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Of particular interest were a possible stable or workshop north-east of the hall and a possible solar block to the west of the hall. By opening larger areas for investigation, it was hoped that the community dig would make more sense of these complex structures.

### Trench 1 - Possible Stable or Workshop North-east of the Hall

This trench focused on a series of earth mounds where Time Team identified a sizeable stone wall, thought to date to the 13th or 14th century. Removal of turf and topsoil revealed that the mounds were large piles of rubble, presumably from the demolition of an underlying building. The topsoil contained late 17th, 18th and 19th century finds, including pieces of clay pipe, pottery, china, animal bone, iron nails, copper buttons, a bone knife handle, and part of a Crosse & Blackwell anchovy paste jar lid of c.1839. All these finds were possibly the result of the site becoming a convenient place for refuse disposal after the castle had been abandoned.

The rubble probably dated to the early 17th century, when George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham levelled the ruins.

## Oakham Castle

### Community Dig 2018

Based on a report by Mathew Morris MA ACIFA, Project Officer, University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS)

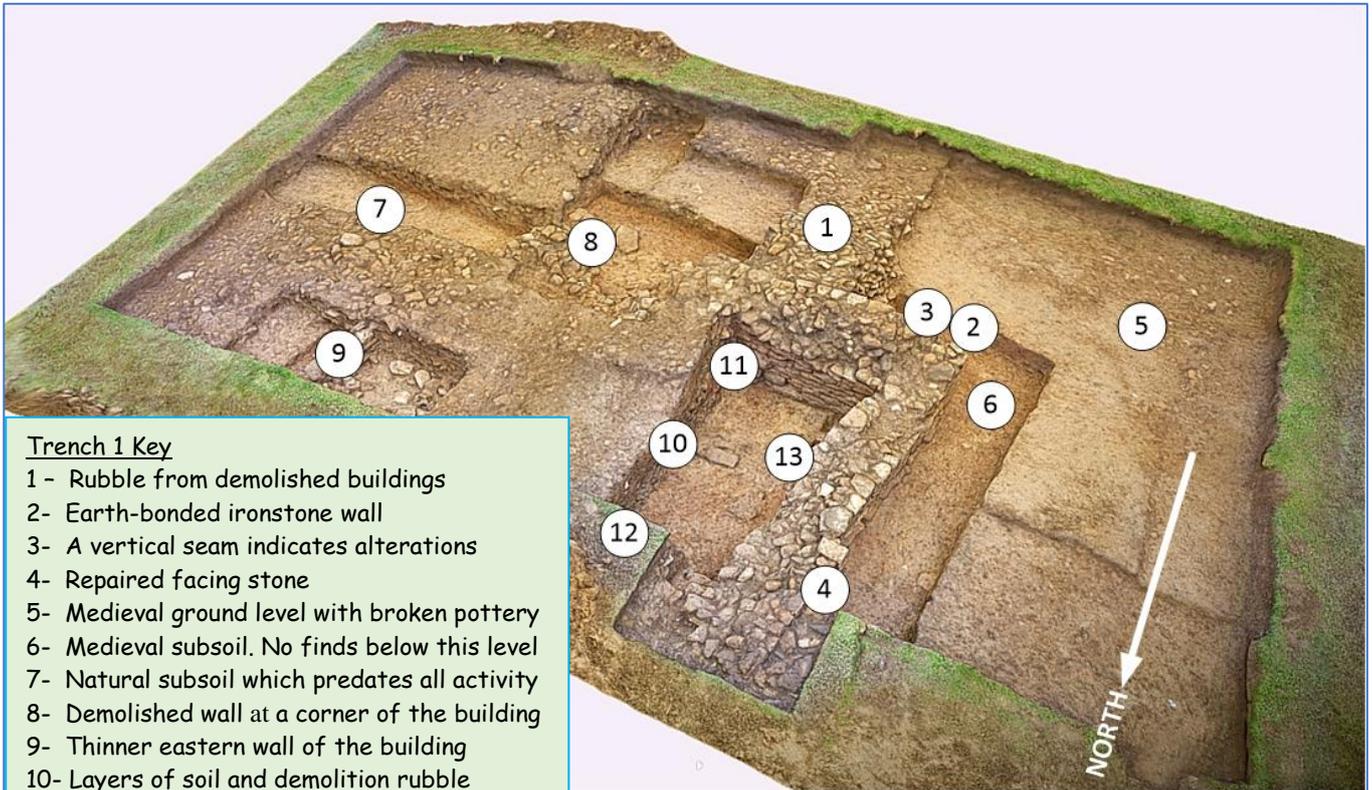
In April 2018, ULAS was commissioned by Rutland County Council to carry out a community archaeology dig at Oakham Castle. This was funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund as part of a broader grant to restore this nationally significant site.

The aim of the community dig was to build on work started by Channel 4's Time Team in 2012, and to give volunteers the opportunity to uncover new information about the castle's history.

Time Team identified that significant archaeological remains still survived under the castle's inner bailey.



Volunteers at work in Trench 1 (ULAS)



**Trench 1 Key**

- 1- Rubble from demolished buildings
- 2- Earth-bonded ironstone wall
- 3- A vertical seam indicates alterations
- 4- Repaired facing stone
- 5- Medieval ground level with broken pottery
- 6- Medieval subsoil. No finds below this level
- 7- Natural subsoil which predates all activity
- 8- Demolished wall at a corner of the building
- 9- Thinner eastern wall of the building
- 10- Layers of soil and demolition rubble
- 11- Scorched stone from a later building use
- 12- The stable or workshop was about 5m wide and about 20m long
- 13- Row of 4 post-holes from an earlier timber building

Trench 1 contained dressed stone, roof slates and large quantities of broken medieval glazed ridge tile. The soil beneath the rubble produced medieval pottery of 12th-14th century, with 15th and 16th century pottery largely absent. This suggests that the building had fallen out of use before the 15th century, long before its ruins were finally demolished in the 17th century. In 1388 the castle was described as being 'in a poor state, suffering from neglect and lack of maintenance', and in 1521 'all ruinous'.



Crosse & Blackwell anchovy paste jar lid from Trench 1 (ULAS)

The southern end of a long narrow building, 5m wide inside, was found beneath the rubble. The stone walls were waist high in places, but construction was crude and the building only had an earth floor. The eastern side of the building was also poorly constructed and may have been open, perhaps facing a yard to the east. This may have been



A bone knife handle from Trench 1 (ULAS)

a stable or workshop, one of the many service buildings in the castle inner bailey.

The soil on the southern side of the building produced large quantities of animal bone, many with butchery marks, as well as sherds of 12th to 14th century green-glaze table wares and plainer kitchen wares - all probably waste from the nearby castle kitchen, the remains of which were found by John Barber in the 1950s. Excavation also confirmed a prolonged period of neglect and reuse before eventual demolition.

A row of four post-holes found in the last days of the dig suggests that there was an earlier timber structure beneath this building, probably evidence of the original Norman castle.

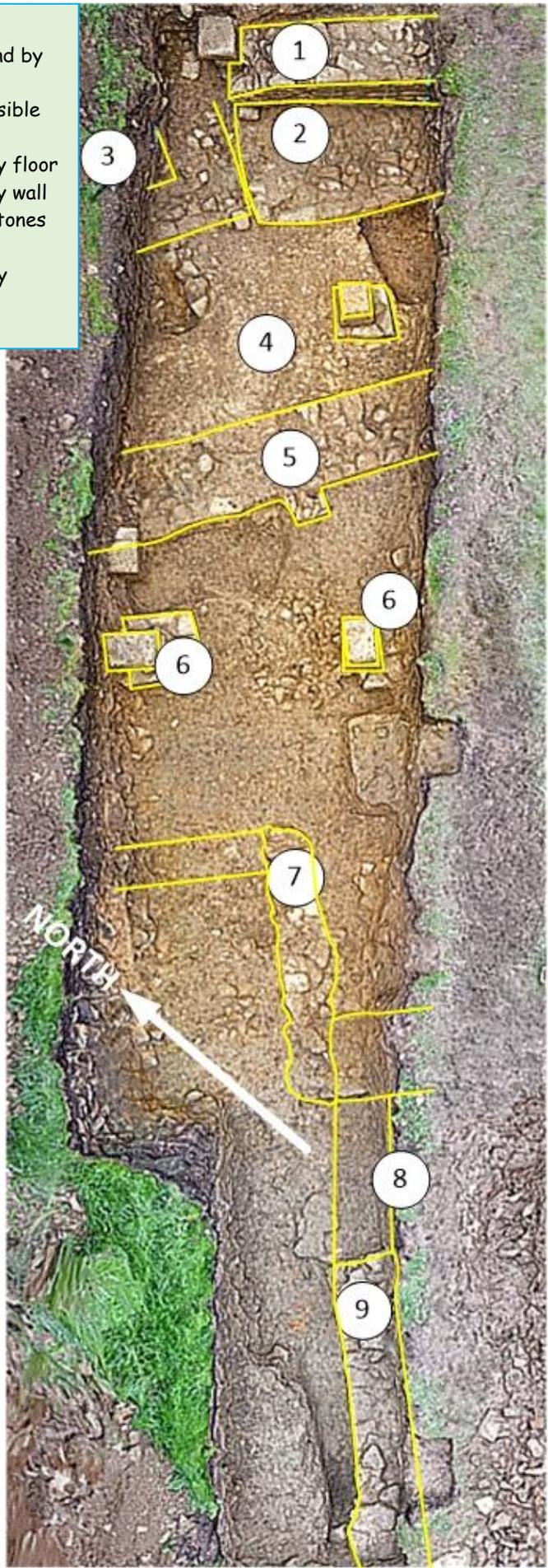
**Trench 2 - Possible Solar Block to the West of the Hall**

It is believed that during the medieval period, the area west of the Great Hall was the site of a detached solar block, the private residence of the lord and his family. Time Team found evidence for more than one phase of building in this

area, with the later phase probably dating to the 15th or 16th century. More recently, work by ULAS during the construction of a nearby toilet block indicated that the area to the south of the walls discovered by Time Team was the interior of the possible solar block, and trench 2 focused on his area.

Over a metre of soil and a thick layer of rubble was removed by a mechanical digger so that the archaeology beneath could be safely accessed. During this work pieces of fine worked masonry, probably part of an arch of a medieval doorway, and broken roof slates, probably from the roofs of nearby buildings, were recovered.

