



NBPT

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE BUILDING PRESERVATION TRUST

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AN OCCASIONAL NEWSLETTER FOR MEMBERS AND THE PUBLIC

Issue 13 October 2024

Chairman's Message

Welcome to our Autumn Newsletter, I hope you have been able to enjoy the Summer!!

The Trust has been active arranging the Harry Johnson Awards programme and, with the help of five University of Nottingham students and a funded intern, Faaris Parker, posters and entry forms were up-loaded onto the NBPT website. Emails have been sent to potential entrants, identified by the students which gave them purposeful experience in the business and historic building world which was all funded by the university, for which the Trust is very grateful. Our thanks, also, to Peter Duncan our vice-chairman, who organised and supervised the UoN input which we hope to make use of in the coming year to enable us to transfer our extensive paper and photographic archive to digital form.

After all the work we received 8 restoration applications which will be shown and rewarded at the AGM. A lot more people, organisations and businesses know of our existence and purpose. So come along to the AGM on Thursday 24th October in the Newark Library at 6.30pm.

A recent visit to Clipstone Headstocks for members and guests was well-attended and we were able to appreciate the excellent work of the team there who have saved and are restoring one of the last remnants of the mining industry. I believe that the visit will be covered elsewhere in this newsletter.

Our search for new members and trustees continues. If you know anyone with an interest in historic buildings and our beautiful Nottinghamshire villages please invite them to join NBPT and help to conserve them.

Thanks to Alan Wahlers, our Hon. Secretary, and architectural adviser, for the time he spends on two Tuxford charities, The Museum of the Horse and The Walks of Life Museum which holds, probably, the most extensive collection in the country of hand-propelled carts and vehicles.

Also thanks to The County Council is also assisting us in advising on work to the timber-framed cottage on the site. Both are worth a visit.

Our Hon. Treasurer, Jon Dawson, is preparing documents to move the constitution of the Trust to the more up-to-date form of a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) which will be

presented to the AGM for approval. This will make trustees no longer liable for the actions on the 'Trust'.

Let me be the first to wish you all a Happy Christmas!



David Atkins, Chairman

Clipstone Headstocks



On one of the dry days this summer in September, a group of members and guests were invited to join Stuart Mills and Julie Wilson at one of the few reminders of the mining industry, the Headstocks at the Clipstone Colliery site. After a brief introduction, Stu then guided the party around the site, starting off with a rickety ride on one of the underground carriers which would be very familiar to many who worked in the mines. The scale of the headstocks and buildings was impressive and the visit catered for

all ages and for those willing there was an opportunity to descend underground for a short walk to experience life “down below”. A smaller group dared the narrow and very tall spiral staircase which gave access to a rooftop view over the surrounding fields and beyond. Sadly we were not permitted to climb to the top of the headstocks. A few pics are attached. The visit was rounded off with refreshments. Visits can be arranged and more details are available on the website at www.clipstoneheadstocks.com.

A visit is highly recommended.



Nil Desperandum

Nil Desperandum *continued part 2.....*

You may recall the article (or was it a moan article ...perhaps it should be called a 'marticle'?) in the last newsletter which finished with an image of one of the four houses which formed Lowdham Grange Borstal Institution (1930 – 1982).



Image: One of the 4 south facing 'Houses' – self contained accommodation blocks at Lowdham Grange which were set on the ridge line overlooking the valley of the Cocker Beck along which the Lambley to Lowdham road runs. Those are not bars on the windows, they are wooden neo-georgian sash. Photographer unknown 1930s.

