Bog bodies—a skull found at Fiskerton
Urns Farm, Baston, 8th Century Spalda and 21st Century Spalding
Thatching • Lincoln University Library • Mystery Pictures
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Contributions to the next Bulletin and the Spring issue of Lincolnshire Past & Present are welcome as soon as possible. Material may be sent to the Joint Editors at Jews' Court, Lincoln LN2 1LS. Articles may also be sent on disk (Microsoft Word document) or as an email attachment to lindumcolonia@hotmail.com

Front cover illustration: Jews' Court on Steep Hill, Lincoln
Back cover illustration: Regal Cinema, Boston—drawing by Hilary Healey, based on that used in an old programme leaflet.
Winter 2005/6

We wish all our readers a happy and successful 2006. Looking back to 2005, we needed to get the magazine early to the printers so it is rather a slim one! Nevertheless we have managed to include two archaeology articles, a useful account of the art and science of thatching in Lincolnshire, and an extract from Jez Ashberry's history of the University of Lincoln's Great Central Warehouse Library, with his kind permission. We also have over five pages of book reviews and new titles, nearly all of which are available from the SIHA bookshop on Steep Hill, Lincoln.

Our first archaeology article is about the bog bodies of Lincolnshire by a new contributor, Erik Grigg, who suggests that Iron Age man came to fear the rising water of the Witham. Another new contributor, John Cleary, has given us our second article of an archaeological nature—exploring the connection between Urns Farm, Baston, the 8th century Spalding and 21st century Spalding. We now have several items that have arrived too late to be included. These we hope to publish in a bumper number 63 edition in the spring.

Perhaps many 'townies' will see the word 'thatching' and think of chocolate-box thatched cottages, but Mr Dobbs' account is of the thatcher's skill on stacks of wheat. A closely related topic is a 'bottle of straw'. Recently on BBC Radio Four someone asked what a 'bottle of straw was'. Apparently, in the story of the scarecrow Worzel Gummidge by Barbara Euphan Todd, his legs were made of 'bottles of straw'. I had seen this word in local glossaries as used of a bundle of straw, reeds or sticks, but soon after this I heard George Danby of Wrangle, on BBC Radio Lincolnshire's Country Diary, going into more detail. George kindly allowed LP&P to quote from his talk. He describes how he needed a small amount of straw to coax some cattle into a pen:

'They have to think it's their idea to go into the pen, so I thought I'd take some barley straw for bait. We don't have any small bales now so I took a bottle of straw. I bet that's set some of you thinking! 'He can't get much straw into a bottle' I hear you saying. A bottle of straw... is a lovely old expression that is never heard now, but years ago it was quite common.

'You lay out a short rope with a loop at one end; then lay straw across it, building it up higher and wider until you have as much as you think you can carry. You then put the end of the rope through the loop and draw it up tight, finishing it off with a half hitch. Now you have a big ball of straw with a bit of a waistline, where the rope goes round. You put your fingers through the rope and swing it up onto your shoulder. The old labourers, who kept a pig, would beg a bottle of straw from the farmer for bedding, and he would usually get the muck in return.'

Boston's Regal Cinema in West Street was destroyed by fire in October. It was hoped to save the façade as part of the site redevelopment, but it was not to be. The part shopping centre that it had become had been out of use for a few years after an earlier fire. By chance I photographed one of the side doors only days before this latest fire, because they are a different design from in the architect's drawing—the one used on the cinema programmes. The back cover illustration is based on one in the old programme leaflet, and is presumably from the architect's design. It differs slightly from the version that was built.

Erratum:

'A Lord of Extreme Authority and Goodness' - the villages of Braceyby and Ropesley and their connection to Corpus Christi College, Oxford (LP&P 61 page 6 Fig 4). In the above article by Marion Ellis the same illustration mistakenly appeared twice instead of the illustration below, which should have been displayed for Fig 4.

We hope Marion will accept our apology for this printing error, as we do appreciate good articles with a high pictorial content.

Hilary Healey and Ros Beavers, Editors

Opposite: College Farm, Braceyby from 1825 Survey, CCCO Da 8/1
In May 2003 while walking my dog near Fiskerton I noticed a strange round object lying in some mud that had just been dredged up from the North Delph (the drainage ditch that runs parallel and slightly to the north of the River Witham). When I picked it up and turned it over I was shocked to find myself looking into the eyes of a human skull! I dutifully informed the police, but the skull was soon confirmed to be ancient and has been sent to the University of Lincoln's Department of Forensic and Biomedical Sciences for tests, but at the time of writing no carbon dating has yet been carried out.

The find site is important as it is just 450 metres downstream from the famous Iron Age Fiskerton Causeway site. As well as the dugout canoes, axes and other objects found at Fiskerton during the excavation of the causeway some human bones, including a piece of skull with what looks like a sword mark in it, were found. The skull fragment belonged to a male of about 45 years old and has been carbon dated to 390-160BC. My find is probably the first complete Iron Age cranium to be found in the area in nearly 100 years, and considering what was found nearby at Fiskerton, it could be very important.

Although the university has not completed carbon dating or a full forensic analysis, certain points can be noted about the skull. From the size of the skull, the amount of wear on the teeth, and the fact that the joints on the skull bones (parietal structures) are closed, we can assume it is an adult of at least middle age. The slightly raised eyebrow ridges (superciliary arches) suggest a male. There is no jaw, many of the teeth are missing and there is some damage to the left cheek, but all of these may have happened some considerable time after death—although the skull seems to have survived being dredged out of a ditch by a huge mechanical digger very well! The teeth show none of the decay associated with a modern diet and the wear on them is consistent with a diet of the coarse grain in Bronze Age or Iron Age bread.
Many other human remains have been discovered in the Witham Valley that date to around the late Bronze Age or Iron Age. In 1816 the *Stamford Mercury* noted: ‘In carrying out works for the improvement of the River Witham, many submarine articles have been thrown up... human skulls etc. have been found.’ The other articles included canoes that seem very like the ones found at Fiskerton.

