Roman Caistor
Horncastle Horse Fairs
Skinnand the Woolfitt family
Methodism in Swinderby
Cold War underground monitoring posts

Magazine of the Society for Lincolnshire History & Archaeology
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Cover picture: Swinderby Wesleyan Chapel—drawing by David Carnell
Editorial

I always feel I have a considerable advantage over my colleague in covering the spring edition of *Lincolnshire Past & Present*. The idea of throwing off winter gloom and creating new beginnings is very appealing. As always, some of the articles in the magazine are new ideas in themselves and we also have both familiar and new contributors. We are pleased in this number to include a contribution on Roman Caistor from Mr I. S. Davies, who has been studying his area for many years. From veteran local historian and contributor, J. N. Clarke, there is an interesting history of Horncastle Horse Fair. Since no period is ruled out we include John Turner’s piece on Cold War Remains. We are pleased also to publish the item on Swinderby Methodist church.

Another topic that arises at the beginning of each year is that of local anniversaries. One of the shortest is the tenth anniversary of Lincolnshire’s first participation in Heritage Open Days, a note on which appears on page 13. Meanwhile Tattershall Castle is celebrating 90 years of being open to the public. On a wider stage, I note the first Impressionist exhibition in Paris (1874), the outbreak of the Crimean War (1854) or the accession of George I (1814). Well, perhaps these events will set off some ideas, so keep the contributions coming! Not as hard as one might suppose—I can produce pictures of one Balaclava Cottage!

*Hilary Healey, Joint Editor*
Cold War Remains in Lincolnshire

THE UKWMO MIDLAND SECTOR HEADQUARTERS AT FISKERTON AND ITS UNDERGROUND MONITORING POSTS

John T. Turner

The entrance to the underground bunker at Fiskerton. The concrete plinth on the left was the base for the telescopic radio aerial.

The Regional Government Headquarters at Skeddley was described in Lincolnshire Past & Present No 46. If it had become operational it would have relied heavily upon information gathered by members of the Royal Observer Corps stationed at the numerous underground monitoring posts in the area. This information would have been collated and passed on by the UKWMO headquarters located in the village of Fiskerton, seven kilometres east of Lincoln. With the advent of the Cold War the role of the ROC personnel changed dramatically. Gone was the requirement for visual sightings of enemy aircraft and the subsequent plotting of predicted flight paths. Now the wooden huts and raised observation platforms were exchanged for purpose-built blast proof underground monitoring posts that were barely visible on the surface and often constructed adjacent to the obsolete observation posts. It was now only necessary to watch the various dials and instruments that would register the effects of a thermo-nuclear explosion and pass on the information to headquarters.

In 1960 the location of the Lincoln No 15 ROC Group headquarters was moved from RAF Waddington to a new site on the southern edge of the wartime airfield of RAF Fiskerton, overlying part of its perimeter track. The control centre itself was a semi-underground
Sign formerly at the entrance to Fiskerton site bunker and was officially opened in December of that year. In April 1976 the ROC Midlands Area Headquarters was added, moving from RAF Spitalgate, near Grantham. This move entailed the building of new office accommodation on the surface and the enlargement of the underground bunker. As the situation of the Cold War continued to deteriorate the United Kingdom Warning and Monitoring headquarters for the Midlands Sector moved here in 1985. The result was that the bunker was modernised and its monitoring and reporting equipment was upgraded, and a new and larger emergency exit was added. The whole of the site was securely fenced with only one gateway onto the Reepham road. Thus it was to remain, continually manned, until being decommissioned in 1992.

Little remains of the equipment once used on the site. However, one important relic of the past has been saved and is now preserved in the boardroom of the new owners. It is the very large enamelled sign that formerly stood at the entrance to the site. It states the three co-existing functions of the complex in its latter years: ‘United Kingdom Warning and Monitoring Organisation Headquarters Midland Sector’, ‘Royal Observer Corps Headquarters Midland Area’ and ‘Royal Observer Corps Headquarters No 15 Group’.

As a follow-up to the site by the member of SLHA in 1997 (see Lincolnshire Past & Present No 32) a return visit was made on 29 June 2001 in order to check on the current state of the surviving buildings. After the abandonment of the site in 1992 it became the target of vandals and became overgrown. It was put onto the open market in 1993, finally becoming the home of Primentale Limited in 1998. Since that time much has changed to make the site suitable for its new owner.

The most prominent feature on the surface is the large single storey former administration block. It is a flat-roofed building of prefabricated construction, built around a central courtyard. It has been fully restored by the new owners for use as their offices and boardroom, as well as providing a debriefing room and changing rooms for the police who attend training sessions on the site. To the east of this block is a long single storey brick building that was used as a store. To the south of the administration block is the semi-underground bunker that housed the control centre. Intended to be blast and radiation proof it had three operating levels, and an earth mound set with grass covers the whole. Externally the massive concrete entrance block is as it was left in 1992. There are ventilation vents on the roof and sides, while four hand levers from the outside secure the entrance blast-door. The door is approached through a short concrete blast passage. To one side of the entrance is a square concrete platform upon which formerly stood the telescopic radio aerial. The aerial had recently been taken down and at the time of the visit was laid down against the northern perimeter of the site, rusting away. The small enamelled instruction plate, giving details of the erection of the aerial, is still attached to the wall of the entrance block. The original ROC observation post type of emergency escape hatch still survives although the later one that replaced it is much larger and housed within a brick structure. Four hand levers from the outside secure its steel blast door. Near the centre of the earth mound are the mountings for the bomb power indicator and the fixed survey meter.

The control centre, when completed in 1960, had its own kitchen, canteen, washrooms and showers, decontamination room and sleeping quarters. It had an emergency water supply and a standby power generator. The GPO room had connections to the numerous ROC monitoring posts in the area. Over the subsequent years, as the Cold War
intensified, these features were improved and new ones added. Since being acquired by Primetake Limited the internal features have been drastically changed. Access to the inside of the bunker was denied for this visit as this is now a restricted area, but a survey made by members of Subterraria Britannica on 17th February 2000, reported that most of the internal features had already been stripped away to convert it into 20 furnished rooms for use in police training courses. They also found that the generator had been sold in 1998 and two of the three water storage tanks removed. But whereas the female toilets had been removed, the male toilets survived, although there was now no longer a water supply to the bunker! Part of the ventilation plant survived.

Of the many ROC underground monitoring posts in Lincolnshire, including those not under the control of Fiskerton, many still remained as they were abandoned, with even their tables, chairs and beds in situ, although most of the equipment has been removed and most had suffered at the hand of vandals. The establishment of ROC, just before World War II, led to the establishment of 55 observer posts within the county and the majority of these sites were used for the underground monitoring bunkers during the early part of the Cold War period. Subsequently, however, in 1968 the number was reduced to 28. The new underground bunkers consisted of a single room that contained a table, chairs, bunks and various pieces of monitoring equipment. In this small room three ROC members would be expected to eat, sleep and carry out their duties for several weeks in the event of a thermo-nuclear conflict, taking it in turns to use the bunk beds.

The bunkers, built of reinforced concrete and located just below ground level, are mound ed over with soil and sown with grass, the only visible signs on the surface being the upper part of the two small concrete shafts, one for ventilation and the other for access. Although the intention was for them to be constructed to a laid-down standard plan, each post has its own individual minor variation, occasionally even being built back-to-front. As these bunkers lacked the sophisticated environmental back-up systems of the command bunkers, the chances of survival for the ROC personnel, who might be shut up in them for many weeks, is questionable.

