# Lincolnshire Past & Present

**No 20 Summer 1995**

![A brick from Little Bytham](image)

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The deadline for contributions to the next Bulletin and the autumn issue of Lincolnshire Past & Present is 14 August 1995. Material should be sent to the Joint Editors at Jews’ Court. It will help the editors greatly if articles are sent typed, double-spaced and with a good margin. A note of the number of words is of great value. More detailed ‘notes for contributors’ are available from Jews’ Court. (please enclose SAE).

*Cover: Cortingham Mill under repair*
EDITORIAL

Welcome to another issue of Lincolnshire Past & Present. You will notice some changes in this issue: two columns on each page; a different quality of cover; they have even allowed me to edit this issue, albeit with much help from Chris and Hilary! Credit must be given to Mrs Sue Smith for entering many of the articles onto disc, and a special thank you to Helen Palmer-Brown of the City of Lincoln Archaeology Unit for so ably designing this periodical.

To those who have sent in articles, thank you: we hope we have done justice to those to be found within. To other members, please consider sending us an article; after all Lincolnshire Past & Present is by members and for members. I am especially grateful to those who have allowed their work to be re-published.

Neville Birch

Erratum. Lincolnshire Past & Present Spring 1995, page 24:

In the review of the Education publications by Rex Russell, the 1960s booklets were not published by the Lincolnshire County Council Education Committee; it was of course Lindsey County Council Education Committee.

SOCIETY FOR LINCOLNSHIRE HISTORY AND ARCHAEOLOGY
OFFICERS 1995-6

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If you are writing with queries that do not seem to be covered by the four existing committees please address your enquiry direct to the Chairman.
LINCOLNSHIRE HOLY WELLS (Part II)

Hilary Healey

This second section of the account of holy wells in the historic county of Lincolnshire includes some references found in sources other than Lincolnshire Notes and Queries (see Lincolnshire Past & Present, 19, pp.3-6), which consisted largely of sites in the north (former Lindsey) part of the county. A number of other early sources also refer to springs/wells (new readers note that the word well originally referred to a spring).

Between Stamford and Lincoln in the Kesteven division there are many springs, or mineral chalybeate springs, as at Bourne, Walsoken by Folkingham, Pickworth, Newton, Aunsby, Aserby (Asgarby) and, 'as said in the grounds of Dunsby Hall, three miles north of Sleaford [Dunsby St. Andrew, now mere earthworks], but those chiefly celebrated and used are Bourne and Walsoken.' Gough's edition of Camden's Britannia (1789)

It is not certain that all these named are holy or considered to have medicinal qualities. Obviously many settlements were sited near springs, as at BILLINGBOROUGH and at HORBLING where the Spring Wells are. Both these villages are on the fen edge 'spring line' between Sleaford and Bourne. There is another spring on more or less the same line in the churchyard at SEMPRINGHAM.

Some of the places listed below were noted by the late Mrs E. H. Rudkin, but the reasons for her listing them are not all given. Perhaps readers can throw some light on those sites. Disappointingly we have had no response from readers following the publication of Part I.

ASGARBY and HOWELL. Sandra Sardeson has noted the field name Burwell, in what was formerly ASGARBY parish, around a ploughed out spring just north of the stream currently known as the Washdyke. On aerial photographs, in particular some taken by Mr Jim Pickering, of Leicestershire, triple ditches can be seen (not necessarily contemporaneous, they may all be re-cuts) running south from the spring. One of these ditches continues across the line of the Washdyke and is intersected by the Heckington by-pass (Fig. 1). When the by-pass was constructed this ditch was found to contain Roman pottery. It is not unreasonable to suggest that the spring was indeed of some importance in Roman times.

ASHBY [not clear which one], Spring Well west.

Fig. 1: Asgarby (now parish of Asgarby and Howell). Probable site of Burnwell spring. The thick black lines shown are ditches noted from aerial photographs. Sketch map based on 1860 estate map and 1906 Ordnance Survey maps. Note that the footpath passes directly by the spring or springs.
ATTERBY. Spring to cure rheumatism.
BARTON UPON HUMBER. St Catherine's Well.
BELLEAU near ALFORD. No details.
BRACEBOROUGH SPA. There was a spring here, eventually used to advantage by the famous Dr Willis (W. Marratt, History of Lincolnshire, 3 (1816), pp.50-51).
BULLINGTON near Wragby. No details, but possibly related to the Priory.
CASKWELL. No details.
CLAXBY near ALFORD. No details.
CONINGSBY SPA. Noted in Cox's Lincolnshire.
CRANWELL. Spring earlier this century fed a large pond near west end of churchyard.
DODDINGTON. The wood now known as Gilbert's Plots in Doddington parish is recorded as Cuddelwell Wood in the nineteenth century. The meaning of Cuddle is not known; it is probably a shortening of Cowdale or a similar word.
DONINGTON ON BAIN. No details.
EDENHAM SPA. See Allen's Lincolnshire 2 (1834), p.296.
FULECK (See part I, p.5). Since compiling the first note I am pleased to see that Lady Well is marked on Ordnance Survey maps.
GAINSBOROUGH. White's Lincolnshire Directory (1826), p.117.
GOKWELL. Spring called Nunwell. See Diary of Abraham de la Praye.
GRANTHAM. 'Without Spitalgate, at what is called Grantham Spaw, a salutary spring rises out of sandy ground, the water of which is a mild chalybeate, contains a small quantity of acrid iron, and is specifically lighter than common spring water.' John Erton's Description of the County of Lincoln (c.1816) p.771.
GREENWELL. Allen, 2 (1834), p.49.
HIBALSTOW. Spring near the Grange known as Bubbling Tom - haunted by large black dog!
HOLTON LE MOOR. There is a pond in the churchyard here, presumably fed by a spring. Which came first, and was this well considered holy?
HUGH ON THE HILL. Petrifying spring, location not known.
LEADENHAM. St Annes's Well. This may be where the present fountain now stands, on the main street.
LEASINGHAM. A beautiful spring and cold bath in field adjoining site of residence of Sir William Yorke (d.1725), mentioned in Creasey's Steephol (1825).
LITTLE COATES. No details.
LONG BENNINGTON. Thackson's Well south of here.

MAIDENWELL. A local spring, said to be a petrifying one, gave rise to this name; it is therefore likely to be holy, dedicated to the Virgin Mary.
NAVENBY. Road here called Maidenwell Lane, but no further information.
NEETLETON. Wishing well. Half mile from church, east from Grange. One on gable said to rise and fall with tide. This property is quite widely attributed to springs, e.g. at Folklingham, but has no obvious connection with holiness or healing.
NORTH CARLTON. Spring called Roaring Meg.
NORTH RAUCHEBY. Drywell in North Rauceby is situated to the north end of the present village, and now feeds a small reservoir. However, it does lie amongst earthworks remains, apparently of former village closes. Does the name suggest that offerings were dropped into the spring? Several adjacent closes bore the name Dropwell in the 1790s, so it evidently had been well known.
OSBOURNBY. A field once called Spaw is the site of a spring hailed as medicinal in the eighteenth century. The site is known from the field name.
ROWSTON. Overton's Steephol Almanac (1836) apparently contains a story of the origin of the well.
SALMENBY. 'In the moory grounds...a chalybeate spring said to resemble the Tonbridge water' (White's Lincolnshire Directory, 1856 p.730).
SCAMBLESBY. No details.
SEMPRINGHAM. Well on south side of churchyard.
SOMERSBY. There is a Holywell Wood in Somersby parish, about half a mile north west of the village.
STAINFIELD (near Bourne). Two springs are mentioned here by Marrat in his History of Lincolnshire, 3 (1816), p.179: 'Here is a chalybeate Spring similar to that at Bourne; there is also another spring which is reckoned good for the eyes, it also acts as an astringent. The former was much frequented about 20 years ago, but it is now almost entirely neglected.' The text goes on to give (in inverted commas) a report and a comment on what Stukeley said and to state that the place is now only noted for a chalybeate spring. More research is needed to sort out these springs, but the early Ordnance Survey maps show at least two sites.
THORNTON CURTIS. There is an old pump in churchyard - was there a Holy Well here?
TUMBY. In St Helen's Wood.
WALGOT near BILLINGHAY (currently spelt WALCOTT). 'Seltzer' spring water from here was bottled and sold early this century. It is on the site of Cailey Abbey and therefore likely that the monks used it. But does this make it holy?
WELL near ALFORD. Where is the actual well or wells?
WILLEDBY near ALFORD. No details.
WINTRINHAM. Chalybeate Spring.
WOOLSTORPE. No details.

Village ponds have already been mentioned. There must be many fed by springs, e.g. at Carlton-le-Moors. Do they show signs of past care? Several years ago when the pond at PICKWORTH (presumably spring-fed) was cleaned up, a stone revetment was discovered around its far edge. This may have nothing to do with reverence for the spring, but rather to protect the edges from damage by stock. There are sure to be other examples.

As noted previously, the hanging of rags on bushes was often associated with healing springs (see the cover illustration, Lincolnshire Past & Present, 19). The writer, in the cause of research, visited one or two sites in the hope of finding some rags still being placed, but had no success, or should one say, luck, to date.