Some time around 1911 an adult male skull was found near... a woman standing upright in the peat moss... and two ancient shoes.

Bracebridge (it is still preserved in the Sedgwick Museum in Cambridge, catalogue number D33836).1 In 1946 a human mandible (jaw) was found at Branston Fen.2 In 1972 at excavations near the pumping station at Washingborough (a dig that produced Bronze and Iron Age remains) human bones were found and more during field walking nearby.3 Further afield, around the Isle of Axholme, there are more cases.

Discovered near Crowle in the early 18th century was: ‘a woman standing upright in the peat moss at Althorpe, and two ancient shoes’4. Recent examination of the shoes the woman was wearing suggests they are: ‘typical of the one-piece shoes found throughout the northern provinces of the Roman Empire, in having a semicircular heel shape, a back seam and series of side loops to accommodate lacing.’5

A further bog male body with his skin preserved was found at Asby Moor in 1724 and a well preserved female at Amscote Moor in 1747, but either of these discoveries could be a confused repetition of the Crowle finds.6 In 1884 an Iron Age causeway similar to the Fiskerton one was dug to the west of Island Carr near Brigg and a human jawbone was found. Not all the Lincoln bog bodies are thought to be prehistoric, for during the construction of the railway in 1848 a body was found near Stixwould with an iron sword, iron spearhead and chain mail, all of a 13th or early 14th century date.

It is tempting to equate the new find and all the other Lincoln bog bodies with ritual murder in the Iron Age. Certainly well preserved bog bodies like Lindow Man from Lancashire (in fact two men and a female skull have been found, but it is the best preserved male who is in the British Museum that most people associate with Lindow) and Tollund Man from Denmark seem to have been murdered, with garrote and possibly axe or knife, probably for ritual reasons. We should remember that we have found very few Iron Age burials compared to the periods before and after so our knowledge of how they treated the dead is very slight.

The proximity of the skull I found to the Fiskerton Causeway—a place we know ritual deposits were made... perhaps Iron Age man had come to fear the rising water...

...we know ritual deposits were made into the water... making me think he may be an Iron Age offering to a watery deity. We know this period was one of climatic change and peat was beginning to cover upland areas that had been fertile in the early Bronze Age. Work at Flag Fen has shown that water levels were rising so perhaps Iron Age man had begun to fear the rising water and wanted some sort of divine help in keeping the water god happy.

It’s interesting that both Lindow and the Celtic name for Lincoln, Lindum, both mean ‘dark pool’. Perhaps the Brayford Pool and the Witham were sacred to the people of the Iron Age, or they may have considered these watery areas malevolent. Once the university has finished the forensic tests and has found the funding to get the skull carbon dated, we will know more—perhaps even the cause of death. In the meantime we can just speculate what caused so many Iron Age people to end up in our bogs.

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**Notes**


2. A. L. Armstrong (Heritage Lincolnshire Records)


URNS FARM, BASTON
THE 8TH CENTURY SPALDA
AND 21ST CENTURY SPALDING

John Cleary

Before I retired to live in Spalding, Lincolnshire, I was a consultant physi-
cian at Peterborough Hospitals. Part of the duties included visiting patients in their
homes at the request of their GPs. One such visit took me to Urns
farmhouse in Baston. At the time I did not realise the significance
of the farm’s name. After I retired I developed an interest in Spald-
ing area history and started to
read around the subject. In the
course of my readings I found that
the large fifth century Anglo-
Saxon cemeteries in Northern
Germany were referred to as Urns
fields and so I decided to investi-
gate Urns Farm in the archaeo-
logical literature.

It was indeed a fifth century An-
go-Saxon cemetery. It had been
excavated twice; the findings pub-
lished by this Society (Mayes and
Dean 1976). Some of the illustra-
tions here are taken from this pub-
lication. Figure 1 shows the loca-
tion of the site with the road
known as King Street, which runs
from the Roman town of Duro-
briva near Water Newton, north-
wards to Bourne. This is mentioned
by Roman Road researcher Ivan D.
Margery (19 under ref no 26).

[Unfortunately the original authors
slipped up in their introduction by
labelling it as Ermine Street, which
lies further west! Ed]

The Baston site lies in the angle
between this road going roughly
eastwards known as the Baston
Outgang, also a Roman road,
(Hallam, 112) which leads towards
Spalding, six miles away. It is now
all built over, although further exca-
vations were carried out in advance
of that development.

Drawings of some of the pottery
from the second excavation in
1966, including one pot with exces-
sive decoration, mostly formed
from small stamped impressions.
This is vessel no 42 shown in Fig 2.

J.N.L. Myres, leading Anglo-
Saxon pottery expert, compared this
pot with one from Sancton in Yorks-
shire and suspected a link through itinerant potters. He created the

term the Sancton/Baston workshop,
and found other similar pottery in
cemeteries at Newark, North Film-
ham in Norfolk, Illington in Suff-
olk and Melton Mowbray in
Leicestershire (Myres Fig 5). He
gives close-up photographs of the
detail.

