



# NOTTINGHAMSHIRE BUILDING PRESERVATION TRUST LIMITED

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Registered No. 595782 Registered Charity No. 254094

## RESTORATION IN ACTION

An occasional newsletter for members and the public

Winter 2011/Spring 2012

### PROGRESS IN 2011

As so much has happened since March 2011, this Newsletter is a supplement to the 2010-2011 Annual Report.

#### THOROTON DOVECOTE



Above: The Dovecote in December 2011  
Photograph by Mr Ted Gence



Above: A "watching installation" conducted by Mr Roger Scanlan



Above: Thoroton Dovecote in the 1850's

The Trust's plans for the future of this striking building have progressed, a Local Improvement Scheme grant from the County Council lending impetus to the project, which is being master-minded by Alan Wahlers, one of the Trust's Technical Advisers.

By November 2011, after removing all but the sound main timbers of the roof, a team of craftsmen led by Roger Scanlan of Spratton, Northamptonshire, had rethatched it, completing the work with an ornamental block cut top.

A radar survey confirmed that the walls have no cavities, and we now await permission to create a gate, fence and path to allow public access. Further work to create an interior view to the very top of the structure and to provide an interpretation board will follow before the dovecote's official opening.

None of this would have been possible without the support of the dovecote's neighbours, Mr and Mrs C Ellis, and the co-operation of the neighbouring landowner, Mr J P O'Reilly who permitted the thatching team to use his paddock as their workbase.

Rushcliffe Borough Council has consulted and advised on planning issues, and Mr Jason Mordan of the County Council Conservation Department has encouraged us throughout.

Although the Trust's own Dovecote Fund is intended to ensure the structure is maintained, without the funds donated by Cllr Martin Suthers in 2010 and the generous funding from the County Council the Trust

would have been unable to undertake this ambitious project.

A Dovecote Trail around the county looks increasingly likely.

We were greatly saddened to learn shortly before publication of the death in January of Councillor Keith Sheppard, who had represented Newark & Sherwood District Council on the Trust's Management Committee for several years until he stepped down in May last year.

His interest in and support for the work of the Trust was unfailing, and his knowledgeable contribution always helpful, even when occasionally at odds with his Council responsibilities. Heritage buildings in the east of the county have lost a great supporter.

#### COUNCIL OF MANAGEMENT

Major decisions on Trust activities are made at Council of Management meetings, held quarterly.

Although individual members of the Council are elected at the Annual General Meeting, our Constitution provides for every supporting local Council, the Thoroton Society, the Nottingham Civic Society, and the County Council, to appoint representatives.

Councils currently represented on the Trust are Ashfield, Newark & Sherwood, Rushcliffe, Gedling and Bassetlaw. The Trust is consulted on Conservation Area and Listed Buildings Applications, particularly by Gedling and Bassetlaw.

The controversy around the "Robin Hood Hotel" in Newark has involved the Trust with the Newark Civic Society, the Newark Historical Society and a number of individuals who have raised concerns about the future of the three cottages which formed the hotel building.

The elections in May 2011 resulted in changes to the Council of Management: we have lost Cllr Isard from Bassetlaw, who has been replaced by Cllr David Pressley; Cllr Keith Sheppard was succeeded by Cllr Peter Duncan from Newark & Sherwood, and Ashfield District Council has, for the first time for some years, appointed a representative, Cllr Ms Glenys Maxwell.

We were most grateful to Cllrs Isard and Sheppard for their involvement and support. The Trust benefited greatly from their local knowledge, their experience and advice; and we hope the three new Councillors will bring similar strengths to discussions in the Council meetings.

## A STRATEGY FOR THE FUTURE

Your Trustees decided in 2011 that the combination of a vulnerable economy and a fairly static membership, means more needs to be done to publicise the Trust.

In June 2011 Alan Wahlers took a stand to the Tuxford Windmill Conservation Fair which was promoted by SPAB (Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings) and organised by NBPT member Mr John Holland.

The Fair attracted many owners of heritage buildings (and a couple of new members to the Trust), and encouraged useful interaction between the exhibitors.



Alan Wahlers and a Tuxford Heritage Fair visitor discuss the finer points of restoration.

The County Conservation Dept was well represented, as were national heritage organisations and local architects with a special interest in conservation, including a new member of our Projects Committee, Carl Andrews of Worksoop.

Live demonstrations included wattle and daub walls and lime ash floors. Of special interest to the children was hands-on plasterwork moulding – messy, but fun!

The event's success has encouraged the Trust to consider participation in Heritage Fairs in 2012, with modest investment in graphics material to promote our services.



The Windmill - site of the Tuxford Conservation Fair.

