

Rutland Local History & Record Society  
RUTLAND RECORD SERIES No 5

# The Heritage of Rutland Water

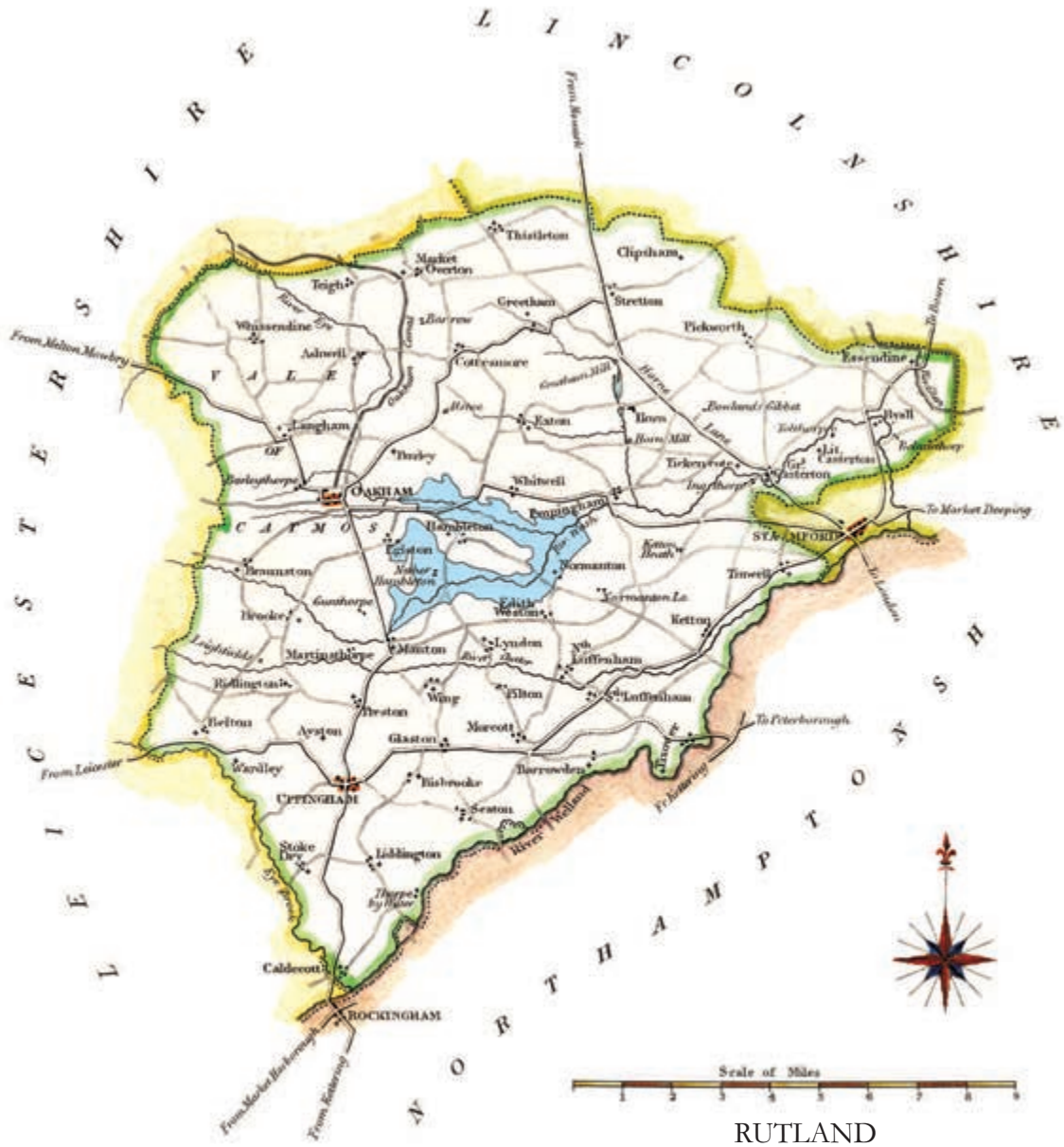


Compiled & Edited by Robert Ovens & Sheila Sleath

‘There is certainly no circumstance of landscape more interesting or beautiful than water and there can be no person so void of taste as not to feel the necessity of improving the valley at Normanton [now under Rutland Water] by enlarging the river, yet this is a subject attended with some difficulty and requires more management than may at first be conceived; for though it might be possible to make such a dam or head as would convert the whole valley into one vast lake, yet the expense of such a bank, and the waste of so much valuable land, is more than I would dare to advise . . . .’

*Humphry Repton, 1797*

# The Heritage of Rutland Water



*After J & C Walker's map of Rutland, circa 1840, with Rutland Water superimposed*

# The Heritage of Rutland Water

Compiled and Edited by  
Robert Ovens & Sheila Sleath



Supported by

**The National Lottery**<sup>®</sup>  
through the Heritage Lottery Fund



Heritage  
Lottery Fund

**anglianwater**

Rutland Local History & Record Society  
Rutland Record Series No 5  
Registered Charity No 700273

RLHRS Rutland Record Series No 5

First published in 2007 by the Rutland Local  
History & Record Society, Rutland County  
Museum, Catmose Street, Oakham, Rutland,  
LE15 6HW

Reprinted with minor corrections 2008

The Society is grateful to the Heritage Lottery  
Fund for a generous grant towards the cost of  
producing this publication under the Local  
Heritage Initiative

Copyright © Rutland Local History  
& Record Society 2008

ISBN 978-0-907464-41-9

The rights of Robert Ovens and Sheila Sleath as  
editors of this work and those of all the  
individual authors have been asserted by them in  
accordance with the Copyright, Designs and  
Patents Act 1993

All rights reserved. No part of this publication  