As I was ignorant of the locations
of these cemeteries I consulted the
AA 2004 Road Atlas. This
showed that three of these sites
were close to 21st century places
with similar names. These are
Baston—Spalding, Lincolnshire,
Newark—Spaldford, Nottingham-
shire, and Sancton—Spaldington
and Holme on Spalding Moor,
Yorkshire. Of course, the simili-
arity of names in the 21st century is
interesting but may merely indi-
cate the so-called daughter settle-

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<td><strong>C21st Town Name</strong></td>
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<td>Holme-on-Spalding-Moor</td>
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<td>Spaldwick</td>
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<td><strong>Domesday Vill C11th</strong></td>
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ment phenomenon, so I consulted
the Domesday Book for evidence
in earlier times. (See Table 1).

The cemeteries with unrelated
names in the twenty-first century
had unrelated names in the elev-
enth century. The Spald names
divide into two groups, those with
pure Spald that is Spaldes-
forde (Notts) and Spaldwick
(former Hunts), and those derived
from Spald- ing, Spallinge (Lines)

Lincolnshire Past & Present No 62 Winter 2005/6
and Spaldington (Yorks). The first
two groups are the 'Ford of
Spalda' and the 'wick or market
of the Spalda'. The second group
with inserted -ing refer to the de-
scendants of the Spalda. This
group of names is the same as that
shows that all the twenty-first cen-
tury names from table 1 are close to
the Roman road later called Ermine
Street by the English, or one of its
major branches. Further study re-
veals that some of these locations
are close to where the Roman road
iron workings, though without as
yet described Anglo-Saxon activi-
ty. Thus the early Saxons Spalding-
gas could be extracting iron to
transport down the Spald road to
the market at Spaldwick. As the
economy of Post-Roman Britain

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<td><strong>C21st TOWN</strong></td>
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assembled by both Ekwall (The
Concise Oxford Dictionary of
English Place-names, 1960) and
Cameron (A Dictionary of Lin-
colnsire Place-names, 1995) as
deriving from the tribal name
Spalda in a document of uncertain
date, but somewhere prior to the
Danish invasion of the early 9th
century. This is known as the
Tribal Hidage.

In the Tribal Hidage the Spaldas
are recorded as having six hun-
dred hides, in very small land
holdings across the more recent
English counties, Huntingdon-
shire (now in Cambs), Cam-
bridgeshire, Lincolnshire, Not-
tinghamsire and Yorkshire. Thus
suggest that there are the sum of
small enclaves linked in some

**Were the Spaldas
crossing keepers?**

It is not surprising that as I
first studied the names on a road
map, albeit a 21st century map,
that the idea of a Roman road
connection should suggest itself.

Consultation of the Ordnance
Survey Map of Roman Britain
would have crossed a major water-
course.

If these watercourses were indeed
bridged by the Romans then by the
time of the Anglian invasion these
wooden bridges would have de-
cyed or have been destroyed leav-
ing a narrow gap, control of which
would grant control of the right of
way.

Could the Spaldas have been keep-
ers of these crossings? This would
fit with Ekwall's noun of 'a cleft or
ravine' and Cameron's topographi-
cal feature 'a narrow opening or
slit'. As it is likely that the tribal
wicks was established after the tribal
settlements then the original 'cleft
or ravine' would be that over the
modern River Glen, just one mile
north of the Baston cemetery.

The original settlement, which I
shall call 'Spaldham' would be the
early Anglo-Saxon settlement near
Kates Bridge, also one mile north
of Baston. Spalding (Lines) would
be a daughter vill of this settlement,
perhaps originating when the Bas-
ton cemetery declined in use, indi-
cating a decline of its feeder settle-
ment.

The Yorkshire Spaldinga names are
in an area rich in Romano-British

**Economic power may
explain unique
survival of the name**

would have reverted to Iron Age
standards. If not lower, this con-
trol of iron extraction would place
the Spaldinga in a position of
great economic power and may
help explain this unusual survival
of the Spaldinga name from fifth
century Britain to twenty-first
century Britain.

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Occasional Paper no. 3.

of Anglo-Saxon Pottery of the Pa-
gan Period.

Ordnance Survey map of Roman
Britain (1956).
Location of second Baston excavations, reproduced by kind permission, from Mayes and Dean, 1976, Fig 1
LINCOLNSHIRE IS THE HOME OF THE THATCHER' SAYS REG DOBBS

Lincolnshire is the home of the thatcher.

After harvest the hard-won stacks of wheat were thatched to keep them dry during the winter rains.

The equipment was simple—a long ladder that would reach from the ground to the top of the stack, usually a thirty-two stabber (stave) ladder, some balls of twine wound onto pegs and some bundles of thatch pegs (thack pegs in our village).

A pair of stout pegs hinged with plaited twine at one end and a twine loop at the other completed the tools. Herbert Strickson, the thatcher, came from the village and all the farm staff were busy ploughing, drilling winter cereals, harvesting potatoes, and all the busy autumn work for the change over to winter stock yarding. But the thatcher needed a server—someone to prepare his straw and carry it to him on the precarious side of the stack roof. This was where I came in as the learner. I was ‘spare man’ and was drafted in.

A heap of straw was dumped at the side of that stack yard and well wetted with buckets of water from the horse tank. The straw of a good length—cut with a binder while young and thrashed by a beater drum did not smash it too much. The water took the brittleness from it and allowed it to be drawn from the side of the heap into ‘welts’ about three feet long.