A few local examples will give an idea of what is to be seen of these underground monitoring posts today. Few have been totally destroyed, although some have had their shafts demolished and the remains thrown down into the room below and the whole bunker covered over with soil. Many of the surviving underground posts are used by the land owners for storage, although those that were purchased by mobile phone companies are now
coming back onto the open market and are finding private buyers.
At Bishop Norton the ROC post has had the earth mound removed, which gives a unique opportunity to see the construction of the two shafts, although possibly hastening its eventual destruction.
The small square-section shaft was for ventilation although the two ventilation grilles have been removed in this instance. The round hole in the side of this shaft was for the radio dome. The second and much larger shaft is the only access to the bunker and the steel trapdoor on the top is now chained and padlocked. It had two small ventilation grilles that also have been removed.
One of the indicators used at these posts was a directional flash indicator. This instrument had four slots behind each of which were placed sheets of photographic paper, to be retrieved after a thermonuclear explosion in order to check the direction of the blast. The post is an example of the relatively few posts that had the bracket for the indicator located on the top of the ventilation shaft instead of the entrance shaft. This would mean that the person who drew the short straw and had to retrieve the photographic papers from the instrument would be exposed to radiation for a longer period.
The ROC post at Burgh on Bain is on top of a tumulus—perhaps an indication of the priorities of war over archaeology! This site is typical of most of the remaining underground posts in the county. Gone is the well maintained appearance of the shafts, and the manicured grass that once covered the mound and surrounding area is now a tangle of long grass, weeds and briars. Nearby are the remains of an Orilt post, used for observations during World War II. Only a few still survive in Lincolnshire.
A site that has recently been sold is that at Louth, which gave the opportunity to go down into the bunker and experience what it would have been like to be confined in a small space with two others for several weeks, and to realise just how basic the accommodation was. A small steel hatch over the square entrance shaft is the only means of access, gained by climbing down a steel ladder. At the bottom of this shaft is a small sump, covered by a metal grille, into which any rain water that percolated into the bunker would drain. The sump may be emptied by means of a hand pump on the wall near the ladder. Opposite the entrance shaft is a small room for the chemical toilet, and for storing cleaning fluids and the like.
The main room still retained a long table, chairs, storage cupboard, and the remains of the bedding for two bunk beds, although the beds themselves had been removed. All the equipment has long since been removed, but the bracket for the blast intensity meter and mounting for the Geiger counter are still there, as is a home-made direction board. As no services are connected to these bunkers, electrical power had to be provided by two high amperage heavy-duty batteries; these still remained. To conserve battery life a 90-minute timer was inserted in the output cable. There are tales of the timer switching off in the middle of a practice operation—with the subsequent dash to reset it!
My thanks to Mr Loui Birke, Managing Director, Primetake Limited, Fiskerton, for permission to photograph and examine external structures there.
TREES AND GRAVESTONES

Hilary Healey

The illustrations here are of two churchyard memorials using trees as symbols of mortality. The first is at Theddlethorpe All Saints, adjoining the well-known church that now belongs to the Churches Conservation Trust. It is noted (West Theddlethorpe) by W. F. Rawnsley in Highways and Byways of Lincolnshire (1926—on page 293). This stone takes the form of a tree stump out of which grows a bracket fungus, symbolising decay and commemorates Rebecca French, who died in 1862. Although the fungus may not be an identifiable species, time has given the 'bark' of the stump itself a convincingly realistic green patina.

The late Chris Sturman thought it was probably made from artificial material, possibly Caede stone, but there is no evidence for this at present. Perhaps someone knows the history of the French family?

The second photograph is of sandstone and stood formerly in the churchyard at Kirton near Boston, although it was lost in an extensive clearance. The relief shows a tree with a broken trunk, leaning over a sepulchral urn.

The broken tree is a typical symbol of a life cut off, although not a particularly common motif in Lincolnshire.

It has been suggested that the deceased, John Wilson, may have actually been killed by a falling tree, but this suggestion has not been confirmed. His death appears to read March 12, 1812 (or perhaps 1842). Unfortunately the details for his wife Elizabeth are more difficult to read from the photograph. But it should be possible to check these against other records.

A further unusual tree memorial, not shown here, can be seen at Barnack, near Stamford, although of course just outside the county. It takes the form of a fallen palm tree, and is dated 1847. It is worth looking out for—after one has marvelled at all the Saxon delights of Barnack church itself.

Solution to WINTER QUIZ 2003/4

LINCOLNSHIRE CARNIVAL OF ANIMALS

- Guy Gibson's dog was known as Nigger, a name not likely to be used today of course
- Fred Dobson's fictional cat is called Fungus
- The grave of an elephant buried in Victorian times can be seen at Aswarby, in the grounds of the Tudor mansion, that was demolished in 1951.
- A bear, a bee, a butterfly and a bat all carved in wood can be found in Lincoln Cathedral
- The Arboretum in Lincoln is the home of a lion, painted by vandals in the early 20th century. Although it was cleaned up it was still possible to see remnants of the paint for many years but the garden, including the lion, has recently been given a makeover.
- There are more sparrows in Lincoln than anywhere else in the country according to a survey carried out in 2003.
- But there are not as many swans since they have become victims of a mystery affliction.
The Methodist Church in Swinderby—a history

Christine E. Carnell

Village Methodists were societies of friends typically drawn from farmers, tradesmen and farm workers who took to non-conformism enthusiastically in the independently minded and rather remote Lincolnshire countryside with its history of lack-lustre or absent parish priests and feudal lords. They funded and maintained significant public buildings for their distinctive ‘hymns, prayers and preaching’ worship from limited personal means by working together, in Swinderby they took pride and fulfilment in their contribution to the spiritual well-being of the village community, but also kept meticulous records of practical matters about their buildings. Yet this story was written to celebrate the 125th anniversary of the second chapel built by the society that had played a key part in John Hunt becoming the missionary who Christianised Fiji in the 1840s.

Here is a selection from their records compiled and published by Christine Carnell, a member, for this anniversary on 20 April 1994...

It all began in 1816. A man named Bladurwick came to live in Swinderby. He only stayed a short while before returning to Gunthorpe in Nottinghamshire, but during his time in Swinderby he founded a Methodist Society. The first services would have been held in members' homes. They may have had a weekly collection of one penny. In 1824 the members of the Society decided they would like their own small preaching chapel. It was built on about 90 square yards of an orchard owned by Mr Wilkinson. The first deeds were signed on 10 August 1824 and the first Trustees were appointed on the following day.

The duties of the Trustees were to keep the building in good repair and receive rent for the seats and pews.
By 1826 the society is described by Mr Watmough in his book *Methodism in Lincoln and the surrounding area* as 'doing considerable good' and in 1828 he said 'the society is vigorous... hope it will prove to be a means of extensive diffusion of knowledge and genuine piety among the inhabitants of the place'. It was this society that John Hunt joined. The 16-year-old John Hunt came to work as a ploughboy for Mr Wilkinson. He went with friends to hear the new young minister John Smith preach at Thorpe on the Hill. After the service he stayed for a prayer meeting and it changed his life. He began studying and, one Sunday evening when there was no preacher at Swinderby, John Hunt was asked to give the address. He studied the Bible methodically and became a local preacher—a lay person licensed to lead services and preach.

The Circuit (local group of chapels) quarterly meeting put Hunt's name forward as a candidate for the Ministry, and he went to college at Hoxton in London. While there, he and Hannah Summers wrote to each other and when he was asked to go to Fiji he immediately asked her to marry him. They sailed for Fiji in 1838 to a difficult life in the tropical climate, but he translated Bible stories into Fijian, and many people became Christians before he died in 1848.

By 1831 the population of Swinderby was 449, with 76 inhabited houses. The Lincoln Circuit Plan for 1835, which was displayed in Thorpe on the Hill Methodist chapel until its closure in the 1990s, showed that there was one local preacher from Swinderby, Mr Blyton. Services were held each Sunday, every third week was a 'love feast' and on alternate Tuesdays there was a ticketed members-only meeting.

In 1847 the first entry in the Baptism register was Mary Caulishaw aged 6 weeks 3 days baptised by the Rev Henry Smallwood. Since then (until April 1994) 153 names have been recorded. 1855 was the 18th year of Queen Victoria's reign and under a new Act of Parliament the chapel was registered as a place of worship, having previously been licensed by the Bishop of Lincoln. By 1862 nearly all the first Trustees had died. A new Trust was appointed, but only 3 lived in the village. They were John Smith and David Jackson, who were farmers, and the butcher Robert Smith. The society must have been flourishing because in 1869 the Trust talked to Mr Meads from London, with a slight link with Swinderby, about the 'desirability of a new Chapel and School Room'. He gave them £5 for a public tea to 'get the friends together and see what could be done'. £170 was raised at the tea and an extra £50 was promised by John Smith, who now lived in Manchester, if the chapel could be opened free of debt. (£5 was more than a farmer's worker's weekly wage.

