1895 advertisement

Lincolnshire Books

Mablethorpe memories

Louth building society

Hiring fairs

City of Boston?

Magazine of the Society for Lincolnshire History & Archaeology
CONTENTS

Editorial
A note on an 1895 advertisement for a nostrum
Lincolnshire Books – a library publishing programme
Memories of Mablethorpe
A nostalgic evening
The M. O.'s report (original document) contributed by
Obituary
Factory booters
The Louth, Mablethorpe and Sutton Permanent Benefit Building Society
Statute or hiring fairs in Lincolnshire
A new City and County Museum in Lincoln
The City of Boston?
Bookshelf

Peter S. Richards 2
Eleanor Nannestad 3
J. E. Swaby 7
Pearl Wheatley 8
Douglas Boyce 9
Jerry Lewis 10
Peter Stevenson 11
Tony E. Merriman 12
C. T. Mackinder 13
Pearl Wheatley 16
John Beckett 17

Lincolnshire Past & Present Editors: Hilary Healey, Ros Bevers
Reviews Editor: Ray Carroll Production Editor: Ros Bevers

The deadline for contributions to the next Bulletin and the Winter issue of Lincolnshire Past & Present is 11 May 2002. Material should be sent to the Joint Editors at Jews' Court, Lincoln LN2 1JS. It will help the Editors if articles are sent typed, double spaced, and with a good margin. They may be sent on disk – this is very helpful – if they are Word for Windows/compatible files.

Cover picture: The Parish Clerk painted by James William Wilson, Lincolnshire
EDITORIAL

This year has been a sad one in respect of the death of members who have been active contributors to the Society for Lincolnshire History and Archaeology and to its activities and publications. They will all be missed, and we send sympathy to friends and relatives. A tribute to Fred Felstead appears in this number.

News of Jim English's death arrived too late for inclusion, but there will be something in the Bulletin, so that we do not have to leave it until the winter number. Jim sent regular contributions to Lincolnshire Past & Present. The editors always welcome recollections about past members, including accounts of the Society's activities in past years. Please send pictures if you can!

As usual we have a mixed bag of tricks this issue, including some from regular writers, and some we have not heard from before, so we hope there will be something for everybody. There are still a few articles submitted for our 2000 competition which are yet to be published; we have benefited a great deal from this event, and are grateful to everyone who entered!

Just lately we seem to be getting somewhat fewer Notes and Queries from readers, so this time they are scattered around as 'fillers'. Perhaps we could revive the 'Mystery Picture'? Now that good quality photocopies can be so easily produced no one need send away precious originals anymore.

Talking of photographs, as we approach winter it seems that we do not hear many seasonal stories, or see many seasonal photographs. I can remember that the early numbers of Lincolnshire Life used to have regular photographic competitions. No doubt the passing of the black and white photo (well, almost, as far as general magazines go) has something to do with this. I regularly see The Countryman magazine, which used to have excellent photographic 'essays', records of architectural features etc. These seem to have been scrapped even though that magazine is recovering from a rather unsettled period - my description!

For those who read editorials I hope this will give you some ideas, and we look forward to hearing from you.

Hilary Healey, Joint Editor
A note on an 1895 advertisement for a nostrum

Peter S. Richards

A WESLEYAN

Local Preacher writes from Stockton-on-Tees—"For 10 years I have been a Martyr to INDIGESTION AND LIVER COMPLAINT.

My sufferings were intense, and almost incessant. The local Doctors gave up my case as hopeless, and told me I suffered from Chronic Indigestion, and must bear it as best I could. Seeing an Advertisement of

PAGE WOODCOCK'S WIND PILLS,

I resolved, almost despairingly, to give them a trial. The results are little short of a miracle. The pain has entirely left me, and I now enjoy the best of health. No mere words can express the gratitude I feel. Publish my statement world-wide, if you please, but not my name and address; give these to all inquirers, and refer them to me."

All sufferers from indigestion, liver complaints, wind on the stomach, costiveness, sick head, heartburn, nervous debility, palpitation of the heart, biliousness, &c., should try this most excellent medicine.

A 2oz. WIND PILLS being Purely Vegetable, Tasteless, and Mild, and Tonic in their action, may be taken with perfect safety by the most delicate of either sex.

From the Methodist Recorder of Christmas 1895

This advertisement (see Fig 1) for a 'nostrum' or 'cure all' appeared in the Methodist Recorder, the Wesleyan Methodist Newspaper in winter 1895. It sold for one old penny. A comparison of advertising costs: 1895 and 2002. In 1895 the Methodist Recorder cost one old penny. Today it is 60 pence. This works out at 144 times as much. The cost of this advertisement in 1895 was £7.48. [pre-decimal currency - £7.20 in decimal currency]. Today a similar advert would be £700 plus VAT, making a total of £832.50, which is 115 times as much.

Advertising as a proportion of the cost of the paper to the customer is lower in 2002 than in 1895. It must be remembered, however, that circulation is considerably higher and modern technology has reduced the costs of typesetting and printing. It is unlikely that the Methodist Recorder or any other newspaper would publish an advertisement like that of 1895 today. The next part will suggest why not. This advertisement in the light of recent legislation quite simply would be unenforceable. There are at least three relevant Acts of Parliament and a European Community Directive [98/22/EEC] with which failure to comply is a criminal offence punishable by a fine or imprisonment.

The three Acts of Parliament are firstly the Food Safety Act of 1990, which controls the description, labelling, advertising and specific claims concerning the properties of food. Secondly, the Medicines Act of 1968 defining what are medical products and provides controls for their production, labelling and advertising; the provisions of this legislation are enforced by the Medicines' Control Agency. Thirdly, there is the Trade Descriptions Act also of 1968. Each of the first two pieces of legislation relates to misdescriptions or false adverts dealing with food or medicine. It may be that this product fails to fall neatly into the definitions of food or medicine, in which case action may be taken under the Trade Descriptions Act, which prohibits the misdescription of goods.

The Advertising Standards Authority Code of Practice ensures that all advertisements should be legal, decent, honest and truthful. In relation to this advertisement the detailed provisions apply relating to medicines and health and beauty products and therapies. If an advertiser continued to publish misleading adverts in the face of ASA advice to amend or discontinue it could face injunctive action under the provisions of the Control of Misleading Advertising Regulations by the Office of Fair Trading. Obviously there is much legislation aimed at protecting the consumer.

The Medicines Act of 1968 and its regulations, as well as regulations implementing European Community Directive 92/28/EEC, govern the
advertising and promotion of medicines and the conditions of ill-health that they can offer to treat. Guidance on the legislation is available from the Medicines Control Agency [MCA].

Medicines must have a marketing authorisation from the MCA before they are advertised and any claims made to products with the authorisation. Unauthorised products should not make medical claims.

Advertisements should include the name of the product, an indication of what it is for, text such as ‘Always read the label!’ and the common name of any active ingredients, even if there is only one. There should be no suggestion that any medicine is either a food or a cosmetic.

Advertisers must not use fear or anxiety to promote medicines or recovery from illness and should not suggest that using or avoiding a product can affect normal good health.

Illustrations of the effect or action of any product should be accurate.

Advertisements for medicine should not be addressed to children.

Advertisers should not use health professionals or celebrities to endorse medicines.

Advertisements for any medicine should not claim that the effects are as good as or better than those of another identifiable product are.

Clearly the advert under consideration would not meet or would directly contravene many of these provisions.

*The Wind Pills of Page Woodcock* and a note about the firm

A dose of medicine

Nostrums and ‘cure all’s have been in common use throughout time. John Wesley, in his book, *PrimitivePhysic*, lists a ‘Collection of Receipts’ of recipes. One of his commonest recommendations is to take cold water. Cold baths are often advised. Sometimes he claims to have tried out some of his receipts eg his cure for baldness: rub the part morning and evening with onions till it is red and rub it afterwards with honey; or wash with a decoction of boxwood. As John Wesley usually wore a wig we don’t know how effective it was.

One of John Wesley’s favourite remedies was to use electricity, the nearest one gets to a universal medicine, especially in nervous cases, of which he was a pioneer. At times he strongly advocates sending for a good doctor.

At one time it was common for chemists to make up their own prescriptions, but the need to comply with extensive and expensive legislation has made this practice less popular.

Page Woodcock was born in Lincoln in 1854. When he was 14 his family moved to Norwich, where he found employment in a laboratory. He married a Norfolk girl but the couple settled in Lincoln about 1880 where he set up business as a chemist and patent medicine manufacturer at 312 High Street, opposite St Benedict Square.

It was there that he produced a popular remedy for flatulence, the ingredients of which, according to an old

Site of Woodcock’s shop in Lincoln High Street today - still a chemist’s!
The recipe book were:
- Extract of gentian (10 drachmas)
- Camomile (seven drachmas)
- Rhubarb (four drachmas)
- Powdered ginger (two drachmas)
- Ipecacuana (one and a half drachmas)
- Castile soap in powder (four drachmas)
- Oil of aniseed (20 drops)
- Oil of peppermint (20 drops)

This had to be made 'into a mass and divided into three and a half grain pills'.

