



DERBYSHIRE • LEICESTERSHIRE • LINCOLNSHIRE

# East Midlands History and Heritage

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE • NOTTINGHAMSHIRE • RUTLAND

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**10** Preserving local history on film

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*Corporation Oaks, Nottingham.*



**FREE**

**PLUS** The social world of Nottingham's green spaces • The Fearon fountain • Regional news & events and much more

# Welcome

Welcome back to East Midlands History and Heritage, the magazine that uniquely caters for local history societies, schools and colleges, heritage practitioners and history professionals across the region, putting them in contact with you and you with them.

We'd like to draw your attention particularly to our first Annual Conference, entitled Luther and the East Midlands, 30th September 2017, at De Montford University. For further information please contact Liz Tingle: [elizabeth.tingle@dmu.ac.uk](mailto:elizabeth.tingle@dmu.ac.uk)

We'd also encourage you to submit work to us for publication. You can pick any topic from any period, just so long as it has a strong East Midlands connection. Articles are normally between 1500-2000 words long. Keep a look out, too, for matching images that will help illustrate your work (the higher the number of pixels, the larger we can make the image). So if you are currently working on a community project, or a private piece of research, and would like to take your findings to a large audience, why don't you email us with the details at: [emhist@virginmedia.com](mailto:emhist@virginmedia.com)

**Dr Nick Hayes**  
Nottingham Trent University

**Katie Bridger, Helen Drew, Hannah Nicholson**  
Assistant editors

## Find us on Facebook

We now have a **group on Facebook** to help extend our network of academic institutions, students (undergrad and postgrad), local history groups, and the wider community, who are united by an interest in the history and heritage of the East Midlands area.

To post and comment, just join our group which you'll find by logging on to [www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com) and searching for East Midlands History and Heritage.



We're also on twitter  @EastMidlandsHH

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## So write for us

Let us have details of your news and events.

We'll take your stories about your community's history to a larger regional audience. We'd also welcome articles about our region's broader past.

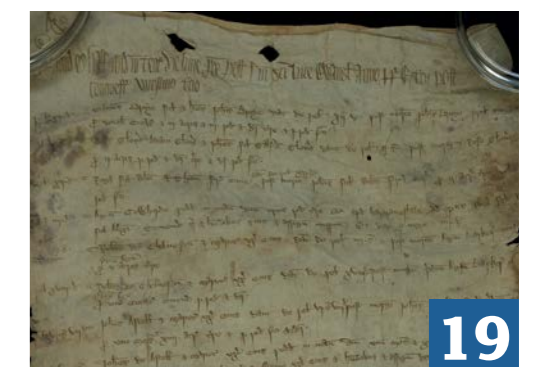
Contact us via our website at [www.eastmidlandshistory.org.uk](http://www.eastmidlandshistory.org.uk) or email [emhist@virginmedia.com](mailto:emhist@virginmedia.com)



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**Postgraduate qualifications with flexible study starting September 2018**

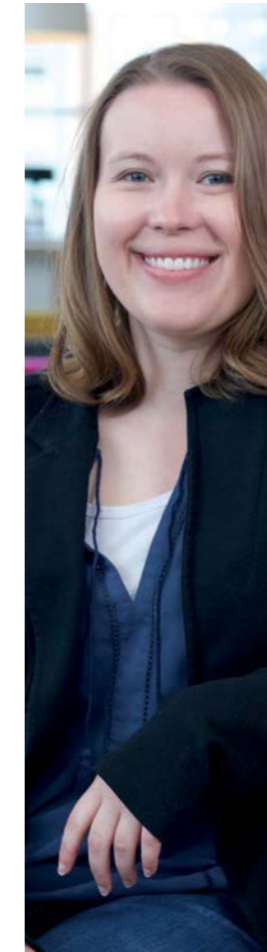
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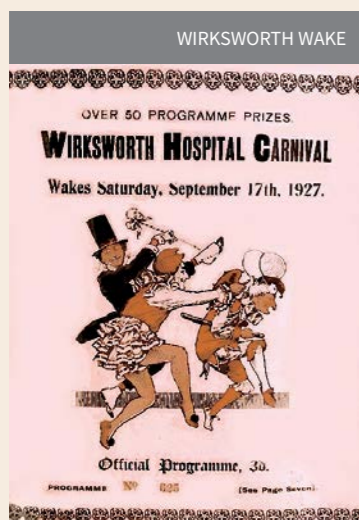
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**NOTTINGHAM**  
TRENT UNIVERSITY



# Entertaining the community: hospital fundraising before the NHS

BY EDDIE CHEETHAM



Before the NHS was founded in 1948, hospital and healthcare funding in the United Kingdom operated very differently. There were two different types of hospital provision. Voluntary hospitals, both general and specialist, focused on acute medical care, specialist services such as eye treatments or ENT, and accident and emergency services. Patients would go to see consultants, be operated on, or be seen as outpatients. Patients paid what they could, or were treated for free. Outside the voluntary sector, there sat a patchwork quilt of local authority and public services. The most famous (or infamous) were the workhouse infirmaries, or as they later became after 1929, Public Assistance Infirmaries that were run by local authorities. Originally attached to the workhouse to provide healthcare for resident and out-relief paupers, in the twentieth century many grew into very large institutions in their own right. Workhouse and public assistance infirmaries housed particularly the chronic sick and geriatric patients. The voluntary hospitals are closest to what we would associate today as a typical hospital, providing a wider range of care.

Though the two counties of Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire were very similar in many ways, with a shared industrial and civil heritage, they had very different patterns of voluntary hospital provision. Nottinghamshire was served by a few larger hospitals spread across the county, while Derbyshire had almost three times the number, from the large to very small. The largest hospitals, Nottingham General with four hundred beds and Derbyshire Royal Infirmary with three hundred and fifty, drew patients from across their counties. A little smaller was the specialist Devonshire rheumatic hospital in Buxton and the Chesterfield and North Derbyshire Royal Hospital with two hundred beds. Hospitals such as Mansfield and District, Ilkeston General and Worksop Victoria, with between fifty and a hundred and forty beds, cared for patients from their respective towns and surrounding areas. Cottage hospitals included Ripley, Buxton, Bakewell, Retford, the Whitworth in Darley Dale, and the Ashbourne Victoria Memorial Hospital. All these hospitals received subscriptions, donations, and bequests from companies and individuals. Later, mutualist Saturday Funds and Contributory Schemes (which could be compared to a form of rudimentary health insurance) became

## Volunteers for the Newark Town & District Hospital and Dispensary in 1926, the year of the General Strike, held five dances, three whist drives, three concerts, two benefit nights, a hospital ball, an angling competition, an Alexandra Rose Day collection, a garden fete, a sale of allotment produce, and a Cricket League Hospital Cup.

very popular, with the majority of individual patients paying into these low-cost, affordable schemes to secure hospital cover for themselves and their dependents. The larger general hospitals – Nottingham, Derby, and Chesterfield – became very adept at securing these income streams. While these large sums of money were very important, also significant was the money raised through carnivals, entertainments, and other public fundraising events. For smaller hospitals particularly, which frequently lacked a regular income, public fundraising became a key part of their financial makeup. Some of the largest events, such as the city-wide Hospital Day in Derby (started in 1928), brought in thousands of pounds in cash and goods. There were parades, sports, and competitions. Every year, too, the organisers published a magazine called the ‘Ram-Page’, containing comical stories, caricatures of local civic leaders, cartoons, as well as adverts from local companies.

There were instances in the early twentieth century when voluntary hospital ran into financial trouble. Particularly during and after the First World War, the increasing costs of healthcare and wartime disruption meant that hospitals found themselves with year-on-year deficits. In 1917, the traders of Chesterfield and District decided to alleviate the financial problems that their local hospital faced by holding a Bazaar on the 19<sup>th</sup> September. This was opened by the Marquiss of Hartington, the son of the Duke of Devonshire, who had been the president of Chesterfield Hospital for some decades. There was a huge market full of stalls, an industrial exhibition, and a number of entertainments. Appeals were made to individuals to donate sizable lump sums to the hospital. It was a resounding success. Over £4,000 was realised from the bazaar alone, and over £8,000 was raised in total. Of this, £4,300 was handed over to the hospital to clear its debt, and £4,000 was donated for future building work. A similarly event was organised in Buxton just a few years later in aid of the Devonshire Hospital and Buxton Bath Charity. Held in 1924 between the 10<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> of September, and this time opened by the Duchess of Devonshire, this attempted to clear the deficits accrued due to recent “additions and improvements” that the hospital had needed as a consequence of the Great War. It was organised, staffed, and run almost totally by women volunteers, who donated their time, skills, goods, and money to the event. According to newspaper reports, well over a thousand people attended the fair that was held under the ‘Great Dome’ of the Devonshire Hospital. It included stalls of baskets, babies’ and fancy goods, “useful novelties”, fruits, cakes, sweets, tobacco, flowers, and dairy products. All these contributed to the significant £8,297 profit.

At a local level, fetes and carnivals in aid of the cottage hospitals, such as Wirksworth and Ashbourne, brought out the peoples of the towns and villages to involve them in the work of the hospital. Each drew the community to

them, in a way far more universal than simply acts of giving through an annual subscription. They provided competitions and entertainment in many forms, and helped to advertise the good cause of the hospital, as well as the various ways to donate and contribute towards it.

Volunteers for the Newark Town & District Hospital and Dispensary in 1926, the year of the General Strike, held five dances, three whist drives, three concerts, two benefit nights, a hospital ball, an angling competition, an Alexandra Rose Day collection, a garden fete, a sale of allotment produce, and a Cricket League Hospital Cup. They also took collections at the local bowling club, Wesleyan Society, many football matches, and at a Christmas carol concert. This raised £423 just in ‘entertainments’ alone, 7% out of the £5,386 total ordinary income that year. Mansfield Hospital, in the late nineteen thirties, encouraged the continuation of public fundraising because it ensured that the hospital was able “to treat free of all charge the necessitous poor, unemployed, old age pensioners, etc., etc.” who were unable to pay towards their care either via the hospital almoner or via one of the subscription or contributory schemes. Similarly Wirksworth Cottage Hospital volunteers created a series of events, including dramatic entertainments, carnivals, and a ‘Pound Day’.

In the early 20th Century, local cycling clubs started to conduct parades in aid of their local institutions. In Matlock, a yearly procession would snake through the town, led by cyclists that had decorated their bicycles in elaborate ways. These would be followed by many townspeople competing in a fancy-dress competition, for which prizes were awarded for best dressed, and best decorated bicycle. Hospital parades were common, and fancy dress was a staple. Characters from history and contemporary events were mimicked or mocked, and contestants were not shy of being political. Lord Nelson appeared in Bolsover, while a group of women in Whittington Moor (near Chesterfield) dressed as scrapping suffragettes in 1909. At the same event, a ‘comic’ football match was held. It was one large play, acted out by both teams and a harassed referee. Players made pratfalls. The St John’s ambulance team responded by bandaging the player from head-to-foot, and stretching him off to cheers from the crowd. At about half-way through the match, the referee made a “poor” decision, which caused a theatrical display from the team at fault. They carried the referee off the pitch, whilst the other team scored goals behind their backs, with local Boy Scouts attempting to defend the referee. Yet while sports could be a platform for theatrics and fun, in most cases hospital sports competitions were serious business. Very large tournaments were held for football, cricket, rowing, swimming, bowls, angling, and much more, with cups awarded to the winners. ▶

It seems to have been rare that such events were poorly attended, unless it rained. In Ashbourne, a series of smaller events were held indoors throughout the year, including plays, collections, afternoon tea-parties, smoking concerts, and a lot of activity around Christmas. The Ladies' Committee at Ashbourne Victoria Hospital were constantly coming up with new forms of community fundraising. Envelopes were sent out to residents of the village and district, to be returned with cash on delivery or on entry to the annual Christmas party. They organised street collections to coincide with the annual Shire Horse Show, which thousands of people attended from across the county. It meant that there was the widest scope for the collectors to draw from.

