become a Nottinghamshire 'classic' in the sense of contemporary Nottingham diarist Abigail Gawthorn, this new volume will assure him a wide and appreciative following in years to come – and deservedly so.

Richard A. Gaunt.

Richard edited the diaries of Godfrey Tallents of Newark (Politics, Law and Society in Nottinghamshire) published by Nottinghamshire County Council in 2012.

◆◆

Stone Age Nottinghamshire

David Budge and Chris Robinson. Nottinghamshire County Council 2011.
ISBN: 978 0 902751 70 5

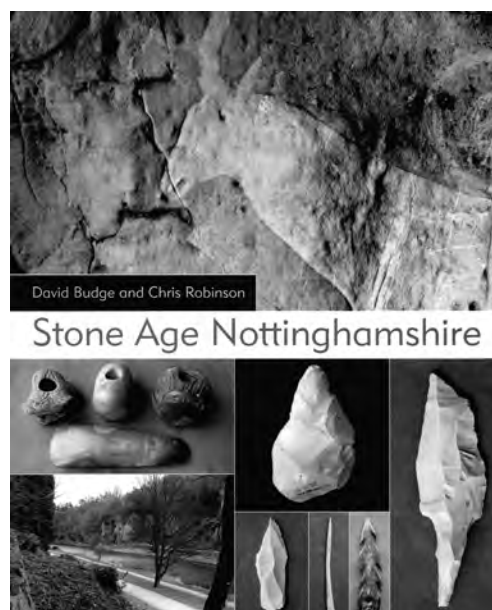
This is a slim volume which sets out a clear outline of the lithic period, describing the key features, be they geographic, climate, animal resources, peoples, materials and artifacts, cultures, etc. of the extremely long period in human development which we call the Stone Age. It lasted from a million years ago until about 2500BC: from the Ice Age Pleistocene to the Holocene, which we are still in (just about).

However, if you go by what's on the tin, you might be disappointed, for the county information is somewhat lacking: not surprisingly in that finds and sites from this period are fairly slight in

Nottinghamshire.

The book therefore uses many examples from other parts of Britain and from Europe and there are not that many from Notts., and not even much text on those which seem to be quite significant. This may be because some of these have been discovered as a result of the major A46 roadworks and are, therefore, fairly recent.

Obviously the key feature which makes the Stone Age hang together is the use of stones for tools and weapons, art, ritual and decorative. We learn that flint being scarce in Notts.,



greater use was made of quartzite which was harder to work with but good for hand-axes and hammer stones: it was not so good for finely worked articles such as arrow heads, therefore we find imported stone or artifacts.

The authors do set out very usefully how enormous the impact was on the land, its flora and fauna and its people, of the rising waters, the disappearance of the vast hunting grounds of Doggerland and the creation of an island Britain.

The book helps us to visualize the fragile life people were living during this period, in earliest times dealing with extreme cold and following the herds of animals now extinct or exiled which roamed freely over the vast plains which linked us to the rest of Europe: and then developing the skills to deal with the ever-changing environment following the end of the Ice Age. The authors, in setting out a clear development path, help us to explore the early human mind, seeing their forethought and planning in addressing new challenges, especially in their collecting of suitable stone for shaping into the tools they needed.

There is nothing in Notts. of the earliest Paleolithic sites – any finds are found mostly in river gravels into which they have been washed. The first actual sites of human activity in Notts. are from the Middle Paleolithic, 60,000 years ago, the best known being Cresswell Crags, used as a temporary base by these very mobile groups of people. From the upper Paleolithic comes the famous cave art, which is given good coverage. I would have liked to know more about the research mentioned which suggests repeated patterns were some form of communication. Reference is also made to a newly discovered UP site at Farndon.

The rising temperature with subsequent submerging land saw a major change in culture in the Mesolithic Period. Britain became an island, or rather islands, and for the first time became continuously occupied and its people, now fully modern humans, developed unique technologies. Traces of this period are mainly found in watery places, like the northern carrs and the Trent valley. By now, forest and wide floodplains were dominating the landscape. Evidence is cited which suggests a still mobile lifestyle, settling in winter camps in the lowland, making hunting equipment to be used in the summer uplands – so it is suggested that people based themselves in Notts. in winter and Derbyshire

in summer. For example, thousands of flints were found at Misterton Carr which suggests a base camp where knapping took place but very few completed hunting tools have been found. A Middle Mesolithic site at Staythorpe is mentioned where a female human leg bone was found in a silted up river channel, the only piece of this period from Notts. and a rarity in Britain.

