

EDITORS' NOTES

Centenary of the *Transactions*

The appearance of the 100th volume of the Society's *Transactions* affords an opportunity to reflect on what has been achieved over the past hundred years. The publication of an annual *Transactions* was from the outset stated as one of the Society's principal objectives. Originally it was suggested that the volumes should contain only 'accounts of the Society's meetings and papers read relating to the antiquities of the county', but this was soon extended to include both transactions of the meetings as well as 'papers on antiquarian, genealogical or historical subjects relating to Nottingham or Nottinghamshire'. The latter originally appeared as a 'supplement' to the details of meetings, but from 1912 onwards the distinction was abolished, and by the 1920s the journal had assumed its modern format. In the early days the subjects of the published papers reflected the preoccupations of the members at that time, especially church architecture and antiquities, pedigrees of landed families, and other topographical topics. Transcripts of some basic archives such as chantry certificates and Archdeaconry act books were later also included. Notable early contributions were made by such writers as W Stevenson, TM Blagg and Harry Gill, the prolific pen of the latter including both 'domestic' (ie vernacular) as well as ecclesiastical architecture. More academic contributions were made by Professor A Hamilton Thompson on medieval churches and abbeys as early as 1911, but it was not until after 1937, when the editorship passed to two senior members of the staff of the University of Nottingham, Prof LVD Owen and Dr (later Prof) AC Wood, that 'modern' academic papers began to appear, soundly based on high standards of research and scholarship. Several of these were in the expanding field of social and economic history. Dr Felix Oswald's report on his excavations at the Roman site of Margidunum near Bingham in 1927 was the first major product of modern scientific archaeological techniques, and this formed the basis of Malcolm Todd's excavations on the same site, published in 1969. Since the 1950s many detailed archaeological reports and plans have been written up in the *Transactions*, necessitating an enlargement in the page size

of the journal in 1967 and again in 1993. On three occasions complete volumes have been devoted to a single theme - the church plate of the county in 1964, Margidunum in 1969 and the history of Nottingham Castle in 1989.

Fifty years ago AC Wood surveyed the future: 'There is no shortage of work to be done: enough remains to occupy students and fill the *Transactions* for many more periods of fifty years'. He enumerated areas where he felt more research was necessary - prehistoric, Roman and Anglo-Saxon times, the Middle Ages, religious history of the 16th and 17th centuries, and the economic development of the 18th and 19th centuries. Looking back after a further fifty years, all of these areas have been represented, perhaps especially the first and the last. Our knowledge of the history of towns such as Nottingham and Newark has increased enormously, and numerous histories of smaller individual buildings have appeared. The academic standard of the contents remains high, conferring prestige on the Society not only within the county but across the world. The accumulated volumes of the *Transactions* are arguably the single most valuable source of information on the history of the county, and a worthy tribute to the memory to Robert Thoroton in whose honour the Society is named.

The leading contribution to the present *Transactions* is a paper on the history of one of the outstanding medieval timber-framed buildings in England - the Old White Hart at Newark. This brings together in one example several different historical disciplines - archaeological excavation, historical research into original archives, architectural surveying of historic buildings, restoration and conservation techniques, and the publication of the result of such historical investigation. These five themes - archaeology, local history, architecture, conservation and publication - reflect the Society's interests and activities over the past 100 years and it is particularly appropriate that they should be illustrated in a single case-study in this Centenary volume.

Society Centenary Booklet

A booklet entitled *The Thoroton Society: A Commemoration of its First 100 Years*, edited by John Beckett, has been published to mark the Centenary. This includes an introduction to County History and County History Societies by John Beckett, two chapters on 'Dr Robert Thoroton and the *Antiquities of Nottinghamshire*' (1677) and a survey of Nottinghamshire historical writing, 1677-1997, both by Adrian Henstock, and a history of the Society by Neville Hoskins. The booklet is free to members but can be purchased by non-members, price £1.50 (£2 post free) from Mr. D. Bagley, 29, Shelt Hill, Woodborough, Nottingham, NG14 6DG.