The Long Eaton Carnival was perhaps the largest single event in the region, offering a plethora of attractions. It contributed towards many different charitable causes, not just the hospitals. By 1936, the organising committee donated its proceeds to Nottingham General Hospital, Nottingham Children's Hospital, Nottingham Women's Hospital, Nottingham Eye Infirmary, Nottingham Ear, Nose and Throat Hospital, the Derbyshire Royal Infirmary, Derbyshire Women's Hospital, Derbyshire Children's Hospital, Derby Deaf and Dumb Institution, Buxton Devonshire Hospital, as well as to the Fire Brigade, St John Ambulance and Nursing Division, and to the Police Widows and Orphans Fund. Nottingham General took the largest share of the money, £800 in 1936, compared to Derby Royal Infirmary's £400. Starting in 1930, the event lasted a whole week, and included competitions, sports events, fireworks, and all other manner of things. But large events cost money. Smaller local carnivals tended to rely on amateur entertainers or professionals who donated their services for free. The scale of the Long Eaton Carnival, however, meant that costs rose significantly as entertainers and attractions (even offering reduced charitable

**Mansfield Hospital, in the late nineteen thirties, encouraged the continuation of public fundraising because it ensured that the hospital was able “to treat free of all charge the necessitous poor, unemployed, old age pensioners, etc., etc.”**




FIRST PRIZE-WINNING CART DECORATED WITH NURSE, DOCTOR AND PATIENT. C.1914



TANSLEY CARNIVAL, INCLUDING CARNIVAL KING AND QUEEN, CIRCA LATE 1920s

rates) had to be booked and paid for. In 1934, it raised an impressive £3,628 gross takings, but half of this went to cover costs, such as renting the ground, paying the performers, catering, and other general expenses. The next year, it took £3,661, but spent £2,108, leaving only £1,553. In 1936 the costs were so high that they considered reducing the number of attractions. The result is quite clear. This type of professionally organised event was far costlier than something like the Hospital Day, or the Rag Days in Nottingham. Yet if large, trans-county events like this were not as cost-effective as the more traditional volunteer-run events, they nevertheless raised significant sums, and became events embedded in the community calendar: something to be looked forward to in their own right.

This article has taken a glance over scattered and varied events and practices in the field of hospital funding in the days before government funding. Voluntary hospitals were independent, but they were not on their own. Even the smallest voluntary hospitals had an army of dedicated followers who strived to make 'their' institution the best it could possibly be. The people of Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire did not shy from this, and are prime examples of what constituted a vibrant, committed, and diligent voluntary hospital community. 

**Edward Cheetham**  
Nottingham Trent University

# Political biographies of the early women councillors on Nottingham City Council 1920-1930

By the turn of the century there were active campaigns for women's suffrage in most of the provincial cities, including Nottingham. Some progress had already been made. Women could already stand for election to school boards and as Poor Law Guardians, and many could vote, too, in local government elections. In 1918 women over the age of thirty acquired the parliamentary vote, and the local franchise was further extended. Local political cultures were also changing. New women's organisations came into being. For example, the pre-war National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies (NUWSS), renamed in 1919 National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship, continued to campaign in Nottingham under the umbrella of the Women's Citizens Association and the Women's Council. Locally, the Labour Party made significant progress in the first post-war elections. Separate women's sections were formed to capture the newly enfranchised female voter. When full female suffrage was realised in 1928, there were more women in the city who had the vote than men, with 56,666 men and 65,956 women on the local electoral roles, largely because so many women were employed in Nottingham's core industries.

The first woman to stand for the City Council, albeit unsuccessfully, was Mrs Bridget Jean Burke-Bloor, who contested a by-election in the spring of 1919. An organiser for the Nottingham branch of the Women's Labour League, she had studied law before becoming a schoolteacher and was married to a local Labour Party activist. Campaigning on the need for housing, jobs and the extension of the franchise for every woman over twenty-one, she argued that "men and women should be co-partners in municipal government and a woman should not for ever be relegated to the kitchen." Helena Dowson stood as a Liberal in November 1919, and Annie Shepherd stood for the Women's Citizens Association. Again, neither were successful. However, in 1920 this changed. Dowson captured the working-class Meadows ward and Caroline Harper was elected unopposed in the safe Conservative seat of Market ward. This confounded critics who had prematurely announced that, "women candidates are not favourably regarded by the majority of Nottingham voters." Caroline was married to Dr Henry Harper, who had consulting rooms in Regent Street. Wealthy, outspoken and a keen sportswoman, she captained local cricket and golf clubs, and at various times chaired the Nottingham Ladies swimming club. She had been active in the Women's Local Government association, which had campaigned since the 1890s for the political representation of women on civic bodies.

Dowson was the only daughter of Alderman Anderson and Jeannie Brownsword, who was one of the first women on the Nottingham Board of Guardians. Her father had served on the council from 1886, and was a keen proponent of female suffrage. A wealthy woman by birth, and then subsequent marriage to William Enfield Dowson, a local solicitor, she was involved in a range of women's organisations and with philanthropic work. Helena had relinquished the leadership of the Nottingham branch of the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies during 1913-1914, when the national body aligned with the Labour Party to put pressure on the Liberal Government to introduce a suffrage bill. When the NUWSS split during the First World War and then became the National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship, retaining its Labour Party affiliation, Helena took the local NUWSS branch into a new association entitled the Notts Women's Service Association. Although she campaigned on a platform for improved housing and sanitation, the plight of the unemployed and the rights of women to equal suffrage and representation on civic bodies, her adherence to the Liberal Party and antipathy towards Labour limited her appeal and standing as a key feminist figure in the city other than amongst her own social class. Both Harper and Dowson had been successfully nominated as Justices of the Peace in Nottingham in 1920, the first women to assume this office.

It is worth noting generally that many of the women who stood for the city council in the years following World War One had already held elected office as Poor Law Guardians, or had previously co-opted onto council committees because of connection and expertise. Women had been eligible to stand for election as Poor Law Guardians since 1892. Between 1900 to 1910 there were ten female Poor Law Guardians, a quarter of the total membership. In 1922, as many as twenty women stood for election for the forty-eight vacancies, prompting the *Nottingham Evening Post* to declare "that there were many lady aspirants and the situation was an election avalanche." Harper became a Poor Law Guardian in



AT LAST!

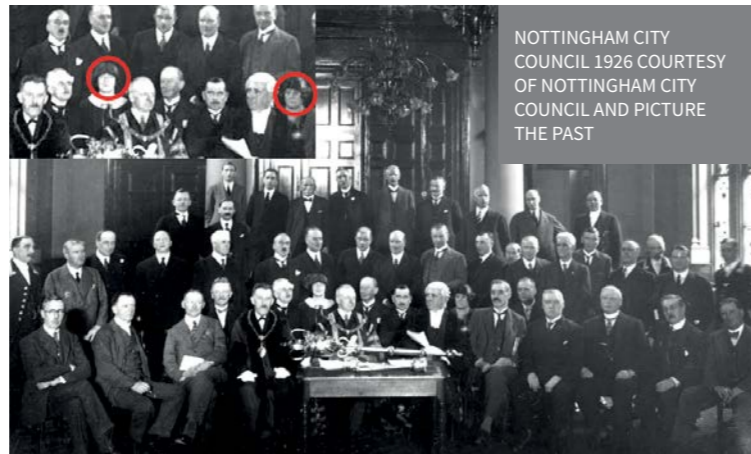
AT LAST – JOHN BERNARD PARTRIDGE, *PUNCH*, CELEBRATING THE REPRESENTATION OF THE PEOPLE ACT 1918, PUBLIC DOMAIN, VIA WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

## When full female suffrage was realised in 1928, there were more women in the city who had the vote than men

1910, becoming vice-chair and subsequently the first woman chair in the 1920s. In 1913, with fellow Conservative Poor Law Guardian Mary Corner, she was co-opted as a member of Nottingham's Care of the Mentally Defective Committee. Indeed, the co-optation of women onto the committee was a statutory requirement under the Mental Deficiency Act, 1913. In 1916, Caroline Harper, Helena Dowson and Harriett Ball, the wife of the Lord Mayor, Albert Ball were all appointed onto the anti-Profitteering committee, and Helena and Harriett Ball took on local responsibility for the War Fund Employment of Women's Committee on behalf of the Queen's Fund. Elizabeth Webber was elected city councillor in 1925 as the Conservative party candidate in Sherwood. She had already sat on the City's Health Committee before the war. Webber, Harper and Dowson were already prominent members of their local party associations. Elizabeth was married to the Nottingham surgeon Alexander Moxon-Webber and had been born and educated in Glasgow and then Switzerland. When war pensions were introduced in 1916, Harper and Webber were co-opted to serve on the committee. Webber later became the secretary of the Nottingham Women's Citizens' Association, which was particularly concerned with promoting women's candidacies in local elections.

There was only ever one independent woman councillor and that was Annie Shepherd. She lived on Highbury Road, Bulwell and was married to a bank manager. Shepherd was elected a Poor Law Guardian in 1919. In 1921, she captured Sherwood ward, which she retained until 1925. Her electoral success appears to have been particularly irksome to many in the ruling Conservative Party, and newspaper reports referred to some underhand dealings to unseat her. Perhaps this was because she had already publicly challenged the council to insist that all corporation building contracts were put to public tender and that councillors declare any financial interests in the building of new public housing. She also became embroiled in a contracts row in 1924 over the sale of land for building public toilets. The campaign for women's toilets was led by Shepherd and other local women's groups in the city. It was alleged that inflated prices were being charged for the land. In 1925, local Tories appeared to be behind moves to transfer her husband to a branch of the Westminster Bank on the Isle of Man, anticipating that Annie would accompany him. The Bank Officers Guild recorded this to be a "dastardly action" which "savours too much of banishment and was in itself a tactical error".

The Labour Party lagged behind the other two parties because, while women were nominated onto prospective councillor shortlists, initially none were selected. In 1923, Annie Elizabeth Wallis did secure the nomination for Bridge Ward but she was defeated. In 1926, Labour gains saw the election of the first woman Labour councillor, Elizabeth Hyatt. Born in Kentish Town, London, Hyatt had worked as a machinist in the textile industry until she married Ernest Harold Hyatt, a supervisor in the railway works. They both joined the Labour Party in Sneinton, a suburb of Nottingham where they lived. Ernest Hyatt was its secretary and an organiser; Elizabeth campaigned mainly on women's issues and had a specific interest in public health and sanitation in particular, the provision of Corporation bath and wash houses. Slum clearance and the shortage of working-class housing in



NOTTINGHAM CITY COUNCIL 1926 COURTESY OF NOTTINGHAM CITY COUNCIL AND PICTURE THE PAST

Nottingham dominated political debates and were specifically noted in the election addresses of women Labour Party candidates during the 1920s. Hyatt remained in office until 1939, successfully contesting nine council elections. Reflecting on her role as one of Nottingham's women pioneers in local politics, she remembered that the actual elections were particularly strenuous: "the public were very rude and awful on the doorstep. The times I was told to go home and scrub my floors, politics were a man's job! And the older women were the worst". Newspaper reports echoed some of this animosity, referring to hostile receptions and the "unflattering remarks of the women electors."

By 1928 Labour secured the largest number of councillors, although the Conservatives retained control because they retained more aldermanic seats. Progressive advances, however, had not brought in larger numbers of women. In 1927, Annie Martin and Mary Orton had stood for Labour in the safe Conservative wards of Castle and Mapperley respectively, and in 1928 Edith Eggleston again stood for Labour in Mapperley and easily lost. Vera Woodward similarly stood for the Liberals in Broxtowe and was heavily defeated. Edith was a director of the Co-operative Society and President of the Nottingham Women's Co-operative Guild, and her candidacy reflected the spirit of reciprocity between the two organisations and potentially an attempt to secure the female vote. It is not clear whether Woodward had the complete backing of the Liberal Party and her standing split the right of centre vote and allowed Labour to win. Annie Shepherd returned from her exile in 1927 from the Isle of Man to stand for St Alban's ward, again as an Independent candidate campaigning under the witty slogan "A Shepherd for the Nottingham Lambs" but lost to the Labour candidate, George Goodall. Annie died in 1929. Communist Party candidate, Florence Edith Stanger stood in the Byron ward in 1927, but she lost to Labour. As the NEP recorded she was "given a hostile reception when she appeared in Colwick Street when she was roundly hooted and went up Independent Hill to escape the unflattering remarks of the women electors." In 1929, Hyatt, Webber and Harper were joined by Susannah James, the newly elected Labour councillor for Wollaton ward. She was the wife of a colliery worker.

In conclusion, women's representation on the Nottingham Corporation was uneven. In 1930, there were only three women councillors, two representing Labour and one for the Conservative/Unionist Party. This lack of female representation was common across much of England and Wales at this time: it was not particularly a Nottingham phenomenon. The 1930s were to see greater numbers of women standing and being elected to the city council, but again the overall numbers remained small across the parties. It is interesting that there was less resistance to female candidatures as Poor Law Guardians, partly because such posts were less prestigious, but also because the work of the Guardians was more closely allied to perceptions of women's traditional interests in matters relating to family. 📄

**Val Wood**  
Chair of the Nottingham Women's History Group

THE MEETING  
LEAFLETS COURTESY  
NOTTINGHAMSHIRE  
ARCHIVES.

NOTTS. WOMEN'S SERVICE ASSOCIATION,  
(Affiliated to the N.U.S.E.C.)

### A MEETING FOR MEMBERS (and friends)

WILL BE HELD AT

THE FRIENDS' SCHOOLROOM, FRIAR LANE,

On Monday, February 7th.

MRS. H. B. DOWSON, C.C., J.P., in the Chair, 5 o'clock.

Address by MISS ROSAMOND SMITH, (Hon. Sec. of the N.U.S.E.C)

"Current Legislation for Women and Children."

TEA 4.30.

Chair taken 5 o'clock.  
Annual Business Meeting (Members) 6-30.

Tea Collection to cover expenses.