The Neolithic saw the greatest social transformation with the arrival of a more settled way of life, changing from hunters and gatherers to farmers. There were also new artifacts, including pottery. The evidence here is mostly in the form of pottery, worked bone and flint tools. Quite a lot of examples of finds from this period are mentioned in the book., for example, stone axes from Holme Pierrepont and Bulwell. The burnt mounds found at Gorton and Gonalston are described and their usage explored. The two settlement sites in Notts. , at Stanton-on-the-Wolds and Langford, are described but houses have not been found. There are no extant long barrows, stone circles or other ritual sites in this county, but there is slight evidence of where long barrows may have been and there are a number of completely ploughed out henges. At East Stoke there was a large timber circle and other circular monuments have been found recently at Saxondale and Holme Pierrepont – there may even be a trace of a cursus at Newton.

For me, the most interesting site described in this book was found at Langford, where an old river channel had been blocked by a log jam in which were caught up a large number of human bones including thirteen skulls of men, women and children. The authors posit a suggestion that this may indicate that disposal of bodies was made in rivers, hence the lack of burials.

This is a good book for taking us through the Stone Age but I think more could have been made of sites and finds in Nottinghamshire and it would be great to have more information on recent sites – maybe there will be another volume on these.

Barbara Cast

◆◆◆

The Winter King

Thomas Penn:

Allen Lane, 2011

ISBN: 10:1846142024

Thomas Penn's book, *The Winter King*, covers the final decade of Henry VII's reign. The King does not come out of this book well. In fact, by the end, he seems a Stalin-like figure in his use of spies and enforcers, and the infamous Court of the Star Chamber.

What is highlighted is his greed which affected Henry's actions and appointments towards the end of his reign. He became the most solvent monarch in Europe through his systematic collection of taxes and bonds, which allowed him to bribe foreign powers to hand over rebels. He was cunning in the ways he paid for ceremonial events, such as getting the City of London to pay for the London celebrations of the marriage of his eldest son, Prince Arthur, to Catherine of Aragon.

There was paranoia, especially in his treatment of his leading nobles (for example, the Earl of Suffolk). The book covers the events of the various rebellions well, including the one around Lambert Simnel that is of interest to local historians because it culminated in the Battle of Stoke Field in East Stoke, Nottinghamshire. It also covers the illegal trade in alum, from which Henry profited so much and has apparently been ignored by historians of the Henrician accounts, Penn places the trade within its geo-political context.

The book only really becomes interesting when Prince Henry comes to court because the Prince was, even at a very tender age, so much more glamorous and exciting than his

father. Henry VIII had all the colour and vivacity of his Yorkist ancestors, specially his maternal grandfather Edward IV, whose palace at Eltham was Henry's childhood home. Henry VII was a shrewd and hard man because of his years in exile, but he was never glamorous. Penn does, however, make the interesting point about how Henry VIII came to increasingly resemble his father in many ways as he aged.

The book's chronology is confusing because Penn writes about the 1500s and then refers back to events of the 1480s and 90s, unlike David Starkey in *Virtuous Prince*, which covers roughly the same period but is much more entertaining because of its narrative flow. Starkey is the better storyteller. But Penn's is still a worthwhile book to read, albeit hard work. It is not a page-turner and a great many names are included that are entirely forgettable within pages. Perhaps it is best to read Starkey's book first and then Penn's if interested in the period. Before reading either of those, Helen Castor's *Blood and Roses* provides background on the wars that lead to Bosworth, with the destruction of so many Lancastrian claimant, and Henry's tyrannical reign.

James Eady. James is a Nottingham tour guide at the Galleries of Justice and the City of Caves. He has done around four thousand tour and is a member of the Guild of Battlefield Guides and the Honorable Society of Lincoln's Inn. Whilst he claims not to be an expert on the Middle Ages he has read intensively on the period and has a great interest in that time of our history.