- Trench 2 Key**
- 1 and 2 - Walls found by Time Team
  - 3 - Building 1, a possible solar or chapel
  - 4 - Covered walkway floor
  - 5 - Covered walkway wall
  - 6 - Building 2 pad stones
  - 7 - Building 3 wall
  - 8 - Possible doorway
  - 9 - Building 3 wall



Decorated glazed ridge tile from Trench 2 (ULAS)



Sherds of decorated tableware (c.1225-1400) from Trench 2 (ULAS)



A lead fishing weight from Trench 2 (ULAS)

Beneath the rubble at the northern end of the trench, a complicated sequence of buildings with evidence for multiple phases of rebuilding was uncovered. It appeared that the walls discovered by Time Team were part of two stone buildings constructed close to the curtain wall. The earlier building (Building 1) was connected to the north aisle of the hall by a covered walkway (pentice) and appeared

to date to the 13th and 14th century. The walkway was 2m wide and had a sturdy stone and mortar floor and may correlate with an Inquisition of 1375 which refers to the building of a new chapel and chamber, the chapel being connected to the hall by a passageway.

At a later date, probably in the 15th or 16th century, Building 1 and the covered way were demolished and replaced with a large timber structure (Building 2). The northern side of this building was supported by a stone wall, but the rest of the structure was supported by timber posts which rested on large pad stones.

A third building, of stone construction and also probably of 15th or 16th century, was identified at the southern end of the trench. It was also probably built against the curtain wall and appeared to have a threshold and doorway on its eastern side. However, not enough of this building was uncovered to determine if it was contemporary with Buildings 1 or 2 to the north, although 15th century pottery from beneath the threshold suggests the latter. As in Trench 1, evidence confirms that the remaining buildings west of the hall had been demolished by the 17th century.

Currently, there is insufficient evidence to confirm the use of these buildings. However, finds of decorated green-glazed table wares, dress pins, an iron knife, high-quality masonry and elaborately decorated glazed ridge-tiles all suggest that the use of Building 1 was of higher status than that of the Buildings 2 and 3, and the buildings in Trench 1. This agreed with the supposition that this area of the castle was the location of the private residence of the lord and his family.

3D models of the trenches can be viewed at <https://skfb.ly/6yPnH> and <https://skfb.ly/6yP6v> Also, a montage film of the dig can be seen on YouTube at <https://youtu.be/H04LKjIXZyo>.

There will be a second community dig at the Castle in 2019, running from 10th to 23rd June.

## Membership Matters:

### Email Contact with Society Members

An ever-increasing number of members are able to communicate by email and we would like to use this method to keep in touch with you. It is quick and easy and helps the Society to keep costs to a minimum.

Email addresses will only be used by the Society to distribute information on Society matters. They will not be used for any other purpose or passed on to any other individual or organisation.

If you agree to this and you have not already done so, please send an email to [allow@rutlandhistory.org](mailto:allow@rutlandhistory.org) giving your name and brief address in the subject line. Also, if you have changed your email address recently, please let us know the new address by the same method.

The Society is fully compliant with the General Data Protection Regulations introduced in May 2018 and the Society's Data Protection Policy can be seen on our website.

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### Membership Subscriptions and Renewals

Membership Subscriptions are due on 1st May 2019. The current rates are unchanged as follows:

Individual Membership: £14

Family / Joint Membership: £16

Institutional Membership: £16

Overseas supplement (all grades of membership): £5

**If you pay by standing order, please ensure that it reflects the current rate relevant to you.**

Particularly for overseas members, annual subscriptions can also be paid on-line via [www.genfair.co.uk](http://www.genfair.co.uk).

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## The George Phillips and Tony Traylen Built Environment Awards

As there were insufficient nominations, there were no awards presented for 2018. However, an Awards Ceremony is planned for January 2020 for the presentation of the 2019 awards.

Anyone can make a nomination for the Awards, so please think about any recent and relevant developments that you are aware of in Rutland. It might even be your own home. For a 2019 nomination, all we need is an address and a simple statement as to why you are nominating. See the Awards page on the Society's website for details.

The Awards are now in their 39th year and all the winners since 1980 can also be seen on the website.

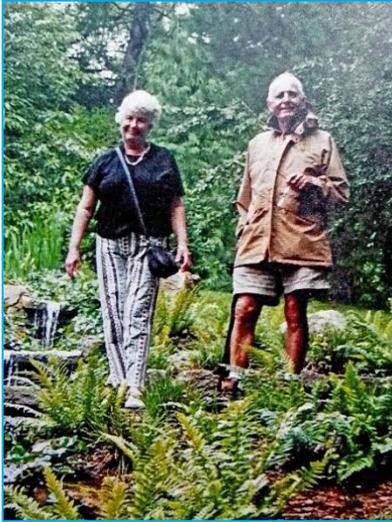
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## The RLHRS Archaeological Team - My Valediction

By Elaine Jones, Archaeological Convener

'Nazi Gold' and 'Romance' led me to field-walk!

Field walking is just one of many archaeological avenues researching our prehistoric past. Never mind the LIDAR, the aerial photos, the 'geophizz', sooner or later you need to go and look at the land.



Elaine and Clive 'when we were young and beautiful' (Elaine Jones)

Here are some good reasons for spending the winters of the last 34 years, from 1984, trudging through the mud. That frontier field on a grey January morn kind of bonded our 'band of brothers' and I have made many friends.

Yet it was not only this band. When I was at university one of books that stood out was 'Natural Symbols' by Mary Douglas. Douglas argued that

the development of complex, or civilized societies, was ruled by boundaries, be they mountains or seas, or the attraction of islands of fertile land in a wilderness - like the Egyptians and the Nile and Minoan Crete, which encompassed people. They needed control, order and discipline if they were to flourish. Hence the inside needed to be kept 'pure' from the danger without.

In our own land I naively thought that if we could find and record where our ancestors had lived, like, for example by the concentrations and find-spots of Neolithic and Bronze Age worked flint, we could get an idea of the degree of complexity of their societies. For me, it is our boundaries in all their forms that control the way we live today - dream on Elaine...

When we started field walking around Oakham in 1984, little was known. The pit circle excavated near *Our Lady's Well*, north of the Burley Road in 1986 by the Leicestershire Archaeological Unit revealed this lone monument in the landscape. It showed that there had been a complex society organising its construction. Our subsequent field work before the development of the by-pass and housing estates showed that not only had there been occupation from the stone age but later on through the Roman, Saxon and medieval periods - and nobody knew they were there.

I like to think that the new archaeological finds spots recorded during the subsequent twenty years to the north of Oakham by professional excavations were in some small way the result of our 'beacon' shedding light on the historic potential of our lands which might not have been realized otherwise.

[Jones, Elaine, 'The Oakham Parish Survey - archaeology on the ploughlands of Rutland', published by the author, 2007.]

The publication of the 'OAKHAM PARISH SURVEY' was awarded with the Miss Linford trophy in 2008. [OR how I killed off the Miss Linford prize for ever].

After the Oakham survey we moved south to Gunthorpe and Martinthorpe in support of Robert Ovens and Sheila Sleath's research on the demolished 17th century mansion.



'How could I forget this one' - the Miss Linford trophy presented by Peter Liddle in 2008. Peter Liddle, Rob Hutchins, Sheila Sleath, Elaine Jones, Robert Ovens, Clive Jones

Around the site we found quantities of Roman, Saxon, Saxo-Norman and medieval pottery predating the big house. This not only added to Robert and Sheila's documentary research, but also to the 'bigger picture'. When Professor John Wacher and University of Leicester students excavated a 15m by 20m trench, little did he know he was digging a medieval site which was so close to a Saxon site.

[Ovens, Robert and Sleath, Sheila, 'Martinthorpe' in *Rutland Record* 14, 1994 167-174]

[Wacher, J, 'Excavations at Martinthorpe, Rutland 1960' in *Transactions of the Leics Arch and Hist Society*, Vol. 39, (1963), 1-19]

[Jones, Elaine, *The Martinthorpe Project 1995-99*. Unpublished field work records and finds in Rutland County Museum, 2016]

[Jones, Elaine, *Pottery and Flint Material from Gunthorpe in Rutland*. Unpublished archive report, RLHRS Archaeological Group No. R18, 1999.]

Kate Don was asked to field-walk the Roman Temple site at Thistleton. It was '9/11' when a crowd of us strode off across the field by the Cottesmore air-base. No one knew for sure if this was our Armageddon because the Tornados roared continuously with take-offs and landings so that the earth shook. We were not shot - but health and safety matters!

Since 2000 we have been walking in the south of Rutland around Ayston, Beaumont Chase, Uppingham and now Ridlington - it's cool. For me, our discovery of Upper Palaeolithic flint on the field surface is exciting. Thirty years ago, it was assumed that people moving over Britain at the end of the last ice-age, kept to the caves - like those at Creswell, but now open-air sites like Bradgate and Farndon, and our very own Launde and Glaston have been found.

[Jones, Elaine, 'The Last Hunters and Gatherers of the Uppingham Plateau', *Rutland Record* 27, 2007, 243-268]

It has been a long plod, but so rewarding. It could not have been done without the Society's, no, without My Team - the best team ever. I have been so lucky. But soon I will be 80 and before I 'fizzle-out' I want to pass on the baton.

I have been fortunate in finding Jane Greenhalgh to continue leading as Archaeological Convener for the Society. She is a clever lady, now retired from her 'day job' and has walked with us since 2015. Before moving to Oakham, she

experienced the Barkby field walking survey.

I aim to keep walking but now I will do it Jane's way and together we will continue on and on into the sunset - hey!



Some of the current Archaeological Team at Ridlington: Liz Sanders, Iain Drake, Linda Dalby, Jasmine Knew, Elaine Jones, Jo Holroyd, and Jane Greenhalgh (Marion Drake)

#### **A note from Debbie Frearson - Society Chair**

Dear Elaine

I am writing to thank you for all your efforts over the decades in running the Archaeology Group for the Society. What an innings! From the recruitment, training and getting people out in the freezing cold, to the finds washing, sorting, bagging and begging of experts with the end results being published and deposited in the museum.

Elaine, the work is outstanding. A leading academic professor at Leicester University recently spoke to me about the importance of the work the group has achieved in Uppingham when the new houses were built on Leicester Road. They used your report to instigate an archaeological investigation, and this is just the tip of the iceberg with the achievements.

On a personal note, you have been and still are a wonderful mentor and I treasure the skills and encouragement you have given me.

I know you are still involved with the Group and not yet "retired" (as if you ever will), but thank you from all the committee and the people who have walked in freezing and sunny temperatures.

Yours sincerely, with very kind regards  
Debbie Frearson

#### **A note from Jane Greenhalgh - the new RLHRS Archaeological Convener**

I chose to do my History degree at Nottingham University because it offered modules in British Archaeology, and as a student and in the years after graduation was involved in excavations and field walking either as part of the course work or for friends/contacts who became professional archaeologists.

