Scunthorpe St John’s Church  Skegness Stone Lion
Boston Parish Library   Lincoln archeology
Your Letters, notes, queries, faces and places
All the latest books

Magazine of the Society for Lincolnshire History & Archaeology
LINCOLNSHIRE PAST & PRESENT

56 Summer 2004

Gainsborough Sculpture

CONTENTS

Editorial
Seunthorpe St John’s Church
The Skegness Stone Lion
An Absolute Treasure—Boston Parish Library
LP&P Letters
The Big Book of Lincoln Archaeology—The City by the Pool—an informal review
Notes & Queries
Faces & Places
Bookshelf

J. E. Swaby 3
Winston Kime 5
Pauline Napier 7
10
11
15
16
17

Apology
In the Spring edition (no 55) there was a mix-up over the sketch for Mr Davies’ plan of Caistor, and the published paragraph came from unfinished notes being prepared for an A4-size illustration. We changed the plan size, which means that in order to get the correct scale for superimposing on the 1:25,000 map, the plan should first now be enlarged on a photocopier from A5 back up to A4! The scale on the map was already given (incorrectly) as 1:2500 so would need changing (after enlarging) to 1:25,000 as well. At least I had apologised in anticipation. Oh dear! Hilary Healey

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The deadline for contributions to the next Bulletin and the Autumn issue of Lincolnshire Past & Present is 1 September 2004. Material may be sent to the Joint Editors at Jews’ Court, Lincoln LN2 1LS. Articles may also be sent on disk, or as an email attachment to lindunicolonia@hotmail.com.


Back cover illustration: Inscriptions on bells cast in 1423 for St Peter’s Church, South Somercotes.
EDITORIAL

My colleague felt there was an advantage in writing the editorial for number 55, spring being a time to look forward, but talk of ‘new beginnings’ need not be confined to spring. For many academics and students the year begins in late summer, and although the new City and County Museum is due to open in spring 2005, the new library at the University of Lincoln opens in September this year. Both these prestigious buildings, pictured in the last edition of *Lincolnshire Past & Present*, were formally ‘topped out’ in June, so they really are beginning to look finished. After England’s disappointing exit from Euro 2004, our own football season starts in August, with four teams from the historic county as League Two (old Third Division) rivals. *Lincolnshire Past & Present* covers the historic county of course, and in this issue we are pleased to include Canon John Swaby’s informative and humorous account of his time at Scunthorpe St John’s Church, featured of course in his new autobiographical book, *Tales of a Lincolnshire Parson* (see page 20). Not being certain of the popularity or otherwise of the occasional quizzes in this magazine, it was reassuring to receive Winston Kime’s nostalgic article on the Skegness stone lion, inspired by the mention of the one in Lincoln Arboretum in the winter quiz. We seem to have quite a bookish aspect this time, with Pauline Napier’s well researched account of Boston Parish Library and a discussion by Dennis Mills of an important new book of Lincoln’s archaeology. We are always happy to receive small items that can appear on the Notes & Queries and Faces & Places pages—and pictures—one like these of letter boxes below are always welcome! And letters—on whatever Lincolnshire topic you like.

Ros Beevers, Joint Editor

SCUNTHORPE ST JOHN’S CHURCH 1891-1984

J. E. Swaby

This building served the purpose for which it was erected for less than a century, but its story is not inglorious. I was vicar there from 1949 to 1953, and shall here try to put flesh on bones by relating a few stories told to me, and by mentioning incidents at the beginning and end of my incumbency.

To many Scunthorpe means the borough as a whole, but the original Scunthorpe was just one of the five constituent townships. Each was a narrow strip, partly on and partly below the cliff. Danish Ashby was in the ecclesiastical parish of Saxon Bottesford, while Danish Brumby, Scunthorpe and Crosby were in the ecclesiastical parish of Saxon Frodingham.

The place name of Scunthorpe derives from the man Skuma, but I am intrigued by the old suggestion that it had to do with esker or water. A subterranean stream runs down the High Street, occasionally emerging in shop cellars. It may have ended in a pond near the church and it may not have been a coincidence that, when the pond was filled in, two feet of water appeared in the church heating chamber. During my first winter there the church was heated only by two small borrowed stoves, their chimneys stuck through the windows. Eventually we drained into a sewer.

In 1832 the ecclesiastical parish of Frodingham had just over 600 people, the Scunthorpe part having 249 of them. Change began in the middle of the 19th century when ironstone was found on the land of Rowland Winn, later Lord St Oswald. In 1882 Scunthorpe had 2000 folk and in 1890 Edmund Akenhead took charge of a new parish consisting of Scunthorpe and Crosby.

On 15 April 1891 Bishop Edward King of Lincoln consecrated the church, which was St Oswald’s gift. When the peer died in 1893 seven bells were added in his memory to the original one. Appropriately the church foundations were slag balls and local ironstone faced with Ancaster stone was used.

At this time there is no doubt that the east end of Scunthorpe was the most important part of the area. Such things as the railway station, the police station and the main post office were there.

One of the faces on the window to the north of the west door is that of Billy Hilbert whose cottage stood where the Ashdown Memorial Hall was later built. An elderly man told me that Billy would sit at his door watching the workers until he discovered that masons were carving his face. He then appeared only during the lunch break. Leaving a man behind a screen to peep was futile. Billy counted the men as they came and went. So the elderly man (then of
course a boy) was smuggled behind the screen. At lunchtime he left in
mason’s overalls, making the number right, and a mason left behind could
study Billy’s face. The one on the
right side of the window is that of
Mrs Hogg, who kept a little shop.
I was also told of a Flixborough man
who came into town one Saturday
night and imbibed too freely. On his
way home he heard footsteps behind
him. He increased his pace. They did.
He ran until he was exhausted and
turned round. ‘Satan, I defy you. You
can’t hurt me. I sing in Flixborough
choir twice a Sunday.’ From the
darkness came a donkey’s bray.
In Henry Richard Ashdown’s time
(1898-1909) the population of the
parish doubled. In the time of Tho-
as Boughton (1909-20) it had
reached 15,000 and the vicar had
three curates, a lady worker and a
stipendiary lay reader to help him. In
1913 Crosby became a separate ec-
clesial district. In the same year
Mr C. J. Turrell, the reader, began his
memorable work at Santon, partly in
Scunthorpe and partly in Appleby
and dominated by steel works. The
mission church of St Nicholas was
opened in 1921, but unfortunately the
site was wanted for mining in 1937.
We started a Sunday school in bor-
rrowed premises in 1942 and the Rev
Arthur Murkow did good work there.
During Canon Steele’s time (1921-
40) Canon Rust was at Frodingham.