◆◆

God's Biologist: a life of Alister Hardy

David Hay

Darton, Longman and Todd, 2011

ISBN: 978-0-232-52847-3

Sir Alister Hardy was one of the twentieth century's greatest biologists and is credited with, amongst other achievements, the rescue of the UK fishing industry from collapse. This, it is a somewhat unusual book to be reviewed in the Thoroton Society's *Newsletter*. However, the interest for us is in the fact that Hardy was a Nottingham man. Indeed, one of the advisers to the author was our own Ken Brand. Alister's parents were Richard and Elizabeth Hardy. Richard's family had at one time kept the Maypole Hotel, an important coaching inn (long vanished) on Long Row. Richard trained as an architect under

Richard C Sutton and became a prominent and wealthy architect in Nottingham. He married Elizabeth Clavering, a young widow, in London. They came to live in Nottingham where Alister, their third son, was born in 1896. Alister was baptized at All Saints' Church, Raleigh Street and was subsequently educated at Oundle and Oxford. Much of his early life was spent in and around Nottingham and the book contains a wealth of information about little-known areas, and characters, in the city. Alister studied zoology at Oxford and subsequently entered the Army during the Great War. He was an accomplished watercolourist and perhaps

because of this skill he became involved in camouflage and the interpretation of aerial photographs taken of the enemy lines. After the war he returned to academic life and took part in the *Discovery* expedition to the Antarctic in 1925-27. He set up the Department of Zoology at the then new university of Hull, became heavily involved in the application of science to deep-sea fishing, and was eventually appointed as Linacre Professor of Zoology at Oxford.

Hardy had a strong interest in spiritual matters from boyhood, although he was at odds with the Anglican Church and at one time became a Unitarian. He considered that theology should be studied as a natural science, a view that was not popular amongst scientists either then or now. However, he was invited to give the Gifford Lectures in Aberdeen in 1963-64. These lectures were set up under the will of Adam, Lord Gifford, for 'promoting, advancing and diffusing the study of Natural Theology'. Hardy tailored his lectures around

an approach to religion from the perspective of evolutionary science. The success of Hardy's Gifford lectures led to the foundation of the Religious Experience Research Unit, based first at Oxford and now at the University of Wales at Lampeter. The original purpose of the unit was to test Hardy's hypothesis that what he called 'religious experience' was actually true and not an artifact of the human mind.

At this point, Hay's book becomes very interesting. In his last chapter he gives a convincing demolition, using science, of the atheism of such writers as Hobbes, Feuerbach and Max Webber. Even Richard Dawkins, one-time student under Hardy at Oxford, gets an airing.

Altogether this book is very unusual for a biography, but it is an enjoyable read, even if one disagrees with Hardy's views on spirituality.

John Wilson

◆◆

Also received for review is *The Grisly History of Nottinghamshire*. The review is under preparation and will appear in the Summer issue of the *Newsletter*.

◆◆◆



Picture from the *MOTHERS and MIDWIVES* exhibition - see next page

MOTHERS AND MIDWIVES

A history of maternity in the East Midlands

The subject of the current exhibition at the University of Nottingham's Weston Gallery seems particularly topical at the moment with the start of the BBC series *Call the Midwife* coinciding with the exhibition opening.

Mothers and Midwives: A History of Maternity in the East Midlands gives a Nottingham perspective on the subject. Its main object is to explore the story of maternity care in the East Midlands over the last century, looking both at how the experience of pregnancy and childbirth has changed for local mothers and how professional midwives have pursued their careers. The iconic image of the district midwife, complete with bicycle, is among the photographs on display, while an example of the equally familiar midwife's bag, complete with typical contents, provides one of the case displays.

The exhibition was curated by Dr. Tania McIntosh, Lecturer in the Department of Nursing, Midwifery and Physiotherapy, and inspired by her recent historical research into the history of local midwifery. Her fellow-curator was Dr. Denise Amos who will be well known to Thoroton Society members for her work on the Society's *Nottinghamshire Gateway* web site. Denise extended the interest of the exhibition to include the fate of the new born, with information on local infant mortality rates at the end of the nineteenth century. Her talk in January on Infant Welfare examined the patterns and causes for infant deaths at the turn of the 20th century in Nottingham, Leicester and Derby.