I trained to be a teacher and worked for a number of years in secondary schools in the UK and for the Service Children's Education Authority, before making a career

change into social work. I managed services for young people leaving care and a fostering agency, and I still do some part time fostering related work.

I retained my general interest in archaeology throughout my careers but wasn't involved in any practical work until c2004 when I attended a Peter Liddle training session. There I met a couple from a neighbouring village and the Barkby Field walking group was formed. We surveyed the parish over the following 5 years. I moved to Oakham in 2013 and joined the Rutland Field Walking group almost straight away.

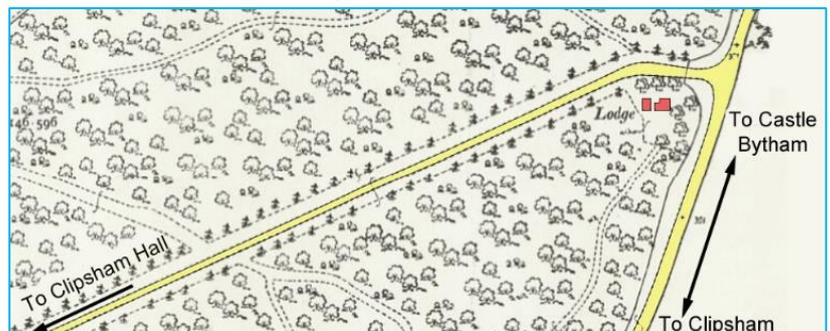
I look forward to continuing Elaine Jones' work, which I am very much in awe of. I don't have her knowledge and experience but we have a group of very committed and enthusiastic walkers raring to discover more about the County's history and I know we have the support from Debbie Frearson, the Society and Peter Liddle's Leicestershire Fieldworkers Group.

### **Clipsham Yew Tree Avenue**

The iconic shaped trees in Clipsham Yew Tree Avenue have been one of Rutland's popular visitor attractions for a long time, but in recent years there has been considerable concern by those who have watched their steady decline.

The 150 yews in the avenue, which formed the original carriage drive to Clipsham Hall, are estimated to be over 200 years old. Many had been shaped to depict a famous person or event and they were quite unique in the United Kingdom.

However, the Forestry Commission has been unable to look after the trees to the standards that they would have liked, so sadly the topiaries have become overgrown and the patterns lost. Originally the avenue was clipped around September each year by the Forest Enterprise workforce, making this the best time to see the designs at their finest. Funding cuts have meant that clipping has not been carried out for several years.



Yew Tree Avenue in 1904 (Annotated OS Series 2 map, 1904)

Trimming of the yew trees was begun in 1870 by Amos Alexander, the Clipsham Estate Head Forester. Amos lived in the gate-house at the east end of the avenue and, as a pastime, began to create figures by clipping the yew trees which grew near his house.

He subsequently asked his employer, John Davenport-Handley, if he could make the Avenue more interesting by

clipping patterns and depictions of local people into the trees. It was agreed that each tree must be different and each tree should show events and people of interest. The clipping was continued by Amos' son, Charles, and then by a Mr Beecham, who lived in the village.

However, Mr. Davenport-Handley would not allow depictions of women on any of the trees, the Queen being the only exception. Family member's names and year of birth would be topiarised, as would important events in the family such as the anchor when David Davenport-Handley went to Dartmouth Royal Naval College in 1930 and the Davenport-Handley's ruby wedding was also commemorated. However, World War Two restricted time spent on the trees and they fell into decline

In 1955 David Davenport-Handley leased the avenue together with surrounding woodland to the Forestry Commission for 999 years. The Commission then began to restore the topiaries.

Amos Alexander, the estate Head Forester, and 'DDH' was for Sir David Davenport-Handley.



Part of Yew Tree Avenue in 2016 (Author)



Part of Yew Tree Avenue in 2011 (Author)

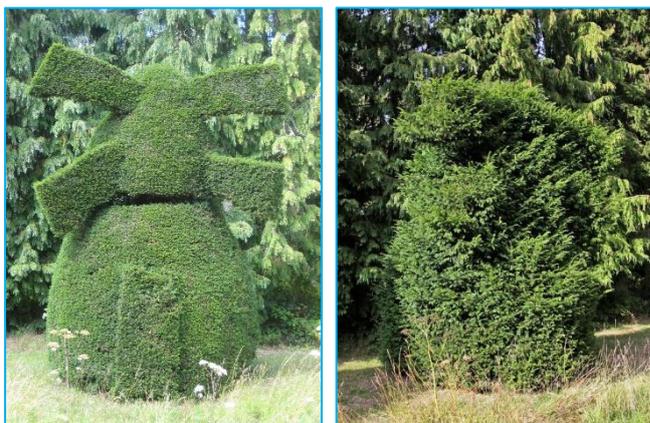
In the mid-1960s, Frank Cornell took charge of the avenue for the Commission. He maintained the existing designs and created new shapes of his own. This work was later taken over by the workforce of the Forest Enterprise, an executive agency of the Forestry Commission.



The Queen was represented on a number of trees. For example, 'ER' commemorated the Queen's coronation in 1953 and another yew marked the 40th anniversary of her accession (Author)

The tops of many trees were made into the shapes of various birds and animals, including three bears, a deer, an elephant and many others. The initials 'AA' represented

The Spitfire was cut to commemorate the Battle of Britain and 'NA' was for Neil Armstrong, the first man on the moon. Various members of staff of the Forestry Commission were also immortalized by having their initials on trees. 'FC' did not stand for the Forestry Commission, as often thought, but for Frank Cornell who began the restoration of the avenue. There was also a depiction of the Forestry Commission logo.



The Windmill Tree in 2011 and 2016 (Author)

However, government cuts to the Forestry Commission meant that after 2010 they could not fund the annual trimming and the trees became overgrown and diseased. Bank voles moved in and the trees suffered further. The patterns were all lost.

A number of individuals and groups, including this Society, raised their concern regarding the lack of maintenance and the survival of the avenue. An interest group of local people was subsequently set up in an attempt to co-ordinate and get something done. They involved Roger Begy, the local Councillor and leader of Rutland County Council as well as local MPs Alan Duncan and Nick Boles, but they were unable to persuade the Forestry Commission to continue looking after the trees.

The interest group developed into a new charity known as the *Clipsham Yew Tree Avenue Trust*. In July 2018 the trust signed a 20-year agreement with the Forestry Commission

to take over the management of Yew Tree Avenue.

The trust has already cut the grass rides which had become overgrown, using grants which had been secured over the last couple of years, including £2,500 from Cory Environmental Waste Ltd. The next steps are to assess the health of the trees and to research the original individual topiary designs.

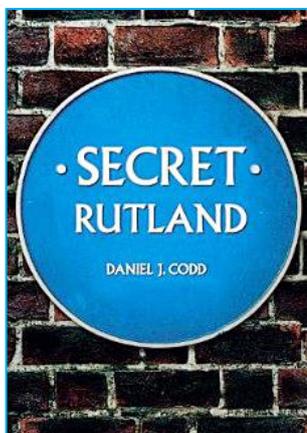
The trust has also applied for major grant funding, but it will still need to raise £20,000 a year to keep the trees and grass rides in good health and to restore and maintain the Avenue' topiaries, using specially selected contractors.

Various events will be organised at the Avenue to encourage visitors. The trust is also looking for people to help with fund raising, publicity and general support. For more details, see the Trust's website at [yewtreeavenue.co.uk](http://yewtreeavenue.co.uk)

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## BOOK REVIEW

### Secret Rutland



By Daniel J Codd  
Amberley Publishing 2018  
Paperback, 96pp, illustrated  
£14.99  
ISBN 978 1 4456 856 0

Oh dear. Well, I suppose the title should serve as a warning. I think I can best describe this book as a disarticulation of history. The author, described not at all in the book but appearing in the

accompanying press release as 'a lifelong student of history, criminology, folklore, the out-of-place and the paranormal in Britain', has cast his net wide and worked hard to haul in a very varied catch amply reflecting his wide interests. The problem is that he has done so indiscriminately and without sufficient or informed evaluation of what he has harvested. It is impossible for the innocent or credulous reader to judge what is fact supported by evidence, and what is hearsay or invention or exaggeration - or indeed what is simply erroneous.

One example may suffice. On pp6-7 we are told that some people say that 'sometimes you can still hear the church bells chiming underneath the water' of Rutland Water, and so on, and in the same paragraph we are referred to 'an even older legend that there were once seven churches in the vicinity of Upper Hambleton, but Cromwell had six of them pulled down when attempting to take Burley House during the Civil War'. Yes, people have said all kinds of silly things about what may or may not have been submerged beneath the reservoir - we know for certain that all of the relatively few buildings that were lost were completely demolished and there was not a church among them - but to repeat this nonsense without disabusing the uninformed reader is unhelpful. Likewise, Burley House was indeed seized by

parliamentarian forces in 1643 and a garrison installed under the command of Col Thomas Wayte (not Cromwell), and, yes, we know that medieval Hambleton had an important mother church and seven berewicks, which *Victoria County History* interpreted as probably represented today by the parishes of Braunston, Normanton, Lyndon, Martinsthorpe, Edith Weston, Manton and Market Overton, but the author does not tell us how these facts may have been conflated into the alleged 'even older legend' which is patently untrue but which he does not debunk.

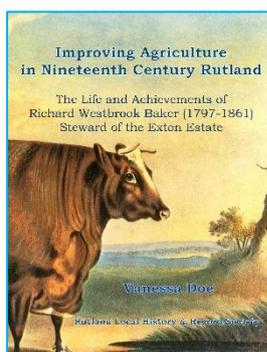
The greatest problem with trying to use this book, which despite such drawbacks throughout and an overall lack of structure does include much genuine historical fact, many intriguing diversions into the by-ways of our past, and much of proper interest, is that so little is referenced to source and that therefore so little can easily be checked or substantiated. There is neither bibliography nor index. However, we do know that one of the author's principal sources, duly acknowledged, was the two-volume *Villages of Rutland*, originally published by the then Rutland Local History Society, which like other titles in that series made a valiant effort to put on record historical detail and reproduce old photographs which would otherwise have been lost, but often relied on uncorroborated hearsay and half-checked information, revealed few sources and lacked academic rigour. Unfortunately, *Secret Rutland* falls into the same category: I fear the reader will require many pinches of salt.

Tim Clough

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## BOOK LAUNCH

**Improving Agriculture in Nineteenth Century Rutland - The Life and Achievements of Richard Westbrook Baker (1797-1861) Steward of the Exton Estate**



By Vanessa Doe  
Published by the Society  
Paperback, Crown 4to  
Introduction + 128pp  
Full colour  
71 illustrations  
£12.50 (Members £10.00)  
UK p&p £2.50  
ISBN 978 0 9074 645 87

A new book on the life, work and achievements of Richard Westbrook Baker, researched and written by Dr Vanessa Doe and published by the Society, was launched at Rutland County Museum on Thursday 10th May following the Society's AGM.

