

## EDITORIAL

### Highs and Lows

Welcome to the 2008 issue of our newsletter. A year ago we were relishing the prospect of moving into a nice 'new' office after a couple of years of chaos working round stacks of boxes in temporary storage. Well, I am pleased to report that we reached this happy state last July AND the museum now has a row of new bookcases (provided by the Society) in the Riding School which accommodate both the museum's and the Society's reference libraries. More details about the reference library are given later in this Newsletter, and a catalogue is now available, both on line and at the museum. Thanks are due to the Library Group (Auriol Thomson, Peter Tomalin, Peter Diplock and David Carlin) for the many hours spent sorting, cataloguing and arranging the collection.

This is perhaps an appropriate place to thank Auriol for her contribution to the running of the Society over the last 6 years or so, because she has decided to step down from the management committee at the forthcoming AGM. Auriol was 'thrown in at the deep end' when she was elected chairman of the Society following the death of John Field and the temporary chairmanship of Alan Rogers, without having the benefit of a period of time as a committee member. She served in this post for two years, followed by four years as a committee member. Amongst other things, she has been convenor of the Library Group, an active member of the Programme Planning Group and for several years was responsible for organising the annual Bryan Matthews Memorial Lecture.

A replacement committee member is therefore required, and the Society is still in urgent need of a **Minute Secretary** - someone who is able to take the minutes at our management meetings (five per year) and the AGM, type them up and circulate them. Please think about whether you might be able to take on this role and contact me if you think you can help your Society in this way.

The highlight of the year (to those closely involved at least) has been the completion of the Heritage of Rutland Water Project and the launch of the book last November. When it was only half way to completion, we knew in our hearts that it had to be a success. Our measure was - 'If you saw this book for sale for £20 would you buy it?' The answer was always an unqualified 'yes'. However, the sales exceeded even our optimistic expectations - it sold out in a

little over four months, with more orders from local outlets in the pipeline. Needless to say, it has been reprinted, fresh stocks arriving from Malta on 11th April.

I end this editorial on a sad note. Our friend and fellow local historian, Tony Traylen, died on 27th March, just as this Newsletter was being prepared. To many he was 'Mr Rutland'. He was always prepared to talk to and help fellow local history researchers, especially if there was a Rutland connection. I visited him on a number of occasions at Uppingham Yarns and well remember the long and interesting conversations about our respective current projects. He was able to provide a number of hard-to-find photographs for the Heritage of Rutland Water Project and we were particularly grateful to him for that. An extended obituary is included later in this Newsletter.

*Robert Owens*

[rfovens@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:rfovens@yahoo.co.uk)

## ARCHAEOLOGY

### News from the 'Miry Quarter'

Beaumont Chase, southwest of Uppingham, is well named. Seldom has the archaeological group field walked in such a lovely and inspiring landscape. For centuries a hunting ground of English Kings, the Chase has been revealing some much older secrets to us, recently in the field known charmingly as the 'Miry Quarter'.

In recent weeks we have retrieved finds from the surface of the plough soil that have really excited us. Worked flint tools, including handaxes and scrapers, may prove to be from the Paleolithic (Old Stone Age) era and we look forward to receiving an expert opinion on them



(three are illustrated here and on the previous page - they are about 7 to 10 cm high). On the other hand, the expert who examines the flint may roar with laughter at our fanciful notions and chuck the lot in the bin! Watch this space . . . .



Hutchins and Clive Jones showing flint finds

'The Last Hunters and Gatherers of the Uppingham Plateau' by Elaine Jones in *Rutland Record* No 27 records some 30 sites and findspots where Paleolithic tools have been found, mainly as a result of field walking by our archaeological team. Our endeavours this winter may well add further information to the bigger picture which may prove to be not just of local but of national significance.

Field walking can be a tough business as we are confined (mostly) to working in the winter months. However, with finds like the worked flint tools from Beaumont Chase it makes it all very rewarding. If you would like to join our merry band, please do get in touch. No experience is necessary, just enthusiasm and good thermal underwear on occasions!