Although the experience of childbirth is a universal one, the juxtaposition of modern records and historic accounts shows stark differences in expectations, practices and outcomes. Accounts of individual midwives, such as Hannah Jeffcott, and records of training and work in hospitals or in the districts, show the steady professionalism of the career midwife. The historical dimension has been taken further back to the early modern period by supporting content from the historic collections in Manuscripts and Special Collections.

The exhibition is by Manuscripts and Special Collections, University of Nottingham, and will be open at the Weston Gallery, Lakeside Arts Centre until Sunday, 15 April.

A series of lunchtime talks accompanies the exhibitions. These are open to the public and admission is free but places are limited so advance booking is required via the Box Office on 0115-846-7777.

The only talk available following the publication date of this *Newsletter* is Wednesday, 14 March when Julia Allison, former district midwife in Nottingham, past-President of the Royal College of Midwives and author of *Delivered at Home*, a history of district midwifery in Nottingham, will talk about the development of district midwifery and the experience of having a baby 'on the district'.

◆◆◆

THE THOROTON FAMILY AND THE ALFRETON/SWANWICK COLLIERIES.

A recent enquiry addressed to the Society was from the Archivist of the *Friends of Cromford Canal* and was seeking information about the name of Thoroton in connection with a map of circa 1787 relating to a proposed Langley Mill to Pinxton canal.

Adrian Henstock responded and his comments will be of interest to members of our Society: 'The Thoroton Society was founded in 1897 and named in honour of Dr. Robert Thoroton (1623-1678) who wrote the *Antiquities of Nottinghamshire* in 1677. He was a physician from Car Colston near Bingham, where his family had owned a small estate since the Middle Ages.

He had no male heirs and in 1672 his second daughter, Elizabeth, married a wealthy self-made colliery owner, John Turner, of Swanwick, Derbyshire. The Turners' extensive colliery interests in the Alfreton area eventually reverted in 1767 to Robert and Thomas Thoroton, descendants of Dr. Thoroton's brother, Thomas, who had prospered as a London merchant. However, in 1789 they sold all their mineral interests to George Morwood for £16,100 and used the proceeds to purchase Flintham Hall near Newark. The family (who later adopted the surname of Hildyard) still live there.'

◆◆◆

ADAM NIGHTINGALE – A NOTTINGHAM AUTHOR

By James Eady

Adam Nightingale is a writer, based in Nottingham, whose books have included *Murder and Crime in Nottingham*; *Heroes and Villains of Nottingham* (which thankfully do not include Robin Hood in either category) and most recently *Masters of Crime: Fictions Finest Villains and Their Real Life Inspirations*.

You may have heard Adam talking about *Masters of Crime* on the Today Show on BBC Radio 4, Newshour on BBC World Service and the John Holmes Show on BBC Radio Nottingham. In the Radio 4 discussion he was asked who his favourite fictional villain was and responded with

Professor Moriarty's (at which point James Naughtie jumped in with, 'Ah yes, the Napoleon of crime') right-hand man, Colonel Sebastian Moran. It is like Adam to come up with a less-than-conventional answer. He always references the Hollywood actor and sometime pugilist, Victor McLaglen, in his interviews and this has become somewhat of an in-joke amongst his friends.

I worked with Adam at the Galleries of Justice for some years. Although his latest book contains mainly London criminals, he remains a great advocate for the (woefully) neglected Georgian criminal history of Nottingham. His knowledge of Nottingham's darker history is encyclopaedic and his descriptive powers are great. He freely admits that he is not an academic historian, but he is an effective communicator to the layman. He describes himself as a 'failed actor', who now writes 'books about crime and punishment, war and rioting, and fictional criminals'. There is often a Biblical style to his writing, and his research is extensive. When I worked with him I discovered that before writing an educational mock-trial for the National Centre for

Citizenship and the Law (the educational arm of the Galleries of Justice) he would read everything he could on the subject.