When Basil Greeson came to Crosby
people asked, ‘What do you do when
you get rust on steel?’ ‘Put grease on!’
In Steele’s time numbers in Scunthorpe
parish rose rapidly, but growth was far
from the church and most of the people
were nearer to other churches. The east
end was being deserted. A man told me
of the sale of three disused east end
chapels in one day. The pace quickened
and in 1960 even the great Trinity
Methodist church was pulled down and
replaced by Home Stores.
To meet the expansion below the Cliff
a site was bought for a church that
would serve the lower part of three
parishes. The outbreak of war pre-
vented building, but after I had left I
was told that someone had built on the
site. The builder however found an
alternative one on which the Church of
the Resurrection was built.
I have told how my ministry in Scun-
thorpe started with a flooded heating
chamber. It ended with a piano accom-
panying our singing. The fine threo-
manual organ needed overhauling. The
organist of York Minster recommended
a clerk of works; a contract was agreed
and all the pipes went away. But the
clerk of works died, and repeated visits
to the organ builder failed to spur him
on. Later, when he went bankrupt, it
was revealed that he had used many of
our organ pipes on other jobs! For most
of my time we were much hampered by
the requisitioning of our church hall.
Soon after I went to Scunthorpe an
uncle said: ‘A fine church, but down
town.’ A cleric, who shall remain
nameless, said, with reference to the
verger finding a better job: ‘Rats
leaving the sinking ship.’ But the
loyal, splendid people of St John’s
never acted as if they were on a sink-
ing ship.
Later they were to receive stunning
blows. After my successor’s brief
ministry, the Diocese kept the parish
without a vicar for two years, as if
intent on killing it. Then two of the
last four incumbents also had other
jobs. Finally, as Scunthorpe parish
had included Crosby, so Crosby ab-
sorbed a truncated Scunthorpe.

What depressed me when I returned
was to see the old east end streets
gone, replaced by high-rise tower
blocks of flats. For those old streets
had an unassuming friendliness—
ever more evident than in the VE
Day celebrations—though to eat three
street party teas in one afternoon
strained the digestion! Little Princess
Street, with its unmade road and wa-
ter supplied only to backyard taps,
was the best decorated in the bor-
ough. When St John’s was closed for
worship there were those who felt
that part of their life was torn away.
Perhaps a man who spent his boy-
hood in one of the old streets and was
closely associated with St John’s has
summed the matter up: ‘I am sure the
standard of living is better now, but
certainly not the quality of life.’
In the Winter issue (No 54) of LP&P, one of the quiz questions related to the stone lion in Lincoln Arbroathum, which reminded me of the much loved stone lion in Skegness, familiar to visitors, as well as residents, for more than a hundred years. For most of the last century it stood on the pavement on Roman Bank, in front of the Lion Hotel and, as small children, we always demanded to be lifted onto its broad back for ‘a ride’ as we passed by. Being close to the railway station, over the years, for thousands of visitors’ children also, it was the first stop on the way to the seashore. A ride on the lion was perhaps a preliminary exercise for a later ride on a donkey.

The Lion Hotel, with the bar entrance exactly at the junction of Lumley Road and Roman Bank (it was called the Lion Corner) opened in 1881. The owner, building contractor and landlord, was Samuel George Clarke, who came from Annesley near Nottingham when New Skegness was in its early stages. People from many different parts of the country, but especially Nottingham, came to seek their fortunes at the new watering place beginning to blossom a few years after the railway reached the coast.

Samuel Clarke was 40 when he opened the Lion and he had already built the Council Offices (long demolished), the building that is now the NatWest Bank and a number of other premises on Lumley Road. He had also been landlord of the Vine Hotel and was described as a building contractor, brick and drainage pipe manufacturer, coal merchant, farmer and victualler—a good all-rounder, in fact.

The stone lion was carved from sandstone by Richard Winn (1823-1912) of Grimsby, who had been a blacksmith at Belchford and Halton Holgate, near Spilsby, before turning his hobby of carving in wood and stone into full employment in the fish port.

He was a younger brother of Henry Winn, ‘the sage of Fulbeck’, parish clerk, shopkeeper, teacher, local historian and poet, who lived all his 98 years in the Wolds village where he was born.

Richard Winn’s stone lion weighed about six hundredweights and was conveyed the 40 fairly hilly miles from Grimsby to Skegness on a dray drawn by two horses. The hotel had...
just been completed and the lion was hoisted up to the roof to stand over the corner entrance to the public bar. There was another entrance for staying visitors on the Lumley Road frontage, with a glass covered canopy across the pavement, allowing them to alight from the carriage under cover in wet weather.

In 1905 it was decided that the stone lion had become unsafe and it was brought down to footpath level where it remained almost to the end of the century to delight many thousand small children. Just before Wetherspoon bought the hotel in 1996, the previous owner had the stone lion quietly removed, possibly to use as a garden ornament at his retirement residence. A sad happening because it had become a part of the Skegness heritage and there was quite a lot of protest; but nothing could be done as it was all legal.

There is a humorous tale about a rugby football team that came to Skegness to play the local club one Saturday afternoon and, after a memorable victory, they retired to spend the evening celebrating in the Lion, staying until nearly kicking-out time. In good spirits and still with a surplus of energy to work off, one of them spotted the stone lion and began heaving it across the pavement, and was soon joined by his team mates. The intention was possibly to move it to the railway station, but they only managed to get it across the road as far as the Lumley Hotel and they dumped it there. Next morning, residents on their way to church or to collect their Sunday papers, were amazed to behold the familiar lion not at his usual post, but guarding the portals of the rival pub across the road. The free transfer of course was quickly cancelled with the agreement of the two managers and the lion was eventually back on duty in his regular position.

When Wetherspoon took over the hotel they spruced it up to a higher standard, but for some reason changed the name to the Red Lion, although there are three others in neighbouring villages but not a single 'Lion'. I never understood why there are so many Red Lion pubs but no green or blue ones that I can recall. Perhaps readers can offer an explanation?

The Lion Hotel had earlier lost its Lumley Road frontage to Cancer Research and Argos and is now confined to Roman Bank. The stables and yard once extended as far as the Prince George Street junction, but half a century or so ago that area was built over with single-storey shops.

Lincoln's stone lion (subject of the quiz) looks down from its lordly height as king of beasts, as once the Skegness lion did, but the latter became a working chap on its lower elevation, as we have seen. Exposed to vandals, it suffered damage from time to time and underwent several 'hospital' spells. It seems the Lincoln lion was not immune from mindless paint daubers, but thankfully he is now cleaned up and still giving pleasure to strollers in the park. The two lions would seem to date from about the same period, but perhaps readers may offer information about the origin of Lincoln's lion.

