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Lincolnshire Past & Present Editors: Hilary Healey, Ros Beavers, Neville Birch - Reviews Editor: Ray Carroll - Production Editor: Ros Beavers

The deadline for contributions to the next Bulletin and the Autumn issue of *Lincolnshire Past & Present* is 23 August, 1999. Material should be sent to the Joint Editors at Jews' Court, Lincoln LN2 1LS. Tel 01522 521337. It will help the Editors if articles are sent typed, double spaced, and with a good margin. Details (SAE, please) available from Jews' Court.

Cover picture: Crown Mill Tower in Princess Street, Lincoln
Editorial

One of the best aspects of editing and producing *Lincolnshire Past and Present* is meeting our contributors, not just face to face but by telephone, letter and email as well. Also I can now say it has been pleasant to meet our advertisers. We hope that by including advertisements we can help local businesses and organisations as well as working towards a better quality magazine. You may be assured that we don’t intend to get carried away and make *Past & Present* a poor imitation of *Lincolnshire Life*, but we hope it will reach a wider readership. On the other hand, if you are reading this and you are not a member of the Society for Lincolnshire History and Archaeology, why not join and receive this quarterly magazine, *Lincolnshire History and Archaeology* (the Society’s annual journal) and other information regularly?

It would be interesting to know which of the various items readers enjoy most. Some contributors hope that what they write will prompt others to find out more. In this issue *Two Countesses* is one such article, and it was inspired by an item in a previous edition, on *Lincolnshire Ladies*. It was pleasing to find praise for *Lincolnshire Past & Present* in Local History magazine which referred to our notes and queries as ‘always a fascinating lucky dip’ and Rex Russell’s *Help for the Historian* page as ‘a valuable resource’ whilst exhorting more society periodicals to emulate it.

One of the pieces I liked in the Spring issue was *The Storm Prone Lincolnshire Coast*. I had not realised that our coastal region suffered more thunder storms than any other part of Britain, yet Leicestershire hardly ever has a storm. Geoffrey Humphrys tells us that all over the world on average nine times more males than females are struck by lightning. Could it be because men tend to be taller? Or is it because women are more than ever, at least in the western world, less likely to be out of doors than men? On 29 April 1775, however, Ann, wife of Thomas Bankes was killed by lightning on Cranwell Heath, a verdict, according to the Bishop’s Transcripts for burials 1603–1812, ‘brought in by an Inquest this day set over her corpse’ on 1 May 1775.

Included in this issue is a little piece about Jews’ Court, Lincoln. It is possible that many members of the Society would be pleased to know more about what goes on there day by day. Jews’ Court is a great asset to the city and the county as well as to the Society. We are able to report on more good news for the city. The University has awarded its first full degrees this year and developments at the Cathedral Library mean that important books that have been kept at Nottingham University will be returned to Lincoln.

We have tried to include more pictures in this edition and are grateful to those who have sent them in, both for use this time and in the future. Ruby Clark’s tales of Itby are full of happy memories. Can you remember when children had cornets and adults had wafer sandwiches? It was a different world!

*Ros Beevers (Joint Editor)*

*July 1999*
In 1987 when the Society for Lincolnshire History and Archaeology (SLHA) moved in, the schedule of events was a blank sheet. Now the secretary has to keep an eagle eye on the users' diary. Jews' Court is a very busy place every day. Naturally SLHA is the primary user. If you visit on the offchance, there is no guarantee you will find the officer you wish to see, but generally officers keep to specific days. The chairman nearly lives in the building and the secretary at least Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. The public relations vice-chairman is in most Tuesdays and Fridays, the marketing

**What goes on at Jews' Court**

managers on Wednesdays, the membership secretary on Monday mornings, and the treasurer on Thursday mornings. The clerk has fixed days - Monday, Tuesday and Thursday mornings, whilst the treasurer for Lincolnshire Heritage is regularly in the building on Tuesday and Friday mornings. Others call in to collect mail and discuss projects frequently. Then of course there are the shop assistants — every day, Monday to Saturday. In addition there are now young people in training for business or employment as well as volunteers who come in for specific jobs. Many a day the office is so full, desks are used in the library and store room. SLHA meetings take priority but many friendly societies like to meet in the lecture room. These include The Lincoln Society, The Lincoln Engineering Society, the local horologists' society, the Heritage Open Days committee, and the City and County Museum Action Group. But the most frequent is the Jewish community, who meet on alternate Saturdays as well as festival days. Quite often Jews' Court resounds with the patter of tiny feet - or rather, school children of all ages. Jews' Court is a centre for pupils and students to study the history, archaeology and geography of the city under the guidance of Dr Stuart Bennett. Also welcome are adult student and visitor groups, many of whom are interested in the Jewish connection.

There is no doubt, however, why most people visit. The shop is the most comprehensive history and archaeology bookshop in the county. The stock ranges from very specialised volumes on archaeological excavations to pictorial collections illustrating Lincolnshire's past. The stock of village histories is, no doubt, the best to be found anywhere. It is the Society's lifeline; profits pay the rent and other overheads. The new stock and gift range is extensive, but so is the collection of second-hand books. These are donated by members, so allowing one hundred per cent profit. Donations of second-hand books and magazines are always welcome! At present the library, which is growing from donations, is being catalogued by librarians. When this is complete, another group of members and friends will be regular visitors and, hopefully, Jews' Court will become an even more valuable resource centre for students.

All is well at Jews' Court. Over the centuries many people and organisations have made it their home, but perhaps there never has been a time like the present when the building has served so many purposes.

*Pearl Wheatley*
TWO COUNTESSES

The first, Countess Lucy, was a Saxon heiress, described by Sir Francis Hill in his book, Medieval Lincoln, as a 'mysterious person'. She is thought to have been the niece of Robert Malet and of Alan of Lincoln, and a kinswoman of Thorold (sheriff of Lincoln), possibly a niece or great-niece. Thorold built a church at Alkborough and endowed Spalding Priory with the tithes.

Sir Francis says that Alkborough may have been her 'matrimonium' if in fact she was descended from William Malet, Lord of pre-Conquest Alkborough, through her mother. Her first husband was Ivo Taillebois, a Norman. After Ivo's death, Lucy married William de Romano and then Ralph, Earl of Chester, bringing to each the Alkborough property, which after her death went to her son, William de Romano. His descendants still held land in the area in the twelfth century. Lucy is remembered by Lincoln Castle's Lucy Tower. She is said to have repaired it when Constable of the Castle.

The square earthwork on the hilltop, close by Julian's Bower and once thought to be a Roman camp, is called Countess Close after her and she is reputed to have had a manor house there. Certainly dressed stones have been found but very little else although stories abound amongst village children, such as tales of a silver coffin being buried there, and of a tunnel going to West Halton. This last was evidently a tradition when Abraham De La Preme visited the village in 1697, for he says -

That which makes me believe it is Roman, besides the squareness of it, is the tradition the people has that there is a passage underground from it to Halton Bolts, which is a mile off.

William Stukeley also recorded the site in his 'Itinerarium Curiosum' in 1724.

'Prospect of Alkborough', William Stukeley, Itinerarium Curiosum, 1724
The second countess was Frances, Dowager Countess of Warwick. It is unlikely that she lived in Alkborough or even visited it. She was the daughter of Christopher Wray, Lord Chief Justice of England, and married Sir George St. Pol. After his death in 1613 she married Robert Rich, Earl of Warwick. In 1624 she purchased the manor house and lands, which had previously belonged to Spalding Priory, to give an endowment to Magdalene College, Cambridge, in order that a Fellow and two scholars be maintained there. The two scholars were to come from the school at Market Rasen and, failing that, from any school in Lincolnshire.

Her copy of the indenture was found in a box in the cellar of 37 Silver Street, Lincoln, before its demolition. The collection is now in the Lincolnshire Archives (LCS 3/1, 1/2). It lists the endowment in detail - very useful for the student of agriculture in Alkborough before parliamentary enclosure. This endowment is highly regarded by the college as it is one of its earliest, and it was with some reluctance that a field was sold in the late 1940s for the building of a group of council houses known as College Close.