The job of drawing from the heap was called ‘yorming’. The trick was to draw it and pull it neat and straight side by side to make a ‘welt’ about 18 inches to two feet across and about three inches thick. The welt was then laid across one of the carrying sticks and back to ‘yorm’ some more. The next welt was laid across the first so that the thatcher could separate each welt on its own to lay it on the stack roof.

When about half a dozen wells criss crossed over the stick, the other stick would be brought over and looped to the one on the ground. The whole bundle could be hoisted on my back and carried up the ladder to Herbert who needed it to be placed just so, halfway up the roof.

By now he had got his thack pegs ready, a line of them stretching from the eave to the roof with about three inches left showing. By the side of each peg was a ball of twine on its little peg. He
started at the eave giving the thatch a bit of overhang to shoot the rain out from the stack, and progressed methodically upwards, carefully overlapping the last layer until he reached the top. Each line of pegs was added to about every two feet across the roof and the twine was brought across and tied to the new peg. The rows were neatly carried up the roof at intervals of about two feet. And so on, row after row, sweating in the sun or sweating at the breeze because wind and loose straw make fools of men.

At last the rows of thatch pegs join up and the ladder can be taken away as the twine is tied off on the first row of pegs. Taking a pride in the work, a pair of sheep shearing clippers trims a neat edge along the bottom. This is purely cosmetic because untrimmed longer edges would carry the rain out further away from the stack.

As a postscript, Herbert Strickson and his brother thatched 47 stacks in Bourne Fen one autumn, not finishing until the November. Herbert was taught by Benjamin Smith who farmed at Drainage Farm, Guthram.

LINCOLN UNIVERSITY LIBRARY
- THE GREAT CENTRAL WAREHOUSE

Members of SLHA were invited on a conducted tour of the new University Library on the bank of the River Witham. The Librarians made us most welcome and conducted us round explaining the history of the building and its adaptation. They were proud to be working there. We were all furnished with a copy of a description written by Jez Ashberry, Press and Media Relations Officer for the University of Lincoln. He has kindly consented to our publishing some of his script:

A landmark from Lincoln's industrial past has stood derelict in the heart of the City for years, but now a £5 million restoration project has given it a new lease of life as the university's library.

Once its stout brick walls echoed to the din of the railway goods yard, the clank of the crane and the hiss of the steam locomotive. Now the noises of a bygone industrial age have been replaced by a much more studious sound: the clicking of fingertips on computer keyboards, the riffing of pages in a book and the low murmur of voices engaged in hushed conversation.

The Great Central Goods and Grain Warehouse was built almost a century ago as industrial activity on Lincoln's Brayford Pool reached its peak and rivalries between competing railway companies intensified.

By that time the new University of Lincoln had begun to develop on the Brayford Marina and now, nearly 100 years after it was built, the Great Central Warehouse has found a new role as the University's library - almost certainly the largest academic library in the East Midlands.

The Edwardian era in the early
years of the 20th century was a period of rapid expansion for the Great Central Railway, as the Manchester, Sheffield and Lincolnshire Railway was now called. In an attempt to keep pace with its rivals — in particular the Great Northern Railway which also served Lincoln — the Great Central Railway spent thousands of pounds improving its infrastructure and developing new facilities.

The Lincoln West goods depot was a prime example of this investment. With its sidings it covered 70 acres south of Brayford Pool and featured a spacious warehouse served by electric cranes. Work began in 1905 after the Great Central Railway obtained an Act of Parliament authorising construction. The depot was built by Thomas Wright of Manchester and Hughes and Stirling of Liverpool and the buildings alone cost some £28,000, or £2.1 million in today's money.

The Great Central Goods and Grain Warehouse was partially opened on 1 June 1907, with access provided by half a mile of new line which connected with the Great Northern lines east of West Holmes junction. By 8 July it was fully operational, with water access provided on to the upper reach of the River Witham above the Great Northern Railway swing bridge. But the construction project had not been easy: a steel strike at the time meant that the builders had to look further afield for their materials. Some of the steelwork came from United Steel in nearby Scunthorpe, but as the project progressed steel was brought in from Dorman Long in Middlesbrough and eventually old railway lines from Germany had to be imported and recycled as the strike took hold. Enormous pine beams 14 inches deep and 55 feet long were shipped in from Canada to provide the original roof trusses, which are still in place.

The warehouse was built on a grand scale: on the ground floor the walls are 30 inches thick, though by the third floor they have narrowed to 12 inches. Locomotives entered the building to the west, where the main library entrance now stands, and were able to pass right through the building, emerging on the east side facing what is now the home of the Lincolnshire Echo newspaper.

For decades the Great Central Warehouse played an important role in the heart of Lincoln's industrial quarter, but its decline followed the pattern set by the whole Brayford area as goods traffic moved inexorably from the railways and the waterways to the roads. In 1967 the warehouse was sold by British Rail and in 1972 the water access was filled in and piled at the end. Builders' merchants Pattinsons — later to be taken over by Harricos — used the building for around 30 years, but Harricos vacated the site in 1998 and the building was left to decay. But dereliction was by no means the end of the line for this imposing building. Its location in the heart of Lincoln, next to the historic waterfront and in an area being revitalised by the growth of the University and by a concerted effort by the City Council, gave the Great Central Warehouse a development potential which was obvious to many.

The building was first purchased by a property developer who planned to turn the upper floors into luxury apartments, but that idea never got off the drawing board. Instead it fell to the University to realise the full potential of this important piece of Lincoln's industrial heritage. The University acquired the lease on the building in August 2003 and gave architect, Nigel Stevenson, the task of turning the derelict building into a fully functioning library in just 12 months. Inside and outside the Great Central Warehouse retains much of its original ambience. The beautiful brickwork has been cleaned and exposed, the iron and steel work shot blasted and painted, original winching gear preserved and existing roof lights reinstated to provide natural light on the top floor. With its wide airy expanses the library still feels like a former warehouse, though now its four floors are filled up with books, CD-ROMs and computers rather than merchants' goods and supplies.

