The lady and the engine driver

A new line of enquiry is followed up
Welcome

Writers of historical fiction usually draw heavily on their knowledge of historical fact and this seems to be the case with Alfred Rosling Bennett's story in The Chronicles of Baudon's Siding about a 'lady of title' and a young engine driver 'to whom Dame Nature had been uncommonly lavish in the momentous matter of good looks'. Rather than dismiss it as a mere romantic tale, Chris Padley concludes that the author has simply swapped the name of one railway line for another, which makes it much more plausible.

The future of public libraries has been a hot topic in recent months. Simon Pawley treats us to an illustrated account of their history in Sleaford. They met with varying success, some of the 19th century schemes, though well-meaning, being perhaps rather too high-minded to accommodate those looking for relaxation and recreation after a hard day's work.

On a similar theme is James Foster's article on the Redbourn Garden Village Trust in Scunthorpe in the early decades of the 20th century. The new 'garden village' was intended to provide modern, more spacious accommodation for the families of steelworkers than Rowland Winn's earlier development at New Frodingham had but, like the Swanpool Garden Village in Lincoln (see a previous edition of LP&P) it was hit by the post-war depression of the 1920s and never reached its full potential. Interestingly, those houses that were built are still providing good accommodation, and a photo of a street of modernised terraced houses in Winn's 'new Frodingham' has recently met with the exclamation: 'How delightful! I didn't know there was anything so pretty in Scunthorpe!'

Being too young, and the wrong gender, for National Service, I have often felt I had missed out on something and wondered what it was like to experience it at first hand. The next best thing is to hear and read the accounts of those who have, and Dennis Mills tells the interesting and entertaining story of 'getting into the Navy' in Lincoln in the 1950s. Perhaps this will inspire other readers to share their experiences. I do hope so.

Ros Bevers, Editor

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Erratum: A map in LP&P 93 (p.14) was wrongly dated as 1828. Of course this could not have been the case as it showed a railway line and a station! We apologise that none of us noticed this until after publication.

Lincolnshire Past & Present Editor: Ros Bevers
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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 by post to the Editor c/o Jew's Court, Lincoln LN2 1LS, either as paper copy or on compact disc, or alternatively as an email attachment to info@silha.org.uk or lindumcolonias@hotmail.com or access the online enquiry form via lincolnshirepastandpresent.co.uk to submit a query. To place an advertisement email lindumcolonias@hotmail.com

Front cover: main picture; L&NWR Locomotive No.1816 - line and wash drawing by Chris Padley
The Lady and the Engine Driver

Chris Padley explains one part of the mystery of Alfred Bennett's story but has had no luck so far in finding the lady.

No contemporary drawing or photograph exists of no. 1816. However, Mr Bennett states that it was one of a batch of similar locomotives of the L&NWR that Mr Boulton purchased at the same time, which he illustrated with a drawing in his book, except that no. 1816 had the steam dome over the firebox instead of the centre of the boiler. This suggests that it had a similar boiler to that now fitted to Columbine, a locomotive of the L&NWR preserved at the National Railway Museum. Using photos of Columbine, together with Mr Boulton's drawing, the author has reconstructed the probable appearance of no. 1816 (above).

Among students of railway history The Chronicles of Boulton's Siding by Alfred Rosling Bennett has long been a celebrated work. First published in 1927, it deals with the history of the 19th century business of Mr Isaac Watt Boulton, an engineer whose main occupations were dealing in secondhand locomotives and hiring them out to contractors and small railway companies. As his name suggests, he was a relative of the famous Matthew Boulton, partner of James Watt. His business was based at Ashton under Lyne, and became generally known as Boulton's Siding, from the siding on the Manchester, Sheffield and Lincolnshire Railway that served it.

This might seem a dry subject, but Mr Bennett took a delight in the foibles of human nature and wrote in a playful style full of arch wit and humorous anecdotes. This was blended with solid history and an otherwise poorly recorded subject to produce a work that combined social and engineering history in a uniquely entertaining form.

For Lincolnshire railway historians a passage in the book has often caused puzzlement and some fruitless research. It is worth quoting in full. Writing of a former London and North Western Railway locomotive, number 1816 of that company, which Mr Boulton purchased early in the 1870s, Mr Bennett tells us:

1816 came back from Wales in June 1874, and after overhaul went, the same month, still as a tender engine, under her own steam, to Barnetby, Lincolnshire, where she joined Rattlesnake, another member of the Ashton stable, in making the Lincoln and Barnetby Railway. When the line was finished she stayed for a time to work the traffic in charge of her Ashton driver, a young fellow to whom Dame Nature had been uncommonly lavish in the momentous matter of good looks. He was seen on the engine one day by a lady of title, who immediately began to take such an intelligent
interest in locomotives and their appurtenances that she sought an introduction and engaged him to teach her to drive. She often rode on the footplate and handled the regulator, learning how the wheels went round, and avidly absorbing her mentor’s lectures on stays, petticoat pipes, exhaust nozzles, tube expanders and so on. She used her influence to persuade the L & B Railway to have her Christian name painted on the sides of the engine – which still carried the L & N. W. number – and by that dainty appellation it was thereafter known of men as long as it continued to labour near the City of the Cathedral. When the hire was over the young driver brought the engine, still bearing the lady’s name, back to Lyneside, but immediately sent in his resignation to Mr Boulton, explaining that he had found a better job at Lincoln.

It should be explained for those not conversant with locomotive terminology that stays are to be found within locomotive boilers, a petticoat pipe is part of a locomotive chimney, and expanders are tools used in fitting boiler tubes. Railway enthusiasts have tended to pass over the rarer elements of this account and look with more interest to real railway history.

They immediately encounter a problem, in that the railway between Barnetby and Lincoln, though real enough, was built in the late 1840s, being completed at the end of 1848. No significant new building work has taken place on it to this day, and certainly nothing that would have required the extended hire of at least two locomotives in the 1870s. This clear mismatch of the story with known fact has led some simply to dismiss the whole account as either pure fiction or at best a myth so far removed from whatever its factual origins might be as to be worth no further consideration.

They overlook two things. Firstly, it was Mr Bennett’s habit to alter names of places, railways, and people, here and there. It would be tedious to explain the other examples, but usually there are enough clues to point the knowledgeable reader to the real location of events, name of customer etc that is being referred to. It isn’t clear what his motives were in half hiding the truth in this way. It seems too unsubtle to be a case of the names have been changed to protect the innocent, though in this case such a motive would be understandable, especially as at the time he wrote the 1870s were still within living memory. Even so, I suspect it might have been just part of his playfulness to set these fake trails.

The second thing overlooked is how well the account fits a different railway, that between Louth and Bardney. This was being built during exactly the period given, its construction occupying the years 1874 to 1876. Its official name was the Louth and Lincoln Railway, the junction at Bardney providing the connection to Lincoln, via the Great Northern Railway, which operated, and later bought, the Louth and Lincoln.

The accidental (or is it faux accidental?) transformation of the name of the Louth and Lincoln Railway, which ran from Louth to Bardney, into the ‘Lincoln to Barnetby’ Railway would be understandable. The present writer, having spent most of his life living almost exactly half way between Barnetby and Bardney, and in a house overlooking the same Lincoln
to Barnetby railway, can attest that the names of Bardney and Barnetby are often accidentally said one for the other, even by people who know both places well. In fact, he confesses to have made the same mistake in typing the draft of this article.

Further evidence comes in the chapter where Mr Bennett details the history of the locomotive said to have worked beside no. 1816 on the 'Lincoln to Barnetby Railway', Rattlesnake.

In May, 1874, she was hired to Mr James Myres, contractor for the Lincoln and Barnetby Railway, where she stayed till the line was ready for traffic. After a time she had as a partner, in the exhilarating work of tipping spoil, the old St Helen's Railway engine 1816, in connection with which Chapter V of these prosaic and matter-of-fact records was illumined for a moment by the roseate and scintillating halo of romance.

According to Ludlow and Herbert in their history of the Louth and Lincoln Railway, the engineers of this line were Messrs Myers and Tolme. Surely this is not a coincidence? The slight difference in spelling between Myers and Myres might be a printing error or another sport by Mr Bennett.

One wonders who was the 'lady of title'? We are given no indication of her age, or whether she was single. The story no doubt suffered from ribauld humour in the retelling, even before it met Mr Bennett's ears. Most likely she was young and single. Her eagerness to learn to drive a steam locomotive suggests a strong will, an adventurous spirit, and intelligence. Was she fighting against social conventions, and the restricted opportunities for education and career for women? One wonders who she was, what she was like, and what she made of her life. There are not many big houses between Louth and Bardney, such that a 'lady of title' might belong to.