Richard Westbrook Baker was the Exton Estate steward appointed by Sir Gerard Noel in 1828. Between then and his death in 1861 he gained an international reputation as an agriculturalist through his work to improve arable and livestock farming on estate farms. At the same time he worked hard to reduce the impact of agricultural

improvement on rural poverty, particularly the effects of enclosures and the introduction of new machines on farms.

After Vanessa Doe's introduction at the book launch, Tim Clough presented an overview of the life and achievements of Richard Westbrook Baker. A scripted version of this PowerPoint presentation can be viewed on the Society's website - go to [Publications](#) then [Record Series](#) and click on [See Presentation](#) under the book details.



Vanessa Doe signs copies of her new publication (RO)



The silver replica of the Rutland Plough presented to Richard Westbrook Baker in 1847 (Private collection)

Although research for the book was unable to locate the portrait of R W Baker mentioned in his will, an exciting development was the contact made with his descendants in Australia. It soon became clear that they were in possession of the magnificent silver replica of the Rutland Plough presented to him at his last ploughing meeting at Oakham in 1847 and we are very grateful to them for providing the above photograph.

## Oakham's First Cinema

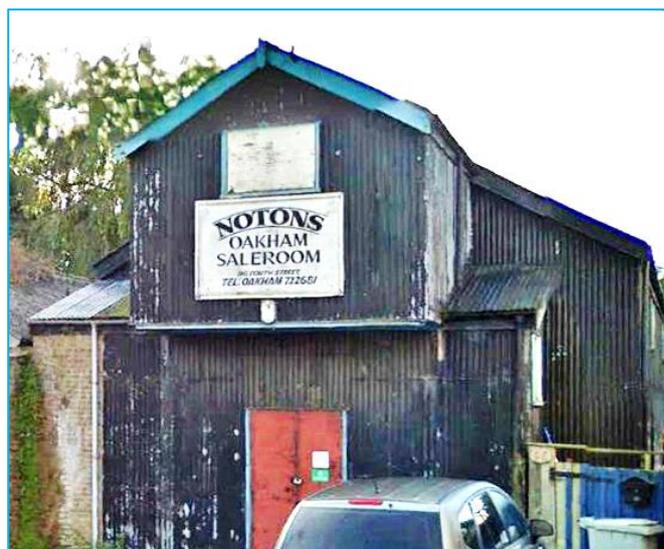
By Robert Ovens

Known to many as Noton's Oakham Saleroom, the black-painted corrugated iron building at 96 South Street has lain derelict for many years. Originally built in 1925 to show silent films, it was Oakham's first cinema and known variously as The Picture House and The Picture Theatre.

In the late 1990s, it stood on one of the parcels of land which, including the former cattle market, were brought together and sold to a developer who was acquiring land for the new Tesco supermarket.

In 2018, a 'For Sale' notice appeared on the front of the building. The agent was Mark Leill Property Consultants and their particulars describe it as a 'Development Opportunity': *The property comprises a self-contained derelict former Auctioneer's building with a total gross floor area of approx. 300 sq. m on a plot of approx. 720 sq. m. The site is situated on South Street adjacent to the entrance to the Tesco Store car park close to Oakham town centre.*

There is no mention of the building's former history and the use of 'derelict' in the description suggests that the intention is demolition. By December 2018, the particulars described it as being 'under offer', but no associated planning application could be found on the Rutland County Council website. It is probably now in a poor state of repair, but quite what it might be used for if it is not demolished is an interesting question. There is a feeling that this survivor should not be lost but perhaps put to another use, preferably for the community, if it is structurally feasible to do so. How many purpose-built silent film cinemas are left anywhere? Should it have been listed as a rare survivor?



The former Picture House / Picture Theatre in 2016 (Author)

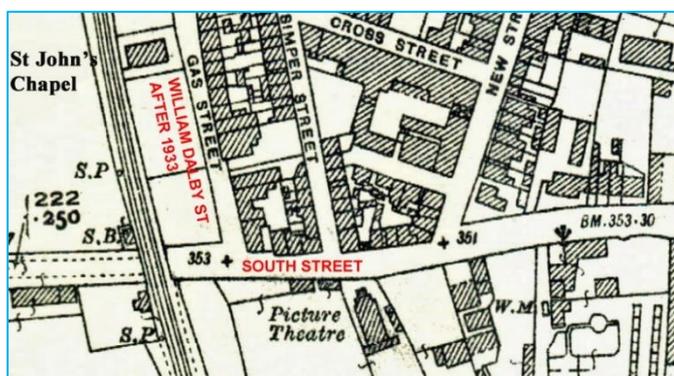
Although there are currently no answers to these questions, it is at least worth recording some of the history of this building. A brief history of cinemas in Oakham is covered in Brian Hornsey's 'Cinemas in Rutland' in *Rutland Record* 12 (1992), 80-83, which can be viewed free on-line at <http://www.rutlandhistory.org/rutlandrecord/rr12.pdf>. We can now add to this by reference to *Matkin's Oakham Almanack* in Rutland County Museum and by searching the British Newspaper Archive online.

Up to 1925, Oakham did not have a purpose-built cinema, although films were shown in the Victoria Hall and other temporary venues. However, on Thursday 9th April 1925, *The Bioscope*, the trade journal of the British Cinematograph Industry, reported:

*At Last. The unique record held by the County of*

Rutland in that it is the only county in the kingdom in which a cinema has not yet been erected, is about to be broken. A site has been acquired in South Street, Oakham, for the erection of a small up-to-date cinema. Plans have been passed and the work of erection is being pushed along with all speed for the opening in May.

However, this is not quite correct. Uppingham Social Hall, a former WW1 prisoner of war hut, was the first permanent venue for film shows in Rutland, the initial cinematograph licence being granted on 7th June 1920 to Henry Samuel, an Uppingham grocer, who had applied on behalf of the Social Hall Committee. It continued as the 'Social Club Cinema', the 'Electric Cinema' and the 'Cosy Cinema' until it closed as a cinema on Saturday 16th January 1937. The new 'Rutland Cinema', in Ayston Road, opened the following Monday. (Sheila Sleath, 'What's in a Hut?', *Rutland Record* 37, 2017, 319-20).



The Picture Theatre in South Street, Oakham (Annotated OS Series 3 map, 1904)

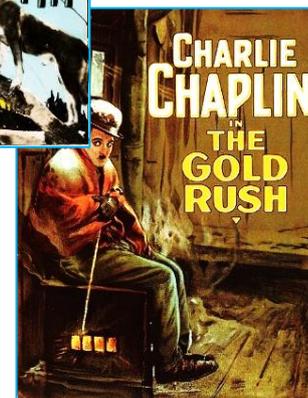
On Friday 29th May 1925, the *Stamford Mercury* reported that Captain Guy Dawson was granted a licence by the Magistrates Court at Oakham Castle for the cinema to be opened the following day. There was no special opening ceremony, but the first film was 'White Rose of England', with all the patrons on the first night being given a white rose. Initially, films were shown twice every night, with a matinee on Saturdays. There were 250 seats, but the front rows were only wooden forms. Prices were 6d, 1s, 1s 3d and 1s 6d. There was also a 16' by 16' stage and two dressing rooms, so presumably the cinema could also be used for plays, musicals, concerts and similar events.

The cinema programme was advertised in the *Stamford Mercury* and the *Grantham Journal* every week, with reports on special fund-raising events, and previews and reviews for film fans.

From the *Grantham Journal* - Saturday 18th December 1926:

OAKHAM PICTURE THEATRE  
 GRAND CHRISTMAS PROGRAMME.  
 WEDNESDAY, THURSDAY, & FRIDAY, DEC. 22nd, 23rd, &  
 24th  
 RIN-TIN-TIN in  
 "THE CLASH THE WOLVES."

Nightly, 6.30 and 8.30.  
 Special Matinee, THURSDAY, at 2.30.  
 Children 6d. and 1s  
 N.B.—No Performance on Christmas Day.  
 MONDAY, TUESDAY, A WEDNESDAY,  
 DEC. 27th, 28th, & 29th:  
 STUPENDOUS ATTRACTION!  
 Booked at Enormous Expense,  
 CHARLIE CHAPLIN in  
 "THE GOLD RUSH."  
 Nightly, 6.30 and 8.30.  
 Matinee, MONDAY, DEC. 27th, at 2.30.  
 Children 1s. and 6d.  
 Seats for this Picture. can be booked at  
 Matkins, High Street, Oakham.



From the *Grantham Journal* - Saturday 11th October 1930:  
**PICTURE HOUSE ASSISTS CHURCH FUND.** — The fund for the repair of the fabric of All Saints' Church is being augmented in a variety of ways, and on Monday Mr. Guy Dawson, proprietor of the Oakham Cinema, kindly gave afternoon and evening performance for that object. The chief film shown was 'Scaramouche' [starring Lloyd Ingraham, Alice Terry and Ramon Novarro], and large audiences assembled, the Vicar and Mrs. Fraser being present at night. A sum of £19 was realised and handed over to the fund.



The Edibel Sound System was installed in 1930, but the quality was inferior and it was said that 'the rattle of hail on the tin roof drowned all else'. By 1931, the depression meant that the cinema was only open for three nights a week with films shown twice each night. By now the best seats were 1s 9d.

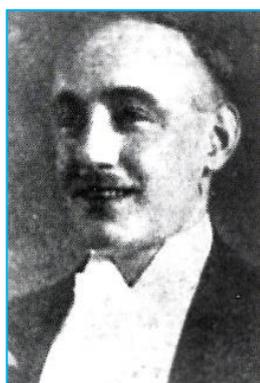
From the *Grantham Journal* - Saturday 26th November 1932:

**TO-MORROW'S ENTERTAINMENT.** — Oakham cinema-goers and theatre-lovers will be given an unusual opportunity of spending an enjoyably part of their leisure tomorrow (Sunday), when an entertainment, comprising the film, 'Captivation' [starring Betty Stockfeld and Conway Tearle], and vocal items, will be given in the Oakham Picture House, starting at. 7.45.



It is to be hoped the entertainment will be widely supported, the proceeds are wholly to be devoted to Leicester Royal Infirmary; indeed, since many outsiders are to

freely give of their help and talent, it would seem ungrateful were Oakham townfolk not to respond wholeheartedly. The film is being lent by Ideal Films, Ltd., Nottingham, and the following gifted artistes will assist; —Mrs. Barlow, Mrs. W. A. Pledger, Messrs. K. Sims, P. Blake, Burgess, W. Kelham, L. Thomas, and Barlow.