Archaeology at the University of Nottingham

Archaeology at the University of Nottingham is currently undergoing a major phase of transition and change under the direction of the newly appointed Professor of Archaeology, Professor R J A Wilson. A significant event was the birth of a separate Department of Archaeology on 1st August 1995: previously Archaeology was only a Section within a larger Department of Classical and Archaeological Studies. Staff changes which have occurred since the beginning of the 1995/96 session include the appointment of two new lecturers, Dr Julian Henderson in Scientific Archaeology (with research interests centring on the scientific analysis of glass) and Dr Mark Pearce in Early Prehistoric Archaeology (with specialisms in north Italian prehistory and Bronze Age metallurgy). David Taylor has been appointed permanent Senior Draughtsman to a Department he has served over many years in a part-time capacity, and a new post of laboratory technician has been filled by Ian Merchant. It is a pleasure to report also the promotion of Dr Philip Dixon to a Readership in Medieval Archaeology, a recognition of long and distinguished service to the discipline; that recognition is also marked by his current Presidency of the Council for British Archaeology. Dr Chris Salisbury, a name well-known to readers of these *Transactions*, and Dr Yvette Sablerolles, a specialist in ancient glass, have been appointed as Research Associates.

A particularly exciting development has been the physical rebuilding of parts of the Department in two

stages, in the summers of 1995 and 1996, which has transformed both the appearance and the facilities of the Department. New offices and a separate new undergraduate and graduate common rooms have been created, as well as a new, fully-equipped seminar room and a scientific laboratory, provided with an X-Ray Fluorescence Spectrometer, which is shortly to be joined by a Scanning Electron Microscope. The physical shell of a new University Museum has also been created within the Department, but it will take time and a good deal of money before a full quota of new displays is arranged: modern showcases are among several urgent priorities.

The Department continues to expand its post-graduate teaching. In addition to existing MA programmes in Archaeology and Archaeological Research, an MA in Roman Archaeology was started in October 1995, and an MA in Medieval Archaeology is available from 1996. An MSc in Archaeomaterials is planned for 1997. Further details on these courses are available from the Tutor for Graduate Admissions, Dr Henderson (tel: 0115-9514820; FAX: 0015-9514812; e-mail: Julian.Henderson@nottingham.ac.uk).

It is particularly pleasing to report that the final publication of some of the Department's major research projects appeared during the year. Pride of place goes to Jeffery May's definitive 2-volume report on his excavations at *Dragonby*, which is of fundamental importance for Iron Age and Romano-British studies in the East Midlands; it is available from Oxbow Books, Park End Place, Oxford OX1 1HN at the very reasonable cost of £60 (for 677 A4 pages). Other monographs published by members of the Department during the year include *Continuity and Change in a Greek Rural Landscape: the Lakonia Survey II*, by Dr Cavanagh and his collaborators, and Andrew Poulter's *Nicopolis and Istrum, a Roman, late Roman and early Byzantine city*, the first of a projected three volumes on his excavations in Bulgaria. Of current field projects, excavations were conducted in the summer of 1996 by Dr Poulter in Bulgaria, by Dr Henderson in Syria, and by Dr Pearce in Italy, all with excellent results. Dr Pearce's and Dr Poulter's excavations are due to continue next year, as is Professor Wilson's project at Campanaio in Sicily.