Perhaps you know better? In any case it would be interesting to know which of these springs/wells still survive. We hope that keen local historians will take up the idea in their own parishes, bearing in mind that cooperation of landowners is essential. An account of the present state of the sites, photographs or drawings, especially of any structural remains, would be welcome. The early editions of the 6" to 1 mile Ordnance Survey map are good starting places, as well as parish maps in the Lincolnshire Archives Office, where useful field names, and reference to springs can often be discovered. The County Sites and Monuments Record (tel. 01522 575292) would also be pleased to have details of any discoveries; information can be kept confidential if requested.

It is clear that knowledge of those sites whose names have survived owes much to the county’s early historians and folklorists, where none of these people was active there are undoubtedly gaps in the record of holy wells. This may be impossible to fill, but we can certainly try!

SCHOOL CHILDREN VISIT THE R.A.F.

An infrequent magazine was published by the Central Senior School of Market Rasen. In the July 1939 issue, edited by E. Spalding, there are accounts of visits to two local R.A.F. stations.

The first occurred on 27 September 1938 and was to Scampton Aerodrome. About 60 boys from forms 3a, 3b and 2a travelled by coach taking an hour to get there.

‘The first thing we noticed was a number of air-raid shelters which were being rapidly constructed, because it was during the week of the September crisis.’ Then they visited ‘a large hangar, where we saw parts of planes, and each of us sat in the cockpit of a Hawker Hind fighter.’ Onto the wireless room, ‘where they explained to us how messages were received and sent out’. At the armoury, ‘we saw a Bren gun, a Lewis gun, all types of revolvers, and signal guns.’ In a small room, ‘we saw a Link Trainer, which is like a small aeroplane but swivels on a small stand, it being used to teach young pilots blind flying.’ Finally, ‘we saw a Hampden bomber landing at 80 m.p.h.”

The second visit was to the Empire Day celebrations held at R.A.F. Cranwell on 20 May 1939. Whilst there was a physical training and gymnastics display, ‘opposite a large new hangar at the west end of the public enclosure’, it was the flying display that caught the eye.

The pupils ‘saw five Oxford aircraft giving a display of different types of formation flying across the aerodrome.’ Then they witnessed, ‘supply dropping by parachute from three Wallace aircraft’, followed by, ‘a demonstration of Radio Telephony by a Fury aircraft, the pilot receiving orders from the ground.’

After that, ‘three Hawker Hurricane Fighters gave a demonstration of speed and formation flying’ and at 4 p.m. ‘a Fury aircraft gave an exhibition of aeroacrobatics, such as loop the loop and a roll on top of a loop.’ The afternoon was concluded by demonstrations of ‘low bombing, with smoke bombs, of a pyramid target on the ground by three Hampden aircraft’ and ‘a demonstration of picking up messages by two Audax aircraft.”
WINDMILLS AND WILDLIFE

Stewart Squires

The link between wildlife and buildings in the form of precarious ruins providing safe nesting sites for a variety of birdlife is well known. This link has recently been reinforced within West Lindsey by the renovation of two windmill towers specifically to provide a safe haven for owls.

On the A631, half a mile away from the village of Corringham, are a pair of brick windmill towers, one to the west as part of a complex of farm buildings known as Mill Farm, Corringham, the other to the east, alone in an open field, and known as Corringham Mill.

Very little is known of the history of the two mills. Both are of three storeys and are believed to date from the early 19th century, and both had become disused by 1908. By 1985, when they were Listed Grade II, both were derelict, roofless towers, with no internal floors. The one at Mill Farm had had a water tank installed internally at some stage, and in 1979 was recorded as having been used as a water tower for many years. They stand to their original height, two tapering towers, with dog tooth dentillations under their surviving iron curbs, the toothed ring at the tower top around which the cap rotated. The upper floors of the Mill at Mill Farm had been bricked up for many years. No surviving openings on either tower retained any windows or doors. They are both in the ownership of the Thonock and Somerby Estate.

In 1991 the West Lindsey District Council's Buildings at Risk Survey recorded both as Risk Category 1, Extreme Risk, and they were so recorded in the subsequent Register.

The District Council has a policy of targeting buildings on the Register, and the owners were contacted. They were interested to know what needed to be done and what grants were available.

The Planning Department suggested that the process of the brickwork could be solved largely by repointing, and repair of failed arches to door and window openings. There were no major structural problems

Fig. 1: Corringham Mill before repair

Fig. 2: Corringham Mill ready for the owls
concerning the lack of floors internally, as the towers are short, and tied at the top by the curb. The major problems were to roof them and to justify the expenditure by finding an alternative use.

Lincolnshire is not alone in the United Kingdom in experiencing a drastic drop in the owl population largely because so many old farm buildings, which provide safe nesting sites and areas for daytime rest, are being demolished. Concerned that these towers may be nesting sites, and needing more information, the Department asked wildlife consultant, Dr Derick Scott, to advise in October 1992. He found evidence of Little Owls, suggested that they had been present for some time in both towers, and that they had bred successfully that year. Nooks and crannies in the brickwork, where once floor joists had been located, provided their homes.

Modern agriculture has no use for buildings such as these, and to their credit the owners were interested in the possibility of providing more permanent nesting sites. The solution was to adapt the towers, with the advice of Dr Scott.

The towers have been roofed, and all except the minimum required number of openings blocked in with reclaimed bricks to match the original. Each tower requires an east facing clear opening to allow birds access with a further glazed opening on the opposite side to allow in additional light. Finally, a doorway is retained for access.

There are no surviving photographs which have come to hand to show the Mills in their working days. They must have been typical of the County, however, with ogee caps. To provide such a design of cap would have been financially prohibitive. The Lincolnshire Mills Group, however, publish details of a tower cap to provide a cheap and reasonably durable alternative, of timber and roofing felt, and this was recommended by the Department.

The agreed renovation scheme was costed and carried out by the Estate, with the assistance of Buildings at Risk grant by the District Council. Each tower now contains two purpose-built nesting boxes under the roof, the work was carried out in July and August 1999, after a delay to ensure that the nesting season was unaffected.

The end result is a beneficial if non-profit making use for the area. Two landmark towers in the countryside which were in danger of disappearing have been retained in a scheme which has proved to have popular public acclaim, and stands as a good example of a co-operative, pragmatic, flexible approach to the problems of old buildings.

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A TRAMWAY BETWEEN BRIGG AND LINCOLN?

The idea of building a steam tramway between Brigg and Lincoln's city centre had first been mooted in 1881. In August of that year the Board of Trade granted an order to the Lincolnshire Road Tramway Company for its construction. It was proposed that the track for the greater part of its length of 23 miles, should be on one of the wide grass roadside verges, utilising a gauge of 3ft 6in. completion was expected within nine months. The contract was placed for £90,000, the scheme being divided into four sections: No. 1 Brigg to Spital, No. 2 Spital to Lincoln, Nos. 3 and 4 dealt with lines within Lincoln.

Although initially Lincoln Corporation lodged an objection to the scheme, they changed their mind when the company agreed to two conditions: a diversion of that portion of the track within the city from Rasen Lane to the newly constructed extension of Yarborough road; and to consider carrying coal and other merchandise up the hill for the benefit of the citizens. The corporation also felt that if the rails were laid on the side of the road within the city they would at some future date, be a hindrance to building development.

Repeated applications had to be made by the company to the Board of Trade for extensions, negotiations with the railway company; and difficulties arising from the acquisition of land in Brigg, were cited as reasons. By 1884 the promoters had to report that only six miles of track from the Brigg end had been, 'more or less completed'. Four years later the tramway from Brigg to Spital was 'nearly completed with the exception of a portion near Brigg.' At a Board of Trade enquiry held in Lincoln in October 1888 it was stated that for two years no substantial progress had been made because of financial difficulties.

Although the contractor was persuaded to accept shares and debentures in the company as payment for the work; and Brigg Local Government Board decided to support the scheme, nothing further was constructed and the project was abandoned.
MEMORIES OF LEGSBY

John Albert Rands speaking in 1994

My grandfather, Thomas Rands, was born at Sixhills on the Heneage estate. He married Ann Lowe of Linwood and came to work in the woods at Legsbys which were part of the Heneage estate. They had a family of fifteen children, and my father was the fourteenth child. Some of the children emigrated to Australia and Canada. In Canada land was allocated to immigrants at a very low rental. Old Thomas worked in the woods until his death. My father was also called Thomas and worked in the woods until he retired after fifty years service. He had attended Legsbys School, and later the National School in Willingham Road, at Market Rasen. He walked the three and a half miles in all weather.

My other grandfather, Elliot Miller, was a native of Middle Rasen and moved to Binbrook where he was a forester and bailiff for twenty years on Lord Grimthorpe's estate and continued to live at Binbrook until he died at the home of his daughter at Legsbys.

I was born in 1898 where my father had a smallholding at New Pasture, Legsbys. There were two semi-detached cottages, each with about ten acres of land. These were let to my father, and his neighbour who also worked in the woods. They paid a rent of £19 per year. They kept two cows and a young beast or two, besides pigs and poultry. These helped to augment the family income. My mother worked very hard milking the cows, and doing the many jobs on a smallholding. She made butter which she took together with the eggs to the grocer's shop in Market Rasen. She walked the three and a half miles, until she eventually got a bicycle. The butter would sell for about 6d per lb, and the eggs perhaps twenty for a shilling. The proceeds would help to pay the week's grocery bill. Apart from the outside work my mother had her husband and family of four to look after. She was a good cook and always made her own bread which she baked in a side oven. I wish she could have lived to see the modern labour-saving devices. Electricity did not come to Legsbys until after 1954. They killed a 30 stone pig and sometimes a smaller one as well. These were salted and dried and hung on the kitchen walls, and the hams and bacon would provide meat until next 'pig killing time' came round.