The advertisement claims that these pills were purely vegetable, tasteless and mild, tonic in their action and could be taken with perfect safety by the most delicate of either sex. At 1/11/6d and 2/9 [presumably for a larger amount] they were not cheap. Not only the 'Local Preacher from Stockton-on-Tees [these wind pills had a wide circulation] but many others attested to their effectiveness.

In a book, More Secret Remedies, What they cost and what they contain [1912] based on analyses made by the British Medical Association [p98] there is half a page about Page Woodcock’s Wind Pills. The price of a box of 32 pills was still the same, is 11/6d (deceptively cheaper than 2s). They are described in a circular enclosed in the package as 'The most effective Medicine yet discovered for the Prevention and Cure of Disease'.

The list is even longer than in the advertisement in the Methodist Recorder a few years earlier. In all cases of Indigestion, Liver Complaints, Blisterness, Constipation, Palpitation, Debility, Anaemia, Irregularities [of passing faces?], Bad Assimilation [unable to digest food?], Wind in the Stomach and Bowels, Spasms, Heartburn, Giddiness, Disturbed Slumbers, Piles, Toothache, Neuralgia etc [what else?].

They will be taken with the following directions effect a positive and permanent cure in the most stubborn and deep-rooted cases. The directions in various cases are from three to nine pills to be taken daily.

There follows a description of the pills, which is more or less the same as recorded above. Interestingly, however, the description concludes by saying ‘No mercury or calomel [a mercury chloride formerly used as a purgative] was present’. This was important; mercury, in anything but extremely minute quantities is a deadly poison, and it gives off poisonous fumes. It was used in some medicines. This statement would reassure purchasers that these pills contained no harmful substances.

Despite (or perhaps because of) the fact he shared the premises with others such as a printing office, butcher, artificial teeth manufacturer, musical instrument dealer and the Church of England Waifs Society, he prospered. So much so that by 1895 he was concentrating on the manufacture of patent medicines and ceased, apparently, to be a chemist and druggist. His prosperity enabled him to buy a

Woodcock’s former house ‘Lothair’ as it is today in St Catherines, Lincoln
house in St Catherine's, Lincoln, named Lothair and he was described as managing director. In 1906 he went to Wemblay where he built a housing estate, giving the names Lincoln, Scarle, Bassingham, Eagle, Thurlby, Swinderby and Morton to the roads. These roads still exist.

The firm must have been a family concern and remained in business; at least as late as 1955 when the recipe for the wind pills, similar to the one above, is given in The Extra Pharmacopoeia Vol 2. The address is given as 'London' but whether the firm had moved there or whether the patent was registered there is not clear. There are, however, some confusing names - the 'Horner Page Woodcock' appears to have been the one who has been the subject of this article, but in one directory the firm is described as 'Page Dowing Woodcock'. The Dowing may well have been the father and founder of the business. He was a patent medicine vendor in 1857 when Horner Page Woodcock would have only been three years old. Finally there is an obituary tribute to a Mr W. Page Woodcock, 'Uncle Reg', the author of children's stories. He died, 80 years old, on 17 September 1934 at his home in Hornsey, North London. This would be the Page Woodcock who was born in 1854. The tribute states that he had been 'for many years in the patent medicine business in the City of Lincoln. He was a Councillor for the Park Ward of Lincoln from 1900 to 1906 when he left the City. He was a Methodist Local Preacher and served that church for over 60 years; he frequently returned to Lincoln and preached in the village churches of that County. He was in his later life a member of the Old Hornsey Philosophers and regularly attended their meetings where topical affairs of the district were discussed.'

In view of his religious and denominational leanings it is not surprising he advertised in the Methodist Recorder. He would seem to have been an honest entrepreneur so typical of Wesleyan Methodism.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Eleanor Nannestad, Community Librarian - Information, Lincoln Central Library
Caroline M. Reed, Museum Curator, Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain

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The launch of Mid Victorian Sleaford at Wetholme, Sleaford, in 1981. Left to right: Councillor Ralph Bennett Chairman of Lincolnshire County Council, Charles Ellis author, Harold Nadin Vice-chairman of Library Sub-committee, Ray Carroll County Librarian. Photograph supplied by Mr R. A. Carroll.
Lincolnshire Books - a library publishing programme

Back in 1977, the late Jim English, then Senior Librarian, Stock and Services with Lincolnshire Library Service, suggested that the Library Service should publish a booklet to commemorate the 250th anniversary of Sir Isaac Newton's death. The senior management team of the Library Service (formed in April 1974 from the constituent local authorities that came together at local government reorganisation to form Lincolnshire) felt this was a good idea and asked him to go ahead and write one, which he did, completing the first draft in a single weekend. It was duly launched at the opening of the Newton exhibition at Grantham Town Hall one Friday evening - but these attending were unaware that the printers had been very late supplying the copies, delivering them only hours before the launch, and causing much apprehension to Jim and his library colleagues.

This event marked the launch, not only of Jim's 32-page book, *And all was Light*, but also of Lincolnshire Library Service's publishing programme, later known as 'Lincolnshire Books', which produced volumes on many aspects of local interest at irregular intervals over the next 20 years. The following year, 1978, saw the publication of *Bomber County*, by Terry Hancock, then head of the Schools and Children’s Library Service. This was to be the best seller of the entire series, attracting interest from all over the English speaking world, particularly from ex-service men and women who had been stationed in Lincolnshire. Terry had wondered if the initial print run of 3000 copies was over ambitious, but the books sold rapidly and reprints had to be commissioned. At one stage a representative was contracted to market it worldwide. Lincolnshire County Council generously presented copies to all the local RAF stations, and Terry attended numerous signing sessions.

As well as publishing a book, Terry was also responsible for introducing a phrase into popular vocabulary: it is believed that the title of his book is the first use of the expression 'Bomber County', now commonly used to describe Lincolnshire with its RAF connections. Following this volume's publication, Terry received much correspondence on RAF history, some of which he was able to use in the sequel, *Bomber County: 2*, launched at the Coningsby Bookshop in 1985, and also a steady seller.

After works by other library staff (*Lincolnshire in 1880*, fascinating extracts from the *Stamford Mercury* newspaper compiled by Lynn Tasker, and *Richard William Goulding: a handlist* by Kathleen Jefferson), there followed *Mid-Victorian Slagford 1851-1871*, the results of research by a local WEA class, edited by their tutor, Charles Ellis. Ray Carroll, who was County Librarian at the time, and present at the launch, recalls that this was the first book of its kind in the world with a machine readable barcode linked to its price - surely a candidate for the Shell Book of Firsts?

Others followed on a variety of subjects, some by library staff such as Laurence Elvin, and others by authoritative local authors, including Rex and Eleanor Russell, Hilary Healey and Malcolm Knapp. There was no 'house style', the volumes varying in size, length and cover design, with similarities only between companion volumes, such as the Russell series on enclosure, which all feature Rex's clear and accurate drawings on the covers. Authors such as the Russells were pleased to be given considerable editorial freedom. Everyone was delighted when their *Old and New Landscapes in the Horncastle Area* won the 1986 Altna Ball Award, a national award for local history books published by local authority library departments.

Along with some other library authorities, Lincolnshire teamed up with the publishers Wheaton Books, in the late 1980s, but Wheaton later pulled out of this market, so Lincolnshire County Council's Recreational Services and later Education and Cultural Services departments continued the publishing programme, now designated 'Lincolnshire Books'.

Book launches took place in a variety of local venues, including the Airman's Chapel in Lincoln Cathedral (Lest We Forget), Edward King House (Lincolnshire Women), the Usher Art Gallery (Sedition, Insurrection and Invasion), Oldrid's department store in Boston (A Fenland Glossary), Market Rasen Library (Land, People and Landscapes) and Lincoln Railway Station (Lincolnshire Railways).

My personal favourite is *Land, People and Landscapes: Essays on the History of the Lincolnshire Region in Honour of Rex C. Russell*. As well as being well produced, with a beautiful cover showing detail from an 1810 engraving of the Humber, it contains essays on a wide variety of topics relating to Lincolnshire and reflecting Rex's many personal interests.

There is something here to interest most people. *Lincolnshire Women* by John Ketteringham was the last volume to be published, marking the end of Lincolnshire County Council’s programme of publishing local history books.
Memories of Mablethorpe

J. E. Swaby

I was rector of Mablethorpe from early 1953 to late 1960. Mablethorpe St Mary's has been likened to a Viking longboat, with high prow and stern. The chancel is higher than the tower. The local story is that the rector, responsible for the chancel, carried out a restoration, but the people conveniently forget their duty.

I accepted the benefice without seeing that unusual building. The resignation of my predecessor, who lived five miles away, took effect on 31 January 1953 and that night the sea defences broke. When I came to look round I reached the edge of the place. Great machinery was moving in to plug gaps. So I turned back lest I be a nuisance. In any case most of the people had been evacuated.

One of the unsung and undecorated heroes of that night was the Rev Mr J. J. Osney. Methodist minister. Long hours spent in deep cold water damaged his health.

