Lincolnshire Past & Present

A public appeal for funds for the repair of Newport Arch in 1825

Wilderspin National School, Barton
Glentworth Cliff LDV

The Revd Atwill Curtois of Branston and his family

WW1 Lincoln School and the 4th Northern General Hospital
IN HIS ARTICLE David Stocker refers to a document that he discovered in a bookshop headed ‘To the lovers of antiquity and the public. Newport Arch, Lincoln’. It highlights the esteem in which the monument, the remains of the 3rd century Roman north gate to the city, is held by local people, as much in 1825 as it is today. On the back of the document is a list of subscribers including many prestigious names. The repairs carried out then proved insufficient and more work was done in subsequent years and eventually, in 1849, by the City Council, which today has a duty of care to preserve it as an ancient monument. It was placed on the English Heritage At Risk Programme in 2012 after harsh winters and vegetation growth had damaged it to the point of needing major repair work. This was carried out by Robert Woodhead Ltd. During the course of the work it was found that more work needed to be done and the generous funding already secured from Waste Recycling Environmental Ltd would not be half enough. The additional funding was agreed, and the work was completed in April with the monument restored, damaged stones replaced and an extra layer of stones to protect the top of the arch. This was the largest restoration project on the structure since 50 years ago after a lorry famously crashed into it. The work has ensured that this important monument continues to stand for many years to come.

Ros Beevers, Editor

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Lincolnshire Past & Present Editor: Ros Beevers Reviews Editor: Ray Carroll. Production: Ros Beevers
Contributions to the next Bulletin and the autumn issue of Lincolnshire Past & Present are welcome as soon as possible. Material may be sent by post to the Editor c/o Jewell Court, Lincoln LN2 1LS, either as paper copy or on compact disk, or alternatively as an email attachment to info@alha.org.uk or lindumcolonia@hotmail.com or access the online enquiry form via www.alha.org.uk to submit a query. To place an advertisement email lindumcolonia@hotmail.com

A public appeal for funds for the repair of Newport Arch, Lincoln, in 1825

Newport Arch seen from the north during the 1780s. The view shows both the Roman arch visible today and — in front of it and on its northern side — the more southerly of the two Norman arches. Both Norman arches were built when the gate was re-edited in the years following the Norman Conquest, about 1070, but the northern arch had been demolished shortly before this view was made.

A copy from the Ross Manuscripts, Civilis Lincolnia Volume 1, No.16, on loan to Lincolnshire Libraries Service — reproduced courtesy of the Estate of the Tenth Baron Morson.

An unusual document from a bookseller’s oddments box in Rutland could hardly have fallen into better hands than those of David Stocker and hardly at a more appropriate time than when the Newport Arch was about to undergo major repairs.

I spend too much time rooting through oddments boxes in booksellers, but occasionally this activity brings dividends. Earlier this year I found the accompanying document from 1825 in just such a box in Uppingham and it seemed very appropriate that I should find it in 2013, as Newport Arch has recently disappeared beneath scaffolding once again, as another repair programme gets underway in succession to that proposed 188 years earlier.

The document is a ‘hand-bill’, that is to say it is an ephemeral publication, published to seek public support and finance for repair work at Newport Arch. Because it was published for this short-lived and practical purpose it is now quite a rare item. The handbill makes it clear that the demolition of a building to the west of the arch in 1824 had not only done damage to the arch itself, but that its demolition was part of a scheme connected with improvements to the turnpike road from Lincoln to Brig.

Furthermore, it adds to the evidence that the side postern, to the east of the main arch, was reopened early in 1826, as a direct result of this appeal for funds. It also explains that the footway was reopened to ensure that pedestrians would not mingle with wheeled traffic using the ‘newly reformed’ road through the main archway. The date of this significant alteration to Newport Arch has not been widely published previously, though the work proposed in the handbill was trailed in the Stamford Mercury in June and July 1825.
TO THE

LOVERS OF ANTIQUITY AND THE PUBLIC.

NEWPORT ARCH, LINCOLN.

The Roman station was founded at Landum (Lincoln) about forty-five years after Christ, in the reign of Claudius. The area inclosed was upon the brow of the hill, and in form nearly a square. The sides facing the cardinal points: that on the east extended from the north corner or tower, (the site of which is now occupied by a summer-house late in the tenancy of Major Colegrave,) to a tower that stood near the Vicars Court; from here the south wall ran in a line by the Leopard public-house, to a tower that stood on the south-west of the Castle Keep, and the foundations of the same were taken up about four years ago by Mr. Dawber, who is proprietor of the land; from here the west wall run in a line with the present Castle Wall, the foundations of which are very probably the same, as William the Conqueror would find them laid to his hand; this wall extended across the Burton road, and over a close the property of Mr. Turner; the north wall run from here by Newport to the before-mentioned summer-house.*

These walls were pierced by as many gates; viz. one stood in East-gate, near the house lately inhabited by Major Colegrave, and was taken down several years ago by the late Sir Cecil Wray, Bart., on building the said house; the south gate stood over the road against the Leopard public-house, the plinths being still visible on each side of the road, this arch was taken down about the beginning of the last century, by the proprietor of the house adjoining on the east side of the street, with much difficulty, being semicircular, and every stone anwsering as a key to the rest, so as one stone was broke the others closed, until the arch could no longer reach across: the west gate is supposed to be the one now blocked up in the present west wall of the Castle: the fourth and north arch with one postern, is still standing, and the subject of our present solicitude, in the Bail, stretching across the road leading to Brigg and Barton.

This arch may be considered as one of the greatest curiosities, having stood nearly two thousand years, amidst all the calamities which Lincoln has from time to time undergone from foreign and civil wars, and other casualties of time. As a monument of antiquity, and of the brave and warlike people by whom it was erected, it is justly considered one of the greatest objects of interest; and not a stranger visits Lincoln who has a taste for antiquities, but bestrides his admiration upon this ancient relic: it is supposed to be the only arch of the kind, except the one in the Castle Wall, now standing in England.

To preserve this interesting and picturesque object from mouldering to the ground, and restoring the postern again to its original use, after being buried for centuries, is the occasion of bringing the subject before the notice of the public: the road under the main arch being, by the Trustees of the Lincoln Turnpike Trust, now under reform, which work is going on rapidly,—in order to restore the postern, (as both works are in a degree connected,) a subscription has been commenced to accomplish the object. The lovers of antiquity are urged to assist in rescuing so much as is left of this venerable arch from the ruthless grasp of time, by opening the only postern left, which, for a small sum of money, judiciously expended, would make a handsome addition to the present appearance, as well as an useful accommodation to foot-passengers accustomed to go through; the more so, as no footway will be left under the main arch.

A plan for the foot-road and opening of the postern-gate, with the present list of subscribers, may be seen at Mr. Drury’s, Post-Office, Lincoln, where further subscriptions are received.

* The Romans, after remaining a considerable time, extended the station from the south-east and south-west angles down to the River Witham.
### PRESENT LIST OF SUBSCRIBERS

#### TO

#### RESTORE THE EAST POSTERN

#### OF

#### NEWPORT ARCH, LINCOLN.

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SEPTm. 26th, 1825.

(2 W. DREW, PRINTER)

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A list of illustrious subscribers on the back of the handbill.
Apart from confirming the precise date and context of these works, the handbill contains several other points worthy of note, and it is introduced with an interesting description of the state of understanding of the Roman town (or ‘station’) of Lincoln in 1825, by which was meant the Roman Upper City.

This part of the document mentions a number of ‘towers’, for which there is little or no other evidence. An earthwork at the northeast corner of the upper city is noted beneath a ‘summerhouse’, nearly a century before it was described by E. M. Symson. At the southeast angle of the upper city a hitherto unreported tower that stood near the Vicars Court is noted. No such tower is known from any other source, but the tower’s existence could be mere presumption on the part of the author, rather than an eyewitness report. At the southwestern corner, on the land of Mr Dawber, a third tower is identified ‘south-west of the Castle Keep’ of which the foundations were ‘taken up’ around 1821.

All four of the Roman gates are also mentioned. The East Gate is said to have been destroyed ‘several years ago’ by the late Sir Cecil Wray, which presumably pinpoints the event to about 1820, another date which has not been precisely established hitherto.