Hilary's Mystery Pictures

Mystery picture 1. Can anyone identify the church pictured opposite? It was sold to me as Epworth, on account of a) the postmark being Epworth, and b) the card bearing the faint red rubber stamp of 'NEWBITT, Epworth'. I knew it wasn't Epworth, which has a tower anyway, and being a crook spire it reminds me more of examples in the south of the county, but I cannot immediately recognise it. Perhaps it's in Yorkshire? It appears to have several gravestones on the north side, which is not common, and may help identification.

Mystery picture 2. This photograph of two gentlemen in a trap was apparently taken in Hagworthingham. Does anyone recognise the photo or the characters? They look as though they might be father and son.

Hilary Healey
Bookshelf

Includes reviews of newly published titles. A list of books more recently notified or received follows but inclusion of a title here does not mean that a review will appear later. Nearly all included are available from SLHA Bookshop, Sweep Hill, Lincoln.


This is a nicely printed and illustrated volume, firstly, on the history of Fen drainage and, secondly, on the visible sites affected by the schemes put through in the last three hundred years. There is much more besides since the author gives brief accounts of the lives of the notable people who have been born in the area covered and there are quite a few ghost stories to enliven the text.

For the Lincolnshire reader the disappointment is that the author rarely strays across the border. Crowland and the Trinity Bridge are discussed and one of the peregrinations touches on Parsons Drove and that corner of the county. The book begins with an historical account of drainage works back to Roman times but the main concentration is on Wymuden and the Duke of Bed-
ford’s Adventurers and, apart from a brief reference to the Dutchman’s work in Hatfield Chase the setting is modern Cambridgeshire and Norfolk. The second half consists of five chapters concentrating on tours of the main drainage areas in those counties. Here there is a great amount of information on the people and places and, since there is no index, it would have been better if the maps at the heads of the sections had been larger and more detailed. It is all very interesting and conveyed in a very readable manner.

The book’s usefulness could have been improved; the author has chosen to describe all the pictures in a section at the beginning which leaves the 50+ pictures in the text without captions; he also refers to many other writers but without edition or page references (the bibliography is arranged under titles so locating references is difficult, especially so as, in one case, the book mentioned isn’t in the bibliography); there are a few typos. Nevertheless, the author knows his stuff; users (eg tourists following the itineraries) will gain much information pleasantly written.

BRASSINGTON, Marion, and others. The parish of St Mary and St Nicholas, Spalding: the history of a Fenland parish; edited and revised by Marion Brassington, Peter Case and Roger Seal. Spalding PCC, 2004. 57pp. ISBN 0 9560425 2 9. £2.50 pbk (or £3.25 by post from the Parish Office, 1 Halmer Gate, Spalding PE11 2DR).

In this compact book there is a wealth of information, properly researched, written up by three different authors and now freshly re-edited and reissued. The story begins with the history of Spalding Priory (probably established in 1087) and its development, separate from the present church, which was built in the 13th century. In a series of six sections, the changes in the buildings structure are detailed, along with the changing forms of worship, its leading role in the life of the town, especially after the dissolution of the monasteries, and during the Civil War. Proper emphasis is placed on the activities of its many incumbents, their dealings with many dissenting organisations that became part of the town’s developing religious life and the, possibly unique, role of the 13 feoffees in owning the advowson of the church and being responsible, therefore, for the appointment of the vicar.

This is well produced, readable, with the vital references from which the authors have drawn their work and deserves wide circulation. The place of this church in this town means that in many ways we have a potted history of Spalding as well and there is much here on the life of its people through the ages. If only the authors would now set to and produce the single volume but wide-ranging history of the town we badly need. Gooch’s book has now reached its venerable age of 65!


Here’s treasure! Mr Bray has lived all his long life in Pinchbeck, as have his forebears, and he has spent much of his leisure time collecting up bits and pieces about his home village. And here they are all gathered up into a large, well-printed volume that will give pleasure, entertainment and illumination to all its readers. There is no index and items are loosely arranged under the usual headings—buildings, the church, residents, the wars, waterways and drainage, farming, local government and so on. But there is a good deal of cross-over between categories and it all resembles a gigantic lucky dip. But it is rewarding that so much has been collected up and put out for all readers to find of value. It is illustrated (a bit blurry and a map has the wrong name) but it is greatly recommended.


Spalding man Alastair Goodrum has made a specialty of studying the aviation history of the Fens and has written many many magazine articles on the subject, plus the book ‘Combat Ready’, a history of RAF Sutton Bridge. In this his latest book he looks at the night battles between the British air defences and the German air force over the Fens, The Wash giving enemy aircraft a corridor into England on their way to bomb the Midlands and the North. During WW 1 the Royal Flying Corps tried to intercept the dreaded Zeppelins, from aerodromes such as Tydd St Mary, and this campaign is covered in an early chapter.