The new chapel was built on the old site from Mr Stephenson and Mr Marshall. Built in little over three months by a Hogsthorpe firm, its opening service was on 30 September. By the end of the opening celebrations £621-12s-8d had been raised. The Trustees decided to charge sixpence a quarter for the 'sittings'. There were 300 seats in the chapel and 100 in the school room. These brought in an income of £9-11s-2d. Some of the outer seats were free for females but the middle ones cost 9d. Seat rent was collected until 1928, when it had fallen to £1-7s-0d from a peak of £17-16s-0d in 1870. The lighting was by candles, costing 4 shillings and sixpence for 6lb in 1876. Heating was by coal and coke fires: in 1871 five hundredweight of coal cost four shillings and sixpence and the same amount of coke cost four shillings and two pence.

The chapel keeper received £5 each year from 1869 until 1921 and in 1871 deacons cost sixpence. A large amount of crockery, specially made for Swinderby Wesleyan Sunday School in 1879, may have been for a big party on the 10th anniversary. New oil lamps in 1883/4 cost £4-4s-6d. Oil was bought from Mr Blyton for nine shillings and sevenpence and a new harmonium cost £58-25s-7d.

At the 1892 Chapel Anniversary the collection was £1-1s-1d and income from the tea was £3-14s-0d. The beef and ham cost £1-6s-0d and the butter cost six shillings and eigthpence. The next year a Mission was held in February and it cost £3-10s-0d to have the inside and outside painted. In 1899 the assessment to the Lincoln Circuit (for ministers' stipends and administrative services) was £40.

16 August 1913 was the day when the building was first registered by the Registrar in Newark for the solemnising of marriages. In 1914 a New Year's Eve service of song raised £3-15s-6d, a coffee supper raised £2 and a visit by North Scarle choir raised £1-3s-6d. The circuit minute book for 1917 recommended the village chapels to take a collection at services; Swinderby already took one in the evening.

The Jubilee was celebrated from 15-23 June 1919. There were special services with the Sunday School Anniversary and a parade through the village when all the children wore 'new frocks and suits' and 'most of the Wesleyans hung out flags'.

In 1929 the next trust was appointed, the previous one had run since 1893. The Diamond Jubilee was planned and the Circuit Quarterly Meeting was invited to the public tea to celebrate the renovations including a new stove for £12. During the 1920s a Wesley Guild was started, which gave donations for the use of the building.

In 1931 a safe was bought for £4 and the chapel was fully registered for marriages. In 1932 all Methodists joined into one Union and Swinderby became part of a new circuit. The next year it was agreed to install hat pegs in the Sunday School Room! In 1934 there was a recital in the Village Hall when the chairman was the vicar, the Rev Gardiner. 1936 was the year of the garden fete in Hutson's Paddock. It was a success and raised £34. New tablecloths cost £1. In 1937 the Anniversary plat-
form was repaired. This was a temporary structure erected in many chapels to make small children more visible while reciting, singing songs or acting playlets in the Anniversary celebratory services. Mr W. A. Smith left the Trustees a legacy, the interest to be used for cleaning, lighting and heating.

In 1942 Mr Weetherhogg—a Sunday School scholar of 60 years ago—gave money for 24 chairs at thirteen shillings and fourpence each and also promised a legacy. In the Minute Book is written: 'the Trust is greatly indebted to this gentleman who shows in so practical a way the true value of S.S. teaching of 60 years ago.' When he died in 1957 the legacy of £500 was put in the hands of the Swinderby Poor Trust to share 'for the benefit of the Poor in Swinderby'.

During the Second World War a special risk insurance of ten shillings a quarter had to be paid. A Trustees' meeting in January 1946 agreed to install electricity for £15-5s-0d. The cost of electricity for 1947 was £1-1s-3d. The War Memorial tablet was placed in the chapel in 1950 and a new Trust was appointed. Piped water was installed and the first bill was four shillings and tenpence.

In 1955 the old harmonium was replaced by an electric organ for £150. The organist of 40 years (Miss Cargill) resigned and 3 ladies were appointed. In 1957 the premises were first used for a clinic.

In 1960 another garden party was held and an Elsan chemical toilet was given. In November a new stove was put in the hall and a larger gutter installed around the chapel. Electric heaters were installed in January 1963 and cost £108. In 1964 a blue carpet was bought for £206, followed by matching curtains in 1965.

The chapel was connected to the main sewer in 1968, and in 1969 electric heaters were installed in the school room. The Sunday School that had to be closed for want of children). In 1984 there were 28 children, three leaders and six Girl Guides who helped and were doing their service badges. The Shell Group for children of 7-12 years had 26 members and five helpers.

The Women's Fellowship that was begun in 1959 closed in 1990. From their collections the Fellowship members had been able to give donations to many charities and also buy equipment for the chapel. A youth club ran for a short time in the 1970s and again in 1980 when the Shell Group was split into two parts.

Brownies met on the premises from 1974 until 1986 and Guides also met for a short time in the 1970s.

During the 1960s the Parish and Methodist churches began to have some joint services. From that time many of the special services at Christmas, Easter and Harvest Thanksgiving were supported by members of both churches. A party for the Vietnamese refugee 'boat people' children living at Morton Hall was also run by both churches.

In May 1988 a Circuit Service to commemorate the sailing 150 years previously of John Hunt to Fiji was held at Swinderby. The church was full and it greatly encouraged the members who were wondering whether a society should remain at Swinderby.

On Christmas Day 1983 a set of the new hymn books was dedicated. In 1984 some seats were removed to make a small vestry and the building was also redecorated.

1986 was a difficult time with attendances falling and services reduced to monthly although the Shell Group and Women's Fellowship continued. In 1992 reintroduced weekly services increased activity, but the membership decreased to 12 in December 1993 on the death of Mr A. Eddie Pacey, a member since 1927 and a Local Preacher for over 70 years.

The 125th Anniversary of the opening of the present building was celebrated in 1994, but numbers had dwindled once again below a viable level and the chapel ceased to be a Methodist church on 29 March 1998.

© G. David Carnell 2000, for Christine E. Carnell (deceased)
LP&P Letters

Forum where readers can have their say about local issues. We welcome both replies to letters and new comments. (Any views expressed will not necessarily be those of SLHA.) Unfortunately this new feature did not get off to a very good start as we inadvertently omitted some of Mr Turland’s letter—without which it made little sense! With apologies to Michael, we publish it here again in full:

LIBRARY CHARGES

Dear Editors

I have learnt that Lincolnshire Library Service has greatly increased its charges for library loans from outside Lincolnshire from 75 pence to £2.50 (plus copying charges where applicable).

To someone like myself whose research (‘Kirk and Parry’ of Sleaford, London and various other places) is widely based and is in a field where background reading is essential, such a hefty increase in costs is a serious hindrance. To be more blunt, the charges could be regarded as undermining serious research by private individuals and (unintentionally) an attack on the higher levels of intellectual endeavour. ‘Dumbing down’ I believe it is called in a BBC context. What really annoys me is that the charge for loans within Lincolnshire has been cut to a third—25 pence. In effect, those seeking enlightenment outside the county are subsidising the ‘parochial’ as though the latter were somehow ‘better’.

It will be pointed out that other counties levy similar charges for loans via the British Library, to meet the latter’s charges (or rather, part of them). But inhabitants of, say, Nottingham and Leicester, have well established university libraries in their midst: Lincolnshire does not and to that extent, access to the wider context is vital. Personally, with these sorts of costs to obtain vital books, I no longer see any reason to donate, free of charge, information or documentation to the library service— they who charge should expect to pay! Have other readers any views—ideas on how to reverse the decision (unlikely) or ways round it? Presumably all academic specialists are affected—not just historians and archaeologists.

Yours sincerely

M. J. Turland, Sleaford

University of Lincoln—Library under construction
55.1 Hilary Healey's article about the current state of museums in Lincolnshire was very timely. She could have added that the Louth Museum is also closed for refurbishment at the moment. It is undergoing a major refurbishment and extension, ably led by SLHA President David Robinson, and Hon Curator Jean Howard. It will be the first to reopen later in 2004. This project is also largely funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund. Whilst it is unfortunate that all these museums are closed at the same time, let us not complain! The current work represents the biggest investment ever by local authorities and others in the county museums. In particular the Heritage Lottery Fund is making a substantial commitment to the county. Apart from the £5 million plus allocated to the new City and County Museum, the HLF has already spent or earmarked over £1.3 million to ensure the future of these significant historic buildings and the collections they contain.

