

his output was such that there must still be many examples of his work in private hands.

A portrait of John Flower has survived. This is an oil painting done in 1841 when he was in his late forties, and is privately owned. His real memorial, however, is the record he has left us of the appearance of early 19th century Leicestershire. As William Gardiner predicted: "His drawings of ... the picturesque scenery in this county do credit to his genius, and will hand down his name to posterity".

(Readers may like to know that Mr. Bennett, in an article on John Flower in the most recent issue of the Transactions of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society, vol. XLII pages 76-81, includes appendices listing most of the known pictures of Leicester and Leicestershire buildings and scenes drawn or painted by Flower. A review of the article is to be found on page 95 - Editor).

MAKING SOCIAL HISTORY : INTRODUCTION TO A PROJECT

Ian KEIL

In a lecture given in 1949, Professor R H Tawney said of Social History, "The adjective (Social) in my title is to be regarded, not as a signpost pointing to a recently discovered field, but merely as a reminder of riches already at our disposal, or waiting to be extracted from

ground beneath our feet". He went on to observe that the subject was "not merely or mainly concerned with the iridescent surface of manners, fashions, social conventions and intercourse, but with the unseen foundations, which... most men in most generations are wont to take for granted". The Leicestershire Local History Council hopes to play its part in bringing to light such 'unseen foundations' by encouraging the systematic collection of people's reminiscences of their lives in Leicestershire during the past two or three generations.

The potential range of topics is, of course, very great: food, fuel, clothing and shelter, as well as work, leisure, and entertainment are areas in which many of us have seen substantial changes during our lifetimes. Because we have all been involved in some measure and because we know that people enjoy talking about themselves and their experiences and comparing life today with life during their childhood, the task may seem a very easy one. But if we are to make such recollections social history rather than a scrapbook of memories, the task is more difficult and needs considerable preparation before it is begun. We should have two main aims:-

(1) That of collecting information in a systematic fashion so that we may compare memories of conditions in one part of the County and another, between one social group and another and between rural and urban communities.

To achieve this it is essential to observe the basic rules of noting the date and place of the

recording, by whom it was collected, who gave the information and whether it is a personal recollection or a repetition of what father, mother, or some other person has said. We need to know the period about which a person is talking - the decade, the year, or an even more precise date where necessary.

It will be clear from this that much depends on the questions asked, and the skill and accuracy of the interviewer. Although systematic notes taken during the discussion will be the more commonly available means of recording information, it would seem that it is here that tape recorders might be used to good effect.

(2) That of recording information in such a way that it is easily accessible to subsequent researchers and can be used in conjunction with other sources of information and with other research projects.

To achieve this the Leicestershire Local History Council intends to develop a way of recording information and a means of preserving the information in a form accessible to all those who are interested.

In order to assess the complexities of the task, it is intended to undertake a small scale pilot survey this autumn. The survey will be undertaken by initiating discussions with groups of people so that some collective impressions may be gathered, and by interviewing individuals who have lived in the County for many years.

We are in the process of designing questions which we hope will trigger memories and provide a means of ordering the material.

We intend to begin by restricting our discussions to the collection of data about food and drink. These are subjects about which we are all experts in some way yet it is a topic about which historians know relatively little. As the product of home agriculture or as an imported commodity, the general pattern of food supplies is fairly well documented during the past century. But we are generally poorly informed about the composition of diets. It is true that some recipe books survive but these usually contain notes about the unusual dish infrequently prepared. Even Mrs Beaton's 'Household Management' which has been in print for more than a century indicates what some householders might do and not what actually happened. Even allowing for the flow which memory may lend to times past, we think our survey may begin to discover more of the latter. For example, we should learn how the imports of fruits from the tropics, which rose very rapidly in the ten years before the outbreak of the First World War, affected diets in Leicestershire. Or, for example, we may find out how the decline of the fishing industry since 1920 has been reflected in the diet of people of Leicestershire. We might also expect to find out something about the changes in ideas as to what was considered good food for children and, possibly, about the impact of changes in marketing through the availability of frozen foods, supermarkets, travelling shops and home grown produce. The value people attach to these is at least of as much interest as the

profitability of these activities for farmer, processor or shopkeeper.

Our plans are provisional. We intend to begin on a small scale but we think we shall provide an opportunity for enjoyment not only to contemplate times past nostalgically but also to give an insight into the richness of experience that might otherwise be lost to posterity. Social history is within us as well as about us.

Any member of the Council interested in this undertaking may contact Dr Keil (The History Department, Loughborough University) for further particulars relating to the questionnaire and methods of collection of data.

KIMCOTE WILLS OF THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY

R A COWLING

The object of this study of thirty-four Kimcote wills (preserved at the County Record Office) was to obtain some information on what was happening in the parish between 1524 (the year of a lay subsidy) and 1670 (the year of a Hearth Tax return), a period for which other information is scarce. The population of Kimcote rose considerably during this period, there being 46 persons resident in the parish in 1524 and some 82 families in 1670; many families moved on in this period and were replaced by others, for only 13 names are common to both 1524 and 1670 returns. There also seems to have been rising prosperity