



# NOTTINGHAMSHIRE BUILDING PRESERVATION TRUST BULLETIN

78, BRIDGFORD ROAD, WEST BRIDGFORD, NOTTINGHAM NG2 6AX

NUMBER FIVE

AUGUST 1988

The work of the Trust continues at two levels. The Revolving Fund Committee has built up a comprehensive list of Buildings at Risk in the County and is following up the possibilities of bringing each one back to active life and restoration.

The Technical Panel, whilst assisting with this work, is also organising slide evenings and coach trips and is attempting to organise the recording and storing of an archive of information on historic buildings.

The Trust also comments on planning applications that affect historic buildings or Conservation Areas and responds to queries from the owners of historic buildings.

The recent rapid increase in property prices may make many neglected buildings financially viable and it is likely that the danger to historic buildings will now come not from neglect but from overdevelopment.

The Trust would welcome offers of help in hosting slide evenings, suggesting venues for coach trips or assisting in measuring old buildings. Constructive criticism is also invited, as are contributions to either the Newsletter or the News Bulletin.

G.A.T.

## COACH TRIP

A coach trip has been arranged for Saturday, 3rd September 1988, visiting converted farm buildings in the county. We hope to include the following buildings on our route:

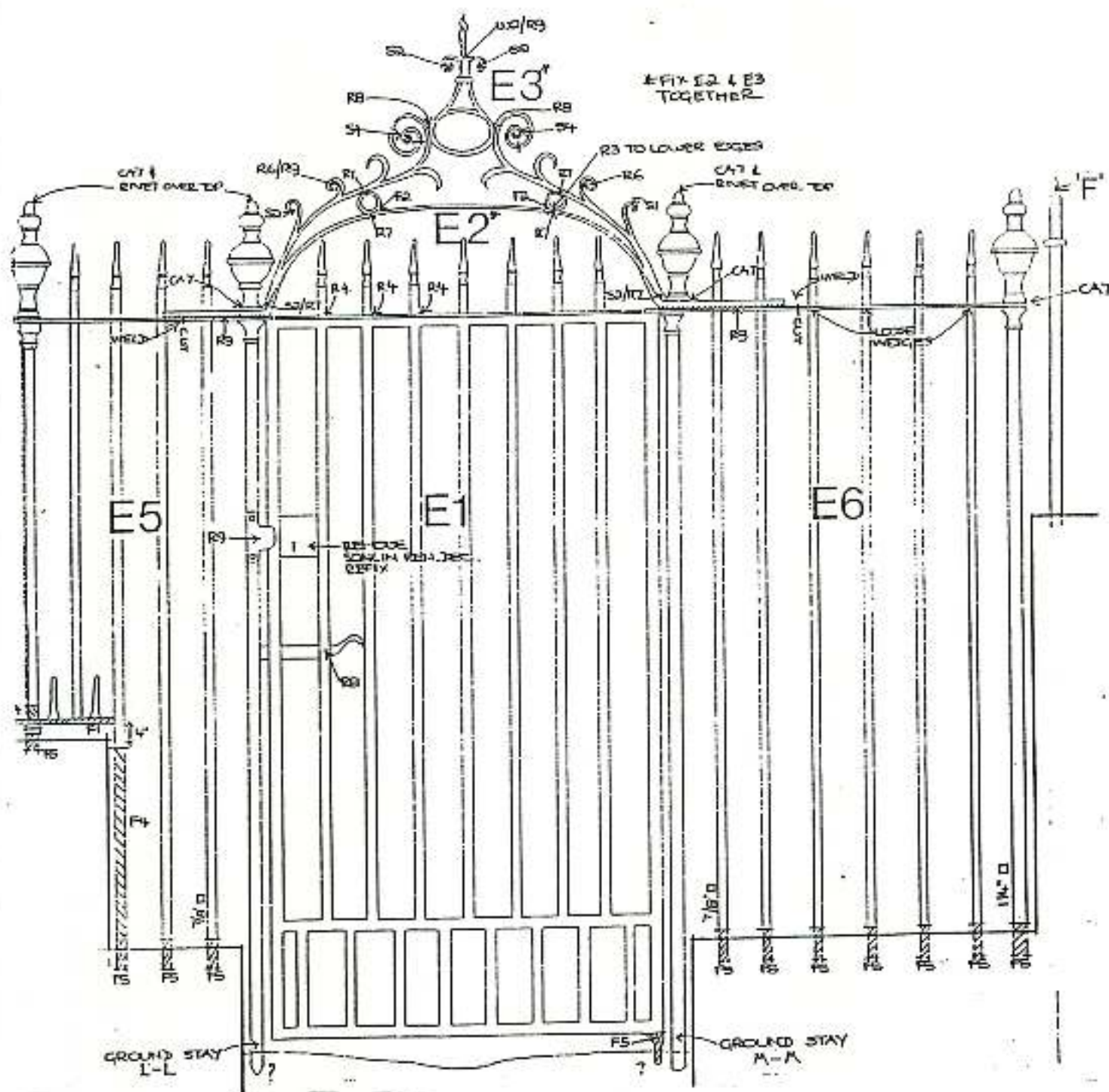
Holme Pierrepont Hall Stables	Blyth Priory
Patchings Farm Art Centre, Calverton	Worksop Priory
Governor's House, Newark	Tuxford Windmill
Kelham Hall, Newark	Bleasby Dovecote and Tea Rooms