may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system,  
or transmitted in any form or by any means,  
electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording  
or otherwise without the prior permission of the  
Rutland Local History & Record Society

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data  
A catalogue record for this book is available  
from the British Library

Edited for the Society by T H McK Clough

Designed by Dan and Phil Jarman,  
philjarman@yahoo.co.uk

Printed and bound in Malta by  
Gutenberg Press Ltd

# Contents

---

Map of Rutland, <i>circa</i> 1840, with Rutland Water superimposed		2
Foreword		7
The Middle Gwash Valley before and after Rutland Water		8
Acknowledgements		9
Introduction and Abbreviations		11
1 Working the Soil – the Generation of Wealth 1086 to 1800	Ian Ryder	13
2 The Agricultural Revolution and Beyond	Edward Baines	25
3 Barnsdale	Sue Howlett	45
4 Burley on the Hill	Sue Howlett	55
5 Edith Weston: A Queen’s Dowry	Sue Howlett	93
6 Egleton: A Glimpse into the Past	Sheila Sleath & Robert Ovens	117
7 Empingham: An Entire Model Village	Sue Lee & Jean Orpin	133
8 Hambleton: The Settlement on the Crooked Hill	Sue Howlett	149
Aspects of Topography: Lost Footpaths, Footbridges and Bridleways		192
9 Lower Hambleton in 1797	Sheila Sleath & Robert Ovens	193
Aspects of Topography: An Ancient Ridgeway		210
10 Manton: A ‘Town on a Rock’	Manton Millennium Group with Robert Ovens & Sheila Sleath	211
11 Normanton	Sheila Sleath & Robert Ovens	231
Aspects of Topography: The Egleton to Nether Hambleton Road		282
12 Whitwell: A ‘pretty little village’	Sue Howlett	283
13 Changing Communities	Paul Reeve	303
Aspects of Topography: Normanton Park Road		314
14 Rutland Waters	Robert Ovens & Sheila Sleath	315
Aspects of Topography: A New Wetland Habitat		348
15 Don’t Dam Rutland	Hilary Crowden	349
Aspects of Topography: Normanton Bridge		358
16 The Geology of the Middle Gwash Valley	Clive Jones	359
Aspects of Topography: Bull Bridge		368