**PLEASE MAKE A REAL EFFORT TO ATTEND.**

### National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship. NOTTS. BRANCH.

Upper Broughton,  
Notts.  
March 26th.

The First Quarterly Meeting for 1923 will be held at the Elite Picture Theatre (ladies' room) on Thursday, April 12th, at 3-30.

Mrs. Dowson, J.P., will open a discussion on "The possibilities of co-ordinated action among the local Societies working on behalf of Women and Children."

A. MAUD DOWSON,  
Hon. Sec.

TEA at café prices if desired.

Please try and come

# Preserving local history on film

BY PETER RYDE

**When Spalding's Savoy cinema closed its doors for the last time in 1976, three decaying rolls of locally shot film were rescued from the skip. But when local historians tried to get help with restoring them, it soon became clear that although there were regional film archives for Yorkshire and East Anglia, there was nothing of the kind for Lincolnshire.**

Their attempts to interest anyone in restoring the films met with bemused indifference. Eventually, as an independent film producer, I was asked to help. I then discovered that in the meantime one of the three rolls had decayed beyond all hope of recovery, its contents lost forever. This disaster convinced me that if no one else was bothering to conserve the county's film heritage, perhaps I ought to start doing it myself.

**“But is there any old film of Lincolnshire?”**

people said.

Indeed there is. The Lincolnshire Film Archive, founded in 1986 with just the two surviving films from the old cinema, is now thoroughly well-established and has conserved around 850 titles showing life and work in the county, dating from 1901 to 1995. They have been found in all sorts of places: attics, old churches, refuse tips, even cattle sheds; and the subjects range from commercial fishing, agriculture and industry, to natural disasters like the 1953 floods, civilian life in wartime, and happy domestic scenes like bathing the baby. There are plenty of less predictable subjects too: a celebrated local water diviner at work, a home made hovercraft, a portable folding boat, and a WVS emergency cooker intended for use after a nuclear attack.

Some of these films were professionally produced, but the majority were taken by Lincolnshire people themselves, many of them amateurs or semi-professionals, who set out to record the local events of their day for their own personal satisfaction. Although these films have long outlived their original purpose, their useful life is far from being over. For the local historian, film offers a valuable and unique resource. Nothing brings the past back to life like motion picture film, and it can be full of surprises, for the value of archive footage seldom has much to do with the reasons why the film was made in the first place. With the passage of time, the interest tends to focus increasingly on matters which the photographer had scarcely even known he was recording. This “unconscious testimony” is often what later generations will chiefly value.

Here's just one example to illustrate the point. A big family Christmas party, circa 1950. Quite an occasion. But look. To the speechless incredulity of their later counterparts, the two teenage boys

are wearing their school ties and blazers, a telling reminder that in those austerity days they would have had no alternative.

Most people tend to think that beyond blowing the dust off the can there's nothing much that needs to happen between the discovery of some old footage and its first showing to an audience. If only it were that simple. In fact, getting an old film back on the screen again can be a long and complex process that takes months to accomplish.

Old films are often extremely dirty and may well have suffered considerable damage, so before the footage can be run on a telecine machine or scanner to produce an electronic copy from the original, the first job is likely to be a thorough cleaning and some painstaking repairs. Joins may have distorted over the years or even come apart, so each one will need to be carefully inspected and perhaps re-made. The film may also have shrunk so much that the perforations which keep successive images correctly in register no longer fit onto the drive mechanism. Worst of all, these perforations may even have broken away in places, leaving the film impossible to run on any machine.

In a case like this, the only way to save it may be to copy it one frame at a time. With sixteen or even twenty-four images per second, rescuing a five minute film would mean copying around five to seven thousand separate frames, not a job for the faint hearted. On top of that, individual frames may have acquired unsightly blemishes which will need to be removed using software such as Photoshop.

But even then the job is by no means over. If the front titles and labels have been lost, a fair amount of research may be needed to identify the film and establish when and where it was made. All this takes time.

Of course, there wouldn't be much point in rescuing and conserving old film if no one ever got

to see it. So an important part of our work is to make the footage accessible to the public. Many people will have seen it in TV programmes such as *The Second World War in Colour*, or the four part biography of Margaret Thatcher which drew heavily on our early Grantham material. But we have also produced numerous DVD compilations, including the award-winning series *Lincolnshire – A Century on Film*. On request, we can also undertake customised compilations for running continuously at exhibitions or museums.

No less important are the needs of the individual researcher with a personal or academic project in hand. Any item in the Archive can be viewed by appointment at our premises near Boston, and many people make use of this facility to help with their research.

However, there's no doubt that the best way to appreciate old film is to see it as it was meant to be seen, projected onto a large screen. So we regularly present archive film shows at venues all over the county, where more than anything, perhaps, it's the delight of the audience on seeing these newly restored films at full size with even the smallest detail clearly visible, that makes the job worthwhile. 🎬

**Peter Ryde**  
Archivist, Lincolnshire Film Archive

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Images from top to right: Opening of Municipal Buildings, Boston 1904; On board a Grimsby trawler at sea, c 1901; Celebrating the Treaty of Versailles, Grantham 1919; Decontamination Squad at a practice gas attack, Louth 1940; Bathing the baby, c 1950; The winner! Louth Hospital Fête 1939; Snowman about to have his head knocked off, Louth 1940.

Readers interested in historic film of the East Midlands can also view other content at Media Archive for Central England (MACE) at <http://www.macearchive.org/>

# Young criminals on the march through the East Midlands

BY JEREMY LODGE



IMAGES LEFT TO RIGHT:  
FELTHAM BEFORE THE MARCH STARTED.  
MARCH ARRIVING AT LOWDHAM 13 MAY 1930 COURTESY NOTTINGHAM EVENING POST.  
PARADE OUTSIDE GRANGE HOUSE C.1930. GRANGE FARM BUILDINGS ARE IN THE BACKGROUND.  
PHOTOGRAPHER EDMUND BIRD, COURTESY OF HIS DAUGHTER.

In May 1930, forty Borstal lads, aged between sixteen and twenty-one, marched with ten officers from Feltham Borstal in Middlesex to a country estate which nestled on a hillside between the villages of Lowdham, Lambley, Epperstone and Woodborough, some eight miles east of Nottingham. Had the local newspapers known, one could only wonder at the headlines. As it was, the prison authorities were relieved that after much misrepresentation of the reform aspect of their work, the press remained blissfully unaware of their plans and of the march itself. Tom Iremonger MP said in 1962 that this was an epic journey that was still talked about by prison officers. The historian Victor Bailey later wrote in that the march rapidly entered into the folklore of the prison service.

So how did it all start? In 1895 a reform-minded Home Office Committee chaired by Herbert Gladstone, son of the prime minister William Gladstone, envisaged a juvenile-offender establishment that was:

*"a halfway house between the prison and reformatory... situated in the country with ample space for agriculture and land reclamation work ... with ... penal and coercive sides according to the merits of particular cases ... amply provided with staff capable of giving sound education, able to train inmates in various kinds of industrial work, and qualified generally to exercise the best and healthiest kind of moral influence."*

However, it was not until 1930, with the opening of the Lowdham Grange Borstal Institution, that this aspect of the committee's work was realised.

Borstals had developed slowly, with the conversion of prison wings and reform schools from 1902. And, although a few borstal lads were allowed out into the community during the day they were locked up at night in secure cells. This was not to be the case at Lowdham Grange where they could literally climb out of a window or walk through an unlocked door for, as Tom Iremonger MP wrote some thirty years later: *"the open borstal system placed a great strain and responsibility on its charges through the trust placed upon them."* As its future Governor noted shortly after its opening: *"They have a choice. If they choose to come to Lowdham Grange, they know they must make this promise: 'Because of the Trust put in ME, I promise, on my honour, to do my best to keep up the good name of Lowdham Grange.'"*

But what of the march itself – an ultimate test of trust and responsibility – did it succeed or fail? Harold Scott, a civil servant, a future prison commissioner and future commissioner of Scotland Yard, noted in his biography:

*"one day in May 1930 Alec Paterson [a prison commissioner who championed penal reform] walked into my room and issued one of his usual abrupt and excited invitations ... we are starting a new borstal at Lowdham Grange in Nottinghamshire, and we are going to begin with a little experiment. Bill Llewellyn [the deputy governor of Feltham] who is going to be the governor, will lead a party of forty boys on a route march from Feltham to Lowdham. They will spend six days on the road, and will sleep in halls and other places arranged by friends. Would you like to join them?... I accepted the offer on the spot."*

Paterson personally interviewed the nine staff chosen to participate on the march and they set off with the lads on 4th May 1930. After a church service, photographs and speeches, they left Feltham at 9.15 am and arrived at Harrow at 5pm, where they were hosted by the local Christian charity TocH. After an uneventful night, they left Harrow at 9.30 the following morning, later arriving at St. Albans. The lads were treated to a tour of the town and were then entertained by TocH and local scouts before sleeping on the floor, under tables, and in a lorry, having a good night's rest at "close quarters."

On 6th May they washed by the river, cooked breakfast and left St. Albans to arrive at Dunstable at 4.15. So far so good. They left the next morning to arrive at Newport Pagnell. The 8th May saw them leave for Northampton *"through beautiful countryside"* where, according to one lad:

*"much courtesy was shown us by passing folk and motorists who always had a friendly nod, or friendly word for us, boy scouts saluted us taking us for fellow scouts and even a policeman on point duty held up traffic for us to pass...everybody seemed to have a ready smile."*

A thus far uneventful journey saw them arrive at Northampton at 4.15 where they were joined by Scott. They went swimming and had *"a lovely tea of teas"* at Valentines café. Later they were entertained by a conjuror, jazz band and ventriloquist.

They left Northampton the next morning and spent the night of 4th May in Market Harborough. On 10th May they left for Leicester and were joined by Mr and Mrs Paterson *"who handed out bananas... which they had bought especially for us"*. They arrived in Leicester at 5pm to be entertained at Granby Hall, after which they went to Aylestone public baths for a wash, swim, change and an inspection. Scott recalls that the lads slept in Granby Hall, where the Lord Mayor raised a titter when, after reviewing the party, he cheerfully declared *"if I was a bit younger I would like to be in your place"*. They spent the Sunday in Leicester attending church and sightseeing. The next morning they were again visited by the Lord Mayor and left to complete their walk.

They spent the night of 12th at Broughton Lodge, sleeping in a refreshment hut and, to quote one of the lads:

*"we had dancing and jazzing ... lovely feed of feeds spread out on the table ... anyone stepping in would have mistaken us not for borstal boys but for a party of boys on a world tour, happy as sandboys were everyone"*

On 13th May 1930 they marched along the Fosse Way in rain and drizzle to have lunch at Gunthorpe. The sun came out as did many of the villagers and the vicar as they entered Lowdham village.

*"It seems like all of Lowdham had turned out to see us."*

At the gates to Lowdham Grange they were met by the Bishop of Southwell and other dignitaries. They proudly marched up the hill in good order, craning their necks to see the country house and tents that were to be their new home.

Llewellyn wrote: *"so ended a wonderful ten days; it has been a happy and inspiring experience for all have shared a common life, entirely out of common for borstal officers and lads ... The staff pulled together in an admirable way; a better spirit could not have been wished for. The lads, in conduct, in good manners, in willingness, in unselfishness at all times were ideal; unpleasant incidents, even of a petty nature, were almost entirely absent."*

Bailey also noted that the preparation for the march and the enterprise was as important as the move itself, as it involved a change in the relationship between staff and boys from the arid strict discipline and punitive regime of existing borstal training. It involved risks for staff, who had to:

*"look again at the boys with a scrutiny, a hope and an anxiety ... dependent on the boys loyalty to them". "At once the boys and their gaolers became, in however elementary and superficial way, on the same side"*

Scott wrote in his memoirs: *"the borstal boys felt proud in the trust we placed in them, and felt themselves to be, for as indeed they were, the pioneers of a great new adventure."* He also wrote that he *"never regretted"* accepting Paterson's invitation to join the march.

The officers and lads were to spend the first few years at Lowdham Grange living in tents and wooden huts. Under the supervision of local tradesmen, the lads built a borstal institution that was finally demolished in the 1990s, to make way for a modern, secure prison. They also built the housing estate for officers and their families, which still stands and is now in private hands. Lowdham Grange Borstal was an internationally famous innovation in penal history. It received many visits from dignitaries and study groups from across the world and was still spoken about by academics and others at conferences decades later. 📖

**Jeremy Lodge**  
Collingham and District Local History Society

## About the book

The book *Lowdham Grange Borstal* by Jeremy Lodge can be obtained through [www.amazon.co.uk](http://www.amazon.co.uk), The Bookcase (Main Street, Lowdham) or directly from the author at [www.jeremylodge.co.uk](http://www.jeremylodge.co.uk), or the address below. The author would be interested should any of our readers have any material concerning the march, Lowdham Grange Borstal or the people who lived and worked there. He can be contacted through his website or by writing to: Jeremy Lodge, 15 Satterley Close, Witham St Hughs South, Lincoln LN6 9QB.

