

EDITORS' NOTES

Historic Buildings

Recent events relating to the conservation of historic buildings in the county include a number of successes and failures, as reported by the Nottinghamshire Building Preservation Trust. On the debit side, the so-called 'Guide House' at Redhill, Arnold, has been demolished after years of decay and argument over its future. This was a fine example of what was almost certainly a purpose-built inn of *c.* 1700. The principal part of the 17th century manor house at Willoughby-on-the-Wolds also disappeared during a period of administrative confusion and legal argument as to its fate. This episode highlights the inadequacies of statutory controls over the preservation of listed buildings, which tend to concentrate on issues of enforcement and evasion of the letter of the law, without any constructive appreciation of the true character and historical value of the buildings concerned. On a more optimistic note, however, the aisled timber-framed barn at Keyworth, whose future was also once in doubt, has now been excellently restored. A scheme has now been finally resolved for the restoration of the Old White Hart at Newark, an outstanding medieval building. Clifton Hall, the former home of the Clifton family, which was recently transferred to the Trent Polytechnic after some years of use as a Grammar School, has also been restored and redecorated. Largely built to the designs of John Carr of York in 1779–97, it incorporates parts of an earlier building, including early 17th century rooms, one containing a series of remarkable wood paintings of Dutch military figures.

Redundant Churches Survey

Fourteen churches in Nottinghamshire, either ruined or abandoned, have been surveyed in a Job Creation Project organised by Trent Valley Archaeological Research Committee. As no complete survey has previously been made of these sites the aim of the project was to make a comprehensive record of them in their present condition. Plans and elevations of the standing structures were drawn up and details such as gargoyles, columns, capitals, sedilia and piscinae were also drawn. Plans were made of the graveyards and associated earthworks and the position of each gravestone plotted. Where a church, or part of a church, is no longer standing a Resistivity Survey was used to locate the position of the foundations of the former buildings. The inscriptions on the gravestones were recorded with additional information on the mason's name, size and type of stone used and the condition of the stone and the inscription. Each gravestone was photographed. The development of the churches as buildings was pieced together from a detailed examination of the fabric still standing and by documentary evidence. The survey report is being published by the Trent Valley Archaeological Research Committee and the survey records are being deposited with the Nottinghamshire Record Office. The churches surveyed were: St. Mary's, Colston Bassett, St. Wilfrid's, Kinoulton, St. Peter-in-the-Rushes, Rempstone, Bradmore chapel, St. John the Baptist, Colwick, St. Michael and All Angels, Bramcote, St. Helen's, Thorney, Elston chapel, St. Helen's, West Burton, St. Helen's, South Wheatley, St. Martin's, Saundby, St. James', Haughton, St. Peter's, Habbleshthorpe and All Saints', Annesley.

Vale of Belvoir Fieldwork Survey

A joint project of fieldwork by the Trent Valley, Leicestershire, and South Lincolnshire Archaeological units is being carried out in the Vale of Belvoir in advance of the proposed large-scale developments of the coalfield by the N.C.B. The project is the first intensive survey in the area. Despite the poor returns from aerial surveys on the clay soils, and the lack of previous fieldwork in the area, over 200 sites are already known. It is likely that the rich farmland of the Vale has always supported a dense rural population, and that many more sites exist. The project aims to record the archaeology of the Vale through aerial and

ground surveys, including fieldwalking. Work will concentrate on the discovery of sites, the preparation of site plans and descriptions, and the identification on the ground of sites known from the air. It is hoped that the fieldwork survey will establish the pattern of archaeology in the Vale, and will be a basis for further examination of sites threatened by coal-mining developments.

Sherwood Forest Map

In the Public Record Office in London is preserved an important large-scale map of the southern part of Sherwood Forest surveyed for the Crown in 1609 (L.R.R.O. 1/1112). The map is in two halves, each measuring over 13 ft. by 7 ft. and is surveyed on a scale of two perches to the inch. It shows many features in detail, including some field boundaries, buildings, and windmills and deserves to be better-known by local historians. Despite its title, the area covered is in fact the southern part of the ancient legal limits of the forest, bounded by the River Leen on the west, the Trent on the south, and the Dover Beck on the east. It thus includes Lenton, Nottingham and Lowdham, but extends no further north than Hucknall and Calverton. The plans and fields of each village are shown in detail, and there is a good street-plan of Nottingham. As this antedates John Speed's map by one year it is thus the earliest-known map of the town. A reduced photographic copy has recently been acquired by the Nottinghamshire Record Office.