Although it is well known that the ruins of the south gate were incorporated in The Leopold public house, this source has an entertaining account of difficulties encountered during demolition of the arch ‘at the beginning of the last century’ (i.e. the 18th century). It may be that the detail is included partly to warn potential enemies of the Newport Arch that the demolition of such structures was not a straightforward process! The writer of this account also repeats the long-held (but erroneous) view that the Castle West Gate was actually a Roman arch.

Who was the author of this document? Subscriptions were requested at ‘Mr Drury’s Post Office’, pointing towards the circle of John Wold Drury, a prolific publisher of books and pamphlets including guidebooks etc to historic Lincoln. It is possible that the campaign to protect Newport Arch was actually masterminded by Drury, and that the handbill was written by him, but it is perhaps just as likely that both the leaflet and the campaign were promoted by some of his antiquarian friends.

We know that his and their efforts were successful, as the poster is still in use today, but this success was probably due largely to the impressive list of local patrons whom Drury persuaded to subscribe. Not only were Lincoln notables, such as the Dean, Sub-Dean and Mayor along with members of the Sibthorpe, Ellison, Cracroft, Bromhead and Swan families persuaded to contribute, but so were major figures in County society such as Earl Brownlow and the Countess of Warwick.

The campaign to restore the archway climaxed in a meeting in December 1825 at which a resolution was passed to preserve the arch. The repairs of 1825 proved insufficient, however, and further work was undertaken in 1837, and again in 1849 at the expense of the fabric along the west side which had collapsed, this time apparently funded and undertaken by the City Council.

In a year when the City Council is mounting another programme of conservation at Newport Arch, then, this ephemeral document with its scattering of information, is a timely reminder that public concern about Lincoln’s ancient monuments is not a recent phenomenon, and that the city’s most articulate ‘Lovers of Antiquity’ have always been at the forefront of fundraising.

Acknowledgements
I am extremely grateful to Mick Jones for discussing an early draft of this note with me, and to John Herridge of Lincoln City Council, who sent me a very useful series of references to the repair of the arch in the local press.

Endnotes
2. Stamford Mercury 3/2/1826, p.3 col.2. This interesting note that reports concern that the new pedestrian footway leading to the north side of the pedestrian arch had cut into the ancient churchyard of St Nicholas Newport, without the appropriate authority. I am very grateful to John Herridge for passing me this reference, and the others contained in the contemporary press cited below, extracted from the Lincoln Heritage Database.
3. Work was not completed until the early summer of 1826 Stamford Mercury 5/5/1826, p.3 col.2.
4. Stamford Mercury 24/6/1825, p.3 col.2; 17/7/1825, p.3 col.3.
6. E. M. Symson, Lincoln, 1906, 26. It is likely, however, that the gate was demolished in stages between the mid 18th and the early 19th centuries.
9. Although John Wold Drury had published earlier guidebooks to the city, he produced a successful History of Lincoln in 1816, but it is not clear how much of this text was written by him (J. W. F. Hill, Georgian Lincoln, 1966, 289–91). Drury was primarily a publisher, and also the City postmaster after 1840 (J. W. F. Hill, Victorian Lincoln, 1974, 8). See also M. J. Jones, Inexhaustible Themes for Study and Speculation: Michael Drury and the recording of Lincoln’s buried archaeology, Lincoln Connections. Aspects of City and County since 1700. A Tribute to Denis Mills (eds. S. Brooke, A. Walker & R. Wheeler), Lincoln 2011, 19–30. John
A philantropic and talented family

Chris Adams on the Reverend Atwill Curtios of Branston and his family

The following text appeared in the Lincolnshire Chronicle in 1933:
The Rev Algeron Curtios of Lincoln has died while on holiday at Maidstone. Deceased, who was 66, was a member of a family which has been connected with the village of Branston for more than 200 years. 7 members of the family have been rectors of the parish, and the connection was unbroken from 1680 to 1891 when the Rev Peregrine Curtios, uncle of the Rev Algeron Curtios, died. This paragraph contains the most-recited fact about the Curtios family; for 211 consecutive years they held the living at Branston, which is believed to be a Church of England record for one family (though, contrary to what it says, there were in fact six of them). The Rev Algeron Curtios was the son of the Rev Atwill Curtios, the penultimate Curtios incumbent of Branston. Algeron was the tenth of eleven children, several of whom left their mark on Lincolnshire (and beyond). This article briefly considers some of their achievements.

Atwill Curtios was born at Branston Hall on 8 November 1809, the second of the two sons of Peregrine Curtios, the fourth member of the family to be Rector there. Despite being the younger son, on his father's death in 1847 he became the Rector of Branston, and he ministered there until his death. He seems to have been a Francophile—his father's will mentions "my Second son Atwill Curtios now residing at Saint Omer in France"—and of an artistic bent, traits both inherited by several of his children:

Miss Dering Curtios, the clever young artist, comes of an old Lincolnshire family, many members of which have, in one form or another, followed art. Her father, Mr Atwill Curtios, occupied much of his spare time in wood-carving, whilst others of her relatives followed out another branch of design. Atwill Curtios married Ann Henrietta Lee-Warner on 9 June 1853 at Tiberton or Tyberton, near Hereford, where her father was Lord of the Manor. This was the cause both for a grand celebration, though only among the desiring:

The meat, the gross weight of which was 442lbs, was distributed among the cottage tenants and labourers of Mr. Lee Warner and his tenantry, and such other deserving objects of charity in the several parishes of Tiberton, Madley, Blakemere, and Preston-upon-Wye, as had been recommended by the tenantry. The number in family was taken as the basis upon which the distribution, in regard to quantity, was made; while just discrimination was observed between industry and idleness, habits of general good conduct and sobriety, and their opposites of irregularity and vice, by the granting of tickets, entitling the holders to participate in the distribution, to those only who were considered to be deserving characters, and for some choice doggerel:

The Reverend Atwill Curtios, when seeking for a bride,
To Walsingham Abbey resolved to take a ride;
The mansion he admired, as picturesque and brave,
But to make short my story—she daughter he would have.

Walsingham is in Norfolk, and Walsingham Abbey was the ancestral home of the bride's ancestors, the Lee and Warner families. The lands...
in Herefordshire had been inherited from Ann Henrietta Lee-Warner's mother (née Bridges).

Atwill and Ann lived at Longhills house, outside Brantston, and their marriage produced seven daughters and four sons (ten of the children reaching adulthood) in the 15 years before Atwill died aged 59 in 1868 'after a protracted and extremely painful illness.' Longhills was then sold, and the family moved to Bedford, before living at Washington Manor from 1876 until Ann Henrietta's death in 1898, and it was at Washington where the children were largely raised. They were close to their Norfolk relatives and the 1881 census has Margaret Fountaine, later famous as a clarinetist, explorer and lepidopterist, staying with her cousins at Washington. Three of the children (Dering Curtois, Daniel Henry Lee-Warner Curtois, and Huntley Curtois) were given as forenames surnames from the Norfolk ancestry, and the children pop up regularly in Margaret Fountaine's diaries.

Despite having so many children, the Rev Atwill and Mrs Ann Henrietta Curtois had no grandchildren; indeed, only two of their children married, and as that was after their mother had died both were over 50 when they did so. Atwill Curtois was born, worked and buried at Brantston - 'It is the home of my childhood: it is the place in which I live and where I wish to die' - and his wife and most of his children are buried there with him, even though none of them ever lived there after his death.

There are parallels between the widowerhood of Ann Henrietta Curtois (1829 – 1898; widowed in 1868 after 15 years of marriage) and that of Queen Victoria (1819 – 1901; widowed in 1861 after 21 years of marriage); both were left with large young families, and both survived their husbands by many years. Like Queen Victoria, Ann Henrietta Curtois apparently wore mourning for the rest of her life; an 1866 painting by her daughter Dering shows her clad in black taffeta.