It was evidently too much for the villagers of Stukeley’s time to have two countesses associated with the place, for when describing the so-called Roman camp, he says -

I am told the camp is now called Countess Close, and they say a Countess of Warwick lived there, perhaps owned the estate, but there are no marks of building, nor I believe ever were....

I suppose their confusion can be forgiven - Countess Close and College Farm are adjacent, separated by a stone wall, but Countess Close at that time was owned by the Dean and Chapter of Peterborough, whereas College Farm had formerly been the property of Spalding Priory.

A monument in Snaith Church has effigies of George St Pol and Frances. She is also commemorated with her second husband, Robert Rich, on an alabaster wall tablet.

Above: Plan of Alkborough, showing College Farm and Countess Close.

Further reading

Medieval Lincoln, Sir Francis Hill. Cambridge University Press.

History of Alkborough Church, James Goulton Constable, 1886, reprinted Alkborough History Group, 1982.


History of Alkborough bound manuscript compiled by Harold Dudley and a history class, 1932. Lincoln City Library.

Portraits in Stone (article), Rosemary F. Dorin, Lincolnshire Life, vol 18, no 1, April 1978.

Her second husband according to Goulton Constable, Sir Francis Hill has Roger Fitzgerald as her second husband and William de Roumare as their son.
36.1 STEAM EXPERTS TO THE RESCUE. Mr. J. E. Salway of Walsall is not the only person to be puzzling over a W. H. Chester engine (Lincolnshire Past & Present 35:1). Erewash Museum Service in Ilkeston, Derbyshire, also holds an engine in its collections by the elusive W. H. Chester. An appeal for information in issue No 2 (Winter 1990/1) proved fruitless. In brief, the engine has a bed about 30 inches long and a flywheel 12 inches in diameter. It was originally thought to have been a model, but now thought to have been an original - possibly used to power a lathe. If any readers can provide any further information, please contact Julian Brindle (Curator, Erewash Museum Service, High Street, Ilkeston, Derbyshire DE7 5JA, or telephone 0115 967 1141).

36.2 WATER TOWERS. Could any readers supply an illustration and/or information (description, date, use and demolition, whether public or private supply etc) on the following Lincolnshire water towers that no longer exist?

Billingborough (a pre-war concrete tower); Brigg (another concrete tower, but there is some doubt as to whether this one ever existed); Burton Chadwick (adjacent to the old school); Cleethorpes (in its original form, before it was reduced in height and the tank replaced); Goole (the predecessor to the present 'wine glass' type tower); Grimsby (location uncertain, believed to have been demolished in the 1970s); Heckington (on the Sleaford road, west of the village); Immingham (a very early concrete tower, probably associated with the dock development); Kelstern (roadside iron railings still mark the site); Mablethorpe (demolished within the past ten years or so); Quarrington (demolished within the past 20 years); Rushington (somewhere in the middle of the village); Scopwick (another very early concrete tower, but it may never have been built); Skegness (both the original C19 tower and its C20 concrete replacement. There is however some evidence that there may have been two towers before the concrete tower); Sleaford (the original 1911 concrete tower - but is this the existing tower on Clay Hill?); Spalding, Pinchbeck Road (opposite the end of West Elloe Avenue), Weston (possibly on the site of the modern service reservoir); Whaplode (location uncertain); Winterstoke Northlands (appears on older OS maps).

Barry Barton

36.5 NOT MOTHER CAREY? A recent enquiry in the Skegness Standard was asking for further information on a Miss Carey of one of the Tolpuddles near Spilsby, who was a leading breeder of Orpington chickens in the early 1900s. Her champions went abroad as far as South Africa and North America. This information is recorded in a 1913 issue of American Poultry Journal. H. Healey

36.6 STOUT FAMILY. I am researching the Stout line of my family history and would love if you have any members researching Stout in Lincolnshire and Nottinghamshire. If so could you put me in contact with them? Do you have anyone who could check census returns for Stout, especially at Bassetlaw, for 1851 and 1861? Also does anyone know of any history attached to 17 Motherby Hill, Lincoln? I would be most grateful if you could let me have a photocopy of an 1830s Lincoln street map. Rosy Mary Holmes (nee Stout), 14 Wingfield Road, Skegness, Lincs. LN11 8HS. [SAE supplied]

36.7 FIRST WORLD WAR TANKS. In 1917, at school in Grantham, my late father-in-law, Harry Beesley, made a small model tank of paper and cardboard. This may have been to celebrate the short-lived victory won at the Battle of Cambrai. Does anyone else have such a model or know of anyone who made one? Ros Beesley

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Please reply to John Field - Email: johnfield@tesco.net
By post: 10 Withcote Avenue, Leicester. LE5 6ST.
The mill in Princess Street in Lincoln was popularly known as Le Tall's Mill, although the whole premises comprised Crown Mill, Lincoln. The old windmill tower is still standing, being part of the larger complex that was once the flour mill belonging to Henry Le Tall Ltd. The tower is between 75 and 80 feet high, about 33 feet wide at the base, and had nine floors.

**Crown Mill, Lincoln**

The mill was erected between 1824 and 1841, by Ann Seely. The deeds show that some land lying east of the River Witham in the parish of St Peter at Gowts, Lincoln, belonged in 1696 to James Goodnap, a haberdasher, of the city of London, and passed through the female line of the Cheneaux family of Hagworthingham, to Peter Packham in 1747. The land was then gradually split up among several owners. In 1812, one of these was Henry Boot, a surgeon. Further splitting up in 1818 resulted in part of the land being sold to Thomas and Charles Foster, builders (hence Foster Street).

In March 1824, Henry Boot conveyed to Ann Seely for £420 a piece of pasture land in the parish of St Peter at Gowts, being one acre 14 perches, 636 feet east to west, 64 feet at the east end and 76 feet at the west end. This was part of a close of three acres. Ann Seely was the widow of Charles Seely, and the mother of Charles Seely who had an interest in several milling businesses in the city. He was a prominent radical, a friend of Thomas Cooper the Chartist, and briefly represented the city in Parliament.

Ruth Tinley

Part of a map of Lincoln, printed in about 1888, showing Princess Street and surrounding area.
The valuation of Lincoln made in 1828 does not mention Ann Seely in St Peter’s but it states that some lands adjoining the Witham were ‘not in charge,’ therefore it can be assumed that the mill was not yet erected. But it was built and working by April 1841, when Ann Seely sold property to Dennis Lilly of Newark and Thomas Hibbert of Lincoln St Swithin, both millers and bakers, for £1,400. This comprised a five-sailed wind corn mill together with all going gear, sails, sail cloths, wheels, cogs, spindles, stones, harness, fixtures, utensils etc and the land on which it stood.

Provision was made for right of way over Henry Boot’s land, this occupation road to be nine feet wide from corn mill from Lilly and Hibbert, subject to the payment of the mortgage but it was not until November 1847 that the deal was completed. The description was the same as in 1841, with the addition of a dwelling house, granary, shed, stable, outbuildings and garden. In 1849 Lister was declared bankrupt, owing his bankers £2,349. Lister had farmed at Gotho, and was from a family who appear to have been comparatively well off. Why did he fall? A ‘Proprietary Mill’ was being built on land adjoining the Witham at the west end of Princess Street, also known as ‘the Subscription Mill,’ a forerunner of the Co-operative movement. Although a short-lived project, milling began in November 1848 and it was reported that within a few months all other Lincoln millers had to reduce their prices. As Lister’s bankruptcy was filed in April 1849, this may have been the reason.

At the auction in August 1849, the highest bid was £1,550 by John East. By this time machinery for milling by steam as well as wind power had been installed. In 1855 it was reported in the press that Thomas Sharpe, who had left East’s employment after a wages dispute and gone to work elsewhere, alleged that East was selling adulterated flour. It was said that ‘old’ Mr East was looking after the mill for his son who was ill. In fact the son, John Johnson East, died soon afterwards. East carried on until 1862, when he was in difficulties, and the Lincoln and Lindsey Bank sold the mill premises and land in Salthouse Lane for £900 to William Dawber (who may have been East’s son-in-law). In March 1870 Dawber, then of Guernsey, sold it to Charles Sampson Dickinson for £1,000. The description was virtually the same and wharfare was still included in the rights. Dickinson already had his mill on Brayford East, and other milling interests in the city, perhaps he hoped to reduce competition. In May 1871 the property was sold to Henry Le Tall for £1,125. Henry Le Tall was the son of John Le Tall, schoolmaster turned miller and baker, of Handsworth Woodhouse, Yorkshire. He had learnt his trade with his father, had shops in Rotherham and Sheffield, and had built a new steam corn mill in Woodhouse, which in January 1871 was destroyed by fire. His obituary states that he bought a six-sailed windmill in Princess Street, Lincoln. In December 1863 the press reported a ‘scrapeful hurricane’ that dismantled the five-sailed windmill in Lincoln. It seems reasonable to assume that the refit necessary at this time resulted in the change from five to six sails. This would give an improvement in balance.

