

Nottinghamshire Heritage

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News from the
Nottinghamshire
Building Preservation
Trust

Nottinghamshire Heritage

Summer 1991

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UP AND AWAY

NEARLY 200 people attended the official launch of the 'new-look' Nottinghamshire Heritage magazine at the Coeur de Lion restaurant, Elston. It was great fun and my thanks to everybody who made it such an enjoyable evening. The High Sheriff of Nottinghamshire, Mrs Marcia Abel-Smith and the Chairman of Newark and Sherwood District Council, Councillor Des Whicher launched the magazine and were presented with a selection of books published by the Cromwell Press.

Letters and telephone calls have flooded in praising the quality of the magazine and suggesting interesting future articles and pointing out some

of the typing errors! If you wish to ensure that you regularly receive your quarterly issue of Nottinghamshire Heritage, either place a regular order with your newsagent or return the subscription form on the inside back page.

The aim of Nottinghamshire Heritage is to show the richness of the county in the past and present and to discuss topical issues. If you have any news or views about Nottinghamshire, write or telephone us at the Cromwell Press.

Best wishes to all our readers.

John Samuels,
Editor



At the Launch. Left to right: Lord Mayor of Nottingham, Councillor Chris Gibson; Lady Mayoress of Nottingham, Miss Rosemary Gibson; Dr John Samuels; The High Sheriff of Nottinghamshire, Mrs Marcia Abel-Smith and Chairman of Newark and Sherwood District Council, Councillor Des Whicher.

Master of Trivia

The answers to David Elias' local trivia competition in the last issue are: Michael Foot, Bendigo, their motor cars, ammunition for their guns and Henley Royal Regatta. Nobody gave all the correct answers but Alan Wilkinson of Cropwell Bishop was the nearest with some amusing alternatives for those he didn't know and receives the £10 book token.

Summoned By Bells

The village of Scarcliffe, near Bolsover, although just over the County boundary and in Derbyshire, nestles in a rural valley which once formed part of Sherwood Forest.

At the heart of the village lies the medieval church, dedicated to St. Leonard. The church contains many interesting features, but, perhaps the most important, is the rare thirteenth century alabaster effigy, which depicts the lady Constantia de Frechville,

who, according to legend, was lost with her baby in the forest and found her way to safety by the sound of the church bells; a bequest for five acres of land still enables the bells to be rung during the darkest nights of the year.

An important annual event in the village is the Flower Festival which this year, takes place between June 14th and June 17th. Visitors now come from far and wide, not only to enjoy the magnificent flowers in their historic setting but, also, great interest is shown in an extensive collection of photographs from the past which include the development of the railway line and the engine named after the village.

An extremely popular feature of the festival, during recent years, has been the 'Antiques Roadshow' conducted by Mr Anthony Marriott (Henry Spencer & Sons) whose ancestors have been connected with the village for several generations. This event is restricted to the afternoons of Thursday and Sunday.

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NOTTINGHAMSHIRE HISTORIC CHURCHES TRUST

Winkburn: St John of Jerusalem

By Dr. CHRIS BROOKE

THE tiny village of Winkburn lies almost forgotten in a quiet valley in mid-Nottinghamshire. J. C. Cox, writing in 1912 remarked that the church is smothered in trees, and so hidden away behind the hall that it is difficult to find. Although easier to find today, it still appears to those visitors who discover it for the first time to be a little, lost English parish church, and a near perfect example of timelessness.

Winkburn is in fact a very good example of an early Norman church, founded as a private chapel for the Knights Hospitallers, and still carries the rare dedication to St John of Jerusalem. It belongs almost exclusively to two periods of time: its Norman fabric of the mid 12th century, comprising most of the west tower, south doorway and the side walls; and the eighteenth century interior of box pews, Jacobean pulpit, altar rails and plaster ceiling. The south doorway is particularly fine, with Norman 'beak-head' mouldings around a door which must be, at the latest, of 16th century date. around a door which must be, at the latest, of 16th century date.

However, a closer look at the fabric reveals that the true story is far more complicated than simple Norman and Jacobean. starting at the west tower we can see that the north and south walls of the ground floor contain narrow Norman slit windows, however, in the west wall at this height, there is a fourteenth century window, probably a replacement of a Norman slit when techniques of construction became better. Higher up, there are four Norman belfry windows with characteristic 'cable' moulding, and on the east side of the tower are the stepped 'drip' mouldings which protected the original Norman roof over the nave. The top of the tower has simple para-



pet and battlements of the seventeenth century. A carved panel on the north side boldly proclaims that the tower was 'New Built AD 1632', a rash statement which in all probability refers only to the new battlements. ment which in all probability refers only to the new battlements.