Automatically I took charge of Stain, which had been united with St Mary's in 1662. It had one house. I was also vicar of Theddlethorpe All Saints' and rector of St Helen's with Mablethorpe St Peter's. My list of titles reminded me of Dr Smyth who rode around his parishes on a tricycle. One night he got into a ditch and called for help. A passing labourer shouted, 'Who's there?'. Smith answered, 'The vicar of Sutton in the Marsh with Hannah cum Markby and Hagnaby.' The labourer replied, 'If there are so many of you, you can help each other.' His daughter, wife of a former vicar of Alford, became a refreshing friend.

The Church Times had gentle fun over my appointment, suggesting that a boating costume would be suitable for induction to St Peter's. St Peter's has been under the sea more than four hundred years. It perhaps received its first battering in 1287 and it would seem that the church of St Mary was moved farther inland soon afterwards.

It was said that Marshall Hayley had predicted the great storm, and no one knew that shore better than he did. He took visitors for boat trips, caught crabs, and it was beach combing activities that caused Mablethorpe to be listed as a place of Roman settlement. When the Duke of Edinburgh came to the completion of the new sea wall Hayley presented him with a Roman relic. Hayley was a man of very fixed opinions and it was impossible to convince him that Mablethorpe St Peter had ever existed, in spite of ample documentary evidence and known boundaries shown on maps, he held that all references were to Trushorpe St Peter.

On the day the Duke of Edinburgh was expected, I had a journey to make on tenterhooks by road to take a funeral in Louth. On my return I was told that the Duke's plane could not land. But the luncheon provided by the Council had to go ahead. The Duke came the next week and we had another meal at the Council's expense.

Among the councillors was Mr Brownlow, a retired Lincoln grocer. To see him pushing an old pram around and to see his front garden full of junk might make one think of Steeple and Son, but that would be a bad misjudgement. He kept none of the proceeds from sales of what he collected. In the Second World War he raised enough to buy a Spitfire. Then he built a shelter on the sea front, perhaps to the displeasure of some amusement arcade owners, for rain would drive people to seek protection with him. In my time he provided lonely people with Christmas dinner in a restaurant.

There was a time when families, such as the Tennysons of Somersby and the Brackenburys of Raithby Hall, had long stays in Mablethorpe in the summer. Later came what can be described as 'boarding houses', although the stay of families was much shorter. In my time there it was very much a place for day trippers. Even so it was possible to find the beach, washed twice daily by the sea, empty at about eight in the morning and I would take my small daughter and dog with me as I gathered driftwood. Her first sledge was made from a washed up fish box.

In winter the High Street could look like a ghost town, especially if an east wind was blowing. As people said, there was nothing between us and Siberia. At times that street seemed even like a wild west shanty town. The season lasted for about nine weeks and in that time people had to make enough to last them through the winter. One family I knew lived in their garage and let the house.

In 1953 there was no season, and much time was spent in hearing claims for relief. Once, by chance, two other clerics and I formed the panel. The claimant looked at us and said, 'Parsons know nothing about business.' The accountant, sent by Birmingham City Council to assist us, intervened. 'How is it that the figure in your claim is much higher than that in your income return last year?' The man grinned and said, 'I think I'd better drop my claim.' But most claims were genuine and treated as such.

The rectory, which had been near the church, was burnt down centuries earlier and absentee paid curates to do the work and pocketed what was left. When I came to Empingham 17 years ago, I found that Lovick Cooper, who had been rector for more than 50 years, had held Mablethorpe in plurality. Happily for Mablethorpe one of his curates was James...
Quarryby, "The Friend of the Children". He started a Sunday school and then a day school in a barn. When he died his body was buried in the chancel, but when that part of the church was tiled his memorial stone was covered.

The brasses of the Fitzwilliams, who once lived at the Hall, were preserved and are now in the wall at the east end of the north aisle. Mr Whitelaw was probably the first resident rector for centuries. He too lived at the Hall. His daughter told one delightful story about him. One Sunday his sermon was long and a visitor made a show of consulting his watch. Whereupon the rector produced his. I make the time so-and-so, what do you? She also told how a farmer named Wood, son of a one-time vicar of All Saints, Theddlethorpe, used to read the lessons, and how one day he read Nathan's parable about a rich man with many flocks of sheep and a poor man with one little ewe lamb. (2 Samuel 11). A visitor was greatly puzzled by the Lincolnshire pronunciation of ewe and enquired, "What is a yow?"

The diocese acquired White Lodge in the Boulevard as a rectory for me. The picture shown [on the cover of this magazine] of 'Ole Gooden' was given to me by Mr Slack, a Louth solicitor. It was later given to the old man's descendants, named Gooding.

A nostalgic evening

The Kinema in the Woods has just celebrated its 80th birthday - and in style. The Woodhall pavilion has seen a number of changes and additions over its life span but it remains recognisable. One can still envisage it as a sporting pavilion as it was at the beginning of the 20th century.

The birthday celebrations included the launch of The Story of Woodhall Spa's Unique Cinema by Edward Mayor, conducted tours and a gala evening. The first half of the latter was shown to a packed house, most of whom were there to recall earlier, much earlier, visits. A full length silent film opened the show with a live pianist who highlighted the drama with his keyboard skills. Then followed clips from a multitude of films shown over the years. These included some of the memorable ones like Gone with the Wind, but also advertising for Woodhall traders and publicity extracts from Wartime and Pathe News.

Refreshments were available in the foyer during the interval, which also offered an opportunity to view the large display of pictures of Woodhall Spa and the Kinema in past years. There was also the chance to visit Kinema Too - an exceptionally well planned and decorated addition to the complex. As the adverts usually say, 'a full length feature film' followed. The chosen one was Gene Kelly in Singing in the Rain - a most apt choice. As oldies will remember, Kelly acted a

Pearl Wheatley

"Valentino-type" in the films of the silent days but he and his leading lady had to adjust to talkies. An interesting response by the audience was a round of applause after a somewhat acrobatic dance sequence. Did we usually clap at the cinema? Then came the National Anthem. Everyone stood still - not one made a rush for the door before the final chord!

By the way, the beginning witnessed the arrival of Princess Marie Louise and her entourage and the distribution of chocolates as was her custom when visiting the cinema. There was a hearty rendering of Happy Birthday, Dear Kinema before settling down to the business of the evening - a memorable one.
The M.O.'s Report

This report is taken from the War Diary of the 8th Battalion, Lincolnshire Regiment and appears with kind permission of the Trustees of the Royal Lincolnshire Regiment.

From Medical Officer of Lincolnshire Regiment
To Assistant Director of Medical Services 21st Division
I have the honour to submit this report of the operations carried out at my Regimental Aid Post from June 30th to July 3rd 1916.

I moved into the Stonehaven Street dug-out just before midnight on June 30th, bringing in final stores and preparing to receive cases.
The ten bears from the 65th Field Ambulance mentioned in your operation orders not having shown up by 1 am. I sent a guide down to the Advanced Dressing Station to bring them up. Instead of bears he brought a verbal message that they would come 'early in the morning'.

Work started around 2 am and soon increased in the rate of cases, till about 6 I had to start sending down stretchers by regimental bearers. I sent a written message to the OC 65th Field Ambulance when I thought that the time specified as 'early in the morning' had more than arrived.

This and another message sent to the ADMS evoked no response in bearers or otherwise. Up to about 12 noon I had dressed and evacuated about 100 cases, giving anti-tetanus, when there was time and providing tea &c before sending them down.

About mid-day the MO of a battalion in the 62nd Brigade arrived and said that he wished to take over the Stonehaven dug-out.

As it was showing signs of filling up with stretchers with no one to carry them, I handed it over and leaving the more important stores under the charge of the chaplain and an orderly a little further up in Stonehaven St, crossed into the German trenches.

I found No Man's Land still swept by Machine Guns and receiving a mild barrage from the field guns.

As this was unsuitable for the passage of stretchers, I returned to Stonehaven St, and for about an hour carried on in the trench. Then, as things were quieter in front, I transferred my RAP to a Machine Gun emplacement in the German front trench, where there was fair cover. The German dug-outs are useless for the purpose, as the entrances are very steep and deep and stretcher cases could not be got into them.

By now nearly all my bearers had gone back to Becourt with cases, so that I applied dressings and evacuated as quickly as possible using my observer, messengers and other odd orderlies as bearers.

Later I found the 1st Battalion Lincolnshire Regiment's bearers, who had lost their MO on the Sunken road.

My battalion was by now in reserve and not likely to move over the Sunken road which was only 600 yards in advance of my position.

Accordingly I remained in the MG emplacement until the division moved out July 4th.

On the 2nd and 3rd I received most valuable assistance from a party of Royal Army Medical Corps bearer kindly lent to me by the 53rd Field Ambulance.

These men worked very hard and intelligently till I dismissed them on the night of 3rd when work was almost over as far as we were concerned.

The only bearers from our own Ambulances that I saw was a party of six with two stretchers belonging to the 64th Field Ambulance. I had one case in at the time and instructed three of them to take him down and the other three to wait for another who was then being brought in. Unfortunately I turned my back for a moment and the second three dumped their stretcher and walked back to Queen's Regiment with the others.