The eldest of the 11 children was Mary Henrietta Dering Curtois, born at Brantston in 1854 and dying in 1928. She was a painter, and studied at the Lincoln School of Art and the Julien Studio in Paris, and exhibited as Dering Curtois at the Forum Club, the Paris Salon and the Royal Academy; some of her pictures are in the Usher Gallery. She also painted an altarpiece for the church at Whaplode, including within it a likeness of her own 'dearly loved and much revered' mother. Perhaps the picture of which she might be most proud was the remarkable painting which is here reproduced, and which she presented to Whaplode Church. It is a wonderfully bold and original treatment of the subject "Christ in Glory." Special interest centres in the fact that one of the angel's faces is modelled upon an early picture of the artist's mother. The figure of Christ is several feet high, and the whole picture is on a colossal scale which serves to accentuate rather than mitigate the beauty of the treatment. Other of Miss Curtois'
pictures have been presented to Crowland Abbey and Long Sutton Church, with which she had connections on both her father's and mother's side. The next daughter was Margaret Anne Curtois (1855 – 1932), who was an author and lecturer on literature — "Her death will be lamented by the choice, if not very large, audience who like in art the refined movement and the gentle line." She was responsible for the 1903 restoration of the village cross at Washington. This week a handsome new cross, to replace the ancient one which formerly rested upon the fine set of old steps still existing on the village green, has been given by Miss Margaret Anne Curtois as a memorial to her mother, Mrs. Curtois, who lived at Washington Manor. The new cross is designed in the late 14th century period, and enough evidence was found to furnish a reliable guide as to the shape of the shaft for the new cross by what remained in the original top stone upon the steps in which the old cross had once stood. Nothing has been done to change the aspect of the old steps except to replace the stones where absolutely necessary. On 2 April 1903 Mrs A W Verrall, a famous medium of the time, had been guided by the spirits to draw a picture of a similar looking cross and the initials A J C. On meeting Miss Curtois at a séance and seeing a photograph of the Washington Cross, Mrs Verrall was struck by the similarities to her drawing:

"the general resemblance between the description in the script and the cross erected by Miss Curtois, and the near approach to correctness in the initials given in the script, seem to make the incident worth relating."

The third daughter was Florence Isabella Curtois (1857 – 1932), who lived all her life at Washington and immersed herself in village life: She was of a kind and sympathetic nature, and her willingness at all times to help her less fortunate friends was highly appreciated. It was typical of her thoughtfulness for others that for many years she had made a practice of personally distributing gifts to many of the villagers at Christmas time. She was well known for her long association, extending over forty years, with the G. F. S. [Girls' Friendly Society] local branch, which was started by her eldest sister a few years before. She had also been head of the Women's Institute since its formation. Miss Curtois has, we understand, bequeathed "The Studio" on trust as a house for the parish nurse at Washington and Henton. She has also made bequests to the Cathedral Restoration Fund and to the County Hospital.

Of the 11 children, only Florence is buried at Washington. The fourth daughter was Ella Rose Curtois (1860 – 1944), who seems to have been the most genuinely talented among them all. She was a sculptor, whose work is in the Usher Gallery, and was jointly responsible with her father for much carving in Branstnall church:

"Miss Curtois has been settled in..."
The Christine in Glory in Whaplode church, painted by Dering Curtois. The angel modelled on Ann Henriette Curtois is at the bottom, centre left (behind the parish chest, which was too heavy to move out of the way) © Richard Croft, reproduced with permission.

Paris for some years, but when her father was rector here she lived at Branston. Father and daughter between them carved the beautiful chancel screen in the church, the rector carving the delicate arches and tracery at the top and his daughter the figures below. The figures represent men and women from the 1st to the 17th century who have helped in the growth of Christianity. Miss Curtois must be a Nature lover, for the snowdrops, thistles, leaves, and ferns in the panels are charming.

Unfortunately, most of the screen was destroyed in a fire, which devastated Branston Church on Christmas Day 1962, but some of the figures survived and have been remounted.

The excerpt above is a little misleading: Ella Curtois was only eight at the time of her father's death, so seems unlikely to have actually carved the screen with him. She also carved the lower screen in the church at Long Sutton.

Ella's greatest legacy was in her will:

This is the last will and testament of me, Ella Rose Curtois, spinster, at present residing at La Vallee aux Loups, Chatenay-Malabry (Seine), I think it well to state that I am a British subject, born at Branston, Lincolnshire, England, and, although I have resided in France for a considerable time, I have never acquired a domicile of choice in this country or lost my British domicile of origin, and further after the war and if my health and circumstances permit I intend to return to England and take up my permanent residence there again.

I therefore consider that the administration and winding up of my personal estate as well as the carrying out of this my Will and any testamentary dispositions should be governed by the law of England.

I hereby revoke all previous wills, codicils and testamentary dispositions made by me and I appoint my friend Miss M. Constance Lloyd of 8 Avenue de Breteuil, Paris, to be the sole executor of this my will.

All my furniture, books, jewels and articles of my personal wear not otherwise disposed of and which I may die possessed of I give and bequeath to Miss M Constance Lloyd free of all death duties.

The rest and residue of my estate, real or personal wherever situate, after payment of all my just debts, funeral and testamentary expenses I give and bequeath to the Usher Art Gallery, Lincoln.

I direct that my body be cremated and the cinders, if I should die in France, taken to England if possible and if not scattered or preserved as most convenient.

Ella Rose Curtois died in France in 1944. Her estate came to £14,984 1s 10d, and as a consequence the Curtois Wing of the Usher Gallery was built for the sum of £14,400, and opened on 11 November 1959. It was partially demolished in 2005 to make way for a new building, now known as the 'new Curtois Gallery'.

The only son I shall mention here is Algernon (1865 - 1933). Owing to an accident at college he took no clerical livings, but he lived all his life in Lincoln helping the church. He was also an enthusiastic genealogist and amateur historian, and an early member of the Lincolnshire Architectural and Archaeological Society, a forerunner of the SLHA.

He will be remembered for his gallant fight with others to save St. Benedict's from destruction, and, without success, St. Peter-at-Arches.

The Curtois children gave much of their lives to what might be termed 'the improvement of the working classes, especially women.'
presided at a meeting held in the grounds, and among those present were the Bishop of Lincoln, the Revs. Canon Hodgkinson, A. Curtois, A. Hunt [sic], Mr. R. A. MacBair (secretary), and others. PRIMROSE LEAGUE GATHERING AT WASHINGTONBROUGH — The annual gathering of the Washingtonbrough Habitation was held on Wednesday, December 14th, and was a marked success. The Misses Curtois deserve the sincere thanks of all the villagers for their efforts to provide an evening's intelligent recreation combined with political instruction.

The Primrose League was set up in 1883 to spread Conservative ideas among the people. The GFS branch (mentioned in the newspaper excerpt above) started by Dering and later chaired by Florence, was the Girls Friendly Society, set up to address through Christian values the problems of working class girls. The early W1 might be said later to fulfill a similar role for older women, and the suffrage movement, in a different way, would help women of all ages.

AN A. S. L. CARAVAN TOUR - This tour, organised by Little Kingshill, of the Mid Bucks Society, was conducted from July 20th to 25th by Miss Wright and Miss Dering Curtois, with Miss Lily Wooster, its objective the outlying villages of Mid Bucks. The campaign started at Weston Turville, when Miss Dering Curtois, President of the C. U. W. F. debating society, gave an able address.

The A.S.L. was the Artists' Suffrage League, responsible for creating a great deal of suffrage propaganda. The CUWF was the Conservative and Unionist Women's Franchise association, and Dering Curtois was also active in the Women's Tariff Reform League.

An interest in helping the poor is also visible in Margaret Anne Curtois's will. To her friend Miss Isabella Macdonald M. B. she bequeathed 'the likeness of The Hon. Maude Stanley, and the picture of Wastwater (by the said Hon. Maude Stanley) which at present hangs beneath her likeness.' Maude Stanley was one of the great pioneers of youth work in Victorian London, whose book, Clubs for Working Girls was the handbook of the movement. Margaret Anne Curtois obviously respected her enough to have a picture of her hanging on her wall, and seems also to have put her ideas into practice; she bequeathed 'to the St John's Girls Club of St John's Institute, 7 Tufton Street, Westminster SW1, my pianoforte, and the clock given to me by my Elocution Class.'