The cost of the trip will be £8.00 per head, which will include lunch at The Governor's House, Newark. Tea will be available at Bleasby if required, at extra cost.

If you wish to go on the Coach Trip, please complete the form at the end of this Bulletin.

250 YEAR OLD NOTTINGHAM RAILINGS RESCUED FROM THE SCRAP HEAP  
AND RESTORED BY ENGLISH HERITAGE

IRON RAILINGS, VAULT HALL, 24-26 LOW PAVEMENT, NOTTINGHAM



Until now, wrought-iron railings have been unable to grow old gracefully. Those that escaped extermination in the second world war are usually a sorry mess; their ornamental leaves and scrolls have dropped off and not been replaced, they are held together with clamps and wire and they have suffered the ignominy of wholesale replacement in welded mild steel. Most blacksmiths don't work the old skills like they used to and wrought-iron is not produced afresh any more. That is, until now.

English Heritage, researching techniques for conserving wrought-iron in its Ornamental Smiths' Workshop in Regents Park, London, was looking out for a full-scale railings project when a call for advice from Nottingham's Planning Department provided this. The Conservation Officer, after a tip-off from a member of the general public, had discovered the remains of Grade II\* listed railings removed from 24-26 Low Pavement (and about to be scrapped) in a workshop of a steel fabricator who was finishing off a brand new set of welded steel replacements. By present-day reckoning the old railings were beyond repair when English Heritage took them over. Armed with old photographs, survey drawings, reconstruction drawings and a lorry load of pieces, the Ornamental Smiths carried out hundreds of individual repairs and reassembled the railings. Scroll-ends, new leaves, new feet for sawn-off spears and new spear tops were crafted and fixed by traditional forge techniques using re-worked reclaimed wrought-iron. Every serviceable inch of the original railings was re-used in its original position, its cavities filled by 'pudding-in' molten iron if likely to remain a water-trap.