The book then concentrates on WW 2, the night fighter stations at Coleby Grange, Digby, Wellington and Wittering, and the radar stations at Langtoft and Orby. In the early days after the Battle of Britain, when the Luftwaffe went over to night bombing, the crews of the inadequate Blenheim and Defiants relied on the ‘Mark 1 Eyeball’ (as radar was still in its infancy) with limited success but from 1941 radar-equipped Beaufighters and Mosquitos began to make life very difficult for the Luftwaffe bombers. Of course it was not always a one-sided affair and the RAF night fighters also suffered losses, as did the bombers returning from raids over Europe whose crews tended to relax and therefore became more vulnerable—the Luftwaffe’s ‘Operation Gisela’ on the night of March 3rd/4th 1945 resulted in...
eight bombers being shot down over Lincolnshire alone, and this is covered in the book. Also covered are the little-known flying bomb attacks on eastern England, these being launched from Heinkel 111 bombers over the North Sea in 1944/45; fortunately they did not cause too much damage but did cause much consternation and a reorganisation of the AA defences. However, the bulk of the story is devoted to the individual experiences made and the author has researched squadron and radar station Operational Record Books to provide much detail, fleshed out by accounts from those who were there, which he presents in a well-written and readable way. I found it a fascinating read and the author is to be congratulated on his meticulous research. There are photos and maps and the front cover is an arresting painting of a Dornier being intercepted, spoilt by the publisher cutting off nearly all of the RAF Defiant doing the interception!

Terry Hancock

This substantial work provides us with a real insight into what living in a Poor Law Institution was like. Now in his 80s the author came from a farming family, which fell on hard times in Gosberton Clough and Risегate during the Depression of the 1930s. His father was named Horton and his mother was ‘knocking on a bit’ (at 44) when the author was born, the last of four illegitimate children. Not an auspicious start in that more innocent but also much more moralising age. The first long section tells of the deprivations the family witnessed in the late 1920s and early 1930s. The father had rented land but took out a mortgage, which in the depression of the period he could not sustain and the family gradually fell into straitened circumstances. We read of lack of food, a hovel to live in and, one winter, the mother scavenging for fuel by collecting the cinder thrown out by the railway men in Gosberton station (which happened to be next door to their home).

Eventually, the bank foreclosed and the family was moved to the Workhouse in Spalding. Again the author describes in quite graphic detail his new life. In some ways the move was a blessing; they were fed, clothed quite well (two suits – one for Sunday best) and, although strictly confined, they did have occasional excursions into the town and they all trooped off to the old Westlode Street Primary School, where the rudiments of a good education were instilled. However, the overwhelming experience was of an unloving childhood, where stoicism and buttoned-up emotions were necessary in order to survive.

Finally, they were allowed out to go to Lincoln to live with a relative; his first real job was on the land back at Gosberton but after his mother got a housekeeping post in Skegness he moved there and served an apprenticeship and that’s where the story ends. This is well told; there are lots of repetitions (and editing might have benefited the book) but, in their way, they serve to emphasise the drudgery of life in rural Lincolnshire during the depression. It is a first-hand account drawn from a memory that seems prodigious in its ability to recall so much detail (though there never was a Gaumont cinema in Spalding and the Pool in Lincoln is not Bradford Pool).

The hatchments of the Johnson Family in the Parish Church of St. Mary and St. Nicholas, Spalding. Friends of the Church, [2005]. 27pp. No ISBN. £1 pbk (or £1.25 by post from the Parish Office, 1 Halmer Gate, Spalding PE11 2DR). This brief booklet not only tells you what hatchments are and how to interpret them but then illustrates all nine examples in Spalding Parish Church. Copious biographical details are provided of the people whose coats of arms are depicted. Since most of them are members of, or related to, the Johnson family we acquire an interesting slant on one of the town’s most important families, from Theophilus Buckworth (b. 1729) to T.M.S. Johnson, who died in 1892. A family tree rounds off the story. The compilers have done an excellent service for local historians.


In seven succinct chapters the development of transport in the county is interestingly (and often illuminatingly) told. The first sections deal with pre-Roman tracks, Roman roads, turnpikes, coach services, early bicycles, the first cars and other vehicles and particularly their manufacture by local entrepreneurs. David Robinson writes about ports and coastal traffic and is followed by chapters on canals and river transport, bridges and bridge builders and, finally, the development of the railway system in the county. In such a small space a great deal of information is presented. It is all very readable and well printed with good pictures. A number of points needed clarification; the bridge at Sutton Bridge designed by Rennie was wooden with only the central lifting section of cast iron (p. 38; correctly given on p. 53) – it was the bridge of 1850 that was made of cast iron only; the Nene was never dredged nor were Fords destroyed (p. 53) – navvies cut a new channel to the deep water at Crab’s Hole (the Nene Outfall Cut). It is slightly confusing also to write of viaducts...
at Fosdyke and Sutton Bridge – the latter had an embankment nearly two miles long leading to the bridge. The other slight disappointment is the bibliography, which fails to mention, for example, any of the specialist studies of the local branch railways and canals or recent books on Humber fishing. Still a useful general survey and good value.


When first announced the title suggested a journey from Cornwall, ending in Grimsby. As the present sub-title makes clear the whole of England is included and now only one chapter (headed ‘East Side Story’) is devoted to Lincolnshire. Even the chapter heading gives a clue to the mostly humorous viewpoint adopted by the writer. In ‘our’ chapter, he recounts a visit to Skegness, then Brigg (because of Joseph Taylor and ‘Brigg Fair’), then, dismissively, though Grimsby and Cleethorpes to Louth and then it’s off to Norwich. So not much on the county and that a mixture of jokiness and musical references, not all of them on the pop scene (though there is a lot of that throughout the book). It is an enjoyable effort but only in small doses for this reader.