To take stock of the fieldwork on which academic members of the Department, and others working in it, have been engaged during the past five years, a publication entitled *From River Trent to Raqqa: Nottingham University archaeological fieldwork in Britain, Europe and the Middle East, 1991-1995*, edited by Professor Wilson, was published by the Department in October 1996. It is the first volume in a new series, 'Nottingham Studies in Archaeology', of which volume 2 will be *Old Sleaford Revealed* by Sheila Elsdon, Special Lecturer in the Department, which is shortly to go to press. *From River Trent to Raqqa* includes a chapter on the latest research by the Trent and Peak Archaeological Trust; an article on the exciting excavations which revealed Neolithic skulls and other contemporary material at Langford Lowfields, Nottinghamshire; a report by Gavin Simpson on his latest research on Britain's cathedrals (including Lincoln, Peterborough and Ely); Bob Laxton's latest news from the Dendro Laboratory (including a new date for Chesterfield's famous twisted spire!); and much more. Copies of *From River Trent to Raqqa*, which comprises 104 pages and is handsomely illustrated with 5 colour photographs, 24 black-and-white photographs and 54 maps, plans and line drawings, are obtainable from: The Publications Secretary, Department of Archaeology; University of Nottingham, Nottingham NG7 2RD; tel. 0115-9514820; fax 0115-9514812; e-mail: Roger.Wilson@nottingham.ac.uk. A colour flyer with a full list of the volume's contents is available on request. The price per volume (postage and packing inclusive) is £10.95. (Contributed by Prof. R.J.A. Wilson).

Descriptions of Nottingham, 1699-1716

Visitors' accounts of Nottingham by such travellers as Celia Fiennes and Daniel Defoe are well known, but those of lesser known figures can also shed valuable light on outsiders' perceptions of the town. One such account which has recently come to light is that written by a civil engineer, Thomas Surbey, on his travels from London to Yorkshire and back in 1699. This has been published by Paul Hughes in his article 'Some Civil Engineering Notes from 1699', *The Local Historian*, vol 26 no 2, 1996, and reads as follows:

Monday, May 29th. Departed about 5 in the morning for Nottingham. Arrived half an hour past eight. Find it a noble, large and well built town. Situated upon good soil near the River Trent, which is navigable. Their houses are chiefly brick and stone. They trade much upon malt also. Having saw them make fine glass ware for drinking and earthen mugs, beakers and teapots. Here are but few marks for antiquity. As to Robin Hood but some protest to call a well (about a mile northward) after his name.

He, the Duke of Newcastle, has a magnificent house built upon the rock where the old castle stood; which is accessible only at one place towards the town. Note it is above twenty years standing but the rails and bannisters towards the south, which are to keep one from falling over the rock, are not all finished. In the house are two pair of openwell stairs of stone 6 foot going with iron rails and bannisters. Those stairs, and their half paces, are all geometrically built by large tayling in the walls which supports the whole weight after the manner of those at the Royal Exchange, London.

The church and some houses are built with a good free sort of stone. But it does not endure the weather so well as that at York. Bricks are 12s6d per thousand delivered, very good and will rub. Carriage is here excluded. Lime is about 1s4d per quarter at the Kiln. They have carts for this sort of work which will carry about 9 quarters at a time. They cover their buildings with tiles. Which are sold at the kiln for 12s per thousand. They have the best of coals at 4, 4½ or 5d per hundredweight delivered. And each cart will carry about 28 or 30. Workmens wages is something cheaper than at York but the difference is inconsiderable.

Two other brief notices of Nottingham in the same period are worthy of record. It is perhaps salutary to note that youthful disturbances are not the prerogative of modern times, as reported in *The Tatler* for 9th September 1710:

WHEREAS, by letters from Nottingham, we have advice, that the young ladies of that place complain for want of sleep, by reason of certain riotous lovers, who for this last summer have very much infested the streets of that eminent city, with violins and bass-violins, between the hours of 12 and 4 in the morning, to the great disturbance of many of her Majesty's peaceable subjects: And whereas I have been importuned to publish some edict against those midnight alarms, which, under the name of serenades, do greatly annoy many well-disposed persons, not only in the place above-mentioned, but also in most of the polite towns of this island.