I was confirmed at Market Rasen in 1918 and have been churchwarden at Legsbys for forty years and was treasurer sixty years. My sister was organist for sixty-five years.

My brother, two sisters and I, all attended Legsbys School and I went to evening classes at Market Rasen. After leaving school I went to work for my uncle who had a baker's shop near the church at Tealby. He used to go round with a horse and cart to all the neighbouring villages delivering bread and cakes. A four-pound loaf sold for 4½d. After leaving my uncle, I went to work on Mr Dring's farm at Legsbys for eleven shillings a week. The hours were long, 6 a.m. to 5 p.m. This was at the time of the First World War. Because so many men were serving in the Army long hours had to be worked by those at home. For the potato harvests work would go on till 9 p.m. I drove a tractor (an ex-government Titan) and got interested in that work, and decided I would like to have one of my own. Very few farmers had tractors then, and when I had got a bit of money saved I bought a nearly new 'Fordson' from a farm sale near Boston for £100. Leaving home at 6 a.m. on a friend's motorbike I went to Wyberton and got the tractor fixed up for returning at noon. It was fitted with iron wheels and could only travel at four miles an hour, reaching home at 9 p.m. I then started with my tractor ploughing and cultivating for local farmers. I did a lot of work at Hainton, South Willingham, Panton, Lissington, Faldingworth and out as far as Hackthorpe. I charged ten to twelve shillings an acre for ploughing and eventually had to get another tractor to cope with the work. This was an 'International 10.20'. This cost me £220 but it was a much better machine than the old 'Fordson'. The woods at Legsbys were some of the most beautiful in the county, having fine larch, oak, ash and beech trees probably 150 years old. Flowers of all kinds grew in abundance, including bluebells, harebells, cowslips, primroses, anemones and many others. Lilies-of-the-Valley grew in some parts. These were a great attraction for raiders from Market Rasen. They would come as early as 3 a.m. and my father, and sometimes a policeman, would be on the look-out for them and order them off.

There were a few old characters in Market Rasen, including 'Curly' who went round the villages with a bag of oranges on his back, and bought rabbit skins. Another was 'Pig Mutton Smith' who was sent to get pork chops, not mutton, but asked for 'pork mutton chops' and the name stuck. The shops did not close until 9 p.m. on Saturday nights, and the barber's 10 p.m. Young people came on their bicycles from the surrounding villages, and the streets were crowded. The road to Market Rasen was not very good. Each
roadman was responsible for his own length, and would be cut with his wheelbarrow filling the holes with 'cobbles' or stone. This made cycling very tricky dodging these patches, with only a little oil lamp on their machines. Before my time the Rev Field Flowers was Vicar of Tealby and Legsbury. There is a memorial window to him in Legsbury Church. For a short time Legsbury had its own Vicar, the grey-bearded Rev E Barker. One night some of the lads in the village put a cockerel down his chimney. Another time the lads said there was an owl in a lime tree in the churchyard. They asked for help to catch it in a basket underneath. Instead of the owl landing the helper got a bucket of cold water over his head. In my earlier days Legsbury had a cobbler’s shop. There was a blacksmith employing two or three men, who won many prizes at the County Show for shoeing horses. His name was Jack White. There was also a carpenter who employed two or three men. His name was Walter Whitaker (an uncle of mine) and he was a noted wagon maker, nothing but the best would do for him. An old lady kept the village shop in her front room. She could supply almost anything, and seemed to have a bit of everything. Farm workers were hired yearly. Single men from one May to another and these hirings took place in all the market towns. These men lived in the house with the farmer or lodged with the foreman. Married men were engaged in April and lived in the farmer’s cottages. April 5th was known as ‘flogging day’. Before motor transport came the workers' belongings were moved by farm wagon and horses. The furniture, pots and pans, with the beds on top were covered with a large waterproof sheet. The mother and children, with perhaps a cat or two, squeezed into the front of the wagon and father would follow behind on his bicycle. The loaded vehicle looked like a gypsy caravan.

There was a greater community spirit in the villages than there is now. The people would arrange concerts, and whist drives were very popular. They had a big celebration at the Coronation of King George VI and Queen Elizabeth. All the parishioners were invited to a meal of beef, ham, pork pies and other good things. This was provided by the local farmers and others able to help. This was followed by a social evening in the schoolroom. One of the greatest changes I have seen is in farming mechanisation, from the scythe and sail reaper, to the massive combine harvesters of today. Many farmers employ four or five men, where they would perhaps have had thirty. I look back over my long life, I had the best of parents who always did all that could for their children. I think of the little smallholding in the woods where I was born, and of my happy childhood and of neighbours who lived next door. Some of these are still alive and they are still among my best friends. Although I have had my times of illness and sorrow, I thank God for all the blessings I have enjoyed for over ninety-six years.

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A STUDY OF CHANGED CONDITIONS
RURAL LIFE IN LINCOLNSHIRE SIXTY YEARS AGO
W. M Childs

W. M. Childs's account of his childhood in 1870s Alvingham, "Reminiscence of things past", first published the Hibbert Journal for 1933, was reprinted in the Winter 1993-94 number of Lincolnshire Past & Present. At that time I was unaware of a further autobiographical essay, also published in the Hibbert Journal - vol. 33, 4 (July 1915), PP.357-66 - which is reprinted here in its entirety. William MacBride Childs (1869-1933) was born at Carvington near Boston where his father, William Linnam Childs, was incumbent - here he married Henrietta Fowles Bell, one of the daughters of George Bell (d.1872) of Revesby, for almost thirty years land agent to James Banks Stanhope. The Childs family moved to Alvingham in 1872 and to Ponsea in 1879. In this reminiscence, Childs looks back with affection to the farming world of his uncles and aunts, evoking, with great sensitivity, the effects on them of the 1880's agricultural depression. Limitations of space have prevented me from attempting to identify these members of his mother's family; perhaps a Lincolnshire Past & Present reader will follow up the clues offered by Childs himself. [C.S.]
freedom. Nowhere else in England does the arch of heaven reveal itself with less reserve, or do the hues of sunset spread themselves upon a more generous canvas. Lording it over sea and fen, the majestic lantern tower of Boston rises to a height of nearly 300 feet, a monument of pride to Englishmen and also of interest to Americans — since John Cotton ministered here in the seventeenth century — and a monument to which I myself owe personal allegiance, since here my father served as curate some ninety years ago.

Before I was four years old, my father moved to a living in the northern part of the county. Our new home lay within that belt of pasture and arable, known as the marsh, which divides the North Sea and its rampant sand-dunes from the upland Wolds. As if to console us for the loss of Boston's tower, our horizon now gave us a view of the spire of Louth, which I must ever regard as the eclipse and glory of its kind. Here we stayed seven years, happy in the isolation common enough at that time, but so unlike the conditions of today that to have known it is as if one had sojourned in another age. Then, in 1879, my father went south to take charge of a parish in a naval port. My rural habits were torn up by the roots; but no pump of ships-of-war or red-coated soldiers could seduce me from my first allegiance. To me holidays have always meant going back to the country, though not always to the fens; and it was to the country that instinct prompted me to return when, fifty years after first leaving it, I had to decide where to spend my latter days.

I wish to record here some recollections of my early years. It happened that in my boyhood I enjoyed intimate glimpses of a particular element or feature in the rural society of that time, partly because of my upbringing, but even more because of an accident of birth. My mother's parents were Scottish; and when I glanced at the inscription upon a silver bowl which was once hers, and originally her father's, I am reminded that a century ago my grandfather, George Bell, had rendered "valuable services" in Perthshire to the improvement of agriculture. Some years later he migrated to Lincolnshire in order to undertake the management of a large but neglected estate not far from my birthplace. Here, backed by the resources of an enterprising landlord, he worked wonders, changing the face of the district, planning and building a model village, and cultivating not only the soil, but those relations of goodwill with all sorts and conditions of men which were perhaps the best tradition of old English rural life. Here also my grandparents, untroubled by doubts and fears which beset ourselves, brought up in happiness, if not in luxury, a host of sons and daughters. All the sons but one became Lincolnshire farmers, and all the daughters but my mother and one sister took Lincolnshire farmers in marriage. When, therefore, I first began to take note of things, I found myself exceptionally endowed with farming uncles and aunts. All of them were hospitable; and my visits to them, at first with my parents and later by myself, are among the happiest of my early recollections.

Most of these farms were on the Wolds near Horncastle. Readers of The Romany Rye will remember this little market town; for it was here, upon the occasion of its famous yearly horse-fair, that George Borrow staged some lively passages. A visit to these farms, therefore, meant leaving the flats of our too familiar marshes, where the towers and steeples of village churches stood up like candlesticks upon a table, for the reticences and surprises of the hills. The whole back of the Wolds, a chalk upland with here and there a trout-stream and woody vale, lifts itself from the Humber shore and prolongs its bulk for fifty miles south-easterly, in alignment with the stark coast-line a few miles away.