*Kate Don, Archaeological Convenor*

**A R (TONY) TRAYLEN 1927-2008**

- 'a great Rutland Historian'

Tony Traylen was born on 9th December 1927 in Hartley-Witney, Hampshire, and was educated at Wellington College. He was the only child of a professional soldier in the Lincolnshires - the family originated from Spalding - but he showed no inclination to follow in his father's footsteps. Instead he seemed to favour his relative J C

Traylen, one-time architect to the Diocese of Peterborough. In fact he attended the Brighton School of Architecture for three years before deciding that the profession was overcrowded.

Rather than design houses, Tony felt he would be more satisfyingly employed in building and restoring them in the traditional manner. To this end he conducted a survey stretching from Cheshire down to Buckinghamshire, his eye eventually falling on Rutland. He married Patricia Loake, a Derbyshire girl, in 1962 and they moved to South Luffenham in 1964. They brought-up two children, Nicholas and Emma, and now have four grandchildren.

As a property developer he restored many cottages and shops in Rutland and Stamford. He also established Uppingham Yarns which is now run by his son Nicholas.

Uppingham Yarns was founded in 1980 by Tony and his family in a small shop in Uppingham to sell industrial yarns to home, trade, and club machine knitters. The firm thrived, and moved to larger premises in 1984, a two storey warehouse on the site of an old bus station and garage in North Street East, Uppingham. Twenty years later it moved to the present location 50 metres away in the same street.

However, Tony's great and consuming interest was local



history. Shortly after arriving in Rutland, Miss Gladys Meade persuaded him to join the Rutland Local History Society, which at that time met above the library - then in Gaol Street, Oakham. In 1971, he took over the chairmanship from Joanna Spencer shortly before Miss Meade's death.



It was a chance remark which sparked off the crusade which culminated in the original series of booklets recording the histories of Rutland villages. 'What a pity' somebody said, 'someone did not record the stories of old Rutlanders, as the young do not listen to their parents' and grandparents' reminiscences as they used to, before the days of radio and TV.' The booklets covered all the parishes in Rutland, and were later brought together to

form the first volume in the 'In Rutland' series. This series now extends to eighteen volumes:

1. *Villages of Rutland, Parts 1 & 2*
2. *Soldiers, Police and Firemen of Rutland*
3. *Railways of Rutland*
4. *Wings over Rutland*
5. *Turnpikes & Royal Mail in Rutland*
6. *Oakham in Rutland*
7. *Uppingham in Rutland*
8. *Traction Engines in Rutland*
9. *Maps of Rutland, 1579 to 1845*
10. *Windmills and Watermills of Rutland*
11. *Churches of Rutland*
12. *Dictionary, Dialect & Traditions of Rutland*
13. *Old Motors of Rutland*
14. *Life of the Gentry of Rutland*
15. *Old Trucks & Buses of Rutland*
16. *Old Village Schools of Rutland*
17. *Notable Citizens of Rutland*
18. *Ancestral Houses of Rutland*

Volume 18 was published in 2007, and *Uppingham in Rutland Revisited*, an updated version of volume 7, is currently with Tony's publishers. Also in the pipeline are reprints of *Villages of Rutland, Parts 1 & 2* with much new material.

As can be seen, Tony was a prolific writer. He gave all the royalties from his books to The Rutland Trust, a charity that gives grants to individuals and organisations in the county. In fact, our Society was a recent recipient of an award from this charity as a contribution towards our publications programme.

(We are grateful to Audrey Buxton for allowing us to use the photograph and information from her 1980 interview with Tony, which was published in *Rutland People*).