NOTES
1. No. 1816 was built originally for the St Helen's railway, a line later absorbed by the L&NWR.
2. The Louth & Bardney Railway, Ludlow & Herbert, Oakwood Press.

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An awkward letter

COMPETITION RESULTS

LPcP 93 described the problem facing Richard Ellison of Boultham in 1851: his niece had died, seemingly by suicide brought on by harsh treatment from another uncle and his wife with whom she had been living. The guilty couple, Mr and Mrs Hele, were about to visit Boultham Hall and Richard Ellison wished to withdraw his invitation.

Ellison's knowledge of the circumstances was limited to what the deceased's 15-year-old sister, Laura, had been told by the servants, so clearly he could not directly accuse the Heles. On the other hand, he wanted to convey the seriousness with which he regarded the situation; diplomatic excuses, however plausible, would not do.

The best competition entry managed to strike this balance, taking the view that:

- a lengthy period of mourning and quiet, calm reflection is required by all of us, especially by Laura [who was at Boultham]. We think we should pray for an understanding of the Good Lord's intention and give time for all of us to accept God's Will.

Accordingly the prize - a copy of the latest Survey of Lincoln publication, Boultham and Swallowbeek - has been awarded to Mr R. Thornalley of Willoughby on the Wolds.

The reader is doubtless wondering how Richard Ellison actually tackled the problem. I think he manages to combine elegant cadences of the best Augustinian prose with a message that is sharp but not libellous.

Dear Sir,

Since the sudden, and, I must add, suspicious death, of my poor niece, Jane Wyse, various circumstances have come to my knowledge which impose upon me the painful duty of writing a letter such as this. We should be sorry to see any guest in our house whom we could not welcome with unmingled feelings of satisfaction, and with every human certainty of uninterrupted harmony; but the circumstances alluded to forbid me to hope that such conditions can be anticipated, should you and Mrs Hele come down to Boultham at the time proposed. Discussion would be unavoidable, and the result of it probably such as both parties should feel anxious to avert ...

He concludes with a request that any papers left by Jane should be sent to his brother (who was her legal guardian).

The punctuation varies slightly between different newspapers; the above version is from Tremain's Exeter Flying Post, 21 August 1851.

Rob Wheeler
TREASURES OF THE COLLECTION

Antony Lee describes the museum’s recent acquisition...

A new Anglo Saxon runic inscription

It will not come as a surprise to readers that many archaeological finds have a significance that their initial appearance belies. This is certainly the case for this slightly misshapen object, discovered by a metal detector user at Barkston in 2011.

The object is silver, but traces of gilding survive. Its form is similar to a pair of tweezers, but both arms are bent, and one arm damaged so that its original length and terminal are unknown. The surviving arm flares at the terminal. A copper rivet sits at the point where the arms meet. Despite its superficial similarity to a pair of tweezers, of which many of Anglo Saxon date have been found in Lincolnshire and are usually not so noteworthy, the object may have a greater significance, as revealed by the runic inscription that runs along the outer edge of the arms.

Although lightly incised, and with some parts lost due to damage, Professor John Hines at Cardiff University has been able to decipher the inscription, which reads:

Side A: þecblosigibilwitfæddæ
Side B: ondwerccagehwelchefenondecla

Professor Hines has observed that the text is remarkably close to a passage of three lines of verse in the Old English poem 'Azarias', which translates as

Let the glories of the created world and everything made, the heavens and the angels, and the pure water, [and all the power of creation upon Earth], bless Thee, kind Father

The form of the runes and the language used has led to a suggestion that the inscription dates to between c.AD725 and c.AD825.

Such an ecclesiastical reference raises questions over the interpretation of the object as something as utilitarian as a pair of tweezers, and it might perhaps instead be a pair of candle snuffers or page turners for a book. Whatever the exact function, the discovery of a new runic inscription, always a rare find in archaeology, is significant, and new research will undoubtedly be carried out on this item in the coming years.

The Collection would like to express its thanks to the Friends of Lincoln Museums and Art Gallery for their generous contribution to the purchase of this important find.

Mary thanks to Antony for his informative articles on these fascinating objects. This one brings us to the tenth in the series. Ed.

Antony Lee is Collections Access Officer for Archaeology at The Collection, Diana’s Terrace, Lincoln
Getting into THE NAVY in 1952

Rob Wheeler's article in LP&P 92 on getting out of the Army in 1813 has prompted Dennis Mills to respond by writing about getting into the Navy at Beaumont Fee, Lincoln, in 1952.

Like Rob's, this story illustrates the importance of chance and the workings of service bureaucracy. The event took place only about 60 years ago, but for some that apparently counts as 'history'.

Under the National Service Acts, Britain had conscription from 1945 to 1960 and quotas were devised to regulate the flows into the three services. Recruitment to regular engagements in the Royal Navy were almost enough to fulfil its requirements, so the service accepted a quota of only about 2,500-3,000, or two percent of national servicemen.

Most of the quota was reserved - 600 for the Marines, 500 artificers, and 1,200 from the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve, leaving a balance of about 200 taken from 'naval families'. Consequently, the word got about that it was impossible to get into the Navy for national service, and it went unrepresented in all but the biggest national service registration centres.

The Lincoln centre was held at regular intervals in St Martin's Parish Hall in Beaumont Fee, well known as the venue for WEA classes. It was there that I registered for service in the spring quarter of 1949, during which my eighteenth birthday fell. Deferral of service was granted so that I could finish my sixth form studies and take a degree course at Nottingham University.

As I started the last year of that course in October 1951, I gave some serious thought to national service. The Army's reputation was very poor. The RAF seemed a much brighter prospect, but it carried a good chance of spending two years on a draughty Lincolnshire airfield and I wanted to travel. The pre-war poster 'Join the Navy and see the World' came to mind and I found my way to the university's Careers Service. Remarkably, they gave me a leaflet on the RNVR, which guaranteed national service in the Navy, provided...
A grammar school combined cadet force in Grimsby, early 1950s. Service in a CCF could be useful for getting into the Navy, as Robin Pearce discovered when becoming a coder special in 1953. Courtesy of Robin Pearce, at the far end of the front rank.

Certificate of the Service of

NOTE: The person of this certificate is to be struck off when discharged with a 'blank' character or with discharge, or if specially ordered by the person giving the certificate. It is to be used only for certificates to the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve.

MILLS

DATE OF ISSUE 1931

Division Hunger Sub-Division Official Number HN 887

RNVR service doc. issued at Hull, January 1952. The note in small print indicates that if the corner was cut off it meant that the rating had been discharged in disgrace. Beware leading writers with a grievance and a pair of scissors!

The minimum period of three weeks' training had been carried out.

During the Christmas vacation I got my first free ticket: Lincoln to Hull via Doncaster, return via the New Holland ferry. In the RNVR Hull Division training ship I was interviewed and given a perfunctory colour sight test, acquiring the official number HN 887, along with uniform for an ordinary seaman. I was also entered to do my three weeks in the following August. In early July I found myself back at Beaumont Fee, which is when the real fun started.

Picture the main hall with a series of desks arranged along the walls and at each one a superannuated doctor, each testing us for his specialty, passing us, parcel like, down the line with our record sheets. As we progressed, we deposited items of clothing on a group of tables in the centre of the room. We were only 18-21, so there wasn't much wrong with most of us, but the Ministry of Labour and National Service was anxious to avoid the expense of operations for ruptures, piles, and still more unseen defects.

Half dressed and half way round the room we mounted the stage in turn, entering a box about four times the size of a Tardis, in which sat an expectant doctor at the far end. Motioning one to be seated, he then proceeded to whisper individual words in the expectation that the recruit would repeat them correctly. I think I stumbled on 'sausage', which I repeated as 'scissors', and discovered that my hearing was Grade III.

Next came the eyesight test, not just colours, but also a reading test. I presented my glasses to the kindly ancient, who asked me to try reading without them. Giving me a page of poetry, each successive verse in smaller font than the one above, he instructed me to see how far down I could read. I got to the bottom verse, but 'wait', I said to myself, there is something still smaller below a line, and enunciated: A. Brown and Company, Printers, Hull. The doctor snatched the card out of my hand, peered at it through powerful glasses, and admitted he had never seen that line before. I didn't do so well on the colour vision!

Progressing still further and arriving at the last desk in a state of nature, I was asked if my name was, say, 'Bloggs', and was I 5ft 11 inches and 14 stones (my measurements were about 5ft 8-and-a-half inches and 11-and-a-half stones)? At this point 'Bloggs' turned up carrying my record sheet and we were both sent, snakes and ladder like, to the beginning again, as our records were irrevocably intermingled. Consequently, we were late going upstairs to see the Presiding Officer.