Here Tennyson was born and bred, and here romance and scenic charm try hard to win a footing in a shire which King Henry VIII, enraged by its unliness, once expropriated as "the most brute and beastly in the whole realm". To us dwellers in the marshes the Wolds were mysterious; partly because of the blue haze which so often screened them, and partly because rumour made the most of the hazards of their hilly roads. The railway, no doubt, would carry us most of the way; but not, as I used to remember with glee, the whole of it. A balance of adventurous miles must be accomplished in dashing gig or dog-cart, or more sedate phaeton or wagonette. Once, upon the occasion of a visit to my aged grandmother, who had no carriage, I was forced to travel by the humble carrier's cart. The distance I had to go was only six miles; but that day I tasted eternity. To me jammed in there upon the hard convex seat under the tilt, between inquisitive and volatile market-wives angular with baskets, the long, hot afternoon dozed itself out to the beat of slow, reluctant hoes. Our way wound on and on, past cottages and hamlets, at each of which inertia proved too much for our feeble impulse of progress. While the horse chafed at the files, the carrier, who alone found the journey eventful, wrenched and tore at the packages submerged beneath entangled legs and skirts; and lost both time and temper in the effort to recover his expenditures and dues.

During these visits my elders often left me to my own devices. They were kinder than they knew. To be the target of their dispassionate, if benevolent, comment, to
be surveyed, handled, measured, and compared, was a distinction of which I quickly came to feel one might easily have too much. Nature had not endowed me with the telling physical assets, or the brassy composure, which carry more fortunate children through these ordeals in triumph. My aunts would have it that I was much too thin, and much too tall; and though I hardly ever ailed, and was far more adventurous than my elders guessed, they shook their heads mournfully in tacit apprehension of my early demise. My anxious mother was exhorted to drench me with Parrish's Food and cod-liver oil. Surprise, not enthusiasm, was expressed that should take a bigger size in hats than any of my uncles. Upon the other hand, the refractory cow's slick up my forehead was viewed indulgently as an inherited Scottish grace. At this point in the scrutiny I always blessed because I knew what would come next. 

A small mole upon my chin was regarded with a consternation and abhorrence which impelled the expression of a desire for a daily scouring with soap and water and a hard brush might tell "in the end". My harassed mother would now try to turn the conversation by remarking that I was a good whistler; but my aunts, after listening gravely to my rendition of "Jesu, neek and gentil", would retort that they certainly did feel, and really must say, that a boy as big as I was ought to learn to speak up to his uncles and grown-up cousins, when (as often happened) they took pleasure in baiting me with boisterous raillery.

Altogether, it was not surprising that when the blessed words of dismissal were at last pronounced - "Now find your hat, and don't get into mischief out-of-doors" - I should be off like an arrow from the bow, and betake myself to haunts probably beyond the ken of my excellent aunts, and certainly beyond their powers of pursuit.

Most of these farm-houses had character, for they served homely and worthy ends. Some of them had done this for generations. One of them, for example, was on Old English, a four-square of mellow brick, with here and there a dummy window - white lines on a black ground - reminiscent of taxation in the old French wars. Another, with cream-washed walls and a roof of Dutch tiles painted bright blue, turned one face to the seclusion of its garden and the other to the busle of the farm. In all the houses, the brick-paved kitchen, with open fire, shining brass, scoured tables, and flitches of bacon overhead, was the power-room of the whole concern; and here my competent aunts, who in silks and bonnets cut so different a figure in their carriages of ceremony, wielded authority. It was possible, though not certain, that if one drifted through the kitchen opportune a ration of home-made sweet biscuits or sponge-cake might be issued from a corner cupboard. The back-door beyond the kitchen was the working entrance to the house: all day long traffic came to it and through it, grooms and elders, wagoners and foremen, horsemen, carts and carriages, masters and men. If the kitchen was for work, the parlour was for comfort. To this room, tired and hungry men, fresh from encounters with the weather, came tramping early and late. Seated in their solid chairs, they took their fill of the best victuals to be had in England. At night they reached for their slippers on the fender and for their long churchwardens in the rack, and talked over the business of the day with wife and sons; or, upon occasion, played with zest the part of hosts. To a modern stylist, the furniture and decoration of these parlours would have been beyond redemption. Perhaps they were. But the sense of home, with which these Victorian parlours overflowed, is not the perquisite of any style, however exquisite or fashionable, but rather the reward of an artistry which is inspired by human affections and human needs.

The parlour had a fellow, though I doubt whether, unprompted and unshepherded, I ever set foot in it; for, apart from the abnormal standard of propriety exacted there, one could not enter these drawing-room sanctuaries without a feeling of guilt and unworthiness. Perhaps it was the light; for, thanks to a dexterous use of blinds and curtains, what light of day got through seemed purged of vitality. Or was it the air? For what there was of air became the vehicle of an intricate and unique aroma. Many things went to the making of that aroma: old rose petals in china urns; tall grasses in attenuated vases; faint emanations from ferns and seaweed crushed between the pages of heavy volumes; contorted West Indian shells, full of sea murmurs, poised on corner what notes; peacock's feathers mirrored in the glass above the mantelpiece; humming birds in glass cases, and stuffed owls, and fox masks, regarded them without emotion; deer-skin rugs slowly disintegrating before the hearth; picture-frames enclosing portraits of the departed within a zareba of varnished accorns, filberts, and fir-cones; palm grass bunched up in corners; antimacassars protecting the hot colours of sofas and chairs, miracles of fragility and discomfort, but indubitably elegant; volumes of poetry by choice hands, from Rogers to Tupper, planted on the circumference of weaved tables, bound in gilded cloth, and as dead to use as Stonehenge; and the pleated and faded silk fronts of pianos. Somewhere, too, among these bristling and congested what-nots there would be a solitaire board, or a set of dominoes, or a stereo-sopic masterpiece, through which, if a cardboard view was inserted, one could see the enticing things in startling relief: waterfalls, the Crystal Palace, the nuptials of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert, and a dessert table, loaded with luscious fruits, ruby glasses, and purple decanters, but inexplicably destitute of
guests. Among such treasures I have spent blameless hours, while my aunts and young lady cousins kept up their rallies of gossip and crochet. Another thing, too, I noted from my corner; that, except myself, whose presence was involuntary, no male ever entered this chamber of elegance.

Upstairs, the bedrooms made play with ribbons and bows, chintz and muslins, and knick-knacks past their prime. Guest chambers housed four-posters of mahogany or painted iron, canopied, frilled, and curtained, stoutly floor'd with wooden slats carrying layers of mattress upon which overflowed the vast and deep expanses of feather-bed, in which one wallowed and sweltered. Night air was less delectable than of old; and the opened window admitted the girts which, as I well remember, danced and sang beneath the canopy overhead.

Gardens were modest, for farms were greedy of time and labour. I remember them when lawn tennis was only a rumour, and when, as an alternative to hide-and-seek, croquet gave more scope to the graces of deportment without making any excessive demand on skill or effort. Lawns, therefore, were not large, and their expansion was reduced by beds and borders. Old English flowers thrived, but the place of honour was captured by scarlet geraniums and flaming calcocullaries. Beyond the lawns might be park-rolling, or perhaps a ha-ha, to which a favourite pony might come at call. These gardens were shady places, and after rain there was a delightful odour from the clipped box and yew, and from the arbours half-buried beneath ivy, honeysuckle, and roses. The flower-gardens passed abruptly into the kitchen-garden, and the kitchen-garden into the orchard. Here there would be fruit in season, and, if so, wasps for a certainty. A light-weight could climb one of these ancient plums or apples, and sitting astir a slaying branch mark the harvesters stooping and toasting in the barley-field, or an aunt reassuringly engaged in picking roses. A judicious shake or two; a soft thudding upon the long grass, and then the task of filling pockets without getting stung.

gardens and orchards were very well; but with all their charms they could not rank with the farm itself. Some of these farms were big concerns, running to many hundreds of acres, and sometimes including detached holdings. Farming was large-scale, varied, and thorough. Besides hay and pasture and roots, there were wheat, oats, and barley; and, after harvest was over, the well-dressed lines of symmetrical and smartly thatched stacks in the farmyard stirred delight and pride. Horses and cattle were yearly becoming more important. The long sheds were full of wagons and carts, masterpieces of traditional craft and flaring colour; here, too, were ploughs, drills, harrows, water-carts, reapers, and the latest machines. Carriages in variety filled the coach-houses. There was plenty of man-power, and at harvest-time strength was augmented by a gang of Irishmen, who slept in the barn, the same men returning year after year. Thus there was plenty to explore, and I missed little of it. A farm seemed to me a perfect place, and the farmer's life the best there could be. As I grew older, I became aware that the farmer's life was not always as perfect as I supposed; and that behind the alluring facade of prosperity and heartiness might lie gnawing financial worry and disappointment deepening to heart-break. Yet I still think that the old farming life of England, when it had a chance to do itself justice, and when men had the strength to resist its peculiar temptations, was founded upon fundamentals which make for happiness and well-being. Untroubled by such reflections, I wandered in and out of great barns, so cool and shadowy, the dim ranges of odoriferous stable, the cowyards full of trampling red cattle, the shops of carpenter and smith, the harness-room reeking of polished iron and leather, and handsome with its display of saddles, collars, bits, traces, reins, and stirrups. Then there were sheep and pigs and poultry; that awesome half-door on the other side of which were the dark bulk, glowering eyes, and brazen ring of the pedigree bull; fox-hounds at walk; coursing greyhounds; a setter or a retriever; the shepherd's dogs; and the little fox-terrier preoccupied with her sixth litter. There were also rabbits in hutches, and cats in plenty. Of all the living things, I preferred the cart-horses, rating them indeed above the glossy hunters and carriage horses, especially when with tossing heads and manes the care-free teams came clumping and thundering down to stables at the close of day. As their great hooves clattered and sisted upon the cobbles at the dark entry, you would hear the loud cry of their names in broadest Lincolnshire, and the high, ringing, rhythmical calls, with their strange traditional words, with which their masters told the patient creatures which way to turn and what to do next. The pond, where the horses had just watered, offered a gateway to particular adventures. Often it was large, and perhaps upon its shores there might be a water-logged tub, which, if not very capable of expeditious propulsion, was at least capable of revealing the unsuspected perils of navigation. Then there were the partly cut stacks of hay or straw. Perhaps a long ladder had been left in place, and if so the way was open to high places obviously calling for conversion into secret, and also luxurious, lairs. Finally, there was the pony, which, after carrying my uncle on his farm rounds, was still equal to a boy's weight. Over those uplands, down their slopes to the little river where first I saw trout hovering and rising in the channels between
the swaying weeds, and along the quiet grassy lanes of the Wolds, I rode at will, full of the pride of adventure and scarcely knowing how much I had to thank the sagacity of the good-natured little animal that carried me. Sometimes there were long carriage drives. I soon tired of the dignified waggonette, in which one tried not to stare too much at the person within; but I never lost the chance of an outing in a high-wheeled dog-cart, which was sure to have a fast and spirited horse between its shafts. I remember one drive which, out and home, covered more than forty miles.