The outstanding feature of the operation was as before the failure of the Field Ambulances to get in touch with us.

As it was, all were evacuated in time, though many had to walk down who should have been carried. The casualties among my bearers and orderlies were one man bruised.

Attached is a list of wounded of other Units evacuated by me. Some minor cases escaped tabulation in the busiest time.

H. Douglas Smart, Captain RAMC
5-7-16
[Abbreviations have been expanded in many instances]
Obituary

Fred Felstead - a tribute

Fred moved with his family to Wiltshire. He received his education at Calne then Sherborne School, Dorset. After moving to Bourne, he worked for two local firms, at one of which his work was interrupted by service in The Royal Army Medical Corps.

Win and Fred were married in Stamford in 1956. Eventually he set up his own business as a painter, decorator and sign writer, counting large companies and municipal authorities amongst his many customers.

Fred was a man of many interests, having been chairman and secretary of the Bourne branch of the WEA, a member of Bourne Twinning Association, Bourne Civic Society, the Bourne Zipper Club, the Richard III Society, and through his business connections a Member of the British Decorators’ Society.

A keen collector of books on local and Lincolnshire history, Fred was also interested in photography, often to be seen with his camera at meetings and outings of the South Holland group. With Win, Fred ran the SLHA bookshop at the South Holland group meetings and the SLHA bookshop were most appreciative of their excellent sales figures.

Fred was a gentle man in every respect. All who were privileged to know him will never forget his great and warm personality and his enthusiasm for the SLHA. We extend our deepest sympathy to Win, also to their daughter Alison, son-in-law Arthur and brother-in-law Peter. Fred will be sadly missed by members of all the associations [including the Stamford group of SLHA] with which he was connected and his wide circle of friends.

Gerry Lewis

A bell query...

For a short time in the 1950s Big Ben at Westminster was unable to be used on the radio to introduce the news on the hour. Another bell named Great Tom was used. Does anyone else remember this – and why it happened? And was it our Great Tom at Lincoln Cathedral? I do not know if there are any other ‘great toms’!  

R. Beavers
Summoned by hooter - in Gainsborough, early 1900s. Some wives and daughters appear to be bringing the dinner

Factory hooters

When I grew up in Grantham in the 1920s and 1930s there were three major factories and several smaller ones in the town, which between them employed several thousand workers. The engineering products of Grantham were known world wide, but for all that, times were hard, with high unemployment and low wages.

There was no such thing as television and few manual workers had a "wireless" at home. For most people finding out the exact time meant looking at the Town Hall clock or listening to the chimes of the parish church. Few could aspire to the luxury of a wristwatch and the most they could boast was probably a five-bob Ingersoll pocket watch to grace the waistcoat of the Sunday best suit or hang in state on the dressing table.

However, absolute punctuality at work was de rigueur. Two minutes late and you were "stopped a quarter" (i.e. you lost a quarter of an hour's pay). If you were a quarter of an hour late, you were probably sent home for the morning and you lost a half day's pay - a bitter blow to the household economy for that week. If you did this twice in a month, you stood a good chance of getting the sack. To ensure punctuality, most factories had at least one steam or compressed air whistle or hooter, each of which had its distinctive note and was sounded off at precise instants during the day. Most people in the town regulated their lives and set their watches and watches to these "calls from afar".

The first blasts of sound would be those decimating the starting times of the foundries of the firms making their own castings. These would sound off at various times between 6am and 7am. Depending on their particular jobs, other workers would receive hooters, horns and whistles giving fifteen, fifteen or two minute warnings of actual starting times or the closing of the factory gates. All these would fill the air from 7am to 8am. Half an hour's relative peace would hold until more hooters would announce the beginning (or end) of the foundry men's breakfast, or tea break for the other workers.

Peace on the industrial front might reign until say five minutes to midday when whistles or bells would announce "hand-washing time" and then between midday and 1pm would be a seemingly endless succession of tooits announcing knocking off and starting times. The afternoon would have sound signals for tea breaks, clean up and finishing times, plus a few extra for good measure during the evening, for those lucky enough to be asked to work overtime or night shift.

All this came to an abrupt end in the autumn of 1939. With the threat of massed Luftwaffe air raids it was decided that, with few exceptions, all factory hooters would be silenced (along with the church bells) for the duration of hostilities. The new 20mm aircraft cannon factory, MARCO, was the first in Grantham to install an electric siren and this was used for a fresh purpose. It gave warning of air or military aircraft crossing the east coast and was followed by one of Hornsby's steam whistles emitting a series of "pips" when they were within 30 miles of the town.

During the war years much changed on both social and industrial fronts. In the new peace time of 1945 even the "wailing willies" were silenced and the factory hooter's tyranny faded into the past, for which most were thankful. Still, one cannot help feeling that as a distinctive element of our industrial past, factory hooters should not be completely forgotten.
At the time when authority was obtained to construct the Louth and East Coast Railway in the early 1870s a group of businessmen met in Louth. It was their aim to create a ‘Permanent Benefit Building Society’ for the town and the East Coast Marsh.

Among the local newspapers where advertisements were placed was the Louth Times & Mablethorpe & Sutton Advertiser. Naturally there was a certain amount of gossip and discussion at the weekly markets before the registration about an appropriate name for the society. It was felt that the name should reflect, promote and attract the interest of investors from the town, but also from the countryside to anticipate the opening of the railway to the coast. The railway, covering the area known as Louth Esk, particularly the Withern sub-district, was expected to create increased building development and business. An assorted cross section of local people had taken a positive interest from the Lord of the Manor to tenant farmers.

This was at a time when Louth ranked next only to Lincoln, Grimsby, Boston, Gainsborough and Grantham among the most prosperous and populous towns in the County, so naturally the burghers and businessmen were anxious to retain this position. There appears to have been some urgency among the founder members. This was possibly due to the predictable opening of the railway from Louth Town to Mablethorpe via Grimoldby, Saltfleetby and Theddlethorpe All Saints. The plans to extend to Sutton le Marsh were also well known. The rumoured plans of the Lancashire, Derbyshire and East Coast Railway to extend their line from Macclesfield to the resort, building docks similar to those the Manchester, Sheffield and Lincolnshire Railway had developed at Great Grimsby, although on a smaller scale, gave rise to considerable comment.

The society began life at Louth earlier in June 1877 as ‘The Louth, Mablethorpe and Sutton Permanent Benefit Building Society’ and incorporated under the Building Societies Act of 1874. The first patron of the society was Mr R. J. H. Parkinson JP of East Rayendale Hall and Mablethorpe. The first President was Mr John Hurst and the Vice Presidents were Mr T. E. Smith, Mr Wm Hyde Jr, Mr S. Cartwright, Mr Wm Neil, Mr John Eve and Joseph Cusworth. All were prominent businessmen in the district.

The first annual report was presented in June 1878 at the society’s office at
3 Westgate Place, Louth, Mr Robert Ranshaw was the treasurer and Thomas E. Markham was the secretary, a position he was to hold well into the next century. Their bankers were the Lincoln and Lindsey Banking Company and the manager of the Louth branch was Charles Mitchell Nesbitt JP, a trustee of the society. Ninety-two shareholders are listed and included not only subscribers from Louth, but also members from Mablethorpe, Sutton and Huttoft. Only two were women, Mrs S. and Miss R. E. Cartwright.

256 Ordinary Shares had been taken up, amounting to subscriptions of £543 6s 3d. A very satisfactory £1,060 had been advanced with a further £1,440 of advances sanctioned. Profit after expenses was £28 11s 8d.

The officers and the investors’ business interests were diverse to say the least. Vice-President John Eve, for example, was listed as ‘Draper, Tailor, Hatter, House & General Furnisher, Cabinet Warehouseman, Milliner, Dressmaker, Tea and Coffee Merchant of Louth’. Another such was Charles Parker, a machine printer, bookseller, stationer, bookbinder, newsagent, and fancy goods dealer who also acted as the depot for the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge (SPCK) from his premises in the Market Place, Louth. Benjamin Simmons, auctioneer, valuer, Lloyds agent, coal merchant and farmer ran his businesses from Sutton, Sutton in the Marsh, Sutton le Marsh or even Sutton on Sea.

The name depended on who one was talking to. Mark and Thomas Smith were manure manufacturers, bone crushers, coal merchants and boat builders. Mark was also listed as a manufacturing chemist, sheep dipper and weed killer manufacturer. They had premises at the River Head, East Gate and the Corn Market in Louth. David Sempers, a direct relation of my maternal grandmother, was also listed as ‘Shopkeeper and Lodgings, Rose Cottage Mablethorpe and Theddlethorpe’. What can one say about the diversity of these gentlemen in this day and age?

Geoffrey Dales (Draper and Fancy Dealer at Mablethorpe) and Benjamin Simmons (Auctioneer and Valuer of Sutton) are listed as agents and receivers for the society. By 1900 ‘Offices of the Society’ still remained at No 3 Westgate Place, Louth, Mr Thomas Markham remained as Secretary. The twenty-third Annual Report to the Shareholders & Depositors conveyed a very healthy Statement of Accounts with undivided profits of £241 2s 1d at the close of the year. The total amount advanced by the Society since its formation was £20,450. Mr Charles Mitchell Nesbitt was now not only a trustee but also Treasurer. He was a fairly obvious choice as he was the manager of the Society Bankers and Borough Treasurer.