## VISITS IN 2011

### NORTH LEVERTON WINDMILL.

In May 2011 James Barlow, the miller who also represents the Trust which now manages the Tuxford windmill, answered every question from our small group as we moved from the ground floor to the inside of the massive cap.

His animated accounts, and detailed personal knowledge of every inch of this 1813 building, its machinery and its history, clearly reflected the fact that the previous two millers were his father and grandfather.



Above: James Barlow explains one of the milling processes.

### AND ON TO RETFORD

We then joined Mrs Mary Hall, a previous Chairman of the NBPT, and Bernard Barnett; both keen members of the Retford Civic Society.

Near the town centre, with its improved pedestrian area and town square, we were truly impressed to see how imaginative treatment can turn a desperately neglected industrial area into attractive homes.



Left: neglected



Right: renovated

After a short towpath walk, past some restored buildings, including a canalside little theatre, but others in a very sad state, we reached the Town Hall.

Mary had pre-arranged special permission for us to make a short conducted tour.

The building houses a majestic ballroom, a beautiful Council Room with magnificent portraits, and a grand chandelier from Rufford.



Above: Retford Council Room



Left: the chandelier

Below: The Ballroom in Retford Council office



Last was the Banana Warehouse, a historic relic of Retford's commercial past which is now "integrated" into a new building. Private developers are restoring Georgian buildings all around, but only the frontage will remain of the Banana Warehouse.



The Banana Warehouse in May 2011 – now you see it, now you don't! It's behind the car.

Due to short notice the party was very small. A repeat visit in 2012 has been suggested, to see progress and to enable others to share the experience.

Please use the form on page 4 to receive information on future visits. This will enable information to be sent out more efficiently when an opportunity arises.

Arrangements are also being made to visit the Hemsall Heritage Orchard and Scarthingmoor Mill in the Spring of 2012.

## TRUST ARCHIVES

*With many years' work recorded since the Trust was formed, valuable material exists in old publications. Amongst the Trust archives are copies of the Annual Reports from which Alan Wahlers has extracted the following article.*

**The Trust has at least one copy of almost all the Annual Reports since the first in 1967-68, when it was among the first ten such Trusts formed in the UK – the oldest, the Cambridge Preservation Society, dating back to 1929!**

Formation of the NBPT was attributed to the County Planning Officer, Jack Lowe – and the Trust enjoyed an office in Shire Hall, High Pavement, free access to all County legal services, a £4000 grant from the County, with a further £2000 from the other 20 rural district, borough and urban district councils. The total startup figure was £6161 15s 0d (worth over £80,000 at 2011 rates)!

*The cover illustration of the very first Annual Report is a photograph, taken by Dr Norman Summers, of Brewster Cottage, Scrooby.*



The Trust's high status is evidenced by the very impressive Council of Management - 31 members included County Aldermen, County Councillors, District and Borough Councillors and representatives of the Nottingham Rural Community Council and the Thoroton Society. The Dowager Viscountess Galway from Seriby Hall represented the CPRE.

A Finance and Grants Sub-Committee consisted of the Chairman, the Secretary and 12 other members of the Management Committee who gave grants "designed to contribute towards the extra costs incurred in using traditional materials in bringing a building back into use".

A Grants Policy directed that grants were made initially as interest-free loans, to be repaid (in full or part) if the building was sold by the recipient of the grant within five years.

In the first year 22 buildings in seven Council areas were assessed by the

Honorary Technical Advisers (Norman Summers and Harry Johnson). The first Report also refers to the Survey of existing buildings. Instigated by Dr N Summers, then Reader in Architecture at Nottingham University, this Survey was conducted by students using a system of record cards, starting with a Pilot Study in the Southwell area.



*A typical Building Survey Record Card.*

Gradually the number of grants increased. In the 1970 Report twenty five projects were listed. Later Worksoop Priory Gatehouse and eleven cottages in Windles Square, Calverton benefited, the latter, converted into eight dwellings, gaining the Trust the European Heritage Year Award.



*Worksoop Priory Gatehouse today. Photo: Carl Andrews.*

In 1974 the Constitution was amended following Local Government Reorganisation. A virtual moratorium on grant applications resulted from "financial difficulties".

By 1975/76, although local authorities were forming their own Conservation Area Advisory Committees, the Trust had made grants to 41 properties. Windles Square, Rempstone Cottages and Sunnyside Cottages were sold, enabling the Trust to assist the restoration of 54 properties the following year.

In 1977/78 the technical advisers were John Severn, Geoff Turner and Graham Beaumont. Funding restrictions meant the Small Grants Policy ceased in 1978/79. The County annual grant was drastically reduced from £10,000 to £500; as a result only 12 properties were assisted in 1979/80 and none the following year.