When I first knew these farms, they and their owners, or tenants, carried every sign of prosperity. Half a century ago life no doubt was everywhere simpler than today; expenses deemed necessary were fewer; holidays and travelling were less common, and both amusements and education were less costly. If here and there extravagance and over-confidence in the continuance of prosperity were perceptible, the general mark of these households was less riches and luxury than plenty and solid comfort disciplined by thrift. This characteristic was in no respect better illustrated than at table. All these farm-houses were notable for their good fare. Good fare did not mean fashionable hours, or an elaborate menu, or the habitual use of wine. The hours of meals, and the character of each, depended upon the day's work and engagements. The question which should be placed upon the table at a particular hour would turn upon what a hungry man needed or desired. Whatever the fare provided, it was certain to be plentiful, to be well cooked, and in great measure home-grown or home-made. Shops, whether the butcher's, the baker's, the grocer's, or the confectioner's, mattered then far less to farm-housekeepers than they do now; the age of tins, packets, food substitutes, and food patents was only dawning. The artist in the kitchen might be limited in range, but within that range she was almost certain to excel, because of her experienced skill, and because her materials were first-rate, fresh, and abundant. For pork-pies, sausages, hams, sponge-cakes - to name only a few instances out of many - these houses had a traditional celebrity, and their standard of excellence was peculiar to themselves. A high tea of ceremony in a Lincolnshire farm-house sixty years ago meant an array of solids and delicacies to which only an appetite at once healthy and discreet could do justice without incurring disaster.

Unhappily, the time came when even a schoolboy must be concerned to observe the massing of clouds over this busy and prosperous scene. To set forth all the causes which brought about the extinction or supersession of so many of the old order of Lincolnshire "gentleman farmers" would require a treatise. It must suffice here to say that the principal causes of disaster were the failure of the harvests in the years round about 1880, the fall in the prices of agricultural produce, and the lack of adaptability on the part of farmers menaced by the advent of conditions which demanded a radical change of policy. As for the seasons, the cut corn rotted and sprouted in the fields; as for the fall in prices, English agriculture was at length experiencing to the full the disastrous onecideness of free and unlimited importations of foreign produce; and as to want of adaptability, a race of farmers who had been trained to the observance of traditional methods, and had hitherto followed them with conspicuous ability and success, were the last men in the world to surrender and replace them by novel procedures without an obstinate, even a fatal, struggle. Some of them, it is true, were nimble-witted and flexible enough to turn from the production of corn to the production of beef, the breeding of horses, or, in the southern parts of the county, to a concentration upon vegetables and flowers which the fertile soil of the fens made possible. The rest struggled on in the old ways until the overtaking tide of depression and loss submerged them. They ate into their capital. Seldom trained to keep castings accounts, they stumbled on blindly, not always knowing which part of their farming paid them and which did not. Memory recalls to me a sad picture of one of the kindest of my uncle's sitting with his account books spread out before him in the lamp light, painfully trying to puzzle out his gains and losses. A little later, he had to quit his farm for a tiny villa in the neighbouring town, where his ill-content was due less to unwonted poverty than to the loss of the life-long occupation which he had loved.

The catastrophe of these years did not destroy the race of Lincolnshire farmers. Nevertheless, it marked the end of an epoch. The days of careless prosperity, of the old rooted confidence in the stability of the countryside, returned no more. The old-time farmer of robust simplicity and conservatism was to be replaced by a more agile and a more acute type of agricultural expert; and the all-round sufficiency of the old farm-house was to give way to that dependence upon a multitude of external providers which is the mark of the modern economic order.
A CHANGE IN THE LANDSCAPE

Neville Birch

Although clay deposits in the Little Bytham area were used by the Romans for their pottery, it was the construction of a railway between Peterborough and Grantham that revealed raw materials in quantity suitable for a range of building purposes.

The Great Northern Railway constructed its main line through south-west Lincolnshire, between 1850 and 1852. It was a dramatic intrusion of the local landscape, being graded for fast trains. Consequently there are considerable earthworks: embankments, cuttings, viaducts; even a tunnel; in order to achieve easier running. The valleys of the rivers Glen and Witham were utilised for much of the route.

According to Judd this district exhibits 'a peculiar tabular outline' which indicates '... rapidly alternating beds of limestone and clay so abundant in the Oolite Series'. A year after the railway's completion a Professor Morris recorded the sections of its cuttings. Their then fresh state offered unique facilities for study.

The clay beds of the Upper Estuarine Series were well exposed in the G.N.R. cuttings. In the lower part of the series at Little Bytham clays are dug from which are made bricks of singular hardness and durability; and at Wakeley, in the same position, a good fire-clay occurs which is used at Stamford for muffles, and also in the manufacture of terra-cotta.

At the Adamantine Clinker Works of Little Bytham, writes Judd, the clays 'are extensively dug for the purpose of making bricks of peculiarly excellent quality, which, from the ringing sound which they give when struck together, are known as clinker bricks'. These bricks were strong, hard wearing, of biscuit colour, and small in size. They were laid on their side, and used in large quantities to form floor surfaces that were ideal for schools and other public buildings.

Tiles, also, were important. Kerr refers to a 'yellow tile, found on many of the cottages on the Ancaster estate at Grimsby'. These were manufactured at the Adamantine clay works at Little Bytham.

Fig. 1: One inch First edition O.S. map with railways superimposed.

Fig. 2: Six inch O.S. map, 1891 edition (sheet number cxxxix SE)
When did brick and tile making commence at Little Bytham? Certainly by 1861: 'Brick and tile making is extensively carried out here'. Two years later Isaac Addams was listed as being at the 'Adamantine Clinker Works'. Later the business passed into the hands of William Towers who at one time had Thomas Williamson as a partner. This was the same Williamson who later began to make fire bricks at Stamford.

What of the brickworks site itself? It appears that there was a gradual digging away of the clay towards the west and south, the spoil being dumped on the worked-out land, adjacent to the railway. One area was left for the erection of buildings necessary for brick-making. So when the railway was quadrupled in the early 1900s, the brickworks were unaffected. A sequence of maps indicate the growth of the area quarried and of the complexity of the buildings. By 1886 the site buildings were almost fully developed, and the yard served by two sidings that trailed from the down line, and by a cart track, over the railway, from a nearby public road.

The Adamantine Clinker and Fireclay Co. Ltd. of Little Bytham is listed in the last county directory of 1937, but the maps that appear after 1945 show it as disused. Until c. 1980 most of the buildings survived thanks to the site's continued use as a chicken farm. The brick kilns and sintering furnaces were almost intact. The shells of the drying sheds and the large building that housed the steam engine and peg mill had also survived, albeit in a gutted condition. The dominating structure is still the large chimney, the top of which was the only feature visible from the south and west. From the other two quarters the whole site is plain to see. Today the property is called Oak Tree Farm with a large barn: a far cry from smoking chimneys and noisy operations.

Notes:
1 Hugh Martineau, 'The Open Road', *Lincolnshire Life*, November 1974, p.28.
2 On this stretch of track two railway speed records have been set: (i) the world's steam hauled train 126 m.p.h. on 3 July 1938, (ii) the fastest British train 154 m.p.h. on 2 June 1995.
3 A portion of the David & Charles reprint of the first edition of the one inch Ordnance Survey map (1824) with railways superimposed is shown as Fig. 1.
6 Judd p.189; see also Fig. 2.
7 Judd p.199; which also lists the types of clay in this section.
8 The older school building at Little Bytham, opened in 1877, has a flooring of Adamantine Clinker bricks.
10 Post Office Directory of Lincolnshire (1861).
11 Morris & Co's Commercial Directory & Gazetteer of Lincolnshire (1863).
12 See Fig. 3.
20.1 TOM LIDGTT'S TRIP TO GLASGOW. We have received a number of responses to the reprinting of the broadside in LP & P 19 (Spring 1993), p.26. As they are by and large complimentary we print them as received:

Tommy Lidgett was born at Cherry Valley Farm, Rothwell in 1844. At the age of five Tommy walked every day the seven miles to school at Caistor. To make the journey easier his father had made a hoop for him to bowl along the road. At the age of nine he earned twopence a day looking after cows in the lanes and bird scaring.