Henry Le Tall himself remained in Yorkshire while his son, Horace,
Salthouse Lane, but the confusion between the two names persisted for many more years. The plot between the mill and Vernon Street was developed by S. & R. Horton & Sons, builders, between 1894 and 1905. The main warehouse had three bays and five floors (including the roof space); the storage bins were installed. Splendid stables were built in the south west corner, which were turned into offices when horses were no longer employed. Previous to that the old 'counting house' had been in Princess Street. It was then that the big square tank was placed at the top of the tower for water storage, and the tall chimney was erected (reputedly used by the Germans as a guide for their bombing raids in the Second World War).

Le Tall's increased the milling capacity and continually modernised the machinery. The first rollers were installed in 1882 to supplement the French stones. In 1920 there was a complete overhaul when additional plant by Turners of Ipswich was installed. At this time grain was transported from Hull in 100-ton keels and brought to the mill by two steam wagons, a 'Clayton' and a 'Robey'. Ruston-Proctor engines were also used.

A return of 'Goods made for sale and work done' for 1937 shows over 5,000 tons of flour produced, plus 2,400 tons of by-products - millers offals, bran, sharps, middlings etc. These processes continued with very little modification until 1961 when milling ceased due to competition from the large port mills. Mr John Le Tall remained at the Mill and set up a grain drying and storage business.

The next stage of the history began in 1967, when the mill became the headquarters of Frank Wright & Son (Lincoln) Ltd, corn and agricultural merchants. Frank Wright was the younger son of a basketmaker; his elder brother continued the basket-making firm on Waterside South, and Frank was apprenticed to Albert Wingfield Hall, grocer and pea merchant of Wigford. He started his own business on Canwick Road in 1910 and also had the sub-post office there.

When Pelham Bridge was built the firm's office premises had to be demolished and Canwick Road was too busy for vehicles using the warehouse. John Le Tall joined the company and the business was
transferred to the mill in Vernon Street. More and more modern storage bins and drying facilities as well as a seed corn cleaning plant were installed. Vernon Street is a cul de sac used for parking, so the 1980s vehicles of over 30 tons were already commonplace and it was becoming impossible to get them into the yard. The mill floors were too low for forklift trucks to be used. The business closed in 1985, bringing the site's commercial use to an end.

The premises were sold and made into flats. Jen and Mandy Griffin bought the top six floors of the tower, which they converted into a comfortable home. For 30 years the old tower had little use, but it is now restored to a positive purpose.

Sources: Mill deeds by permission of J. D Le Tall and L. F. Wright during their ownership. Copies of the magazine Milling.

Editor's note.

The mill tower is visible between the stands at the north west corner of Sincil Bank football ground and during quieter moments on the pitch its history is something to contemplate. I was pleased, therefore, to find that Ruth had done this work, so it will now be possible to look at the tower with one hundred percent more insight! There is also a possible connection. William Dawber bought the mill in 1862 and a Robert Dawber owned LCFCC's first ground (1834-1895). John O' Gaunts (behind the old stables), on the other side of the High Street (L. and D. Nannestad, Lincoln City FC, The Official History, 1997). Does anyone know what the connection is?
A VILLAGE RECORD  
Margaret Goodrich

Recently I came across a bundle of nineteenth-century papers. They all relate to two small parishes in the Lincolnshire Wolds, South Ormsby and Driby. The documents range from the annual record of communication services, largely complete from 1830 to 1910, including details of communicants, the alms given and how these were distributed, to a Rural Dean's return for 1861 and an inky record of the Clothing Club distribution for 1858. Lists of four years of Sunday School scholars (1866, 1867, 1869 and 1870) and the prizes they won complete the collection.

South Ormsby, today as then, is an estate village, and Driby, a tiny hidden settlement with a church, two farms and half a dozen cottages, was twice as large a hundred years ago. In the nineteenth century Ormsby had several craftsmen: a blacksmith, wheelwright, carpenter, shoemaker, gardener, groome and a coachman, even a railway guard, but the Driby folk apart from the farmers were uniformly labourers; it must have been a poor place. The two settlements lie about a mile apart, but by road at least double that distance. In their rector's they exhibit a classic example of old-fashioned patronage. The squires of South Ormsby, the Massingberd Mundy's, were the patrons of the united living, and their cousins, William Burrell Massingberd Francis Charles and William Oswald Massingberd, father, son and grandson, held the living from 1780 to 1911 with only one slight interruption.

The communion papers record for each year the services held at both churches; they detail the numbers receiving the sacrament, the collection total and to what causes and people it was given. For many years the communicants' names are listed as well. Noting them must surely have been the task of a parish clerk. Two appear in the burial register, and these lists make a useful social record. The names are written in careful precedence, usually beginning with the rector's wife or the squire's family, then came such names as Mr Mountain, the squire's bailiff along with a tenant farmer or two, and at the end the labourers, sometimes inscribed with Christian name and surname, sometimes a surname suffices - Brumpton, Campion, Lingard and so on. Occasionally brief notes are added, giving a glimpse into local life. Mr Holland and his daughters, Miss Jane, Miss Charlotte, Miss Sophia and Miss Louisa, were regular attenders for nine years at Ormsby, but then came the day in 1866 when Mr Holland, four Miss Hollands, their groom and maid' embellish the list for 'the last time before leaving Worlaby'. Maybe the girls had exhausted the limited field for husbands and were desperate to hunt in a new area.

Typically for the time the communicants remained only a fraction of the regular church-goers. If we look at the Rural Dean's form for 1861 (the rural dean happened to be the Rector of South Ormsby, Francis Charles Massingberd) we see he recorded his average congregation as 140 souls yet average communicants were only twelve, an amazing difference to modern eyes. This does not mean the village people were not confirmed; they were, but too often, perhaps as now, this was a rite of passage out of the Church.
rather than in James Obelkevitch in his Religion and Rural Society, South Lindsey 1825-1875 has showed that often if the bishop was coming to confirm in the neighbouring town, the local country clergy collected up the older children, took them to the church and left them to the bishop's ministrations. Afterwards, to celebrate, the boys might visit the town's hostellers, if not the brothels, to prove their new adult status. Hopefully such a situation had gone by 1866 when the Sunday School prize list records two boys, Joseph Codd and Joseph Calvert, each awarded a Bible and a confirmation card, though there is no sign of them on later communicant lists. Some newly confirmed do appear though, with a note beside their names, such as when 'Emma Tear, (lately confirmed), Wm Peacock, (lately confirmed) made their Easter Communion. But many must have been missing because they were among the young boys and girls who went into service or to live in as farm servants and could not be spared to attend church on a Sunday morning. An occasional evensong was the nearest they might get.