Margaret Anne Curtois had laid down her manifesto in an 1889 article entitled 'Village Ethics.' Obviously based upon her observations of Washingtonbrough (though not naming it), finding the village somewhat lacking in ethics the article concludes:

Whatever can be done in the way of clubs and libraries, of night schools and White Cross Armies, of meetings, and Bible classes, of cricket and football matches, should be sedulously encouraged; we know that it is in the empty house that the evil spirit enters. The lives of our rural, working population are so full of work, so patient, often so noble, that they demand some efforts from those who possess more time and means, and no such effort can be counted.

The newly restored village cross at Washingtonbrough c.1903. The restoration was funded by Margaret Anne Curtois.
as thrown away on the most rough, secluded hamlet, by anyone who claims to be a member of that most inclusive of kingdoms – the Kingdom of Christ. It seems that the lives of public service lived by the Curtois children were an attempt to carry on the work of their late father, who had been taken from them when they were young and subsequently idealised by their mother’s mourning. He had, after all, improved the lot of the poor in his role as benevolent Victorian cleric.

BRANSTON AND FINN CHURCH SUNDAY SCHOOLS. – On Tuesday the 17th inst. the children belonging to these schools, to the number of 200, with their parents and friends, received their annual treat of plum cake and tea in the park of the Rev. A. Curtois, of Longhills, the entire expense of these schools being defrayed by the Rev. gentleman in question. The children were examined by the Rev. P. Curtois, of Leasingham, and by the Misses Curtois, and gratified all present by their intimate acquaintance with the Scriptures, and by their skill in arithmetic, writing &c. After the children had received some valuable prizes in clothing and books they amused themselves by sports upon the lawn. Amongst the company present were Major Ellison and Mrs. Ellison, of Boultham Hall; G. T. W. Sibthorp, Esq., of Branston, and Captain Sibthorp, Mrs. and Miss Sibthorp, of Washington, who, with the principal inhabitants of Branston and the neighbourhood, partook of a dejeuner in the dining-room of the Hall, which was tastefully arranged for the joyful occasion. Several of the gentlemen amused themselves at cricket. The children had a supply of fruit and sweetmeats, with a bun each, before they were dismissed. A delightful day was spent by all parties.

Endnotes
1. I have a website containing much detail about the family, available at www.chradams.co.uk/Curtois/contents.html
2. Lincolnshire Chronicle, 16 September 1933.
3. His maternal grandfather was named Atwell (his mother was born Mary Atwell), and apparently Atwill was a misspelling.
7. In the 20th century it became a site of Catholic pilgrimage.
9. Lincolnshire Chronicle and Northampton, Rutland and Nottingham Advertiser, 14 October 1858.
12. The Times, 15 September 1932.
13. The SHLA website has a picture of the cross, which was restored again in 1947 as a war memorial.
14. Lincolnshire Echo, 2 July 1903.
16. Lincolnshire Chronicle and Leader, 9 January 1932.
18. I do not know how she fared during the occupation.
21. Lincolnshire Chronicle, 23 December 1887. The article then proceeds to spell out in great detail precisely what was said by whom.
22. Woman’s Leader and The Common Cause, 7 August 1914, Issue 278, page 379

Summer is the time for agricultural shows

Did you visit the Lincolnshire Show this year, held on Wednesday 19 and Thursday 20 June at the Lincolnshire Show Ground, Grange de Lings, Lincoln? In 1907 the Royal Agricultural Show visited Lincoln. It was held on the West Common from Tuesday 25 June to Saturday 28 June, and was attended by 133,000 people. It had previously been held in Lincoln in 1854. King Edward VII visited on the Wednesday. He was accompanied during the day by Earl Brownlow, Lord Lieutenant of Lincolnshire, and the Earl of Yarborough, President of the Royal Agricultural Society. The entire route of the procession, from the railway station to the West Common was decorated with flags and garlands, with great arches across the street. Newspapers reported that the weather for the opening day was extremely unsucessional. The Hull Daily Mail reported:

On Tuesday and Wednesday the showground was like a quagmire, but the King brought Royal weather with him, just as his genial presence brightens whatever assembly he comes into.

Happily the weather was pretty decent this year for the Lincolnshire Show, and with no ‘quagmires’ unlike at the Glastonbury Festival. See Picture Post on page 16 for a 1907 photograph of the entrance to the Royal Show at Lincoln.

Louth station was one of the very first to open in Lincolnshire. With the public facade of a Jacobean style country house I have always considered it to be an excellent example of one of the beneficial changes the railway made for the man in the street. At this ‘country house’ everyone, no matter how lowly his station in life, entered through the impressive front door.

It seems that this change was not always a benefit, however. In this excellent booklet Ali Ludlam describes how, in 1879, a temperance refreshment room was opened at the station by the Holy Trinity Temperance Association as part of their concern about the trade in ‘seduction and prostitution’ brought about by the facilities for travel afforded by the railway and the resulting increase in female immorality. My eyes have been opened as never before.

This booklet outlines the story of the railway at Louth; from opening to closure: trains and travel; goods and passengers; and the wartime bombing which resulted in one railwayman fatality. It is illustrated with a good collection of well reproduced photographs, each with an illuminating caption. Among the pictures of the station buildings, signal boxes and its goods and passenger trains I find it refreshing to be also shown how important was the role of the humble horse; including shunting wagons; delivering goods; decorated for special occasions and with the horse drawn omnibus to and from the Masons Arms Hotel. We even see the successor, the three wheeler tractor unit, or mechanical horse, used widely on Britain’s railways in the 1960s and early 1960s.

To remind us of this history little remains on the ground. The station building is now at the centre of a housing estate although the former Louth North Signal Box, since converted into a small home, still stands alongside Kedington Road. This booklet will serve as a first-rate reminder of what has been lost and will be of interest to railway enthusiasts over a much wider area than the town and its hinterland alone.

Written by a well respected railway historian and published by a steam railway society it is perhaps understandable that there is more about locomotives and railway operation than social history and the effect on the life of the town. However, it will also be of general interest to the local historian.

Stewart Squires, Scunthorpe

REED, John. Ruskinstown as I remember it: a few of the memories... [Ruskinstown], jcr publishing, 2013. ix, 143 pp. No ISBN. £5.99 pbk.

The author has collected up a series of random memories of his youth growing up in Ruskinstown. Effectively he stops at the point when he leaves Carr’s school in Sleaford and goes into the navy about 1950 (dates are a little short). However, he gathers his short sketches of his rural life into larger sections – health, school, agriculture, the village, wartime, animals etc and it all forms a book that will be read with some sense of recognition by older folk, not only in his home village but in others across the county.


This is David Saunders’s twelfth book ‘telling the story of Caistor and its inhabitants’, and is a history of the church from earliest times to (almost) the present day.

The chapters cover Early Days, The Middle Ages, The Reformation, Restoration in 1660, 17th-18th Century, 19th Century, Late Victorian Restoration and Embellishment, Canon Westbrooke, and Post 1918. There are also features on the stonemasons’ marks, the gad whip, and the churchyard. There are many well-produced illustrations.

David Saunders is to be congratulated on this very interesting, well-presented and attractive book, which is another valuable contribution to our knowledge of Caistor’s history, a handy little book for the researcher and an informative read for the rest of us.
LUXURY LIVING AT BOLINGBROKE CASTLE IN THE THIRTEENTH CENTURY

Patrick Mussett and Ian Simmons tell us how the castle was made ready for the visit of Henry de Lacy, the 24-year-old 9th Earl of Lincoln, in 1275.

The remains of Bolingbroke Castle are not spectacular and its fame rests mainly on having been the birthplace of the future king Henry IV in 1367. But shot through many medieval documents from east Lincolnshire are references to the manor and the soke of Bolingbroke, the caput or HQ of which was at the castle, and the lordship of which resided in the thirteenth century with the Earls of Lincoln.

In 1275 the holder of that office was Henry de Lacy (1251-1311), 9th Earl, who was just three years beyond the wardship of the earldom by his mother, Alice de Saluzzo. It is unlikely that he lived at the castle but a surviving document from 1275 gives some detail of his accounts for that year, including items for the running of the castle in preparation for a visit by the 24-year-old earl. The castle was then, says M. W. Thompson, in its golden age.