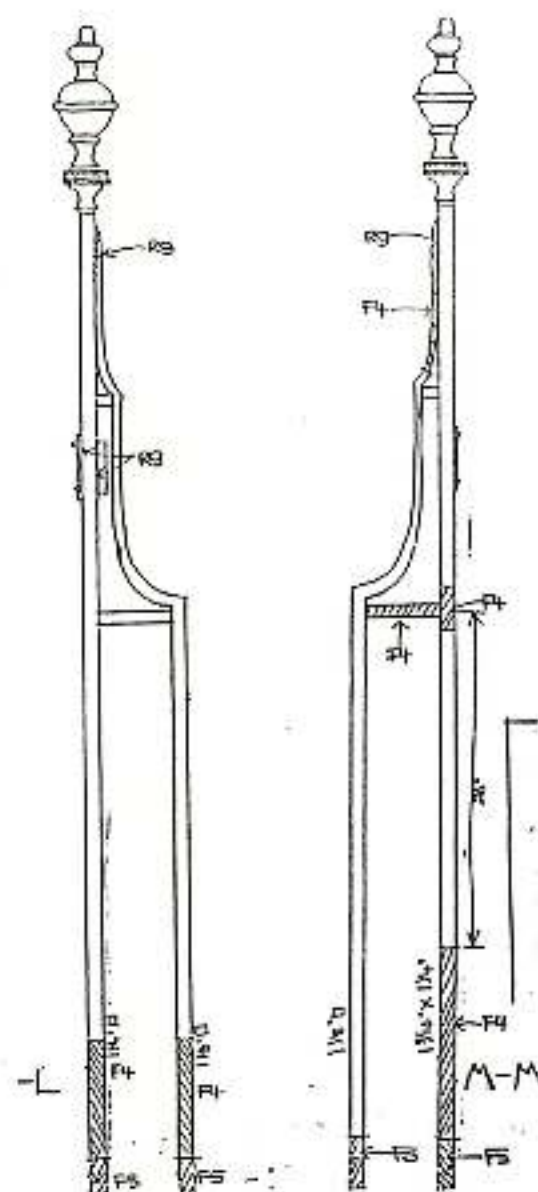
The railings are now refixed on site, resplendent in their original colour, a warm grey which enhances their elegance. They are as they were in 1733, except in two respects: firstly a close inspection reveals a subtle distinction between the (usually) pitted original work and the smoother new work and, secondly the gate overthrow which displays the Gawthorn/Austen coat of arms is still the 1950's steel replica (except for the crest) which deviated from the original so much that it could not be restored. English Heritage intends to replicate the original as a second project.

The cost of the work is in the region of £27,000, three times the cost of steel replacements, but considerably less than a full replica made traditionally. English Heritage and Sun Alliance (then owners) have contributed the lion's share and the City and County Councils have each contributed £1,000.

The project is a personal triumph for Nicola Ashurst, research architect to English Heritage, but credit must equally go to the smiths and masons who have pioneered with exceptional dedication, making it easier for others to follow.

Until now, wrought-iron railings have been unable to grow old gracefully.

R.A. Harrison



Members will find in this publication, which appeared in April, full and amply illustrated accounts of Aspley Hall, a medieval house demolished in 1968 and of The Gables, Little Carlton.

There is also a full account of The Flying Horse - that is the present building - including a survey and a history of ownership of the site from the middle ages onwards. The City Council deserves the credit for commissioning this survey and the documentary research was carried out by Mr. S. Mastoris of the Castle Museum staff.

Those who are not members of the Thoroton Society will find this volume in public libraries but they might consider joining the Society, which arranges lectures through the Winter and excursions in the Summer. Particulars may be obtained from the Honorary Secretary, John Childs, 20 Cransley Avenue, Wollaton, Nott'm NG8 2QY.

The Society aims to include an article in each number of Transactions.

M.B.

#### STOREY'S FARM, KNEETON

It is always good to learn that an old house is being restored sympathetically after neglect. Storey's Farm belonged, from about 1600, to a family of that name; in 1674, the third generation was a John Storey, who was Robert Thoroton's brother-in-law. His grandfather had bought an old, timber-framed house and either he or his son had improved it by building a new stone wing to provide a large parlour with mullioned windows and a fine chamber over it. In the 18th century, the rest of this house was rebuilt in brick.

It is hoped to present a full account of this house when the work has been completed.

M.B.

#### MAJOR HAYMAN ROOKE OF WOODHOUSE PLACE, MANSFIELD WOODHOUSE

Not everyone realises that the Major Oak is called that, not because it was a big tree, but after Major Rooke, the Nottinghamshire Antiquary, who died in 1806.

His career was written up in 1965, in the Transactions of the Thoroton Society, volume 69, by Andrew Sherratt who, at that time, was a Mansfield schoolboy and is now on the staff of the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford.

Rooke retired to Mansfield Woodhouse after a career in the Army Signals School. He was a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries (the first Nottinghamshire Fellow as far as I know) and took up archeological field work. In 1786, he found and excavated the Roman Villa at Mansfield Woodhouse and investigated various other sites. He provided information and drawings for John Throsby's enlarged edition of Thoroton's History of Nottinghamshire, published in 1797 (reprinted in 1972).