BY TONY &amp; TERESA BAK, AND DAVID TIPPER

# The Row that Barber built



BARBERS ROW, 1969 BEFORE DEMOLITION

Barbers Row was two rows of Victorian terrace houses on the outskirts of Barlborough, a parish in Derbyshire: known locally as Front Row and Back Row. Mention Barbers Row today, and people born there in the 1920s and 30s say they would move back tomorrow. They laugh and joke about the outside toilets, the black clock beetles, and the overcrowding. What they fondly remember is the community spirit. Our project was to set up a local history group, and record as much information as possible. We found that people from Barbers Row were extremely enthusiastic about the project, and wanted everyone to know what life was like when they lived there. We made a DVD of interviews with people from Barbers Row, and also acquired over 200 family photographs which we have shown at four Barbers Row reunions. Ex Row residents came from far and wide: London, Scarborough, Leicester, Nottingham, and Sheffield to tell us their stories. We found an individual who attended university, and one who went on to run his own transport business. Four men won the Military Medal in WWI.

In the 1857 *Derbyshire Gazetteer Directory*, local entrepreneur Miles Frederick Horatio Barber was listed as a brick and tile maker, colliery owner and farmer. A true entrepreneur of his time, he had the foresight to expand his businesses further by recognising that there was a high demand for housing in the area. Miles did not just build houses, he started creating his community. He began in around 1863 by building the Prince of Wales public house, likely to have been named after the future king Edward VII, who in July of that year married Alexandra of Denmark. The steel, coal mine, and brickyard trades created a thirsty workforce. Attached to the public house was a shop selling boots, clothes, and fabric. There was living accommodation above where he installed his son Miles, along with his brother Edward, who ran the Prince of Wales. We know the Prince of Wales was operating as a public house by 1864 as Edward was mentioned in the *Sheffield and Rotherham Independent* for serving deficient measures. Quite a family affair!

“the beds were never cold on Barbers Row”

Attached to the Prince of Wales were four stone cottages, the beginning of Barbers Row. These were followed by the red brick terraced cottages: 46 in total, two up and two down. One unusual feature of the houses was that those on the back row had no back door at all – just a front door.

There was no running water installed in the cottages so a 60 foot well was dug in the yard. Electricity was not installed until as late as 1934, so originally the houses would have been lit by candles and paraffin lamps. Tin baths hung outside on a nail and were brought in and placed in front of the coal fire, often shared by several households. Quite a task to heat the water, fill the bath and then empty it. There were earth toilets at the back of the houses which remained until the Row was demolished in 1970. Coal was used for both heating and cooking. Miles was creating an outlet for his bricks, demand for his coal, jobs for his family, and an income from rents.

Miles owned all 46 cottages. In 1870 an Act was passed calling on all owners to pay poor relief instead of their tenants. In 1877 the *Chesterfield Herald* reported that Miles Barber had been summonsed for not paying £1 19s. 4d. Poor Relief. The clerk stated that Miles was the only person not to have paid during that year, an extraordinary fact considering he was an elected Poor Law Guardian.

Life was hard on the Row, money was short and families were large. Often the miners were put on short time, and low wages brought about strikes. There were often 12 or 13 people living in one household and they also took in lodgers to supplement their income. This is evidenced in the census returns throughout the years. In 1871 the

population of Barbers Row was 263, including 142 children and 12 lodgers. In 1911 the population was 228 including 191 children and 6 lodgers. Fortunately, many men worked shifts, so the nightshift slept during the day.

There was a saying that “the beds were never cold on Barbers Row”, for as soon as one was vacated someone else jumped in. The men got a reputation for drinking, and many cases of drunk and disorderly conduct were reported in the *Derbyshire Times*. Time spent in the public houses was often an escape from the crowded household.

However not all their free time was spent drinking. In 1886, we know they were playing cricket and boxing, a popular sport during this period. The small community had its own recreation ground across from ‘The Row’, where football was regularly played. Other leisure time was spent in the fishing club and also playing darts and dominoes. Not all pigeons went in the pot, some were kept for racing! The women raised the children, and did their best taking pride in the houses, black leading the coal fired ranges and whitening the doorsteps and window sills with what was known as ‘donkey stone.’

Many of the residents tended small allotments where they grew vegetables, kept pigs, chickens, and geese to help feed their families. Some became entrepreneurs, like Miles, and set up small businesses. One resident repaired clogs in his garden shed, whilst another

chopped sticks and sold them for kindling. Working life for the children started at 13 with many of the sons following their fathers down the mines, and the girls going into service. ▶



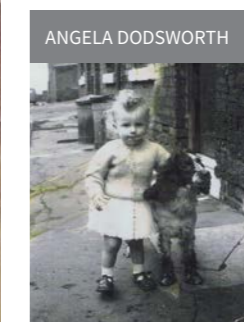
KIDS BATHING



OLD LADIES



MEN, DOGS AND CIGS, BARBERS ROW



ANGELA DODSWORTH



YOUNG DEAN



JOE HODKIN WEDDING 1946





HELEN DODSWORTH AND SYLVIA GOUCHE



GRANDAD AND GIRLS 1951



DORIS & SETH G PEMBERTON



WILLOUGHBY STATE NO 28



ELIZA WILLOUGHBY, 28 BARBERS ROW

*“The end is in sight for Barbers Row, once described as the worst slums in Derbyshire – soon the demolition gangs will move in”*



MENFOLK



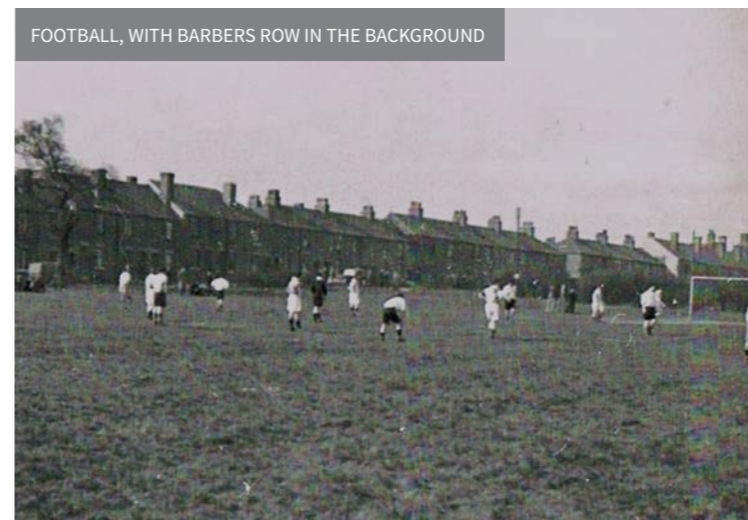
RHODA HALL AND JOYCE, NO 9 BARBERS ROW



FLORENCE, MARIAN AND CONSTANCE GEE PEMBERTON, NO 8



OLD DRAPERY SHOP



FOOTBALL, WITH BARBERS ROW IN THE BACKGROUND



LADIES OF THE ROW

Miles Barber passed away in 1884 at his Speakley cottage in Barlborough. He left a widow with seven children. His obituary stated that he was the builder of the County Court in Sheffield, which opened in 1847, and that he widened Lady's Bridge in 1866. His remains were carried to the grave by eight of his old servants. Even after his death Barbers Row remained in the family. The 1891 census shows Mrs Eliza Barber and three children living above The Prince of Wales public house, and running a grocery shop, which had previously been the drapers shop.

Water was always an issue on 'The Row', often ending in tragic circumstances. In 1885 Jane Barber, daughter of Edward Barber (Miles' brother) and the landlord of The Prince of Wales, fell down the well while fetching a pail of water, suffering severe head injuries. Another incident in 1891 resulted in 3½ year old Joe Fisher drowning in a tub of water. In 1904 water was in such short supply, so the pump was chained and residents restricted to just two buckets per day. Any extra had to be brought up from the neighbouring village of Emmett Carr, further down Renishaw Hill.

The shortage of water was raised with the council in 1906, as Barbers Row had been designated as the 'Black Spot' of Derbyshire. This was not rectified and another complaint was raised in 1909 by the Eckington District Education Committee. It appears there was a prevalence of worm disease amongst the children residing in 'The Row', making them unfit to attend school. Reports stated that no water had been delivered on four consecutive days and the carter only delivered two small buckets per house five days a week. This was confirmed by the contractor, who admitted that they should have delivered four buckets per house per day, six days per week. Although the water was blamed for the disease amongst the children, it was the opinion of the doctor that the cause was due to the want of water.

The remaining houses were still in high demand. Housing was in short supply after the First World War. Residents born and brought up on the Row often married someone from the neighbourhood, creating many related families and drawing the community even closer together. Rent in 1902 was 2 shillings and sixpence. By 1959 it had increased to all of 4 shillings and 8 pence (approximately 25 pence in today's money).

There were no locks on the doors of this close-knit community. Whatever they had was shared or loaned. If you were in need of a drink you called at the nearest house, and mothers would mind each other's children. Living so close together did cause altercations, but these were soon forgotten. People were proud to say they came from Barbers Row and even today you can find it written in their obituaries.

All that remains today is No.1 Barbers Row 'The Prince of Wales', now an Italian restaurant. The former drapers shop is now a coffee shop. The road still bears the name of Barbers Row and is fondly remembered. Between 1960 and 1970, the future of the Row hung in the balance as Clowne District Council debated its future. It was the slum clearance project that sealed the fate of Barbers Row. Several residents were re-housed into new Council properties with modern facilities. Houses on the Row then gradually became empty as people moved out. A small report in the *Derbyshire Times* dated 17th July 1970 reads "The end is in sight for Barbers Row, once described as the worst slums in Derbyshire – soon the demolition gangs will move in 'A community was split apart and a way of life lost forever.'"

Tony and Teresa Bak  
David Tipper

## There were no locks on the doors of this close-knit community

Handbills were given out giving simple instructions for the prevention of worm disease, suggesting that the owners be compelled to keep the houses in reasonable repair and condition. By this time some of the houses on the Row were in dilapidated condition, in regard to the structure, outbuildings, and yards. The council were informed that some houses were unfit for habitation and it was suggested that the Sanitary Inspector make a much more careful and detailed examination. This inspection resulted in 20 of the most neglected houses being demolished in 1920.

### More about Barbers Row and the authors

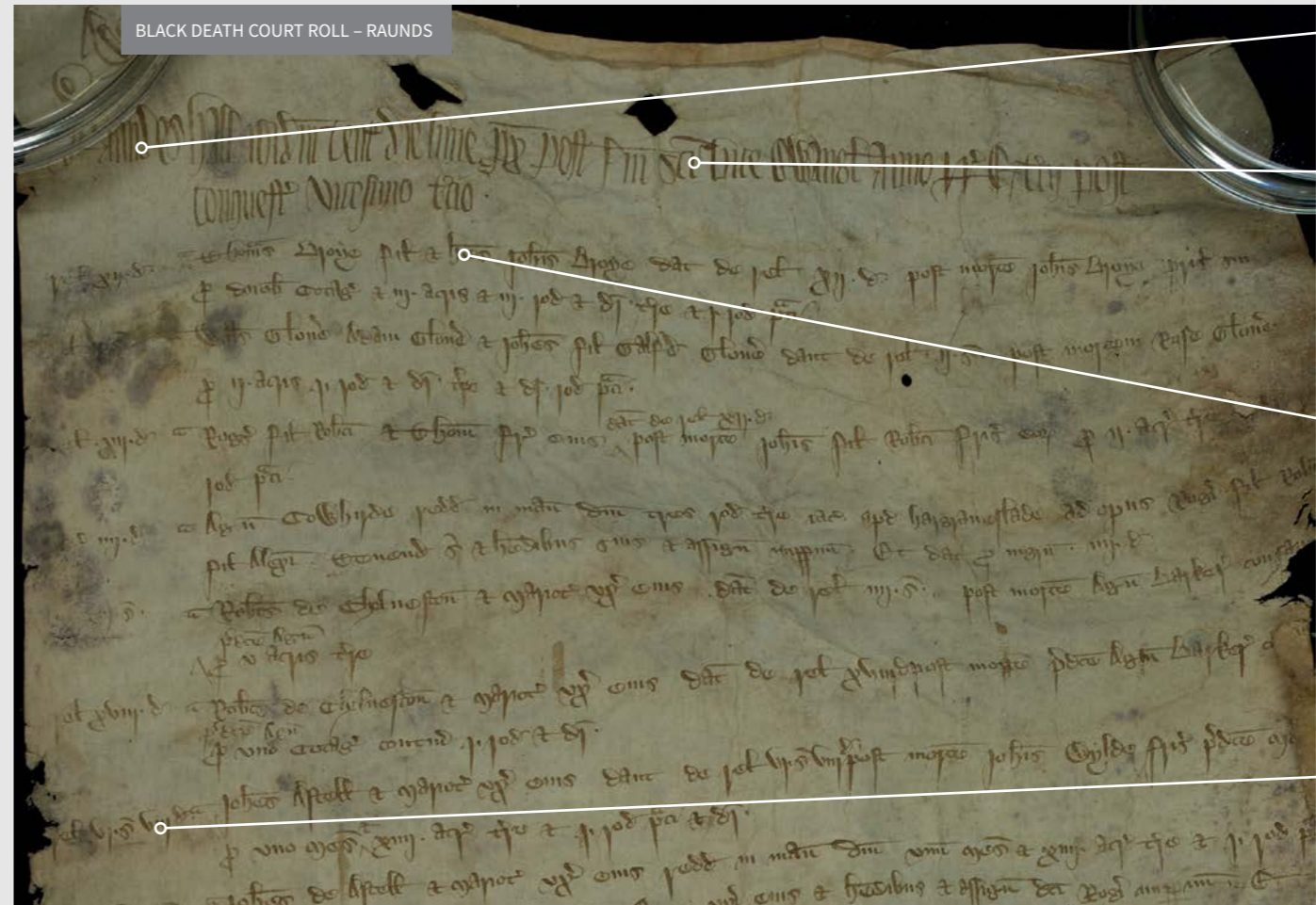
If you are intrigued by Barbers Row and the people who lived there, you can read more in *Welcome to Barbers Row: Come Inside and I'll tell you a Story* and its sequel, *Once Upon a Time on Barbers Row*, written by Tony and Teresa Bak, and David Tipper from stories told by original Barbers Row residents and their families.