Rural customs did not entirely dominate the local church. Changes in the wider Church of England gradually reached South Ormsby and Drifby. The Massingberds were not out of touch with the world. Often they were travelling to London where Francis might be visiting friends or be on his way abroad to improve his health, and William, in his time, heading for the British Museum to research his History of Ormsby. Whilst in the capital they must have heard about new trends in the church and bought books and papers to keep themselves informed, for it becomes clear that the Massingberds considered themselves high church and favoured Tractarian practice and teaching. This they tried to bring to their rural parishes. For example the Tractarian emphasis on the Eucharistic meat things, making Holy Communion more frequently available to the faithful, and we find this reflected in both churches. At Ormsby in the 1830s and early 1840s there were usually four or five communion services a year, but from the late 1840s celebrations became much more frequent so that by the 1850s a pattern of 18 to 20 services annually was established. At Drifby too, services increased to twelve or thirteen a year - a monthly communion - faithfully maintained by the priest though often only two took the sacrament. Another indication of the Massingberd's churchmanship is that for years their two churches supported the communion alms the SPG and the Assistance Curates Society, both causes of a high church nature. They understood the importance of keeping the church's year, another Tractarian teaching. Sundays are carefully named - seventimes, Last, Whitson and so on, and feast such as Candlemas or St. Mathew's Day, Ascension or John the Baptist's Day are noted. Something of the improved standards of clerical training and practice, again Tractarian, shows through the Massingberd's careful lists. Francis Massingberd had once visited the county Kobbe and was obviously influenced by him in his devotion to his parishioners in their illnesses and misfortunes. Frequently he took 'private' Communion to the sick and the dying when a handful of family and neighbours gathered with the Rector and Mrs Massingberd in the nearest houses to celebrate the comforting sacrament. Distributing the Communion alms provided another chance to tend the poor and, looking at the alms distribution alongside the parish registers, the hard poverty of these Victorian agricultural workers is all too apparent. It was hard because of the comfortless lives they endured and hard because the constant sufferings and anxieties must have often bred harsh people. You could not afford to love husband or child too much when illness, near starvation and death were commonplace. On pages of the burial register until at least the 1830s and 1890s, half the entries are for babies and children. In the South Ormsby register in the early 1870s eight child deaths spread over two years follow one another down the page, some babies only a few hours old, others little children.

Probably the poor just managed as long as life jogged along, although their wages, as low as twelve shillings a week and far less than an industrial worker's, allowed no cushion for adversity. Any mishap spells disaster and here the church would help. If illness or accident put a man off work the communion alms might pay for treatment or fill the gap of lost wages.

Thus in October 1864 the church gave John Rhose a half a crown because his 'oldest boy was ill all harvest'. Years earlier five shillings went to Robert Brumby 'having broke his leg' and the same to William Robinson 'towards a truss'. Two women 'lying in viz Brumby's wife and Crowson's wife' received ten shillings, a substantial sum in 1833. Sometimes alms gifts were in kind, as when Ingleby and Atkin
had a bottle of 'port wine' each or when four pounds were distributed as coals. Obelkevich points out that when the rector visited he was not expected to leave a poor home without a handout, so probably he made this the moment to distribute the communion moneys. In the 1870s the 'regulars' were receiving five shillings or half a crown annually; by the 1890s this had gone up to twelve shillings and sixpence, although there were far fewer recipients. Did they have such bounty all in one go or was it given out at intervals over the year? The Communion accounts do not show. It is a pity that the accounts end at 1911 or we might know if payments to the aged were ended or were reduced as David Lloyd George's revolutionary old age pensions of 1909 changed the lives of the poor. Certainly the five shillings a week that the government gave was more bountiful than the church's sustenance.

Other entries give further insight into the ups and downs of village life. For example, an alms recipient from 1893-1904 was one Emma Hard. She first appears in the Sunday School list of 1866 with the lowest attendance of 41 children and thus with a handful of other black sheep gained 'no prize'. Probably she had some physical or mental disability that prevented her attendance, for in her thirties, unmarried and perhaps jobless, she needed regular financial support. In the 1870s she features frequently on the communion lists and as the cause of one 'sick communion'; perhaps she finally succumbed to a frail constitution when she died aged 49 in 1904. Earlier a brief note tells another unhappy story. In 1833 the rector held a special communion for Thomas Andrews and family in preparation for (two sons, Thomas and Langley's) voyage to America, but the entry ends, 'Langley died on the voyage'. Such a great adventure, such a sad end. Hopefully one story had a happier ending. In July 1865 Joseph Rhodes and Robert Codd both benefited from ten shillings 'on loss by a pig'. What happened? It can be assumed that pigs got out and uprooted two gardens, all the precious vegetables ruined and only the rector's aid averted tragedy.

But alms did not go only to the local needy. Clearly as the century wore on, the rector and churchwardens were becoming aware of the wider church and community. Although money was always earmarked for church expenses, which included paying the ringers and the organist - he was given £5 in 1905 - and they also gave regularly to the 'Diocesan Sunday Fund', the County Hospital and, as already mentioned, to the more distant ACS and SPG.

Even little Ormsby, out of its scanty annual total, gave a guinea to the ACS. Amounts were not much larger at South Ormsby, where in 1900 £1 10s 1d was sent to the Diocesan Fund and 25 shillings to the SPG. Occasionally some interesting one-off payments vary the list, such as £1 6s 1d in 1899 for the 'Church Army Van', (the Church Army was by then 17 years old), or, long before this, in 1848, a donation after the fire at St John's, Newfoundland and in 1859 'in Thanksgiving for the Suppression of the Mutiny', £2 15s 7d was collected for SPG in India.

It is sad to see that in the last quarter of the nineteenth century communion numbers and, consequently collections, declined considerably. In the 1830s Easter communicants numbered well over 30: 39 in 1831, 47 in 1838, even 64 in 1833. But by the 1850s and 1860s they had fallen back to a steady 23 to 25, with Christmas communions usually a little lower. The last years of the century must have been depressing for the rector, William Oswald Massigben. He had succeeded his father, 'the best of fathers', in 1873 and remained in post until 1910, more than 30 years, though his father's tenure had been nearer 50! Unfortunately the accounts for 1878-1892 are missing so we cannot see when the decline in communion attendance began, but comparing with the 1860s, average attendance 22, and the 1900s, average 16, the scale of the drop is obvious. Studies show a similar decline nationally, generally becoming obvious in the 1890s. Undoubtedly local Methodist chapels took some from the Church of England, though often keen worshippers would have been to the church in the morning before the chapel at night. The Ormsby squire would not allow a Methodist chapel on his estates but in nearby 'open' villages they flourished. For men, if not for their women, to boycott the church was at least one reprisal for the failure of their Union in the 'revolt of the field' of the 1870s and 1880s. Often the persons had lined up with the squirearchy against them.
and it was not forgotten. But it is likely the decline was part of the general exodus from Wolseley villages in the agricultural depression of late Victorian England. Census figures for South Ormsby and Driby show that Ormsby’s population fell from a high point of 294 in 1881 to 211 in 1911, a rapid decline. Driby shows a similar fall - 117 in 1881 to 75 in 1911. Strangely enough the census figures kept up better at Driby, not that there was much to be maintained, indeed in the 1900s there is even a surge in numbers from the regular two to a peak of seven in 1904, but this could indicate the arrival of one devout family.

Six pages of Sunday School records survive recording attendances and prizes awarded to the scholars. Titles of marvellously prize-worthy Victorian children’s books appear - Difficulty Hill, Little Children’s Duties, Robert and Emily or Diligence Rewarded - but there are also picture books of the Bible and books of birds for the smaller children, as well as Bibles and Prayer Books for their older brothers and sisters. William Peacock, at 16 the oldest child, may not have been too excited by Let a Man Examine Himself but the more practical The Potato seems an excellent choice for a little Lincolnshire girl, Mary Ann Atkin. That moralising books were available was all due to the evangelical revival with its enormous influence on the late Georgian and Victorian church. Although its leaders tried many methods of evangelising its literature, whether it was scripture, penny tracts or improving children’s stories, swept through society. It was a characteristic protestant technique used to great effect. Many of the titles of the children’s prizes are typical of the pious writing of the period and even if the rector did have high church leanings he obviously found the evangelical publishing most useful for his prize list. In the 1850s the Massingerheds had built a school in South Ormsby and clearly expected that the children would read their prize books and be improved by them.

The Sunday School seems to have met twice on Sundays because the most worthy children logged up 99 or even 100 attendances. One year, 1870, half the boys. 17 out of 36, achieved more than 80 attendances, whereas the 31 girls were much more frequently absent. Perhaps the hard pressed mothers pushed their sons out of the house with relief whilst keeping their daughters at home to mind the baby or help with chores. Small notes on the lists give other more definite insights: Susan Househam at 14 had left to go into service, and two boys had departed to Birmingham, a long way from an isolated Lincolnshire village.

Good news for the Cathedral Library

The Heritage Lottery Fund has announced an award of £69,800 to Lincoln Cathedral Library for the introduction of heating and humidity controls in the historic Wren and Medieval Libraries. This is the first award to be made by the Fund to Lincoln Cathedral.