I was surprised to find that he was in civvies, but I took the precaution of calling him 'Sir' (many years later I discovered that he must have been a Ministry official, rarely seen in the front line). On being asked which service I preferred, naively I said that I was an ordinary seaman, RNVR, and I was guaranteed national service in the Navy. With the utmost conviction he replied that the Navy took no national servicemen. Unseeingly wrangling followed, which he suddenly broke off to search for something in the desk.

At last, triumphantly, he pulled out a leaflet, read it carefully, scanned down my CV, turned to me and said: 'I see you did French and Latin in the sixth form.' 'Yes, Sir', I replied, totally floored by the swift change of tack, and how could they possibly be of use to the Navy? Then came the bolt from the blue. 'Could you try Russian?'

My head spun. It was long past my lunch time and I was hungry — 'Yes, Sir.' 'In that case, I can let you go into the Navy', he declared as if he was the First Sea Lord himself.

I did my three weeks in HMS Indefatigable (a carrier without
(aircraft), two weeks in Portland harbour and one in Guzz (Devonport), separated by a cruise down channel and a thrilling entry round Drake's Drum into the Hoeaze. Home in September, I fretted about not getting my call-up papers, thinking I would be too late for return to university in October 1954 (it would not have mattered as early releases were in plentiful supply). So I wrote a polite, but complaining letter to the Admiralty (where else?).

While I waited, The Times announced a reshuffle in the ranks of the admirals, and after a further pause my papers arrived for me to report to Victoria Barracks, Portsmouth, on Monday 27 October. I travelled in uniform, confident that I could now get well enough dressed to pass the prowling 'Redcaps' (military police) at London stations.

That uniform was the cause of a final 'hiccup', as I was dressed in the wrong 'rig'. I was to be re-categorised as a coder special and given the official number D/MX 910781, D standing for Devonport. Scamen, stokers, signalmen and other older branches were dressed in traditional 'square rig' (bell bottoms, etc), but junior ratings in the miscellaneous (MX) branches were uniform for men 'not dressed as seamen', known as 'fore-and-aft rig'.

So our Petty Officer sent me with a little note and all my kit to get it changed in 'Slops', the clothing store. There I was hailed by a Leading Wren Stores Assistant. How on earth did one address such a lady, not malam surely, well never mind. I handed her the PO's note, whereupon she said, finding a list, 'OK, I will have to take your 'square rig' in first, before I issue you with 'fore-and-aft. I'll start with your lanyard' - pause while I unthreaded it and handed it over to be ticked off. Then my cap (but I kept the tally with Indelible Peg on it), then my tie, then my jumper, then my collar, and so it went on. The lads near me in civvies, drawing their uniform, started smirking, possibly a Wren or two in the background was giggling.

Well, she got me down to pants and vest (and socks, of course, one can't do without them) and although it was late October I was sweating. 'Oh,' she said, with mock solemnity, 'that all seems in order, OK, you can get dressed now'.

So saying, she issued me with what some of my class called a 'chauffeur's uniform'. That was how I came to be asked in Lincoln bus station what time and from where did the Skellingthorpe bus go out.

Not only did I see a fair amount of the 'world', I also, ironically, spent a long time with both the Army and the RAE. Three weeks at 'Pompey' were followed by two at 'Chats'...
on basic training, followed by two months ‘sea time’ in HMS Portchester Castle, working out of Portland. (Many readers will have seen her in The Cruel Sea – I was just too late to take part in the filming.)

Then came ten and a half months on the top of the North Downs, at Joint Services School for Linguists, Coulston Common, learning the beautiful language. The camp was a wartime extension to the Guards Barracks at Caterham and was run or misrun by the Army, where we happily sent mad our Lincolnshire Regiment RSM, marching in three different styles in our mixed classes. Radio training was undertaken with our airmen colleagues at RAF Wythall, south of Birmingham, a former balloon station, and altogether more civilised. At last we got back to ‘Andrew’ (the Navy’s nickname for itself) and could draw our tots of rum and grow beards. I went with other Ds to our home port of Devonport for a brief spell during which I spent Flora Day in Helston, Cornwall. We travelled by Army troopship between Harwich and the Hook of Holland and BAOR train to Hamburg, thence to Cuxhaven, the location of HMS Royal Albert, a shore base and radio station at the mouth of the River Elbe. There we kept radio-watch on the Soviet Baltic Sea Fleet and enjoyed ourselves in the town. I spent leave in Hamburg and Copenhagen, and even managed a Sunday trip to Heligoland on a German ferry. I returned three times for reserve training, once to Cuxhaven, twice to Kiel.

On the way home, at Harwich, the Redcaps intended putting everyone from the troopship on to a London train, but forewarned, I ‘disappeared’ into the Gents with kit bag, hammock and suitcase, emerging on the opposite side to get into the Harwich-Liverpool boat train. Thus I arrived in Lincoln in time for mid-day dinner at my parents’ cottage in Canwick. It was Saturday 30 September and I went back to Nottingham the following Monday.

In the autumn of 2012, sixty years on from our call up, six coders special held a reunion in Lincoln and it really was special.

Endnote 1. The National Archives/Cabinet Papers 1/29/24 and 31, February and November 1948. In order to admit over 300 trainee coders special each year, the quota was raised: TNA/Admiralty 6332, 31 March 1951, Naval Intelligence (originally a Top Secret document). More on this subject is available in Tony Cash and Mike Gerrard, The Coder Special Archive, 2012, from websites or in Lincolnshire Libraries.

OBITUARY

Joan Thirsk

Joan was the general editor of the series from when the History of Lincolnshire (HoL) Committee was set up (c.1966) until about 1977. She oversaw the first three volumes to be published – II, V, and I; and started off with vol. VIII when Maurice Barley took over. From 1966 to 1979 Alan Rogers was chairman, followed by myself when I joined the committee in 1979; and then John Beckett.

My personal contact with Joan began in the academic year 1956-57 when I was completing my MA thesis. Dorothy Williamson (later Owen) said that I should go and see Joan, who was then writing her Lincolnshire book. So I got on the train and went to Marylebone, where Joan met me with their Morris Minor. I have clear memories of the way in which we strode papers and maps of Lincolnshire all across the sitting room of their flat. There was much discussion of the cartography! Joan let me have a carbon copy of several draft chapters, which I was very pleased to have, as the book did not appear until after I submitted my thesis. I responded in kind and received some very sound advice.

We kept in touch for many years by occasional letters and by seeing each other at the conferences of the Agricultural History Society. Then in the early 1990s I found myself paired with Joan as an external examiner in Oxford, with Joan as the internal. This was for two cohorts of Kate Tiller’s Local History Certificate students in the Dept of External Studies (Rewley House). Both Joan and Kate were a pleasure to work with and it was notable that Joan could strike an appropriate level for those students without any hindrance from her own great scholarship. Her passing leaves a great gap.

Dennis Mills, 1 November 2013

World War 1 Thanks to everyone who has sent or promised us an item on the First World War. Please keep sending them in. The series begins in the next edition.
The Redbourn Garden Village Trust

James Foster researches the origins of his childhood home in Scunthorpe

The Redbourn Hill Iron & Coal Company's works were established by a group of Birmingham investors in 1872 on a site known as Redbourn Hill on the northeast side of existing Iron (& later Steel) works at Scunthorpe, North Lincolnshire. The name 'Redbourn', adopted by the company in 1874, was most likely to have been a derivation of 'Red Burn', due to the presence of a stream in the area with a red sandy bed. Contrary to common lore, the name had no connection with the village of Redbourne near Brigg. The word 'burn' is more commonly found in the north of England and Scotland, whereas 'bourne', with the same meaning, is more common in the south.

In 1912 the company amalgamated with two other ironworks, but to some extent kept its own identity by retaining a board of directors although without executive powers. The newly constituted company later changed its name to 'North Lindsey Ironworks', which in 1917 was taken over by Richard Thomas Iron & Steel Co. Most of the smaller ironworks were eventually taken over by the Appleby Frodingham Steel Co., the largest steel company in the area. In 1919 the Board of the Redbourn Hill Ironworks (RHI) became interested in a social experiment prevalent at that time, the establishment of 'Garden Cities' on undeveloped land surrounding urban areas. The RHI employed several hundred workers, and expansion was planned for the near future.

Workers at other ironworks in the area had been accommodated in terraced houses built between Rowland Road and the railway, several streets being named after the principals and directors of the works which employed them, or the works themselves. Rowland Road, >
connecting Ashby Road to several steelworks, was named after Rowland Winn (1820-1893) who provided capital to develop ironstone beds in the area. Winn lived at Appleby, a small village in north Lincolnshire, and was later made Baron (Lord) St. Oswald. Ashby Road was a principal road connecting Ashby with Scunthorpe, but c.1870 a section of the road between the railway station at Frodingham and Scunthorpe High Street was renamed Oswald Road.