Tony is the Heritage Project Manager at Barlborough Heritage & Visitors Centre and Teresa is a Library Assistant for Derbyshire County Council. David is a lecturer in engineering at Sheffield Hallam University.

# 'Danse Macabre' – Witnessing the Black Death in Northamptonshire through manorial records

BY MATT BAZLEY

The Black Death of 1347-1351 represented the pinnacle of what had already been a terrible century for the people of fourteenth century Europe. Sweeping in from the Far East it wiped out somewhere between a third to half of the continent's population in just over a thousand days; a death toll that would not be seen again until the Second World War.



BLACK DEATH COURT ROLL – RAUNDS

PLACE NAME WHERE THE COURT WAS HELD 'RANDES'; AN ARCHAIC SPELLING OF 'RAUNDS'

OPENING PASSAGE STATING THE DATE OF THE COURT, IN THIS CASE 'MONDAY AFTER THE FEAST OF ST. LUKE THE EVANGELIST, THE 23RD YEAR OF THE REIGN OF EDWARD III' (19TH OCTOBER 1349)

EACH ENTRY RECORDS A SEPARATE TRANSACTION, IN THIS CASE 'THOMAS BROYE.. GIVES 12 PENCE FOR RELIEF (AN ENTRY FINE) AFTER THE DEATH OF HIS FATHER, JOHN BROYE, AND RECEIVES 2 COTTAGES, 3 ACRES AND 3 ROODS OF LAND AND 1 ROOD OF MEADOW'

FEES PAID BY TENANTS INHERITING LAND FROM RELATIVES KILLED BY THE PLAGUE, IN THIS CASE 6 SHILLINGS 8 PENCE

The disease arrived in England by ship in June 1348 before spreading across the entirety of the country by December 1349 and we are able to chart its progress with unparalleled detail due to England's extensive record-keeping tradition. No other European country is able to draw such a detailed picture of day to day life on a local scale and reconstruct the lives of ordinary medieval people, even down to their names, family ties and daily affairs. Much of this information can be found within what are known as 'manorial records'; essentially the documents generated in the day to day running of medieval estates, or 'manors'.

The term manor is still used today, generally in relation to large houses owned by the well-off, but to the people of Medieval England it had a much broader meaning. Manors were the units of land into which England was divided up and where each man, woman and child lived and worked. Each was owned by a lord, to whom the tenants owed labour duties and rent. The defining feature of what made a manor is generally accepted as being its ability to hold a manorial court or 'court baron'. This was usually held around every three weeks and played a central role in the lives of the tenants living there by dealing with their daily affairs: for example, issuing fines for misdemeanours such as slander, assault or trespass, and taking payments from those accepting new land. The records produced by these courts are generally known as 'rolls', as they were written on sheets of parchment which were then sewn together and rolled up for easy storage. Thousands of these items survive across the country, yet they represent a vastly underused resource. Part of the reason for this is the very nature of the documents themselves. Until 1733 they were largely written in heavily abbreviated Latin, and, as such, they are essentially inaccessible to the casual researcher without background knowledge (although some, like those for Peterborough Abbey used below have been transcribed). As well as this, because they are administrative documents in nature, their content can often be repetitive and difficult to interpret; simply listing day to day cases and

nothing, seemingly, of note. However, when analysed in detail they can reveal information which is simply not recorded elsewhere.

Northamptonshire, like the majority of the rest of the country, suffered badly from the effects of the plague. One of the most commonly used sources for charting the Black Death's progress are Bishop's registers, which list new appointments of clergy to vacant benefices. This information is useful as it is generally mentioned why a benefice has become vacant, usually due to the death or resignation of the previous holder, and as a result patterns can be seen. In the fourteenth century, Northamptonshire and the Soke of Peterborough were part of the massive diocese of Lincoln, which stretched all the way from the River Humber in the north down to Dorchester at its southern extreme. The register book of John Gynewell, Bishop of Lincoln from 1347-1362, has survived and paints a vivid picture of the mounting death toll amongst the clergy in Northamptonshire in 1349. The disease seems to have arrived in the county sometime in May, with 8 deaths being recorded, and increased in virulence from then. In June 20 priests died and it seems the pestilence reached its height in July and August with 39 and then 32 deaths recorded respectively. From this point the figures begin to decline towards the end of the year and into early 1350.

These records are useful as they aid us in creating a timeline for the disease's spread and show when it was at its most virulent. This is very much an overview however and tells us little of what was happening 'on the ground' and the effect that the Black Death had on local communities. For this we can turn to the administrative records produced by the manorial courts. An amazing snapshot of the Black Death's arrival in Northamptonshire is recorded within the hundred court rolls of the Borough of Higham Ferrers. This small town lies to the east of the county and, as a result, may well have been one of the first places within it to encounter the plague as it advanced

north from London. Court cases were heard in April 1349 as normal, with no indication that anything out of the ordinary was occurring. By the next sitting three weeks later, however, over one third of those involved in cases had died. This figure even included the court's clerk, and his successor was forced to go through the entry for that day's sitting and write the word *obit* (Latin for 'he/she has died') above the names of the deceased. Another illustration of the disease's effects can be found in a court roll from the manor of Raunds, just to the north east of Higham Ferrers, which dates from November 1349 and contains a list of at least 28 tenants who had died. Whether these were recent deaths or this was a record of all those which had occurred since the disease arrived is unclear as this roll is an isolated survival and no other examples for this manor have survived until the 15th Century. Either way they must have represented a significant portion of the manor's tenants. This court roll is also a good illustration of an often forgotten point about the Black Death; that lords stood to make a decent profit from the rising death toll. When a tenant died his land would pass to his heir, usually a close relative. However, in order for this process to occur a payment known as a 'heriot' was due to the lord of the manor. This was essentially an early form of inheritance tax based upon the value of the property to be inherited and provided a steady income stream. As the Black Death wiped out a large proportion of their tenants, in a very short period lords suddenly found the amount of money they were receiving rose dramatically. At Raunds the lord of the manor received approximately £2,075 in modern money from the single court in November. In comparison standard courts with one or two heriots being paid would generally provide, at most, the equivalent of around a few hundred pounds.

Such a state of affairs was untenable, however, and although lords may have profited in the short term from the pestilence the lack of workers available had a hugely negative effect upon them going forward. As is well documented the Black Death created a new climate of social mobility and

## ...the Black Death created a new climate of social mobility and better conditions for the lower classes.

better conditions for the lower classes. The sudden low numbers of labourers meant that tenants could demand higher wages for their work and, if these were not given, they could simply move to new estates that would pay more. This can be seen in the court rolls for Peterborough Abbey's manor of Boroughbury, where in the 1360s regular entries begin to appear stating that tenants have either "gone away" or are "absent from the manor". In these cases it was within the lord's power to demand they return, as shown by an entry from the November 1364 court. Stating "John Hune, one of the lord's villeins, has stayed outside the manor and it is not known where. The whole homage is ordered to search out where he is before the next court." Whether John was tracked down we will never know, as the entry for the next sitting of the court has not survived. His case illustrates the point well though that times were changing. The 'old orders' of feudalism and serfdom were on the decline and that suddenly peasants had much more say in their day to day lives. ▶



DANSE MACABREBY, 1493 MICHAEL WOLGEMUT, PUBLIC DOMAIN VIA WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

Signs of this changing state of affairs can be seen again in the Boroughbury rolls where, between 1363 and 1380, 11 out of 18 tenants at 5 courts were excused their entry fines for taking on new lands. The fact that this staple payment was relaxed is a good indication that lords were finding it difficult to get enough tenants to work their lands. Many peasants also took opportunity of the vast swathes of land that had suddenly become available from other manorial tenants who had died. The most common heading found in court rolls of the 1350s and 1360s is that of *fideltas* or ‘fealty’ as tenants came forward to take on new lands and tenements. For example, at a court held at Easton Maudit in 1354, 7 messuages (i.e. house, outbuildings and adjoining lands) and 51 acres of land were claimed by 10 tenants; with the bailiff being ordered to ensure an additional 21 others, who should have appeared, came to the next court to do fealty for their new lands. However, taking on such large amounts of new land also had its pitfalls as many tenants soon found themselves with more than they could actively manage, and with additional buildings which began to quickly fall into ruin without proper maintenance. This can be seen in Catesby during 1358 where 4 tenants were ordered to repair their tenements or be fined 40 d., a substantial sum.

Even with such large amounts of land being claimed, much remained unoccupied. Such a situation is obvious in the accounts of Peterborough Abbey in 1355 where the bailiff was unable to claim well over a third of the rents he

should have been able to for the manor because so many tenements “stood empty” as their owners had died and nobody had come forward to claim them.

Over the next century successive waves of pestilence continued to strike England at regular intervals, preventing population levels recovering to their pre-1349 high until the 1500s. Evidence for this can be found throughout the court rolls of the later fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Yet the Black Death is only one event amongst many whose effects can be found within manorial records. The Peasant’s Revolt, the Civil War and enclosure have all left their mark. Personally this is why manorial records interest me so much. “*The history of the world is but the biography of great men*”, as the nineteenth century philosopher Thomas Carlyle wrote. However, in contrast these documents enable us to gain a viewpoint into the lives of ordinary English people whose stories have so long been ignored. Though they may often present access issues due to the language in which they are written and the intricacies of the legal terms involved the perseverance is certainly worth it to unlock the many fascinating stories that are held within them. 📖

**Matt Bazley**  
Northamptonshire Archives

# East Midlands Airport: From local airfield to regional hub

BY CHRISTOPHER WEIR

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ADVERT FOR THE MIDLAND SCHOOL OF FLYING

On the 21st July 1965 H.R.H. Prince Philip unveiled a plaque for the opening of East Midlands Airport. Its hours of opening were 6.30am to 9.45pm or “*by arrangement*”; its telephone number was “*Castle Donington 621*” and its telegraph address was “*Midport*” Derby. To modern ears these ‘modern’ attributes seem very antiquated but nevertheless a new era of travel had been born in the area and the Airport was destined to become a key part of the evolution of the East Midlands Region.

The origins of the Region’s airport lay in wartime Britain. In 1942 a new operational training unit to provide crews for heavy bombers was set up at Wymeswold, and a ‘satellite airfield’ at Castle Donington (Leicestershire) had been established by early January 1943. The trainee airmen included many Canadians and New Zealanders. The danger of ditching over the sea required crews to undertake dinghy drills at Loughborough Baths. By June 1943 the first crews were ready to join operational squadrons, often beginning with raids to drop leaflets over Occupied Europe and take photographs that could be used for subsequent missions. With VJ Day on 15th August 1945 Wymeswold and Castle Donington were re-organised as No. 1382 Transport Conversion Unit, and the Lancaster and Halifax bombers were converted into long-range transports. In time, the RAF connection with both Wymeswold and Castle Donington ceased and it was to be some years before Castle Donington found a new lease of life as a civil airport. In the late 1950s the dormant Castle Donington site attracted the attention of Derby Aviation Limited. It used an airfield at Burnaston, near Derby, that had been created by Derby Corporation in 1938 for training service pilots, but its post-war ambitions were limited by Burnaston’s grass runways and limited opportunities for future development. With an eye on the future possibilities of civil air transport, Derby Corporation began to consider alternative airport sites in the Midlands. The fact that the M1 Motorway, begun in 1958, had arrived in the East Midlands area in the early ▶

## The total estimated expenditure for the airport was £1M, with an additional £137,000 to provide ‘additional accommodation’ for Derby Aviation, which by 1964 had evolved into British Midland Airways (BMA).