During recent years the high level of humidity in the Library during the winter months has caused great concern, because of the threat posed to the safety and long-term preservation of the unique collection of rare books and manuscripts housed in the building.

The technology is available to achieve an environment matching the national British Standard for historic documents, yet the question of how to introduce modern machinery into a building designed by Sir Christopher Wren has proved a major difficulty. After years of preparation, and careful monitoring of the conditions in the Library, an imaginative plan was drawn up, including the reinstatement of what is thought to have been the original furnishing scheme. Window tables along the south wall of the Wren Library will effectively conceal the new heating and dehumidifying equipment. This project can now be carried out by means of the Heritage Lottery Fund grant.

The stabilising of the environment in the Wren Library will make possible the return of the Cathedral Library’s important collection of some 270 medieval manuscripts, which have been on temporary loan at Nottingham University Library. A selection from these manuscripts, including the hombilites of the Venerable Bede (dating from around 1000 AD), will be on display next year in the Library’s Millennium Exhibition, A Thousand Years of History in Lincoln Cathedral Library. The introduction of heating will enable access to the Library to be extended beyond the summer months, with exhibitions, events and seminars in the spring and autumn.

The Heritage Lottery Fund award has been warmly welcomed by Gillian Merron, Member of Parliament for Lincoln, who wrote in support of the grant. She said, ‘I have visited the Cathedral Library on a number of occasions to see the impressive collections there. I am delighted that funding has been secured to ensure the survival of these invaluable sources of our heritage.'
Rich trade in poor things

15 November 1805, Brackenborough, Lincs.

ABSCONDED, from Hatcliffe, Lincolnshire, and left a bastard child chargeable to the parish of Brackenborough, BENJAMIN BENNINGTON. He is about 5 feet 10 inches high, 26 years of age, brown hair cut short, grey eyes, very much pock marked, long visage, slim and very small legs. His common dress is a fustian frieze, let out with new on each side at the back, a red waistcoat, silk handkerchief round his neck, bootees with turned down tops, or shoes tied; he has lived two years at Waddingham, near Brigg, and is generally employed as a farmer's servant.

Whoever will ... bring Benjamin Bennington to the OVERSEER of Brackenborough, or lodge him in any of his Majesty's gaols, shall receive FIVE GUINEAS Reward.

Barrow on Humber, 19 December 1806

To OVERSEERS, etc., ESCAPED from Barrow Workhouse, on or about the 28th of October last, A MIDDLE AGED WOMAN, rather low in stature and sometimes a little deranged. Any person giving information where she may be found, or causing her to be returned to her place of settlement, will be properly rewarded for their trouble, by applying to the OVERSEERS of the POOR of BARROW aforesaid.

South Kyme, Lincs, 4 December 1807

MILITIA WANTED IMMEDIATELY, three able-bodied young men, to serve in the Royal South Lincoln Militia for the parish of South Kyme, near Sleaford. A liberal bounty will be given, by applying to the OVERSEERS of South Kyme...

Spilsby, Lincs. 17 June 1811

A strong healthy Man, who is suitable for turning a machine, working in a stone-mason's employ, etc., or capable of any other labourer's work, would be disposed of on liberal terms till next Easter, on application to the Overseers of the Poor of the parish of Spilsby (if by letter, post paid).
OBITUARIES

MICHAEL POINTER

A polymath with a lively range of interests and abilities, Michael Pointer was well-known in Grantham as publisher of the Bygone series of booklets, six of which he also wrote. One of the best loved of these is The Glory of Grantham, a useful and informative study of St Wulfram’s Church. He was a member of SLHA as well as the Parson Woodforde Society and the Sherlock Holmes Society. His Holmes books include The Public Life of Sherlock Holmes and The Sherlock Holmes File. An important area of his knowledge and expertise was cinema and how literature is portrayed in the medium. Charles Dickens on the Screen was written as a result of this interest.

Michael Pointer also studied and researched Grantham’s industrial history, producing two volumes on the engineering company, Ruston and Hornsby, and The Rise and Fall of Aveling-Barford published in 1998. His death, in December last year, was a great loss in the local history world, but his contribution, especially in Grantham, has been tremendous.

THE DUKE OF RUTLAND

The death occurred at the beginning of the year of Charles John Robert Manners, tenth Duke of Rutland. Although outside the county, the Manners family have had Lincolnshire interests and estates in the county over the years. The Bloxholm estate was bought by Elizabeth, second wife of John, second Duke of Rutland (1676-1721) after his death, and it remained in the family until 1828. General Robert Manners made alterations to Bloxholm church in 1812/13 including erecting the coat of arms in Coade stone over the porch.

The ninth Duke of Rutland, in the 1920s, was something of an antiquarian. He collected medieval floor tiles from the monastic site at Belvoir and the site of Newbo Abbey, a Premonstratensian house at Sedgebrook. Many of these decorated tiles are on show at Belvoir, although some are mixed together. There is also a splendid effigy of a priest from Newbo, with such unusually stylised drapery that it might be a twentieth century work. It is in the chapel area and well worth seeing.

JEREMY ELWES

Captain Jeremy Elwes of Elsham Hall, near Brigg, died earlier this year. Following a distinguished and varied military career during the Second World War, some of it in Intelligence, the SAS and in Yugoslavia and Albania, he was one of the first people to develop his estate into a country and wildlife park, whose many attractions are now well known. Some of the sensitively converted traditional estate buildings have won awards.

He was High Sheriff of Lincolnshire in 1962, and in the 1970s, when Local Government was being reorganised, he won a fight to prevent the abolition of the ancient office of Sheriff and went on to found the Shrievalty Association. He will perhaps be best remembered by the local history fraternity as the prime mover and chairman of the Lincolnshire Association for the Arts and Heritage. This Association funded a number of heritage projects including Gill Harden’s important survey of medieval Boston and its archaeological implications, and Jenny Alexander’s study of paintings in Lincolnshire churches.

The Association was a major influence in the formation of the Museum of Lincolnshire Life (not forgetting also the bygones collection formed by SLHAs predecessors). The subsequent dropping of the heritage aspect of the organisation to bring it in line with other arts associations, was a disappointment to many.

St Wulfram’s Church, Grantham: North porch, with former chapel of St Katharina and Grantham House in the background. From a photo by Michael Pointer.
Tales of Irby on Humber

IRBY TOP FARM, IRBY on HUMBER, Mr LACEBY, LINCS

Ruby M. Clark

Dad was a farm foreman all his working days, and we arrived at Irby Top on April 6, c.1926. Mam and Dad stood outside waiting for us to go and have a look at the rooms. There were four bedrooms, one sitting room, two kitchens, and one large pantry and a stock room. The wash house, coal house and toilet were all outside.

There were chickens in the stack yard. My brothers and sister and I would find eggs in the crews and stacks. Mam had two hamper baskets that held 500 eggs each basket. Then Mr Sargeant would take the eggs to Grimsby Market on Mondays.

Children under eleven went to Irby school, but it was very difficult for kept Percy, and any more of us that would be going when we left Irby school.

The side roads were very bad in the early days. The wheels of the prams were made of steel; they did rattle on the old chalk road. People wore large hats, and their skirts were trailing on the ground. The house we rented stood near a big wood and a large field with ponds and trees in it. The field belonged to the Cow Cottages of Irby, and as my brothers grew older, they would take the cows to the village to be milked. Every cow knew which cow stable to go to. The boys would get a shilling or two a week, and one kind lady would give them breakfast, as they left home about four in could paddle, and my brothers made themselves some fishing rods. Also Mam and Dad had a truck made, put a pillow and cushions inside and made it cozy for one of the younger ones to come with us. We sat Wilfred on the grass. He yelled at the top of his voice so we took him home. I thought he was frightened of the lovely dragon flies, but he had been stung by the bumblebees, whose nest we had sat him on. We were all very upset for him.