A few years later, in 1716, Lady Mary Wortley Montague (a daughter of Evelyn Pierrepont, Duke of Kingston) visited Holland and was struck by the

similarity between Nottingham and Nijmegen. In a letter to a friend dated 13th August 1716 she wrote:

If you were with me in this town, you would be ready to expect to receive visits from your Nottingham friends. No two places were ever more resembling; one has but to give the Maese the name of the Trent, and there is no distinguishing the prospect. The houses, like those of Nottingham, are built one above another, and are inter-mixed in the same manner with trees and gardens. The tower they call Julius Cæsar's has the same situation with Nottingham castle; and I cannot help fancying, I see from it the Trent-field, Adboulton, &c. places so well known to us. 'Tis true, the fortifications make a considerable difference.

The letter is printed in *The Letters and Works of Lady Mary Wortley Montague*, edited by Lord Wharncliffe, vol 1, 1837. (Contributed by Marjorie Penn and others).

Malthus in Nottinghamshire

In 1798, the Reverend Thomas Robert Malthus, then an unmarried country curate of 32, with a living near Dorking, in Surrey, published his influential and controversial book entitled *An Essay on the Principle of Population as it affects the Future Improvement of Society*. In particular, Malthus stressed the inherent problem posed by the fact that population, if unhindered, had the capacity to grow according to a 'geometrical' progression, while food output, he thought, could grow at best by only equal increments, ie by an 'arithmetical' progression, over a given time. It does not seem to be generally known that, rather fortuitously, Malthus spent some time in Bramcote in his youth, while being tutored for entry to Cambridge University. After being educated to the age of 16 at a private boarding school run by the Rector of Claverton, near Bath, Malthus was sent by his father, rather surprisingly, to the highly-regarded Dissenting Academy at Warrington. Here he was taught by Gilbert Wakefield, who, after a brilliant undergraduate record at Cambridge, had spent a short time as a curate before distancing himself from the Established Church. The Academy closed down in 1783, after Malthus had spent a year there. Wakefield, who was the son of the Rector of St Nicholas, Nottingham, then returned to his home area and rented a house in Bramcote, where he hoped to attract a few resident pupils in order to support himself as a freelance

biblical and classical scholar. Malthus joined Wakefield as, apparently, his sole pupil, and stayed from the autumn of 1783 until June 1784, when Wakefield took him to Cambridge to introduce him to his own college, Jesus. Malthus therefore lived and studied in Bramcote for about eight months and attained his 18th birthday there. In a letter to his father he wrote that: 'I think I shall never repent having been this little time at Bramcot before my going to college, for I have, if I am not deceived, got into a more steady and regular way of study'. (Contributed by Prof. Richard Osborne).

Nottinghamshire Historic Gardens Trust

Nottinghamshire Historic Gardens Trust established in 1993, is a registered educational charity that offers help to care for parks and garden landscapes within this area. Gardens Trusts are established in at least another thirty counties. They all have the common aim of stimulating interest in Historic Gardens, enthusiasm for their care and appreciation of their intrinsic value.

Nottinghamshire has a rich and varied heritage of historic gardens and landscapes, ranging from country estates and public parks to pumping stations, domestic gardens, and even field systems.

The Trust, supported by funding from English Heritage, has identified a potential of some 700 historic landscape sites. Over forty sites have been researched in some detail, and nineteen of these have been put forward as possible candidates for the English Heritage Gardens Register. The Trust will continue to build this information into a comprehensive data base with the aim of sharing research with other Gardens trusts and specialists.

The Trust offers assistance with research and with survey to identify and record historic elements. It is intended that thorough research and recording will guide and encourage owners and developers, to adopt sound conservation principles when managing sites of historic value.

Membership events and activities include: visits to Historic Gardens of interest; lectures, slide shows and exhibitions on the work of the Gardens Trust; the

opportunity to be involved in the research, conservation and restoration of historic gardens and the settings of Listed Buildings; National Gardens Trusts news updates; involvement in practical conservation projects.