60s, was no doubt hugely important in deliberations for the site. Discussions with the City of Nottingham led to a far-sighted decision that five local authorities in the Region would combine to form an East Midlands Airport Joint Committee or Joint Consortium. The authorities were Derby Corporation, Derbyshire County Council, Nottingham Corporation, Nottinghamshire County Council and Leicestershire County Council. In June 1963, each authority put forward a representative to sit on the committee and, following a consultant’s report on the project, it was agreed to proceed with the Castle Donington site. The decision followed a 1960 planning application by Derby Corporation to acquire the airfield land, a public enquiry to hear objections and a High Court action.

With these decisions and relevant planning permissions in place, work on the site could begin and a contract for £696,782 9s 2d was issued to Richard Costain (Civil Engineering) Ltd to start on clearing 630,000 cubic yards of earth for the airfield, concreting a runway, the laying of ‘taxiways’, creating the terminal area and constructing the airport ‘apron’. Ericssons Telephones were engaged to supply a ‘telephone equipment console’ and a ‘fuel farm’ was to be installed by Shell Mex-BP. The total estimated expenditure for the airport was £1M, with an additional £137,000 to provide ‘additional accommodation’ for Derby Aviation, which by 1964 had evolved into British Midland Airways (BMA). The theme of expansion, so familiar throughout the Airport’s existence, began almost immediately. In February 1964, minutes of a Nottinghamshire County Council meeting recorded that plans for the original runway, set at 5,300 feet, would need to be revised to 5,850 feet in order to facilitate Viscount and DC4 aircraft. The terminal building was built to run parallel with the ‘apron’ and the remarkable speed of construction, in under a year, was achieved using CLASP, a prefabricated system of construction developed by Nottinghamshire County Council, intended originally for education buildings. The work was undertaken by J. Searson Ltd of Sutton in Ashfield. A key part of the terminal building was the restaurant. The Airport proved a major visitor attraction in those early days and a “luxurious and restful dining area”, with “waitress service” offered full menus, while the lounge bar had windows that overlooked the airfield with the pending excitement of the occasional arrival or departure of a plane!

The new Airport at Castle Donington attracted a whole range of associated services and facilities. One of these was the Midland School of Flying. It was approved by the Ministry of Aviation to provide training courses for private pilot’s licences, “Radio Telephony Licence Tests”, night flying and aerobatic training. Godfrey Davis set-up a car hire service at the Airport, offering “the largest fleet of new 1966 models including lively new Fords.” A new company, King Aviation, was formed to operate executive and business style charter flights, promoting the flights as an Air Taxi Service. The company also offered a helicopter charter service. With the prospect of increasing leisure traffic abroad BMA advertised flights to a whole range of destinations, promoting “a flying start” for holiday travellers to Barcelona, Palma, Bergen, Jersey, Guernsey, Northern Ireland, Eire, the Isle of Man, the Isle of Wight, Glasgow and Newquay in Cornwall. BMA hoped to entice holidaymakers to speed to destinations where they could enjoy the “burning sun, blue seas and golden beaches”, or the “crisp ski slopes of Switzerland” or “the magic of Norway fjords.” The Co-operative Travel Services also took the opportunity to advertise in the Airport’s official handbook, describing themselves as “agents for all major Airlines, Railways, Steamship Companies and Coaches.” At the same time it was evident that airfreight was destined to be an important part of the Airport’s future. EMG offered the “Emgair System” with “radio controlled collections” and “no hidden extra charges”, while D.C. Andrews, Ballantyne & Co Ltd offered air freight services with “daily collection



MAIN TERMINAL BUILDING, C 1965



AN AERIAL VIEW OF EAST MIDLANDS AIRPORT IN THE 1960S



PUBLIC RESTAURANT AT EAST MIDLANDS AIRPORT



VIEW DOWN THE MAIN STREET, HEMINGTON, LEICESTERSHIRE. THE VILLAGE IS ONLY 2 KILOMETRES FROM THE AIRPORT

## Yet there is no doubt that during the late 1960s and 70s there was a developing trend towards regions and this included an ‘idea’ of an East Midlands.

services in the East Midlands Area”, with offices in Nottingham, Leicester and Northampton. Although these services were in the beginning rudimentary, they set the scene for future expansion and their use of the term *East Midlands* underlined that the Airport was from the start a regional entity.

The Joint Consortium set out its longer-term strategy in a Development Plan that would run from 1966 to 1970. By 1970 the runway was to be extended to 7,400 feet, the ‘apron’ was to be expanded, and related passenger and freight facilities and land was to be acquired to allow the airport to manage up to 360,000 passengers a year and increased freight traffic. In 1970 the minutes of Nottinghamshire County Council recorded that the runway extension had been undertaken thus enabling “jet aircraft to use the airport.” An interesting addition to the minutes was a reference to operators being “forbidden to run jet engines on the ground between 11pm and 6am.” This limitation hints at noise and environmental issues arising in the area around the airport. The impact of East Midlands Airport on Castle Donington and local villages was becoming evident. Enhanced employment prospects for the area came with the inevitable problems of aircraft noise, environmental issues and pressure on local roads. These were themes that would continue throughout the century and into the present-day.

But where does the Airport stand in relation to a regional identity? Do local people identify themselves in any way as East Midlands or is such a term simply a ‘handle’ on which to hang organisations that can seek government funding through a regional structure? Perhaps none of this matters. For anyone who uses the airport for holidays or business purposes what is important is being able to fly to their destination quickly and in reasonable comfort. Yet there is no doubt that during the late 1960s and 70s there was a developing trend towards regions and this included an ‘idea’ of an East Midlands. An illustration of this development is the publication of *The East Midlands: A Regional Geography* by H.E. Virgo MA. He was

Deputy Principal of Hinckley Upper School in Leicestershire. The book was first published in 1968 by The English Universities Press Limited, a series that underlined the developing importance of regions. It was updated and revised in 1975. Virgo considered the underlying geology of the East Midlands, farming developments, coal mining, water supplies, gas and electricity, engineering, boot and shoe manufacturing, towns and communications.

The presence of East Midlands Airport was highlighted by Virgo, who wrote that “the airport is close to the M1 motorway and in the triangle formed by the three largest centres in the East Midlands: Nottingham, Derby and Leicester.” He went on to note the rise of air passenger traffic, especially in connection with “package-holiday operators” and he noted that freight handling had increased “threefold” since 1972. His work was a pioneering contribution to our regional history, though its worth may have been overlooked in the more economic and planning approach to regionalism in more recent times.

Today, East Midlands Airport is used by thousands of holidaymakers every year and its freight capacity is set to increase again as more land is levelled and prepared for freight reception and handling on an ever-larger scale. In its immediate area roads like the now enhanced A453 continue to deal with more and more car and lorry traffic. The East Midlands Parkway Station offers links to passenger and freight traffic via the rail network and local villages like Lockington and Hemington brace themselves for yet more expansion of the Airport. EM Airport is no longer run by the consortium of local authorities but their vision and determination saw the creation of an increasingly important regional hub. 📍

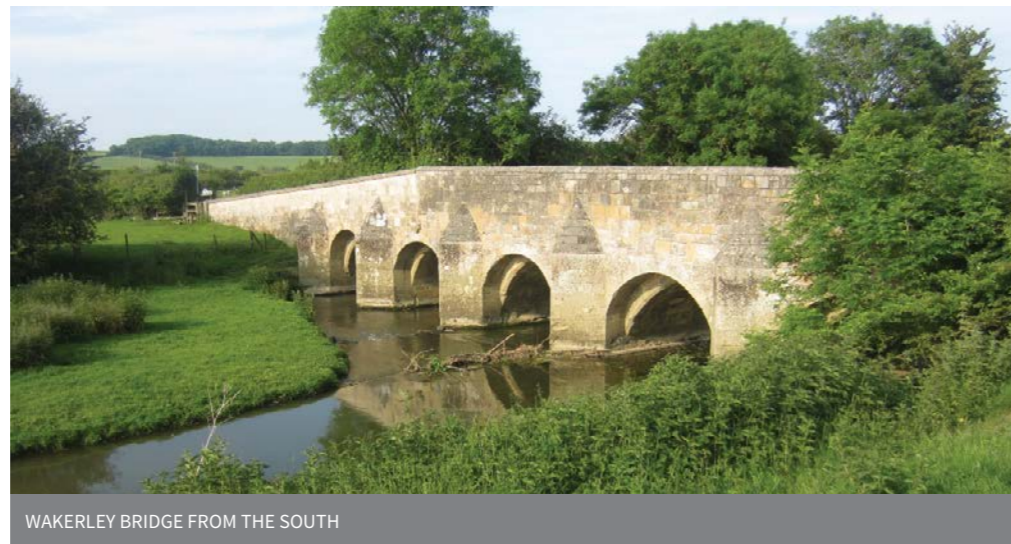
**Further reading:** *Official Handbook: East Midlands Airport*, (Manor Publishing, 1965). H.E. Virgo, *The East Midlands: A Regional Geography of the British Isles*, (English Universities Press, 1968). Nottinghamshire Archives (Inspire): County Council minutes: CC1/4/57; CC1/4/58; CC1/4/59 and CC1/4/63, 1964-1970.

**Christopher Weir**  
Nottinghamshire Local History Society

# The stones of Wakerley Bridge

BY MARK DOBSON

After the local parish churches of Wakerley and Barrowden, the oldest extant man-made structure in the Wakerley area in Northamptonshire is probably the bridge over the River Welland, which connects these two villages, known as Wakerley Bridge.



WAKERLEY BRIDGE FROM THE SOUTH

The earliest reference to a bridge here is in an inquisition post mortem – a local enquiry into valuable goods left by an individual after death – of 1298 which refers to “*Wakerle brigge*.” Derek Blunt opines that the remains visible today originated in the fourteenth century. Peter Goodfellow agrees, and adds that “*the stone arches at ... Wakerley are the finest examples of medieval bridge work that the county possesses*.” However, looking at it today, it would seem to have been repaired, or even rebuilt, more than once. The stonework on the northern side towards Barrowden, for example, is of a finer finish than to the south. Both Rutland and Northamptonshire County Councils have a shared responsibility for the bridge and will have carried out work at different times using different stone. The bridge was widened by around two feet in the eighteenth century: the upstream arches are round whilst on the other side they are pointed. It is certainly recorded that repairs were made in 1793 by Thomas Swann and later in 1843. Bequests were often made for the repair of bridges in medieval wills. In 1500, for example, Thomas Bukke of Northampton left 3s 4d for the repair or upkeep of Haringworth Bridge, just three miles upstream of Wakerley.

There are other references which refer to a rebuilding or repair in the local area in the early eighteenth century. The village of Pickworth was once a thriving community – it is said that the village decreased in size after the Battle of Empingham, or Losecoat Field, in 1473. It now consists of a few farms and cottages about six miles northeast of Barrowden, and appears to have had a long-standing connection with Wakerley. Of the former parish church at Pickworth, there remains only a stone doorway arch which serves as the entrance to a farmhouse. The old fourteenth-century church was in ruins by 1700, but the tower and spire, the latter of which was known locally as “*Mockbeggar*”, survived until 1728. Local historian Francis C. Laird, quoting from an earlier text by William Stukely, notes that “*Pickworth steeple ...*

*was taken down about AD1728 to build a sorry bridge at Wakerley; I saw the lower part of the steeple anno 1731, when it was pulled down to build a bridge by Casterton.*” This account of the rebuilding of the two bridges at Wakerley and Casterton has consequently attracted much attention in surviving references to them. The use of the word “*sorry*” to describe Wakerley Bridge is interesting. It seems to be describing its condition as being in a dilapidated state, and may indicate the reason why future repairs and amendments were needed.

So, is there any solid evidence that the stones from Pickworth church steeple really were used to repair our bridge? In this area limestone is a relatively abundant material, but the availability of suitable cut stone would have been limited. A closer look at the bridge exposes an intriguing, and arguably revealing, feature: over the second arch from the north side, on either side of the bridge, a medieval head corbel juts out with a face on the front and a flat top surface (see image 2). It has been suggested that they mark the county boundary; the change in stone quality noted above coincides with the

“*the stone arches at ... Wakerley are the finest examples of medieval bridge work that the county possesses.*”

position of the corbel stones, which supports that theory. But there is more to these little corbels, which are features usually found in large buildings – such as parish churches – to support roof trusses! This may well be the evidence we need.

On the parapet of the bridge are some interesting carvings: the names of local inhabitants and of flood activity. They can be seen most clearly when the sun’s rays are nearly parallel with the surface so that the indentations are in shadow. There are about a dozen names. Some of the surnames are still well-known locally, of which the clearest are: ‘D ROBERTS’; ‘BOB PEELING T’; ‘W GLAPTORN’; ‘H HARGRAVE’; ‘W SHARPE KC 1904’ (see image 3); and ‘R POLLARD’. The latter may be associated with the date 1663 carved adjacent to it. ‘W. TUBBS’ appears to have been carved from the other side of the parapet, but this is only because the coping stone on which it is carved has been repaired and replaced the wrong way round. There are also visible flood marks: ‘FLOOD DEC 31 1804’; ‘FLOOD JULY 1853’; ‘FLOOD’ and ‘BIG FLOOD DEC 31 1800’ (see image 4). Most curious of all, there are a couple of small impressions of ploughs, which are difficult to discern unless the light is just right. They may be a nod to the local agricultural industry, which is certainly evident in the census records.