(Illustrations from the author's collection.)
An absolute treasure

BOSTON PARISH LIBRARY

Pauline Napier

Boston Parish Church isfortunate to possess an absolute treasure in its parish library. With its high proportion of old books, still in their original setting over the south porch of St Botolph's Church, it is so important a parish library that it is ranked among the top ten in the country. The interest of the Boston library lies, not in individual books, but rather in the collection as a whole and also in the room in which it is housed.

The first mention of a library was in the mid-fifteenth century when John Edyington, Rector of Kirkby Ravensworth, bequeathed a small collection of books to it. These would most likely have been in manuscript form and have not survived.

The Boston Corporation also had an interest in establishing a library and the Boston Assembly Book for 12th December, 1610 states: ‘Item at this assembly it is agreed that the room over the south porch of the church of this Borough shall be prepared and made ready at the charge of the Borough decently fitted and meet to make a library in.’

The official founding of the library came in 1634 by Archbishop Laud's edict. His commissary, Sir Nathaniel Brent, on a visitation to St Botolph's had discovered ‘much decay’ in the church and he directed that it be tidied up and several items were listed. Among these he ordered that ‘the rooms over the porche of the said Church shall be repaired and decently fitted up to make a Library to

Boston Stump—the room where the library is housed.
(From Pishey Thompson's History & Antiquities of Boston)
the end that in case any well and charitably disposed persons shall hereafter bestow any books to furnish the same they may be there safely preserved and kept to and for the furtherance and help of such ministers as shall preach in the said Church and others who shall require thereunto."

This may have resulted from requests for a library by the town or the Puritan vicar of Boston, the Rev Dr Anthony Tuckney, a learned divine who later became Regius Professor of Divinity at Cambridge. Many of the first books in the library were his gift. The order itself refers only to the preparation of the room and the safe keeping of books, but not their purchase. This was quite unusual for the period. Parish libraries were generally founded for the purpose of helping the local clergy to improve their preaching. Where there were parish libraries educated men of ability were attracted to them. In the parishes around Boston at this time a small number of the sixteen clergy had Master's degrees and at least one other was a Bachelor of Arts. These were the people who would make use of the library and many of them contributed books over the years.

About 500 books are thought to have come to the library in the early years. Books were received from clergy in neighbouring parishes and from the people of Boston. In the years immediately following, the Mayor and six Aldermen gave books, and in 1638, the year of his shrievalty, Sir Anthony Irby gave £10 towards the purchase of books, which were to be selected by the Vicar. In 1719 the Vicar, the Rev Edward Kelshall, died and the Corporation purchased his books for £50 to add to the library. The library was catalogued in 1724 at the expense of the Corporation who gave £50 for this work, but sadly, this catalogue no longer exists.

No account of the history of the library has survived, but a few events are recorded. In 1766 the Vestry ordered that the lead roof should be repaired and the books thoroughly cleaned and "piled up again". This suggests that perhaps there was no proper shelving, but this was not uncommon in libraries at that time. There is no evidence that the Boston Parish Library was ever a chained library. It seems likely the books were laid flat on the available shelves. The present day bookshelves are thought to date from c1766. Curtains were eventually fitted to the fronts of the cases to protect the books from dust. The sliding glass doors, which now enclose the books, were not added until 1957. At some point a sloping desk was placed beneath the window.

In 1819, Dr Goddard, Archdeacon of Lincoln, ordered that a catalogue of the library be made, and a Dr Michelson received an honorarium for doing this. There were approximately 950 books on the list, but many were in more than one volume and included roughly 1,500 titles. The list still remains in the library. From this list the Archdeacon threw out, or sold, between 150 and 200 books that he considered to be "trash". By 1854, Fitzhorne Thompson could only find 970 volumes, and believed the actual loss to be in the order of 500 volumes.

In 1931 Canon W. H. Kynaston was asked to prepare a report on the library and this he did. It was not an encouraging report as he found that the books were "for the most part in a sadly dilapidated condition, e.g., one of the oldest has a fine old binding, but one of its covers is half eaten away by bookworms." Canon Kynaston found approximately 975 books dating from 1515 to the mid-eighteenth century, and he was quite sure that they were well worth preserving. He recommended that the room itself be thoroughly cleaned and tidied up. He thought electricity should be installed in order that a vacuum cleaner might be used. The addition of a table and a few chairs would also be useful.

A report probably by the Rev P. E. Mann in 1950 recorded that in 1948 an investigation of the library was again begun. The work was carried out by two curates and their wives, the Rev and Mrs P. E. Mann and the Rev and Mrs R. A. B. Ewbank, and was completed in 1950. It would appear that the books had deteriorated even further. About 1,500 volumes were found, about 150 of which were printed before 1600, and a few before 1500. There was also one twelfth-century manuscript. About 1,200 volumes were dated from 1600 - 1700 and the remainder were modern. When the listing was complete a card-index was made. At the same time the books were cleaned. The Rev Mark Sparrell, Lecturer at St Botolph's compiled a further report on the library in November 1967 in which he says that two thirds of the books are in need of attention, roughly 317 volumes. Mr Sparrell estimated that the library now contained approximately 1,100 titles included in 1,500 volumes.

In July 1988 Mr Peter Hoare, then a member of the Council for the Care of Churches' Books and Manuscripts Sub-Committee, inspected the library. His visit coincided with the packing and removal from the library of pre-1900 parish records to Lincoln for safe-keeping and storage. Mr Hoare considered it unthinkable that the library should be removed from its home in Boston. He noted that most of the books were in good condition, although there were still a number which required repair and conservation. Mr Hoare was the first person to mention the cataloguing of the library by a professional cataloguer.

On 16 October 1997 the present Parish Library Project Group of six people was formed and it was decided to consider four points:

i) Minor refurbishments to the room.

ii) The conservation of the books.

iii) The provision of a good catalogue to international standards.

iv) As physical access to the library is poor (up a narrow, winding staircase of 24 steps) an information board and display cases were to be placed in the main body of the church.

In May, 1998 Mr Neil French completed a Conservation Report giving information on the state of the books. At the same time Pauline Napier made a listing, on computer, of the books with titles, authors, publishers, dates and shelf numbers. In the meantime the National Association of Decorative and Fine Arts Society (NADFAS) had come forward and
volunteered to clean the books and treat the covers. Their work began in February 1999 and took 18 months to complete. Minor work to the room was carried out. A water tank, which could not be removed, was encased and sealed using marine-ply and given a bottom overflow pipe. Then other pipe-work was lagged and boxed in.