The eight membranes of accounts (of which there is an extract below) deal with income as well as expenditure for the year ending at Michaelmas and written out in Latin on 10 November for the Receiver, Robert de Winthorpe. It is unlikely that all of his account has survived though it does record arrears of nearly £200 from the previous year, which would be about £151,000 at today's RPI. Some of this was offset by leases (farms) which included notables like Philip of Kime and Walter de Mabletterope.

The soke had obligations and traded with several local places. Items that deal with Bradenham, Thorley, Greetham, Steeping, Kirkby and the Abbot of Revesby are listed but there are two places of unusual interest. The first is that the port of Wainfleet is leased (at farm) out for eight years for £176 p.a., of which £22 comes to the earl; a nice little earner at about £15,000 today. The second is a good deal of interaction with Wrangle. That place was then under the control of the abbey of Waltham Holy Cross and so, for example, the abbot is owed one pound of pepper for an unspecified service and 20s 2d for rent. The soke was involved in the growing of beans, oats, and animal fodder as well as the raising of sheep and lambs, oxen, colts, calves and cows, with the result of 133 cheeses and 11½ stones of butter.

A luxury item is a game of swans, which were fed oats. Money from rentals came from the River Hestia and a lake that rendered eels (20s) and a sea fishery (at five shillings worth much less than the freshwater sources), herbage and two salters belonging to Dereham Abbey (20s = £680).

Then there were sales of cereals, straw, beans and 345 acres of land and pasture. The last named brought...

Et xxs. in denarius portandis semel Lond' semel Line' bis apud Crydeling. Et xxs. ixd. in uno muro removendo in nova camera precepto comitis, gayola et ponte emendandis. Et ixs. ijd. ob. in domibus mundandis contra adventum domini. Et xjd. in illij serulis emptis. Et lxjs. jd. ob. in camera alure cum tegula de novo cooperienda. Et cvjs. viijd. ob. quart. in muro magne aule prostrato et reedificando et meremio emendando et cooperiendo quia minabarur ruina. Et iiijd. 9½d. in una nova porta facienda ad balleum, et balleum novo muro claudendo.
in £37-9-4d, about £25,000 today. In return, the soke had to spend money on maintenance of farms and drains, on a broken windmill, a new cowshed and, no doubt by ancient custom, 3d on a light in the church.

Much of the interest derives from expenditure at the castle. Staff were clearly a necessity: there were four senior employees (domini) who were sent to Boston market to make purchases and to settle the earl’s debts and had their expenses (£4-9-5½d) paid: that is about £750 each, which sounds generous.

Lesser servants were rewarded on a lesser scale: John the Falconer and Henry Foxholes were brought in to look after weak or unwell falcons and 18s 6d was paid for their board, with 54s spent on the falcons themselves. Other pleasures foretold included the refilling of a ‘walking chamber’ (camera alata), the alteration of some buildings and the fitting of new locks; there was to be a new wall to enclose the bath house and the…

Below: Extract from the accounts of Bolingbroke Castle (Nottinghamshire Archives, DD/EJ/6/1/1, m.3) with transcription (left) and English translation from the Latin (right).

And 20s. in carrying cash once to London once to Lincoln and twice to Crydeling. And 20s. 9d. in removing one wall in the new chamber by order of the earl, repairing the gaol and bridge. And 2s. 2½d. in cleaning the buildings against the Lord’s arrival. And 11d. on buying 4 locks/bolts. And 71s. 1½d. on newly roofing the walking chamber with tiles. And 197s. 8½d. on the collapsed wall of the great hall, both its rebuilding and timber for repairs and roofing, because it threatened to fall. And £4 0s. 9½d. in making a new gate for the bailey, and enclosing the bailey with a new wall.
purchase of a new bucket for it. (We might wonder whether the Countess was coming too: about one fifth of the wax that had been bought was for the earl and the rest for the Countess, though it is an assumption that this was all for Bolingbroke.)

Not surprisingly, luxury comestibles are acquired. The basic cereals and meat are not listed, though a new cooking pot and frying pan were needed. Yet four dozen lampreys and two barrels of sturgeon, 600 almonds, cinnamon, galangal, ginger, saffron and zedoary were thought necessary.

What seems most remarkable in this sector is the acquisition of 300 pike to be put in the castle ditch. They cost 4s 6d (= £1.53), which at 50p each seems pretty cheap: in medieval times freshwater fish were usually much more prestigious than sea fish. They were, perhaps, young animals.

Of course, there was wine. Eighteen barrels of wine were bought in Boston market (at a cost of £38 2 4d = £26,000) and 3s paid for transport to the castle. Since money was laid out for the transport of wine to other places, it seems that not all of the 18 barrels went to Bolingbroke.

So, in the context of a well-off aristocrat's trappings, there is a tiny vignette of some expensive purchases and some domestic makeovers that were deemed necessary for the comfort of the earl and likely his immediate entourage. The soke became part of the Duchy of Lancaster, whose first duke was John of Gaunt (1340-1399) who is said to have been one of the wealthiest men in history, worth $110 billion at today's prices. So Henry de Lacy's new bathroom seems quite modest.

Notes
2. The document is in Nottinghamshire Archives D/EF/6/1/1. There are further accounts in The National Archives at Kew, at DL 29 1/1 and DL 29 1/2, not seen by the present author.
3. This may have been an early kind of exercise gallery within the main structure. Thanks to Professor Michael Prestwich for a discussion which pointed out that at the Tower of London there was a roofed walk at battlement level for defensive purposes. See J. Goodall, The English Castle: 1066-1650, New Haven: Paul Mellon Centre, 2011, p.157.
4. Galangale comes from Asian plants of the ginger family or from European sedges; zedoary is from the East Indies and is also ginger-like. In both, the tubers or rhizomes were used and presumably these travelled well in dried form. The etymology of galangale goes back to China and of zedoary to Persian via Arabic.

PICTURE POST

Chris Hewis has sent us this photo of the entrance to the Royal Agricultural Show from the John Wilson collection. Please send us your Lincolnshire photographs – place or theme – so we can make Picture Post a regular feature.
THE SCHOOL CARETAKER

John French finally fulfils a youthful ambition at Barton upon Humber

IN SPITE OF the discouragement of my parents, my childhood ambition was to be a school caretaker. Indeed, well before the plethora of Health and Safety legislation, I did help the caretaker of my primary school scrub the wooden floors during the holidays.

However, after leaving Caistor Grammar School (CGS) I became a public health inspector (later known as environmental health officer). The work was very varied – challenging but rewarding – and involved an understanding of building construction and repair. This was especially useful when, in my twenties, I bought a derelict house and shop on Fleetgate, Barton upon Humber, a few doors from where we lived.

It was the comprehensive restoration of this property that led to the ‘unearthing’ of the adjoining building at 51 Fleetgate, which is reputedly the oldest domestic house in North Lincolnshire, dating from the 14th century. Years later I became a founder member of the Glenford Buildings Preservation Trust, which restored 51 Fleetgate. The building is now owned by North Lincolnshire Council and, through Barton Civic Society, opened to the public at certain times during the year.

But, to return to my school caretaking role; from being a pupil at CGS I have admired Victorian architecture and furnishings. How I loved Grove House – lessons in the Congs Schoolroom, events in the Town Hall, along with exploration of other Caistor delights!

At one time, as if to test my mother’s patience, I rescued parts of a Yorkshire range and stored them under my bed, and before my teenage years I had taken photos of an early Victorian church school in Barton’s Queen Street. Eventually, when this antiquated building was closed in 1978 and abandoned in favour of a new school, I became increasingly concerned for its future, especially when it was threatened with demolition to provide a site for a new police station of incongruous design.
The local Civic Society, of which I was a committee member, shared my concern, and undertook research into the school's history and that of the unique group of fine public buildings of which the school forms a part. Society members discovered that one of the most important pioneers of infant education, Samuel Wilderspin, helped in the design of the school or—as was often the case—really three separate schools: boys', girls' and infants'. Born in London, Wilderspin had eventually come with his family to live in Barton in 1844 while the plans for the 'National and Infant Schools' were being drawn. His influence is especially noticeable, of course, in the infants' school, of which he was appointed first Superintendent (head teacher) teaching there for four years with his wife and one of his daughters.