In 1981/82, with grants of £675 from the County, and only four supporting local authorities, the Trust office moved to The Old Bowls Pavilion in West Bridgford assisted by a one-off payment of £4250 from the County.

The Trust had paid the NRCC for secretarial work, but a part-time

administration assistant now had to be found. Some grants were still being awarded, but ceased by 1983/84.

A "Revolving Fund" was then set up, enabling the Trust to own properties requiring major work, restore them and use the proceeds of sale to fund the next project. Nottingham City Council properties at no. 3 Greens Gardens, Forest Lodge and Newstead Lodge were the first to benefit.

*(The above provides a brief glimpse of the Trust's first twenty years as recorded in the Annual Reports. It is planned to develop this further with a look at the more recent Reports in a future newsletter.)*

**The Trust would very much like to acquire further copies of early Annual Reports, as in many cases only one survives in the archive.**

**And if anyone has a copy of the report for 1968/69 this would be most appreciated, and fill a small gap in our records for which we will be very grateful.**

## HARRY JOHNSON AWARD 2012

In 1988 the Harry Johnson Award was launched in memory of one of the founders. It is now awarded bi-annually, and attracts a good number of entries.

Entry forms for the 2012 Award will be available in March this year – and if you know of a sensitive restoration of an old building, or a new building designed and built to enhance its village environment, both categories completed within the past three years, please let the NBPT office know:

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Tel: 01636 829555

e-mail: [nbp@btclick.com](mailto:nbp@btclick.com)

Please complete and return this section if you would like information on any visits arranged by the Trust.

To: The Administrative Assistant,  
Nottinghamshire Building  
Preservation Trust,  
Minster Chambers, Church Street,  
Southwell, Notts, NG25 0HD

Please include me on your mailing list for details of planned visits by Trust members:

Signature: .....

Name .....

Address: .....

Telephone: .....

E-mail: .....

(Or e-mail - [nbpt@btclick.com](mailto:nbpt@btclick.com))

**For further information on the Trust's work, the Harry Johnson Award 2012, or to seek advice, practical support, or membership details, contact us by e-mail or telephone (leaving a message if necessary).**

**Annual subscriptions are:  
Individuals £15;  
Concessions and students £10;  
Organisations £25.**

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## COMMENT

The latest moves by the Government to encourage house building have produced much concern among the heritage community.

In addition, the need for economies appears to have resulted in local Councils reducing support for conservation and the staff who protect our historic environment.

But how dangerous is this trend?

Will even more of our vulnerable, often Listed, buildings succumb to the pressure to produce high density homes or "commercially viable" retail outlets?

Typical of this dilemma is the situation highlighted by concerned residents of Newark-on-Trent, who banded together to fight an application by developers to demolish the three houses which, before they fell into disuse, had been developed into one structure – the Robin Hood Hotel.

When the Potterdyke site was purchased by M F Strawson Ltd an undertaking was required that, in return for permission to construct a supermarket, the developers would protect and restore the listed buildings. An Asda supermarket is now built and operational – but the Robin Hood Hotel remains boarded up, with peeling paintwork and sliding roof slates.

An energetic campaign by local people, supported by the Trust, convinced Newark & Sherwood District Council, contrary to the opinion of local planning officers, that demolition was not acceptable.

Since then, the developers have stated their intention to incorporate the buildings in the final phase. Meanwhile, the structure remains as an ugly eyesore.

We know that, although this initial skirmish was won, victory is not secure, and the Trust and local enthusiasts will be watching the situation with great care.



*The Robin Hood Hotel (1-3 Lombard Street) in 2011 (Photograph: Nottinghamshire Buildings at Risk Register)*



*With original brickwork revealed, and historic internal features preserved, the Robin Hood buildings could provide retail outlets and enhance Lombard Street again.*

## OTHER TRUST ACTIVITIES

Every so often the Trust is contacted when an old building needs repair. Our volunteer Technical Advisers can then advise on the most appropriate course of action and the materials compatible with the age and style of the structure.

Occasionally building owners, or their solicitors, discover a Charge shown at the Land Registry in favour of the Trust. For some, this comes as quite a shock.

The Charge usually involves a grant, given by the Trust to ensure suitable restoration work to a historic building on condition that, should the building be sold within a stipulated period, the grant should be repaid. In most cases there is no longer a debt to the Trust, and the Charge is released on payment of a small fee to cover administration.

**A DATE FOR YOUR DIARY  
SOUTHWELL  
HISTORIC CRAFTS  
FAIR**

**SATURDAY 12TH MAY  
AT SOUTHWELL MINSTER  
DEMONSTRATIONS OF  
TRADITIONAL CRAFTS**

**FURTHER DETAILS TO BE CONFIRMED**