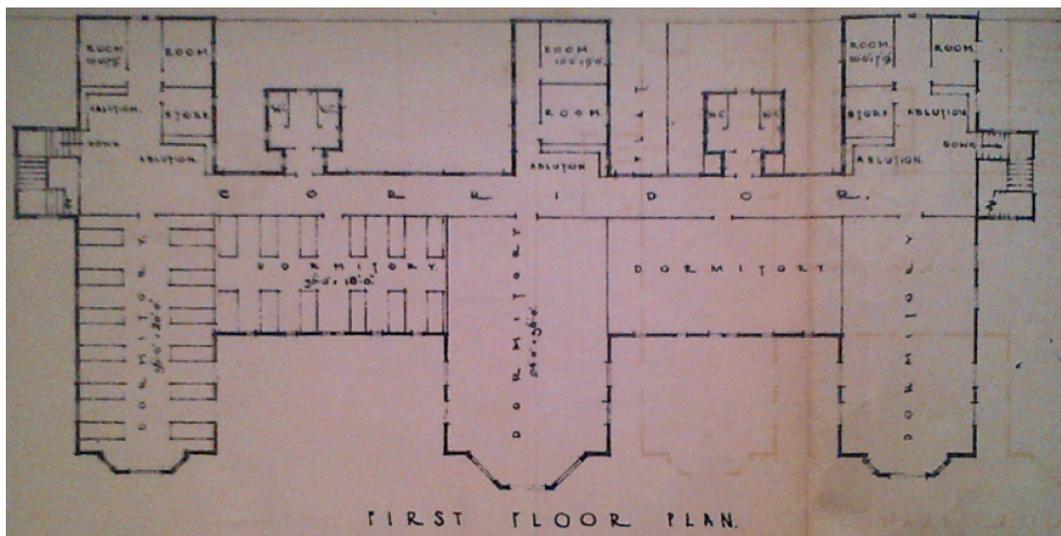


Image. First Floor plan of the above showing the five south facing 12 bed dormitories. On the ground floor all of the communal areas also faced south.



Image. Uninterrupted view from the Administration building which was shared by all dormitories and communal areas of the four houses. Photographer unknown, 1930s. The buildings line the top of a rise and just beyond the cut grass then the narrow uncut area is a Ha-Ha. This is the valley of the Cocker Beck along the bottom of which the Beck and the Lowdham to Lambley road runs.

When undertaking further research on Lowdham Grange Borstal a couple of years ago I found a number of modern academic papers which proposed ‘new’ (reputation enhancing?) research and proposals by academics and architects, some involving prisoner focus groups, resulting in innovative proposals for prison design. Although not referring to Lowdham Grange or previous practice, many of these mirrored those consciously developed and implemented here almost a century earlier.

For example a paper at the 4th International Space Syntax Symposium in 2003 proposed a 21st Century Model Prison where the architecture and the resultant building would be positive enablers. It spoke of the new model, developed in conjunction with the Prison Service, which included;

maximum size 400 prisoners.

prisoners to live in semi-autonomous units, a house, within which he is a member of an accountable group, living close to open space. Quoted is the Home Office Design Briefing (1989) advocating groups of 50-70, although it stated that there is no evidence to ratify the efficacy of this figure.

some prisoners working in the community during the day and returning to their cells at night, which was an important aspect of the approach of Lowdham Grange and other borstals.

Others spoke about ‘Maximum exploitation of natural light’, ‘views of nature and the exterior’, ‘human scale with connected pavilions’ and even ‘soothing sounds of nature, variance in light, colours and natural scents’ all of which were features of Lowdham Grange. Although rural sounds and scents were not always soothing for those from an urban environment.

Indeed, a then recent newspaper report on a forthcoming open prison included in its description that it will be ‘without bars to make it more “like home” for inmates in smaller more intimate wings for just 20 inmates rather than 60 in traditional jails ...*which would make it conducive to rehabilitation*’. The list goes on with conclusion and new approaches which mirrored many of the obviously lost aspects of the building design which was developed around the proposed (and enacted) culture and approach of the rehabilitative regime of Lowdham Grange Borstal.

The design of Lowdham Grange was a conscious construct by men of practical military, prison and life experience, one of whom was to become the first Governor. It was designed for 240 inmates. It was divided into 4 houses, each of which consisted of 5 dormitories of 12. Each dormitory and all communal living areas had copious windows with unobstructed southerly facing views of the open countryside with no sign of enclosing fences or walls (there were not any).



Image. The clock tower nearing the end of its life. Early 1990s. Photographer unknown.

The how, why and wherefores of the design and build of our built environment are an important and complementary partner to its aesthetic, technical and architectural merits and history – in this respect the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. And perhaps, by openly recognising these and crediting those who have gone before, we may help to aid collective memory and prevent paying unnecessarily for reinvention wrapped up in the garb of something that is new and innovative.

Alas none of the institution buildings of Lowdham Grange Borstal remain. Although the Lads also built the staff houses which have been sold off to individual private owners.

Do I fairly despair at the lack of institutional and professional historical memory and learning. Or am I just being unfair on myself and others?

Play my cards right, keep quiet, get a grant, cudos and perhaps a promotion for reinventing the ...

No sh __ Sherlock as some of my friends say.