Before leaving the outside of the tower, a glance at the west face discloses a crude stone lozenge which has no obvious purpose.

Closer study reveals a small hole in the centre, cut through the wall of the tower. It is only by climbing up the tower on the inside that the true purpose is revealed – a stone weight with an iron hoop has been pushed into the hole, all that remains of the clock which was once housed here and whose lozenge-shaped face was once situated in the feature we now see outside.

Entering the church by the south door, we pass through another contribution of the eighteenth century, the small porch. It has served well to

protect the finely carved 12th century doorway, on the right hand side of which can be seen the scar of a holy water stoup – smashed off flush with the wall at the Reformation. Inside, to the west is the Norman tower arch, the wall at the Reformation. Inside, to the west is the Norman tower arch, with simple zig-zag moulding. What is not seen by the casual visitor however, is the trial zig-zag carved on the other side of the arch, underneath the tower; perhaps the work of an apprentice, or a more skilled mason trying out the style to be used in the final work.

Turning to the main body of the church, there is little else which appears to be Norman. Some fourteenth and eighteenth century windows, and some nineteenth century glass, show the extent of the main alterations are all superb examples of eighteenth century craftsmanship, and one very significant change, made at this time, was the insertion of a half screen between the nave and chancel, and

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE HISTORIC CHURCHES TRUST

presumably the removal at the same time of a dividing wall and arch.

Looking around the walls we can see the unusual windows at the west end, both at a high level, that on the north side is clearly visible, whilst the one on the south, in the angle between nave and tower, is only seen on the outside. These are eighteenth century insertions to light a singers' or musicians gallery, now long since dismantled. A few scars and blocked slots remain in the wall below to indicate where the gallery was once attached.

The plaster on the walls can be seen to have a very uneven appearance, and closer study has revealed paintings and texts beneath the outer layers of

distemper and limewash. It may well be that the whole church is covered by such paintings, but our generation cannot afford the enormous costs of revealing and conserving them.

Finally, there are the tombs and monuments to the Lords of the Manor of Winkburn, the Burnell family. Dating from William in 1570 to D'Arcy in 1774, with many others commemorated in simple slabs or buried in the family vault beneath the nave, they represent the family who most influenced and maintained this little church for hundreds of years, and undoubtedly (albeit unwittingly) saved it from the ravages of over zealous Victorian restoration.

Stained Glass

By Henry Blagg

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE is not nationally renowned for medieval stained glass but there is excellent representation by the best Nineteenth and early twentieth century craftsmen in the medium.

Henry Holiday (1839-1927), unlike so many Victorian stained glass artists an able draughtsman, was not fully part of the Arts & Crafts Revival, but late in age was a pioneer. His 1908 memorial window to one of the Pagets in St. Anne's, Sutton Bonington depicts an especially well executed Angel. Windows attributed to Kempe in Pevsner are in fact the work of Burlison and Grylles according to Peter Cormack, MA, assistant keeper of the William Morris Gallery and one of the foremost authorities on glass of the period. There is Morris glass in Coddington Church and one to a Burne-Jones design at Whetton-in-the-Vale, for once properly cited in Pevsner and one to a Burne-Jones design at Whetton-in-the-Vale, for once properly cited in Pevsner.

Charles Eamer Kempe (1837-1907) is all too often represented throughout both County and Realm. After the 1880s, so many became prolific and figures invariably appear insipid and uninspired; the overall effect, one of metallic mass production, eg Wollaton & Southwell Minster. But in Car Colston church chancel there is a superior example of Kempe's early work the recently restored Giradot Memorial window of 1875.

It was Christopher Whitworth Whall (1849-1924), exasperated by the adulteration of his designs by the glass makers, who fulfilled what Holiday heralded; the principle of the single artist designing and executing the entire process through the use of richly textured handmade "Early-English" Slab glass. Whall's work is complemented by that of his numerous and exceptional pupils.

The splendid triple-light window on the South side of Bleasby church is an excellent and typ-

ical example of Whall's work and of his school. Like Holiday Whall fulfilled American commissions, and of all their glass that I have seen both in England and in the USA, that at Bleasby please me most. The simple triple lancet without tracery lends itself to Whall's composition of virgin and child in the centre light, flanked in the others by Angels richly robed and winged in viridian, ultramarine and episcopal purple, Whall's typical devices. Whall drew from life: compare these images with the lamentable East and West windows, Victorian stained glass most ghastly.