This is the story of an RAF WW2 air bomber (bomberai) from his training in the UK and South Africa through to the end of the war. After converting to four-engined Stirlings at Wigsley and to Lancaster at Sverston, near Newark, P/O Jennings and his crew were posted to 57 Squadron at East Kirkby near Boston, in April 1944 (it is interesting to note that he joined the RAF in February 1942, illustrating the long training required by heavy bomber crews). In June his Lancaster was shot down over Belgium and the bulk of the book concerns his escape from capture, helped by many brave Belgians, until he was liberated by the Americans in September.

On return to the UK he learnt that all of his crew except the pilot had also bailed out and, after survivor’s leave, he was posted, in January 1945, to 9 Squadron operating from Bardney, where he was soon back in the thick of the action including dropping 12,000lb Tallboy bombs on specific targets such as bridges and tunnels, until the war’s end.

This is the unassuming story of one of those courageous young men who faced death every night they flew over Europe and, in this case, managed to tell his tale. There is little direct Lincolnshire interest apart from mentions of pubs and villages but the book is well-written and the story is well told.

Terry Hancock

LOVEDAY, Jack. *Square-bashing by the sea; RAF Skegness 1941-1944*. The author, 2003. 226pp. ISBN 0 9544004 1 0. £8.95 pbk (or £10.45 by post from the author, 62 Hill Crest Road, Thorpe St Andrew, Norwich NR7 0JU).

Many of today’s holiday makers at Skegness would be surprised to know that their hotel or B&B (boarding-house in 1940s terms) was once the ‘home’ of young men experiencing their first taste of life in the wartime RAF. No. 11 Recruit’s Centre was not an RAF station as we think of one – the Station HQ was the Seacroft Hotel, the County Hotel was the Officer’s Mess, there was an assault course in ‘The Jungle’, and Tower Esplanade rang to the sound of 100s of pairs of boots as it was the drill square. The airmen were billeted in the hotels and boarding houses which had closed because of the war and which had been requisitioned and stripped of all their luxuries and they had their meals in the Pavilion, the Casino and the Imperial Grosvenor – there were no served lines of huts as one might expect.

The author did his ‘square-bashing’ there and after a brief history of the unit (including some useful maps) he presents some personal accounts from other recruits, covering many aspects of their training; at the end of the book are details of their subsequent RAF service, which took them all over the world, and their civilian careers. In fact, some probably saw more enemy action at Skegness than later, as 14 recruits were killed and 16 injured by German air raids on the town, plus 16 civilians; one brave AC2 was killed by a mine explosion whilst trying to rescue two Wrens from HMS Royal Arthur (Butlin’s Holiday Camp), who had inadvertently strayed into the defensive minefield laid on the beach, one of the girls also being killed. I enjoyed this book as it covers a hitherto little-known aspect of the RAF in Lincolnshire, and is well written and well produced, with some photos taken during WW2 or identifying those buildings still in situ.

Terry Hancock


Three years ago the author wrote *No need to worry*, the story of his army life during WW2 in which there are passing references to Moulton and Spalding though the bulk of the book deals with his service largely in Africa, the Middle East and Italy. (Still available from the author, for £20 – terms as above). The present book goes back to the earlier pre-Army life. His father obtained a post at the new Sugar Beet factory in Spalding in 1924 and the family
moved to Chilfen House in Moulton. Half of the book describes the happy childhood he spent there - the people of the village, local families (and in Spalding he had many friends too). It is very pleasantly written, full of affectionate portraits and is modestly priced. A fuller review will appear in the Society's annual volume.


This is a book full of splendid colour photographs of many sides of the present city. The captions are short and accurate but it is the pictures that claim the attention. Mrs Roworth developed her photographic skills as a by-product of her interest in local history and architecture, while her husband has been a life-long enthusiast, sufficiently expert to be an Associate of the Royal Photographic Society. All this expertise shows. The close-ups are full of detail, while the wider views seem always to have been taken on some of the city’s summer days (well, almost all - even when wet, as it was for several taken in The Strait, there’s detail and atmosphere). At its price and with this appeal it will make an ideal present as well as a very up-to-date record of the city’s present appearance.


This is a rattling good read of a life ill led. The author has done well to sort out the facts of a man who was not only a dyed-in-the-wool criminal but a con artist and liar to boot. So many things he said to so many were untrue that to unravel the strands has been a considerable task. The result is a very worthwhile piece of research that is also enjoyable to read.

Briefly Delaney, already what we would now call a ‘skiver’, joined up in 1915 in Sussex, where he seems to have met Kitty Sharpe from Swineshead, who was widowed at the age of 33 in 1912. He deserted the army, moved to Lincolnshire where they lived in Woodhall Spa and then tried to farm and join in local sporting activities. Not knowing anything about these tasks, within a short time he left his wife for London, after running through most of her fortune. Now comes the presumed start of his criminal life, since he became what the police fashioned the phrase for – a cat burglar. The rest of the story describes his criminal life - he was rarely out of prison once he became well known to the police - his elopement with Kitty’s niece, bigamy with another woman (Kitty only died in 1971, aged 92) and death in Parkhurst in 1948. There is quite a lot about Kitty’s family background and others in Swineshead, when Delaney came up to burgle property using his local knowledge and this enhances its value for local students. Highly recommended.


For those who revel in blood and gore here is a collection of real-life tales from the north-western part of the county. The author does not simply recount such stories, however. He does discuss seriously the nature of crime and the various treatments of criminals through the ages, so that we obtain a picture with an historical perspective of social attitudes that have changed radically with the times. Many of those found guilty here were hanged and the author has researched records of proceedings in Lincoln Castle and elsewhere. We don’t hang people anymore but then we don’t transport ‘criminals’ to Australia for what now seem trivial and understandable offences. There is much of interest here and the serious approach and research makes it a useful study on various levels. It is well produced and the author has photographed many of the scenes relevant to his thesis.