17	Planning and Constructing the Reservoir	Robert Ovens & Sheila Sleath	369
	Map of Archaeological Sites in the Middle Gwash Valley / Archaeological Timeline		402
18	Brooches, Bathhouses and Bones – Archaeology in the Gwash Valley	Kate Don	403
	Aspects of Topography: High Bridge Road		414
19	The Archaeologists	Sheila Sleath & Robert Ovens	415
20	Medieval Settlements at Nether Hambleton and Whitwell	Tim Clough	421
	Aspects of Topography: Gibbet Lane		444
21	Lost Homes	Sheila Sleath & Robert Ovens	445
	Aspects of Topography: The Stamford to Oakham Turnpike		480
22	Rutland Water: Planning and Developing a Water Supply Reservoir as a World-Class Leisure Venue	David Moore	481
23	Fauna and Flora before Rutland Water	Mike Griffin	499
	Aspects of Topography: Old Barnsdale Hill		528
24	Tim Appleton MBE – Thirty Years of Rutland Water Nature Reserve	Sue Howlett & Robert Ovens	529
25	The Birds of Rutland Water	Terry Mitcham	575
26	A New Home for the Osprey	Barrie Galpin	587
27	A Panorama of Activities at Rutland Water	Robert Ovens & Sheila Sleath	601
28	Rutland Water Fishing	John Wadham	611
29	Sailing on Rutland Water – Rutland Sailing Club	Tony Gray & Mike Barsby	625
	Aspects of Topography: New Barnsdale Hill		642
30	Extra, Extra, Read all about it!	Sheila Sleath & Robert Ovens	643
	Bibliography		665
	Index		668

## Foreword

---

Rutland Water occupies the heart of the county of Rutland: a small county, and a very big heart. Even so, when the Rutland Local History & Record Society first proposed that the reservoir area's extensive and varied heritage should be recorded and commemorated, I think no-one envisaged that the project would give birth to a publication on such a scale as this, nor that it would cover such a range of subject matter – from Rutland Water's underlying geology to the management of its nature reserves, from the history of families that once lived nearby to the types of boat that now sail its waters. Anyone who has an interest in Rutland, its history and its environment will find something in this book which will catch the imagination, and if its readers are inspired to talk about what they have read here, or to find out more, then one of the project's aims will have been fulfilled.