Also by Whall and but minutes hence, the South transept glass in Southwell Minster showing the Crucifixion and vision of St. John the Divine on the Isle of Patmos of 1906; rich, dark and vibrant; the best glass in Southwell.

Either side of the sanctuary in Wollaton Church and vibrant; the best glass in Southwell.

Either side of the sanctuary in Wollaton Church are two Whall windows; S.S. George and Michael the Archangel, a 1914-18 War Memorial and S.S. Francis of Assisi and Nicholas with two children in early C20th. children's dress, again typical of the Whall school, and this window is by his daughter, Veronica (1887-1967).

Edward Woore, a further pupil is represented in South Collingham, but it is a while since I have seen the window: I must revisit.

Holbeck, private shrine of the Dukes of Portland, contains good work by Hendrie of Edinburgh (Nave) and Sidney Meteyard (Chancel); Ossington, glass by George Cooper Abbs, all working in styles quite distinct from Whall and his kind.

It would be churlish to deny that our marches too enjoy good glass. Christopher Whall is represented in Ashbourne and Pentrich in Derbyshire; at St. Mary's Stamford, Silk Willoughby and Marston (seat of Henry Thorold) in Kesteven, Veronica at nearby Barkston.

Nottinghamshire Historic Churches Trust

Unfortunately, our Churches may not always be the centre of Community life any more, but the buildings are nearly always the most important and the most historic feature of the locality. They are now often left to be cared for by a few devoted parishioners who lack all but enthusiasm. Without financial aid our most important historic structures will deteriorate beyond repair and it is up to all of us, as guardians of our building heritage to pass on these buildings to our children and they to their children, hopefully in a better state of repair than when we inherited them.

The Trust exists, as a registered charity, to raise funds for the repair of historic ecclesiastical buildings in the County, whatever their denomination, providing they have been or are being used for public Christian worship. The Trust also gives advice and encouragement to those engaged in the repair of Church buildings and wishes to spread the knowledge of Nottinghamshire's Historic Churches and interest in them.

The Nottinghamshire Historic Churches Trust invites members of the public to become Friends of Churches Trust invites members of the public to become Friends of the Trust. There is no fixed annual donation please give whatever you feel you can. Subscriptions by Covenant and Banker's Order would be particularly welcome from those who feel they would wish to support the Trust over a period of time.

The Trustees are aware of the widespread interest in Historic Churches, as buildings and works of art, amongst many who do not use them for worship. If you appreciate the worth of these buildings in Nottinghamshire, please give generously to keep them in good repair.

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE BUILDING PRESERVATION TRUST

Holmegarth House, Blyth, Nottinghamshire

By GEOFF TURNER

THERE has been an exciting discovery in the North of the county where what seemed to be a rather mundane dwelling, converted to shopping use, has now been revealed to be a 17th century timber framed building.

The Listed Building Report describes the structure as being stuccoed with part timber framing, having a possible herring-bone king-post truss in the left gable, two storeys, three bays. It was not until the owner began to erect a rear extension to the building that the full extent of the timber framing was revealed and the importance of the building recognised.

Freddie Charles, the leading expert on timber framed buildings, was called in and, with his detailed report together with a dendro sample record and summary made by the University of Nottingham, a full study of the building has been completed.

The plan form comprises two 16 foot (4900 mm) square units, separated by a cross-passage. The passage walls were originally of stave construction, now stud and plaster, within each internal cross frame. What remains suggests that this was designed as a pair of units and the absence of a closed truss at the Southern gable shows that the structure was intended to continue to the South, at the very least as a mirrored pair.

The roof structure is very informative. There is only one triangulated truss and this is to the Northern gable; the other six supports are tie beams or cross beams spanning from wallplate to wallplate. Heavy rafters are laid flat, many still with carpenters' marks showing the sequence in which they were laid, which is from the cross-passage outwards. Every third pair of rafters is coupled by a broad collar half-lapped to the upper face.

Freddie Charles comments that the construction details, with the mathematical articulation of each set of components, shows a sophisticated



Holmegarth House under restoration

approach which suggests a date at the end of the timber framed tradition as applied to house building. His suggestion of the timber framed tradition as applied to house building. His suggested date of late 17th century for the building has now been followed by a felling date for the timber of 1579/80, determined by dendro analysis of thirteen samples of timber.

It is likely that the original building was part of the work carried out by Edward Mellish, who died in 1703 and whose family was responsible for most of the buildings which formed the original village of Blyth.