Membership details can be obtained from the Membership Secretary, Fiona Newton, 171 Derby Road, Sandiacre, Nottingham, NG10 5HL.

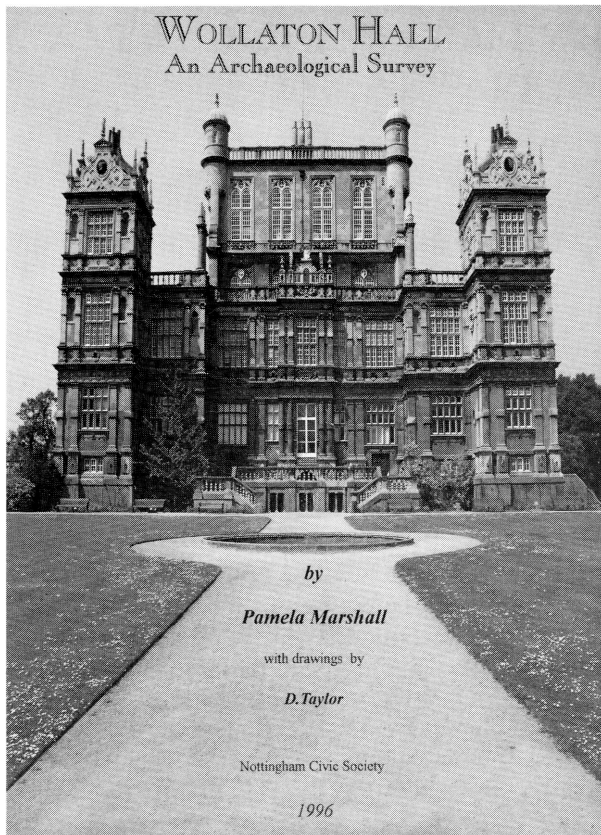
Recent Publications

Following five years of research and preparation, a monumental new history of Nottingham has been published. This is the most comprehensive account of the city's past ever to be written, and it is published to coincide with the centenary of the grant of the charter which conferred city status on the town in 1897. *A Centenary History of Nottingham*, edited by Professor John Beckett assisted by Philip Dixon, Adrian Henstock, Colin Griffin and Ken Brand, occupies nearly 600 pages of text. It is published by Manchester University Press and retails at £50.00. In it a team of more than twenty authors has come together to detail Nottingham's past from its Anglo-Saxon origins on a hill overlooking the flood plain of the River Trent, to the modern industrial and commercial centre of the late twentieth century. *Part I* looks briefly at the origins of settlement in the area, and then at the evolution of the medieval town growing up in the shadow of its Norman Castle. *Part II* lays special emphasis on urban renewal between the mid-seventeenth century and the late eighteenth century, and on the development of the hosiery industry. It was framework knitting which underpinned, as *Part III* argues, a major provincial town by the late eighteenth century. Unfortunately the town grew in upon itself and became a notorious nineteenth century slum, a situation which was reversed only slowly in the second half of the nineteenth century. *Part IV* carries the story forward to the present day, examining the physical growth of the town as its Old Market Square has come to typify the commercial core of the modern city. Although the story is told chronologically, different themes (including politics, leisure and education), are separately treated. This is the single, most comprehensive account of the evolution of Nottingham into a major

late twentieth-century British industrial city. Based on detailed research, it is quite different from the celebratory civic histories of earlier generations. It covers much new ground in tracing the development of the modern city through good times and bad.

The 1990s have seen a considerable amount of research at Newark Castle. Consolidation of the fabric gave rise to an opportunity to record and analyse the gatehouse and adjoining areas in some detail, and four seasons of excavation have also been carried out. These investigations have revealed a great deal about the development of the castle site since pre-Conquest times, and also more about the nature of the stone castle from the 12th to the 17th centuries. This information is to appear in a number of academic publications over the next couple of years, and has been summarised in a short book to be published in Spring 1997. *Guardian of the Trent: The Story of Newark Castle* traces the history and development of the site, its relationship with the town and describes the form of the medieval castle. It has many illustrations, including attractive reconstruction drawings by David Taylor which were specially commissioned by Newark and Sherwood District Council. Further information may be obtained from the Gilstrap Centre, Appletongate and Millgate Museums and the Tourist Information Centre in Newark, and Newark Library (tel. 01636 - 703966). (Authors: Pamela Marshall and John Samuels).