Two ladies from the village came to see us one night, Mrs Thomas and her daughter-in-law, to invite us to go to the Primitive Methodist Chapel. We started Sunday School, going to the Church Sunday School first, and then on to the Primitive Methodist Chapel, which stood at the top of Lacey Hill. We felt we were miles from home. On the way to Sunday School I called at one of the cottages to take another little boy with us; his name was Charley Padison. My name was 'Little Mother'. I was the third eldest in a family of eleven, so you can see how

This photograph from the Scunthorpe Evening Telegraph of 22 October 1954 is of Washingdale Farm, Irby upon Humber, and gives an impression of the childhood haunts of Ruby M. Clark

children over eleven years. Mam sent my late brother Percy to laceby school, but Mr Drosset, the schoolmaster, sent him home. So the next day Mam sent Percy to Hatcliffe school, but yet again he was sent home. So Mam sent Percy to Swallow school. Now the headmistress soon

the morning. Then at night they did the same. We all used to have a good time playing in the woods. The wood was high with bracken, so if we saw the gamekeeper coming we would get hidden, and I can say we never got caught. We found ourselves a lovely spring where we we all loved each other. Mr and Mrs Farmey and Mr and Mrs Plasket were always very kind to us, beside other people. Dad and Mam stayed eleven years at Irby, Mr Stepnall was our grocer and our minister was called the Rev W. Sayers. He was very kind, and we
all loved to talk to him. When we had our Chapel Anniversary, we would have a large tea and an outing to Cleethorpes. We loved watching the sea come in and we loved a ride on the donkeys. No one had much money to spend in those days. When Father fetched us home, we were all ready to go to bed.

One night we were all having our teas when there was a terrible noise outside. An aeroplane came past the living room window. We all rushed out of the house and saw the plane taking all the hedges as it went along. Then we saw it land in the middle of a stubble field on Mr. Wilson's land, near the main road at Irby. We were all too excited and to see a plane on the ground was marvellous. I don't think the pilot got out of the cockpit. We could not make him understand when he had come down. Mr. Wilson and a lot of men got together and pushed the plane until it flew on its own. The wings were only made of cotton material. I should think it would be about 1927.

We had guinea fowl in the stack yard. They laid good eggs and always slept in the hedges. They were always calling 'come back, come back'. When we went to school we often used to see the wild geese in a large V shape coming inland. They used to be calling out like mad. Such a lovely sound, any time of the day.

In the harvest holidays we used to go breaming a lot in Irby Holmes Wood. Mam would always make bramble and apple jam and plenty of pies. Then Uncle Jim and Auntie Eva who lived in Grimsby used to bring us a straw bag full of fish.

One summer night we were sitting on the roadside reading our comics. Tiger Tim and Rainbow when we saw the queerest object coming up the road. It was a horse pulling a cart with a roof on it and all decorated up. It stopped in front of us and turned out to be an ice cream cart from Lacey. So we fetched Mam and Dad, who bought us all cones at a halfpenny each, and Mam and Dad had a twopenny sandwich. Then Mr. Allsop called every week to see us with his ice cream.

Then there was the time when workmen arrived on Mr. Osmond's land and started building large electric pylons, stretching from Grimsby to Lincoln. We used to sit on the bankside watching the men for hours. We did not have any drinking water in the house, but one of the workmen would take a large barrel on two cartwheels and with a pair of shafts for a horse to pull it. We had the barrel filled up once a week, but we had plenty of soft water to wash with and keep everything clean. Then there was a large pump that supplied the whole village. We used to love to help pump water. Our village blacksmith was a very happy man; he used to go post our house every Sunday morning. He would always be singing his favourite hymns. He used to sing and preach at Hatchlefe Chapel.

In the harvest holidays we would go bucking. I used to have one young brother sitting in the truck, and I fastened some of my younger brothers to the truck with binder band, and they acted as my spare horses. They would kick over the tracers and get ruffled up in the binder band. Our time went so quickly. When we went to Irby School we took a short cut across a grass field that had cows and a bull in it. My brothers would shout, 'Put your beret under your coat, Ruby'. We thought the bull might run us, but it never did.

The Irby Wood was noted for its bluebells, violets and primroses and all sorts of wildlife. Dad used to tell us about tramps who slept in the horse stables or anywhere that had straw in at night. When asked, some would go straight away, others would get nasty. Dad and the two men were out in the fields working the land, and harvesting in the summer holiday. We took the men a hot dinner consisting of boiled bacon, cabbage and new potatoes, and a good milk pudding and a milk can full of tea. All the men who helped in the yard used to come and help in the harvest fields. A team of horses kept being taken back to the stables for a feed and rest. The horses were wonderful to pull a heavy binder all day and part of the night. We all loved horses and Dad always saw to it that the horses were looked after and fed well.

Mr. Button kept the cycle shop at Lacey, in fact Lacey got to be very busy. Our post lady came from there (in all weathers Miss Ruth Plumtree would bring the letters). My sister Hilda and eldest brother Percy, and Herbert and I started work in service while at Irby Top. At night we stayed till it was dark in the village. We had about two miles to walk, but the River Humher, not far away, was all lit up. The tugs were busy escorting the travellers to Grimsby Dock - and what a booming row they used to make! I must close now and say all the best for such happy early memories.

Ruby M. Clark 4 Sept 1999.
buildings of the twentieth century

Sleaford Picturedrome - built 1920 - it is still showing films at the time of writing, but its future is uncertain. It may be the only 1920s cinema left in the county.

The Regal Cinema, Gainsborough - built 1924, photographed c.1963 - now demolished
Thoroton and SLHA - a joint event

1999 is the 25th anniversary of the Society for Lincolnshire History and Archaeology in its present form. As part of the celebrations, a joint event was organised with the Thoroton Society of Nottinghamshire. This took place on Saturday, 12 June. A vast number of Thorotonians braved the crossing of the River Trent into foreign parts. Despite the cold and clear, brisking air of 'Up Town' Lincoln, which they were patently unused to, the day was a great success.

The day started with an introduction by the Chairman of both the Thoroton Society and SLHA's History of Lincolnshire Committee, Professor John V. Beckett. This took place in St Mary Magdalene Church, the parish church of Bailgate, Lincoln. Church Warden Mrs Shirley Brooks, gave a succinct account of the history of the church and its relationship with the cathedral. Professor Beckett then divided the company into two as the numbers were so great.

Mr Michael Credland gave a detailed lecture on First World War memorials, illustrated by over 80 slides. 'Lost we forget' is a hackneyed phrase, but he was truly upholding this in Lincolnshire. Every memorial told heartbreaking tales. For example, Mrs Peak at Sleaford lost three sons and for this dubious 'honour' she was asked to unveil the town's war memorial in the Market Place. Another family, in Lincoln, had lost five sons. The grief behind the names on the inscription is unimaginable. My parents told me that one reason every village, town and city had a war memorial was that, at the end of 'the war to end all wars', the mood of the general population was near to riot as the realisation of the sheer waste of young lives sank in. The memorials were a sop to the seething mass of discontent with the political leaders of the time. A guided tour of the Cathedral Close followed, given by Trudy who not only has the pleasure of living in the close, but also knows all there is to know about its history. Trudy led us round from the Vicars' Choral Estate to Pottergate Arch and back to Exchequer Gate. The Vicars' Court is a quiet oasis in the close. The ancient dwellings stand on a south-facing slope above Lincoln's vineyard, with views over the Witham Gap. But Trudy said they often lay empty as tenants could not be found. What is the catch? Maybe there is nowhere to park the car. I could easily be persuaded to abandon my own vehicle for such a panoramic view!

Two long-standing and distinguished SLHA members, Miss Flora Murray and Mrs Eleanor Bennett, allowed me to share their company at lunch, after which we foraged in the Wren Library over the north cloister of Lincoln Cathedral. Here Dr Nicholas Bennett, the vice Chancellor and Cathedral Librarian, talked about its history and some of the magnificent treasures that are on its shelves. Although Wren designed the library it is thought that he never visited it. Wren tried to soften the long rectangular effect by breaking the line of the walls. The bookshelves he placed on one wall only. Opposite is a magnificent set of windows so aligned as never to allow sunshine to fall on the books.

The 270 manuscripts in the collection are in safe keeping in the Hallward Library at the University of Nottingham. About 8000 pre 1801 printed books are arranged by size on seven rows of shelves. Michael Honywood, Dean of Lincoln (1660-1681), gave two-thirds of this total, but sadly for Honywood, Wren is better known. Being a librarian I enjoyed this part exceedingly, but was concerned to hear there is no subject index. I guess it is the case that Dr Bennett is the human subject index. He knows the stock so well.