New shareholders appeared on the scene. In particular Mark Phillips of Saltfleetby, Cottager; John Pottage, North Thoresby, a corn miller, Theophilus Benton of Donington, Grocer, Draper and Postmaster; Joseph Richard Smithson, grocer and outfitter of Mablethorpe; plus George Priestly, a wholesale rag and bone merchant who had earlier traded as a hosier manufacturer, milliner and marine store dealer. Perhaps these were father and son.

In the society’s formative years there was a definite influence from the ladies. The Berry families of Louth were now very prominent among the shareholders, particularly in the female line. Not only Hubert George, a butcher and cattle dealer, but also Alice Bertha and Florence. A Miss Sempers of Henry Sempers, grocer, draper and dyers agent of Sutton in the Marsh was also listed. Notice of the forty-fifth annual meeting for 26th September 1923 at the ‘Offices of the Society’, now at 8 Corn Market was given by the Secretary Mr F S Riggnall. The Society’s President was Mr Joseph King, watchmaker, jeweller, and optician of Northgate, Louth. The Society reported a balance in hand of £235 8s 7d after apportioning to the shareholders the sum of £375 5s 5d for interest and bonus earned during the previous three years. The Society’s bankers were now the London Joint City and Midland Banking Company Limited. The change is possibly due to the Lincoln and Lindsey’s amalgamation. It was also stated that the retiring directors, Mr George Foster, Mr Frank Tyler and Mr Bert Appleby were eligible for re-election.

On 20th May 1927 the Directors presented the 50th Annual Report. It was extensive to say the least. Mr Albert Sidney Hibbert and Mr Frank Tyler of High Holme Road, Louth had fully audited the accounts, which showed the Society to be in a very healthy state. 911s shares had been taken up during the past year and eleven new advances made. The overall liabilities and assets of the Society amounted to £11,971 2s 10d. An interesting diminution within the accounts were £2 2s for ‘Office Rent’ and £59 14s for ‘Salaries, Auditors, &c.’

The auditors reported on each of the 55 properties in mortgage. There appears to have been a progressive trend throughout the existence of the Society not only to grant mortgages to prominent businessmen but also to enterprising individuals who the directors observed to be reliable and worthwhile.

Joseph King was still President. The number of directors had increased from seven to nine with Mr William Crow and Mr Robert Laking being new.

I am told that during this period mortgages were often granted by word of mouth or observation of one’s business; ie how well Henry the carpenter and wheelwright, Edward the butcher or Harry the fisherman and fruiterer were trusted. This worked very well over the years without any undue problems. J. W. Goulding & Son of Louth continued as the Society’s printers as they had for the past thirty-five years. They had been shareholders since 1900.

In the late twenties the Society moved to its own offices at 3 East-
gate, Louth. It is rather interesting to note that in the report of the 113th Annual General Meeting held on 30th April 1990 that Mr W P Smith, aged 71, is stated to be eligible for re-election in view of his long experience and knowledge of the Society. The directors also recorded their appreciation of the services of Mr C F Jackson, a member of the board for 32 years and notably his fifteen years as Chairman. The Board of Directors also reiterated a statement made at the first Annual General Meeting in 1878 that 'the principle purpose of the Society continues to be the raising of funds for lending on house purchase'. Once again this says something about the 'Society' as a whole. Mr T A Lusby was Chairman. His deputy was Mr John Keily and Miss L. A. Jones, Secretary. The directors reported that although the inflow of investment funds was satisfactory and, although mortgage advances were made at a level considerably below that of the previous period, the results for the year were good and the Society's sound financial base was maintained. The audited report of Oxley Coxon presented liabilities and capital at £6,722,230 of which £6,153,157 were held in shares and £2,528 in deposits. The overall profit for the year was £77,640 after taxation, which was over 60% up on what was forecast ten years previously.

By 1991 the financial climate within the United Kingdom had changed considerably with hyperinflation. The 'Big Five' Building Societies appeared to be in direct, some would say hostile, competition trying to take over their medium and smaller sized competitors. In this volatile climate it appeared to the directors of the Louth, Mablethorpe and Sutton Permanent Benefit Building Society that it was commercially viable to accept the Bradford & Bingley's offer of take-over. It must have been a very sad day for many people, including many of the officers, subscribers and shareholders. Miss L A Jones was the last Secretary / Chief Executive. T A Lusby and John M Kelly were the last Chairman and Vice Chairman respectively.

So after 114 years the Louth, Mablethorpe and Sutton Permanent Benefit Building Society, established in 1877 was to be no more. It is certainly part of Lincolnshire history. Yes, we all know what happened to the Bradford & Bingley Building Society.

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Louth County Library.

A postcard query...

This is an unused postcard of council houses in Fishpond Lane, Holbeach. It is undated, but presumably pre-1940. Is this the earliest (or the only?) picture of council houses on a postcard?

H. Healey
Statute or hiring fairs in Lincolnshire

If you had been standing beside a single farm worker in the Stonebow or Cornhill area of Lincoln in about 1928 you would quite possibly have heard a farmer ask him if he was 'looking for a place'.

A place meant employment for the following year, but it meant more than that; it meant a place to live as well as to work. That farmer was seeking to hire a servant, possibly a houseman, to work for him and live in his own household for the following year.

That worker was wanting a place and if, after some enquiries from both parties, the prospects appeared to suit them both, a bargain was made regarding wages and when the servant was to report for work. That settled, the farmer gave the hired man a 'hiring penny' or 'fasten penny'. It would be anything from two shillings to five shillings. Acceptance of the fasten penny was legally binding upon the servant to serve his master for one year or 51 weeks.

You would have witnessed a very old form of employment exchange and it was at that time in its last years. The origin of the custom possibly dates back to 1563. In that year the Statute of Artificers fixed contracts of service in many crafts at not less than one year, and a hiring penny, later known as a fasten penny, tied the worker to the master for one year. That is why a hiring fair was known as a 'statute' fair or just a 'statute'.

In his book, Tudor and Stuart Lincoln, Sir Francis Hill says that the Justices in Lincoln used the Statute of Artificers to make a ruling that all unemployed men were to report at the Stonebow every morning at 9am, with the tools of their trade. They were to stay for not less than one hour. For failing to comply, the punishment was imprisonment without bail during the Mayor or Justices' pleasure. Although less and less heed was taken of this ruling, a notice of an Annual 'Statute' was fixed to the Stonebow until 1925.

Over the years the word 'statute' became corrupted to 'statis' and that was the most widely used name for a hiring fair in Lincolnshire. Another name was 'mops' in some districts but 'hiring fair' was the most usual name because all the larger gatherings were observed as festive occasions.

By 1925 probably only farm servants were hiring themselves out for a one-year term, but up to 1914 I know that domestic servants were too. It would appear that from the early 18th century, hiring fairs were largely used for the hiring of farm and domestic servants. This gives a period of 150 years from the Statute of 1563 and that century and a half may well have brought considerable changes regarding other types of workers.

The earliest preserved records in Lincoln date from 1737 and the one book covers 100 years. As it was an official gathering, the task of fixing the date and place of a 'Statis' was the responsibility of the High Constable and he was also responsible for its supervision. The degree of official control is perhaps emphasised by the fact that there were Statute Sessions with magistrates in attendance to record details of the hirings and to sign the completed record.

In the Lincoln Record Book the names of the masters and of the servants, and the wages to be paid, are recorded in the appropriate columns. But unfortunately there is no entry regarding the work for which these people were hired. Such an entry would have established beyond doubt whether or not they were all farm workers and domestic servants.

There is, however, just one very interesting exception to the general rule in the Lincoln records. At a Statute in Lincoln in April 1764, this record appears: 'Robert Naylor of Rand, labourer, to Thomas Barker of Bail, Lincoln, as gardener, for one whole year from May Day next, £3'. The low wage for the year suggests that he was quite likely a lad of fourteen or fifteen or even younger. In the 1851 census we find boys described as labourers. May was the chief time for servants to change their places. Hiring fairs became established on the market day following 14 May.

Associated with Lincoln during the period under review were the 'four towns' in Brascidg, Canwick, Branton and Waddington, and the records give details of Statute Sessions held at three of these towns, the exception being Brascidg.

Of the statutes recorded the majority were held in Lincoln at a variety of inns. The next highest number was in Waddington and at least three inns there are named as the focal point at various times. At Branton the hirings were very sparse and Canwick gets two mentions, October 1750 and April of the following year. The inn named there is the Red Lion.

Other interesting points include Notices of Statute Sessions held from the late 1760s to 1871 but no records of any transactions. Were there no hirings or were the justices too idle to make records? Again, why was there no notice of any Statutis in the years 1744-1750? And after the turn of the century there is a complete gap from 1808 to 1830, although there are records from 1830 to 1836. Perhaps the missing years are evidence that, as some historians claim, the Statutis was becoming less and less of an official occasion. Also, whereas the records up to 1800 were signed by the magistrates in attendance, the few records in the 19th century were signed by the Chief Constable.