The purpose of all this investment is to ensure that everyone can have better access to the heritage that these collections represent. I have been involved, in one way or another, with all these projects so I know just how much careful thought and planning is going into them. The end products will be interesting, entertaining and stimulating, and more accessible both physically and intellectually than their predecessors. They will aim to appeal to a wide audience, not just traditional "museum visitors", but they will also have improved storage conditions for the reference collections, better documentation of the material and better facilities for anyone who wants to study them. For example, Boston will have, in addition to the refurbished medieval Guildhall, a new Resource and Exhibition Centre. This will give ready access to a computer database of all the collections, complete with digital images of every object.

As local historians and archaeologists we can all celebrate this significant investment in the things we are interested in. I hope that all SLHA members will support these projects when they reopen. Why not consider becoming a Friend of regular supporter of one or all of them? At least watch the local press for when they reopen, go to visit them, and encourage others to do the same, and use the facilities they offer. We need to demonstrate, particularly to the local authorities, what an important part of our local history and local identity these museums are, so that they will continue to support them in the future, once the glamour of the new project has worn off. And, by the way, do keep buying your Lottery tickets, so that other buildings and collections have their chance for refurbishment too!

Catherine Wilson

55.2 Lincolnshire giant The SLHA has received a request from a gentleman in Belgium for information on a Lincolnshire giant named Balthasar Mackensfield. The Belgian gentleman came across an article in a Belgian newspaper about Mackensfield and apparently he was having legal problems as he sold his body to ten or more doctors. Allegedly he was buried in Westminster. Did he exist? Can anyone throw light on the story?

55.3 Lucky for some—protecting the house A couple of years ago a letter was passed to me from a student looking for information on finds of objects deposited in roofs or under thresholds of houses. Put briefly, objects were often deposited as a general protection against evil and against witches in particular. At short notice I could find nothing about this on a county basis, but did rustle up a list of about eight finds that I had heard of in Lincolnshire over the years, mostly through information handed in at agricultural shows. A recent press report in Spalding about a mumified cat (which actually turned out to be misinformation!) reminded me of the topic, and I decided to do a note on it. However, I thought I would first ask readers if they have any information. The types of find vary from "witch-bottles" (stoneware bottles filled with pins) or cats, to shoes (probably the most common find) or clay pipes. I also know of an iron poker and a metal tipped arrow. If you know the likely date of the building concerned please include this in your account. Contributors may remain anonymous, but the name of the village or town would be useful.

Hilary Healey
55.4 Sophie Farrell, b1861 I'm writing a book about Virginia Woolf's servants and the oldest of the family servants, Sophie Farrell, was born in Ranby, Lincolnshire, in 1861 (she went down to London sometime in the 1880s, probably to work for Julia and Leslie Stephen, Virginia Woolf's parents). They were almost certainly Roman Catholics (her father was Charles Farrell, originally O'Farrell, an Irishman who gave his occupation as gardener when Sophie was born). Sophie spent the last part of her life working for the Duckworth family in London and Sussex; she died in Brixton in 1941. I realize that the chances of any relatives or connections remaining in Lincolnshire are slim but any information about Sophie and her family or about Ranby in the mid 19th century would be most welcome.

Prof Alison Light
Alisonfreelance@aol.com

55.5 Heritage Open Days This event, which began as a European initiative, and was brought to the county's attention by SLHA member Dr Dennis Mills, is celebrating its tenth year in 2004. The Lincolnshire programme is co-ordinated in the county by the Heritage Development Officer at the Heritage Trust of Lincolnshire, currently Liz Bates, assisted by a steering group. Since it is the historic county that is celebrated, we are supported in the leaflet production by the County and District Councils. The event is now spread over four days and has gone from strength to strength, with around 80 venues available each year. The Civic Trust—the national coordinating body—has praised Lincolnshire for its attractive leaflet.
The deserted village of Skinnand and the Woolfitt family


Jennifer Fox

W. T. Woolfitt (Bill Woolfitt of the Woolfitt/Brown branch of the family) wrote in a magazine (don't know firm or name) Overseas Trade Promotion Department circa 1970s:

'Remote from the public highway, down a cart-track, through a farmyard, over a wooden bridge and in the middle of a field in which cattle graze is a fenced-off square with sides of about 20 feet. Now overgrown with weeds, a hawthorn bush in one corner, the square encloses seven graves: four inscribed Woolfitt and three Massy the maiden name of Catherine Woolfitt. The graves now form a desolate and uncanny memorial to the vanished Skinnand and the church of St Matthias in whose grounds they once stood. They are part of the history of the Woolfitt family gathered by Mr Ronald Harwood for the biography he wrote entitled *Sir Donald Woolfitt—his life and work in the unfashionable theatre* published in 1971 by Seeker and Warburg.'

I first visited the site in the late 1980s and again in the 1990s after I had come to live in Lincolnshire. It is an eerie place where one feels the ghosts of the past walking. On my visit the stone barn was still there. It is said that it was built with stone from the church, but I suspect it is what was left of the nave, with the churchyard just the other side of the dyke.

On my last visit at the end of the last century the 'barn' had gone and the ground had been levelled. Still standing was a Victorian brick farm house but nettles had taken control of an orchard and ivy was about to engulf the farmhouse. I doubt if the house is there today.

'Richard Woolfitt' the author continues, 'lived in Navenby in 1740 and a century later a descendant, John, was one of three generations of the family farming at nearby Skinnand.

'At this time the church was already in ruins, the tower having been "blown down in a recent gale". But the churchyard was still in use and as late as 1882 divine service was held once a week in John Woolfitt's house. By 1892 the frequency had become once a fortnight, presumably because the village was reduced to "less than forty souls". In 1909 it is recorded merely that "divine service is conducted at the house of Mr Edward Woolfitt by the vicar".

'Some time after this a small wooden hut was erected as a chapel and the remains of this hut, together with some derelict cottages, are signposted as Skinnand from the road joining Navenby and Brant Lane. There is, however, no access between chapel and graveyard as the land is under cultivation.'

I understand that grave stones were found in the ditch beside the Woolfitts' graves but I do not know if there are any records of this. In the 1990s there was a Woolfitt still farming in the area and maintaining the family graves.

The Woolfitts of Skinnand, and the Woolfitts of Newark from whom Sir Donald came, are descended from Richard Woolfitt of Navenby and we know from an entry in the family Bible that Richard Woolfitt married the widow Moore whose maiden name was Maples.

I understand that Richard Woolfitt died at Harmston. I searched the Lincoln archives for more information on the family and found nothing in Harmston but I did find something in Navenby, but mostly to do with Maples.

The family Bible purchased by John and Maria Woolfitt in 1819 has given the Newark Woolfitts the clue to his ancestry. Note that Sir Donald Woolfitt changed the spelling of his name to the shorter Wolfit but his son, Adam, is meticulous in being a Woolfitt.

The entry in the bible reads:

John son of William and Mary Wolfit was born on the 20th day of February 1796 at 54 minutes past 6 o'clock in the morning

Departed this life January 27th 1848 a.m. mean time
The Marriage Solemnity of John Woolfitt and Maria Cooper was on the 19th Day of May 1818
Died January 24th 1871, Buried January 27th 1871 at South Clifton

The bible contains the information that Richard the father of William Woolfitt was born in Laxton and married Mary, the Widow Moore, who was of the family of Maples, at Navenby, Lincolnshire. They had two sons—Richard (1745-1825) and William (1754-1838). It was William, the second son, who had to leave the Navenby area to find a farm elsewhere and start his branch of the family, which leads us to Sir Donald, whose grandfather abandoned farming to become a townsman in Newark.