It was fortunate for us that expert advice was available to carry out such a thorough and informed survey of the building. These records are now available for deposit as work to bring the building back into use, whilst retaining its historic features, continues.

Aims of the Trust

FOUNDED in 1967, the Trust is funded by the County Council and by five of the District Councils within the County. There is a membership of over 300 individuals and groups who make an annual subscription to become life members.

a membership of over 300 individuals and groups who make an annual subscription to become life members.

Today the Trust's main thrust is through the Revolving Fund Committee which produces a comprehensive list of buildings at risk, containing those buildings of architectural or historic interest which are threatened by neglect or over-development.

The Trust investigates how best to save those buildings, preferably by encouraging the owners to take the right action and by the best use of grants or other finance that might be available. The ultimate course of action is for the Trust to acquire the building and carry out the necessary work itself. The building is then sold and any profit ploughed back into the Revolving Fund in order to save other buildings.

The Trust is invited to comment on planning applications which affect listed buildings or Conservation Areas and often comments on applications even when not invited to do so. It is an independent view, if not always a welcome one.

Activities for members include slide evenings and an annual coach trip. New members are very welcome and the annual subscription is only £3.00 which includes a quarterly copy of Nottinghamshire Heritage. For further details contact the Secretary, Geoff Turner, at 2 Priory Road, West Bridgford, Nottingham NG2 5HH. Telephone 0602 61 9622.

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE BUILDING PRESERVATION TRUST

Making Wollaton Work

By PAMELA MARSHALL

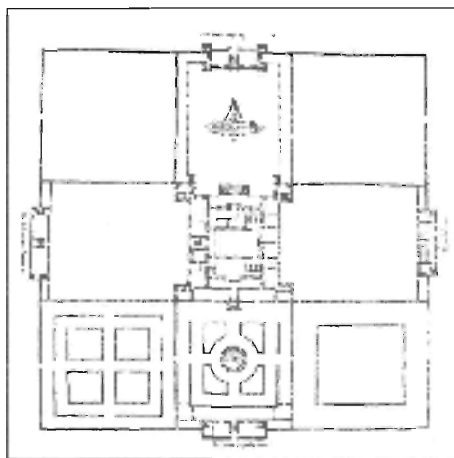
EVERYONE knows Wollaton Hall. I suppose most think of it first as a natural history museum and then as a grand example - one of the grandest in England - of Elizabethan architecture. Only after that comes the thought that it was built in 1580-8 as a house, by Francis Willoughby, a county landowner who was into coal-mining.

It is almost impossible to think of it as a house since there is no way of seeing how it worked; there is only one room recently rearranged in a domestic manner. Every other room tells you about the natural world. Architectural historians think they know all about it because the architect's design drawing for it still exists. They can also tell you where Willoughby and Smythson got their ideas from for the elaborate decoration of the outside, but that leaves questions unanswered. Was it built exactly according to Smythson's design? Has it been altered in its five centuries? Not on the outside, but what about the inside? Has it never been damaged - in the Civil War, or by a fire? Has the family which owned it from 1580 to 1924 never wanted it modernised or redecorated? Or enlarged? Yes, of course, but exactly how?

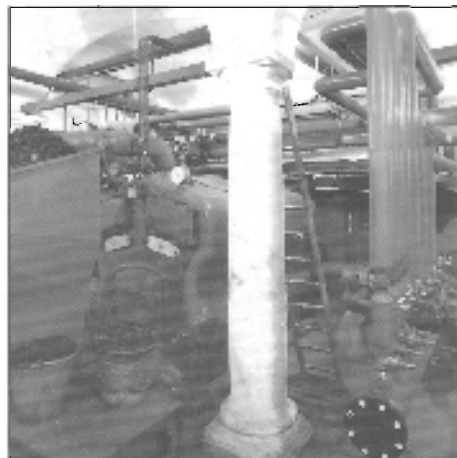
This is where I was brought in as an archaeologist. I put aside my research on Norman castles to spend weeks, all told, poking about everywhere with the good will and help of the museum staff. The masons who divide their time between Wollaton and Newstead are particularly knowledgeable about the fabric of the house, which is built mainly of brick and cased in stone. Working in the basement was awkward because the museum staff accumulate old cases and redundant specimens and some rooms were full of unused materials, but I have got just about everywhere.

I measured and drew, identified original doorways, fireplaces, staircases, mouldings; distinguished changes made by Jeffrey Wyattville, a fashionable architect employed in 1800-30 to modernise the house and others made to adapt the house as a museum. As my guide all the time in identifying the original plan and the functions of rooms, I used the inventories made for the Willoughbys soon after the house was built; they name every room, its use and its contents.