At the time of writing this article, Adam was working on a one-man show for the Galleries of Justice, called *Georgian Bloodbath*. I was lucky enough to see a preview of this show last

August: it is very dramatic and aimed at people with a good knowledge of history. He used gory props and the concept of the Georgian Darwin Awards for stupid deaths to engage the audience. LeftLion said, 'this isn't a show for children, or for those not terribly interested

in history. But if you're an adult with an irreverent sense of humour and a penchant for the macabre, watch out for this show. It's fun and interesting, and part of Nottingham's wonderful cultural vibe.'

The show does seem to fit with the zeitgeist. We can see that with popularity of Horrible Histories on television how useful the darker

parts of history are at getting children and young adults interested in history. Adam's show is bringing criminal history to a larger audience. At the preview people went away talking about the stories he had told and this continued for several days. Perhaps a children's version is the next, logical, step. In a recent interview for LeftLion, Adam said that

'historical distance confers a degree of colour and exoticism that makes the awful things some of these people do seem alien and almost like fiction. There's an attraction in that.'

Ed: LeftLion is an online magazine which lists and reviews much of Nottingham's cultural and sporting activities. See it at www.leftlion.co.uk



Adam Nightingale reading from his latest book.

CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE

By John Beckett

This newsletter will reach you almost 200 years to the day after the publication on 10 March 1812 of Lord Byron's *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*. Such has been the international reputation since 1812 of Byron that it is hard now to recall just how important this was in his life. Byron, born in 1788, had inherited Newstead Abbey in 1798 on the death of his great uncle, and with that responsibility had come the barony as 6th Lord Byron. After Harrow and Cambridge, he had taken his seat in the Lords in March 1810, and then gone with John Cam Hobhouse on a belated Grand Tour, from which he returned in June 1811. *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* was written during that European adventure, and its publication turned Byron from being a relatively obscure (and poor!) minor aristocrat, into a major literary figure, initially in London but subsequently on a global scale.

The poem, in four parts, of which the first part came out in 1812, describes the travels and reflections of a world-weary young man looking for distraction in foreign lands. It brought Byron immediate fame. He was later to recall that 'I awoke one morning and found myself famous'. Subsequently Byron more or less gave up his fledgling political career, and in August 1812 he

reversed all he had previously said about the importance of Newstead in his life, and offered it for sale. Subsequently he had several high profile affairs, including perhaps most notably with Lady Caroline Lamb who described him as 'mad, bad, and dangerous to know', made a disastrous marriage to Annabella Milebank, and with allegations ringing in his ears of having committed incest with his half-sister, Augusta, departed for Europe in Spring 1816, never to return.

By now he was one of London's leading literary figures, and each publication was eagerly awaited by his followers, particularly perhaps his second epic, *Don Juan*, part of which was set in a fictional country house which was clearly intended to be recognized as Newstead. The house itself was finally sold in 1817. Byron was interred at St. Mary's, Hucknall, after his notoriety led to Westminster Abbey refusing burial. Byron was neither born in Nottinghamshire, nor did he die in the county, and he spent relatively little of his life at Newstead, but he remains one of the county's most iconic figures and Newstead Abbey is forever associated with his memory.

◆◆◆

NEWSTEAD ABBEY UPDATE

By Barbara Cast

You will probably have read that lead, including the decorative lead pipes installed by Colonel Thomas Wildman, was recently stolen from the Abbey.

This is, of course, very distressing to those who believe that Newstead Abbey should be given the highest standard of care, security and, indeed, accessibility in view of its history, architecture and associations. The Society has long been concerned about the Abbey and its gardens and, having made enquiries of the City Council, received some assurance from the museums manager. He states that there is some good news re the drainpipes in that the police have recovered a significant part of the stolen lead and made arrests. They also recovered more lead from a local scrapyards. All this recovered lead has been identified by staff, using a full photographic survey made of the Abbey leadwork.

Council staff removed the leadwork which remained after the theft to safeguard it while the police conducted their enquiries. The Council officer goes on to say that extra security measures have been put in place and that once they are satisfied that these are fully operational and effective, they will replace the historic lead pipes.

The Society is still of the opinion that all interested parties need to give fundamental consideration to the Abbey's future. Substantial investment is needed now and ongoing to ensure this iconic and internationally renowned place is restored to top class condition and its continuous maintenance secured.

Newstead Abbey is to be a venue for the Antiques Roadshow later this year so we hope that it will be spruced up and looking good in time for this.