[Jennifer’s mother was a Woolfitt and elder sister to Sir Donald.]
Skinnand: Enclosure with Woolfitt graves. Photo by Bill Woolfitt – 1970s

Skinnand: Three of the seven graves. Photo by Bill Woolfitt – 1970s
I have two mappings of Roman Caistor; one is small and of a reproducible size and another is much larger at 1:10,000 Ordnance Survey and cannot be reproduced. The larger mapping shows eight Roman structures that can be paired as four bivariate sets to illustrate the effects of evolution in ancient days when events were not pre-planned as a whole, indeed could not be.

The first pair comprised two Latin crosses of the first-century road systems (AD 47). Most of the evidence for these was inferentially determined from OS aerial photographs of the region. The roads were diffused through to the surface soils or settled down to bedrock. An excavation in North Street proved the original alignment as being 12° west of Grid North. The secondary attempt at re-siting the cross was to the east of the original but incomplete, as if the effort was too great a task to repeat. Furthermore, two farm strips were generated, one to the south along an extant footpath to Nettleton from Caistor, now forming part of the present Viking Way, and the other, also at an angle to the main ‘frame’, which shows ‘atonic’ characteristics, much as in musical regulations, over and along Whitegate Hill. Completion of the cross is not evident here but the change of direction is obvious. Some depletion of the population seems certain as well during the first to second centuries due, perhaps, to the moving of the Ninth Legion to York, under Vespasian in the AD 70s.

The second pair consists of a 50-acre wooden fort and its extension westward to 91 acres, overlapping. This also shows, to its western edge, some incompletion of earthworks. The original fort was dated to 208; Septimius Severus’ time. It was only half occupied but it was built with great care to conserve the previous road plan of the Ninth. It is just possible that the nearly square fort was conceived from the central area of a Grecian cross this time, but no evidence is extantable enough for this actual concept. The central area of the Latin cross was rectangular but it was not a stronghold defence of 120 acres since the arms of the cross were populated throughout the area of its 1.75 square miles.

The third set of bivariates consisted of two small camps; one, thought to be the earlier, was 8½ acres overall and the other 12 acres. The 8½-acre one was dated to the time of Gordian III and the 12-acre one to Philippus I, by means of two brass sestertii found in 1981 almost together on opposite sides of Whitegate Hill, close to both camps. The finder was 10-year-old Jamie Wilkinson of Caistor. The dates were in the range AD 238 to 249. These camps are normally very difficult to date.

The fourth set were camp-sized structures too, both quite different; the earlier was timber, the other stone. The earlier was one stadium square (8½ acres) and adjoining it along one side and corner. The stone camp was not a defence of internal buildings as has been postulated and illustrated by others, but a retreat for the surrounding housing estates where most people lived, except in emergencies. They would retreat into it and use the space for livestock too. The housing estates were rotational as sites and helped date the defences by means of the new Indiction Period of 15 years each. There were four such estates and a probable fifth at the Nettleton region. Assuming the settlement was deserted in AD 410, four and a half Indiction period sites would back-date the decagon to AD 343, in the time of Constantine.

The two names Barrowall and Thetl applied to the first and last structures respectively of Roman Caistor. The first name was mistakenly given to Horncastle by William Stukeley in the 18th century. More recently, Barrowall was interpreted as ‘peak strength’ by Professors I. A. Richmond and O. G. S. Crawford and attributed to Caistor instead. The last name is a Greek inspiration and a new word of the late 1960s. It was originally interpreted as ‘a red, brewe decagon around a “yella” interline’ and applied to the stone structure and its inner way from Bank Lane to Castle Hill. The red brewe reflected the longest note of a notation in pre-1450 music, but remained contemporary with modern times, shapewise. Castra meant Camp, of which there were four areas so far discovered, the principal one being the stone enclosure.

Above right: CAISTOR AND ITS ENVIRONS. Mr Davies’ map is too detailed to reproduce at this scale. This sketch of the main features is at the correct scale to superimpose on the 2½" (1:25,000) map, part of sheet 9 and traces Mr Davies’ principal features. It was drawn by Hilary Healey who takes full responsibility for any errors in transcribing the information.
Horncastle Horse Fairs

J. N. Clarke

A great deal has been written about Horncastle Horse Fairs, much of it highly coloured, and some of it based on imagination. Even so, Horncastle Horse Fair was one of the largest horse fairs to be held in England during the 19th century, and attracted many colourful characters—as well as some shady ones—to the town each August.

The original charter for an August Fair was confirmed by Henry III on 18 April 1229 to the Bishop of Carlisle who was then Lord of the Manor of Horncastle. The fair must have been held before then because the Charter refers to ‘this Fair which they have in the same Manor every year at the Feast of Saint Laurence.’ (See Charter No 2). The Feast of Saint Laurence was held on 10 August.

In order to grasp the real reason why horse fairs, and the Horncastle Horse Fair in particular, played such a large part in the life of the countryside on both a county and national level, it is necessary to have some idea of the economic importance of horses during the 18th and 19th centuries. Before turnpike roads and canals, all heavy goods had to be carried in heavy horse-drawn wagons or alternatively in small quantities on large companies of packhorses. Tens of thousands of such horses would be required over the whole country.

From 1784 onwards there were three types of public vehicle on the roads for the use of travellers viz. STAGE COACHES. These were either fast or slow, with passengers inside and on top, pulled by relays of six or more horses.

MAIL COACHES. Carried four passengers in addition to the mail. (Before 1784 mail had been carried by post boys on horseback because
roads were impassable for wheeled vehicles. The Turnpike Acts allowed the roads to be improved sufficiently to take wheeled vehicles over a large part of the country.)

POST CHAISES. In spite of their name these had nothing to do with mail, but were fast two-horse, enclosed small carriages slung on 'e' springs. Two passengers were carried. The chaises were either privately owned, or hired from posting houses—usually inns—situated approximately 12 miles apart where horses were changed. Many isolated inns in existence today started off as post houses.

The average life of horses working in stage coaches was only four years, and in the top-line fast coaches driven by 'Swell Dragsmen' the life of the horses was only three years. The owner of one fleet of stage coaches operating from London in 1810 kept 1,300 horses, a third of which were replaced each year. So one operator alone would be purchasing 430 horses annually! Tens of thousands of farm horses were needed each year. Even as recently as 1921 the Agricultural Returns for that year show there were 74,500 horses in Lincolnshire alone.

Many thousands of horses were used by tradesmen in towns for hansom cabs, delivery of coal, milk and other goods. The demand for cab horses in the larger towns would run into many thousands. The railway companies and large breweries were also users of thousands of heavy horses.

Huge numbers of the animals were purchased annually by the Army for Cavalry units and Transport Companies, and there would be a heavy annual replacement required for dry horses, packhorses, hunters, hacks, cobs, ponies, and so on. Matched teams of horses were in demand for private carriages, undertakers, etc.

This insatiable demand for horses of all kinds was met mainly by horse dealers who operated between the breeders and purchasers. Many men who could not read or write built up large fortunes in the horse dealing business, and Horncastle Horse Fair was one of their chief centres of activity in the British Isles.

The Market Place, Wong Bull Ring, inn yards, main roads and even side streets were packed with horses for sale. Dealers from abroad also visited Horncastle to buy breeding stallions and mares for their studs. The fair sometimes lasted for as long as three weeks, although the usual period was seven to ten days during the latter half of the 19th century.

The Stamford Mercury included full reports of Horncastle Horse Fair each August, and the following extracts of that newspaper give a vivid factual account of the fair during the early years of the 19th century:

14 August 1829 'The demand for good horses at Horncastle Fair is expected to be very brisk as several strings of them have been eagerly bought on their way to that place.' The animals were driven in large droves across country by breeders, who, so doubt, sold during the drive if offered a good price.