Changes have been most radical in the basement, where Smythson put all the services - two kitchens and places for preparing food, cellars for ale and beer; possibly



Left: William Smythson's plan of the ground floor of the house, its outbuildings and layout of the grounds.



Right: The vaulted kitchen now used as a boiler room.

Photo: Philip Dixon.

a servants' hall; sleeping rooms for a few servants. I have compiled what archaeologists call a phased plan, marking all the changes in different colours. I have done the same on the principal floor, where some of the rooms round the hall were bed-chambers for the family. The grandest rooms after the hall were on the first floor, where one of the great chambers was certainly intended for queen Elizabeth if she could be persuaded to visit; in fact she never came.

There are still a few jobs to do and the most difficult, to survey accurately the rock-cut passages down to a spring; the sewer system which survives intact and must be related to the various garderobes (toilets) on each floor; another large vaulted cellar buried under the lawn outside the house. The work has been funded by the Nottingham Civic Society and we must all be grateful to it. The eventual result must be a publication.

St. Leonard's Court By Brian Allebon

REFURBISHMENT of the six cottages in St. Leonard's Court, Newark for the Trust is progressing well. The work is being carried out by a local company Bauen Ltd on a design and build basis.

The cottages were on the brink of disaster after being left vacant and largely unattended for over 25 years. Water leaking from the roof and open windows had caused deterioration of the gypsum floors, structural timbers and plasterwork. Vandalism had also played its part and rising damp was much in evidence. Parts of the roof were near collapse and in parts their state defied the laws of gravity. Liberties taken with the roof structure when alterations were carried out in 1906 to inset dormers are astonishing with roof collars removed and purlins

cut away. However, despite these problems, the building fabric, with the sympathetic treatment, is providing a sound basis for refurbishment.

The principle is to preserve as much of the character of the buildings as possible and to repair rather than renew so that the cottages can be seen as an example of good conservation practice. Already Trust members who have visited the site have complimented Bauen Ltd on the quality of their work. It is hoped that the visited the site have complimented Bauen Ltd on the quality of their work. It is hoped that the cottages will be completed in October 1991, when they will be offered for sale individually and the Trust will have made a significant contribution to the conservation of an historic area of Newark.



Brian Allebon's drawing of the completed front elevation.

Norwood Park

**OPENS TO
THE PUBLIC**

JUST outside Southwell surrounded by landscaped parkland is Norwood Park, the home of Sir John and Lady Starkey and for the first time they will be opening it to the public. An elegant red-brick house in a classical style reminiscent of the designs by John Carr of York, it consists of five bays with linked pavilions at either end.

Norwood, originally one of the medieval deer parks belonging to the Archbishop of York's Southwell estate, was purchased in 1646 by Mr Edward Cludd, a leading supporter of Oliver Cromwell. He built himself a large house in the park described as a 'lordly pleasure house, whose hospitable doors were thrown open for the reception of guests who could entertain him with their wit and pleasant small talk, and Cludd is also credited with saving Southwell Minster from damage by Parliamentary troops.

In 1760 the Park was purchased by Mr John Sutton who demolished Cludd's house and built the present house which was acquired by Mr Lewis Starkey in 1881. Despite various Victorian additions, the house remains unspoilt and is still a family house at the centre of a farming estate.

Famous today for its extensive fruit orchards which developed from a 10 acre orchard of Southwell's well-known Bramley Apples in 1910, the estate has moved with the times while managing to preserve much of the parkland with its rich natural wildlife.

With over 15,000 people a year already visiting the various shows, rallies, cricket matches and walks held in the Park, Lady Starkey said, "We thought it would be fun to open the house for people to enjoy. It's not a dusty museum but a living family house".

Visitors will be guided around the house where they will see an interesting collection of family portraits, mementoes and china including the French Bird Plates smuggled out of Russia in the 1930s by Lady Starkey's father in his Tiger Moth aeroplane and the massive head of a Bull Water Buffalo shot by Sir William Starkey

while serving in India on the North West Frontier.

Attics have been raided for old clothes and toys not seen for years. As Lady Starkey said, "I've been searching out all kinds of things because I like the idea of people saying, 'we used to have one of those'. But unfortunately we haven't any ghosts".

From June 2nd to August 25th the house and park will be open every Sunday afternoon and is certain to be a great success.

For further details contact Lady Starkey, telephone 0636 812762.