Such was his charisma (his was a household name in his own lifetime) that within weeks of opening his Infant School was enlarged to accommodate an additional 50 children from two to six years. And this at a time when parents had to pay for each child's attendance, and many years before the introduction of compulsory education. Poor families often relied on the extra income brought in through their children going out to work, never mind about paying for them to be at school! Being a friend of Charles Dickens, Wilderspin was, not surprisingly, a champion of the poor. His enthusiasm for infant education, especially in helping the children of the 'labouring classes' is shown in a number of ways:

First a Sunday school teacher and then developing a deeper interest in education, he was drawn to James Buchanan, a teacher from Robert Owen's infant school at New Lanark, who opened the first infant school in England at Westminster. Buchanan invited Wilderspin, although then inexperienced, to take charge of 165 children under seven years old, in one room, in the second English infant school, at Spitalfields in London's East End. Through skilful perseverance he successfully developed this school to be a much respected place of learning.

His ideas—way ahead of his time—included the importance of play in the learning process, and he invented the garden/playground, planted round the sides with fruit trees, flowers and vegetables, encouraging learning through the senses and involvement with nature. He realised the importance of music in school, he invented much educational equipment, and was the first to write books about infant education for the labouring poor.

He became an educational missionary, travelling before the days of rail throughout the British Isles, encouraging the foundation of hundreds of infant schools. His achievements were discussed in Parliament, and in 1846 Queen Victoria offered him a Civil List Pension of £100 a year for his 'services as the founder and promoter of Infant Schools'. It is believed the Barton School, with Wilderspin's playground, is the only surviving school building in the world so closely linked with Samuel Wilderspin.

For some years after the old school was abandoned, I held the keys. With the help of the Civic Society and, former pupils, the school was kept tidy and secure and urgent repairs were done, while continued efforts to safeguard its future were made, as below:

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Continued efforts to safeguard the building's future included:

- Potential purchasers were sought.
- Applications for listed building status were submitted.
- The town council, district council and county council were lobbied, along with the MP.
- Good press coverage was achieved.
- Support was gained from leading educational academics.
- Architectural plans were drawn and submitted to the Police Authority, showing the feasibility of conversion to a new police station, as opposed to demolition and new build.

Alternative sites for a police station were put forward.
Eventually listing was achieved in 1992, subsequently upgraded to II* in 2002. The site was now regarded by English Heritage as one of the most important school buildings in England. The police scheme was shelved, and the building offered on the open market.

1993 saw the foundation of the Queen Street School Preservation trust, of which I am now a director. The aims of this trust were to produce an appropriate, viable and funded scheme for the reuse of the premises.

After several drawn-out and abortive schemes, which with the benefit of hindsight were not sufficiently sympathetic to the historic school and its setting, the Trust produced a scheme that won the all-round approval of the Heritage Lottery Fund, English Heritage and Yorkshire Forward, the regional development agency, and from which it attracted most of the necessary funding (over £1.5m). This project, some 30 years after its closure, achieved the sympathetic refurbishment and conversion of the school, including the restoration of Samuel Wilderspin’s Infant Schoolroom and Playground to its 1845 appearance, together with a suitably furnished late Victorian classroom, complete with open fire and gas lighting!

Adjoining parts of the school provide facilities to welcome visiting school groups and the general public, coming to learn about and, through role-play, experience earlier methods of education. Other sections of the premises have been adapted for a coffee shop, gift shop, and rooms for hire and commercial lease, to assist the long-term viability of the project.
Glentworth Cliff LDV

The television series *Dad's Army* is probably nearer to truth than fiction as this account by *James Foster* demonstrates.

Defence volunteers practising with their homemade weapon somewhere in Britain during the Second World War.

Soon after Dunkirk, Anthony Eden, War Minister, realising that an invasion was now a strong possibility, made a radio broadcast to the nation appealing for volunteers to form a part-time home defence organisation. This was to consist of those in reserved occupations or not considered suitable for service in HM Forces. These paramilitary units would be attached to local Territorial Army units in towns or, in rural areas, to the nearest Army unit such as an anti-aircraft unit protecting airfields and military sites. Initially the small units, many no larger than a platoon, were named Local Defence Volunteers (LDV), but this was later changed to the Home Guard.

The general public took the proposals seriously, especially when they learned that the LDV would have powers granted to them by parliament not far short of those granted to the Regular Army, for example carrying arms, detaining 'Enemies of the Realm', and entering and searching property without a warrant.

Existing large regular army units, such as brigades and battalions, had always been associated with the county in which they had been raised, but the Home Defence units were to derive their identities from their association with a local area, group of villages or a town. Inter-village rivalries developed as quite often a unit from one village would act as invaders while one from an adjacent village would defend a building or feature.

The recruitment of volunteers in urban areas was relatively easy to organise with the local Territorial drill hall being a convenient point at which to muster. In rural areas it was more difficult, and the War Office decided to ask senior members of local Army or Airforce establishments to visit the principal landowners and employers in their areas. That was the position on Glentworth Cliff in July 1940.

Charles Edward Cross of Cliff House, Glentworth, was one of the principal landowners and employers of labour in the area, and he received a visit from the commanding officer of Hemswell Aerodrome adjacent to the villages of Glentworth, Harpswell and Hemswell. Mr Cross was asked for his help in forming local units of the LDV, which would operate from various sites near the airfield.

The function of these units would be, should the enemy get as far as Caenby Corner or Harpswell Hilltop, to try and prevent or delay access to the airfield by blocking the approach roads until a stronger force could be deployed.

The formation of the Glentworth Cliff unit took less than four weeks to accomplish. The HQ for communications was to be Cliff House, the residence of Charles Cross, and the Glentworth Cliff LDV squad assembly point and storage depot would be Dog Kennel Farm (DKF), near to the airfield.

The reason for choosing DKF was two-fold. First, there was ample room for the storage of equipment and machinery in the several large barns and sheds at the farm, and secondly, although the only telephone on Cliff Top had been removed from the farmhouse in 1939, the line was still in place, and communications were re-established by the installation of a GPO telephone – Tel No 250 (Magneto ringing), an instrument similar to a field telephone. Link lines on temporary poles or laid along verges were provided to connect Dog Kennel Farm, Cliff House, and the control centre at the airfield. Code
books were issued to the Section Leaders in charge of the Squads. Although it was not initially intended to use army rank designations for home defence units, within a few months most had done just that. Mr Cross's manservant who lived at Cliff House was appointed to be Section Leader of the Glentworth Cliff squad with the rank of Sergeant, and Fred Seaford, the estate's shepherd, was appointed Lance-Corporal. Charles Cross was thought to have been awarded the rank of Captain to oversee several LDV units in the area, but rarely attended their manoeuvres and was never seen to wear Uniform.

In the early years the Cliff Top squad received very little equipment from the government, but what the platoon did possess was housed at Dog Kennel Farm, and Lance-Corporal Fred Seaford, who lived at the farmhouse, was to be responsible for the fire keeping and maintenance of the stores. The TV series of Dad's Army is probably nearer to truth than fiction, and the early volunteers of the Glentworth Cliff LDV were slightly ashamed to be seen having to march behind a farm tractor along the A631 with broomsticks and storage bin lids.

Mr Cross's 'man' is somewhat of an enigma, but he normally fulfilled the roles of bailiff, valet and groom. It is thought that his name was Walter Ward, but no one has been able to discover anything about his background. Most of Mr Cross's workers referred to the Bailiff as 'his nibbs' or just 'Nibbs', but never to his face, nor within hearing distance of any but themselves. He was a tall, thin man, slightly cross-eyed, and when he spoke to anyone one eye would be firmly fixed on the face of the recipient of his message and the other at least five degrees adrift. He always had a smile on his face, but this was not always indicative of his mood or the tidings he was about to deliver.

Those who worked for Mr Cross and subject to the administration of his bailiff addressed him as 'Mr Bailiff' or 'Bailiff'. The khaki work coat he wore seemed to be glued to his back. He couldn't drive, but he did possess a bicycle, and would pedal furiously through the lanes of the village to deliver the orders and instructions of his master. Very occasionally his nickname 'Nibbs' was replaced by 'Nippy' because of his rapid journeyings.