◆◆◆

A MAGICAL SECRET GARDEN WITH MUSIC FOR MAGGIE'S

Have you ever wondered what lies behind the door at the end of the hallway in the townhouse between the newsagents and charity shop on Angel Row? Well, in May you will have a chance to look around the secret garden that nestles at the back of Bromley House Library.

The Library is holding an 'open garden' event to raise funds for Maggie's, the cancer care charity, as well as the conservation work we are doing here at the library.

The walled garden, usually only open to members of the library, is a place of tranquility and calm in the busy city centre. It is one of the last remaining gardens from the eighteenth century, when Nottingham was known as the 'garden town'. It will be looking its best in May.

Maggie's offers cancer patients and their families practical and emotional support to complement their medical care. The latest Maggie's centre, designed by Piers Gough and Paul Smith has recently opened in Nottingham. Piers calls the building 'Maggie's Teapot' but really it is more of a tree house. Balconies

extend from the kitchen and meeting rooms and a terrace opens onto the garden, which is designed to use scent and texture to create a secluded and uplifting area for people to enjoy.

Elizabeth Robinson, the Bromley House gardener, will be on hand to answer any queries. Carol Barstow and her staff will be able to answer any questions about the library (which will not be open for visits on this occasion) and June Perry will be playing the Hammer Dulcimer. Cordials and cake will also be served.

Opening time: Saturday 12 May from 1400 to 1700.

Admission: £2.00 per person. £4 families (2 adults plus children).

Further information: Geraldine Gray – 0115-946-9839.

email: enquiries@bromleyhouse.org

www.bromleyhouse.org.uk

www.maggiescentres.or/centres/nottingham/introduction.html.

◆◆◆

MISS MARJORIE BOOT'S CANTEN IN FRANCE

By John Wilson

I came across the following note in my historic weather records, regarding a severe rainfall episode in Nottingham. The note is from the *Nottingham Evening Post* of Friday 16 July 1915.

The Headline reads 'March Weather in July – record fall of rain in Nottingham'.

The heaviest fall at the castle since records began there in 1876. Castle total was 2.578 ins in the 24 hours. Other heavy falls were 2.357ins on 24 August 1903, 2.157ins on 8 August 1875 and 2.136ins on 19 September 1869.

Between 8pm on the 16th and 1.45am on the 17th, about 1½ inches of rain fell. It was still raining at mid-day on the 17th. There was also a North to North-West gale which did much damage to fruit trees, gardens and growing crops. Several large trees were brought down, including two onto the tram lines near Basford Gasworks and another near the Mapperley Tram Terminus. There were severe effects on telephone and telegraph services. A military

camp (Royal Field Artillery) on Wollaton Park was washed out – 'the tents provided no protection against such a downpour'. The troops remained cheerful though. One described it as a 'little damp' and another was dreaming about swimming and woke to find his head in a pool of water. Much barley had been flattened in the county.

The Evening Post has been asked to state that the garden fete organised for today [Saturday 17 July] by Lady Boot at the Plaisance, in aid of Miss Marjory Boot's canteen in France, has been postponed for a week. Also today should have been geranium Day on behalf of funds for the National Children's Fund and Orphanage. Some 'brave and philanthropic vendors' ventured out, but sold very little'. Another day was to be fixed for later.

Does anyone know anything about Miss Marjory Boot's canteen in France? If so please advise the editor of the *Newsletter*.

◆◆◆

SNIPPETS

The Place-names of Nottinghamshire

The definitive English Place-Names Society volume of Nottinghamshire place-names was one of the earliest to be compiled and, this being so, a great deal of scholarship and name retrieval has taken place since it was written. Discussions have been underway between Thoroton and the EPNS to see if there was any way in which new research could be undertaken to produce a more up to date version but, due to other pressures, this has stalled.

We are asking any researchers that, if you come across a source of Nottinghamshire place-names during your research, to let us have the reference and location so that this can be followed up as part of a new compilation.

If you have any such source information please get in touch with Barbara Cast at barbaracast@btinternet.com, and we will follow up the information provided.