By far the majority of the records held at the Lincolnshire Archives are from the south of the county, the old Holland division. Not only are there records of Statute Sessions at Spalding and Holbeach, but numerous village hirings are recorded. Places
like Swineshead, Long Sutton, Sutton St Mary's are all officially documented and signed by the Chief Constable. The Chief Constable only signed the Lincoln records after 1800. Those for Holland were signed by that officer for many years before. Some of the Holland entries are in specially printed books, where the column headings are printed giving a more official look to each page. Wider pages allow for more columns, in which are details not found in the Lincoln records.

Whereas in the latter the master and the servant's home village is named, the Holland records have another column that gives the name and address of the servant's last employer. Reference to this extra column could allow the researcher to follow the yearly migration of some servants round the villages in the locality. If a servant's previous address was with his parents, this is probably their first 'place'. The low yearly wage would also indicate a child.

Another column in many records is headed 'Ereasted' and is no doubt the money given as 'fasten penny' because the amount varies between 1 shilling and five shillings. The right hand column is invariably used to enter the yearly wage but there are other interesting entries. The most frequent of these is 'To find own doctor or nurse if sick'. Often in the column with the servant's name is a very shaggy cross, and written with it are the words 'his (or her) mark'. This shows that the servant was a witness to the record made but could not sign. From the 1860s some of them have written their names, a sure indication that the movement for the education of working class children was beginning to take effect.

We have looked mostly at the business side of the statute fairs, but these gatherings became fairs in all the larger centres because they were festive holiday occasions. The Stamford Mercury on 21 May 1852 has this report about the annual Hiring Fair at Binbrook that had been an exceptionally large one: 'Jesters and Chappells Corps of Rope dancers were in attendance and there were plenty of stalls for the sale of finery, eatables and trash.' Most towns and the larger open villages had their 'Statsis' and most of them were frequented by cheap-jacks, confidence tricksters, pickpockets and other rogues to take their takings off the servants recently paid yearly wages. Hiring fairs in general had such a bad name in regard to drunkenness and vice that some people, not all of them with puritan inclinations, began to speak and write against them as long ago as the 18th century.

A new City and County Museum in Lincoln

The Society for Lincolnshire History & Archaeology began a campaign for a new City and County Museum in July 1993, when it was obvious that the museum at Greyfriars would close with no plans for the future. Greyfriars closed in September 1993. For some years there were no public displays of this very special internationally important collection. SLHA has continued to pressure the County Council to provide Lincolnshire with a museum for this valuable asset.

In 1999 other organisations joined us in our campaign and together we launched the City and County Museum Action Group. Our Vice-President (Mrs C. M. Wilson), the Chairman (Miss P. Wheatley) and Dr D. Mills have served in this group since its formation. Working closely with officers of the County Council, they have had the opportunity to act as a steering group and help guide the project as well as keeping up the pressure.

Now the final stages of funding are in hand and, hopefully, we shall see building commence within the next few months. The architect has made every effort to ensure that the building, although modern, blends well with this historic city. Inside there will be a chronological display of the artefacts from the collection as well as themed exhibitions with state-of-the-art displays. There will be the usual facilities for a modern museum, such as a shop and café, now deemed essential. There will also be provision for educational groups so that the museum can be used by the local community in and out of hours.

The proximity of the new museum to Jews' Court should be to the advantage of SLHA because it will bring more local people and visitors to that area of the city. I thank our members for their donations to help close the funding gap. This support encourages us on the Action Group to continue our work.

We are determined to function until we go through the door and view the displays - in the hope that we shall be doing so in 2004.

[Take a virtual tour of the new City and County Museum at: www.lincolnshireregov.uk/ccm]

A post office query...

I am interested in the history and development of Lincolnshire post offices. The information I am collecting is gradually being posted on my website: www.reynolds-a.a-freeerve.co.uk/REYNOLDS-COLLECTORS-WORLD/INDEX.HTML. If you have any information on post offices such as where they were sited, who was the subpostmaster, or any photographs or documents, I would like to hear from you. I might also be able to contribute information to assist you in your endeavours. You may also wish to link your website to mine so that users can find information they are looking for.

Andrew Reynolds, Post Office, Keeling Street, North Somercotes, Louth, LN11 7QI. Tel 01507 358704. e-mail: SONIA-ANDREW-REYNOLDS@bigfoot.com
The City of Boston

John Beckett

On 14 May 1945 Boston celebrated the 400th anniversary of its Charter of Incorporation, but few people in Boston knew that as far as leading members of the Corporation were concerned the celebrations were of a lower key than they had hoped.

In the summer of 1944 the Estates and General Purposes Committee held informal discussions about the possibility of having Boston raised to the status of a city in conjunction with the proposed celebrations. Their role model was Lancaster, created a city in 1937 in conjunction with the coronation of King George VI. The towns raised to city status in the earlier years of the 20th century were large industrial centres such as Leicester (1919), Siske (1925) and Salford (1926) or important naval towns such as Portsmouth (1926) and Plymouth (1928). Lancaster was much smaller and was regarded in Boston as a possible precedent for an application for city status. The town clerk, C. L. Hoffrock Griffiths, thought the Boston councillors were being over ambitious in their hopes, but he agreed to write to his opposite number in Lancaster to find out how to proceed.

Armed with helpful information from Lancaster, on 3 August Hoffrock Griffiths approached the Lord Lieutenant of Lincolnshire, Lord Brownlow, to ask him to lead a campaign for city status. The grounds on which Boston was wanting to base its claim were the antiquity of the borough and its medieval importance as a port, its continued significance within the Holland district of Lincolnshire, its strong links with Boston, Massachusetts, and its cathedral-like church of St Botolph.

Brownlow considered the case to be a good one, and immediately offered to approach the Prime Minister on behalf of the Corporation. Brownlow wrote to Brendan Bracken, Churchill's right hand man through the war years, and by 1944 Minister of Information. He in turn passed the request to the Home Office. There, Brownlow's letter, together with the town clerk's statement of the case for Boston, dropped onto the desk of a Miss Usher, to write a report. She was not, it has to be said, very flattering. 'Boston', she wrote, 'is a large, rich, but unimposing (bordering on sordid) market town, with very little architectural beauty apart from the church, and with a population in 1931 of only 22,190.' Lancaster is in quite a different category. The title was given as Coronation gift in 1937, and the primary consideration was the close link with the Sovereign who for centuries has been Duke of Lancaster, and in addition it is the county town of the Duchy of Lancaster, and the castle is the King's personal property. There are no grounds on which a case could be made for raising Boston to city status.

Cities, she added, were made only from towns 'of the first rank'. Boston did not qualify. Miss Usher drafted a response to the Home Secretary, who wrote to Bracken on 9 September 1944 to say that there was no case to be made in Boston's favour. 'While I appreciate the history and interesting features of Boston's position in the fen country, and also recognise American interest in the development of the town, I am afraid that, having regard to the general principles governing policy in this matter, I could not make a favourite recommendation to the King.' Bracken passed the news to Brownlow who conveyed the gloomy tidings to Hoffrock Griffiths.

In his response the town clerk noted that the members of his Estates and General Purposes Committee were 'naturally somewhat disappointed at the reply which you have received from Mr Brendan Bracken' but, he added, 'they quite appreciate, as I do myself, the necessity for complying with precedents in such matters as this.' Boston remained a town, as it still does, and the celebrations in May 1945 had to take a different course.

Notes

1 Such constitutional issues have always been regarded as highly confidential and so nothing was written. Consequently there is no reference to this episode in the minutes of Boston Corporation or its Estates and General Purposes Committee. Lincolnshire Archives Office, B3, 2A/30. Confidentiality also explains why nothing was known of the application beyond a small circle of Boston politicians.

2 No relevant papers of Lord Brownlow are known to have survived. I am grateful to Adrian Wilkinson for help on this point.


4 Public Record Office, HO 45/23202.

5 The file was closed for 30 years, becoming available for consultation in 1975.


7 Lao B13, 2A/21, Incorporation Celebrations Committee minutes, 1944-5.
This section aims to list all new titles with as many short reviews as space permits. All reviews are by the Reviews Editor unless otherwise stated. The majority of these titles are obtainable from Jews' Court bookshop, Sleep Hill, Lincoln.

DOWLING, Alan. Humberston Fitties: the story of a Lincolnshire potteland. The author, 2001, 144pp. No ISBN. £8.95 pbk. (plus £1 for p & p.) from the author, 4 Howlett Road, Cleethorpes DN35 0EF.

A nostalgic look back at the Humberston Fitties potteland development on the east coast near Cleethorpes. The writer starts off by examining the appeal of pottelands and the reasons why people from different backgrounds were drawn to the Fitties.

The book, a combination of story and history, spans the twentieth century: from the early years as an area used for informal camping before the first world war, its heyday in the 1920s and 1930s and the colonisation of the dunes with chalets and other 'structures' until the second world war when it was used by the military. After the war its leisure use resumed but the post-war period saw stricter controls over building on the Fitties, and, at the same time, the provision of modern amenities as the Council 'improved' the Fitties - changes welcomed by some but not all owners.