By now the Project Group had some idea of the extent of the problems it faced. The project was expected to cost £136,811. Support for the project was received from local authorities, the academic and library world, various charities, grant making bodies, local firms, organisations and individuals. However, it soon became obvious that a large grant would be required. The decision was taken by the Project Group and agreed by the Parochial Church Council to bid for Heritage Lottery funding. In 2000 the Project Group were busy consulting specialists, putting together a business plan and filling in forms. The bid was finally dispatched to the Heritage Lottery Fund in January 2001, but it was not until January 2002 that a contract was signed for a grant of £84,800. The project could begin. The first batch of books left Boston for Tom Valentine’s Bindery in Larbert, near Falkirk in Scotland in February 2002. Two years later the work is almost complete.

The two display cabinets were the first items to be completed in mid-2002. Funds to purchase these were raised in memory of the late Canon Peter Fluck, a former Vicar of Boston who had given great support to the work of the Project Group during its early days. The cabinets were made by Mr Peter Davies of Telford. They now contain items of interest from the library. The information boards, designed by Mr John Bangey of Horgbling, are still to be completed, but work is ongoing and should be finished by the summer of 2004.

The search began for suitable computer equipment and software and this was finally purchased in September 2002. Mr Stephen Fenney was appointed to catalogue the library and he began work on 4 November. The catalogue was completed at the end of August 2003 and had brought to light a number of interesting finds. The work of publishing the catalogue is now in process.

The books
The Parish Library possesses some very fine treasures. The main theme, as one would expect, is religious. The largest number of books was published in London, others in Cambridge, Oxford and Scotland. Many were published in Europe—in Belgium, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, Sweden and Switzerland, and a very few in the USA.

There is only one manuscript left in the library—a fine 12th century copy of Augustine’s Commentary on Genesis. It was probably produced by the Canterbury School of Illumination and was the gift of Mr William Skelton, MA., Rector of Coningsby. After cataloguing we now know there are 1,689 titles including 1,870 items in the library. Of these 167 books were printed in Great Britain before 1641 and a further 567 between 1641 and 1700. Among the older books are a copy of The Works of Geoffrey Chaucer, 1542; four books by Bede containing eight volumes, dated 1563, and published in Basle. There are works by Erasmus published in 1545 and 1548, in Antwerp. Perhaps most exciting of all, and in very good condition, is the Book of Common Prayer, 1549.
The library has a large number of Bibles, the earliest is a 15th century
Bible in Latin. There is also a large 1763 Baskerville Bible, bound in tooled leather and heavily decorated. The Baskerville Bible was one of the earliest to use a very clear and precise type-face. A recent addition is a nineteenth-century Bible with a large number of coloured and black and white illustrations.

A set of 13 pamphlets, bound together in the form of a prayer book, include a Thanksgiving for The Deliver from the Fire of London and for Release from a Popish Plot. As one would expect there are collections of sermons, most notably, perhaps, those of Robert Sanderson. His sermons were preached throughout the country, but many of them were in Lincolnshire churches, including St Botolph's Boston. Sanderson remained a Royalist throughout the Civil War, and for a time was Chaplain to King Charles I during his captivity, but he did not accompany the king to his execution. Later he became Bishop of Lincoln.

During the recent cataloguing of the books other treasures have emerged - History of Britain - Remains of Britain, written by William Camden. The book carries an inscription giving it to a Mr Mercator. Mr Mercator is believed to be the son of the famous Mercator who devised the method of representing the earth's sphere on a flat sheet of paper. The library has at least three copies of Foxe's Book of Martyrs. One, a first edition dated 1563, was bought in Bath by the Antiquarian Librarian at the Bodleian Library. The book is imperfect, although it is believed that a second imperfect copy was used to improve ours.

One book that came to light during the cataloguing was Dennis's Devout Singer's Delight by William Dennis. It is a hand-written book of music and words - hymns, canticles, psalms, anthems etc. Many have been given local village names such as Wrangle or Bicker, and Boston has a special tune for Psalm 149.

The library also has a number of more local books, including a Book from Lincoln Prison dealing with the moral improvement of prisoners in Lincoln gaol. There is a beautifully bound presentation book, given to Canon Blenkins in the late 19th century, and signed by a large number of parishioners. Also relating to Canon Blenkins time is a scrap-book containing letters, dinner menus, photographs and other ephemera. There is a photograph album, with photos from 1880 - 1900. A diary kept by the Vicar of Boston, the Rev Heygate, from 1905 - 1916, gives a brief insight into life in Boston in the early 20th century, including mention of a Zeppelin raid on the town.

Although much of the archive material was taken to Lincoln, some still remains including the 20th century Parish Registers, a number of local history books, and various other items including a handwritten poem signed by Jean Ingelow that as far as we know has never been published. The library is open, by prior appointment, to anyone who cares to visit. Contact should be made to the Parish Office, tel 01205 362864 in the first instance when a guide will be arranged at a time to suit.

© Pauline Naper BA, March 2004


LP&P Letters

Dear Editors

LIBRARY CHARGES

I totally support M. J. Turland's concerns [LP&P 55] over the new higher charges levied by Lincolnshire County Council for loans from outside the county. He makes the case so well that there is little need to add to it. It goes against the whole principle of a free library service. People do not fight for, campaign for, and leave fortunes to endow, free libraries because they believed in a freedom to read romantic fiction and play computer games. They wanted the ordinary person to have the freedom to educate and inform themselves, so that they could each contribute more to the total well-being of society. We should be encouraging users to take their studies and researches to higher levels, not penalising them.

This is surely a matter that the Society [for Lincolnshire History & Archaeology] ought to take up directly, as a society, with the County Council? I am writing to the Chairman requesting [this].

If a dialogue could be established with the library service, there are many things it would be interesting to know, and suggestions that might be made for reducing the costs. For example, how much of the cost of the inter-library borrowing involves postage or carriage? Are local authority courier services used for this, and do these connect with each other between adjacent counties? If counties co-operate in this way with carriage, it is difficult to see why a loan between different counties' libraries should cost more, in staff time and fixed costs, than within a single library service. I suppose if the whims of local government reorganisation had given us a single library service for the whole of the East Midlands region, that library would not perceive it as inherently more expensive to transfer a book from, say, Stamford to Peterborough than from Stamford to Mablethorpe. So why should it be just because an arbitrary county boundary has to be crossed?

Yours faithfully

Chris Padley, Market Rasen
The big book of Lincoln archaeology

MICHAEL J. JONES, DAVID STOCKER AND ALAN VINCE
with the assistance of JOHN HERRIDGE, The City by the Pool:
assessing the archaeology of the City of Lincoln, ed. David Stocker
ISBN 1 84217 107 0. £29.95 hbk.

This is not a formal review, partly because I am not an
archaeologist and, therefore, not professionally qualified to write
such a review. However, as an historical geographer long acquainted
with Lincoln, I wish to welcome the book wholeheartedly. It is the biggest
advance in understanding the city's past since Sir Francis Hill completed
his quartet of books a generation ago with the publication of Victorian Lincoln
(Cambridge, 1974).