Wakerley Bridge offers a fascinating insight into how one structure can bear the marks of local history. It reveals valuable information about the local inhabitants, the impact of the natural environment and even the agricultural economy, but perhaps most importantly, it is evidence for how places change and adapt through the centuries.

A postscript. Given that the ‘KC’ after Mr Sharpe’s name could really only refer to King’s Cliffe, a village a few miles to the east, a little more research was needed. According to the 1901 census return, William Alfred Sharpe, a slater, was the son of William Sharpe, slater and plasterer, and was then 20 years old. He would have been 23 in 1904. Wakerley was only one stop down the railway line at that time – perhaps he was working in the village, maybe even on the bridge. It is possible that he may have died in the Great War, as a W. Sharpe is named on the war memorial in Wakerley church. But according to Mike Herring, who offers a detailed account of all the men from the village who served in the First World War, William Alfred Sharpe did survive. However, given the care that the engraver took in carving his name, home and date, it does seem a little unlikely that he would have left out his middle initial. Regrettably we cannot be certain which William Sharpe left his name to posterity!

William Alfred Sharpe married in 1902 and at least one descendant still lives locally. Daphne Sharpe resides in Easton on the Hill: she has told me that William had a brother Herbert, also a slater. He used to carve his name on roof timbers, which sometimes come to light in old buildings when they are being renovated. 📷

Mark Dobson  
Barrowden and Wakerley Parish Magazine

Wakerley Bridge offers a fascinating insight into how one structure can bear the marks of local history.

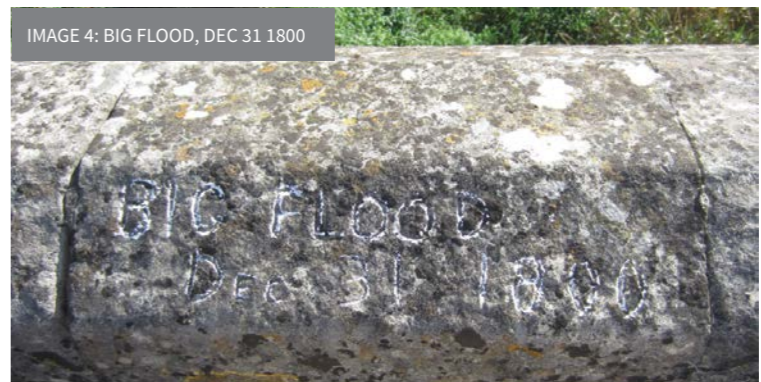
IMAGE 2: CORBEL TABLE, WEST FACE OF WAKERLEY BRIDGE

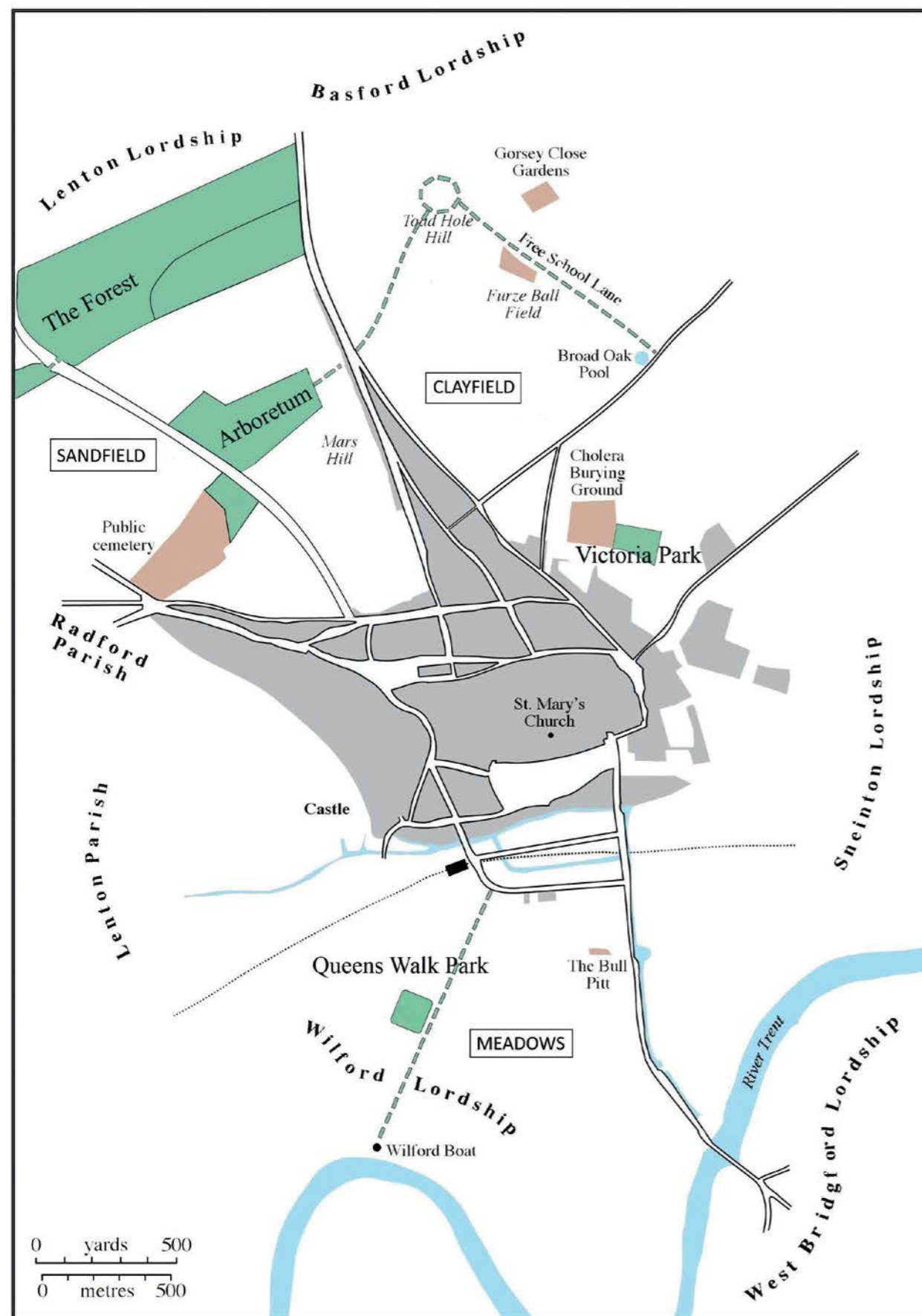


IMAGE 3: W SHARPE KC, 1901



IMAGE 4: BIG FLOOD, DEC 31 1800





MAP SHOWING THE VARIOUS GREEN SPACES SET OUT AS A RESULT OF THE 1845 ENCLOSURE ACT

# The social world of Nottingham's green spaces

**The Nottingham Green Spaces project ran from 2013 to 2016, and researched various aspects of the city's green spaces including controversy; health, hygiene and education; planting, and mass entertainment and celebration. Read on to find out more from the project team about the history of some of Nottingham's open spaces, and how the project shared its findings with the local community.**

## Nottingham's Victorian green spaces

**Professor John Beckett (University of Nottingham) fills in the historical background:**

The 1845 Nottingham Enclosure Act stated explicitly that land should be made available within the town as green spaces, areas for recreation and enjoyment, and public utility. The land would be a shared resource for everyone with the aim of improving the general health of the town, as well as compensating for the loss of open space due to urban expansion.

This requirement was built into the act as a result of various government initiatives taken to ensure that the new industrial towns had 'green lungs'. The worry was that these towns would develop without any parks or recreation spaces. Since it was believed at the time that illness was transferred between individuals as a result of poor air quality, green lungs were considered to be vital for good health, particularly in areas of working-class housing.

The Nottingham legislation provided for a number of green spaces to be laid out. The two largest areas were the Forest, originally reclaimed land from Sherwood Forest, and the newly created Arboretum which opened in 1852. Two smaller parks, Victoria Park and Queens Walk Park, were originally designated as cricket grounds, which was something of a passion for the people of Nottingham. Finally, four recreational walks were laid out, each 90 feet in width and totalling three miles in length: Elm Avenue, Robin Hood Chase, Corporation Oaks (see image 2) and Queen's Walk. These were not simple pedestrian ways but fenced and gated – imagine them as long, thin parks. The two cemeteries, General Cemetery and Church (Rock) Cemetery, were also regarded as 'green lungs'. These areas are still popular public spaces today.



THE FOREST IN 1897. CROWDS CELEBRATING QUEEN VICTORIA'S DIAMOND JUBILEE. PHOTO COURTESY OF J BUIST AND PICTURE THE PAST

## Green lungs and trees in Victorian Nottingham

**Professor Paul Elliott looks at how green spaces went together with tree planting in Victorian Nottingham:**

The provision of green spaces in the 1845 Enclosure Act encouraged a major programme of tree planting in public spaces across Nottingham over subsequent decades. The trees planted in the Arboretum, the Forest and the other public parks and walks were intended to promote public health and encourage the development of middle-class suburban residences with their own private gardens. Some were donated by private benefactors and local businesses such as nursery companies.

The jewel in the crown was the Nottingham Arboretum opened in 1852 to a design by Samuel Curtis, which contained the largest variety of trees in the town. Along with European cities such as Paris, the parks and public walks created by the 1845 Act helped to inspire the tree-lined Lenton and Radford boulevards created in Nottingham during the 1880s. They were seen to be a continuation of the avenues elsewhere in the town. Many trees were also planted on streets, and on new estates, notably the Park for the Newcastle estate.

These various developments prompted local historian Robert Mellors, in his book on Nottingham's gardens and parks published in 1926, to claim that "since 1850" Nottingham had become "a great grower of trees", so much so that it had "atoned for the careless and destructive attitude which its predecessors for several centuries adopted."

To find out more, see P. A. Elliott, *British Urban Trees: A Social and Cultural History* (2016), pp. 145-74.

## The origins of arboreta

**One of the first British public arboreta was opened in 1840 in Derby. Professor Paul Elliott (University of Derby) knows this park well:**

The Derby Arboretum was donated by Joseph Strutt, a wealthy local industrialist, whose statue still stands in Arboretum Square adjoining the park. A generous benefactor, Strutt worked with the pre-eminent landscape gardener of the period, John Claudius Loudon, to design the park. ▶

The result was a planted version of Loudon's comprehensive illustrated book on trees the *Arboretum Britannicum* (8 vols., 1838), with specimens set across artificial mounds on the site so that all their features, including roots, bark and shape, could best be observed.

The trees and shrubs were labelled and laid out according to a natural classification scheme, with additional information being provided in a guidebook composed by Loudon. The idea was that as visitors passed through the park observing the trees, reading the labels and perusing the guide, they would improve their botanical knowledge and experience moral and uplifting feelings.

The Select Committee on Public Walks (1833) believed that the working class would be weaned from the brutal pleasures of the tavern, and from idle dissipation, by enjoying wholesome visits to the park. Certainly, the Derby Arboretum was always more than a specialist tree garden, and it quickly became a popular place of recreation, despite having free admission on only two days each week.

The Derby Arboretum had an important influence on the development of other Victorian parks, partly because of its association with Loudon, but also because Strutt's generosity was widely praised. While the Nottingham Arboretum was partly inspired by its Derby counterpart, it also sought to exceed it with additional features such as the sloping ground, hilltop views, inter-related walks and lake.

To find out more about arboreta, see P. A. Elliott, C. Watkins and S. Daniels, *The British Arboretum* (2011).

### Working with the community

**Dr Jonathan Coope (University of Nottingham) explains how, as part of the project, he came to work with the Mapperley and Sherwood History Group (MASH):**

MASH have been giving talks, publishing material and hosting meetings in each other's homes for several years. In early 2013, in the first days of the Green Spaces project, MASH kindly invited me, as part of the project team, to one such meeting to discuss possibilities for collaboration.

From that first informal chat over tea and biscuits, a fruitful partnership has grown. MASH members initially considered a group project that they might carry out together; however, it was eventually decided that members would work on individual topics, either independently or in collaboration with the academic team. For example, Margaret Knowles undertook valuable research on the history of Aviaries at the Arboretum, which made for a lively and entertaining presentation at Nottingham Contemporary in January 2014! Meanwhile, Malcolm Prosser teamed up with me to undertake a study of Nottingham's green spaces in wartime. The findings were presented in 2014 at the Arboretum Annual History Talk and the AHRC Connected Communities Festival in Cardiff.

CORPORATION OAKS,  
COURTESY OF  
NOTTINGHAM CITY  
COUNCIL AND  
PICTURE THE PAST



MASH members have an impressive record of local history research and publication and it has been one of the project's great pleasures to find that we on the project team have as much to learn from our community group partners as they have from us – if not more!