Some accounts describing housing developments in Frodingham suggest that Winn 'built a village' for the ironworkers, but in fact it consisted only of six short streets of small terraced houses similar to those in the larger industrial towns of the day. As the streets were completed they were given numbers, e.g. 1st Street North etc. but later, names. The north ends of the four ‘North’ streets were connected by Alexander Road, at that time an unadopted lane terminating on waste ground alongside the ironworks' marshalling yards.

The houses in Winn's 'New Frodingham' village numbered less than 200, and although there were no 'corner shops', a number of small shops were opened in the front rooms of some houses. Mrs Campbell, a widow who lived in Chapel Street, converted her small front room into a shop well stocked with toys and sweets for the workers' children. The area did not have a public house until after Winn's death.

Winn's terraced houses in 'New Frodingham' were only 14 feet wide and there was a three-foot passageway through to the second room, thus the front room was approximately ten feet six inches wide. In some cases, the front door opened directly from the pavement into the front room, which provided more space. There were no front gardens, but some houses boasted a grassed area at the rear, no more than six feet square. In some streets, the bath, a rare facility, was at the rear of the small annexe, single storey kitchen, with the WC and coal house situated outside. The two small bedrooms were accessed by a stairway usually placed between the first and second ground floor rooms.

These terraced houses to the north of Rowland Road were built without direct access to the rear of the premises, and the terraces had therefore to conform to a recent adoptive by-law which stipulated that access must be provided at the back of the houses for refuse carts and service vehicles.

These access ways must be at least ten feet wide, and a new term entered the local vocabulary to replace 'lane', 'alley', and 'passage': the term 'ten-foot' survives in some areas of north Lincolnshire to this day. The by-law was intended to provide an amenity not enjoyed by those living in back-to-back houses in other industrial towns, and although well intended, sometimes provided the less socially minded residents with an opportunity to dispose of their unwanted items such as prams, bedsteads and bicycle frames, in adjacent ten-foots. Surprisingly, some of the items disappeared before collection day. Recycling is not new.

The Board of the RHI Trust were well aware of the social deprivation which often ensued when workers were accommodated in small two-bedroomed terraced houses, and at a meeting in 1919, decided to

A ten-foot passageway through a row of terraced houses.

Map of the area showing the Redbourn Way and the New Frodingham developments.
build a new village on the lines of a garden city. The parent company, Richard Thomas Iron & Steel Co., negotiated the purchase of a large area of land from the Scunthorpe and Frodingham Urban District Council (UDC), bordered by Cottage Beck Road, Cottage Beck Close, and King Edward Street. As housing development crept towards the former village of Old Brumby, this area became known as 'New Brumby.' The demarcation lines between Frodingham and New Brumby were accepted by most as being Cottage Beck Road and Cemetery Road.

The Plan

The RHI Trust began building their 'garden village' in 1919 in 350 acres of land to the south of Cottage Beck Road, on which some houses already existed. It was the intention of the Trust to provide 11,000 houses for the workers of the amalgamated company, but this target was never achieved. It was also intended to dedicate three separate grassed areas for recreational purposes, but only one of these, a small field at the rear of Plum Tree Way, was ever developed, and is now a communal car park. The Board of the Trust were also aware that Winn's 'New Frodingham village' had lacked an essential social amenity, the public house, where steelworkers could meet and relax after work. They accordingly built a social club for working men near the corner of Cottage Beck Road and Cemetery Road, membership by subscription. Later, a second 'Working Mens Club' was opened nearer to the steelworks on the corner of Cottage Beck Road and Fairmont Crescent. There was a public house within the boundary of the steelworks, but this existed mainly to provide weak ale for the workers on the blast furnace hearths and supplied in buckets. Each 'gang' paid a young lad to be a 'water carrier.'
It was also decided that the RHI Trust houses would not be built in long terraces, and without 'ten foot' access lanes at the rear. Instead, some of the first to be built were in blocks of four with a shared through passageway between the two centre houses. Some of the end-of-terrace houses were slightly larger with at least ten feet between them and the next block. Almost all the houses at junctions were built in pairs, at 45 degrees to the road. A rough calculation would suggest that if the plan to build 11,000 houses on 330 acres had been achieved, this would have resulted in a density of about 30 to the acre. This is not as generous as dwellings in the garden cities of the day, but it must be borne in mind that in some parts of Victorian London, density was as high as 200 to the acre.

The three-bedroomed Redbourn Village houses were spacious compared with those in the nearby Winn's village, as the ground floor comprised a large living room, front room, and kitchen, and the front door placed centrally in the resulting 24 foot frontage. The houses also boasted a back boiler, and a bath on the first floor, considered a luxury in the suburbs of the 1920s. The WC, although not indoors, was in a sheltered passageway to the back door.

The first principal street of the Redbourn Garden Village, built to the south of Cottage Beck Road and almost opposite the Worley Hotel, was given the name Redbourn Way, but in accordance with an agreement with the Urban District Council, the first 100 yards on each side of the street remained in the hands of the council for later private development. No's 1 to 4 and 2 to 8 Redbourn Way therefore began 100 yards to the south of Cottage Beck Road.

About a hundred yards to the south along Redbourn Way and to the right, a new street was opened named 'Plum Tree Way'. Houses at junctions were built across the corners, so that one of each pair had a different street address to that of its neighbour. Building continued along Redbourn Way in a southerly direction for about 1.500 yards. At a point circa 600 yards along Plum Tree Way at a junction to the south, a road was opened named 'Maple Tree Way' where the construction of more Redbourn houses commenced.

A feature of the several 'T' junctions on the village plan provided for what would be referred to today as mini-roundabouts and to accommodate these, the houses at these junctions, built in pairs or threes, were set back from the road. The resulting spaces were used as play areas, as very few residents owned cars.

Plumtree Way, about the same length as Redbourne Way, terminated at its junction with King Edward Street, a row of existing houses which were generally acknowledged to be part of the proposed garden village. Although no plans can be found, it would appear that the Redbourn Trust houses in Maple Tree Way would have continued.
to have been built to the south for approximately 1000 yards until they reached the southern boundary of the area designated for the garden village. This would have resulted in the village having the approximate shape of a rectangle with its western boundary King Edward Street, and an indeterminate boundary to the south on undeveloped land.

The Redbourn Hill Iron and Coal Company along with many others in the area prospered during World War 1 and employed hundreds of skilled workers to fulfil government orders. No one was quite prepared for the rapid economic decline that followed, and by the 1920s most of the steelworks’ day workers in the area, with the exception of the ‘three-shift’ blast-furnacemen, were on a 40 hour week. Orders for iron and steel declined rapidly and in 1922 there were over 2 million unemployed, many with now obsolete skills. The Richard Thomas Iron and Steel Company, like many other industries, was no longer able to support ideals and dreams of ventures like garden villages. The building work on the Redbourn garden village slowly declined and in 1923 ceased with the completion of five Redbourn houses on each side of Maple Tree Way. By 1925, many of the Redbourn houses had been vacated and remained untenanted; numbers of those who had lost their jobs returned to their places of origin.

A decision was made by the now parent company of Redbourn, the Appleby-Frodingham Steel Co., to sell off approximately two-thirds of the area originally designated for the garden village. Several private developers, some large, some small, but all speculative, were able to buy plots of land at knock-down prices. One of the original conditions for applicants for tenancies was that they should be employees of one of the steelworks in the consortium, but this rule was now rescinded, and the Trust invited applications from the general public for tenancies in Redbourn garden village. The first to take advantage of this ‘open tenancy’ scheme was the Lincolnshire Constabulary who installed a local constable, Jack Lawson, into the vacant No.1 Redbourn Way, and soon afterwards, their police sergeant John Creasy into No.17. While No.6 Redbourn Way had also been vacated, and James Foster, a bus driver, obtained the tenancy and moved in with his wife and recently born son.

Up until 1925, the employees of the Redbourn Iron and Coal Company had paid their modest rents by means of a deduction from their wages, a considerable administrative saving for the company, but with private tenants increasingly occupying their houses, the company was obliged to open an Estate Office, and built a single-storey building not far away in Cottage Beck Road. Their chief clerk and rent collecting officer was aptly named Mr Ledger.

The designs of the Redbourn houses had undergone revision as building progressed, and some terraces opposite T junctions had been built comprising three houses, the centre one having larger bedrooms, an extended frontage and a prominent gable. After the first two four-house terraces had been built, very few of that design appear to have followed, most being built in pairs, and are now described in sales literature as semi-detached.

In the 1970s, the Trust was wound up and the estate taken over by the Scunthorpe Borough Housing Department who then allowed those tenants who wished to do so to buy their homes. Houses remaining on the council’s list were extensively updated, including the installation of central heating, double-glazing, and improved insulation. The former coal house and back entrance became part of the kitchen, and a WC was installed in the upstairs bathroom.