You think I jest!! ... A year or two ago, my partner and I spent over an hour on the train back from London listening to these bright young things talking about this project that they had been given to develop this new, exciting and innovative concept which could result in big promotions ... On and on

they twittered as we sat there fit to explode ... they were talking about what we called customer care, quality management, exceeding customer expectations. Work that my partner had done in the NHS and I in Nottinghamshire Local Government in 1980s, 90s and early 2000s. And we were not the first for example, the origins of modern Quality Management and Continuous Improvement go back to the American led post war rebuilding of the Japanese economy.

Now where are my old reports and training notes – I knew that they would come in useful one day ... I do wonder what are they spending my winter fuel allowance on?

Jeremy is the Author of *Lowdham Grange. Borstal!* (2016) and other local history books. Which are available from The Bookcase, Lowdham; Five Leaves (Nottingham); www.nottinghambooks.co.uk and directly from the author. And a Leicester University MA Dissertation (2020) *Brutality Replaced by Brains: Lowdham Grange Borstal 1930 to 1939: Rediscovering a long-forgotten regime.*

The Thoroton Society - news

The Thoroton Society of Nottinghamshire was founded in 1897 and is the county historical and architectural society.

The website is www.thorotonsociety.org.uk . Rosemary Muge is the administration secretary for the Thoroton Society, and anyone wishing to have further information is most welcome to contact her at rosemarymuge@gmail.com

The Thoroton winter programme lectures - non-Thoroton members are welcome, they are held in the Mechanics Institute in Nottingham, 3 North Sherwood Street NG1 4EZ. Very close to bus and tram routes. they all start at 2.30pm on second Saturday in the month.

Sat 9 November - 'Open to the World': Nottingham Castle Museum and the British Empire, by Frances Potts of University of Nottingham

Sat 14 December - Cinemas in Nottingham, by Graham Woodward, Local Historian

Sat 11 Jan 2025 - Nottinghamshire Timber-framed Buildings, by Jason Mordan of Nottinghamshire County Council Conservation

Sat 8 Feb 2025 - Nottinghamshire Surveyed: Mapping and documenting estates in the county before 1700, by Steph Mastoris

Sat 8 March 2025 - Restoring a Georgian Town House Garden, by Martin Stott, Trustee of Bromley House Library

New members are welcomed and the membership secretary can be contacted at:

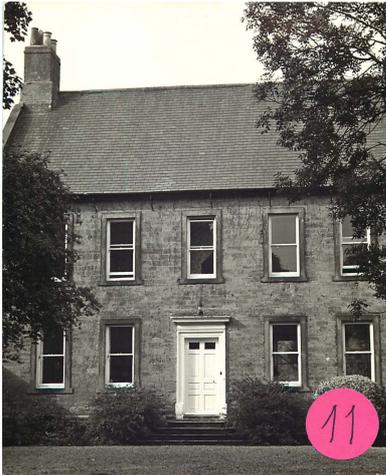
hannah.nicholson@hotmail.com

Archives – Can You Help Again?

Following a successful plea for help in edition 12 of the Newsletter in April 2024 we can thank June McConnell and, more properly, Col. for one of the answers which was:

illustration 1 below Chilwell Manor House, demolished 1965 despite strong protests from the Thoroton Society..... to make way for a housing estate.

Illustration 1: solved



*Illustration 2: not solved
from the last newsletter?*



Illustration 3: whereabouts please?

Tuxford Volunteers - an update

The small group of volunteers led by Jason Mordan of the Notts County Council have been busy working on the timber-framed house at the Walks of Life Museum. The red paint on the front elevation has been removed to reveal the facing brickwork which, including the mortar, is in pretty good condition overall, although the lower parts now reveal cement repairs which will need to be removed and made good. It was possible to use the scaffold to replace the plastic

gutter with a new cast iron one and there was just enough time to paint the gutter before the scaffold was to be removed. A grant from Bassetlaw DC has enabled a new floor to be laid in the sheep barn and a new 3-phase electric supply to the museum installed.

Watch out for details on the Facebook page or on the website.



The pic left shows the extensive work necessary before the red paint could be removed from the facing bricks, and included scaffolding, traffic management with a footpath diversion. Just the back to do now.....oh and re-render one of the gable ends.....and add stainless steel bars to the other gable.....and then.....

The pic below right shows the excavation floor to the main room prior to the installation of a limecrete floor. An old rear blocked-up doorway can be seen and stone foundations, probably associated with the original timber-framed building.



The pic on the left is of the new concrete block floor in the sheep barn, making this area usable for a range of community events.