Bob Salt

Captain Dawson sold the Picture Theatre by auction at the Victoria Hall on 4th May, 1934, for £410. The new owner was Frederick B. Salt (Bob Salt) who was also the proprietor of the new purpose built, 300 seat, Regal Cinema. This had recently opened in William Dalby Street (formerly Gas Street), next door to the Plymouth Brethren chapel and just a hundred yards away from the Picture Theatre.

THE OAKHAM CINEMAS.	
Proprietor and Manager: FREDERICK B. SALT. Tel. 19.	
<b>The Picture House.</b> To-night, An Edgar Wallace Thriller, <b>"THE GREEN PACK,"</b> and Bela Lugosi in <b>"THE RETURN OF CHANOU."</b>	<b>The Regal.</b> To-night & Matinee at 2.30. George Arliss in <b>"THE IRON DUKE."</b> The greatest Arliss Picture yet produced.
NEXT WEEK.	
Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday George Brent & Myrna Loy in <b>"STAMBOUL QUEST,"</b> A Magnificent Spy Drama. Comedies, &c.	Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Laurel and Hardy in <b>"BABES IN TOYLAND."</b> A merry rollicking farce. Comedy, Cartoon, &c.

Bob Salt ran both cinemas together for a short time (*Grantham Journal* - Friday 8th June 1935)

*Talkies! Talkies! Talkies!*

Oakham's Super House  
 :: of Entertainment ::

**Oakham**  
**Picture Theatre**

SHOWING THE FINEST  
 PICTURES ONLY.

---

FOR PROGRAMME & TIMES OF  
 SHOWING SEE WEEKLY BILLS.

---

Admission : 1/6, 1/3, 1/- and 6d.  
(including Tax).

Children Half Price, if accompanied by an Adult.  
 Seats may be Booked at Mr. Chas. Matkin's, High Street,  
 Oakham, at no Extra Charge.

Advertisements for The Picture Theatre in *Matkin's Oakham Almanack* promoted 'Talkies' from 1931

By 1934, the improved Imperial Sound System had been installed, but on 5th July, 1935 the magistrates refused renewal of the cinematograph licence and The Picture Theatre closed a few

days later. The grounds for refusal are not known. Perhaps the nearby larger and more comfortable Regal Cinema was a factor. Interestingly, in 1936 and 1937 the Regal advertisements in *Matkin's Oakham Almanack* also say 'opposite the Regal is a Comfortable Hall (the Old Picture House) seating 250, which is available for Lectures, Meetings, Concerts, etc.'

From the *Grantham Journal* - Saturday 6th July 1935:

**LAUGHTER TONIC AT OAKHAM**

If you're not feeling up to the mark, attend the Regal, Oakham, this week-end. Professor Pippin, in the person of Leslie Fuller, is in charge. Don't miss him in 'Doctor's Orders' as the quack medicine man who gave up everything to make his son a real doctor.

At the Picture House tonight, George Arliss appears in 'Alexander Hamilton', and is cast as the first Secretary of the Treasury of the United States, a role which gives him every opportunity to exploit his marvellous acting talent.



'Alexander Hamilton' was the last film to be shown at The Picture House.

The Regal Cinema was to survive for another 13 years, much longer than originally planned. On 29th April 1939 the

*Grantham Journal* included an interview with Thomas Black, of Blaby, who had taken over the ownership of the Regal Cinema from Bob Salt in 1938:

'Despite certain rumours to the contrary the new picture house to be erected on a site adjoining the Limes, High Street, Oakham, which is to be known as 'The New Regal' is definitely going forward. It will most certainly be opened next year, provided there is no war.'

'The present picture house premises [The Regal] — which are situated in William Dalby-Street—are already on the market. Some people have told me that they would make an excellent skating rink for the town, or billiards hall or fire station.'

Mr Black also stated that the New Regal would have accommodation for approximately 600 people, including the upstairs circle.

'Everything is now ready to go forward', he added, 'but, of course, it will be impossible to start until the crisis is safely past. Personally, I do not think there will be a war, but one never knows what may happen with regard to the international situation.'

Despite Thomas Black's concerns, the New Regal opened on 27th September 1940, but now named the Regent Cinema. It was re-named the County Cinema in 1943. The old Regal obviously didn't sell because the two cinemas ran side by side until it closed in 1948.

Messrs. Royce, Chartered Auctioneers and Estate Agents, took on the old Regal premises as an auction sale room for a time - on the OS 25" map of 1970 (SK8408-8508), the Regal appears as 'Auction Room'. The last occupier before it was demolished later in the 1970s for the modern St John & St Anne development in William Dalby Walk was Len Ellis of Oakham Tyres.

The County Cinema lasted until 1988 when it was sold for development and later demolished.

Oakham Picture Theatre first appears in *Matkin's Oakham Almanack* in 1927 and there are advertisements from 1927 to 1934. It is still in the street directory in 1935 and 1936 but without advertisements, and in 1936 and 1937 is listed as 'Old Picture Theatre'.

By 1938 the old Picture Theatre had found a new use as an auctioneer's saleroom, a function which lasted well into the 1990s. The first proprietors in its new role were G

**Messrs. G. Smith and Son**

AUCTION SALE ROOM.  
SOUTH STREET, OAKHAM.  
To be SOLD by AUCTION, by  
MESSRS. G. SMITH & SON  
(G. H. S. SMITH).  
On THURSDAY, SEPT. 4th, 1941.  
Upon the Premises as above (re-  
moved for Convenience of Sale),  
by direction of Miss G. Bankart  
and others, the  
**ANTIQUE and MODERN  
Household Furniture  
And EFFECTS.**  
Sale to commence at 11.30 for 12  
o'clock prompt.  
The Furniture may be Viewed on  
Thursday Next, August 28th, 1941,  
between the hours of 10 a.m. and  
4 p.m.  
Auction Offices: Station Road,  
Oakham. Phone 18.

Grantham Journal -  
Friday 22nd August 1941

Smith and Son when it was known as *Smith's Auction Mart*. By 1958 it was owned by Smith and Fletcher. Messrs. Royce (later Murrays) then took over the building when W A (Tony) Noton was a partner. In the 1970s, Tony Noton came out of this partnership to work as a sole trader, taking over the premises as his auction room. From then on it was known as Noton's Oakham Saleroom.

Thanks to Tim Clough and Scott Murray for information provided for this article.

## Project Emily - Thor Missiles at RAF North Luffenham

In 1939, John Lang, an airfield contractor to the Air Ministry, began transforming the hilltop between Edith Weston, North Luffenham and Ketton into a bomber airfield with a single grass runway and it was formally opened as RAF North Luffenham on 14th January 1941.



The first unit to be stationed here was the Elementary Flying Training School, but by July the base came under Bomber Command flying Hampden and later Manchester bombers on operational sorties. The influx of officers and other ranks, both air and ground crew, meant that the base facilities became over-stretched and Edith Weston Hall, Lyndon Hall, Preston Hall and North Luffenham Hall were soon requisitioned for RAF use for the duration of hostilities.

In 1943 the airfield closed for fifteen months for the installation of concrete runways. Thereafter, the base was principally concerned with the training of glider pilots, particularly for the D-Day landings. After the war, the airfield became a training base. Then in late 1951 the Canadians started to arrive when the station became home to 1 Fighter Wing of the Royal Canadian Air Force as part of Canada's NATO commitment. The Wing had over 60 F-86E Canadair Sabre jets and the skies over Rutland were very busy until they moved to NATO bases in Europe in 1955.



A Canadair Sabre of the Royal Canadian Air Force

Initially, the Canadians met with some hostility from local residents, but this quickly changed when the visitors joined in with local events, particularly when the very popular RCAF Pipe Band played at dances and village fetes. On Battle of Britain Day in September 1953, some 35,000 people visited the airfield.

The next big event in the station's history was in June 1958 when it was selected as one of four main Thor missile sites in the UK under 'Project Emily', the others being RAF Feltwell, RAF Hemswell and RAF Driffield.

The Thor IRBM (Intermediate Range Ballistic Missile) was developed in 9 months under a crash programme in 1955-6 by the Douglas Aircraft Corporation for the US Government. It was 65 feet long, 8 feet in diameter and weighed 48 tons. Its range was 1,725 miles, with a maximum speed of 10,250 mph and maximum altitude of 390 miles. It took 15 minutes to fuel with kerosene and liquid oxygen, align and fire.

The proposal to deploy it in Britain was put before the Government in 1957, final agreement being reached between

the then new Prime Minister, Harold Macmillan, and President Eisenhower at the 1957 Bermuda Conference. During the 'Cold War', the Americans were fearful that the Russians were setting up missiles aimed at the USA and wished to base their own missiles within range of the Soviet Union. As a result, 60 missiles were delivered to Britain without cost to be manned by RAF crews who were trained for the task in America by the US Air Force. However, the nuclear warheads remained under US control. The first live firing by an RAF crew was on 16 April 1959 at Vandenberg Air Force Base in California.



A Thor missile ready for launch



A Thor missile arriving at North Luffenham (David Carlin)

Fifteen missiles together with supporting equipment and structures were flown in to North Luffenham direct from America in late 1959 and early 1960 by US Air Force Globemaster and Cargomaster aircraft. Three missiles were then transported by road to each of the four dispersed satellite stations under its control. These were RAF Harrington; RAF Polebrook, RAF Melton Mowbray and RAF Folkingham.

A Bloodhound missile at Woolfox Lodge

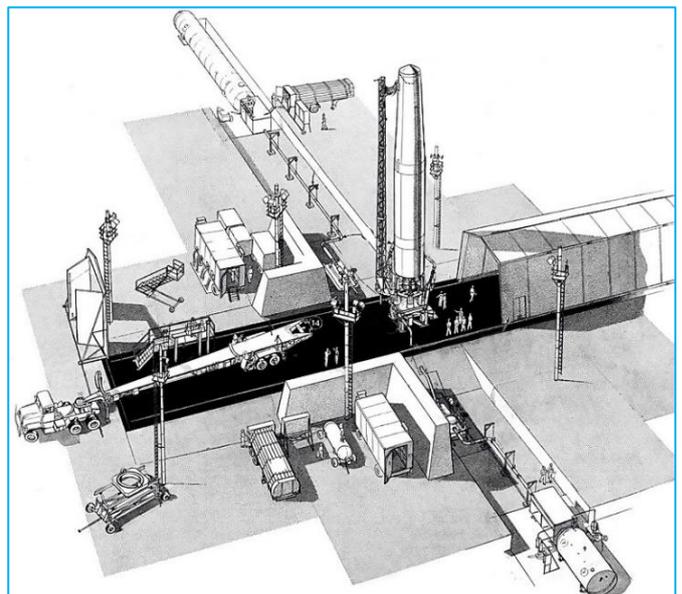


The sites were 'protected' by Bloodhound Surface-To-Air (SAM) guided missiles, 32 of which were located at RAF Woolfox Lodge, 8 miles to the north of North Luffenham at the side of the A1.