From the Bailgate area we descended Steep Hill to Jew's Court for a welcome buffet tea organised by SLHA Secretary, Mrs Maureen Birch. We listened to a short history of this superb HQ of the SLHA. Professor Beckett gave a vote of thanks. It was good to see so many people at an event. Belonging to both societies I had no excuse for not attending. I learned a great deal about a part of Lincoln I thought I knew well. Our thanks go to Neville Birch for organising such a happy day. Maybe a return visit can be arranged to darkest Nottinghamshire. Perhaps to include items like a trip round Nottingham Castle site (caves and all), visiting the 'Trip to Jerusalem', Brewhouse Yard and perhaps a talk on who exactly was this guy, Thoroton?

Lincoln Blimp

In June the BBC used a mini airship high up inside Lincoln Cathedral to get pictures for a series to be presented by Janet Street-Porter next year. For outside shots they used a little helicopter with a mounted camera, known as a bowern. The famous limp will be shown but researcher Rebecca Cole-Morgan told the Lincolnshire Echo that they were 'not concentrating on that' because they feel 'the city and the cathedral have a lot more to offer'.

Launch of a major new book

P. Everson and D. A. Stecker. Corpus of Anglo-Saxon Stone Sculpture. Volume 5, Lincolnshire. OUP 1999. At £103 it will probably be a library reference book for most of us. The authors are well known on the Lincolnshire academic scene and the series is produced under the general editorship of Professor Rosmary Cramp of Durham University.
City & County Museum

Following an enjoyable day at Bishop Grosseteste College to pay tribute to the late Tom Baker, it was clear there was a pressing need to make greater efforts to urge the County Council to progress plans for a new City and County Museum.

The Society for Lincolnshire History and Archaeology (SLHA) invited representatives from that meeting to Jews' Court to formulate plans for action. This Action Group has met three times. Bodies represented are SLHA, The University of Lincolnshire and Humberside, De Montfort University, Bishop Grosseteste College, Friends of Lincoln Museums and Art Gallery, Friends of Lincoln Castle, Lincoln Civic Trust, Lincoln Society, Lincolnshire Naturalists Union, FLARE, Lindsey Archaeological Services, and representatives from outside the county.

A matter for real concern has been the lack of a statement as to the requirements, status and targets of the new museum. The Action Group has produced a position statement, which has been forwarded to County and City Councillors to help them in their deliberations. The Action Group is most grateful to our Vice-President, Mrs Catherine Wilson, for her work on this. Representatives of the group have met councillors and officers of the County Council and councillors of the City Council to put forward the group's views. There has also been an audience with the city's MP, Gillian Merron.

During May and June the Lord Consultancy company, which produced a survey advising that the St Cuthbert's site was the best site, and a second survey to assess the suitability of the Castle, has been looking at sites by the Brayford and Great Firs. Their report is awaited. The Action Group will meet again in the hope of being able to study the report and has plans to meet the chairman of the Cultural Services sub-committee to discuss it.

It is expected that the County Council will make a final decision on the site for the City and County Museum in September.

Ed Whealton. 26 May 1999

At the end of June The Independent declared that the public were 'bored' by the 'new wave' of museums, established with lottery funding, in what the newspaper describes as a serious overestimation of people's interest in them. The article was prompted by news that some, like the National Coal Mining Museum, Wakefield, and The Earth Centre, Doncaster, were getting far fewer visitors than they had expected. Presumably the Lincoln museum will not be such a project, but what are readers' thoughts about the City and County museums in general? Remember that Sleaford too has been frustrated in its attempt to re-establish one in the town.

You may have missed...

In the Gentleman's Magazine for 1801 a letter to Mr Urban from J.C.

Passing through the village of Kirkby-on-Bain, a few weeks ago, in an excursion to Tattershall Castle, I was struck with the odd appearance of the parish-church, and on being informed it was shortly to be taken down and rebuilt, I was resolved to have a drawing made of it, which I thought might not be unacceptable to you. [The drawing does not appear in the volume. The letter goes on with a description of the church after which appear the following:]

As to some other curiosities, for which this place was once distinguished, I shall refer you to a conversation which I was told, passed some years ago between a farmer of this parish and the diocesan.

It was at a visitation; when the farmer expressed an earnest desire to be admitted to speak to the bishop, and refused to mention his business till he was in his presence. Being at length introduced into the room where the clergy were assembled, and having made his bow, the bishop desired to know, what great matter of importance he had to communicate. "I thought it necessary to inform your Lordship," said the farmer, "if you happen to come our way, that there are six things in our parish well worth your notice." The bishop thanked the honest man for his intelligence, and begged to know what they were. "They are," continued he, "a wooden steeple; a stone pulpit; a presbytery parson; a clerk who is a whore, two drunken churchwardens; and, please you, my Lord, (making a very low bow,) I am one of 'em."

[An editorial note explains that it is not unusual to have female parish clerks in some parts of this county!]

Douglas Boyce

Graduation Day

The first full graduates from the University of Lincolnshire and Humberside (Lincoln campus) took place on Thursday, 8 July at Lincoln Cathedral. About three hundred people received their degrees, thus making important history for the city. The university was opened in Lincoln in 1996 after years of planning.

Images of England

Photographers are being called on to create a huge picture library of every listed building in England. It is hoped that 360,000 pictures will be available on the Internet by 2002. It will also be possible to buy CD-ROM and hard-copy extracts, and access to the pictures can be made through the National Monuments Record Public Search Rooms at Swindon and London. To take part you need to join the Royal Photographic Society who are co-ordinating it. A discount is currently available for anyone joining to take part. Telephone 01225 310363. If you would like to join the images of England and National Monuments Record's mailing list, telephone 01793 414779 or visit the Images of England website at www.imagesofengland.org.uk
BOOK SHELF
This section aims to list all new titles with as many short reviews as space permits. Some items will be included based on notes culled from trade bibliographies; not all publishers supply review copies. It is hoped that readers will be glad to know of a title's existence. The Reviews Editor would be glad to have notes from members of SLHA of items published in their locality.


The reappearance of this seminal text is to be greatly welcomed. When it appeared in 1954 it opened up a completely new area of academic study, involving the use of archives, the study of cartography and, primarily, archaeology allied to the newly developing production and increasing availability of aerial photographs of potential sites. The only previous seriously researched study of the lost villages of an English county had appeared in 1924 as part of the Lincoln Record Society series of volumes. Then Canon Foster added his invaluable appendix on extinct villages in the county to the study of the Lincolnshire Domesday and Lindsey Survey prepared with Canon Longley. It was more than twenty years after that before W. G. Hoskins produced his study of Leicestershire villages and this area of research received a further push. It is undoubtedly owing to Beresford's work that the bringing together of such varied academic disciplines led to so much further activity including an increased production of larger and more detailed county lists and studies of sites spread over an ever-increasing range of areas.

Apart from the thrust that Beresford's general approach to this activity gave, his book provided the first wide-ranging lists of lost villages county by county. Four fifths of the original book comprised an introduction to the topic, a discussion of methodology and a large number of case studies based on a wide experience of field work. The final fifth of the volume yielded the list of extinct or lost villages and a variety of analytical tables that have provided the impetus for a vast amount of fresh study.

The publishers have now put in our hands the original text, to make it the more usable by present-day students, a very comprehensive essay with notes by Professor Christopher Dyer of Birmingham University. In sixteen pages he surveys the developments since 1954 and, amusingly, the not wholly favourable feeling that Beresford's book initially aroused; he recounts how his personal, engaging and accessible style... reflected the excitement of discovery and... how research was done' and led to his own youthful studies. In ending he writes that the book was the 'starting point for so much new work' and his thirty-six footnotes list well over a hundred studies of a multitude of approaches to this new work in the intervening years.

Not the least pleasure from handling this new edition comes from the publishers using a copy of the original text to prepare a book with an excellent large and clear type set on generously sized pages. Although paperback it is sturdy bound and, at a very good price for such quality, the book should inspire future generations to follow up what has already been achieved.