Unlike the Hill volumes, The City by
the Pool was not written primarily as
an academic study (although it is
thoroughly academic), nor out of an
individual's devotion to his native
city. Rather, it is the work of four
professionals bringing together the
work of a very much larger team,
with a particular practical objective in
mind.

This objective is to provide planners
and developers with a hi-tech tool for
application to the conservation and/or
exploration of archaeological evidence
at any point within the city boundary where development is
proposed. The main essays comprise a scholarly basis on which to make
properly informed planning decisions. They contain accounts of what is
known about Lincoln's cultural environment over the whole span of
time from the prehistoric down to c1945 (yes, 1945!). They also contain
well thought out and theoretically justified indications of what one
should be looking for below any piece of ground that is to be disturbed.
Each essay is followed by a much briefer and more technical re-
view of achievements to date and of
priorities for future research.

The printed text is supported by a CD-
ROM that can be interrogated for detail
on any site within any of the seven
defined areas. Beyond that, the Urban Archaeological Database kept at City
Hall is being continually expanded and
updated with the same objective in
mind, especially for the latter eras, for
which there is so much more written
information.

Aside from technical considerations,
the essays, which take up the bulk of
the book, will give much pleasure to
anyone with a space-time interest in the
subject. Equally, they provide many
thought-provoking insights for the
teacher and student. For such a large
and complex book there are remarkably
few obvious blemishes, especially in
view of the short time allocated to writ-
ing up. Considering the specialist na-
ture of the subject, there is a minimum
of technical terms. The great wealth of
illustrations—maps, sections, photos,
drawings of artefacts—not only helps
the reader, but also adds an extra di-
mension to the text.

I will pick out a few items which I
found particularly interesting and illus-
trative of new and recent thinking. Pre-
history is dealt with as one era, but the
author concentrates on the bronze and
iron ages. This chapter contains proba-
bly the most controversial aspect of the
book—the argument for a ritual or
ceremonial causeway across the River
Witham in the neighbourhood of Stamp
End (Fig 1). Artifactual evidence is in
short supply and the hypothesis rests
largely on the drawing of analogies with similar features downstream, for
which much more substantial evi-
dence has emerged in the last two
decades, especially at Fiskerton.

If this hypothesis is capable of being
confirmed, it would follow that when
the Romans arrived they found no
well-established crossing of the river
on the future line of Ermine Street,
about three-quarters of a mile to the
west of the supposed causeway. For
part of the way this line took advan-
tage of a slight ridge above areas li-
able to winter flooding. The river
itself was about 400 yards wide, but
as far as the crossing was concerned,
this width was considerably reduced
by the Romans making use of a large
island, its approximate location being
marked today by the churches of St
Benedict and St Mary-le-Wigford. A
causeway was constructed across the
southern branch of the easterly flow-
ing Witham in the vicinity of St
Mark's.

Many of those who went to school in
Lincoln and nearby were brought up
to think that the Foss Dyke and the
Sincil Dyke were both of Roman
origin. Nothing has been found to
connect either of them with the
Romans, which also puts paid to the
assumption that Brayford was a Ro-
nan port. A date in the 10th century
is more plausible for the creation of
Foss Dyke, as that is the period when
large quantities of Torksey ware first
turn up in Lincoln and when there is
evidence for works at Stamp End that
raised the level of water in the upper
Witham and the Brayford.

It is further suggested that the Great
Gowr was dug a little later, around
1000 AD, the water finding its way to
Fig 1. The Witham Gap at Lincoln in the 1st century AD, showing the approximate location of the presumed causeway at Stamp End and the Roman approach to the site of the legionary fortress. Drawn by Dave Watt, copyright English Heritage (Fig 6.2 in The City by the Pool).
the lower Witham via a lake lying south of the site of Thorn Bridge (Fig 2). The Great Gowt probably marked the southern limit of the Wigford suburb at this time, until the cutting of the Sincil Dyke about a century later provided a limit further south, and also on the east of what is referred to as Lower Wigford.

These watercourses gave some defensive protection as well as protection from flooding, but settlement all the way from about St Mark’s to Bargate clung to the Ermine Street, a few feet higher than the surrounding land. It has long been known that the period between about 1000 AD to the mid 14th century was a period of prosperity and greatness for Lincoln. This prosperity was based on the wool trade and the woollen industry, as well as the city’s position, after the Conquest, as the administrative centre of the country’s largest diocese. Lincoln was then in the top five or six towns in all England. Perhaps the speed and extent of its subsequent decline have not been so well appreciated, but when the skills of the archaeologist are applied to the subject it is clear that large areas within the city walls became derelict and the suburbs shrank. For example, all the six parish churches in Butwerk (Monks Road area) fell into disuse. It was not until after the reopening of the Foss Dyke in the 1740s that the city began to revive significantly, and only with the coming of the first railway in 1846 did its ‘industrial revolution’ really start.

As is to be expected, the essay on the industrial era (c1750-c1945) is strong on industrial archaeology, a sphere in which much work has been done since Sir Francis Hill stopped writing. There are, however, many aspects of Lincoln’s history in this period on which the book has little to say, and in some cases little that the authors could say, since the basic research has not been done. For instance, how much do we really know about the captains of industry whose names are to be seen in so many places in the city: Shuttleworth, Clayton, Ruston, Robey, Richardson, Foster, and there are many others worth the study, ‘Blood Mixtures’ Clarke for one. Seely the miller and a mid-Victorian MP for the city is almost forgotten, along with the Dawber brewing family, kept alive only by the name of the Dawber Charity.

The cathedral clergy also included some important figures who took a leading part in the economic and cultural development of the city, John Gibney and Chancellor Leeke for example. Other professionals were also influential, notably solicitors such as the Brogdens, Larken and Page, and medical men, among whom Brook, Cant and Lowe were prominent, whilst the architect Watkins was keen to improve public health. Among the commercial men, Mawer, Collingham, the Bainbridges and Malroy deserve more attention.

The City by the Pool gives the best account yet of the fate of many medieval churches, but historians have still to write about the history of Lincoln’s parishes in, say, the post-reformation period when their number was reduced to 15. Even in the first half of the 19th century the parishes were important organs of local government, since the City Council, which famously shied away from levying rates, was keen to push work and unpopularity onto the parishes, or various combinations of them. Many of the county’s rural parishes have their histories, but the published record includes nothing much of this kind for the city.

By happy chance - or was it deliberate policy? - the parishes remained the framework for the collection of census statistics all the way down to the 1901 census. The census enumerators’ books, well known to family historians (who have indexed them) could be made to yield so much about the ordinary people of Victorian Lincoln.