◆◆

The British Newspaper Archive (www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk)

An ambitious project to digitize every newspaper, periodical and journal ever printed in Britain has been launched, making more than a million pages of pre-1900 newspapers available to readers online.

The British Newspaper Archive will allow readers to search by date, title and keyword, and will include material previously only available at the British Library.

The project aims to build to four million digitized pages over the next two years, and to 40 million pages over the next decade.

Some Nottingham papers are already available online.

To access full reports a subscription is available with three options, annual, month or two days.

◆◆

Nottinghamshire Local History Association

The Association holds its spring event at Ravenshead village hall on Saturday 31 March 2012 starting at 10 am and ending around 4.15 pm.

The day's theme is ***New Windows on our past*** and deals with recent archaeological discoveries in Nottinghamshire.

Speakers are: Adam Thompson - *A different approach: 12 years of excavations on the Romano-British site at Besthorpe Quarry*; Louise Robinson – *Archaeology under the A46: Results of the Initial assessment*; Ursilla Spence – *The Roman Remains of Southwell* and David Budge – *Chamber Pots and beer mugs – the story of a community excavation at Kirkby Hardwick*.

The cost is £6.50 for members of the NLHA and £7.50 for non-members. There is no need to book in advance although booking forms for advance booking are now available. More information from 01623-870515

◆◆

The John Player Archive

A project by the University of Nottingham and Nottingham City Museums and Galleries is in progress to create an online archive of over 20,000 object relating to John Player & Sons, including adverts, packaging and enamel signs from the 1890s to the 1980s.

The archive will include people's memories of the factory.

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE ARCHIVES

Nottinghamshire Archives hold regular Wednesday Workshops usually on the third Wednesday of each month. They cost £4 per place and are limited to 15 places per event so booking is essential by contacting the Archive office. Each event starts at 14.30 and last for an hour.

18 April	Military records
16 May	Police records
20 June	Records of Royalty
25 July	Apprenticeship records
15 August	Nottingham City and its records
19 September	Electoral Registers.

In addition there are skills workshops with the same booking conditions. These events start at 14.30 and last between one hour and one hour and a half.

13 March	Dates and Weights
8 June	Reading Parish Registers in English
15 June	Reading Parish Registers in Latin (no experience of Latin is required)
24 August	Finding Your Way Around Nottinghamshire Archives

A further talk takes place on 10 July at 2.30 pm, cost £4 with 30 available places – Nottinghamshire's Sporting Heritage will explore the county's sporting heritage as reflected in the holdings of Nottinghamshire Archives.

Recently catalogued items now available for research are:

Papers of the Nottingham Master Butchers' Association 2006-2011 (DD/2360/1/13)
Sales particulars and deeds for property in Selston 1857-1980 (DD/2677)
Sales particulars and deeds for property for Newlands Farm, Misson (DD2628)
Vernon Road Bleach Works, correspondence, plans and order records 1888-1997 (DD/VR)
Faculties of the Diocese of Southwell and Nottingham 1975-1984 (DR/1/2/30)

RUFFORD ABBEY

From Tuesday 15 May to Sunday 10 June 2012 to celebrate the Queen's Diamond Jubilee, Rufford Gallery turns regal with some right royal exhibits and majestic fun-themed activities.

A selection of archives from Nottinghamshire Archives will be on display from April with associated workshops and activities.

Details from 01623-822-944 or www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/ruffordcraftcentre.

DEADLINES for items for the Newsletter are 1 February, 1 May, 1 August and 1 November every year.

COPY should be sent to the EDITOR, Howard Fisher, 21, Brockwood Crescent, Keyworth, Nottingham, NG12 5HQ or by email to handjaf@virginmedia.com.

Items can be handwritten or typed in Word format, either suffix .doc or .docx. Pictures, diagrams and maps are all most welcome to illustrate an item. Images can be submitted on CD or as an email attachment (300 dpi JPEG). Images will be adjusted to suit the publication.

All copyright remains with the author and photographer. No item may be reproduced without the express permission of the author and Newsletter editor. Due regard for copyright issues must be given when sourcing items for illustration. Acknowledgement of authorship and photographer will be given where the information is known.

All views expressed in the Newsletter are those of the author and not necessarily shared by the Thoroton Society, its officers or Council members.