R. A. Carroll, Quading


Many books have been written about World War II flying, most of them of specialist interest, but this latest production is a book that can be enjoyed by everyone. It is about the many aircraft that crashed in the Lincolnshire countryside during the war. The author draws on his many years of hands-on experience with the Lincolnshire Aircraft Recovery Group, a dedicated band of enthusiasts who, with the greatest respect, research and excavate crashed aircraft. The book contains lots of photographs and is a truly fascinating read. I read it in one sitting the moment it came into my hands. One lady, having read the book, said she felt like going out immediately to visit the many crash sites covered. The book is available from the SLHA shop at £5.50.

John Williams, Lincoln

CAMERON, Kenneth John. A Dictionary of Lincolnshire Place-names; with contributions by John Isley, Nottingham, English Place-Name Society, Dept of English Studies, Nottingham University, NG7 2RD, 1998. (English Place-Name Society: Popular Series, Volume 1). xxviii, 157pp ISBN 0 9648859 5 0. £30 hbk or £11.95 pbk. (If ordered direct from the Society: Members: £11 including p&p; non-members should add £1 for p&p for the paperback; £20 and £30 incl respectively for the hardback).

Lincolnshire people should be proud that this county has been chosen as the first volume in a new popular series from the above society. As the title page explains, it is a guide to the major place-names of the whole [historic, as some would say county, making available the fruits of Prof. Cameron's 35 years' research into the county's place-names. In fact it includes many hamlets and lesser settlements that never made it to EKwall's Oxford Dictionary. Thus I was delighted to find Burtford, and the earliest references to Great Tows and to be reassured that Hubberts Bridge was not named after a Dane called Hubba. In future editions I look forward to Cleat (Surfleet/Gosberton) and Wykes (Donington). I am pleased to be corrected on 'ast', which I had always assumed to be Latin and meaning 'south' when it is really 'east'. The introduction includes notes on arrangement, pronunciation and abbreviations, and there is an especially useful section on the place-name elements. One error noted is the spelling of Crowland near the River Witham instead of the Woldland I was surprised that the spelling of Colbeach as Coalbeach (Surfleet) had reached any OS maps, as it is only about twenty years old. A printing error in the modern spelling of Skeckingham confuses the text, and Temple Bruer as Brewer I have never seen. But these details do not detract from the whole, which is a must for our local historians, and a very convenient size.

Hilary Healey, Bicker

This is a short book packed with information about the origins of the gunpowder industry and the way the business has changed and developed. In this country at least, finally died out. The author was one of three people who founded a national gunpowder mills study group in 1985. Every page has at least one very well produced photograph or reproduction of a print to countervail the authoritative text. There is a very useful bibliography, a list of places and museums to visit (including seven overseas) and finally, from the study group's Gazetteer, sites of industrial interest in the UK, complete with national grid references. For its price an attractive achievement. Ray Carroll


The author spent twenty-five years as a teacher at Stanford High School. It is a comprehensive and quite often amusing account of all aspects of the school from its beginnings in 1877 through the years to 1987. The book begins with an account of the financial and structural changes that have taken place over the years, followed by a short biography of each of the headmistresses who have been in office. A chapter on the teaching staff comes next. There is a section on the girls themselves and the backgrounds they originated from in the early days compared with today's pupils. A chapter on the way the curriculum and the uniform has changed over the years takes its place in the book, and also the Junior School and its evolution. The outside activities of the school also have their mention - charity work, school trips and holidays amongst them. Athletics sports days and swimming sports days are also featured. Careers followed by pupils on leaving the school and the Old Girls Guild bring the book to a close. The whole of the book is liberally sprinkled with black and white photographs, which give extra voice to the text, and I found this to be an altogether very informative and interesting book. Ann E. Turner, Stanford


This book sets out to tell the story of water supply in Lincoln from Roman times to the present day. The period up to 1846 (the Act of Parliament for Lincoln Waterworks Company) is thinly covered but thereafter the author gets into his stride on more familiar territory. He describes the building of the Hartholme and Bolingbam system of 1849 and its flawed expansion, which ultimately led to a typhoid epidemic. Although much has been written about the social aspects of the typhoid epidemic of 1905, this book is also strong on descriptions of the supply infrastructure and the measures that were taken during and after the epidemic. The author describes the building of the 1911 system. The construction of Elkesley pumping station, the Bracebridge Heath reservoir and Westgate water tower are all well covered, and there is a vivid description of the christening of the engines at Elkesley.

There are also chapters on sanitation, some operational aspects such as the maintenance of health standards, and the gradual introduction of water supply to Lincoln's outlying areas. The key personalities are not neglected either.

The completion of the 1911 system was not so much the end of the story of water in Lincoln but the beginning of a less well-known but equally important programme of development, which continues today to meet changing demands and standards. The author devotes a large part of his book to this period including the sad loss of the Elkesley steam engines, the development of the Newton site and the various organisational changes that have taken place. This book is written in a down-to-earth style by a practical man and, sadly, it suffers badly from a lack of editing. Nevertheless it is a valuable little book full of interest to a wide non-technical readership; it also carries a wonderful collection of illustrations. Chris Lester, Branston


The writer was born at Scunthorpe in 1926 and has set down family and other memories of life in the town during the years before and during the Second World War. He describes the hardships endured by working-class families and the social conditions that were the lot of many, particularly when lack of work or strikes reduced the family income. School days and sporting activities offer period interest and the author remembers vividly the various teachers who came his way as well as the names of characters of the time. Leaving school early and, after a couple of other jobs, Mr Quickfall (we never do learn what his forename is) makes good use of his cadet days and gets into the RAF for the last years of the war. The story ends with the writer about to join the Palestine Police Force. It is a readable tale and will prove of interest to readers interested in the author's birth place and life in the wartime RAF. Ray Carroll


Few local firms manage to survive in the direct family line for two centuries. The Society President, Mr David Robinson, has recorded one such experience. David is a native of Horncastle and has first hand experience of Crowder's Nurseries, first in the town and later in the neighbouring parish of Thimbleby.

The A4 booklets has a striking cover showing in colour the present garden centre and an excellent aerial view of the extensive nursery beds. The text follows the family fortunes from the founder, William Crowder, to the present managing director, Robert. This includes family and residential details as well as the development of the business, but perhaps the most notable feature is the abundance of illustrations and the design layout. Sketches, photographs and maps tell a story themselves and these are interspersed with advertisements from Morton's almanacs and other publications. This makes a very attractive and informative commemoration of one family's achievement over 200 years and still going strong. Pearl Wheatley, Lincoln

Mary Steele is an enthusiast. In 230 pages of a well presented and well illustrated softback, she guides us through the history of Lincolnshire and its sheep from Roman times to the present day. Dividing the book into four sections, she devotes the first three to historical, social, topographical and agroeconomic developments in Lincolnshire. In the fourth she concentrates on biography and personal acquaintance of the central figures in the history of the Lincoln Longwool and its Breeders Association.

The author has assembled an impressive base of information from her researches, and given the breadth of her remit, it is hardly surprising if the pace at which we are taken through the background sections is at times breakneck, nor that the narrative becomes on occasions somewhat disjointed and a little confused. There is ample compensation in the wealth of detail with which we are presented, and we begin to understand the varied topography and fluctuating economic and social developments that progressively moulded the Lincolnshire farming community and the sheep that formed the long term basis of their fortunes.

Our interest is maintained throughout, even when the basis on which a particular conclusion is drawn might seem somewhat arbitrary, and despite a feeling that space or time has here and there dictated only a superficial consideration of a particular topic. Woven through it is the gradual evolution of the Lincoln Longwool, and it is this which links and unites the text. It is not however until Mrs Steele considers the biography of the historical and present day characters who have been influential in the development of the Lincoln and its Breed Society that her true enthusiasm breaks free. Her style becomes warmer and more intimate, and particularly in her Postscript - a very personal and anecdotal account of her involvement with this sheep - we get a glimpse also of the character of a sheep that beguiles all those who own and breed it.

This is a very readable book, well prepared and presented with plentiful, well annotated photographs and illustrations by the author. It is a worthy celebration of two hundred years of Lincolnshire Longwools.

Dr Morgan, Spilsby

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BOOKS RECENTLY PUBLISHED - to be reviewed soon, we hope.