The reason for mentioning him is that Woodhouse Place at Mansfield Woodhouse is now on the market and, according to the Estate Agents' brochure, it was Major Rooke's home. It certainly looks as though it had had an owner like that; it is 'Gothicised', with a crenellated parapet and lancet windows. It is alarming to learn that it is not, at present, listed. The County Council's Conservation Officer has applied to English Heritage for it to be spot listed and it is to be hoped that this application succeeds.

M.B.

## CITY COUNCIL REFUSES APPLICATION FOR PEARSON'S DEPARTMENT STORE DEVELOPMENT

Nottingham City Council Planning Committee refused planning permission, listed building consent and conservation area consent at its June meeting for a scheme prepared by architects Bernard Engle and Partners for Grosvenor Square Property Developers. The Committee decided that the scheme, which proposes to demolish all of Pearson's store except the main facade and roof to the Long Row frontage, and constructs a modern multi-level shopping centre in place of the store and the old Classic Cinema on Market Street, was not an appropriate treatment for a listed building in the Old Market Square Conservation Area.

Pearson's store was established in Victorian times in one of three early 18th century merchants houses on Long Row which it grew to absorb. Their narrow, but adjoining mediaeval plots stretching back to the town defences on Upper Parliament Street proved ample for the development of a fashionable department store in the 1920s. Most of the outbuildings in the densely built-up plots were demolished in the process, but those nearest Long Row, and the houses themselves were merely gutted at ground and first floor, leaving upper levels, roof structures and of course the principal elevation, largely intact. Early 18th century staircases and rooms with panelling, fireplaces, cornices and doorcases, oak pegged roofs, mediaeval caves, a possible 16th century warehouse or workshop and oak-framed casement windows lay dormant in an aladdin's cave of architectural delight, whilst most of their contemporaries were totally replaced by Victorian and later developments.

The houses and their contents were so well masked by the department store that they were not even listed but, just before Grosvenor Square presented their scheme, a facelift under 'Operation Clean Up' had begun to reveal their qualities once more.



PEARSONS DRAWING BY COURTESY OF BERNARD ENGLE & PARTNERS, ARCHITECTS

An internal assessment by the Planning Department led to a Building Preservation Notice which was confirmed by the Department of the Environment as a Grade II\* listing, placing the buildings amongst the top 5% or so of listed buildings.

Grosvenor Square decided to substantially amend their scheme to take account of the valuable buildings and have so far dismissed an alternative approach suggested by the Planning Department in which the new shopping centre would grow out of a reformed 18th century yard in the vicinity of the remaining old buildings. At the present time, a Planning Appeal seems more likely than a successfully negotiated scheme, but the Trust (together with Nottingham Civic Society, English Heritage and others) will be supportive of the City Council in that event.

The Members of the Planning Committee are to be congratulated for their bold decision in the face of commercial pressure. Whilst the considerable damage to Nottingham's heritage in the days of Littlewoods and the Black Boy cannot now be undone, the fate of the rest seems better assured in these more enlightened times.

R.A. Harrison

#### HENRY ARTHUR JOHNSON

Harry Johnson died on 28th June, aged 85 and the Trust lost a founder and most valued member. He was, until his retirement, the principal of Johnsons Architects of Wadworth Hall, near Doncaster.

Harry qualified at the Bartlett School of Architecture, University of London, under the guidance of Sir Albert Richardson and was well versed in classical architecture. He contributed articles on country houses to the Transactions of The Thoroton Society; these included reports on Grove Hall (demolished 1952) and Osberton Hall.

In his work for the Trust, he could be relied upon to bring to each project the highest standards of taste and style in architecture, with deep practical knowledge. His manner was quiet and restrained but not the less authoritative for that.

Harry Johnson played a major role in the early days of the Trust and will be much missed.

COACH TRIP  
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TOUR TO COMMENCE AT 9.00 AM FROM COUNTY HALL, LOUGHBOROUGH ROAD, WEST BRIDGFORD  
ON SATURDAY, 3RD SEPTEMBER 1988 RETURNING AT 6.00 PM

Please reserve me ..... seats on the coach

I enclose a cheque to the value of £..... (cost per person £8.00)

NAME: .....

ADDRESS: .....  
.....  
.....

TELEPHONE NO: .....

Return to The Secretary, Nottinghamshire Building Preservation Trust Limited,  
78 Bridgford Road, West Bridgford, Nottingham NG2 6AX