All of the Redbourn Garden Village houses still stand, and are providing as good accommodation as those on many post-WW2 estates – a fitting tribute to the ideals of a socially minded company who cared about the environment of their workers. Some of the terraces in Winn's New Frodingham have been demolished, but those remaining have been extensively modernised and are still occupied.  

References
3. www.historyofscunney.pizco.com
4. National Archives for NE Lincolnshire.
5. Mrs Jane Patrick, Winterton, former resident of Redbourn Way.
During the first decade of the 21st century St Catherine's church and schoolroom, near South Park roundabout in Lincoln, were fully restored to provide a useful community facility used for many activities and in 2006 it was officially opened by the Prince of Wales.

But it is also much more – it is

A SITE OF HISTORICAL IMPORTANCE

John Ketteringham gives a brief résumé of its history

I started a U3A Lincolnshire Churches and Chapels group in 2010 and since then we have visited each month churches of all denominations throughout Lincolnshire. As well as visiting some interesting buildings we have seen parts of Lincolnshire that we didn’t know existed. It really is an amazing county and the following is an account of a visit to downhill Lincoln.

I am sure many of you will have passed the church with tower and spire close by South Park, Lincoln, but have never been inside, so members of the group took the opportunity to do so for our February 2013 meeting.

This is in fact one of the most important historic sites in Lincoln. In the mid 12th century the Gilbertine priory of St Katherine without Bargate was founded, together with St Sepulchre's Hospital, on a site of about nine acres stretching from the Sincil Drain to Cross O'Cliff Hill.

For three hundred years the monks and nuns cared for the poor, the sick and the dying, and as well as a hospital there was an orphanage and school within the priory walls. It was also a place of hospitality – not only church dignitaries but also royalty and the nobility stayed here before entering the city.

In 1186 St Hugh stayed with the prior before proceeding barefoot to his enthronement in the Cathedral. It became customary for successive bishops to do the same. When Bishop St Hugh died in 1200 in London his body was brought to St Katherine’s before being taken to the Cathedral in a procession led by King John.

When Queen Eleanor, wife of Edward I, died in 1290 at Harby her body was taken to St Katherine’s for preparation for the journey to London for burial at Westminster Abbey. Part of her body was buried in Lincoln Cathedral, and the King arranged for twelve crosses to be erected at each place where her body lay overnight. The first of these Eleanor crosses was erected near St Katherine’s at the foot of Cross O'Cliff Hill, and the last at Charing Cross.

In 1538 the priory was dissolved and eventually passed to the Grantham family who made their home in what was known as St Katherine’s Hall. In 1617 King James I stayed there, but
Above: Interior of St Catherine's church fully restored. Remains of the medieval priory can be viewed under the glass floor in bottom right of the picture.

Left: Inside St Catherine's church before it was restored.

Right: Remains of the medieval priory, including ceramic water pipes, which can be seen below the glass floor.

the house was demolished in the 18th century.

In 1879 a group of Methodists formed a trust to purchase land in St Catherine's, including the site of the priory, on which to build a school chapel. In 1887 a church was built in front of the school chapel. Due to the high cost of maintenance it was decided to close the church in 1976 and a period of neglect followed, with the building gradually deteriorating.

In 2002 the Priory Trust was formed to restore St Catherine's Church. This has been done and the church is now the St Catherine's Heritage and Cultural Centre with the former school building [the Priory Centre] being used for many activities. The original organ was sold when the church closed, but a very fine unique and nationally important instrument is to be installed and also it is hoped that bells will be installed in the tower in the near future.

There is little doubt that our visit was to one of Lincoln's hidden gems and the restoration of the church is quite remarkable. The exhibits are extremely well displayed and draw attention to a part of Lincoln's history that, compared with uphill Lincoln, is little known. I must admit that I found of particular interest the reproductions of the Luttrell Psalter and other books quite fascinating. But there is much to see and I urge anyone who hasn't been to the Priory Centre to make a visit soon.

It was good to have refreshments and a chat in the restaurant to finish a most enjoyable visit to the south of the city.

Notes
The initial letter of Catherine is a K when referring to the medieval history, but is a C for later references. The Catherine wheel firework is named after the instrument of torture upon which St Katherine was to have been martyred, but which miraculously flew into pieces when she touched it.
The acquirements of the mind

Public libraries in Sleaford

Simon Pawley charts the attempts by the philanthropic of Sleaford to raise the aspirations of working men from cribbage, billiards and whist to the more intellectual pursuits afforded by public lectures and a library.

By the early 1830s, the physical fabric of Sleaford had been transformed by a series of prestigious building projects. The new Sessions House was completed in 1832, the almshouses in Eastgate were re-fronted, the church was restored and its Georgian galleries removed, and a network of new sewers and storm drains was laid below the streets, after which the owners of the properties themselves clubbed together to pay for the roads to be relaid and new paving put in, 'the latter, as is well known, being much superior to that of the first city of France.' However, the town's leading citizens and philanthropists still complained that it had no public library or reading room to rescue the inhabitants from the imputation cast upon them, of having no taste for literature, and of paying more attention to the comforts of the body than to the acquirements of the mind.

The Victorians saw public libraries as a way of improving the moral and physical welfare of the working classes. Educated middle class men could assemble their own private libraries in their homes. Public libraries were a project for the working man. There were two strands to this thinking. Some people argued that a better educated labouring class would become more and more necessary as technology and industry developed. The other reason for setting up public libraries – especially important in Sleaford with its strong Methodist and temperance lobby – was to keep the working man out of public houses, which were seen as ruinous dens of vice.

One Sleaford correspondent to the Stamford Mercury in 1843 imagined a conversation between a stranger to the town and a local: Why, have you no place of public resort or recreation? None, Sir. Then where do your young men, your shop men, your mechanics pass these long winter evenings? Have you no place for them to resort to but the vitiated atmosphere of the public house, no recreation but cards, the rattie of the dice-box, or the bagatelle board? The first public library to be set up in Sleaford was the Sleaford Permanent Library. It was founded in November 1831 with Henry Handley, the local MP, as its patron, and James Cressey, a bookseller and publisher (based in Sleaford Market Place) as its secretary. Where it was is not clear. Its catalogue shows how high-minded it was: Encyclopædia Britannica, the works of Shakespeare, Samuel Johnson and Plutarch but very little popular literature. Its periodicals

The opening of Sleaford Permanent Library, 1831 (Lincolnshire Archives 3 ANC 9/12/19-20)
more edifying and productive way of spending their leisure hours than going to the pub. Once again, it was not universally welcomed. Soon after it opened, it held a marathon three evening debate on whether agriculture or industry was more important to the nation’s economy and, to the chagrin of local farmers, concluded that industry was. The farmers even threatened to boycott the town’s market and shops for a period in revenge.  

The next year young Charles Sharpe, the son of a Sleaford nurseryman and later founder of the international seed firm, led a campaign to transform the society into a public library and went around the town asking for subscriptions. Collecting £70, he and other local supporters were able to set up the Sleaford Public Library, which was initially based somewhere in Northgate. William Foster, an attorney, was its president; Ralph Coulson, a surgeon, was treasurer;  

list was similar: The Athenaeum, Blackwood’s Magazine, The Literary Guardian, The London Magazine of Natural History.

Whether because of this or because of a relatively high subscription rate (five shillings to join and eight shillings per annum) it did not thrive. By 1840 it had closed because of lack of funds. At the beginning of 1843, James Creasey found a space for it in his bookshop and print works, along with a news room where the local and national papers could be read. Both he and rival Sleaford bookseller Joseph Smedley had libraries attached to their shops in 1849 and Creasey’s successor, William Fawcett, was still advertising this ‘circulating library’ (quarterly subscription 3s 9d) when he took over the business at the end of 1854.  

In 1847 a group of local men founded the Sleaford Discussion Society, which met in a room over the shop of George Bacon in Southgate (now the car park near The Source). This was originally a debating club for the young men of the town, again designed to provide them with a

William Fawcett’s Printworks in Sleaford Market Place. Fawcett continued to advertise a ‘circulating library’ based in his shop, the same as his predecessor James Creasey had done.

(Author)
and its secretary was James Bacon, who ran a thriving private boys' school in Westgate (Bank House, near the current Sainsbury's car park). Men like Charles Kirk, the Sleaford builder and architect, and clergy both Anglican and nonconformist, supported it. Wherever its initial reading room was based, it was very small and whenever the library held public events – talks and debates – it had to go to an alternative venue. By the end of the decade, it had amassed a library of about 600 books, many donated by local clergymen and other dignitaries.