Yet another story of bomber command at war, one small segment of time in the life of 49 Squadron. How much more material can remain to be published?

After early wartime links, 49 Squadron returned, unexpectedly, to Dunholme Lodge airfield while runways at Fiskerton were strengthened and repaired. Coincidentally, the total time involved over the two periods covered came to about 49 days.

Operations commenced on 10 September 1943 and, with other events, are chronicled in some detail. The book becomes something of a variation on the theme of:- 10 aircraft took off; eight returned, two with damage; two were shot down; some crew were killed or captured etc. There is probably no other way to write this story, but it does become a bit repetitive. Reminiscences from ex-squadron members and a good selection of photographs, not all of 49 Squadron, provide added interest but it is hard to see to whom the book will really appeal with such limited scope.

An attractive, anonymous outer cover contains a nicely produced book, spoilt by excessive use of bold face and capital lettering together with heavy captions for the photographs. Irritating punctuation mistakes should have been picked up at the proofing stage as well as the mis-spelling of a
prison camp name and the village of Sudbrooke. One unfortunate
error occurs, where a crew is posted as ‘missing without trace’
on one page only to be detailed a few pages later as ‘three killed,
with two evading capture and two
taken prisoner’.

Owen Northwood, Donington

**Books recently received or notified**

It is hoped that many of these
titles will be reviewed later:

**BAKER, Richard. Red Arrows.**
£19.99 hbk.

**CLARK, Bernard and CLARK, Rose. Spalding in late Victorian times.**
ISBN 0 9551453 90 9. £4.95 pbk
(or £5.50 by post from the publisher, 25 Avebury Gardens, Spalding PE11 2EN).

**COLLIER, Brett. The Danelaw way from Lincoln to Stamford: a long
distance recreational walk linking two “burhges” of the Viking
Danelaw approximately 60 miles... Lincoln Group Ramblers’
Association, 2005. 56pp. ISBN 1 901184 76 5. £5.95 spiral bound
(or £6.50 by post from 39 Fiskerton Road, Reepham, Lincoln LN3 4EF — cheques payable to publisher as above).

**CORNEY, Elizabeth. A journal 1811: the diary of a Lincolnshire farmer’s daughter; transcribed and edited by Audrey & Philip
Walker.**
Oakham, Walker’s Books, 2005. [8], 87pp. ISBN 0 9551197 0 7
(or, in the new 13-digit format, 978 09551197 0 5).
£7.99 pbk. Walker’s Bookshops, Oakham, Sleaford and Stamford

**CRACKNELL, Basil E. “Outrageous waves”: global warming & coastal change in Britain through two thousand years.**
£19.99 hbk.

**CROWSON, Andy, and others. Anglo-Saxon settlement on the
sithland of Eastern England, by Andy Crowson, Tom Hall, Kenneth Penn and Dale Trimble. Heritage
Trust of Lincolnshire, 2005. xiii, 322pp. ISBN 0 948639 44 X.
(Lincolnshire Archaeology and Heritage Reports Series). £2.51 Pb.

No ISBN. £7.50 pbk (from the editor, 43 Eastgate, Deepings St James, PE6 8HH — postage extra).

**DIXON, John. Three quarters of a century of change.**

**DOWLING, Alan. Cleethorpes: the creation of a seaside resort.**

ISBN. £4.95 pbk (post free from the authors, 34 East Street, Fareham, Hants PO16 0BY — cheques payable to Dennis Duck Publications).


**KERRY, Trevor. Of roses and rectories: the birding biography of the Revd Francis Linley Blathwayt.**
(or post free from the publishers at 15 Lady Bower Close, North Hykeham, Lincoln LN6 8EX — make cheques payable to TK Consultants).

**KNAPP, Malcolm G. Grantham.**


**MATTHEWS, Rupert. Heroes of Bomber Command Lincolnshire.**

**MILLS, Dennis. The people of the Sleep Hill area of Lincoln about 1900; an illustrated social study.**
The author, 2005. 84pp. No ISBN. £7.90 pbk (or £8.50 by post from the author, 17 Rectory Lane, Branston, Lincoln LN4 INA).

**NEEDLE, Rex. The Bourne chronicle: a glimpse of the town’s history recorded in dates and events, people and places.**
The author, 2005. 56pp. No ISBN. £5 pbk (or £6 by post from the author, 60 Stephenson Way, Bourne PE10 9DD).

**NEEDLE, Rex. A portrait of Bourne: the story of a Lincolnshire market town in words and pictures.** CD-ROM. £20
(including postage from the author, address as above). It records 2500 images and over 500,000 words.

**RIGBY, S.H. The overseas trade of Boston in the reign of Richard II.**

**ROGERS, Alan, editor. William Browne’s town: the Stamford Hall book; Volume 1: 1465-1492.**
£10 by post from the Group, 2 King’s Road, Stamford PE9 1HD.

**SCARBOROUGH, Bob. O Boy! Farming and changes in farming methods during seventy five years.**
The author, 2005. 38pp. No ISBN. £8 pbk (or £9 by post from the author, Torwood, Lincoln Road, Skellingthorpe, Lincoln LN6 5SA).

**TROTT, Michael. The life of Richard Waldo Sibthorpe: evangelical, catholic and ritual revivalism in the nineteenth century church.**