The second half of the twentieth century saw the creation of large-scale hideous but lucrative static caravan parks.

A large section of the book (pp92-116) is given over to the period 1986 to 1996 - a blow-by-blow account of recent struggles over the future of the Fitties. What originally started off as a simple, carefree life with little in the way of modern amenities, has become bound up with regulations and rules, disputes and conflict between the local authority and the chalet owners.

The halcyon days are over, the Fitties are now overshadowed by vast caravan parks. Few of the traditional chalets still exist, many having been replaced by anonymous brick bungalows with plastic windows. The Fitties was designated a conservation area in 1996 but too late, you might say, its original character has, over the years, been eroded by a policy of standardisation imposed by the local authority. For me, its attractiveness is deplored. The very natural surroundings that attracted pottelanders in the first place has been spoiled by development.

Aside from the map on page 10, which is poor, the other illustrations and photographs are welcome additions to the lengthy text. Peppered with family photographs and personal recollections, its value is as a socio-historical account of the Fitties' development with the emphasis on the community. I suggest that you take this book to the seaside, preferably the Lincolnshire coast, put your feet up and indulge in the dream.

Paula Judson, Heritage Trust of Lincolnshire.


In his introduction to this, his latest book, the author states that "You will not find books about the First World War tanks on the bookshelves every day..." Historians (and the historians of armoured warfare in particular) should, therefore, be grateful to Mr. Fletcher himself who, as Librarian of the Tank Museum at Bovington, Dorset, has done more than most to produce authoritative and well-researched publications on the invention and development of the tank and early tracked military vehicles.

The author, in his books, draws heavily on his knowledge of the vehicles and archival material held at the museum as part of the designated national collection. His previous books - many published by HMSO - have produced a wealth of information about the various marks and models of British tanks and armoured cars. This volume is, however, according to its author, an attempt to incorporate a human dimension into this story of technological developments. Human courage, resourcefulness and invention are all to be described and highlighted here. This is a worthy endeavour. Too many accounts of the invention and development of the early tanks have concentrated on the technological aspects - on the problems of developing suitable material for tracks and so forth - to the detriment of any consideration of how the tanks were used in practice.

The problem with this approach is that it goes against the author's obvious strengths. He handles the technical aspects of the story with a sure and steady touch, confidently outlining the many twists and turns in the development of each of the tanks. However, he is less strong on the details of the events of the war and the decisions relating to military operations. Minor errors do not help. The presence of British armoured cars on the Gallipoli Peninsula in March 1915 when the allied landings did not take place until April is an example. Similarly, a statement that the 1916 Somme Offensive was "due to commence on 1 July" ignores the fact that the start of the battle on that day was due to a postponement of the original start date. Minor faults. A more serious shortcoming (and particularly strange in a book presumably intended as an introduction to the subject) is the absence of a bibliography - even a short one. One or two particularly obscure accounts are, however, noted.

Nevertheless, this book does much to emphasize the Lincolnshire roots of the tank's development. In particular, the role of agricultural machinery manufacturers and engineering firms based in the county is made very clear. Not only Foster's of Lincoln but also Hornsby of Grantham and Robey and Company in Lincoln...
Familiar landmarks also appear regularly: Cross O'Cliff Hill, the White Hart Hotel, Burton Park, while the photographs of the workshops at the Foster Works show the reality of the circumstances in which the early tank was built.

A particular strength of this book is that it is copiously illustrated with over 180 photographs and twenty or so other illustrations. These complement the text very well, but it is pity that the image source is not provided in each case.

This book provided new insight and a great deal of clarification on several aspects of the story of the first tanks. It is certainly a valuable addition to the resources available to historians of armoured warfare. How disappointing though that anyone whose initial interest is aroused by this generally well-written account, should, if they felt inclined to take their interest further, be presented with so little guidance about sources of future information.

Dr Bryn Hammond, Spalding

Second-hand book sellers are not going to be pleased at the appearance of this handsome volume but for everyone else it will be gladly welcomed. The publishers have prepared an edition of the original that, in some ways, improves on the original 1805 publication. The plates are all there in the order that was indicated by William Miller when the project came to its final form and, additionally, David Robinson has provided a short but comprehensive essay on the work's chequered publication history.

As David notes, copies of the original volume fetch several hundred pounds on the second-hand market and, as he further writes, very few surviving copies seem identical - some have missing plates, rarely is the intended order for the plates adhered to and, since the plates and text appeared at irregular intervals over several years (probably seven), the purchasers had a collection of material at the end that they were responsible for having bound into volume form so all the bindings differ. A minor other difference was the appearance of the plates on two sizes of paper and even one case is recorded of an even smaller volume where the plates have been cut down to the same size as the text pages.

All this is included in the introductory essay with detailed notes on all the main artists involved in the project. Howlett, a Leicestershire man, takes pride of place, for his engraving of the plates of course. He used the drawings and other illustrations of the men of the calibre of Turner, Thomas Girtin, J.C. Nattes (commissioned to tour the county and make as many drawings of houses, etc. as possible by Sir Joseph Banks and, between 1789 and 1797 he made 511 such) and William Salter (one of the chief printers of the day) to print the whole. The tribulations that Howlett faced in finding the money for the project and the difficulties he had in obtaining the promised subscription monies are all detailed. The map is based on the John Cary (not as printed) map of 1801 with the curious oddity that the western boundary has been altered to include Belvoir Castle in this county; since the map acts as a sort of index to the plates there is, therefore, a plate of Belvoir Castle.

It is pleasing to read a list of the subscribers to the present edition, which shows that many collectors have already ordered their copies. Interestingly, the Dymoke family are listed here and also in the list of the original survivors (also included). It's a nice thought that in the library at Scrivelsby there might be the two editions side by side.

For those still to purchase, now is the time to be dropping hints for Christmas presents and, although quite expensive, it will make an ideal and long-lasting gift that can only appreciate in value, like the original.

MIGHELL, John. St Wilfrid's Church, Metheringham: a guide and history; second edition. The author, 2002, iii, 40pp No ISBN. £4.95 or £4.50 from the author. 3 Church Walk, Metheringham LN4 3HA

This little book was already out of print when first noted in these columns. Further copies have now become available and should be picked up while still around. Metheringham church has half a page in Pevsner's abbreviated style; here we have the story filled out with descriptions of all the church's major features inside and outside in the churchyard; there are full details of the bells and a list of vicars that goes back to 1209. The depth of the research is shown by the dates of all the 19th and 20th century diocesan faculties permitting changes to the church's fabric. The church is dedicated to St Wilfrid and we are given an account of his life. I should have liked a little about what is known of the early incumbents - who was Maurice, the first vicar and was Robert Bell, junior really the vicar for 71 years from 1749? The list of vicars has gone a little haywire at the end of the Victorian period - the list does not harmonise with the text.

However, this is a very useful piece of work with some nice sketches, two plans and ten coloured and other black and white photographs.


Barton on Humber has been well served in recent years with a variety of studies and the provision of raw materials for further research. This latest work is not a strictly autobiographical work; there is no chronological pattern but, instead, a walk round the Barton of the author's childhood and working life from the 1930s onwards. There is a vivid sense of recall of places, names and working methods in the various works sited alongside the Humber's
There is a good deal less about the river and its craft than I had expected although the traditional boats do enter the narrative. But we are given accounts of the trades along the river. As we proceed we are given detailed descriptions of brick-making (there were several important firms at one time), the methods in the cement works, the quarries of clay or chalk and the hard work of the men involved in shipping the raw materials in and the final products out of the various creeks and inlets. What we do learn of the Humber is the importance of knowing the times and types of the tides since so much of the land-based work was reliant on sailing ships whose time-tables were determined by such external forces.

Only towards the end of the book do we have descriptions of the houses, shops, schools, churches and chapels of the author's youth in Barton and particularly its Waterside area. Again one is impressed with the detailed memories of the people associated with these places. The way the railway and ferry times allowed Hull City supporters to get to and from the match on a Saturday and still have time to dress up and go the pub or to a dance is but one instance of the way the text is enlivened while incidentally describing a facet of life gone forever after the Humber Bridge was built.

The text is enhanced by 61 pictures and 15 detailed plans of the cement works, brickyards, etc., the latter only marred by the very small numbers used to indicate key features. A few 'typos' have crept in (there is a good one near the top of page 188) and, in my copy, page 198 has not been printed (an especially sad point, since, one assumes, it should have had the description of the author's own childhood home). None of these can take away from a very valuable piece of work of great interest for future historians of the town and the way so many crafts were carried on. It is all the more remarkable since Mr. Newton left school at 14 after the then conventional education and spent his life on the river. It's a tribute also to the WEA whose presence in Barton and encouragement of his wish to learn have yielded such a good book.