*Above: Sir John and Lady Starkey
Below: Norwood Park*



In A Churchyard

OVERLOOKING the road by Stapleford Parish Churchyard is the largest Saxon monument in Nottinghamshire. Made of Millstone Grit and standing ten feet high with a rounded base, it tapers and becomes square towards the top. Most of the decoration is intricate interlace but at the top is a flat-faced winged figure with possible horns, tail and hooves which has been considered to be the emblem of St. Luke.

Originally the shaft may have been part of a cross but fits better into a group of rounded shafts of the Mercian Kingdom of the 9th century.

Close by, leaning against the path leading to the church is the slate grave-stone of five year old Thomas Bramley who was killed by the Times Coach on 26th January 1833.

An Early Garden Suburb



By
**PROFESSOR
MAURICE
BARLEY**

The scheme was too ambitious; very few plots were sold and in 1856, according to a Beeston Local History Society Newsletter of December 1985 the Cottage Garden Scheme was dissolved and the profits distributed among the contributors. The only existing building in the Gothic style is the Hop Pole Inn on the High Road on the plot nearest Beeston; it is dated 1847 and was probably built by the Walkers. They may also have built a semi-detached pair dated 1853 which resemble Walker's cheaper style and there are about four other cottages of similar date and style. Park Road has two much larger houses, not much later in date and standing on much larger plots. The Newsletter states that the vacant plots were cultivated as allotments, for how long we do not know, but Park Road gradually filled up and it is likely that all the existing houses are the first on their sites rather than the result of redevelopment. The houses in Grove Avenue are mostly rather larger and later in date.

Land must have been earmarked from the beginning for the school, though it is not shown on the drawing as the caption states. However, there is, in Imperial Road, Beeston, on the site referred to, a large Victorian house named Silverwood, now a hostel for polytechnic students and originally an orphanage for 24 children of both sexes. It is mentioned in directories only in 1887 and onwards and is said to have been founded chiefly through the exertions of Miss Bailey. It must be the last and have been founded chiefly through the exertions of Miss Bailey. It must be the last and indirect achievement of James Orange.

IHAVE long been intrigued by the character of two streets in Chilwell, Park Road and Grove Avenue, which are turnings off the High Road through Beeston and Chilwell just west of the boundary between the two parishes. In 1960 the Thoroton Society published an article in its Transactions (Vol. LXIV) by Professor R. A. Church entitled "James Orange and the Allotment System in Nottingham". It described the efforts of the 1840s to develop allotments in and near the city, to relieve the acute distress of the framework knitters at a time of depression in their trade. James Orange, who was a pastor of the Salem Chapel in Barker Gate, Nottingham, devoted himself to publicising his plan for cottage garden cultivation, to revive 'peasant cultivation in the midst of an industrial society'. The article was illustrated by part of a perspective drawing of the two roads lined by Gothic cottages standing in large gardens. There was no reference to the source of the drawing.

Now, thirty years later, the drawing has come to light; it belonged to Arthur G. Cossons, a Beeston Schoolmaster who was drawn to the study of local history by Professor David Chambers. His son, Dr Neil Cossons, now director of the Science Museum, found the drawing among his father's papers.

The caption, omitted by Church, explains the drawing which is here reproduced in full. It bears the name of an old established Nottingham firm, G.F. and S.J. Walker, who were described as 'stone and marble masons' in directories of the early 19th century but by the 1840s had become 'architects, surveyors and builders' as well. The object of the drawing, and we do not

know how many copies were produced, was to promote the sale of the plots shown. The land must have been acquired by the Chilwell Cottage Garden Scheme which Orange had created and the Walkers must have expected to get the job of building the cottages. More than one good cause was to be assisted - as well as providing the housing, the profits from the sale of plots were to be devoted to 'the erection of an Agricultural School for the training and education of 400 poor children, 250 boys and 150 girls'. The Land Savings Bank, Nottingham, is named but the drawing has no date. Among the deeds of 60 Park Road is a plan of the two roads showing the same layout of plots and dated 1848. Although the layout shows lofty cottages in the Gothic style, a drawing in the corner shows a much simpler design priced £60.

Abandoned Air-Field

By HILARY GREENWOOD

If ever there were laughter here, it fell
from moulded lips, from whimsy wound
around a tired heart... but who can tell
what wisdom blanched this suffering ground?

The soldiers came here in the war
and sweated on the carriage-drive.
The gardens and the woods were sore,
swarming with itchy youths alive

smarting from whitewash, ordered all,
rootless as plants in tubs... and then they went
leaving disorder to be smothered in a pall
of dusty puzzlement ...