Henry Dawson Exhibition

The centenary exhibition on the Nottingham painter Henry Dawson (1811–1878) which was held in the University Art Gallery in November attracted a good deal of interest and comment. Dawson's work had not been exhibited since the opening of the Castle Museum and Art Gallery nearly a hundred years ago. Some 80 oils, watercolours and sketches were included which showed clearly his development from a comparatively untutored provincial artist to an artist of considerable style and skill, who handled landscape and marine subjects in a manner reminiscent of Turner. The catalogue by Heather Williams which accompanied the exhibition gives a summary of Dawson's life and places him in the context of English Victorian painters.

Tree-Ring Dating

The University of Nottingham has recently set up a Tree-Ring Study Group which is a joint venture by members of the Department of Archaeology, Botany and Mathematics, sponsored by generous grants from the Nottinghamshire County Council and the Science Research Council. One of the principal interests of the Group is tree-ring dating and it is hoped to establish a master chronology for oak for the East Midlands over the last thousand years. The principle and method of tree-ring dating is quite simple. The basis is that a living tree adds a single growth-ring to trunk and branches each year. The thickness of the rings is dependent on environmental factors, for example, the density of the forest, the type of soil and the character of the climate. The regional variability of climate from year to year is primarily responsible for the differing thickness of the tree-rings. Periods of drought or prolonged rainfall should be clearly marked in the tree-ring record but more moderate changes of climate are also recorded. Work has started with the sampling of large oaks, mostly from Sherwood Forest, which were felled in or about 1977. Most of them proved to have started life between 1750–1800 but one giant began *c.* 1460. The tree-ring sequences of all these trees have been computerized and plotted graphically. The ring-sequences of oak beams taken from historic buildings of the 15th-18th centuries are being analysed. It is hoped that when these are computer-matched with those of the living trees from Sherwood it will be possible to determine the growth-span of each beam and have a tree-ring reference sequence, or master chronology, extending from the present to before 1400 AD. Eventually it is hoped to be able to give the felling-date of any substantial piece of oakwood after *c.* 900 AD.

New Publications

The old toll-bridge at Dunham, which connected Nottinghamshire with Lincolnshire across the Trent between Retford and Lincoln, has had to be replaced as it was unsafe. A four-arch cast-iron bridge based on the bowstring arch principle, it was a fine example of engineering constructed by George Leather of Leeds in 1832. Although the bridge could not be preserved, an appropriate memorial to it exists in the form of an excellent printed history. *Dunham Bridge: a Memorial History* is written by a leading industrial archaeologist, Dr. M. J. T. Lewis of Hull University, and is published as an occasional paper by the Society of Lincolnshire History and Archaeology (25 Westgate, Sleaford, £1.40 to non-members). It is attractively produced with numerous photographs, measured drawings and maps, and is a model study of its kind.

It is now common for many adult education classes in local history to publish the results of their researches. A recent full-scale printed history has been published this year by the Burton Joyce Local History Group following 12 years of research. Entitled *Burton Joyce and Bulcote: Studies in the history of two Trent Valley villages*, (from 12 Lambley Lane, Burton Joyce, £3 plus 40p postage) it deals with various aspects of village history written by different members of the group. A shorter but similar booklet has been compiled by members of a class at East Markham entitled *Living in East Markham*, edited by Barry Biggs and Brian Hardy (from Denman Library, Retford, 60p).

One of the most notable publications this year is the new edition of Sir Nikolaus Pevsner's *Derbyshire*, Penguin (£6), revised by Elizabeth Williamson. Members will find it a very conveniently-sized companion to excursions into Derbyshire. The new edition records most of the major architectural changes which have occurred since 1953. The greater part of the destruction appears to be concentrated in Derby itself with the extensive redevelopment of the city centre, although eight country houses of significance must be counted among the casualties. The positive side is represented by the restoration of Derby Cathedral and Sudbury Hall, and a good deal of work on many other major sites including those of industrial significance which were scarcely touched in the first edition. We look forward to publication of the revised *Nottinghamshire* volume which is expected to appear early in 1979.