In the same period, John Payne junior, a successful local businessman and wharfinger, built the Carre Place Rooms in what later became Carre Street – a building whose much altered ghost still survives opposite Berkeley Court. Until it was demolished and rebuilt in the 1970s it had an upper storey, always designed as a venue that could be hired for public meetings. The library liked it so much that they took it over as their permanent base in March 1849, with the books housed on the ground floor and the upper room used for lectures and debates.

A series of high-profile speakers was brought in, some of local and some of national reputation, 'gentlemen who are favourable to the diffusion of Useful and Scientific Knowledge', to give talks on subjects like the latest scientific discoveries. The organisation renamed itself 'Sleaford Library and Scientific Institution' and had pretensions to be the precursor of a Mechanics' Institute, like the ones set up in many other towns and cities on the model suggested by Henry Brougham in the 1820s. Such institutes were intended to give a fully structured evening class education to working class men.

The institute's period of success was, however, short-lived. By 1853, the Stamford Mercury was reporting that the reading room, in addition to two weekly and two daily newspapers, is supplied with some of the best periodicals of the day, and is open every evening from 7 to 10 o'clock: the Library contains several hundred volumes, and the charge for membership is adapted to the circumstances of the industrious classes.

But it also said that it was not being well supported. At its height the institute had about 60 members but White's 1856 Directory reported that this had fallen to 45 and that it was 'in a languishing condition.'

In January 1856 it was faced with a new, rival, organisation – Sleaford Young Men's Literary and Discussion Association. This was set up by another private boys' school proprietor, Charles Boyer, whose academy was based, in this period, in Boston Road (Handley House, now Blanchards coffee shop). It initially ran as an offshoot of that school, using the schoolroom for its meetings and with John Partridge, the assistant master, as its librarian. Its members only paid five shillings a year – half the subscription costs for the Carre Place library – and, according to White's Directory, it had a good library and nearly 100 members... It has its meetings and occasional lectures, etc in Mr Boyer's school room, Old Sleaford.

Although this library could have been housed at the schoolroom, later evidence of close association between the Young Men's Literary Society and the Carre Place library makes it possible that is was located at some point in the Carre Place Rooms, either in a separate room or, more likely, just as a section of the Carre Place library.

Like its predecessor, however, it needed a larger venue for its public lectures and fundraising entertainments and, as soon as Sleaford Corn Exchange was opened in 1858, the Exchange Hall provided an ideal and spacious venue for this and other local societies. The Corn Exchange also had a large room over the main entrance, envisaged as a reading room in the plans, but used in the first few years as a dining room.

In March 1860, anxious to avoid the decline that happened to the Carre Street Institution, the Young Men's Literary Association took this room as a permanent headquarters and moved into it, not only its own library but also the former Carre Street one, making altogether a collection of upwards of 1000 volumes. To these the members will have access, as well as the privilege of admittance.
to every lecture. The subscription, which is to be not less than £5 per annum, is set at this very low sum in order to induce the young people of the town to spend their leisure hours in a rational and profitable employment, and thus prepare them for the actions of life, and secure them from the scenes of vice and dissipation to which many become martyrs.

(Lincolnshire Chronicle, 9 March 1860)\(^1\)

This was the base for what now became known as Sleaford Literary Institution, which remained the main library and reading room in Sleaford for the next sixty years.

It was substantially revamped in 1884, explicitly to turn it into a new 'Town Library'. Following another public appeal that raised £200, a number of the older books were sold off and new ones bought. At the opening in 1885, a press report said that subscribers would find

that the pith and marrow of the old library still remained, and nothing which was really of value had been done away with. They would find that there were now nearly 600 new books, and as regards quality and appearance all would be satisfied. But the outward appearance and the number of books were of small moment, compared with the intrinsic qualities. The whole of the books which they saw before them were the works of the best writers, and not a single volume could be called trashy. There were about two-thirds of the books of light literature.

(Sleaford Journal 21 March 1885)\(^2\)

The finances of the Literary Institution were always precarious. In 1884, subscriptions from about 150 members – about the largest membership it would ever have brought in £89. Rent paid to the Corn Exchange Company, gas and firewood, newspapers, periodicals and books, general repairs and a salary of £14 a year for the librarian left them a balance of just three shillings.

These pressures, in turn, led to a slow change in the nature and aspirations of the organisation. From early days, there was a billiard table.

In 1888, just three years after the new library was opened, members pressed for games of cribbage, bezique and whist to be allowed in the Reading Room as well and a formal division was made between membership of the Literary Institution and members of the Social Club, who had rights to use the Recreation Room but not the Library.\(^3\)

Charles Sharpe, who remained the president until his death in 1897, had never really been satisfied with the Institution hiring rooms at the Corn Exchange:

This room was not exactly what he liked," he said in 1885 “but they could not get a third room, and he was ready to take a share in obtaining a separate building in a suitable position. If a piece of ground could be obtained, they might erect a building worthy of the town, and worthy of themselves, and he was ready to co-operate with anyone who would join with him in procuring such a building. In 1888, he wanted them to find new accommodation by offering shares —
to members, so that the Institution and the Social Club could effectively go their separate ways, but the idea was shelved because there was not enough interest to make the project viable. The Recreation Room was kept on, although one committee member described it as 'a dead lose', and a six foot high curtain was stretched across part of it to make a separate compartment for chess, draughts and dominoes. Clearly, the high-mindedness of the library was losing out to the less intellectual entertainment demanded by more and more of the members.

For the Literary Institution, the long decline became terminal during the First World War. The rooms were opened up to servicemen stationed at the Royal Naval Air Service base at Cranwell, but membership declined because so many young men were called away to serve abroad. It now had rivals, no doubt with better and more comfortable accommodation. By 1900, the Sleaford Conservative Club and the Sleaford Liberal Club (both in Northgate in this period) had reading rooms or gaming rooms and the Liberals also boasted a small library of their own. In the early 1900s, Sleaford Urban District Council considered trying to set up a new 'Free Library' in the town by applying to the American philanthropist Andrew Carnegie for a share of a fund he had set up for this purpose, but they could not secure a suitable site and the project was dropped.

The Literary Institution carried on in a declining state until 1924, when a rent rise from the Corn Exchange and a growing deficit led to it being wound up. The reading room was closed and the library books sold to help clear the debt. Members bought some of them. Carres Grammar School in Sleaford took quite a number together with bookcases, and RAF Cranwell and the Sleaford Rural District Council bought others. The Social Club continued at the Corn Exchange until the Second World War, while Kesteven County Council took over the responsibility for library provision in Sleaford, with its first premises at the Council Offices and later ones at Westholm House in Sleaford. In 1956, the main lending library was relocated to the old fire station in Westgate and in 1987 it moved to the present premises in the Market Place.

In one of those strange coincidences that so often happen in Sleaford, the new library building was just two doors away from the old Corn Exchange and it had an even closer link to its predecessor, the Literary Institution. The new site had previously been an ironmonger's shop called Bratleys, founded in the 1870s by Charles Bratley. Charles Bratley's second wife was Florence Boyer, the daughter of Charles Boyer, the Sleaford schoolmaster who had established the Young Men's Literary and Discussion Association in 1856.

Acknowledgements
Thanks are due to Lincolnshire Archives and Drummond Castle Trust for permission to reproduce part of AANC 9/12/19-20; to Sleaford Library, whose 25th anniversary celebrations in their present building led to the compilation of this article; to Wendy Atkin for tracking down the minute book of the Literary Institution, which had been inaccessible for many years; and to Michael Turland for invaluable help and suggestions, particularly with the trade directory sources.

Note on Sources
There is one extant volume of Sleaford Literary Institution minutes 1886-1891 (now in the author's possession). The 'Andrews Document' is an associated six pages of looseleaf notes on the history of the Institution, possibly the work of local historian Victor Andrews in the early 1970s. Its author clearly had access to other Literary Institution records that have since disappeared.
Notes

1. Lincoln, Rutland and Stamford Mercury (hereafter LRSM) 15/1/1830; LRSM 7/5/1830; LRSM 20/8/1830 letter from 'A Commercial Traveller', LRSM 29/7/1831 letter from 'A Native of Seaford.

2. LRSM 13/1/1843, letter from 'Junius'.

3. Lincolnshire Archives 3 ANC, 9/12/19-20.

4. Lincolnshire Chronicle 6/1/1843; LRSM 6/1/1843, Slater's Directory of Lincolnshire, 1849 p.101; LRSM 8/12/1854. The Seaford News Room was moved from Fawcett's shop to a neighbouring building in Market Street in 1858 (Seaford Gazette 22/5/1858) but the fate of the library remains unclear.


7. Slater's Directory of Lincolnshire, 1849 pp.101, 103; LRSM 31/3/1843; LRSM 5/5/1848; LRSM 25/8/1848. Sharpe was just 17 in 1847.