When Tommy was twelve his parents moved to Thoresway Grange and he was then able to earn sixpence a day working with horses and sheep until he left home at the age of sixteen to work for a nearby farmer.

He moved on to Beasty and attended the Primitive Methodist Chapel at Wold Newton. In May 1854 Tommy set out to find work in Grimsby, walking the twelve miles. He found work as a docker before becoming a ship's cook. A life at sea wasn't for him and for five years he worked on the coal dock. In 1870 Lidgett joined a travelling auctioneer named Rees but in the following year decided to set up in business on his own account, firstly in Grimsby, then moving on to Gainsborough and finally to Lincoln.

Tommy Lidgett was a hard worker and he was able to open shops in Boston and Cleethorpes. He opened a shop and auction room in Lincoln and bought two houses in Grimsby. In 1889 his bank failed and this drove him to drink and smoking. To escape from depression which his losses had caused, he joined a fishing vessel at Grimsby and was at sea for two weeks. On his return to Lincoln he had a serious breakdown and was ill for over a year.

He recovered and went to Sleaford where he started a business selling watches. Tommy seems to have believed that his recovery was due to a group of friends who had met regularly to pray for him and he now became an ardent believer in the power of prayer. He became a particularly inspired preacher and spoke in many local chapels and in the market places. There was number of reports of the performance of acts of kindness by Tommy which appear to have been divinely inspired.

In 1908 Tommy Lidgett attended a Salvation Army Service and spoke for 45 minutes. The hymn that followed was 'Say, are you ready if the Death Angel should call?' and half way through Tommy dropped dead.

John Ketteringham

I have a small black book entitled The Life of Thomas L. Lidgett written by himself and printed and published shortly after his death by W. K. Morton & Sons Ltd in 1908. Tommy, as he was known died shortly before the book was printed but he was aware that it was due to be published ready for Christmas 1908.

Thomas was born at Rothwell near Caistor 20 December 1844 and died 18 October 1908. At the age of 16 he went to work for Mr Surfleet of Thoresway. The next year he went to work for Mr Dawber of Beasty. Next he went to sea on the fishing smack Fidelity. He later worked on Grimsby docks.

He was persuaded to start in business on his own in 1871. He started by selling knives and razors from a harden bag travelling from place to place. In 1873 he went to Glasgow at which time the poems you quote were written and are quoted in his book.

Later he was at 201 High Street, Lincoln, and dealing in watches and jewellery. His stock at the Auction Rooms in Lincoln was stolen. An account of the burglary is to be found in the Lincolnshire Chronicle 29 August 1879 and is also given in his book.

He travelled a lot. In 1892 he spent three months in Bracebridge Asylum. He became deeply involved in Methodism. In 1906 he travelled extensively on the continent. Later he is at Orchard Street, Spring Hill, where he wrote the last letter for inclusion in his book.

He writes of his mode of living. He lived on bread and butter and dry toast and fat bacon with boiled fish occasionally, good vegetables and short pudding. He put two ounces of Epsom salts in one quart of boiling water and took a wineglass full every morning. He went to bed at nine o'clock and rose at four o'clock.

His book was written to show that there is never need for despair, but there is hope for all. It contains eight
photographs of himself at various ages and one of his mother and photographs of Thoresway Grange, Caistor school, Rothwell Bottom. There are also other poems and various short letters describing his life and travels.

Betty Kirkham

A strange, rambling autobiography of Thomas Lidgett was published by Morton of Lincoln in 1908 or 1909. Poorly printed on cheap paper, execrably badly bound in a kind of black oilcloth, copies are not particularly hard to find, though usually their condition is enough to put off the reader; the spine breaks easily so that copies feel loose and perhaps incomplete, with the photographic illustrations hanging out. The book was not written for an advertisement, but to help and encourage people to be sober, thrifty and good, to which end he had it printed 'not grammatical or to appear a fine fellow' but 'as I talk' (p.50).

Lidgett was born into a labouring family in 1844, and worked on the land in an area extending roughly from Caistor to Grimsby. In 1864 he found work on the 'Fidelity', sailing from Grimsby; after, he was an auctioneer's assistant, shopkeeper, and took his own auction room in Butchery Street, Lincoln. He ran an 'Auction Van' between there and Grimsby for some years.

Much of the autobiography is tedious, not least from the point at which Lidgett 'converted', apparently via Primitive Methodism to Temperance, of an extreme form, effectively Sabbatarian in nature. Some of his recollections of rural life are valuable, although he valued more his accounts of visits to other parts of Britain and to Europe, and included lengthy doggerel verses. He identifies the 'Trip to Glasgow' as having been composed in 1873 in a field at Thoresway ... after I returned home' (p.16). Presumably others of his verses were issued publicly in broadside form, and may survive in public or private collections.

Nick Lyons

Finally Dorothy King of Spilsby writes with the following reminiscences:

I never knew him but well remember my father's brother and sisters talking and laughing about the doings of Tommy Lidgett. From what I remember of their conversations, which would have taken place in the 1920s, Lidgett was:

1. A nonconformist, possibly a lay preacher and something of an evangelist.
2. He was a trader at markets and fairs, his speciality being cheap watches.
3. He could always attract a large gathering whether at the market stalls or chapels by his 'gift of the gab'.
4. There was something about enticing buyers with a sovereign to tempt them but they never acquired the sovereign with the watch. My memory is not clear.
5. He operated all over the northern half of Lincolnshire and lived at some time in one of the villages between Louth and Grimsby.

20.2 SLEEP BONE FLOORS (LP & P 17, p.21). Betty Kirkham writes as follows:

I was very interested to read of the sleep bone floor in the garden of a farmhouse at Avenue Farm, Long Sutton. It reminded me of other similar floors Mrs Rudkin talked about.

I cannot do better than quote her description word for word:

Blyborough had a cock fighting floor made of the knuckle bones of sheep so that the cocks could get a grip on them. They were laid in a pattern, circular, with the name Jacobus. Some similar bones were dug up at Brigg and there had been one there. In a house at Grayingham cross roads there was a floor and the pattern in the knuckle bones of sheep formed the Lord's Prayer.

She also told me that the yard next to her drive at Willoughton had a cock pit. I am sorry I have no more evidence of a knuckle bone floor but I was told by an occupant of Mount Farm at Marnby that there was once a cock pit there. She pointed to a small depression in the grass about fifteen or twenty metres to the north west of the house.

[Bob Pacey states that the crossroads at Grayingham has been altered, so no doubt that one has gone. Does anyone know about the one at Blyborough? It would also be useful to hear of examples in other counties, or countries, to confirm that this is the most likely use for such a floor. H.Hl]

17
THE DAY OF JUDGEMENT IS NIGH

John R. Ketteringham

The librarian of the Société Jersiaise has sent me a copy of a broadsheet originally printed by T. Besley of Exeter and reprinted in Jersey in French. I had assumed that ‘Gainsbury, Lincolnshire’ referred to in this document must refer to Gainsborough but a thorough search does not confirm that the clergy and churchwardens had the same names as those shown as the signatories to this document. I would be very pleased to hear from anyone who has or can find any information about this most interesting incident.

Mr Worrall (the librarian) has kindly sent me the following translation of the broadsheet:

The true and confirmed account of the appearance of an angel who was seen by the Minister and the Church Wardens of the Parish Church of Gainsbury, Lincolnshire on Sunday 4th April 1819; with details of the conversation which took place between these latter and the Angel in the course of which the Angel bid the English nation repent. The present account, has been attested by these Gentlemen and signed by each respectively.

On Sunday 4th April last the bells of the parish were heard to ring more sweetly and harmoniously than ever before so that the inhabitants were greatly surprised and astonished; whereupon three of them, Mr John Coulston, the Clerk and the Gravedigger, who had the keys of the church and the belfry in their possession, went to the church to ascertain the cause of this extraordinary happening. One of them said: let us go and fetch Mr King (the Minister who was to preach that day); and all of them, having stopped a moment in front of the church, could not contain their surprise at hearing the bells ring so sweetly. Mr King said: In the name of the Lord, let us open the door; but first, he bade them say the following prayer.

'O Lord God, grant us grace to think of our end; deliver us not to the terrors of Death and eternal damnation, but grant us the time to make ourselves worthy of your goodness and of your infinite mercy, through our Lord Jesus Christ, to whom with you and the Holy Ghost be all honour and glory now and for ever. Amen.'

After which Mr King said: Our Father in Heaven, we come at your bidding. Then the Clerk, in the name of the Lord, opened the door. After praying together in the Church, they went up to the belfry where they saw the bells still ringing as before; looking about them they saw a Child aged about 7, clothed in white, a crown of gold on his head and who, by the force of his breath alone was making the bells swing and sound harmoniously to the great astonishment of those present. Mr King said to the child: In the name of the Lord, who are you? He replied: I am the messenger of the Lord and I have come to bid all men repent.’