The ancient market town of Louth, with a population of about 11,000, nestles in the Wolds of Lincolnshire and has been described by the poet, John Betjeman, as "the loveliest country town in England". The spine of the present fifteenth century church, the tallest on any parish church in England, is a dominant feature of the surrounding countryside. The church records reveal that there was an organ in the building before 1500. The present fine instrument of three manuals and pedals was totally rebuilt in 1911 by the firm of Norman and Beard, retaining much of the original pipework of the organ installed by Gray and Davison in 1857. It was on this instrument that I was privileged to play during my tenure as organist and choirmaster from 1949-1956 and it has been a particular pleasure to read the well-researched account of the history of the organs in the church by Mr. Pillans. It is fortunate that the church records have been so faithfully preserved and much of the information in the book has been gathered from the detailed churchwardens' accounts.

This fascinating story of the provision of organs for the accommodation and the enrichment of the services in Louth Parish Church mirrors similar provision throughout the country and raises its profile as a valuable contribution to our social history. There are many interesting references to the changing lifestyle and attitudes of the local community through the five hundred years covered by this booklet making it well worth the attention of the public at large.

Dr Dennis Townhill, Edinburgh.


First published in 1982 Arthur Owen warmly greeted this book (LHA, vol 17, 1982) and it now re-appears in a paperback version with extra material and an enhanced bibliography. There can't be many in the county who have not heard the author's lectures on various aspects of the county's coastline. All is distilled in these pages with plenty of supporting pictures. It is not, as Arthur emphasized, all Skegness and Cleethorpes. The early geological aspects of what makes Lincolnshire's coast so distinctive are fully discussed; other chapters deal with Roman salt-making, the early seaside at Freiston Shore, lifeboats, smuggling and the arrival of the railways that led to the swelling numbers of visitors to the present-day popular seaside resorts. The new matter takes further his earlier chapter on the 1951 storms, the damage they caused and the problems they highlighted of coastal erosion and sea defences. Activities in the 1990s to replace the diminishing amounts of sand along all the coast are detailed with appropriate new illustrations and a map.

The appearance of this title in its new guise will be satisfy all who wish to know more about the county's coastline - its origins, later development and the attempts to retain its shape and condition. The one printing error that Arthur pointed out has been corrected so reviewers do have some value!


Two more villages receive Millennium treatment and the gaps in county historical coverage are further reduced. Four ladies under the guiding hand of a fifth, who has edited their efforts, have provided a collec-
tion of many short pieces, which together give a picture of the history, lives, and activities of the villagers through the ages. The book is not divided into chapters and may appear somewhat haphazard in its arrangement; an index would have helped the seeker of specific topics, since there are usually three sub-sections to each page. Somehow, however, that seems to add to its readability and interest; a strict chronological structure can seem to spell death to many such accounts since so many gaps appear in the sequence of centuries, owing to both lack of suitable written printed resources or the opportunity (even if desired) of delving deeply into what research materials there are.

It is, therefore, a bit like 'pick and mix' but all the expected topics are covered somewhere—church and chapel, school, farming life and related activities, several pages on windmills, the RAF (and the Americans at Stargate) and so on. Printed on good paper it is a nicely produced large format booklet; better proof reading would have minimised the errors that have crept in.

The title accurately describes the results of the editors and their many helpers. This is not a detailed chronological history of the village; it is a portrait and through the various sections a real flavour of place emerges.

It starts with a brief historical note, quoting from Doomsday and locating the village in the care of Crowland Abbey. Succeeding sections deal with the Hall, the Hyde family (long associated with the village and the Hall) - their memorials are described in the section on the church - the charities, which still yield money for the poor or elderly and so on. A lot of material has been culled from the parish minutes; the long saga of the new burial ground is revelatory, since, involving as it did the church authorities and Kentish County Council, it took many years before a solution was achieved.

The personal memories of some of the village people emphasise how much the area relied on agriculture and there is a real sense of community in so many of their activities, epitomised in the development of the village hall and the activities there, especially those of the Langtoft Players.

There are plenty of pictures, including a section in colour, and plans. Although not a strictly historical work it would have been useful when the phrase 'records show' occurs for us to be told what and where such records are. The book is well produced with good size type so that legibility goes easily hand in hand with readability.

The editor is a lecturer in history at the University of Lincoln and the twelve chapters here satisfy his introductory promise to be both entertaining and educational. The volume is an eclectic collection of illustrated essays with subjects ranging from Thomas Watson, the last Roman Catholic Bishop of Lincoln, to the work of the painter Peter de Wint, 1940's RAF Bomber Command, prisons, town criers, cinemas and 'getting drunk in seventeenth century Lincoln'.

The rest are equally diverse and cover a biography and family portrait of Emily Gilbert, who was the first woman sheriff of Lincoln, the development of the Witham Valley east of Canwick Road, pleasure excursions, technical education in the city, and the middle classes in Victorian Lincoln. A variety of topics but all with the common denominator, the City of Lincoln. The chapters are informative and readable enough taken individually but each can be read as part of the whole story as well as being placed in a wider, national historical context. The subject matter is well written and researched by acknowledged experts in their field and provides - with notes and references (50 in one chapter) - a springboard to further research.

The book concludes with a useful index plus a mini biography of each contributor; many are well known to our readers and include Dr Dennis Mills, Local studies librarian Eleanor Nannestad and Drs Philip Swan and Kate Hill, both lecturers at the University of Lincoln. It has an excellent selection of illustrations, maps, tables and quotations, notably some amusing anecdotes from Terry Stubbings, Lincoln's town crier, in the chapter by Jenny Walton.

One of a regional series, this volume hints at a further edition, and there are certainly more aspects of Lincoln that could be explored in this format.

Definitely a little treasure of a book that does exactly what it says on the tin!

Rox Bower, Lincoln


This is a well documented churchyard survey with an excellent plan of the graves. The memorials inside the church are given in full with notes on the church itself. There are lists of all who served in both World Wars with interesting snippets on the WVS, jubilee sales and so on.

The information from the grave stones is given alphabetically in table form so that the grave numbers have to be checked for others buried in the same plot. However, the number of people commemorated on each stone is given as a clue. All relevant additional information is in the 'Comments' column but those who like verses and the sometimes flowery language will have to visit the churchyard for themselves. The plan will be fine for those who do.

Pat Pomery, Fishtoft.

NEWLY ISSUED BOOKS


BOYCE, Douglas G. Let us sleep now... the Market Rasen men who died in the Great War and their memorials, Market Rasen Local History Group, 2002. 53pp. ISBN 0 9528898 1 1. £3.50 pbk (or £4 incl. p&p from Mr. Boyce, 29 Victoria St., Market Rasen LN8 3EU).


HARDY, Clive. Elizabethan Lincoln. Lincolnshire Echo, 2002. 128pp. ISBN 1 904038 05 0. £9.95 pbk; £11.45 incl. p&p from Henry Hochland, Precinct Centre, Oxford Road, Manchester M13 9QA.


MIGHELL, John. St Wilfrid's Church, Metheringham: a guide and history; second edition. The author, 2002. iii, 40pp. No ISBN. £4.50 pbk or £4.50 from the author, 3 Church Walk, Metheringham LN4 3HA.

QUANTRELL, D.A., editor. Living history: [personal memoirs of Al- ford]. [2], 34pp. No ISBN. £2.50 plus p & p from Mrs. D. Quantrell, 68 Chauntry Road, Alford LN13 9HW.


RUSSELL, Rex. From cock-fighting to chapel building: changes in popular culture in eighteenth and nineteenth century Lincolnshire. Huck- ston, Heritage Trust of Lincoln-
Nottingham University courses in local history

These very successful courses, run in various venues in the East Midlands, are being offered again this autumn. For the first time in over ten years, people in the Grimby area have the chance to study on their doorstep. The courses last for two years, giving the students chance to develop their skills in researching and writing local and family history at their own pace. Previous study is not essential, fees are often halved, or the course is even free of fees, for students in receipt of benefits or on a low income. The courses offer an opportunity to make new friends with similar interests. Brochures are available locally, or contact the university on 0115 846 6466. Alternatively phone Bob Kershaw, the principal tutor for Lincolnshire courses, on 01472 840009.

Details of meetings are given below:

Grimby: Waltham Library Room - from Monday 30 September - 10am to 1pm.
Lincoln: Lincolnshire Archives - from Tuesday 1 October - 10am to 1pm

*Our Village Past*
What were villages really like? And how did our forebears live there from day to day? We will investigate the still rather mysterious processes by which local villages came into being, and what made some grow and others die. This fully illustrated course will uncover our village origins, both in their Lincolnshire setting and wider afield. From hovel to hall, and chimney to chapel, we will see our villages change and grow.

We meet for the first session on Wednesday 8 January at 10am at the Lincolnshire Archives (lecture room open from 9.45am). The tutor is Bob Kershaw for Nottingham University (also a LFHS member).

This course is designed to follow on from the current 'Lincolnshire Parishes and People' course, but people more interested in how villages actually looked, and in the furnishings, tools and surroundings of everyday life will find it a must also. Pick up a leaflet or brochure from the Archives, or contact Nottingham University staff at Pilgrim College, Flydell House, Boston, PE21 6HU (tel 01205 351520) to enrol. The course is enjoyable in its own right, but also as a university course offers Higher Education credits. It will probably be possible to join at the first session, though numbers are limited.