10. White's Directory of Lincolnshire 1856 pp.436, 440; LRSM 5/2/1858; LRSM 28/1/1859; LRSM 30/9/1859; 1861 census Old Seaford RG9/2433 fol.73r; B.A. Barton, 'Academy Life in Old Seaford', Lincolnshire Life 19, June 1979, pp.38-40; Seaford Gazette 3/11/1894 obituary of Boyer, Charles Sharpe; his speech at the opening of the new Town Library in 1885 (see below note 14) says the Institution "was located in Carre Place" and the Andrews Document (author) also places it there.

11. LRSM 22/1/1858 (opening of Corn Exchange); Lincolnshire Chronicle 9/3/1860. If, as suggested above, the two libraries had previously shared the Carre Street accommodation, the merger in the new premises would have been a natural outcome.


13. AGM notice of Seaford Literary Institution 1884 (author); Andrews Document (author).


17. Lincolnshire Life 19, October 1979, p.67; 1891 census Seaford RG13/3049, fol.12r.

Notes and Queries 94:1

ROADSIDE WATER SUPPLY (LP&P N&Q 93:1)

It's just outside the county, but by the side of the A607 at (I think) Grid Reference 833290 there is a high-level water supply that still flows continually. I assume it is fed from the spring at 834289.

Rob Wheeler, Harmston

First impressions are of an attractive book with its colourful Peter de Wint painting on the cover. Maps and photographs are in a centre section with relevant tables following each chapter for easy reference.

In the Preface Michael Chisholm states his aim of writing a history of Crowland which draws attention to its importance in the history of the fens. He has examined documentary sources, archaeological reports, printed publications, local myths and legends, as well as local knowledge. All have been checked and tested in his quest for an accurate picture.

The author begins by examining the myths and legends surrounding the coming of St Guthlac to the island and the foundation of the Abbey in 716. He does accept the possibility of there being a shrine St Guthlac. However, he dates the foundation of the Abbey to the tenth century, possibly in 994. If this is the case, he concludes certain books and documents are inaccurate. But, he leaves the reader to judge.

According to archaeological evidence discussed in chapter two, the town was a 10th century Saxon settlement, most probably a ‘planned’ town such as Peterborough and Wisbech which were planned by their abbeys. Moreover, Crowland would not have been a viable town without the excavation of the waterways by the monks in the 10th century. The waterways allowed the town to develop on the drier, higher ground and also provided a means of communication, the facility for trade, and for carrying provisions and building materials for building the Abbey. A significant date was 972, when Crowland Cut was dug. Fortunately the Abbey received some important land grants which brought in rents to the Abbey’s coffers to fund the building projects. The Abbey also held the manor of Crowland, its demesne lands and outlying granges, all of which provided income.

The author firmly believes that the misunderstandings about the origins of Crowland Abbey should be recognised and removed; only then will its importance be apparent.

We are told that from the 10th century to the 14th century the town developed as an important Abbey town. The creation of the waterways, along what today are the North, South, East and West Roads, brought goods and people into the heart of the town. Charters were granted for an annual fair, an eight day event, and a weekly Wednesday market to which merchants came from far and wide. Crowland became an important river port connected by water to King’s Lynn, Stamford, Wisbech, Spalding and other fenland towns. The town developed substantially in the 13th century. Amazingly, the monks were able to use a geological feature, palaeo-channels, which enabled them to excavate along the wrinkles formed by water action in the layer of Abbey Gravels to create a system of waterways using manpower only. As he explains, Crowland’s economy began to change from the 14th century onward, though account books show the Abbey prospered in the 14th and 15th centuries, largely from the sale of wool from its lands. Trinity Bridge was built in these affluent times and perhaps as many as 800 people lived in the old medieval town. Unfortunately, the area became more prone to flooding as the rivers became silted up, so the mixed farming economy changed. Swan culture became important along with fishing and fowling. The reader is given a detailed account of these changes which led to a decline in Crowland’s fortunes.

It appears that Crowland in the seventeenth century was an uninviting town. In the Civil Wars the town had changed hands three times, and consequently the town and its economy suffered. Other contributory factors were the loss of the Abbey’s wealth when it was closed in 1539, the loss of river trade and frequent flooding. A survey of 1650 is quoted, which shows the income of the manor with all its lands fell by two thirds between the 16th and 17th centuries. However, there was hope of being included in the new drainage schemes, and the New South Bank was dug to take the flood waters away more quickly.

Apparently, Crowland had to wait until 1753 when the First North Level Act included Crowland and Postland in its 5th Division. This empowered the lord of the Manor to carry out necessary schemes to improve drainage. All of the drainage schemes are clearly explained by the author. This was a major turning point for Crowland; not a solution as some lands, though better drained, were often flooded. The improvement did allow a revival of arable and pastural farming in the drier areas. Flooding still prevented building outside the old town boundaries and the building of turnpike roads in the area was not viable, leaving Crowland isolated.

The census returns for the 19th
century show Crowland’s population increased in the first half of the century but decreased after 1861. The author is sceptical of the high figure of 91% claiming in 1801 to be employed in agriculture, even in an agricultural town. Agriculture as a whole suffered from the effects of foreign competition which led to a collapse of prices. This and other factors led to unemployment of farm workers and many left Crowland in search of work, resulting in a fall in the population after 1861.

Crowland began to change after the mid 19th century, for the ‘Age of Reform’ introduced a wide raft of social legislation and the effects on the town are fully explained. Unfortunately, Crowland’s isolation continued for no major roads came into the town and it was by-passed by the railway. Descriptions of life in the town at this time contributed by local people make interesting reading.

During the last hundred years the population grew very slowly in the first half of the century, followed by a leap in the population after 1971. We are told that before 1961 the town remained a quiet agricultural town where jobs were few and living standards generally low. Some improvements are mentioned, for instance the new council estates and piped water supplied to many houses.

However, after 1961 changes came quickly and sources of employment increased with the coming of new businesses to the town. Agriculture no longer dominated the economy. Major roads still by-passed the town, but this became an advantage for new residents seeking rural peace settled in the town and new private housing estates were built outside the boundaries of the old town. Crowland thrives once again.

In his conclusion Michael Chisholm emphasises that Crowland’s history is based on the relationship between land and water; the history of a town shaped by its geography. He sees it as a history worthy of celebration. In the Shadow of the Abbey: Crowland gives a compelling argument for the rejection of the traditional version of Crowland’s founding, followed by a masterly account of the history of the town. For these reasons it should feature on the bookshelves of anyone interested in the town’s history or the history of the fens.

Rose Clark, Market Harborough


New Holland is a very interesting place. What is generally well known is its history as the location of a small Humber ferry, taken over by the Manchester, Sheffield and Lincolnshire Railway who built the railway, pier, steam ferries and dock, opened in 1848. A new village was created, together with amenities for its residents.

With this development came additional businesses and industries. One of them, perhaps the least known, was the shipyard, also built by the railway company. Here, its first ship was built in 1857, a 66 foot schooner, the FAIRY. Shipbuilding continued here until the completion of the last contract, a wave damping system for the Pilot Jetty at Spurn Point in 1998.

The yard was sold in 2003 to be used for ship breaking for a time. Much of it now forms part of the storage area used by the operators of the New Holland dock. Hundreds of vessels had been built, and others fitted out as well as repaired, over the 141 years. Many were lighters and keels, with barges of many kinds, tugs, drifters, trawlers, dredgers, workboats and packets, all faithfully recorded within these pages.

Rodney Clapson is well qualified to tell this story. He was an apprentice in the yard in the early 1950s. He has written extensively on shipping in the Humber and his earlier book, on shipbuilding at Burton upon Stather, is also for sale at Jews’ Court. Well illustrated, with lists of the vessels built by the changing operators and owners, together with the lists of employees taken from Census returns, this book will appeal to industrial, local and family historians. It has appendices on marine blueprints, wage rates in the industry between 1880 and 1911 and a glossary of shipping and shipbuilding terms. The author is to be congratulated on bringing to life an aspect of Lincolnshire history that deserves to be better known.

Stewart Squires, Scunthorpe

FORD, Avril. Going home the long way round: how a very ordinary little girl from Kent grew up to become one of the first women priests in Lincolnshire, and her adventures on the way. [The author, 2013]. 95pp. ISBN 987 0 9569729 7 2 (sic). Unpriced pbk.

The author was brought up in Hayes, a large village in Kent but now absorbed into the urban south-east of Greater London. She was a girl much given to fantasy – it seems partly as an escape from a father rather more feared than loved. We are given detailed accounts of life at school, her discovery of reading (greatly helped by the local librarian) and the beginnings of a spiritual journey, which seems to have begun early, even before the discovery of Sunday school.