21 August 1829 'Horncastle August 20th. As early as the 11th instant two or three foreigners had arrived in town; it also became pretty generally known that several of the London dealers were visiting the stables in the northern part of the county, and that the very best horses were scarce and in great request. During Thursday and Friday 13th and 14th, strings of hunting horses kept occasionally dropping in: they excited much interest among buyers, and were eagerly bought up at great prices. Mr. Anderson of Park Lane, London purchased three bay horses of Mr. Whitlam of Tows for £500; a 7 years old light bay horse fetched as much as £300, and several averaged £150 each. On Sunday the town began to assume a considerable degree of bustle. The one-horse Boston socalled was exchanged for the London Perseverance Coach, with 12 outside and 6 inside passengers. Post chaises, gigs, and the more humble dealer's cartes were drawn by the 'prad wot trots away' were constantly arriving. The influx of foreign dealers became greater on that day than before observed, and their salutation of a kiss on the cheek outraged the feelings of several young farmers loitering about the Bull Inn, who were unacquainted with this continental mode of greeting. From Monday up to the present time much business had been done. Cart horses adapted for London drays have fetched very great prices, but the country cart horses have not sold so well. Good harness horses were in request; the middling kind of hackneys experienced rather a dull sale, but on the whole this may be pronounced to have been one of the best fairs held for some years.'

28 August 1829 'Horncastle fair (concluded from our last). As the fair drew nearer its end, the inferior kind of horses were in greater request; buyers became general for almost every description, and a very animated scene of bustle and business presented itself. The usual manoeuvres of the fancy were in many instances successfully played off. A gentleman's groom who was receiving about four and twenty pounds for a horse his master had sold, held the bank notes rather incautiously in his hand; the purchaser of the horse, reminding him of the necessity of taking more care of his money, and again taking possession of the notes, appeared to fold them in a sheet of paper which he placed in the hands of the servant, who carefully deposited them in his watch-pocket; on seeing his master about an hour afterwards, he drew the packet out of his watch-pocket, but on unfolding it he found that instead of bank notes it contained only several folds of paper in the last of which was a sixpence.'

'A few years since foreigners visiting this place were in the habit of purchasing the lighter kind of horses at much higher prices than the English dealers could give; but that the fashion on the continent seems to have changed in
favour of the better kind of horses, may be inferred from the following observation in broken English by a foreigner on his first visit here last week: My countrymen did buy de horse at £40 and £80, but dat vill not do now; he does like de £100 English horse vid de thick body and de short leg; when I come to dis fair, I expect to see de fine horse exhibit in de street, but instead of dat, we have to seek him in all the mazes of de labyrinth.

"We also heard of two or three horses being ridden away by the persons supposed to be trying them out."

It will be seen that the fair lasted for a whole fortnight in 1829.

**August 1830** ‘The Fair started 2 days earlier than usual. On Monday and Tuesday all inns were crowded to overflowing and every building in the shape of an outhouse converted into stables. As late as midnight on Monday the attendants at the different public houses were seeking up and down town for beds for many of their guests.’

An article in the *Horncastle News* in August 1836 gave lists of people visiting the Horse Fair, and it shows that the Rodney Inn and New Inn were the favourite rendezvous for Irish buyers, whilst French, German and Belgian dealers favoured the Great Northern Hotel near the railway station. Titled visitors, army officers and the lesser gentry put up at the Bull Hotel.

Special arrangements for the keeping of law and order during the Horse Fair had to be made from very early times. The *Horncastle Bailiff's Account Roll 1506/7* (Carlisle Archives Office) includes an item:

"Special watching at Fairs Monies paid to certain Knights in the time of the fair for security of the town and its inhabitants... 6s 8d"

In the 18th and early 19th centuries the Petty Constables had to be supplemented during fairs by a number of watchmen who were paid six shillings per day. The large influx of visitors to the town during fairs and markets posed obvious sanitary problems, and at a meeting of Horncastle Local Board held in July 1875 the Minutes show the following resolution was passed:

"That public urinals be erected before the August Horse Fair because complaints have been from house and shop owners that their walls served this purpose, and apart from embarrassment to women the smell was objectionable."

As a result a urinal was built at the bottom of the Bull Ring, but as it drained directly into the River Waring it could...
hardly be claimed to have improved sanitation. It served its purpose for exactly 100 years, however, being knocked down in 1974.

The building of the railway in 1854 virtually put out of business the 'Cadees' or drovers who used to drive large numbers of horses by track and roadreg - the bigness distances to and from the fair. Most farmers at that time bred a few horses, and the herds would grow as the drovers called at farms on their way to the fair.

The fair itself had begun to contract by the middle of the 19th century because, by then of course, railways were being built all over the country, and stage coaches were rapidly on their way out, thus one source of demand for horses was drying up. In 1886, although business was brisk, the fair lasted for four days only. According to the Horncastle News report at the time the reason for the short fair was the rapidity with which business could be transacted due to improved rail and road services, also the lower demand for farm horses caused by the agricultural depression. Even so, prices of £200 were quoted as being paid for good hunters and matched carriage horses. It is obvious from newspaper reports that the duration of the Horncastle Horse Fair varied, very much from year to year.

Mr Jos Boswell of Lindum Road, Horncastle, one of the last local horse dealers, was interviewed by a reporter of the Horncastle News in November 1968 when he was 80 years of age:

'At the turn of the century during the big August fair, Horncastle attracted buyers from all over the world. Jos told our reporter that a large contingent of the German Government used to stay at the Great Northern Hotel, which is now of course closed, and, he said: it wasn't unusual for their wine bill to come to £500 for just one month and champagne was then only seven shillings and sixpence a bottle.'

At that time, remarked Jos, there were thirty-seven inns and pubs in the town, and stabling horses was their livelihood. The Bull Hotel could stable up to 150 horses; the New Inn about 100 horses and, says Jos, you could often see well over 150 horses in the Rodney Hotel yard.

'When we went buying horses,' he said, 'we would probably go to Wales and then to Scotland, where the horses would be walked home, stopping at Gretna Green to have them re-shod.' During the Horncastle fair, he entered a large number of working horses and at the time horses could make anything up to £500. Many of the expensive horses were bought by the Belgium Government for the royal carriages. 'All the horses for hansom cabs and taxi cabs in London were bought at Horncastle' said Jos.

The Horse Fair was a colourful part in the annual life of the town, but its economic importance to the town of Horncastle has often been exaggerated. Huge sums of money undoubtedly changed hands during the week or so of the fair, but usually between breeders and buyer from distant parts. Hay and straw merchants, hotels, inns, grocers, ostlers corn merchants and other businesses would of course benefit, but colourful though the Horse Fair may have been, it should not be forgotten that sheep and wool; tanning and leather traders; barley and malt, have played a much more significant part than horses in the economy of Horncastle over the centuries.

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**Bookshelf**

This section aims to list all new titles with as many short reviews as space permits. Reviews are by the reviews editor unless otherwise stated. Most titles are obtainable from Jews' Court bookshop, Steep Hill, Lincoln.

ARMSFORD, A. and ARMSFORD, R. Sortie not completed: our search for a lost bomber crew. The authors, 2003. 72pp. ISBN 0 9537208 7 3. £3.99 pbk (or £4.50 by post from the authors, 37 Cresshill Drive, Morton West, Carlisle CA2 6RS).

This labour of love tells the story of Ross Shannon, who came to Boston as a young airmen in 1942 for 'square bashing': as there was no RAF camp at Boston he was billeted with the Hall family and became friendly with 17-year-old Frances, their youngest daughter and subsequently the mother of one of the authors. She often spoke of the lads she knew at the family home and had kept one of Ross's letters. After her death this inspired the search for what had happened to Ross; he had become a bomb-aimer based with 207 Squadron at Spilsby. He and his crew completed five sorties in the summer of 1944 but on the sixth they returned with a dangerous 'bomb hang-up' and the pilot decided to jettison it over the North Sea - nothing was heard again from the Lancaster. The authors cover the possible causes and the rescue attempts, which resulted in only three bodies being found but not Ross. This is a personal account of one crew's part in the costly bomber offensive and is well produced, with photos and a map of RAF Spilsby. Good value for its modest price.

Terry Hancock, Cherry Willingham


It has long grieved me that so many street atlases have appeared during the last few years and always of the populous home counties, it seemed. Now two come along! How to choose? If
you are only likely to want a guide to the streets of the county's main towns and larger villages (and that includes Colsterworth, Great Cotes and Holdingham, for instance) then the Barnett guide would suffice. It marks and names some of the prominent houses, farms or inns along the routes and to each map is attached an index of street names. This latter feature does not appear in the Philip's atlas in the same way. A very comprehensive index at the end of the volume not only includes every street name but those of hospitals, industrial estates, railway stations, schools, shopping centres, universities (plural because Hull is also included) and places of interest. It is worth pointing out that both books treat of the ancient county. Ordnance Survey maps have been used by both compilers but scaled up to 3.5 inches to a mile. The areas outside the main towns in the Philip's are shown at 1.75 inches to the mile, while such parts of the county are omitted in the Barnett's work. Philip's use of colour in all its maps gives it an important edge but the extra detail on Barnett's town maps must be a bonus to folk who, for instance, need to find the DHSS office in Skegness. If you know street names in the villages of all sizes you should have the Philip's. So, in an ideal world, one must have both in the car. The county's travellers are now well catered for.


