

THE CENTENARY OF THE DERBYSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY, 1878-1978

BY D. V. FOWKES

The Centenary of the Derbyshire Archaeological Society was marked by a series of special events held throughout 1978. All were well received by the membership and the Society is grateful to all those who contributed towards the success of the year.

The principal event was a Centenary Dinner attended by 75 members and guests. It was held on 25th January at the Midland Hotel, Derby, exactly one hundred years after the inaugural meeting of the Society at the same venue in 1878. The Society's guests were His Grace the Duke of Devonshire, President of the Society, Col. Peter Hilton, Lord Lieutenant of Derbyshire, Councillor Norman Wilson, Chairman of Derbyshire County Council, Councillor Jeffrey Tillett, Mayor of Derby, and Councillor Gwen Swainson, Mayoress, and Professor Jack Simmons of the University of Leicester, the principal speaker. The toast to the guests was proposed by Dr. Patrick Strange, Chairman of the Society. Councillor Wilson responded on behalf of the guests. His Grace the Duke of Devonshire proposed the toast to the Society. Professor Simmons spoke on the important role local archaeological societies had played in the development of the subject over the last century in terms of both excavation and publication.

The Society was also fortunate to be given the opportunity to hold two Centenary Receptions, firstly at Radbourne Hall on 23rd April at the invitation of Major and Mrs. J. W. Chandos-Pole, and secondly at Chatsworth House on 20th October at the invitation of the Duke and Duchess of Devonshire. The Radbourne reception coincided not only with the daffodils in full bloom but also with one of the few warm sunny days in a generally cold and wet spring, while the evening reception at Chatsworth provided a rare opportunity to visit the private apartments and to enjoy a musical interlude in that magnificent setting.

From 7-28th October one of the galleries at Derby Museum and Art Gallery was made available to the Society for holding an exhibition illustrating its work, built around its triple aims of examining, preserving and illustrating the archaeology of the county. The end result of a lot of hard work was the most ambitious exhibition ever mounted by the Society, opening with material on the early excavations at Dale Abbey and Brough, and going right through to matters of current concern such as Swarkestone and Friargate bridges. The exhibition was opened on the evening of Friday 6th October by Mr. Roy Christian, the Society's other guests on the occasion being the Mayor and Mayoress of Derby, Councillor Eric Reid and Miss Kathleen Reid, and the Provost of Derby, the Very Rev. R. A. Beddoes.

Finally, the regular programme of talks was augmented by a series of special lectures with themes particularly appropriate to Centenary Year where possible. Dr. Alan Rogers opened the series in January with a talk entitled *From Local History to Community History—A Study in Villages*, followed in February by a visit from Elizabeth Williamson to coincide with the publication of her revision of Pevsner's *Buildings of Derbyshire. 100 years of D.A.S. Excavation* was the title of a particularly apt contribution from J. W. Allen in March, while another of our members, Professor Alan Barker, spoke on *Civil War and Civil Strife in S. W. Derbyshire, 1250—1660* in October. The last lecture, and the closing event of Centenary Year, was by Barry M. Marsden on Thomas Bateman on 25th November.

OBITUARIES

EDGAR OSBORNE

Edgar Osborne, who died at his home in Smalley on 24th November 1978, had been a Vice-President of the Society since 1957, having previously been a member of its Council from 1946–1950 and Joint Honorary Editor of the Journal, with Francis Fisher, from 1950–1956. His professional life was as County Librarian of Derbyshire, and in this capacity he was also for a time Honorary Librarian for the Society.

Osborne's interest in records and particularly family records developed through his wartime work for the Historical Manuscripts Commission. He negotiated a wartime home in Chatsworth House for parts of the papers of a number of Derbyshire families and subsequently arranged for the transfer of these to Derby Library. From 1946 he did much work for the National Register of Archives. He pressed for the establishment of a Derbyshire Record Office, and when one was eventually formed some of the private papers which passed to its care were ones which had first been deposited with the County Council under his auspices. He had advised the Diocese of Derby on its records and also served on the Diocesan Advisory Committee for the Care of Churches.

KEITH MANTELL

Miss NELLIE KIRKHAM (Mrs. J. H. D. MYATT)

Nellie Kirkham passed away on Monday, 28th May 1979. She was artist, designer, musician, poet, playwright, broadcaster, and also historian of Derbyshire lead mining, the Civil War as it affected the county, and perambulations of several manors and lordships.

Her books, articles, scripts and poems numbered over 140, scattered through the archaeological, speleological, historical and industrial archaeological journals of Derbyshire, as well as in such unlikely places as *The Plumbing Trade Journal*, *The Dental Magazine* and *Oral Topics*. Her works on the lead mining industry and the miners were classics and she was in the forefront of the few who really began to put detail on the skeletal articles written before she took up the theme.

Every farmer, landowner and indeed lord of the manor knew her: the Barmaster, miners, labourers and even roadmen, when such existed, will remember her kindness and ease of asking questions which elicited answers which even the givers had forgotten.

Derbyshire is the poorer by the loss of Nellie, but she will never be forgotten and few will be the future works on Derbyshire lead mining that do not somewhere carry a little bit of Nellie Kirkham in them.

DOUGLAS ASHTON NASH