If there were someone there, I might have dared
to press beyond the tangly trail,
lurching towards the peeling eaves,
and shouted my defiance... but I fail,
turn water in this absence, scared
by silence and untrodden leaves.

THE PILGRIMS REDISCOVERED

THE story of the Pilgrim Fathers and the voyage of the Mayflower is well known, and through numerous books and several films has passed into popular folk lore.

What is less well known, however, is that after the separatists left for Holland in the spring of 1608 to seek out a more tolerant environment, the curtain closed on their English origins for almost two and a half centuries. At the time they were regarded as dangerous nonconformists who presented a threat to the stability of the Anglican church, and their departure was secretly welcomed by the church hierarchy. The fact that the movement which led ultimately to the voyage of the Mayflower and the founding of Plymouth Colony in 1620 had its origins in the north of Nottinghamshire was forgotten about in England, and, apart from a couple of imprecise manuscript references, suffered a like-wise fate in New England.

We owe the re-discovery of the Pilgrims' English roots to the research of a 19th century historian, Rev. Joseph Hunter, Assistant Keeper of the Public Record Office and already known for his *History of Hallamshire* and for his monumental two-volume work on South Yorkshire published in 1828 and 1831.

The major primary source for the background of the separatists in England, their life in Holland, the crossing in the Mayflower and the early years of settlement in New England is a manuscript history written by William Bradford, the Austerfield boy who became Mayflower Pilgrim and long-serving Governor of Plymouth Colony.

The volume was kept in the Bradford family for several generations before being passed on to the New England Library in 18th century Boston, Massachusetts. It disappeared during the American Revolutionary Wars and remained lost until the mid-19th century, when it was found in the Bishop of London's library at Fulham Palace. Before its disappearance, passages from the manuscript had been published in early colonial histories.

Hunter picked up upon two references in colonial histories:

Hunter picked up upon two references from the long-lost history and commenced on the tedious task of filling out the detail. Bradford, in his manuscript, gave an eulogy to Elder William Brewster in his entry for the year 1644, containing the following information:

'They (the separatists) ordinarily met at his house on the Lords day (which was a manor of the bishops) were of sundry towns and villages, some in Nottinghamshire, some of Lincolnshire, and some of Yorkshire, where they border nearest together.'

From the Postmaster General's Accounts in the Public Record Office, Hunter traced William Brewster to Scrooby in north Notts, where he was Postmaster to the Crown from at least 1594 to 1607 as well as archbishop's bailiff and receiver residing in the Archbishop of York's manor house there.

Having traced Brewster, archbishop's registers and the records of neighbouring parishes were scoured to track down other members of the movement.

By MALCOLM DOLBY



Above: Babworth Church where Rev. Richard Clyfton was Rector 1586-1605.

Below: Scrooby Manor House where the Separatists met 1606-7.

Richard Clyfton, pastor of the church meeting in secret at Scrooby Manor House was discovered to have been from 1586 to 1605 rector of Babworth near Retford, from which he had been ejected for his non-conformist views.

William Bradford's baptism was found in the Austerfield parish registers, which extend back to 1538 and contain details of other members of Bradford's immediate family.

The quest for the origins of Rev. John Robinson, teacher of the Scrooby church and the group's religious leader in Leyden,

ended at York, where in the Registry were found the wills of his parents, pin-pointing the family to the village of Sturton-le-Steeple, some seven miles north-east of Retford. Robinson's wife Bridget (nee White) and her sister Catherine, who married John Carver, Mayflower Pilgrim and first Governor of Plymouth Colony, were also from Sturton and were recorded as beneficiaries in their father's, Alexander's, will.

James Brewster, William's Brother, was traced in the Archbishop's Register as incumbent of St. Bartholomew's church, Sturton-cum-Lound, near Retford, and Scrooby's mother church.

Hunter published his findings in 1854 in a lengthy-titled book - *Collections Concerning the Church or Congregation of Protestant Separatists formed at Scrooby* - and in the following year tracked down the

manuscript volume of Bradford's history in Fulham Palace Library.

As the century progressed, various scholars unearthed new information, and were able to refine the story considerably. In more recent years, research based upon the Court Act Books of the Archdeaconry of Nottingham has shown that many local clergy had non-conformist leanings at that time and were arraigned before the archdeaconry court for various offences.