### Sharing our research online

**Dr. Jonathan Coope writes about the website:**

From the beginning, we knew we would need a website. Initially, this was to promote the project and its forthcoming events and activities. Later it became a space in which the academic team and community partners could gather and share our developing research findings with each other and the wider community by posting blogs, and share work in progress, in both the design and the production stages. [www.ng-spaces.org.uk](http://www.ng-spaces.org.uk)

A good example is *Breathing Spaces*, the community play about the history of Nottingham's parks performed in summer 2016. The production team kept the public informed about each stage in its development from blog post updates on writing and casting, to first read through, rehearsals and final performances.

Meanwhile, the academic team used the website to keep the community updated on the project's various other activities – including public talks, the Exhibition at Nottingham Local Studies Library (August 2016), and co-hosting the annual Nottingham Inclosure Walk in July 2016.

As the project has developed, further features have been added to the website, including project videos, feedback questionnaires, an online version of the project exhibition, and Jo Wheeler's delightful production photographs which offer a lasting record of *Breathing Space* performances in Nottingham's parks (16, 17, 24 July 2016).

Topics featured on the website range widely, from the playing of Ladies' cricket on the parks to the history of Belle Vue Reservoir. The blogs have been written by both community group members and the project team.

### Sharing our research in the city

**Dr Judith Mills (University of Nottingham) looks back over the final year of the Green Spaces project and at what was achieved:**

During the summer of 2016, the team organised two major events, which involved the whole community. The first was our specially commissioned play, *Breathing Spaces*, which traced the development and use of Nottingham's parks and open spaces from their creation following the 1845 Enclosure Act, to the early twenty-first century. This was performed in a number of Nottingham's green spaces during July 2016, including Queen's Walk Recreation Ground, Victoria Park, The Forest, and the Arboretum. Audiences numbered between 45 and 130.

Andy Barrett, our community-playwright, took unedited research notes and material already on the website to create a play which was sad and funny, heart-wrenching and heart-warming, while remaining true to the historical record. A version of the script, illustrated with photographs of some of the scenes, is on the website, together with a downloadable unillustrated version for use by groups, societies, schools or others interested in performing all or part of the play. [www.ng-spaces.org.uk/breathing-spaces-the-script](http://www.ng-spaces.org.uk/breathing-spaces-the-script)

The second major event was the *Nottingham Green Spaces* exhibition, held from 3rd to 30th August 2016 at Nottingham Local Studies Library, Angel Row. Opened by police commissioner Paddy Tipping, the



THE CAST OF BREATHING SPACES PERFORMING IN QUEEN'S WALK PARK, JULY 2016 (PHOTO JO WHEELER)

exhibition detailed the history of Nottingham's green spaces. A series of panels combining historic and modern images, as well as written descriptions, took the visitor on a tour through these spaces. Members of the project team gave talks about aspects of the exhibition, and a series of ten short videos was included in the exhibition. Each video was scripted by Andy Barrett. [www.ng-spaces.org.uk/the-ten-films-for-breathing-spaces](http://www.ng-spaces.org.uk/the-ten-films-for-breathing-spaces)

When the Exhibition closed at the end of August, several of the panels were installed in The Pavilion on The Forest, and the remainder were put up in the new café in the Lodge in the Arboretum. A digital version of the exhibition can be found on the Green Spaces website [www.ng-spaces.org.uk/new-online-exhibition-now-available](http://www.ng-spaces.org.uk/new-online-exhibition-now-available). An offshoot of the exhibition was a 20 minute BBC Radio Nottingham feature, and two double-page articles in the *Nottingham Post*.

We also ran two workshops specifically designed for Framework Housing Association's 'Nature in Mind', a programme which supports people with mental health problems and promotes well-being and recovery, through engagement with nature-related activities in Nottingham city. The purpose of our workshops was to introduce the participants to some of the history behind the open spaces with which they were mostly familiar. One workshop was run in conjunction with the Friends of the Arboretum who gave a rather wet but enjoyable guided tour to the participants!

### Project funding

The Nottingham's Green Spaces project began in 2013 and was one of the earliest Connected Communities partnerships, with researchers from the Universities of Nottingham and Derby working with groups such as the Friends of the Forest, the Friends of the Arboretum, and several others.

**Breathing Spaces ... traced the development and use of Nottingham's parks and open spaces from their creation following the 1845 Enclosure Act, to the early twenty-first century.**



A WORKSHOP FOR PARTICIPANTS IN FRAMEWORK HOUSING ASSOCIATION'S NATURE IN MIND PROGRAMME

In 2010, Research Councils United Kingdom (RCUK) started using part of its funding to connect communities with university research, such as the 'Connected Communities' programme. The Green Spaces project was funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC, part of RCUK), under this programme, initially for a year during 2013-2014 and subsequently for a further nine months in 2016.

The first project grant was largely designed to encourage new research, and Dr Judith Mills and Dr Jonathan Coope, the project officers, worked with community groups to develop themes and topics. The findings were presented in 2014 at the Arboretum Annual History Talk, the AHRC Connected Communities Festival in Cardiff and via the project website. The material generated was showcased at an event held at Nottingham Contemporary in January 2014. The follow-on funding in 2016 was largely to share the research, and to make it available to a wider public. This was achieved primarily through the community play and the exhibition, as well as the website (which will remain 'live' for a minimum of ten years), history fairs, workshops and talks. The information boards about Nottingham's green spaces, prepared as part of the exhibition, are now on display in City Council premises including the recently refurbished pavilion on the Forest and Café in the Arboretum. 📍

# The Fearon Fountain



BY DAVID WALKER

Archdeacon Henry Fearon had a profound effect on the life of Loughborough and its inhabitants. He was a fellow of Emmanuel College Cambridge which presented him to the Rectory All Saints Parish Church, Loughborough on May 3rd 1848. He was 46. The “livings” of parish churches were the “gift” of landowners, and Oxford and Cambridge Colleges. He found the church in a poor state of repair and he paid for its restoration in 1862 out of his own income, a sum of £1000 (or his whole income for one year).

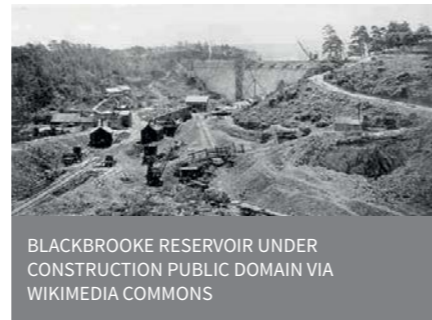
He had a remarkably wide range of interests. His pamphlet on the need for a Post Office Savings Bank was widely read and frequently reprinted. He wanted a safe place for savings that was guaranteed by government, and he wrote a novel to show the dangers of discouraging independence in the poor by proposed changes to the Poor Relief System. Although he had a comfortable existence – well paid and with three domestic servants – he

was acutely aware of the poverty and squalor around him. Houses were huddled together in the town centre and around the market place, without drainage. Untreated sewage and open cesspools were placed close to water sources. Cholera, dysentery and typhoid was rampant – and claimed many lives, particularly of children.

Fearon had studied disease and water supply while a private tutor in Cambridge. He was convinced that the solution to these problems lay in a safe, clean water supply and good drainage. This view was fiercely opposed by local medical opinion, which held such infections were airborne. Providing proper drainage and clean water was expensive, and was resisted. However, Dr John Snow had demonstrated

that cholera was spread through the water supply. He'd mapped an outbreak of cholera in Soho in 1854, which traced the outbreak back to a pump in Golden Street. When the handle of the pump was removed there were no more cases. Fearon was undaunted by the opposition and, with Dr John Palmer, his one medical supporter, he petitioned the General Board of Health in London. They launched an inquiry and sent William Lee to lead the investigation. His conclusions were almost identical to Fearon's; Loughborough needed a clean water supply and an efficient drainage system.

Only a Board of Health could authorise such expenditures to be raised from taxation – and Loughborough didn't have one. So before changes could be made, a Board had to be elected. After much argument, this was done with John Cartwright in the Chair. Progress was painfully slow and debates were often heated. But by 1855, the town's new drainage system was completed at the then enormous cost of £10,000 (when average male wages were around one pound per week). The water supply, however, was a different matter, because local ratepayers refused to pay higher taxes to finance the scheme. After another eleven years of stalemate, Fearon again decided to take matters into his own hands by forming a Limited Liability Company with his associates. The aim of this was to obtain water by damming the Blackbrook to form a reservoir. Possibly shamed into action, the Local Board came up with its own scheme, requiring £15,000 of shared capital, but no increase in the rates, because the water would be sold to paying customers. In 1870, water began to flow into Loughborough for the first time from a reservoir at Nanpantan. To mark the occasion, Fearon (who by this time had been made Archdeacon) donated to the town a drinking fountain, placed in the market place. The fountain was designed by a local sculptor named Forsyth and was built



BLACKBROOKE RESERVOIR UNDER CONSTRUCTION PUBLIC DOMAIN VIA WIKIMEDIA COMMONS



FEARON FOUNTAIN COURTESY LYNNE DYER

## But by 1855, the town's new drainage system was completed at the then enormous cost of £10,000

at a cost of £160, every penny of which was paid by Fearon. It was unveiled on August 31st, 1870 and stands there to this day, recently restored to full working order. Ironically, the town's demand for water proved to be so high that in 1900, extra supplies had to be obtained by building Blackbrook reservoir, as Fearon had first proposed twenty years previously!

Although most renowned for his public health works, Fearon was also closely involved with local educational provision. He became Chair of the Board of Governors of the Endowed Schools, became involved with the Burton Charity and opened an infant school. Like many contemporaries, he thought the education of girls to be less important than that of boys, but, nonetheless, he was a great champion of working-class education. However, the kind of curriculum he favoured for working-class boys was geared very much towards the requirements of work. When Churchgate School needed to expand, half of the £400 needed was raised by Fearon.

When he died on June 12th 1885, Henry Fearon had been working and living in the town for 37 years. We know little of his private thoughts and ideas as he instructed that his papers, letters and sermons should be destroyed after his death. Contemporary descriptions, however, show him as a generous, kindly man with a practical approach to problem solving. Such was the esteem in which he was held that virtually the whole town came to a standstill on the day of his funeral. Shops and factories closed and silent crowds lined the streets from the parish church to the cemetery. Loughborough has not only a street but also a community centre named after him and a lectern in All Saints Church is dedicated to his memory.

David Walker  
Local Historian

## News and notices

### West Lindsey Churches Festival

Lincolnshire's West Lindsey Churches Festival has just completed its 21st year, and early reports from visitors and the church volunteers suggest that it has been very successful once again.

One of the largest festivals of its kind in Europe, and now in its 21st year, the West Lindsey Churches Festival sees almost 100 religious buildings opening their doors to visitors for two weekends in May.

All churches were free-entry, and each offered a memorable encounter with heritage and architecture, with many located in The Lincolnshire Wolds, a designated Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

The event brought people together in their rural communities as they planned and prepared for visitors, offering homemade bakes and lunches, bell ringing, crafts, book sales and themed exhibitions such as displays on local history or children's artwork.

Over 700 volunteers spruced up and opened up the buildings, and were on hand to answer questions and point out those quirky details visitors would not want to miss.

Thanks to the Lincolnshire Organists' Association, visitors could also enjoy an Organ Trail of 16 live music recitals, spread across the two weekends. Other sites, listed as “quiet churches” by the festival, simply opened their doors for visitors and let the buildings speak for themselves.

Carefully gathered data shows that the event is definitely meeting a need among heritage tourists, bringing in 10,123 visitors into the district in 2016, leaping up from 5,693 in 2014, and 7,745 in 2015.

One of the big themes for 2017 was the festival's ongoing “Stories Unlocked” project, where the most interesting - and often little known - stories associated with each church were revealed. Thirty such tales have been gathered on the website and were available to read on paper at participating churches, during the festival.

Many visitors took to social media to share their delight at discovering this somewhat hidden heritage.

"Fantastic weekend, following in the footsteps of centuries past, visiting these unique gems of Lincolnshire," said Clio Perraton-Williams of Gainsborough, a Lincolnshire County Councillor.

"An excellent way to spend a couple of weekends, travelling around the countryside visiting wonderful churches steeped in history and beauty," said Paul Simpson, a freelance photographer from Scunthorpe.

Lincoln based Laura McCarthy commented: "A most enjoyable afternoon spent mooching round stunning churches. Coates by Stow was perhaps our favourite. Such a pretty church. Never knew it existed!"

The festival is sponsored by West Lindsey District Council and Systematic Print.

All the details of the 2017 festival are kept live on the website, to give 2018 visitors an idea of what to expect next year and as a resource for anyone interested in replicating the festival in their area. The website address is [www.churchesfestival.info](http://www.churchesfestival.info)

The festival is also very active in social media:



/WestLindseyChurches



/ChurchesFest



/churches.festival



### In the next issue

Lost Legends: Celebrating 30 Years of Black History Month; The Charnwood Roots Project; The 1917 Food Crisis in Leicester; Newark's Home Guard.





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