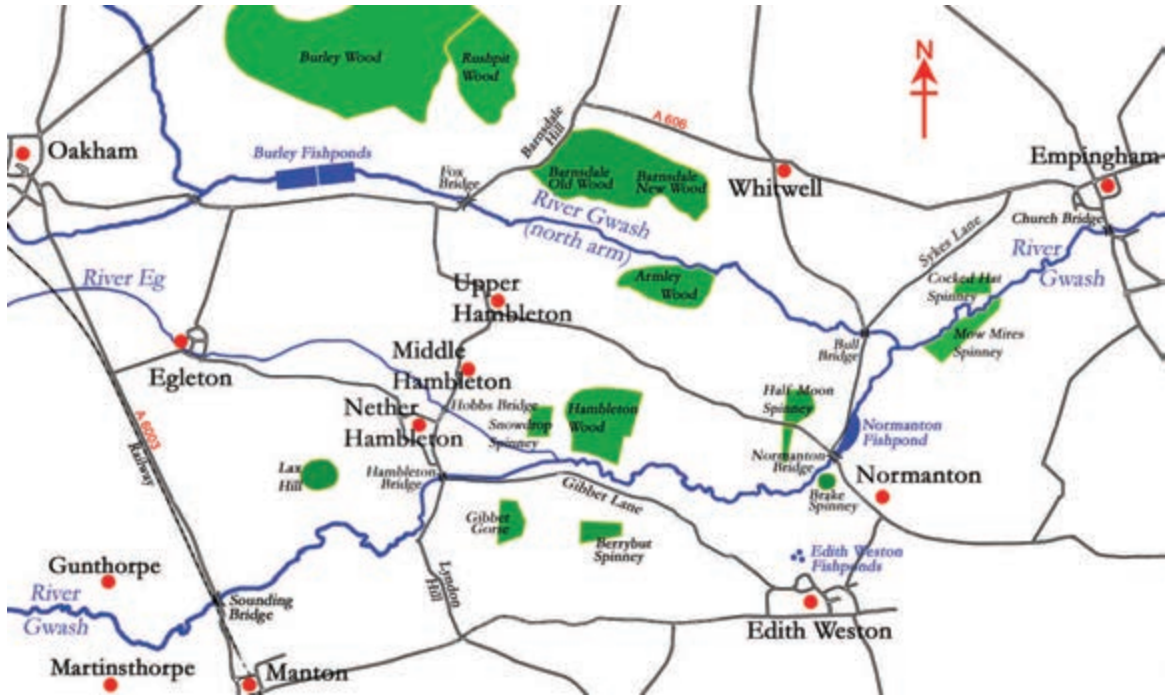
That this book has come to see the light of day is very largely due to the dedicated hard work of its two editors, Robert Ovens and Sheila Sleath. When they first asked me if I would contribute a Foreword, I demurred. As the publishing society's Honorary Editor, I was, I thought, too close to the project, and in any case I felt that such a Foreword should be contributed by someone whose name would lend more kudos to the book than would mine. However, I was persuaded that by my closeness, and through the knowledge of Rutland which I had accumulated during my time as Curator of the Rutland County Museum, I was suitably qualified to perform this task. Now, having seen at first hand the effort that has gone into the making of the book, it is a very pleasant duty for me to congratulate Robert and Sheila – not for the first time – on making a major, and probably unique, contribution to the study and recording of Rutland's heritage.

We should be enduringly grateful not only to Robert and Sheila, but also to the wide range of authors who were persuaded, encouraged, or – rarely, it should be said – cajoled into writing their many and varied chapters for this book. They and others are more fully acknowledged elsewhere, but without all their efforts the book could never have appeared. Nor could it have appeared without the support of the Rutland Local History & Record Society's members and the ambitions of its management committee: it is a small society, and the project has represented a major commitment on its part. We should also gladly acknowledge the generous recognition of the worth of the project by the Heritage Lottery Fund's Local Heritage Initiative and its sponsors, whose significant financial contribution to the cost of production has made possible the design and printing of this book. The LHI was designed to support local community projects, and there can be few such projects which have involved such a wide range of contributors and participants. This has been a community project *par excellence*, and the Rutland Local History & Record Society is now proud to present the results to the community for which it was prepared: not a large community, but big-hearted.

*T H McK Clough*



# The Middle Gwash Valley before and after Rutland Water



## Acknowledgements

---

*The Heritage of Rutland Water* is the culmination of a two-year community project involving a great deal of intensive research and this publication would not have been possible without the help, guidance and commitment of many individuals and organisations. Nor would it have been possible without the support of the National Lottery through the Heritage Lottery Fund, which awarded Rutland Local History & Record Society a substantial grant towards the cost of the project, including the production of this book.

The huge success of this project and the number of people involved means that it is virtually impossible to name everyone who has made a contribution. Without exception, those who were contacted willingly provided information, loaned photographs and archival material and gave valuable advice and support. The Society expresses its gratitude to all of them.

It is not the Society's intention to single out or to categorise the contribution made by every individual or group, but special mention must be made of the following: Tim Clough, Honorary Editor of the Rutland Local History & Record Society for editorial guidance and proofreading; Robert Ovens for his unstinting contribution in his roles as co-ordinator of the project, joint editor and official photographer; Sheila Sleath as joint editor and oral history convenor; Dan and Phil Jarman as the ever-patient designers of this publication; Mike Griffin and Paul Reeve for their invaluable assistance with editing and proof-reading; and Mike Frisby for his guidance on all matters relating to information technology. Those who attended the initial meetings and who became part of the Steering Committee must also be acknowledged. This includes Sue Howlett, one of the initial driving-forces behind the project, who not only found time to be secretary of the Group, but also organised a competition for school children.