It is rare for a club of any sort to reach its two hundredth anniversary and this book celebrates a cricket club reaching that landmark. Remarkably it has used the same ground since 1834 as far as current research shows.

The book is in three sections; a history to start with, followed, rightly, by score cards with 17 pages of illustrations and match reports; a brief final part lists the officers as far as they are known from 1875. The research here makes an important contribution to local studies. The score cards record hundreds of names of individuals in the town (and could be of great use to family historians) and also, of course, those of their opponents.

The highlight perhaps was the visit of W.G. Grace and his brother in 1870—they both got 100s against a Sleaford XXII—though I'm not as convinced as the author that all 22 fielded at the same time. Controversy arose in 1882 when a tennis club was formed and distraction of the players was feared, not helped by the club chairman being also a tennis player.

Some errors in spelling of names have crept in; Fred Truman (oh dear, p.22); Patterson (Pattinson, p. 27 and p.33) among others; the score on p. ix for All England adds up to 171 not 17 and p. vi gives a total of 17 but only 16 runs are recorded. These slight things may well be what the original records said and cannot be attributed to the author, who has delved deep and widely in local source material. They are comparatively insignificant—go out and buy it and discover on p. vii why Julius Caesar invaded England.

Mike Turland, Sleaford


North Witham WW2 airfield lies east of the A1, one mile south of the Colsterworth roundabout. For most of its brief existence it served as a US Army Air Force maintenance unit, keeping C47 Dakotas airborne for the nearby USAF Troop Carrier Groups, which carried paratroopers of the US 82nd Airborne (HQ Leicester) and British 1st Airborne (HQ Fulbeck) on major European operations. It does have a major claim to fame as the base for US Army Pathfinder and their training school; it was their job to jump ahead of the main forces to set up mobile radars which allowed the main Dakota forces to home in to make accurate drops. At 21.54 on 5 June, 1944 the first of eleven C47s took off and at 00.16 the Pathfinders became the first American troops to land in France on D-Day at the same time as the British counterparts hit the ground at Ouistreham at the eastern end of the Normandy landing beaches. The airfield went back to normal duties after that until the USAAF left in May, 1945; until 1956 the RAF used it mainly for bomb storage.

The author has made a good job providing a map and using rare photos and the memories of servicemen and local people; there is a picture of Glenn Miller and his band playing in a hangar, wearing greatcoats and gloves! Recommended to anyone with an interest in Lincolnshire's airfields. (Mr. Chorlton has written another book concerned with this area of the county's WW2 airfields—see below. Reviews Ed.)

Terry Hancock, Cherry Willingham


Colin Carr was born in Grimsby in 1929, the youngest of seven children. The family lived in a council house at Nunthorpe exactly opposite the house in which this book's compiler lived with his brother. Colin studied at the local Art College during the war until he had to begin his National Service, where he was trained in dentistry. However, after his service he went back to Grimsby to finish his art training after which he obtained a post with Ross Company; he was soon sacked for passing round a caricature of the Chairman, who was not amused. At this unhappy point, married with two small children, Mr. Faiers founded the magazine Lincolnshire Life in 1961 and Colin joined the small staff. When the magazine became part of a larger group and moved its HQ to Chesterham Colin stayed in Grimsby. From then on he produced a series of pictures of a generally nostalgic kind; Mr Faiers says that the artist was 'not with it' as far as new developments were concerned and he particularly deplored the destruction of much of old Grimsby. In the course of the book we read of the story behind the inclusion of a startled black cat in so many pictures and how he nearly drowned on holiday in Norfolk; The country bus; a ride through rural Lincolnshire is reprinted and so are the character sketches he wrote and illustrated of the squire, the chemist, the clergyman, etc.

Throughout the affection of the compiler for the artist is apparent. The
book contains perhaps a hundred of his paintings all in superb colour and a few photographs, one of which shows Colin in the audience behind Sir Malcolm Sargent at the Last Night of the Proms. But you have to buy this book to enjoy the truly whimsical nature of the artist's humour and the delight to be found in so many details. Readers of Lincolnshire Life will remember seeing so many of them decorating the magazine's front cover and elsewhere and will need no reminding of their quality.


In 2000 Mr Ford issued The market town of Stamford (see LP & P, 42, p. 21), which dealt with some of the tradesmen in the town based on a walk through the town noting which families had operated businesses in which streets. He has now expanded on his first plan and taken coverage back two centuries. It would be impossible to detail every owner of every shop or business undertaking over a 200-year period; the author has used directories and the ongoing study of all the tradesmen mentioned in Stamford Mercury from 1800 to 1840 currently being undertaken at Stamford Museum to give a series of snapshots every 25 years from 1800 onwards. Arranged as a walk round the town's central areas it gives a fascinating idea of the multifarious occupations and services provided. The text is illuminated by many billheads from local firms and occasional photos of streets in the town that have retained much of their original character (all in good colour). At the end there is a page on the carrier services operated in the town in the 1820s, lists of carriers from the inns from 1825 to 1900, a map, an excellent index and, finally, the names of all the inns and hotels (all 114 of them!). An excellent piece of work very well carried out and well worth its modest cost.


A nostalgic look back at all the towns folk visited on (usually) train excursions when they wanted a day by the sea a hundred years ago. Alphabetically arranged and illustrated lavishly by over 100 colour views it surveys much of England's coastline. Cleethorpes and Skegness each have a page with five pictures between them. Lord Tennyson is quoted in praise of Torquay and in reference to his home on the Isle of Wight. Of Mablethorpe and Sutton-on-Sea - not a word. However, this is an attractive book that will bring many memories back to those of us who have lived near or have been frequent visitors to the seaside.


The 2002/3 football season is relived through the narratives of an interesting variety of people at two Third Division clubs - Lincoln City (the Imps) and Boston United (the Pilgrims). Widely acclaimed as the book that deals with the 'real world' of League football, away from the razzmatazz of the Premiership, this sports chronicle is well written in the best tradition of the genre. Moreover it succeeds in bringing to the Third Division an allure all of its own. The author, who was brought up in Market Rasen, is a nationally known sports writer and broadcaster determined to produce One hell of a season despite the financial collapse of his publisher. Surely it is enjoyable reading whether one is a follower of the beautiful game or not. There is plenty of drama both on and off the pitch-and some intriguing revelations -as the story of the two clubs' particular triumphs over adversity unfolds. Like Chaucer's Canterbury Tales on which it is loosely based, it would make entertaining fiction, except that these 'tales' are true.

With forewords by Graham Taylor (ex Lincoln City and England manager) and Howard Wilkinson (ex Boston United and England manager) the book also has 38 (yes, 38!) colour photographs and a very useful index.


This new instalment of her days in the WAAF takes us from 1943 up to her 'demob' in 1946. The first part details the day-to-day life of an office clerk now installed at RAF Morton Hall. The second gives us much of her many friendships with several RAF staff supported by many letters given in full (poor grammar and misspellings and all). The two final parts are divided into her life before the war and what happened to her afterwards.

In both of these the horse and middle-class life style of a girl at Saxilby are notable; equally noteworthy are the many photographs that have survived and show her (usually on horseback) on holidays or performing at gymkhana or the like and which enliven her text. Her previous book has earned very good sums for the RAF Benevolent Fund and there is no reason to doubt a similar success here.

PULLEN, Richard. The landslips of Lincoln: the story of Lincoln's part in the creation of the world's first fighting tanks. Tusean Books, 2003. 119pp. ISBN 1 873257 32 5. £8.50 pbk (or £9.50 by post from the author, 12 Crow Road, Collingham, Newark NG33 7ST). The author is a Lincoln man with family links with the 'tank story' back to WW1. As a professional archaeologist he has an eye for detail - and it shows in this book.