Woolfox Lodge was one of eleven Bloodhound missile sites built to defend the RAF's V-bomber and Thor missile nuclear deterrent force.

The Thor missile force was designed to attack targets in the Soviet Union with the missiles arriving before the Victor and Vulcan bomber strike force reached their targets. The 15-minute delay in launching made the missiles very vulnerable on the ground and this was the reason given when it was announced on 1 August 1962 that they would be withdrawn in the following year.

The last Thor was taken out of service on 15 August 1963. The missiles were returned to the USA and many were subsequently used in the space programme as satellite launchers. In all, 574 were built, the last one being launched in 1972.



The layout of a Thor missile launch pad

A Thor missile can be seen in the National Cold War Exhibition at Royal Air Force Museum Cosford, Shifnal, Shropshire. The RAF squadrons established for 'Project Emily' were disbanded in 1963, none of them to reform. Most of the bases reverted to care and maintenance and subsequent disposal, although North Luffenham continued in use for non-flying activities until it became St George's Barracks of the British Army in 1998.

Over 1000 former service personnel attended the airfield closing ceremony in October 1997 when the ensign was finally lowered after more than 50 years of proud service. Among the visitors were groups of servicemen from Canada and the United States who had worked on the base in the 1950s.

Because of their international historic significance and their association with world events of the Cold War period, the three Thor missile launch pads and surviving associated structures at North Luffenham were Grade: II\* listed in June 2011. Of the 20 such sites established in England, this example is the most complete, and its outstanding level of survival provides a vivid reminder of the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962.



One of the surviving Grade: II\* listed Thor missile launch pads at North Luffenham (Google Earth)

[For full details of the history of RAF North Luffenham, see Harrison, Bill, *Airfield Focus - 54: North Luffenham*, GMS Enterprises, 2002].

Ian Buxton was one of the RAF servicemen who went to the United States to be trained by the USAF to operate the Thor Missiles. Here, Audrey Buxton, Ian's wife, provides an insight into life at RAF North Luffenham during the Thor missile era.

### Memories of life at RAF North Luffenham

My husband, Ian, was posted to RAF North Luffenham back in 1959 following the decision to have the USA's 65-foot rockets stationed in the Midlands: an entirely new venture for those men who had previously been involved only with radar. A few years earlier, North Luffenham had been a flying station with operations carried out by Canadians: this time, as well as our own men, American airmen would be here too, and with their families - a move which, in my opinion, made for one of the worst Public Relations errors there could have been.

Because of the huge influx, a new building programme for domestic quarters had been put into place and a building contractor engaged together with a complete time-line for the works. Until the houses were ready, the men were told that they could leave their families where they were, look

for lodgings in the village or buy - at their own expense - caravans which would be allocated plots on the right just inside the main entrance. We chose the caravan option. We were given picks and shovels, chicken wire and wooden posts and told to make 'gardens' for our mobile homes.

We were also instructed to dig a six-foot by six-foot hole, six-feet deep as close as possible to the kitchen to make a soakaway; something which was in no way as easy as it sounded, because this part of the old county of Rutland is of limestone. Where this intruded into the proposed hole, the excavation had to be moved and re-dug to satisfy the RAF requirements, and caused one of the Corporals severe problems - he had three attempts before the RAF were satisfied!

To make matters worse, no bathing facilities were provided for families, although the men could visit their Mess and use the bathrooms there. Wives got nothing: children had to be bathed in small plastic baths in the caravans. This caused me no small difficulty, however, as advanced pregnancy made an inch and a half of water rise considerably when I sat in one! And we had no water other than that piped to our kitchen sinks, so there were no flushing toilets: we went back a century with the 'benefit' of a 'night-soil' collection each week. I did have a washing machine, but that sat outside the door in the 'garden'!

So far as infrastructure was concerned, we had a NAAFI [Navy, Army and Air Force Institutes - selling items to servicemen and their families], a small cinema, and a primary school in the former WW2 WAAF huts down the road to Empingham. The site is now the Rutland Water car park at Normanton. My eldest daughter was able to attend this school the term before she was five since we were classed as 'overcrowded' - with our four children there were six of us living in that caravan.

As it happened, there was a shortage of bricks at the time, so the builder thought he would be very clever and sell them at a profit, then buy more. Only there were no more to buy for some time and all the work to build domestic quarters was put back months. In the event, this state of affairs lasted until 1962, by which time the American families had left to go back to the US. The USAF had provided them with 44-foot caravans on hard standings, complete with showers, WCs, fridge/freezers, electric underfloor heating, and even a 'pup-tent' add-on if they had more than two children. This area was known as 'Silver City'. Afterwards, the RAF purchased a few of these monsters for later British arrivals waiting for quarters, but even some NCOs could not afford to run the heating and consequently suffered greatly from huge condensation problems. These caravans were made of aluminium, and one went 'live' as a result of an electrical problem, causing the quick exit of the Corporal and his family who had inherited it.

After the Americans had left, we Brits were moved on to the remaining concrete, but the problem of exposed water-pipes remained. All the caravans were now on hard standings and I had the benefit of a flush lavatory for my family until the Winter of 1961 when we were moved to the long-awaited new housing. But there was just one more snag: there was no

lagging on the pipes between ground-level and the underside of the caravan, about a foot above. On a Saturday in late November, when no help was available, ours froze. Ian had tried to sort out the problem, but only succeeded in knocking off the connector so that the full force was now hitting us underneath the kitchen end of the caravan. There were no mobile phones then, so he went off to try to contact the Water Board. Meanwhile my (female) neighbour and I tried to divert the flow by manoeuvring a spare flagstone over it with the aid of a clothes prop. Unfortunately, we didn't think of the possible consequences: the angle of the flagstone caused the water jet to direct itself on me, and I promptly sat down in a trench full of icy water. We often joked that the fact that my son disliked getting washed was down to this experience two weeks prior to his birth.

Six months later we were posted to Suffolk (although three months after that we were back in Rutland), sold the caravan at a considerable loss and thanked our lucky stars to be in a house again. Why was it a Public Relations disaster? Apart from the US men and their families being given fairly palatial mobile homes, they were provided with a PX [Post-Exchange, the American equivalent of the British NAAFI], selling items in dollars without Purchase Tax, including petrol at two-thirds the price in England at the time. They were so well paid that they had been able to import their enormous American cars which their wives drove through our 'gypsy campsite' and stopped quite often opposite each other to have a chat. They also knocked on caravan doors at random, in search of somebody to look after their children for weekends for a fiver, all found, so they could visit their friends in RAF Alconbury or go to London to pull in a Show. One can imagine what that did for our self-worth!

Finally, the most amusing thing which happened regarding knocking on caravan doors was a purveyor of fizzy drinks, who had the habit of banging on the side of our caravans before attacking - and opening - the owner's door before announcing his arrival. Since the kitchen was the only place for a wash this could have been a shock for the resident, but he got his come-uppance at the caravan opposite ours. The owner had a very evil Siamese cat, which objected strongly and attached itself with all four paws to the man's chest with a yowl. He never did it again!

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## Market Overton Village Visit

The Society's village visit on Saturday 17th September 2018 was to Market Overton. The venue was the village hall where 82 members and guests enjoyed an afternoon of local history and archaeology. Following a welcome and introduction by Edward Baines the audience watched a rolling PowerPoint presentation on *Historical Aspects of Market Overton*.

The first record of the village is in the Domesday book of 1086 where it is called 'Overtune', a combination of the Old English 'ofer', meaning ridge, and 'tun' meaning 'settlement'. Thus 'the settlement on a ridge', a perfect description of its

location. The first warrant for a market to be held here was in 1267 when it was on land to the east of the church.

The geological map shows that the village is located on the western edge of the Jurassic escarpment which includes the Northamptonshire Sand Ironstone.

Ironstone quarrying on an industrial scale began in 1906. Over the next 60 years the village was to become surrounded by quarries, quarry railways and calcine banks. Quarrying ended in 1971 and most of the fields have since been returned to agriculture, but some evidence still remains. In 1906, the newly opened Saxby-Bourne railway line, running along the northern boundary of Rutland, gave easy rail access to transport the iron ore to foundries at Scunthorpe and Corby.

It was well known that there was a Roman town, villa and temple complex in the area. Parts of one or more Saxon crosses with typical Saxon decoration near the ground on all three sides of the church tower also confirmed Anglo-Saxon occupation. A side effect of the quarrying was the further extensive discovery of Roman and Anglo-Saxon features and artefacts. Spectacular Anglo-Saxon artefacts were discovered in the two cemeteries exposed in a quarry to the north-west of the church. These included burial urns, spear heads, shield bosses, brooches, wrist clasps, a gold spiral finger ring, a garter buckle, a gold bracteate, and many amber beads, ranging in date from the early 6th to the early 7th century.



Anglo-Saxon beads found at Market Overton (RCM)

Whilst economically, the quarrying was a blessing for the village, providing an alternative form of employment to agriculture, it was a disaster from an archaeological point of view. It destroyed archaeological evidence and hence the potential to learn more about the historic past of the village.



The Flying Scotsman arriving at Market Overton in 1973

In 1972, after the end of quarrying, the engine sheds of the quarry rail system were acquired by John Gretton of Stapleford Hall on behalf of Flying Scotsman Enterprises. and soon there were eleven locomotives on the site, including The Flying Scotsman. This site became Market Overton Industrial Estate and some of the engines and rolling stock were moved to a site between Cottesmore and Ashwell, to form the foundation of the Rutland Railway Museum, now known as Rocks by Rail.

This presentation can be seen on the Rutland Villages section of the Society's website.

Peter Liddle then presented *A Roman town, villa and temple between Market Overton and Thistleton*. In this talk, he looked at the evidence for an important Roman complex which was extensively excavated by Ernest Greenfield on behalf of the Ministry of Works in the 1950s and 1960s, but never published. More recent survey and excavation has put the site into context. The excavation was ahead of a new quarry by Stewarts and Lloyds near Black Holme Field, close to Cottesmore Airfield,

Apart from the temple complex, a huge quantity of Roman features and artefacts were found including an inhumation cemetery, pits, hearths, post holes, wells, quarries, Roman coins and brooches, and many iron objects.



One of the many Roman brooches found at Market Overton (RCM)

After Peter's talk, light refreshments were served and Paul Reeve manned the Society bookstall.

The final event of the day was a leaflet guided historical walk around the village. For those who were unable to attend, the leaflet can also be seen on the Society's website.