With the help of Padley’s large scale plans and the early editions of the Ordnance Survey 25-inch plans, it would be possible to ‘put these people back into their houses’, so demonstrating the social patterning of the housing stock. The 1891 and 1901 censuses collected information on houses with fewer than five rooms. Moreover, another of the almost undisturbed sources for Lincoln history is the collection of bye-law plans, which survive from the starting point of 1866, when Lincoln set up an Urban Sanitary Authority (only because central government required this to happen). Cross references to these plans are being added by John Heridge to the Urban Archaeological Database. For some of the slum clearance areas, the housing reports of the interwar and post 1945 years have survived. Here is fertile ground where the archaeologist and the social historian could come together. I would like to acknowledge the important fact that English Heritage selected Lincoln for the first study of this kind ahead of all its rivals and put considerable funds and resources into it. Lincoln should be pleased about this, whilst also being proud of the work that has been done by its archaeologists over the last 35 years and more. Lincoln City Council has played its part by sponsorship of the book and by insuring through its Heritage Services department the work of safeguarding the city’s heritage continues. This partnership means that the field of study has had to be defined by the present city boundary. It includes a large part of the former Canwick parish. The remainder of the parish, still outside Lincoln, is located close to the city centre and to the supposed Stamp End casemates. As the proposed eastern bypass of the city will cross this area, the desirability of extending the boundary in that direction becomes stronger day by day.

Fig 2 on page 13. The Wigford suburb and the city’s waterways, showing developments in the early Middle Ages. The Great and Little Bargates are shown crossing over the Sincil Dyke at the southern entrance to the city. This map shows quite dramatically the large area of land still under water or only recently drained - a process proved to be incomplete even as late as the floods of spring 1947. The map is based on a combination of archaeological and documentary evidence and supposition. Drawn by Dave Watt, copyright English Heritage (Fig.9.67 in The City by the Pool).
56.1 St Hybald
In my article on St Hybald (no 45 Autumn 2001) I drew attention to the stone coffin that was exhumed from beneath the chancel of Hibaldstow church during the restoration of 1866. An eyewitness of the discovery, Mr Thomas Watmough, remarked that "the coffin was cut from one large stone and the skull rested in a hollow cut for the purpose... It was said at the time that there was no doubt that it was St Highbald's coffin."

Since the parish of Hibaldstow includes the site of the Romano-British settlement at Staniwells, I speculated as to whether the body of St Highbald could have been laid to rest in a reused Roman period stone coffin. However, using information supplied to me by the British Museum, I added that 'all known classical sarcophagi have flat bases, i.e. with no hollow for the head.'

In fact I was forgetting—and the British Museum seemed to be forgetting—Bede's account of the reburial of St Etheldreda of Ely. Sixteen years after her death it was decided that her bones should be exhumed, placed in a new coffin and translated into the monastery church. A suitable sarcophagus was obtained from the deserted former Roman settlement at Ganchester, and when the existing wooden coffin was unsealed the body of the saint was found to be incorrupt. What is particularly relevant to the Hibaldstow discovery however is Bede's remark that the designated (Roman?) sarcophagus 'was found to fit the virgin's body in a marvellous way... and the special place cut for the head exactly matched the measurements of her own.' (Eccles. Hist. IV:19).

Here therefore was another coffin with a hollow cut for the head! This fact must surely strengthen the case for regarding the Hibaldstow coffin as both authentic and pre-Saxon.

Ian Thompson

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56.2 South Kyme glass
In response to Richard Gravestock's query, I have no doubt that the glass found on the Priory site was from the Priory itself. It was very evident that a pile of glass (perhaps dumped when the window lead was removed from it) lay just under the ploughed depth and that the top part of this pile had been skimmed off, so to speak. In the 1960s there was no system for excavating such a site and it was fortunate that the then owner knew my father and permitted myself and Ben Whitwell to walk over it. It is too far away from the house, I feel, to have belonged there and I assumed it was destruction of Priory buildings at the Dissolution. There is little documentation regarding the windows of the Priory. The glass was seen by Dennis King, of the well-known Norwich firm, but he recommended a dissertation on this material and a collection from Sempingham Priory that had arrived at Lincoln Museum at about the same time. There were similarities between some pieces, but as I was doing a pottery dissertation this was not an option! I have drawn most of the Kyme sherds but my original brown exercise book of pencil drawings was borrowed and has not been seen for some years! Types of glass, colour and decoration can be dated from published material and there is quite a date range. The lion motif in window borders is very common in medieval glass. There is no funding to assess the origins, but who knows? Perhaps someone looking for a dissertation will be along shortly.

Hilary Healey

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56.3 Delayed comment!
In Notes & Queries 41.1 in Lines P&P 41 (Autumn 2000) I raised a query about the origins and dating of plaster relief wall plaques, including Lincoln scenes, which were very popular at one time. Now, thanks to members who constantly turn out old copies of antique collecting magazines for the SLHAA bookshop, I have found an answer to my query. This is in a back number of Antique Collecting (Vol 20, September 1985). The firm was set up by Arthur Osborne in Faversham and the plaques were made under the trade name Ivorea, being produced mainly between 1904 and 1964, when the firm was taken over. Arthur's initials or name appear on many, and few are dated; some are signed by a daughter, Blanche, and other modellers also initialed their work. The plaster cast, taken from a plasticine model, was hand coloured and then dipped in paraffin wax, which gave the ivory effect. Today the wax has sometimes rubbed off and the rear hanger rusted through, so that they often need repair, and one imagines this is rather a specialist job!

Hilary Healey
Sempringham news? Following a small feature on Sempringham last year The Countryman magazine published a letter from Wales which, among other things, lamented vandalism of the memorial to Princess Gwenllian. Flora Murray drew attention to it and contacted John Wilford, who sent the following reply (published with his permission). His comments will give readers an idea of the tone of the original letter:

"Where does one start? It is odd to describe the 1282 battle as ‘an ambush’. It is also odd to refer to Sempringham Priory as "a defunct nunnery" and a "concentration camp".

"In 1282 Sempringham was flourishing, with large numbers of women flocking to it. Many of them were seeking a better life, refuge and security. Llewelyn's 17-month-old daughter Gwenllian was fortunate. She was a political and biological time bomb—the only child of the first (and last?) Prince of Wales. Edward could never allow her to marry or have children. In his eyes he was being merciful. He commended the child to the Prioress with the words: “having the Lord before our eyes, pitying also her sex and age, and that the innocent may not seem to atone for the iniquity and ill-doing of the wicked, and contemplating especially the life of your Order...”. She was given a pension of £20 a year and no doubt played a full, devout and perhaps leading part in community life for the 54 years she lived there. There is absolutely no evidence [for] and it seems absurd that “her bones were later exhumed and scattered for the attention of scavengers”. Why? Why? This is surely fiction!"