Having rediscovered the origins of the Pilgrims, the scene was set for the tourist trade - for American descendants to come over and tread the ground of their forefathers. Visitors appeared in small numbers through the second half of the 19th century, and recorded their names in a book at Scrooby Manor House from 1880. The first recorded large party of visitors came to Scrooby exactly 100 years ago, in the summer of 1891, when an International Congregational picnic was held on the field adjacent to the Manor House. Some 400 people attended the event - a fore-taste of groups yet to come.

In common with other popular lore, the Pilgrim Father story has, over the years, attracted its own myths and legends. Some of these can be exploded here. The Manor House at Austerfield has no proven link with the Bradford family. The Old Vicarage at Scrooby, once revered as Brewster's Cottage, has no connection with the great man, and the legend dates back only to 1912. There is also no substance to the story, enshrined in a novel 'Down Ryton Water', that the separatists left Scrooby by the river Ryton in their second attempt at departure in the spring of 1608.

The Ryton has always been too shallow for any craft larger than a small rowing boat. The departure is more likely to have taken place from Bawtry, only one mile from Scrooby and a port on the river Idle which traded with the Low Countries and Scandinavia. The cells at Boston Guildhall are exhibited as those occupied by the group following their capture on their first attempt at departure. Although the leading seven members of the group were remanded to the next assize court, and were kept in some kind of custody, the cells at the Guildhall are but two in number and intended for one prisoner in each. In any event, the separatists were not dangerous malefactors and there would be no need to lock them up in cells.

Finally, what is perhaps the greatest myth of all - that the timbers of the Mayflower live on in the structure of the Great Barn at Jordans in Buckinghamshire - is but a fanciful figment of the imagination and totally without foundation. To his eternal shame, Professor Rendel Harris, who proposed the theory, delivered a totally empty argument in support of his ideas in his book published in 1920. He of all people, a distinguished academic, should have known better than to delude his readers with what he must have realised was the flimsiest of evidence.

Egmanton Tythe Barn

By NEVILLE HOSKINS

P RIMARY sources are always of value and interest to the local historian. The activities of the aristocracy and gentry are often well documented, the lives of the lower echelons less so. When an account of village life in the early 19th century written by one of the villagers comes to light, it provides a fascinating insight into many aspects of everyday life and when that account is in verse...!

Samuel Appleby was born in Egmanton in about 1806 and when he was in his fifties he wrote, not in very good verse, his recollections of village life in his youth and sometimes commented on the changes over the previous forty-odd years. He wrote in a leather bound notebook in which, possibly after Samuel's death in 1868, his brother Frederick, nine years younger, added more verses. Handwriting and poetic style suggest that this is the case.

The poem is 1500 lines long, its rhymes are many and varied - a description of the church, tales of weddings and funerals, schooldays, an earthquake, accidents, hop gatherings, ghosts, witches and ratcatchers.

Here is Samuel's description of the tythe

barn, from which a reasonably accurate plan could be constructed:

'One thing however I must mention
To miss it was no my intention
The Tythe-barn of all buildings strange,
Strong made and of so wide a range.
The length some seventy feet or more
And forty five from door to door -
The roof of thatch, a ponderous thing
Cover'd the nave and each side wing-
This building was all fram'd in wood
On twelve oak pillars squar'd it stood,
Six on each side, the centre part
Supporting beams that laid athwart
As well as other beams lengthwise
Form'd five large bays of equal size.
Each pillar let me say would be
A straight, well grown, complete oak tree
Now these were flank'd on either side
With less bays some ten feet wide.
The centre transverse ones were high,
With others far above to tye,
The roof, which did such firmness give
And all of oak from ridge to eave,
Such barns are not constructed now
There's not the use for them I trow.
When this was built it was to throw in
Small bits of tythe and safely mow in,
The different kinds from day to day
Brought from the neighbour's fields away
Just when ready and if night fall

Draw in the wagon load and all
And thus one bay of wheaten grain
Might twenty different growths contain
So not it will be very clear
Why this large barn was builded here.
We hope no ruthless careless hand
Whoever owns the barn and land
Or any tenant that may come
To occupy this farmstead home,
Will e're permit the least decay
Which by repairs they timely may
The thatch keep good, the floor relay
The doors and picking-holes and roof
And all the building weather-proof.
That ages afterwards may see,
This fine old barn as well as we,
As oak might peradventure last
More years to come than those that's past
It is impossible to say,
When heart of oak will mould away,
Especially such well grown trees,
So massive, fine and sound as these.'

It is sad to note, after these final sentiments, that I have so far been unable to find any other record, or even mention, of the Tythe Barn and how long it survived, or of Tythe Farm where Samuel Appleby lived. Perhaps some of our readers may have something to add?

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