## Stephen Blackburn, Clockmaker of Oakham

By Robert Ovens, Sheila Sleath & Jayne Williams

*Time in Rutland*, published by the Society in 2002, gives details (pp 62-3) of two eighteenth century Oakham clockmakers whose surname was Blackburn. Several early 30-hour longcase clocks signed on the dial 'Blackburn Oakham' are known and most are also numbered. There are also a number of surviving later 8-day longcase clocks which are signed on the dial 'Blackburn Oakham' or 'Stephen Blackburn, Oakham', some of which are also numbered. It was suggested that Stephen Blackburn was probably the son of an earlier Blackburn clockmaker whose given name was unknown. However, excellent research by Jayne Williams of Rutland County Museum, taking advantage of the enhanced online research facilities now available, has shown that this is not quite correct.

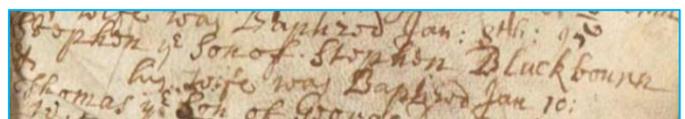
It seems that Stephen and his nephew James were the only time-served Blackburn clockmakers working in Oakham in the eighteenth century. Stephen was working from the start of his apprenticeship in about 1710 until within a few years of his death in 1778. James, the son of Stephen's brother James snr, was born in 1720. He was recorded as a 'clockmaker of Oakham', but he died in 1743, so his career was very short. As an apprentice, his master was quite probably his uncle Stephen, but this has not been confirmed. Jayne's research uncovered a great deal of information about this clockmaking family which has enabled the construction of a Blackburn family tree (*see below*).

This research found family connections in Whissendine in Rutland and Eaton, Easton, Hose and Great Dalby in Leicestershire. In particular, Stephen's will, dated 1st August 1778 (TNA PROB 11/1044/186), provided a lot of detail that helped to answer questions about his origins, especially his relatives in Whissendine and Eaton.



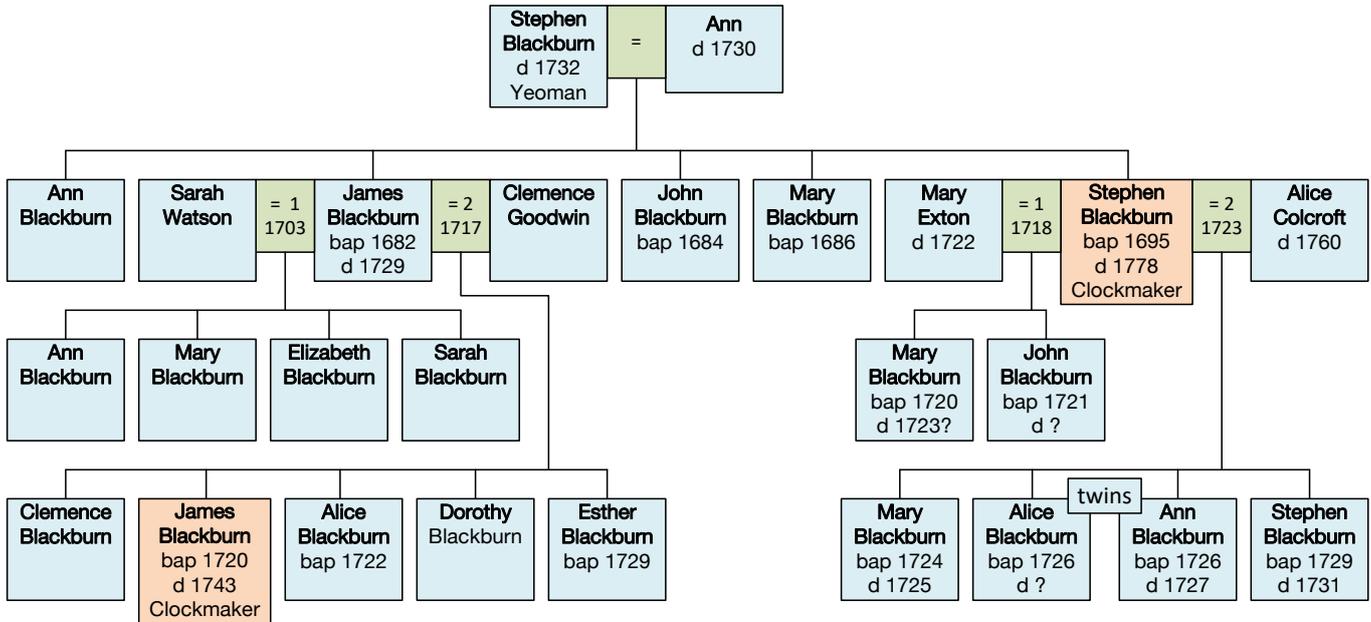
Stephen Blackburn's signature on the dials of two of his eight-day longcase clocks (Authors)

It is clear that Stephen Blackburn was the son of Stephen Blackburn (Blackbourne) snr and his wife Ann, of Whissendine. He was baptised at St Andrew's Church on 10th January 1695.



From Whissendine parish register

The baptisms of three of Stephen's siblings, James in 1682, John in 1684 and Mary in 1686, are also recorded in Whissendine parish registers. Earlier Blackburn family events in Whissendine parish registers include the baptisms between 1649 and 1664 of the offspring of a Robert and Mary Blackburn who may have been Stephen's paternal grandparents, but there is no other evidence to confirm this. In Robert Blackburn's will of 1665 (*Northamptonshire & Rutland Probate Index*), his occupation is noted as blacksmith of Whissendine.



Stephen Blackburn's family tree

Stephen married Mary Exton of Eaton, Leicestershire, at the parish church of Saint Denys in Eaton in 1718.

*Stephen Blackburn of Oakham & Mary Exton of Eaton were marry Jun 17*

From Eaton parish register

Fortunately, the register entry confirms his abode as Oakham. Stephen would have started his seven-year clockmaking apprenticeship at the age of 14 in about 1710, so 1718 was probably the earliest that he could have married Mary as marriage during apprenticeship was not allowed. By then he would have been considered experienced enough to earn an income from his trade sufficient to support a wife.

Mary, the Blackburn's first child, was baptised at All Saints Church, Oakham, on 30th May 1720. This is the earliest recorded event for the Blackburn family in the Oakham parish registers.

*Mary d of Stephen & Mary Blackburn*

From Oakham parish register

Note the Blackbourn spelling of the Blackburn family name. Other variants found in this research included Blackbon, Blackborn, Blackborne and Blackbourn.

Stephen and Mary's son John was baptised at All Saints Church, Oakham, on 6th August 1721. Five months later, on the 29th January, the parish register records the burial of Stephen's wife Mary.

*Mary Wife of Stephen Blackbourn*

The burial of Mary Blackburn in Oakham parish register

Stephen was left with two infants and following the conventions of the time he found a second wife as soon as it

was acceptable. On 1st July 1723, he married Alice Colcroft at St Martin's church, Stamford Baron, then the part of Stamford south of the River Welland, which was in Northamptonshire. It was sometimes known as St Martin's Without.

Stephen's daughter Mary by his first wife must have died in infancy (although no record can be found), because in 1724 Alice gave birth to a daughter also named Mary who was baptised on the 20th September at Oakham All Saints. However, on the 2nd April the following year, the parish register records the burial of this Mary, 'the daughter of Stephen and Alice'.

In 1726, Alice gave birth to twin daughters, Alice and Anne, who were baptised at Oakham All Saints on the 21st November. Anne died and was buried in the January following her baptism but it is known that her sister Alice lived to be an adult.

Their last child was Stephen who was baptised in 1729. Sadly, he did not live to see his second birthday because he was buried on the 10th July 1731. So, it seems that Stephen had six children by his two wives, four of whom died in infancy, and only one, Alice, was still living in 1778, the date of her father's will. His son John is not mentioned in the will so it is assumed that he had died by then.

This was a particularly difficult time for Stephen as both his parents, Stephen snr and Anne also died at this time. Ann was buried at Whissendine on 23rd April 1730 and Stephen snr, a yeoman, was buried at Whissendine on 21st February 1732. He was a blacksmith and churchwarden at Whissendine.

*Stephen Blackburn yeoman was buried Feb. 21<sup>st</sup> 1732 Buried*

*Buried John Blackburn bur. Apr. 23. 30 Buried Anne wife of Stephen Blackburn bur. May 5<sup>th</sup> 1730*

From Whissendine burial register

Stephen's second wife Alice died in 1760. She was buried in Oakham All Saints churchyard on the 10th December. Stephen lived and worked in Oakham for another eighteen years before his death in 1778. He was also buried in Oakham All Saints churchyard, on the 20th May.

At the time of his death Stephen was not alone. His will mentions Mary Brown, the daughter of William Brown of Egleton, 'who now lives with me'. He left her 'a large brass pot or pan' and the clock and case that stood in the 'common room, adjoining the new parlour'.

### Stephen Blackburn's Will of 1778

Two executors, John Woods, clockmaker of Grantham, and Matthew Jackson, a grocer of Oakham, were charged with the disposal of Stephen's estate and personal effects and the payment of his debts. They were then to make specified payments to the many named beneficiaries. The remaining receipts from the estate were to be invested in Government stocks to provide a lifelong annuity for Stephen's daughter Alice Blackburn, his only surviving offspring and the main beneficiary of the will. They were to provide an income for her that would ensure 'proper habitation, clothing and other necessaries'.



### Stephen Blackburn's Apprentices

Stephen Blackburn took John Woods as an apprentice circa 1744 for 7 years. John Woods, clockmaker of Grantham and one of the executors of Stephen's will, was almost certainly the John Woods apprenticed to Stephen (TNA IR 1/50 - UK Register of Duties Paid for Apprentices' Indentures 1710 - 1811). He opened a business in Grantham in 1753 and worked up to the time of his death in 1811 when he was 81. He trained 12 apprentices many of whom went on to establish businesses in Grantham.

James Greenfield, the 'Son of Mary Greenfield, Widow', was apprenticed to Stephen Blackburn circa 1743 (TNA IR 1/16 - UK Register of Duties Paid for Apprentices' Indentures 1710 - 1811).

Another of Stephen's apprentices was probably James Blackburn, the son of his brother James Blackburn snr of Eaton, who died in 1729. In his will, James snr left instructions that his only son James jnr, born in 1720, should be put to a suitable trade. James snr's brother, John (of Whissendine) was to make the arrangements. This trade was clockmaking and his apprenticeship would have been from circa 1734 to 1741. However, James jnr died in 1743/4, so

his career was very short. The burial register of Eastwell near Eaton, Leicestershire, records that he was a clockmaker of Oakham.

Thomas Clarke, clockmaker of Oakham, may also have been another of Stephen's former apprentices. In his will, Stephen left Thomas all the tools and materials in his workshop as well as three clocks, two of which were unfinished.