The Minister said to him ‘And why do you bring us this message?’ ‘I have been sent by the Lord to order you to pray constantly, night and day, to address your requests to God and to pray to him every day; above all to pray and to prepare yourselves for the terrible last day of judgement when the world will be destroyed by fire. There will befall great disasters, the more so as men throughout Europe and in particular these countries where virtue and truth should shine more brightly are impious, irreligious and ungrateful. God has long awaited the fruits of justice but everywhere sees only those of wickedness. Thus says the Lord: I shall torment Christian nations in my anger: I shall punish them for their wickedness; I shall bring down on them small-pox and divers other diseases because they have aroused my anger.’

But before these disasters befall you, the King of France will endeavour to increase his power; great preparations for war will be made throughout Christendom; but the King of France will see his power diminished for discord will beset his kingdom and destroy it.
The Messenger from Heaven continued to exhort them to repentance, telling them that the Day of Judgement was at hand. Then the Revd. Judgement said to him: 'How do you know these things?' The Angel replied: 'My heavenly Master does not show them to his servants; but he has sent me amongst you to bid you repent of your sins before he puts his hand upon you' and he added: 'Come with me, I have another miracle to show you.'

Having led them into the Church he said to them: 'Lift this stone.' Each in turn having tried in vain to lift it, the Revd. Minister cried out: 'Lord have mercy on us!' The child said: 'Stand by my side. Do you fear the work of the Lord? If your faith is so weak when one from Heaven is with you how can you hope to be strong enough to enter the Kingdom of Heaven?' Then, placing his hands on the stone, he turned it over to the great astonishment of those present. He picked up a roll of paper which was under the stone and on which could be read in letters of gold: 'England! England! renounce your impiety and hasten to repent!'

Whereupon he disappeared, accompanied by the sound of sweet music, leaving in ecstasy and happiness those present who had had the joy of seeing him.

In witness whereof, we the undersigned, declare the above account to be true and sincere. Signed this 4th day of April 1819.

Mr King,
Mr Horn (Ministers)
Wm. Chamber,
John Coulston,
John Boon (Esquires)

Printed by T Besley, Exeter - Reprinted in Jersey

THE ROPSLEY FOXE

Rosalind Beevers

This article first appeared in the Sleaford Historian (16th February 1995).

January 1995 marks the 500th anniversary of the translation of Bishop Richard Foxe to the see of Durham, and presents us with an opportunity to examine the local links of this extremely powerful, if forgotten, minister to the first Tudor kings.

Richard Foxe (or Fox) was born in 1448, in the village of Ropsley, at Pullock Manor which still stands. Now a private house, the building was long known as the Peacock Inn. His parents, Thomas and Helena, were probably yeoman farmers. Nothing is known of his childhood, but Richard's early education may have been in Boston or Winchester. There seems no conclusive evidence for either. What is clear, though, is that he attended Magdalen College, Oxford (founded, incidentally, by William of Wykeham in 1457) before being compelled by the plague to attend Cambridge. It is with this university that he is later associated, as founder of Corpus Christi College, Chancellor, and Master of Pembroke College.

Oxford in the 1460s does not seem to have had enough to offer him, and neither university records his presence. He left for the University of Paris, and it is probably there that he was priested and gained his doctorate in Canon Law.

In this period, immediately before 1485, Henry Tudor, Earl of Richmond, later Henry VII, was also in Paris. It was Foxe whom he chose to represent him at the French court, and to be his secretary from January 1485.

Foxe may have been in England visiting his parents in the Spring of 1484. We have evidence that he was made viceroy of Stepney at that time, and according to Twine's Collectanea, an old woman (of Ropsley) 'had
heared it when she was young that Richard Foxe went away very meanly from his parents into France when he was young and after some time there returned to his parents again in very good sort... saying he must over sea again and if one thing hit out airtight, all Ropesley should not serve him for his Kitchen’.

Foxe was at the side of Henry when he landed at Milford Haven. After the victory at Bosworth, Bishop Foxe, together with Bishop Morton of Ely, is to be found on Henry’s Council - ‘such men as keep watch with [Henry] on others’.

As became usual under Henry VII, who preferred churchmen, with no dynastic ambitions, to the old nobility, Foxe’s unpaid political advancement was accompanied by advancement in the church to ever more lucrative positions. Foxe became Secretary of State, Lord Privy Seal and Bishop of Exeter in 1487. It is around this time that the porch of Ropsley Church was completed. Much decorated with weapons, could it have been given by Foxe to celebrate the victory at Bosworth?

Foxe’s best known association with Lincolnshire is his endowment, three days before his death in 1528, of the ‘school house’ in Grantham. Land from this area of Lincolnshire was given to Corpus Christi on condition that they paid the schoolmaster £6 13s 4d a year and kept the buildings in repair.

Foxe also served Henry VIII in the early years of the reign, and was Bishop of Winchester at that time. In 1510, when asked by the Spanish Ambassador if he confided in the bishop, Henry replied, ‘Yes, at my risk. Here in England they think he is a Fox, and such is his name’.

LANCASTER W 4778

Maureen Birch

What connection has a Lincolnshire woman with a rear gunner whose home was in Lymm, Cheshire? Miss Irene Sharpe of St Giles, Lincoln, was the cousin of Sergeant William Arthur (Bill) Sewell; he was killed on his fourth operation in August 1943, at the age of 22. She fondly remembers her cousin as a great tease; always undoing aprons and hair ribbons. Her last encounter with Bill was when he visited her home prior to going on what was to be his last leave: he was to die soon after; ‘I can see him now’, she says, ‘walking down the Nettleham Road hitching a lift back to Lymm’.

Rear gunner Sgt Sewell was aboard a Lancaster bomber of 44 Squadron, based at Dunkholme Lodge. He was taking part in a raid on Hamburg on the night of 2/3 August 1943. This aircraft was shot down 85 miles south of its designated route during its return journey. It is recorded that Bill’s plane, W 4778, was brought down probably by Hptm. Jabs in his ME 110, operating from Leeuwarden airfield. Of the seven crew members four were killed, one was missing believed lost in action, one was missing believed killed in action, and one, bomb-aimer Sgt Peter Swan, was taken prisoner. The Bomber Command Loss Card (fig 1, opposite) lists the crew members and their duties on board. It also shows the route taken, and the bombs carried. The first line on the reverse of the card shows ‘171/71 Sewell shot down 3-8-43 b. 5-8-43 at Harlingen’. As a consequence of the Lancaster coming down in the shallow waters of the Frisian Islands Sgt Swan was in the water for some four hours prior to his being taken prisoner.

The Harlingen General Cemetry, in the Netherlands, where Sgt Sewell is buried, is a port for Vlcland and Terschelling, and some 38 km from Leeuwarden. Of the 740 aircraft taking part in that Hamburg raid 329 were Lancasters. Bill a young man, amongst many others, was cut off in his prime. The ‘tease’, just prior to his last flight, was on the stage of a working man’s club in Lymm singing ‘Begin the Beguine’. On his next leave he expected to make plans to marry his fiancée, Blaine. Although she did eventually marry another, Blaine remained firm friends with Bill’s family.

His mother, Lily, and his father, Irving, visited Lincoln Cathedral in the summer of 1956. There they saw their youngest son’s name in the Book of Memory in the Airman’s Chapel.
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BOOK NOTES

Christopher Sturman

Copies of most of these titles can be obtained through the Lincolnshire Heritage Bookshop at Jew's Court (postage extra).


Stamford continues to be fortunate in the interest it continues to engender amongst historians and publishers. Martin Smith has already written a number of books on the town, including the impressive Stamford Then & Now (1992). The twelfth and final chapter of The Story of Stamford is titled 'Tourist and Retirement Town'; the fine quality black and white photographs capture the 'spirit of place' in the manner of that admirable (though now discontinued) series, the Shell Guides. It would not be unreasonable, therefore, to consider The Story of Stamford had solely been designed for the visitor (seeking the 'Middlemarch experience'?!) and retiree - it also has a useful gazetteer (arranged chronologically) of sites in the town and surrounding area - but those who buy it and digest its contents, will discover it is an attractive history of the borough from Danelaw times to the present, and an accessible synthesis of research carried out over the last thirty years.

A proportion of this research has been published by the local firm of Paul Watkins, and it is therefore pleasing to welcome the appearance of two new books. Readers of David Roffe's 'Walter Dragn's town?' which was included in Lincolnshire History and Archaeology 23, (1988), pp.43-46, will appreciate the significance of the Ragman (or Hundred) Rolls for studying the social, economic and political conditions of the mid to late thirteenth century. Stamford in the Thirteenth Century, the introductory volume to a projected series on the Hundred Rolls, is essentially an edition of the two Stamford rolls, with a substantial introduction - though it is a pity to record Dr Roffe's bibliography suggests his article appeared in the Society's journal volume 22 for 1987 (he also gives the last page of the pagination incorrectly)! Pick of Stamford surveys the achievement of one of the pioneers of the early history of automobile manufacture, John Henry Pick. He started manufacturing bicycles in the 1890s, producing his first car in 1899; the Pick Motor Company went into voluntary liquidation a quarter of a century later. This sumptuously produced book (the 1903 photographs of the company's works in Gas Lane are quite exceptional) charts the history of firm, traces the few surviving models and reproduces facsimiles of the company's extant catalogues.