One evening Sergeant Nibbs called to see Lance-Corporal Fred at DKF and handed him an official envelope, which had already been opened. It was from the War Office, and contained details of a device similar to a trench mortar. This was an invention of Lt Colonel Blacker, which could be constructed from materials found in garages, farmyards and rubbish tips. Its actual construction varied from unit to unit, but basically it could be made from a length of cast iron stove chimney or drainage pipe of suitable diameter, closed at one end.

Improvisation was the order of the day, and L/Cpl Fred, who was an innovative worker, found a length of suitable stove pipe in Nell's Pits adjacent to Caenby Corner and mounted it on an old farm cart axle. One end of the stove pipe fortuitously had an adjustable vent, and L/Cpl Fred asked Pete Key (the village blacksmith) to shrink-fit an iron plug into the vented end of the pipe and drill a small hole in the centre of the plug. It was intended that the force of the charge, which was black gunpowder contained in a hessian sleeve, could be varied by adjusting the angle of the vent and thus, to some extent, the mortar's range.

It could be fired in two ways. One was by a nail or spike inserted into the hole and struck sharply with a hammer; this would explode a percussion detonator placed at the bottom of the pipe. It could also be fired by means of an electronic detonator wired through the hole and connected to a car battery and spark plug induction coil. An old bell-push served as the momentary switch.

Later, the hole in the base was threaded to accept a 14mm car spark plug. The mortar shells, which were of standard size, were made to fit the varying diameters of pipe by means of rope rings fitted into grooves round the shell. The ring at the base of the missile contained cordite,
which not only ensured a tight fit but also gave it an additional boost as it left the barrel.

Sergeant Nibbs’ LDV unit practised their road blocking manoeuvres on the south side of the A631 opposite ‘Nell’s Pit Wood’ near Caenby Corner, and it was found that Cpl Fred’s version of the Blacker Bombard (as the device became known) was extremely effective, and the dummy mortar shells, with a small tracer in the nose, could be seen to fall well beyond Caenby Corner. L/Cpl Fred had chosen to use the spike method to fire the mortar, but there was an undesirable disadvantage in its operation. If the vent had been left open a little too wide, everyone within six feet would be covered from helmet to boots with black soot.

The weather in north Lincolnshire in the first week of July 1941 was wet and it had not been possible to practice with the bombard, but by Sunday the 13th the field had dried out sufficiently, and on a warm sunny evening Sgt Nibbs’ LDV unit, which had been augmented and was now a Platoon, trundled the Bombard from DKF to the field at Caenby Corner for a practice firing.

This was witnessed by a small group of the local population, including young Alan, Fred’s son, and young James, Alan’s cousin, and the teenage son and two older daughters of John Williams. John was the proprietor of the garage and filling station on the northwest edge of Caenby Corner, and also the registered licensee of the Monk’s Arms diametrically opposite. During the day his daughters supervised the pub on his behalf while he was at the garage.

Pte Williams was one of two loaders required as loading was not conventional – the missile was not dropped in from the top, but carefully pushed along the pipe in a horizontal position to rest on the charge at the firing end. The pipe was then elevated and the cart axle moved for left or right targets.

The bombard had just been set up and the onlookers warned to stand well back. Privates Wood and Williams carefully placed two cordite impregnated rope rings around the Mk II dummy mortar shell and pushed it into the barrel with a padded mop. They had selected a Mk II shell as these were fitted with a tracer nose charge for long-range practice. L/Cpl Fred was in detention and was waiting for someone to move the axle to the right, as the target was a field adjacent to Pickington’s Farm to the south. Just as Pte Capes was placing his hands on the cart wheel Sgt Nibbs shouted ‘Stand to attention!’ at the top of his voice. He had seen a large camouflaged limo with an ATS driver stop at the field gate and an Army officer with red tabs alight from the car. The officer strode straight over to Sgt Nibbs who gave the best salute he could muster.

‘Ryland’s my name’ said the officer, ‘I hear that your platoon has a fine example of a mortar that you’ve constructed?’

‘Yes, Sir.’

‘Who made it?’ asked the Colonel. Sergeant Nibbs pointed to Fred, who was holding a builder’s lump hammer in his right hand, but dropped it and saluted.

‘Well said the Colonel, ‘fire the beast!’

L/Cpl Fred was about to explain that the mortar hadn’t been aimed accurately nor the vent adjusted, but the Colonel was waving his cane vigorously at him, which left Fred in no doubt as to what he was required to do. He struck the spike sharply and the mortar fired, covering all in the vicinity with soot as the shell soared out of the pipe.

Its trajectory was easy to see as the cordite ring left a trail of black smoke; Cpl Fred closed his eyes to the next scene. Pte Williams had seen that the shell was making a beeline for the pub and opened his mouth to shout then, seeing the Colonel’s obvious expression of delight, decided to keep quiet. The missile soared over the hedge bordering the A15 and dropped fairly and squarely onto a wooden storage shed at the rear of the public house. The tracer, still burning, set fire to the shed. Fortunately, the landlord’s Series E car was some yards away in the pub car park.

‘Oh! Well done that man’ said the
Colonel, 'jolly good work. Lance Corporal did you say, Sergeant?'

'Yes, Sir.'

'Full Corporal' said Lt Col Ryland, and strode back to his car, nodding his head as he went.

Pte Williams put in a claim for a new shed, and was provided with a new one less than four weeks later. It was the talk of Glentworth Cliff and thereabouts for some years to come.

Cpl Fred's mortar was replaced by the latest Army model late in 1943 and the Blacker Bombard consigned to Nell's Pits from whence it had come. It is now buried under several tons of landfill, but would be an interesting artefact for an archaeologist to discover if the pit was ever excavated. It may, however, confuse archaeologists, as there are artefacts of earlier ages buried there.

A photograph of the Glentworth Cliff LDV squad was displayed for many years on a notice board in the bar of the Monks Arms, but disappeared just before the pub closed in the 1980s. Several photographs of the Glentworth Cliff LDV were taken during the squad's existence, and the author would welcome the loan of copies that may have survived in the family albums of relatives and descendants.

Although in 1944 the total roll call of the Home Guard was over a million men, it was 'stood down' in October of that year. Churchill paid tribute to their contribution and made the magnificent gesture of allowing them to keep their battledress and boots. Corporal Fred of the Glentworth Cliff LDV wore both items for his daily work long after the end of the war.

LINCOLN SCHOOL
AND THE
4TH NORTHERN GENERAL HOSPITAL

Adapted from an original account by Peter Harrod and Chris Williams

WAR WAS DECLARED on 4 August 1914. The flow of casualties from the various theatres of war soon overwhelmed the existing medical facilities in the United Kingdom, just as did the recently established bases in France and Flanders. Many civilian hospitals and large buildings were turned over to military use. By 1917 there were five Northern General Hospitals under the Northern Command. These were located in Newcastle (1st), Leeds (2nd), Sheffield (3rd), Lincoln (4th) and Leicester (5th). Lincoln School provided one of these buildings with the fields being requisitioned for additional accommodation in the form of over twenty huts.

In addition to these 'Territorial Force' General Hospitals, which were mobilised in August 1914 and expanded during wartime, there were other different types of hospital including those run by the Red Cross and St John Ambulance, and auxiliary and private units. Some became specialist units, and there were also convalescent hospitals formed to keep recovering soldiers under military control.

The main medical functions in a complex evacuation chain that processed the casualties from the front line to hospitals at home such as the 4th Northern General and then back to the front line may be summarised as follows:

1. The regimental Aid Posts offered light first aid and superficial medical care near the front line, often in reserve trenches. These were staffed by the Battalion Medical Officer, orderlies and stretcher bearers.

2. In the Advanced Dressing Stations, supported by field ambulances; wounds would be dressed and emergency minor operations would be carried out.

3. The Casualty Clearing Stations, or Clearing Hospitals, were large well-equipped medical facilities usually in tented camps or in huts, where serious operations, including amputations, would be performed.