One of the main tasks early in the project was to convene an oral history group. This resulted in many memories being recorded with specific reference to Rutland Water and also provided an insight into aspects of life as it used to be for people living in and around the Gwash valley. This collection will become a valuable resource for researchers in the future. It will be held by the Society at the Rutland County Museum and in the fullness of time transcripts will be freely accessible on request. The contribution of the interviewers and interviewees is of great merit and a special thank you is extended to them.

Without the contributions of the authors this publication would have been very difficult to complete. The Society is therefore particularly grateful to all of them for devoting their time to and for submitting such varied and well-researched material which will inevitably appeal to a very wide readership.

The number of photographs which were loaned

or donated to the Society was overwhelming. We are particularly grateful to Anglian Water, Tony Traylen and Richard Adams, as well as many other individuals, for giving free access to their photographic collections, and to the Rev Brian and Elizabeth Nicholls (official photographers for the construction of the reservoir) who donated their complete collection of Rutland Water negatives to the Society. In addition, the Rutland County Museum kindly allowed the Society to make use of its collections, especially the Jack Hart Collection of Rutland postcards, an extensive and unparalleled source of early Rutland views. Most of the present-day digital photographs were taken by Robert Ovens, many of which are used to illustrate this publication. This vast archive will complement other donated or loaned project material which has been digitised by the editors and which will be retained by the Society at the Rutland County Museum.

Overall public interest has been heartening and encouraging. One of the particular aims, and a particular condition of the Heritage Lottery Fund award, was to progress the project through community involvement. This has been admirably achieved, the involvement of local schools being particularly rewarding. Whilst it is impossible to acknowledge everyone who has made a contribution, the Society's gratitude is extended to the following:

Fred Adams, Richard Adams (SC), Dora Allibone, Anglian Water ©, aphotoflora.com ©, Tim Appleton, John Bailey, Edward Baines (A, SC), Dan Baker, John Ball, Barnsdale Hall Hotel, Michael Barsby (A), Hayley Bell, Mary Bell (OH), Jane Bewes, Ray Biggs, Bobby Blackstock, David Bland (OH), Justin Boughey, Christine Brammal, John Branson, Liz Branson, Bridgeman Art Library ©, Noel Bridgeman, Elizabeth Bryan, Andrew Burns, Audrey Buxton (OH, SC), Cambridge Museum of Air Photography ©, Barbara Camp, David Carlin, Caroline Cartwright (SC), Tina Cavenagh, Sue Cavanagh, the late Roger Chandler, R C Chatburn, Janet Christian, Robin Church (OH), Patrick Clay, Tim Clough (Ed, A, SC), Mary and the late Louis Cockerill (OH), Gwen Coggan (OH), Tom Coggan (OH), Edward Conant (OH), Sir John Conant (OH), Nick Cooper, Roger Corby (OH), Country Life Picture Library ©, David Cram, Peter Craven, Malcolm Croson (OH), Hilary Crowden (A, SC), Peter Diplock (SC), Kate Don (A, SC), Sheila and Peter Drake (OH), Betty Eaton, the late Jim Eaton, Roy Eaton Photography ©, Edith Weston Parish Council, staff and pupils of Edith Weston County Primary School, Daphne Elliott, Patrick Elliott, Empingham Parish Council, Sheila Ervin (OH), Betty and the late George Finch, Fotolia © (S Camp, S Chushkin, D Freer, J Gil, K Hewitt, ivp, M Kosmal, pdtnc, Stafford, D Zidar), Fox Talbot