John goes on to explain that the original memorial was erected about 10 years ago. It was damaged, but the exact cause is unknown, and there is no evidence that this was ‘a calculated act of malicious and spiteful vengeance’. A new memorial was set up nearby by the Gwenllian Society a couple of years ago and this is well cared for.

Newport Arch—stricken again Almost 40 years since a lorry load of fish fingers got stuck in Lincoln’s famous Newport Arch, it has happened again. Not quite as serious, but a nasty shock.

The morning after. The lorry wedged under Newport Arch, Lincoln, in June 1964. The recent damage was much less disastrous!

Ohio, I thought, not another book on the Red Arrows! You, too, may well be forgiven for thinking that, but this one has redeeming features. Described by the publisher as a 'dazzling pictorial tribute', the amount of red ink from both aircraft and flying suits can seem sometimes overwhelming. Take a closer look, however, and the quality of the photographs is truly excellent. Most of the photographs are previously unpublished and represent several years of camera work, as evidenced by changes of tail art and crew members.

While the aircraft are the star attraction, I found the background equally interesting. Trying to identify specific locations can be very absorbing and rewarding. Even more interesting is the brief history of earlier RAF aerobatic teams, leading to the formation of the Red Arrows, followed by good detailed descriptions of how pilots are selected and trained (some furrowed brows here), the art of formation flying, air-show planning, the importance of ground support, public relations, and—flying in the Hawker Hawk as passenger—the technical difficulties the author as photographer faced.

This is all beautifully produced book with not a word misspelled and not a comma or apostrophe out of place or missing—how refreshing. Sutton Publishing is to be congratulated. Buy it for the sheer pleasure it gives.

Owen Northwood, Donington.


Unlike Harry Humphries' book this is a blow-by-blow account of the raid itself, with some black and white and rare colour photos of some of the personnel (some annoyingly spread across two pages with the middle disappearing), maps of the route to the dams and the attack routes at each dam, and aerial photos taken by the RAF before and after the raid. There are drawings of the 'bouncing' bomb and the modifications made to the Lancaster to enable them to carry it. The aftermath in Germany and the UK is covered and, somewhat curiously, there is a chapter on the making of the well-known film. This is an attractive history which doesn't cover any new ground but, if you haven't already read an account, this is a good one.

Terry Hancock. Cherry Willingham.


The author has already made useful contributions to the study of Axholme geography and here he has produced an original piece of research that deserves a wide circulation. The book falls into two separate sections. In the first there is a review of the historic writings on the Isle with a discussion on their views on the Isle's topography, historic development and early mapping and the contribution made by the study of place names. Much of the emphasis is placed on what the landscape was like before Vermuyden's drainage schemes and, in a sense, whether the Isle (as we call it) was ever an island and what rivers formed the boundaries. Obviously the Trent formed a clearly defined and quite visible marker then as now. But what of the other sides? Mr Garner uses early maps and, particularly, the Saxton survey of 1586, to help delineate what were the apparent rivers and dykes that served to indicate the limits. He discusses also the anomalous position of Wroth, separated, as it was, by the old River Idle from the rest of Axholme.

The second part consists of a detailed walk around the entire 50 miles of the Isle's limits. In ten short stages he traces the beds of rivers now long since dried up or by other means 'lost' except to the eye of our author. Using old maps, the modern Ordnance Survey, aerial photographs and place names he describes in detail the exact route he and the boundaries took. Since much of what he sees is only discernable to the keen student he performs a valuable service to future topographers in describing his route and setting precisely where these boundaries were (are).

This is a keenly observed book; visits to archive offices, the Public Record Office, consultations with a wide number of people and reviews of all the literature (all complete with footnotes) point to the time and effort put in, while producing a nicely printed and well illustrated study.

GASTON, Peter. For better or worse: being the further adventures of Little Will in Lincoln and nearby. Boston, Richard Kay, 2003. xi, 193pp. ISBN 1 902882 52 0. £8.95 pbk.

This is the continuation of Little Will and Clerk Carros, which was published in 1990, and tells the story of the subject's (the author's grandfather's) life up to the age of 18, by which time he had left school and set himself up in business. As the title implies this is the story of his marriage. In fact much is devoted to the severe tests undergone, especially for Polly, his long-suffering wife, who strove to keep her marriage vows while retaining her strong Christian faith. There is much here giving an insight into life in Lincoln, and later when they moved to Welton, in the early 20th century. Their son, little Will, seems to have suffered greatly from a demanding father. The author says that he was often asked: 'Is it all true?' (of his first book) and he says that if only one word were allowed the answer would be 'no'; however, the writer has woven a believable and readable story based on research, family memories and a little 'story telling'.

Marcia Egar, Spalding.

2003 saw the 60th anniversary of the famous raid on the Ruhr dams but, surprisingly, no member of the squadron responsible, 617, has written of the raid since Guy Gibson in 1944. Harry Humphries was appointed as Adjutant (admin officer) of the squadron when it formed at Scampton in 1943 and he kept notes from that time until he was posted to the Far East in 1945. He intended to publish them after the war but was beaten to it by Paul Brickhill and has now decided that this is the right time. His pen portraits of the personnel he knew and worked with are particularly interesting, as is the account of the low morale felt after the Dams raid, particularly in September 1943 after an attack on the Dortmund-Ems Canal resulted in the loss of five of the eight Lancasters which took part, the casualties including some of the survivors of the Dams raid. From then on, however, 617’s fortunes improved and it became one of the RAF’s crack units. The author writes well, there are photos and copies of original documents relating to the squadron. The book is well produced.


This little booklet explores the several attempts in the township to establish horticultural societies. The earliest first met in 1865 but seems to have ceased by 1873. Later attempts were also short-lived but KLAGS (the Kirton Amateur Garden Society, which first met in 1980 and, while different in nature from its predecessors, still goes on. There are long lists of the various classes; several advertisements for early shows enliven the text as do recent photographs. A useful study.


This entertaining book is more than a personal history of Boston Gliderdrome; it is also a record of the singers and [musical] groups of the sixties and seventies. The first part of the book details the opening in 1939 as an open-air skating venue up to the fire on 24 May 1959 and renews memories of every local band, big band and jazz outfit featured during those twenty years. In the second part of the author records the groups that appeared from the reopening on 27 January 1960 until the closure on 25 May 1973; famous names included Billy Fury, Tom Jones, Joe Brown, P.J. Proby, Marty Wilde, The Animals, Status Quo, Manfred Mann, Stevie Wonder, Jimi Hendrix and many more. We are reminded that Elton John first appeared here in 1966 or 1967 as a part of a backing group then came back in 1973 to open his own British concert tour.