Many books have been written about tanks but none has highlighted the part played by Lincolnshire people in its design and early development so well as this book. The role of the tank in contributing to victory in WW1 is particularly well documented and is only briefly dealt with here. Lincolnshire enters the story in 1904 with the pioneering work of Hornsby of Grantham with their development of chain tractors (caterpillars). William Foster of Lincoln followed with their 'centipede', a chain tractor designed for the South American agricultural market. The two companies joined forces in 1910 to produce the unique steam chain tractor sold to a coal company in the Yukon for hauling coal to the Klondyke gold fields.

Early in the days of the First World War William Tritton, managing Director of Fosters, decided to develop a
tractor capable of passing through barbed wire defences and crossing trenches. At the same time Winston Churchill formed a Landships Committee with the same objectives. The author describes the progress of both groups and shows how Foster's ideas were more successful. When Churchill became aware of Foster's progress he arranged for Major Walter Wilson to join Triton in Lincoln. This move brought dramatic progress. In just 37 days the prototype 'Little Willie' was designed and built and prompted army chiefs to supply Foster's with their requirements. A further 135 days saw the design and production of 'Big Willis' or 'Mother' - the first practical tank. From this point Foster's became a powerhouse of tank design, development and production. The author covers this period in detail with a profusion of photographs, many of which have not been seen before.

The book deals with development of the heavy tank range from Mk I to Mk IX, showing the adaptations for various purposes: bridge layers, gun-carriers, river-crossing amphibians, etc. The 'heavies' were followed by the faster medium tanks (Whippets) for when the war moved on to firmer ground. Finally, the book shows how tanks were used to raise money for the war effort by using them as 'Tank Banks' for selling savings bonds. After the war surplus tanks were donated to towns to use as memorials. A must for all tank enthusiasts and a book for Lincolnians to take pride in!

Ray Hooley, Lincoln

REID, Ian. Lancaster operations - one squadron's contribution to the bomber offensive. Ashlea Thomas, 2003. 268pp. ISBN 0 9544516 0 0. (£20.20 by post from 104 Peaks Lane, Waltham, DN36 4LY.)

RAF 100 Squadron was virtually wiped out when the Japanese invaded Malaya in 1942 and was reformed as a bomber squadron at RAF Grimsby (or Waltham) in December of that year, equipped with Lancasters. This book tells the story of the squadron and the airfield until the end of WW2. The fact that it takes so many large format pages to do this shows the detail covered and the tremendous research carried out. This reviewer numbers it as one of the best squadron histories he has read during the past 45 years and considers it to be the nearest thing to actually being there that is possible. There are numerous well-produced photographs, maps, personal reminiscences (both humorous and tragic) and colour drawings of some of the Squadron's Lancasters. One of the appendices has drawings of every type of building constructed on the airfield, from lavatories to the control tower, in itself a major contribution to aviation archaeology. The author is to be thoroughly congratulated on this work and it is well worth the higher cover price.

_Terry Hancock, Cherry Willingham_

ROYE, Freda. Friskney: history & events. The author, [2003]. 47pp. No ISBN 27 pbk (or £8 by post from the author, 4 Romen Bank, Chapel St., Leardons, Skegness PE24 5QR). Once again Mrs Roye has been busy collecting up as many old pictures and memories from the people of Friskney as possible. The result is a book very similar in style and arrangement as her earlier books on Old Leake and Wrangle. There must be something like 200 photographs of events and people and a useful map of the area. The emphasis is on agriculture naturally and the rural life style of (mostly) a bygone age. She is to be congratulated (again) on rescuing so many photographs and anecdotes of all the happenings that make up village life.


This is a good mixture of pieces arranged under thirteen subject groups. The county's places, folklore, sports, farming and people are all covered whether they were felons, smugglers, worthies or associated with the church or medicine. There are the expected pieces (lines by Terryson, Jean Ingelow) but also plenty of pieces either less familiar or unexpected (Brian Forbes on his early wartime service at Simbooth Grange, a house at Woodhall Spa is a good example). You will read about salt-making, hawking throwing, some very odd county medical remedies, a truly graphic piece by Roy Fisk on the Louth Flood and growing woad _inter alia_. A few careless pieces of typesetting and spelling/dating errors have crept in but the book well fulfills its clear intention - to inform and entertain in not too heavy a manner. It will make a good present especially to yellow-bellies far from their original settings.

_TAYLOR, E.R. and TAYLOR, S.P. Blyborough Church of England Voluntary School, 1855-1963. Pott Morton, 2002. 72, [9]pp. No ISBN. £7.50 (including post and packing from Mrs. S. Taylor, 2 Hillside Cottages, Blyborough, Gainsborough DN21 4HG). The authors have used the surviving school log books and managers' minute books and many records (now in the Lincoln Archives or the Public Records Office) to provide a very detailed record of the C of E school in their village. The Bishop of Lincoln responded in 1839 to an initiative for the church to be a provider of schools to educate children; the census return for 1851 recorded a school with 35 pupils but the exact date of the opening of what was really a Dames School has not been found. In 1870 through the efforts of the Luard family, the local squires, a new National School was opened and still survives although long since closed. A fascinating picture emerges of what school was like in earlier days, one that could be mirrored up and down the land, no doubt. Between the lines, one can feel the tensions that arose from time to time; partly because of the First War (when the girls pulled tunnips from the school garden to send to the Navy), interference by the squire (particularly with Miss Hughes who was headmistress from 1918), failure of the coal supplies to heat the building or, in later years, when school meals came from Willoughton and on one day in 1952 the van broke down. All part and parcel of what village schools could be like. A very full set of lists gives details of all the managers, all the head teachers (only one man in 112 years!), assistant teachers, monitors and as complete a list of as many pupils that could be found (a gold mine for family historians perhaps). Top marks!_

BOOKS RECENTLY NOTICED OR RECEIVED BY THE REVIEWS EDITOR


__BENNENT, Brian. The early years:_

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life in the formative years of St. Hugh's parish, Lincoln... The author, [2003]. 32pp. No ISBN. 95p pbk (postage extra from the Society's Bookshop).


DAY, Florence A. A history of the Deepings; (or three Deepings in a row). The author, [2003], xii, 139pp. No ISBN. Unpriced pbk (available from the author, ... published in 1972 but reissued with a few changes).


GASTON, Peter. For better or worse, being the further adventures of Little Will in Lincoln and nearby. Lincoln, Richard Kay, 2003. xi, 192pp. ISBN 0 902882 52 0. £8.95 pbk.


MEYER, Peter and REVELL, John C. Boston, its fishermen and the First World War. [The authors, 2003]. 60pp. No ISBN. £6.95.


dhead, Wellingborough, Northamptonshire, NN9 6DA).

ROYLE, Freda. The history and events of New Leake, Easeville and Midville. The author, 2003. 50pp. No ISBN. £7 pbk (or £8 by post from the author, 4 Roman Bank, Chapel Street, Skegness PE24 5QJ).


WILSON, Bill and WILSON, Connie. The Thorge story [Thorpe on the Hill]. Newark, Acorn Publications, 2003. 120pp. ISBN 1 9032639 3 X. £10 pbk; I believe the book version is already sold out but there may be copies still at the Society's Bookshop; a CD version is available from the authors).

It would be an impossible task to keep up with all the videos and CDs that appear on the county – it's hard enough dealing with printed material alone! However, I thought it worth drawing attention to a little booklet that has appeared from the Church Tourism Network (CTN), which has launched a project called the Cascade, which aims to encourage more people to visit more of the county's churches. Recently published is: The treasures of Boston & District, which deals with 19 churches in that area. It is meant as an introduction to an interactive CD, which allows a 360° inspection of all 19 churches. The booklet is free from local Tourist Information Centres and the CD is £9.95 from the Boston Stump Shop, Church Close, Boston PE21 6NP (postage £2.50 extra).

I listed Dan Hale's book on the Mallard steam engine in the last issue in all good faith, since it was announced for publication on October 3, 2003. It should now have appeared (in February 2004); the good news is that the original intended price of £14.99 has been reduced to £12.99.