Museum, Alick Freer (OH), Kemmel Freestone (OH), Michael Frisby (SC), Lord Gainsborough (OH), Prince Gregory Galitzine, Barrie Galpin (A), Nick Giles, Peter Golden, Sam Gorin, Maggie Gover (OH), *Grantham Journal* ©, Tony Gray (A), staff and pupils of Great Casterton C of E Primary School, Denis Gregg, Dennis Gregory (OH), Marcus Gregory (OH), Dr Mike Griffin (Ed, A, OH), Jane Grylls, Mary Grylls, Dorothy Hackett, Lawrence Harris, Robert Hartley, Charles Hawarth (SC, OH), Tim Hawkins ©, Julie Healey, Angela Herbert (OH), Mr and Mrs John Hibbitt, John Hill, Raymond Hill, Brian Hollingshead, Martin Hollingshead, Sue Howlett (A, SC, OH), Pam Hubbard (OH), *Illustrated London News*, Institution of Civil Engineers ©, Dan Jarman (D), Phil Jarman (D), Mike Johnson, Dr Dorothy Johnston, Chris Jones, Dr Clive Jones (A), Elaine Jones, Philip Joyce (OH), Alan Jury, Marion Kelham, Jill Kimber, Brian Knight, Ron Knight, Vic Lambert, Marigold Lamin (OH), Peter Lane, Janet Lavender, Marion Lawrie (OH), Sylvia and Michael Leach (OH), Sue Lee (A), *Leicester Mercury* ©, the late Jim Levisohn ARPS, Joan Levisohn, Lincolnshire Archives ©, Edna Locke (OH), Madge Lombard (OH), David Lowe (A), Chris Lythall, Andrew Makey (OH), Sheila Manchester (OH), Manton Millennium Group, Manton Parish Council, John Matthews, Brenda May, Roland Meadows, Peter Meakin, Tony Melia, Diana Mellows (OH), Terry Mitcham (A), David Moore (A), National Monuments Record (English Heritage) ©, the Rev Brian Nicholls (OH), Brian and Elizabeth Nicholls Photography ©, Normanton Park Hotel, Northampton Libraries and Information Service, the Churchwardens of North Luffenham, staff and pupils of St Mary & St John C of E School at North Luffenham, *Nottingham Evening Post* ©, William Nourish, John Nowell – Zodiac Publishing ©, the staff at Oakham Library, Jim O'Connor, Jean Orpin (A), Jane Ostler, Robert Owens (Ed, A, SC, Ph, Arc, OH), Robert Owen Smith, Mr and Mrs Eric Palmer (OH), Shirley Palmer, Mary and David Parkin (A), Janice Patient, Alan Peel Shaw, Jim Pickering, John W Pinder, Margaret and Laurence Plumb (OH), Brian Pollard (OH), Richard Pollard, Dr D A Postles, Canon John R H Prophet, Eileen Ray, Diana Read (OH), Record Office for Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland (ROLLR) ©, the staff at ROLLR, Sally Redrup, Paul Reeve (Ed, A, SC, OH), Ruth and Christopher Renner (OH), Pasqualino Risi, Bob Roberts (OH), Mike Roberts, Robinson Library ©, Alison Rogers (OH), Philip Rudkin, Jerry Rudman, Rutland County Council ©, Rutland County Museum (RCM) ©, Simon Davies and the staff at RCM, the officers and committee members of Rutland Local History & Record Society, Rutland Natural History Society ©, Rutland Osprey Project ©, Rutland Radio, Rutland Sailability ©,