After Bromley Grammar School, a maths degree from Durham University she qualified to teach maths and sport. After a year in Eastbourne she came to Hornsea Grammar School and felt she had found her real home. She suffered a nervous breakdown and was subject to panic attacks so she felt isolated and her faith wavered. Marriage and the birth of two daughters took her away from teaching and only slowly did she feel a connection to a church (she had been unimpressed by the C of E in Hornsea when she came in the 60s and found the Methodists more welcoming). The launching of a Bishop’s Certificate Course locally proved a major turning point, the 3 year course providing the stimulus to study again and become involved. Important times at the church’s
A regional house at Edenhall helped her towards her final destination when, in 1994, she was ordained at Lincoln cathedral. She was thus one of the first women allowed, at last, into the Anglican ministry.

She describes the ups and downs of 15 years of ministry at St Mary’s in Horncastle, followed by three years looking after the Hemingby Group of churches. This is a very personal account of a special progress. It is very well produced and sympathetic readers will find it rewarding.

POPE, Margaret. The history of Theddlethorpe, Gayton-le-Mash, Burwell and Walmgate. [The author, 2013] 25pp. No ISBN, 90p, pbk. Mrs Pope has been looking through local newspapers and other documents to gather material on these four small places in the Lincolnshire marsh. They form a useful guide to some of their past but do not claim to be in any sense a definitive account.

This is a comprehensive story of fires, firemen, fire fighting equipment and their location within the city of Lincoln. After the foreword and introduction Mr. Reid provides a diary of events from when the Police Department acted as the fire authority in 1839 to 1974 when the management of the fire service became the responsibility of Lincolnshire County Council. This sets the scene for the book which is basically a chronological record of the story taking each event and advance in strict order.
It is, however, not just a list. Reid intersperses the story with illustrations from the press, the original records and illustrations. Major fires are described often with graphic descriptions of the problems encountered. The family historian will glean much help since many serving men are named from the Chief Constable down to those included in group photographs. The readers keen on the topography of Lincoln City and the area around will find plenty of references to places including maps and illustrations. Many photographs and reproductions of advertisements, which show the changing patterns of the fire appliances and the uniforms of firemen, will be of particular interest to those of a mechanical mind. There is something for all readers be it documents, engines, events, buildings or personnel.

The Lincoln Brigade attended fires beyond the boundary giving rise to problems faced by local authority policies and management. First get your horse; or, could the fire tender find it easier up Camwick Hill or Cross o’ Cliff Hill are items that catch the imagination and one wonders how firemen reached the blaze before it destroyed stacks or buildings.

Mr. Reid makes full use of the logs and records he illustrates with references from official records and news items in the press as well as pages of advertisements for equipment and personal property. Practically every page has illustrations all of which are clearly captioned and placed next the relevant text. Reid himself served with distinction and dedication in the service for many years.

The only drawback is the size of the type especially when quotations are included. These latter are in italic using a light type face. On the other hand if a larger type had been used the book would probably have been unmanageable whereas its size is most acceptable. The cover provides a taste of what is to come inside including a ghostly suggestion of what happened to West’s cycle stores. This volume is well worth its cost and is a welcome addition to Lincoln City records.

Pearl Wheadle, Lincoln

This small format picture book is the ideal souvenir for anyone visiting the city or seeking to find a suitable gift for someone connected to Lincoln but no longer close by. The colour photography is excellent and a very clear view of the face the modern city presents is immediately apparent. At its modest price and sturdy hardback format it would be an ideal present.


A useful reissue of an item easily missed when it first appeared over 20 years ago. It celebrates an important firm whose work in the city and several places in the county still survives but is so often passed by without its stylistic character being noted. The University deserves thanks for bringing back into print a work that sheds light on an architectural firm of more than local significance.


Pinchbeck is a village immediately north of Spalding, on the Boston road. In 1560 it was a substantial place, its parochial population of around a thousand souls being larger than that of Spalding. Its parish extended to fifteen thousand acres, including 6,700 acres of fen, and it had a considerable hinterland, with contacts with the marshland parishes to the east and up the river Glen to southern Kesteven in the west. A comparatively wealthy farming parish, it had rich arable around the village, good grazing land towards the Wash and above all the bounties of the as yet undrained fenland, both animal and vegetable.
Judith Withyman has known Pinchbeck well for most of her life, and she chose the period 1560 to 1660 because it is covered by the first parish register of baptisms, marriages and burials. Waiting to be linked to the register entries were as many as 578 wills and 564 probate inventories for that century, and four surviving acre books, or drainage rate books, enabling her to plot in many cases where the inhabitants had their holdings and even—generally—a difficult thing in rural parishes—where exactly they lived.

As she points out, a further interest of the period is that it links the Middle Ages with modern times. In 1560 the Reformation and dissolution of the monasteries were very recent history. Pinchbeck was a member of the manor of Spalding, previously held by Spalding Priory. Other religious houses, notably Crowland Abbey, formerly had large holdings in south Lincolnshire.

Life in Pinchbeck, however, was less disrupted than might have been thought, with its farmers and householders simply exchanging their old landlords for new ones in many cases. By 1660 the population of the parish had increased to fifteen hundred, but it had recently experienced major (and locally highly unpopular) attempts to drain its fen, not to mention the dislocations of the Civil War and Interregnum.

Today, apart of course from the parish church, Pinchbeck has retained few features that would have been immediately recognisable to the inhabitant of 1560, let alone that of 1530, but Mrs Withyman’s local knowledge enables her to identify some remarkable survivals. The last remnants of the medieval guildhall are said not to have disappeared until the 1960s, the last cattle drover died only fairly recently, and a field name originating in the fourteenth century is still in use today.

The constant battle to keep the water, with which the people of Pinchbeck were surrounded, in its proper places and channels helped to foster the typical local characteristics of resilience, stubbornness and sturdy independence. The need, moreover, to keep dykes in repair and supervise common rights in the fen encouraged a strong sense of local community. That sense possibly declined between 1560 and 1660, but it must have weakened more markedly later on, when the fens were finally drained and enclosed and new settlements began to spring up in previously very sparsely populated parts of the parish.

Mrs Withyman has worked in detail, and over many years, on her principal sources, and indeed has contributed to the work of the Cambridge Group for the History of Population and Social Structure (CAMPOP). Her purpose, however, in this book is not to present a series of statistical tables but to bring to life the people of her village and parish in the early modern period. In this she succeeds by deploying not just her local knowledge but her human sympathies and her understanding of the interaction between people and their environment.

Her method is to use her ‘reconstituted’ families and their inventories to illustrate their domestic and working lives, down to their clothes, their housing and the tools of their trades. She quotes in passing both G M Trevelyan and Professor (Sir Tony) Wrigley of CAMPOP, but as an historian she is clearly a disciple more of the former than of the latter.

For some historians, nevertheless, this approach may have a few frustrations. We learn, for instance, about a number of families, from the Ogelis, with their high status and ramified local connections, to fowlers and fishermen of ‘good fen stock’ such as the Tilsons. But a few genealogical tables, and an index to pull together the scattered references to these families, would have been helpful.

More, too, could perhaps have been said about social structure. The evidence suggests that Pinchbeck lacked any very rigid hierarchy. There was a top layer of gentlemen and esquires, but they did not closely resemble the gentry of, say, Kesteven: their estates were smaller and less compact, their houses considerably less grand. Lower down were the yeomen, husbandmen and labourers, but in a parish where a comparatively small holding could support a family comfortably these categories seem to have been blurred. Labourers not infrequently left wills, and in some cases even held parochial office.

One wonders whether social mobility diminished or increased during the century 1560-1660, and whether there were corresponding shifts in nomenclature. Or perhaps, as Mrs Withyman suggests at one point, the relative status of Pinchbeck people was clear enough to their neighbours, and depended to some extent on, or was reflected by, things such as dress which we cannot always appreciate at this distance in time.

Also relevant here is the role of women, about which Mrs Withyman has further interesting things to say.

In this connection it might be useful to look for possible comparisons in the work of other historians—Margaret Spufford’s, for instance, on the Cambridgeshire fenland village of Willingham or Keith Wrightson’s on Terling in Essex. This could in turn lead to a consideration of whether Pinchbeck was a true peasant community in the sense of the term as used by Alan Macfarlane or Dennis Mills — a community dominated by small farmers occupying their own land and mainly reliant on family labour.

What does seem to emerge clearly from this book is that no Pinchbeck labourer, small husbandman or small yeoman would have recognised the term peasant as applying to himself. Further light could do no doubt be shed on some of these questions. But meanwhile it is a pleasure to read a local study that is both lively and accessible, that is not overburdened by statistical tables, but that nevertheless gives both the general reader and the professional historian much food for thought.

Dr Richard Olney, London.