The author concludes by bringing his history up to date, explaining that since March 1996 three or four shows a year are arranged with such stars as The Drifters, The Supremes and Alvin Stardust. A well-researched and informative book.

Paul Monell, Boston.


Do you remember the day when a V1 flying bomb landed near Metheringham? Alas, not too many people will and those who do may disagree as to whether it was summer or autumn. Digby Diary, 18 September 1944, provides the answer. After a brief history of Digby’s founding as a satellite of Cranwell it moves on to a selective day to day account of movements, events and anything else of interest from 21 April 1920 and ending on 30 April 1953. The final seven years to 1953 are disposed of in one short paragraph.

A number of eminent and well-known RAF names passed through Digby’s gates. Tedder, Harris and Leigh-Mallory were station commanders and Gibson, Johnson, Wheeler, Braham, Whittle, Beamish, Kain, Yeo-Thomas and Bader all spent time there. The author uses some of these names as a book for expanding the diary entries, adding much additional interest.

The role of Digby should not be underestimated. Initially tasked with defending a large part of eastern England by day, along with its satellites at Wellingore and Coleby Grange, it also became an important part of the night fighter force. Later on, as part of 12 Group, the Digby wing mounted offensive sweeps over the continent with Czech, Polish, Belgian and Canadian squadrons playing a major part.

Looking at the entries one is aware at times of the large number of accidental aircraft and aircrew losses which occurred sometimes for more than losses as a result of enemy action. The diary is full of sadness, elation, action, social comment and humour—sometimes unintentional, I suspect—as in the case of Flying Officer Hyde who ‘gave an outstanding and long remembered display of aerobatics over nearby Metheringham... unfortunately [he] crashed and was killed’. There are a number of printing errors—one wonders who had sole use of the officer’s mess—there is very odd use of apostrophes; whilst the cover, half title and title page have three versions of the book’s title.

This is really a book for dipping into rather than reading from beginning to end. Well illustrated with contemporary photographs, this forms a useful addition to RAF history in Lincolnshire.

Owen Northwood, Donington.


This splendid guide shows visitors round the cathedral step by step and points out all the salient features. With this in hand, a variety of religious, sculptural and other decorative sights will be highlighted and all of them illustrated here in colour. It is perhaps aimed at the younger audience but no one could fail to gain enlightenment on the treasures on view and their special significance. Highly recommended.

SERGEANT, Marjorie. Voices of...

What is a difficult book on which to make comments! It is a collection of 150 Psalms written in modern English. There is the same number of Psalms in the King James’ Bible or the Book of Common Prayer, and if you were brought up using these books then “Troubled Joy” may not be for you. There is nothing that has the splendour, dignity, and state of the “The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want”! There are echoes of the originals occasionally, especially if you are familiar with the Church of England’s Alternative Service Book, 1980. For instance, Psalm 62 begins, “My soul waits in silence for God” and in “Troubled Joy” becomes “I wait in silence for the Lord, my beloved”. This probably all sounds very critical, and so it is, if one expects to read Psalms written in the glorious, majestic, beautiful language of a bygone age. There is something very special in hearing the Psalms chanted during a church service.

The psalms of “Troubled Joy” need to be looked at from today’s point of view. They are modern 20th/21st century poems of the soul with a great deal of appeal. Not necessarily easy to understand, or relate to the old, but very readable and bound to strike a chord with most people whether they simply browse through the book or take the trouble to read it more carefully. The book is split into five untitled sections but each psalm has been given a title, loosely reflecting its content.

It’s a book that is well worth buying, a book to make you think, a book to dip into, not only for good days, but also for the not so good. It’s certainly a book that, in its own way, responds to the power of the ancient psalms and is brought into the present day in modern language.

The author tells us that the subtitle Lincolnshire Psalms expresses his affection for the county, particularly Lincoln Cathedral where he spent time when writing this book.

Pauline Napier, Boston

WINTRINGHAM Branch of the WEA. Wads o’ words: a collection of dialect words used in Broughton, South Ferriby, Winterton and Wintringham, North Lincolnshire; [edited by Loretta Rivett], Wintringham WEA, 2002. ii, 22pp. No ISBN £1 pbk (or £1.20 by post from Pam Wells, 165 Southside, Wintringham, North Lincs DN15 9NN).

This collection of Lincolnshire dialect words is compiled by members of a WEA class in Wintringham, who come from five local parishes. The words are listed under topics, such as Farm and Feest, Art and Ornament, The Weather, About Foosts, Things Foosts Say and the way we say ‘em. These themes are less easy to use than a Glossary in alphabetical order, especially as there is no contents page or general index; but in a small book this is not a major inconvenience. Interestingly, two of the places where the contributors live lie within the core area covered by the well-known Peacock Lincolnshire Word Books, 1884-1920; edited and transcribed by Eileen Elder, but there are still words found here which are not in the Peacock collection. Some I particularly like are thick as a bag (foggy), thiskin (enormous) and grumpy (dirty skin). It does not, of course, follow that the contributors have always lived in the area but it is good to know that expressions are still being collected.

This work demonstrates the value of such groups publishing their findings as they can always add to our knowledge. This is a modest collection but it is a good example of what can be done at a low cost by a keen group with an enthusiastic leader.

Hillary Healey, Bicker.

RECENTLY PUBLISHED.

ADDY, Shirley and LONG, Maureen. Lincolnshire village signs, books one and two; photographs by Fred Ham. Al. Publications, 2003. ISBNs 0 9542950 1 3 and 0 9542950 2 1 respectively. £4.95 pbk each (or £5.50 by post from 52 London Road, Kessingfield, Lowestoft, Suffolk NR3 7PW).


CLEWS, Philip Henry, Prisoner of war: my horrendous march 1945.
Lincolnshire Bells and Bellfounders

This book was sold out very soon after publication and the compiler and editor, John Ketteringham, is seriously considering publishing a reprint, which will include comprehensive addenda. He can only do this if there are enough subscribers to cover most of the cost. The book is a record of around 2400 bells in Lincolnshire. The earliest of these dates from c1150 and over 300 bells are pre-Reformation. As much information as possible is given about each bell including inscription, weight and diameter. The fittings are also of considerable interest, with many of the bell frames of great age.

Hitherto unpublished information is included about all the bell founders known to have worked in the Diocese, and this includes the author’s own research into the founder of the bells at South Somercotes with their amazingly decorative inscriptions and date of 1423. There are 136 illustrations and the number of pages in the reprint will be about 400, which would include a list of subscribers. If you would like to subscribe should the reprint go ahead, please contact Dr Ketteringham by email at john.ketteringham27@ntlworld.com or telephone him on 01522 8888097 or write to 27 Bunkers Hill, Lincoln LN24QS.