Rutland Sailing Club, the staff at Rutland Sailing Club, *Rutland and Stamford Mercury* ©, *Rutland Times* ©, Dr Ian Ryder (A, SC), *Sailracer* ©, Vicky Sanderlin-McLoughlin (SC), Nigel Savage, Dorothy and Noel Sharp (OH), Shirley Design ©, Rovy Slater, Harold Sleath, Sheila Sleath (Ed, A, SC, Arc, OH), Adrian Smith, the late C Walter Smith, Gordon Smith (OH), Freda Smithson, Barbara H Smith, the late Derek Spence, the staff at Stamford Library, Anthony Squires, Ian Starkey, *Sunday Express*, Steve Swan, Jane Theobald, Jane Thomas (OH), Auriol and David Thomson, Winifred Tibbert (OH), Malcolm Todd, Peter Tomalin, Phil Tomaszewski, Ann Tomlinson, Tony Traylen, *Trout Fisherman Magazine* ©, Malcolm G Underwood, University of Leicester Archaeological Services, Uppingham School Archives ©, John Wadham (A), Bryan Waites, Henry Wakerley (OH), Ben Walker, John Walker, Joan and Roy Walton, Cliff Waters Design ©, Barbara and Alex Watt (OH), Linda Watts, Mrs Weatherby, B West, May Wheatley, Janet Whittaker, Whitwell Hotel and Conference Centre, Wikipedia ©, Joan Wild (OH), Joan Willerton (OH), A J H Winder (OH), Rosemary Woodland, John Wright, R Wright.

The following abbreviations are used in the above:

A	Author
Arc	Scanning photographs & archival material
D	Designer
Ed	Editorial
OH	Interviewer, interviewee and/or transcriber
Ph	Photography
SC	Steering Committee
©	Institution granting permission to reproduce copyright photograph(s)

The majority of the photographs used in this publication are © The Rutland Local History & Record Society. Other illustrations have been reproduced with the kind permission of individual and institutional owners and whilst every care has been taken to trace copyright holders, if the Society has omitted anyone it apologises and will, if informed, make corrections in any future edition.

Dr Michael Tillbrook  
Chairman  
*Rutland Local History & Record Society*

## Introduction

---

Early in 2004 the management committee of Rutland Local History & Record Society agreed to a suggestion that it should set up a study group to research the local history of the area now covered by Rutland Water. More than thirty years had passed since people living in the mid-Gwash valley, particularly those who earned their living from the land, had fought a concerted, but unsuccessful campaign to prevent the valley from being permanently flooded. This research needed to be commissioned rather sooner than later if it was to be carried out within living memory of life before the reservoir.

Almost at the same time, the Society became aware of grants that were available from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) for projects involving the community. So our local history project became a community project, and a small steering committee was set up to apply for a grant. Its scope was widened to include archaeology and natural history, and it became known as the Heritage of Rutland Water Project. In retrospect, filling in the HLF application forms was easy compared with what was to follow, although we did have to predict, for example, what equipment and specialist training would be required, and how many volunteer hours would be needed.

In no time at all, it seemed, we had been offered nearly £25,000 and within a week half of it was in the bank. Rather worryingly, we now realised that we were committed to performing and completing this major undertaking, by far the largest that the Society had ever been directly involved in.

From the outset we expected the project to be like a large flywheel – slow to get up to speed, and then difficult to stop. How right we were. In May 2004 there were lots of ideas but little action. Then someone had the very bright idea of hiring a stand at the imminent Rutland County Show. Armed only with a small display on Rutland Water and a few Society publications to sell, three of us had a most exciting day. We could not believe how many were interested in our project, and by the end of the day we had a long list of people to see and interview. This, combined with local press and radio coverage and a poster campaign, kick-started the project.

As well as local museums and record offices, we always envisaged that much of the information generated for our project would come from four main sources – local people with memories, old photographs, newspaper cuttings and local publications. We were very successful in all these areas.

Memories of living and working in the valley, the campaign against the reservoir and the impact of reservoir construction work were recorded by our oral history group. In all there were 50 recordings to transcribe, type and analyse, a major project in itself. A competition for local schoolchildren, devised and directed by Sue Howlett, ensured that this section of the community was involved. Following presentations at a number of schools by members of the steering committee, more than 50 children took part and the Galitzine Prize was presented to the winner Evie Smith, of North Luffenham Church of England School, in a ceremony at Oakham Castle in June 2005.