3 X. £9.99 + £2.00 p&p [delivery free within 10 miles of Splisby] from 22 Station Road, Fisby, Splisby PE23 5PX.


Splisby W.E.A. has in recent years supported the publication of a number of excellent booklets by Richard Gunnham on aspects of the Town's history - Georgian Splisby (1984), Victorian Splisby (1987) and Edwardian Splisby (1989). The project has now been continued with a volume exploring the period from the outbreak of war in 1914 up to 1939. The amount of material unearthed - mainly from local newspaper files, though sources at the Lincolnshire Archives Office have been quarried - by Dr Walker and his class is vast. Twenty minute chapters survey not only commercial activity, education, health, etc., but also such topics as the Post Office and telephone service, the provision of gas, electricity and street lighting, and the town's theatre and cinema - there is fortunately a good index! My only reservation concerns the production of the book (a theme I have turned to frequently in recent Book Notes): the quality of paper used is poor and I am not certain the perfect binding will last the heavy handling. Splisby 1914-1939 is likely to receive; moreover the pagination is eccentric with odd numbers on the left hand side of any opening. Catherine Wilson's, The Man Who Ate His Boots, which retells the life of Sir John Franklin, Splisby's most famous son, should, in the absence of other biographies, have considerable appeal - and not just to residents of 'Splisbyshire'!

Colin Ella has written a general guide, Around the Isle of Axholme (1993), to this neglected region: Rural Epworth. The Heart of the Isle of Axholme, his new book, well illustrated with photographs and maps, is essentially a general history of this market town. Colin Ella has had access to much interesting and not always
easily accessible material - for example on flax and hemp production, on the region's Dutch connection and on the surviving buildings in the town - and he presents an attractive synthesis of these (generally printed) sources.

ISBN 0 300 06321 0. £16.95 (pbk).
Readers of these booknotes as well as the reviews in Lincolnshire History and Archaeology will already be familiar with the many strengths of this rich survey of urban development, first published in hardback in 1990, and the agenda it sets for the local historian. Although the appearance of a paperback version is to be welcomed, it is to be regretted that the opportunity for making minor corrections and additions has not been taken (it also presents the bibliographer with a problem: the sheets of the 1990 edition appear to have been reprinted, though there is no indication of the new date in the preliminaries). The cover remains the magnificent view of the sheep market in Boston's Wide Bargate (c.1840), but the endpapers are blank - the hardback reproduces details of William Brown's c.1844-54 panorama of Louth (they are, of course, acknowledged in the paperback's preliminaries p.[iv]). The opportunity to correct one of the plates which had been reversed when the hardback was issued has thus not been taken. It is also to be regretted that the author has not persuaded that a postscript, surveying recent changes in the urban fabric, might be a timely addition: changes in shopping patterns and particularly the growth of out of town centres has had a profound effect on the high streets of many market towns described. One of the comments reproduced on the back cover is telling, indeed now ironic: 'The book will be a joy and inspiration to the scholar... [and to] the middle classes in whose hands the future of towns lies...', but the sad fact is that this latter group of 'custodians' is to some extent (though by and large unwittingly) contributing to the demise of the very towns they so cherish.


JANET TIERNEY, Grimsby Docks in Old Photographs.

DAVID J. TAYLOR, "I remember Normandy..." Life on a Lincolnshire Estate Between the Wars. Scunthorpe Museum and the Hutton Press, 1994. ISBN 1 872167 72 4. £5.95 + £1.00 p&p from Scunthorpe Museum and Art Gallery, Oswald Road, Scunthorpe. South Humberside DN15 7BD.

These three volumes offer contrasting approaches to the publication of old photographs, maps, prints, and more ephemeral printed material. The Phillimore series presents a brief introduction - Neil Wright is an excellent guide here - followed informatively captioned illustrations of the town (the dust wrapper of Boston, A Pictorial History uses the same eye-catching view of Wide Bargate reproduced on the front cover of Mark Girouard's survey). Neil Wright is particularly interesting on the variety of Boston's houses and the town's river frontage (though it is depressing to note that so many of the buildings he illustrates have been demolished); there is also a good selection of maps, both on the endpapers and in the book itself. (Readers are reminded of another Lincolnshire book in the series, Malcolm Knapp's Grantham.)

Janet Tierney, Curator of the Great Grimsby Museum and Heritage Centre, has for a number of years looked after the celebrated Hallgarth collection of photographs, and thus is an ideal compiler of this perspective on the changing (more properly declining) fortunes of Grimsby's docks. The book is divided into sections devoted to the principal docks (the Royal Dock, the Alexandra Dock and the Riverhead, and the three fish docks); to fish processing and marketing, as well as related port industries; and to life at sea. Grimsby Docks in Old Photographs must be considered an enterprise addition to this admirable series (which already includes a number of Lincolnshire towns and their surrounding regions).

The photographs reproduced in "I remember Normandy..." capture the vanished world of the great estate in its post-Victorian 'Indian Summer', but the strength - and appeal - of this most attractive book is that it is more than a well annotated selection of old photographs. David Taylor has used the reminiscences of many who worked for the Sheffield family, to produce short, but extremely useful, essays on life 'below stairs' at Normanby Hall, work in the park and on the estate, the War years, and the village. An important publication, and one which is most reasonably priced.

STUART A. RAYMOND, Lincolnshire: A Genealogical Bibliography. Federation of Family History Societies, 1995. ISBN 1 86006 001 3. £7.50 + £0.60 p&p from S. A. & M. J. Raymond (to whom cheques should be made payable), 6 Russet Avenue, Exeter EX1 3QB.

J. S. ENGLISH, comp., A Bibliography of Lincolnshire Methodism. The author, 1994. ISBN 0 9523725 0 9. £4.95 (including postage) from 1 Dorton Avenue, Gainsborough, Lincolnshire DN21 1OB.

A. R. Corns's Bibliotheca Lincolniensis was published in 1904, but apart from such works as Mary Short's Bibliography of Printed Items Relating to the City of Lincoln (1990) and Eleanor Nannestad's contributions to this magazine, serious work towards a bibliography
of the historic county of Lincolnshire remains thin and patchy. These two publications are therefore very much to be welcomed. Stuart Raymond's 108-page booklet, though principally prepared for the burgeoning family history market, should also be welcomed by all Lincolnshire historians. True, there are omissions and inconsistencies - the section on records of the major estates is particularly thin, making no reference to the excellent essays published in the annual Lincolnshire Archives Office Reports - but the compiler must be congratulated on what he has managed to include (I was reminded that I had neglected to note H. E. Hallam's 'Age at first marriage and age at death in the Lincolnshire Fenland', published in Population Studies 39 (1985) in the bibliography prepared for last year's Lincolnshire History and Archaeology). Let us hope that this useful handbook - it also has indexes of names, places and authors - will be constantly revised and updated, as Stuart Raymond indicates in his Introduction, though this could turn out to be a herculean endeavour!

Jim English's Bibliography of Lincolnshire Methodism though perhaps more specialist in its appeal, makes equally fascinating reading (and as a work prepared by an historian of Methodism, it also ought to have wide appeal to family historians - county bibliography certainly cuts across these somewhat unnecessary territorial divisions!). It is divided into a number of sections: general histories of Methodism; studies of particular places; families (including the Wesleys) and noteworthy Lincolnshire Methodists (Thomas Lidgott, who is discussed in the Notes and Queries section of this issue, merits a brief section on p.59). Jim English also indicates that he will be updating this work. He will no doubt add J. T. Fowler's scarce The Correspondence of William Fowler (1607) to any revision of the section on that most interesting Methodist and antiquarian (who was born in 1761 not 1769 as indicated) - an enterprising publisher should consider a reprint of this important book originally limited to only fifty copies! Fowler also merits an entry in the D.N.B. (which perhaps ought to have been included) and an obituary notice in the Wesleyan Methodist Magazine (here the author admits that 'no systematic search has been made of the various connexional magazines', thought it is to be hoped this can be remedied by future research). Jim English perhaps also ought to consider including literary works, such as the novels of that historian of Methodism, George Shaw; such material, which evokes the often polarised social environment of the times, may, in my opinion, be of greater use to the local historian than a good number of the (devoutly biographical) works cited here.


Contributions to recent issues of Lincolnshire Past & Present have made much of the climatic history of the county. The Louth Flood. The Story of the Events of Saturday 29th May 1920, a handsomely produced A4 booklet (it has over a hundred illustrations), has been published to celebrate the 75th anniversary of the 'Louth Disaster'. David Robinson is an informed and sympathetic chronicler of the events and their sad aftermath: it is very much a tragedy. The booklet, which also reprints 'After the Louth Flood', an essay by Stella Sharples, must be considered another publishing success for the Louth society - though it is a pity that no list of sources has been included (writings on the event are extensive). Perhaps a future edition will rectify this - the booklet deserves to sell well - though such a bibliography might also be appropriate as a future contribution to Lincolnshire Past & Present.

Other titles noticed include:


HELEN GRAY AND NEIL WILKYN, The Manor of Barrow, The Copyhold Tenants of the Royal Manor. The authors, 1995. ISBN 1 859980 40 8. £2.50 + £0.70 p&p from Neil R. Wilkyn (to whom cheques should be made payable), 48 Railway Street, Barnetby-le-Wold, South Humberside DN36 6DQ.


REX RUSSELL, The Logic of Open Field Systems (corrected edition). Society for Lincolnshire History and Archaeology, 1995. ISBN 0 903582 04 X. £2.50 + £0.50 from Jews' Court, Steep Hill, Lincoln LN2 1LS.


Those who missed Harold Jackson's Louth & its People. The Last 150 Years (an edition of a thousand copies was sold out in three weeks!) will be pleased to learn that a second volume is planned for publication in early July).