### Stephen Blackburn's work as a clockmaker

Stephen was a maker of fine clocks and many of his thirty-hour and eight-day longcase clocks survive today, two of which are displayed in Rutland County Museum.



Left: Stephen Blackburn's 30-hour longcase clock of circa 1730  
Above: The 200mm (8in) square single-handed brass dial is signed 'Blackburn Oakham No 1058'. (RCM H258.1952)

Some of these clocks are numbered and known examples are 1058, 1066, 1068, 1076, 1091, 1118, 1128, 1147 and 1208. Although it is quite usual for watches to be numbered in this manner, it is rare on longcase clocks. His numbering system probably started at 1000.

However, his work was not confined to domestic clocks. Whissendine Churchwarden Accounts record that Stephen Blackburn was paid 5s in 1742 and 1743 for the maintenance of the church clock. Then in 1746 he installed a new clock made by Thomas Eayre II, clockmaker and bellfounder of Kettering, at a cost of £20 2s 11d. He was then responsible for the maintenance and repair of this clock until 1771:

1747 pd Mr Blackburn for ye Clock for 2 years 10s Od  
1748 paid Mr Blackburn for the Clock Doing 5s Od  
1761 pd Mr Blackburn for ye Clock 5s Od  
1770 pd Mr Blackburns man for Raising ye dyal Board and making ye hand to go 3s 6d

1771 pd Mr Blackburn for ye town Clock £12 Os Od

Hambleton Churchwarden Accounts record that regular annual payments of 5s for maintenance of the church clock were made to Stephen Blackburn of Oakham from 1731 until 1740. In 1759 there was obviously a serious problem with the clock as it had to be removed from the tower and taken

to Stephen Blackburn's workshop for repair. The exercise was repeated eight years later:

1759 pd Blackburn for mending ye Church Clock £1 12s  
pd for carrying ye Clock to Oakham & back again 3s  
pd for Ale wn ye Clock was set up 1s 4d  
1767 pd Stefon Blackburn for Mending the Clock £4  
pd for Caring the Clock to Oakham & fettching Back 3s

Many thanks to Jayne Williams for her new research and to Lorraine Cornwell for photographing the Blackburn clocks in Rutland County Museum.

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## Obituary

### LESLIE GORDON EMMERSON

Founder chairman of Rutland Field Research Group for Archaeology and History

Leslie Emmerson died on 22nd October 2018. He was born in 1930 at Gainsborough, Lincolnshire, but the family moved to Wednesfield, West Midlands, in 1935. After Wolverhampton Grammar School he joined Stewarts and



Lloyds as a student apprentice and in 1954 he gained a degree in Metallurgy. He started National Service with the RAF on the Isle of Man in 1955, eventually to become a Pilot Officer in charge of aircraft maintenance. On his return to Stewarts and Lloyds in 1965 he moved to Corby steel works to set up a new department.

Meantime, he had married Joyce in 1956 and Andrew, their only child, was born in 1960. Their new home was in Uppingham, and the family interest in Rutland had begun.

Rutland Water was now looming large and Leslie set about recording what was to be lost. To this end he helped to establish Rutland Field Research Group for Archaeology and History (RFRGAH) in 1971 and became its first chairman.

Archaeological field walking revealed earthworks at Nether Hambleton and permission was granted in 1972 for the group to excavate a medieval house platform as a training exercise. Archaeologist Christine Mahany of Stamford supervised the work, and the excavation was led by Sqn Ldr Fred Adams. Participants also included Jo Ecob, Jack and Maureen Dodds, and Olive Adams, together with staff and pupils from local schools, and men from Ashwell Prison. Leslie even purchased a Ford Transit crew bus to transport school children to the site.

The rising level of Rutland Water meant that the excavation ended after three years and the Group moved to the Romano-British site on the Whitwell peninsula. Their final excavation project was the site of medieval buildings near Old Hall in Whitwell. (See *The Heritage of Rutland Water* chapters 18 and 20 - available to read on the Society's website.)

As a keen photographer, Leslie photographed many of the

historic buildings in Oakham and in local villages. These photographs are now in the Society archive.

The closure in 1980 of much of British Steel, formerly Stewarts and Lloyds, in Corby meant leaving his beloved Rutland. Chairmanship of RFRGAH was taken over by Fred Adams and it eventually amalgamated with our Society in 1993.

Leslie converted their crew bus into a motorhome and he and Joyce enjoyed holidays all over Europe until it finally went to the scrapyards. A new state-of-the-art motorhome enabled them to continue this passion until well after his retirement in 1995.

He was liked by everyone he knew and he was always helpful to everyone who needed his help. Leslie's enthusiasm and dedication defined his life.

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## Obituary

### CHRISTINE MARGARET CARLIN



Christine Carlin passed away peacefully at the Leicester Royal Infirmary on Thursday 13th December 2018.

Born to Paul and Margaret 'Peggy' Fisher on November 13th 1942, she initially worked as a secretary at Brockhampton Press, which later became Hodder and Stoughton. She then worked as a personal

assistant to the area secretary of the Royal Air Force Association, Eastern Area HQ.

Christine married David (a member of the Society's Executive Committee) in 1973 at St James the Greater, Leicester. Her interest in things historical was already evident as she was a member of Leicester Industrial History Society under Dr Marilyn Palmer, and she and David enjoyed many interesting visits with this group.

Christine left work to raise twin daughters Hazel and Rachel in 1978 and the family moved to Oakham in 1979.

Christine was a founder member of the local twins club. As a member of All Saints' Church Music committee she helped to organise lunchtime music recitals at the church and was a member of the Mothers' Union and National Women's Register. She was also a member of this Society and served on the committee of the Friends of Rutland County Museum and Oakham Castle for 34 years. She also helped with World Women's Day of Prayer locally and was a member of the John Clare Society and the League of Hospital Friends.

Following a private cremation, a service to celebrate Christine's life was held at Oakham Parish Church on Friday 11th January 2019.

#### Elaine Jones:

Those of us who attended Christine's service of thanksgiving will know how committed to our Rutland community she was, and the number of sympathisers present showed that Christine had many, many friends.

But with her crippling arthritis one thing Christine could not do was archaeological fieldwork. Instead, she 'chucked' her husband David and her two 'wee bairns', Hazel and Rachel, out into the barren fields in winter time for the RLHRS Archaeological Team's field walking surveys.

The Family Carlin started field walking with us in 1991 when we were busy on the Oakham Parish Survey. When the Roman villa site was found, it was David who illustrated the Roman pottery for publication in the book. Although Christine's twin daughters Hazel and Rachel were still at school, they came field walking season after season. They would link arms and trot-on like a pair of ponies in hand, chattering away as if they had had no time together for weeks! Now they are lovely young career women and must have made Christine [and us!] proud.

**Debbie Frearson:**

From my perspective Christine was a wonderful ambassador for the Society. At our lectures as she welcomed people to the meeting when they signed in and if they were new, she chatted to them about their interests and connected them with other members, making them feel like they had joined a heritage community rather than being an outsider.

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**Obituary**

**PETER LANE**

Peter Lane died on 18th February 2019 at Leicester Royal Infirmary. Following a career in the Colonial Service in East Africa, he came to Uppingham to work for Corby Development Corporation until his retirement.



He was a member of the Society's Editorial Committee from 1995 to 2000, and he served on the Society's Executive Committee as a member in 1996 and as Vice Chairman from 1997 to 2000. He left the committee in 2001 when he became an Honorary member.

**Hilary Crowden:**

Peter was involved with the local history of Rutland for more than 40 years. He was instrumental with Alan Rogers and others in setting up Uppingham Local History Study Group (ULHSG) many years ago. But he was in fact heading an earlier group of a small number of people (Norman Byford, Betty Finch, David and Mary Parkin) who carried out active research in the town during the 1980s. Subsequent to then, on his own initiative and with the help of Uppingham School Archives, he calendared and transcribed many of the Manor records for Uppingham. This alone was a fantastic feat of academic perseverance taking him over 20 years. He also researched and self-published a number of individual property histories of the town (see below). He did not seek academic qualification for his work but it rates very highly among the best. Above all this he was a mentor and a friend and I shall miss his advice and knowledge immensely. I have

his archive and I am organising it for future use. His legacy is the work he left behind as well as the affection and friendship we all feel towards him.

**Vivian Anthony (ULHSG):**

I have known Peter since we arrived in the area in 1990 but particularly since I retired in 2000 and took up local history. He was my guru. Amazingly he retained his unrivalled grasp of Uppingham's history until the end of his life. He was always generous with his time and willingness to help others.

He was the rock on which the Uppingham Local History Study Group was founded. I was not around when he was working with Alan Rogers but they must have been a formidable pair leading the group. The publications from that period are a fitting legacy to his efforts.

Peter was always good company and we enjoyed our membership of local institutions. He was a sincere and loyal member of the Parish Church congregation and, inevitably, became one of the authorities on the history of the church of St Peter and St Paul as several generations of the Church Information Leaflets bear witness. Over the years he gave some very well-informed talks on the church and more generally on the town of Uppingham. Peter was one of the founder-members of the White Hart Dining Club established to encourage good relations between the School and the surrounding population. He was also an active member of Probus and spoke to the group on several occasions.

We will miss him; they don't make them like that anymore.

**Professor Alan Rogers:**

Peter was an incredible person - completely committed, a gentleman in all his ways of a generation now long since gone. He never really got out of his colonial persona in the very best sense of this - he put himself out to help other people who may not have been as fortunate as he was. He will be sadly missed in Uppingham and more widely.

**Elaine Jones:**

Peter was my local hero - he was a fountain of knowledge on local Rutland and Uppingham history which he generously shared whenever I needed his back-up for my archaeology.

**Peter Lane's publications** (available on the ULHSG website and in Rutland County Museum Local Studies Library):

- The Court Rolls of the Manor of Preston with Uppingham
- The Court Rolls of the Rectory Manor of Uppingham,
- Copyhold Tenants of the Manor of Preston with Uppingham
- Uppingham Church Stained Glass
- Uppingham Church Funery Monuments
- Uppingham History Notes by Canon Aldred and Rev Irons
- Documents & Sources - Uppingham School Archives
- Uppingham Property Histories, including:
  - 22 High Street, Uppingham / The Hollies / Colbridge House
  - / Craigella / James Smith's Messuage / Meadhurst / 4
  - Stockerston Road / 36 High Street West & Sheild's Yard /
  - Newel House, 26 High Street West / Hope's Yard.

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Many thanks to all the contributors to this issue. If you would like to make a contribution or suggest an idea for the next issue, please contact me by email at rfovens@yahoo.co.uk.

Robert Ovens