One of the last research projects initiated by the late Prof. Maurice Barley was an archaeological survey of Wollaton Hall. The results of this work have recently been published by Nottingham Civic Society as a memorial volume to Maurice Barley, *Wollaton Hall: an Archaeological Survey*. Despite the attention received from eminent architectural historians, the form of the Tudor great house was conjectural following radical internal reorganisation in the early 19th century. The survey, sponsored by Nottingham Civic Society, revealed much new evidence which, used in conjunction with documentary sources, has allowed a full reconstruction on paper of the original house. As well as reporting the survey findings, the volume brings together archaeological and documentary evidence to analyse the way in which the Tudor building functioned, from state rooms to sewer systems. It also looks at the way in



which the domestic plan reflected social convention and how this changed during the history of the building's occupation. The book is attractively presented: the drawings by David Taylor include a masterly cutaway view of the reconstructed house in colour. The book is available from local bookshops, Nottingham Castle shop, Wollaton Hall shop and by mail order (tel. 01522 - 792780). (Author: Pamela Marshall).

A unusual theme of local history is explored in a monograph in the Historical Geography Research Series, no 32. *A Forbidding Fortress of Locks, Bars and Padded Cells: the Locational History of Mental Health Care in Nottingham*, by Hester Parr and Chris Philo (1996) traces the history of mental hospitals from the beginnings of the joint borough and county General Lunatic Asylum at Sneinton in 1812 onwards. A private asylum for middle class patients was opened at the Coppice near Mapperley Plains in 1859, and soon after Nottingham Borough broke its partnership with the county and opened its own asylum nearby at Mapperley in 1880. The County

Council later built a new hospital complex on a large rural site near Radcliffe on Trent in 1902. Later known as Saxondale Hospital, this was the scene of apparently violent strike action taken by staff in 1922.

More recent history is dealt with by Nick Hayes in his *Consensus and Controversy: City Politics in Nottingham, 1945-1966* (Liverpool University Press, 1966). The theme of this major study is the much-debated topic of a post-war British political consensus, but it places it in the neglected context of local municipal reconstruction and the changing structural ethos in local government during the twenty years after 1945. The author examines not only those policy areas central to post-war welfarism where local authorities were key actors, like housing and educational provision, but extends the analysis to cover new permissive responsibilities like arts and leisure provision where Nottingham provided a national lead. Perhaps the best known incident of this period is the celebrated 'Popkess affair', when the City's Watch Committee attempted to suspend the Chief Constable, Athelstan Popkess, raising the key issue of the relationship between the police and elected councillors.

The *Transactions* of the British Archaeological Association's 1995 conference on *Southwell and Nottinghamshire's Medieval Art, Architecture and Industry* is in press and will appear this summer. It follows the format of other transaction volumes in being centred on a specific building, in this case Southwell Minster, and contains papers of new research on that building. Scholars from the UK, Germany, Canada and the US have contributed papers on the architecture and sculpture of the building, including the Chapter House, examining or re-investigating the archaeological and art-historical evidence for Southwell's building history and setting it in its medieval context. Other buildings in the region are also explored in papers on the parish churches, on Worksop Priory, Rufford Abbey, and Newark Castle. Further papers discuss smaller scale items, such as the nationally important font at Lenton, an alabaster retable from the region now in Normandy and the medieval bell-casting industry of the county. Further information is available from W. S. Maney & Son Ltd, Hudson Road, Leeds LS9 7DL. (Editor: Jenny Alexander)