The *Stamford Mercury* was a mine of useful information, not only for its archive going back some 300 years, but also for the years leading up to and during the construction of Rutland Water. Other local newspapers also reported on aspects of Rutland Water and we were particularly fortunate to locate four collections of cuttings. Other rich veins were the often self-published local village histories, the *In Rutland* Series researched by Tony Traylen, the Society's own *Rutland Record*, the *Victoria County History*, and George Phillips' *Rutland Magazine*.

The most successful aspect of the whole project was photography. A new digital camera purchased for the project ensured that we were able to accumulate a huge archive of 'now' photographs, many of which are reproduced in this book. The important Jack Hart collection of early Rutland postcards in Rutland County Museum was another constant source of inspiration.

Before he was ordained, the Rev Brian Nicholls, and his wife Elizabeth, were the official photographers for the Empingham Reservoir Project. We were amazed and delighted when they



offered all their negatives and slides to our project. Until this generous gesture, we were struggling for good quality photographs of the construction process. In fact we were overwhelmed by the generosity of the many individuals and organisations who contributed their photographs either as donations or for copying

So, at the end of the second year of what was intended to be a two-year project we had amassed a huge amount of material and information, all of which will be retained at Rutland County Museum. However, we were yet to achieve our major objectives.

One objective, that of involvement with the media, was achieved when members of the steering committee were invited to take part in ‘Countryfile’ and ‘Castles in the Country’ for BBC television. Another objective was to devise a guided historical walk based on the project, and this took place early in September 2006 at Normanton, on the south shore of Rutland Water. A third objective was achieved two weeks later with a major presentation and exhibition on the project at Empingham, the exhibition then being displayed at Rutland County Museum for the next two months.

However, the main objective, this book, was at this stage a long way from publication, and it was to be another year before it was ready to be sent to the printers. At the original meeting to decide on the content and layout it became clear that no one person could write it, and that the best plan would be to invite individual authors to write chapters on specific topics. This plan worked well and very few restrictions were placed on them as to content, style, length, or what images were to be included.

Originally it was planned to have 260 pages, but as time went on and contributions came forward to go through the editing, proof-reading and designing processes, the page count gradually crept up to nearly 700. However, thanks to our HLF grant, our designers and additional support by the Society, we were able to let this happen, particularly as it was a once-and-only opportunity.

We know that our volunteer group has produced a book to be proud of and we hope that it proves to be an interesting read as well as an inspiration for further research.

*Robert Ovens and Sheila Sleath  
Rutland Local History & Record Society  
October 2007*

## Abbreviations

---

TA	Tim Appleton	ROLLR	Record Office for Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland
AF	<i>Airfield Focus</i>	RCM	Rutland County Museum
AW	Anglian Water	RLHRS	Rutland Local History and Record Society
CSPD	<i>Calendar of State Papers, Domestic</i>	RNHS	Rutland Natural History Society
CIPM	<i>Calendar of Inquisitions Post Mortem</i>	RSC	Rutland Sailing Club
Hart	Jack Hart postcard collection in RCM	RO	Robert Ovens
HMP	Her Majesty’s Prison	RAF	Royal Air Force
HLF	Heritage Lottery Fund	RCAF	Royal Canadian Air Force
IFDS	International Federation of Disabled Sailors	RYA	Royal Yachting Association
JHC	<i>Journal of the House of Commons</i>	RWFF	Rutland Water Fly Fishers
JST	Jubilee Sailing Trust	snr	senior
jnr	junior	SS	Sheila Sleath
SH	Sue Howlett	SSSI	Site of Special Scientific Interest
LHI	Local Heritage Initiative	SPA	Special Protection Area
MNWB	Mid-Northamptonshire Water Board	TWL	top water level
NVQ	National Vocational Qualification	UK	United Kingdom
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation	VCH	<i>Victoria County History</i>
OD	Ordnance Datum (height above mean sea level)	W&NRA	Welland & Nene River Authority
OS	Ordnance Survey	WI	Women’s Institute