4. Base Hospitals, situated near the Army's principal bases at Boulogne, Rouen, Le Havre and Etaples, were manned by 32 medical officers, 3 chaplains, 73 nurses and 206 troops acting as orderlies. 'Tommies' stood a reasonable chance of survival in these units. More than half would be evacuated to the UK for further treatment or convalescence.

5. Those needing specialist treatment were returned to 'Blighty' to a huge network of hospitals for all types of specialist treatment and convalescence. The final destination for a recovered soldier was a Command Depot (Ripon was the nearest to Lincoln), which would be the last step before the 'return to hell'.

The military hospitals were manned and operated by the Royal Army Medical Corps (RAMC) and Queen Alexandra's Imperial Military Nursing Service, supplemented by voluntary workers from a number of organisations including the Voluntary
Aid Detachments, Red Cross, St John Ambulance and YMCA.
The 4th Northern General Hospital occupied the buildings and fields of the former Lincoln Grammar School (later renamed Lincoln School and now Lincoln Christ's Hospital School).

It held 41 Officer beds and 1126 Other Ranks beds with over 445,000 men being treated there during the War. The Newport Cemetery, situated less than a mile from the school, contains 139 First World War graves.

The editorial in the October 1914 edition of *The Lincolnian* reported that Lincoln School (LS) was in a unique position among the schools of England in having its buildings used as a base hospital by the Royal Army Medical Corps during the War. Then, implying that the school had a choice in the matter (they did not of course), the Editorial went on to suggest that it was the bounden duty of the school to help the soldiers and sailors in our country’s peril with pride and at whatever personal inconvenience.

During this occupation of the school, the same Editorial in *The Lincolnian* also reported that those in authority utilised the six weeks of school holidays after the outbreak of war to build a temporary school on Lindum Terrace that was excellent in every way.

Canon R. S. Moxon and the increasing numbers of boarders lived in very comfortable quarters in Goldbath House also on Lindum Terrace, which was later demolished by a bomb during World War 2.

Arrangements had also been made for the Lindum Cricket Ground to be used for games, as the Wragby Road grounds were occupied by temporary hospital wards. After the War, the Hospital apparently was reluctant to return the buildings to the School, and it was not until the summer of 1920 that the pupils and staff were able to return to the Wragby Road site.

This may be indicative of the view that the War had not really ended. After all, the Armistice on the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month was effectively a ceasefire, and the Treaty of Versailles between the Allies and Germany was not signed until 28 June 1919 and not registered with the League of Nations until 21 October.

Also there were many who believed that the end of fighting with Germany, Austria-Hungary and Turkey was merely a brief moment of respite before the next conflict between the constitutional monarchies and democratic republics that had survived the 1914-18 battles, and a new enemy. We should also not underestimate the fear of Bolshevism in Russia.

Not only did the 4th Northern General Hospital keep its hold on Wragby Road, but also a number of memorials from the period have inscriptions stating *The Great War 1914-1918* or similar.

The Wragby Road buildings themselves bear no traces of their military past. However, contemporary photographs provide clues that enable links to be made with the existing school buildings and their current use. The parking space at the front was a different shape reflecting a very different transport age.

Today’s Library was a large hospital ward, but previously and subsequently was a dormitory for Lincoln School boys. The top corridor rooms were also used as wards, and the Sergeants’ Mess was a single space, now divided into two rooms (712 and 713). The operating theatre
and perhaps the temporary mortuary were in the area of room 710.

The last 'hospital hut' was removed at the end of the 20th century. In the 1950s this was the 'Prep' department. In the 1990s this wooden building was still in use, but by this time the ventilation, through the gaps in the timber cladding made for some chilly children and unproductive teaching at times. A large water tank in the corner of one of the rooms was another unusual feature. A visiting inspector remarked that these classrooms provided the worst teaching accommodation he had ever seen. Since then the Calladine Building extension to the school has been built and the site of the former 'hospital hut' is now the southern end of the tennis courts and the groundsman's nursery.

One element of the 1914-1919 period was the extensive use of the school field. The wooden huts used as hospital wards, about twenty in number, were mostly removed in the 1920s. There was also a small wooden chapel later used as the cricket pavilion especially by the Old Christ's Hospital Lincolnians, which finally succumbed to the ravages of time in 2008-2010 when a new pavilion was built as part of the sports development. Most intriguing of all was the presence of an extensive network of drainage pipes running from the huts southwards across the site towards Wragby Road. No maps, if any were made in those turbulent times, survive from 1914-1920, and so subsequent building developments took place with no prior knowledge of where the 'temporary' pipes were.

When work started on a series of major construction projects at the back of the school Chris Williams remembers being shown a hole in the junior playground where a potentially lethal combination of services appeared to cross each other with electricity at the bottom, gas in the middle and water closest to the top.

A few years later, excavations in the bottom corner of the same playground revealed exactly why heavy rains always flooded a significant area. Two six-inch pipes of unknown vintage converged into a single four-inch pipe, which was itself partly blocked by tree roots. A drainage survey with camera robots has more recently provided a reliable picture of what lies under the modern school, an application of technology unforeseen a century ago.

This photograph provides a graphic image of life at the 4th Northern General Hospital at Lincoln Grammar School during the Great War. It shows a ward in what was the dormitory, and now serves as a library at Lincoln Christ's Hospital School. The wide-open window and the plant on the unlit stove suggest that it was taken during the summer. More images as well as further information about the history of the school may be found on the school website under LCHS History/School Archive.
Antony Lee describes a recent acquisition at the museum

Late Medieval reliquary pendant from Wragby

The fifteenth century was a time of upheaval in England as successive Yorkist and Lancastrian claimants to the throne manoeuvred both politically and, eventually, by military means to assert their dominance. At such a time, personal devotion was an important aspect of people’s lives and integral to society’s world view and sense of morality.

This small, lozenge shaped pendant, now missing its suspension loop, is an example of such an object of personal devotion from that turbulent time. Made from gilded silver, the pendant has a sliding front cover, inside which an object could be placed to keep it safe. The exterior of the pendant features incised designs of the face of Christ on the sliding cover, and the Agnus Dei (the Lamb of God) on the reverse. Both of these images were possibly originally enamelled. The pendant is paralleled by objects such as the wonderful Middleham jewel and is very similar to a recent find from Hockley in Essex, now in the collections of the British Museum and featuring the image of Saint Helena and bearing the names of the three Magi. Both of these parallels are in solid gold, however, and the Wragby pendant must have been seen as a lower value equivalent at the time.

The contents of such pendants are of course of extreme interest, and the hope that a piece of the True Cross may be contained within is ever present as the cover is slid open for the first time in over 500 years. Unlike the Middleham jewel and the Hockley pendant, the Wragby pendant did contain objects, in the form of organic matter and two coins. The coins were corroded together, and are extremely worn and clipped. Identification of them has revealed that they are contemporary with the pendant. The first is tentatively identified as belonging to the second reign of Edward IV (1471-1483), the second as a York mint penny of Henry VI, issued in the late 1420s or early 1430s. The extremely worn condition of the coins suggests that they may not have been placed in the pendant until much later, though we can never reconstruct the intentions of the owner and the personal significance the coins may have had. Their inclusion in the pendant seems unlikely to have been simply a means of storing small change.

An amount of organic matter was also present inside the pendant, and this was examined by the British Museum’s Department of Conservation and Scientific Research using scanning electron microscopy. Their research identified, amidst the soil that had crept inside the pendant during its time in the ground, a rabbit hair, a human hair and a fragmented body or head louse. Whether these remains relate to the original wearer of the pendant remains unknown. The rabbit hair could represent a rabbit fur cloak, or just as easily have been introduced post deposition.

The pendant is therefore an unusual and important addition to the museum’s Late Medieval collections, and we would like to take this opportunity to thank the Friends of Lincoln Museums and Art Gallery for their generous support with this acquisition.

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Exterior of the pendant showing the face of Christ on the sliding front cover and the Agnus Dei on the reverse.

Interior of the pendant

Obverse and reverse of a coin probably from the second reign of Edward IV, found inside the reliquary pendant.

Obverse and reverse of a second coin, a York mint penny of Henry VI, found within the pendant.