A number of people who knew Tony have contributed their memories. Together they provide the best possible tribute to him. They are reproduced here, in full, without further comment:

**Tim Clough:**

With the passing of Tony Traylen at the end of March, one of the few remaining links with the former Rutland Local History Society, of which he was once Chairman, is severed. Tony's enthusiasm for local history blossomed in the 1970s, when he produced the first of what was to be a series of Rutland village leaflets on his home village of South Luffenham. These booklets were to cover every village in Rutland and were later brought together in two parts - the first volume of the 'In Rutland' series published, initially, by the RLHS. Over the years, a whole series of titles covering many aspects of Rutland life - from militaria to transport to country houses - was to appear, and he was still carrying out research and working on further volumes at the time of his death.

Although the first few books were prepared under the aegis of the RLHS, it is no secret that before long there

was a parting of ways: Tony left the Society and thereafter published his work independently. He was never to join the Rutland Record Society, founded at about this time, nor the enlarged RLHRS, though, with time attitudes softened and he did eventually attend the occasional meeting. The basis of the disagreement had as much to do with the views of others on his methods of working - including his inclusion of uncorroborated hearsay material and his opinion that academic rigour was not really necessary in that type of publication - as it had to do with any clash of personalities within the RLHS.

It is certainly true that in his earlier works at least there was a kind of hit-or-miss approach to history, and the quality of production was not of the best even by the standards of the day, but we should not lose sight of the fact that, in the course of his assiduous visiting and interviewing of often elderly Rutland people, Tony was in fact undertaking what would now be recognised as a major programme of oral history research. Without his enthusiastic efforts much of what he recorded would undoubtedly have been lost, and he should be credited accordingly. His copying of a vast range of local and family photographs, often over the owner's kitchen table, secured the preservation of much material which we would not otherwise have. Tony was always ready and willing to pass on his knowledge and generous with his replies to enquiries from interested individuals, and it is to be hoped that his archive will become available for future reference. We tend to think of Tony Traylen in terms of his local history achievements, but we should not forget that he left his mark on Rutland in another way too. Buildings and architecture were in his blood (he was, after all, related to the prominent Stamford architect J C Traylen), and in his life-time's work in the building trade he was responsible for the restoration in traditional style of many old houses in Rutland - some of which, at least, would today be candidates for our Society's George Phillips Awards. They remain as tangible reminders of his work and his love of Rutland.

**Audrey Buxton:**

I knew Tony for years - he was always articulate, dapper and funny. We know now that some of the stories in his voluminous series of booklets about Rutland villages and other topics were not always the whole truth, but they never failed to entertain. He will be very sadly missed by his many friends who knew him either as an historian, a builder, a wool shop keeper or any other aspect of his busy and varied life; he seemed never to run out of steam.

**Auriol Thomson:**

I knew Tony reasonably well: he was always most pleasant and helpful and, in his turn, consulted any of us who might help him with particular bits of knowledge. He was habitually to be found in his upstairs office at the Uppingham Yarn Market on Saturday mornings, beavering away at his latest book, and there those in the know would seek him out! He will be very much missed.

### **Peter Spiegl:**

It must be some 40 years ago when Tony Traylen first came into our printing works in Stamford. The first job we produced for him was a series of booklets about the villages of Rutland. He eventually covered all of the villages of the County. Later on these were translated into two volumes. Since that time we have printed under the 'In Rutland' title over 20 books with three still in the pipeline.

Tony had boundless energy. I know little of his property restoration projects but I do recall his work on Reedman's Court in St Georges Street, Stamford, said to be the oldest house in the town. A practical 'hands on' man he was to be seen working on the roof back in the 1970s. About that time he set up Uppingham Yarns and when he moved premises just a few years ago I saw him once again on a roof fixing the joists.

Tony had a deep interest in all things connected with Rutland and he collected a great fund of anecdotes. He was good with people - indeed he must have been to extract the information and photographs which formed the basis of his books.

He did not write for financial gain and royalties on sales were distributed to local charities. Over the years he must have devoted thousands of hours compiling local histories. The deal was that Tony produced the manuscripts, we made the books.

In this age when so much is disappearing so fast - customs, way of life, people of character, buildings, landscapes - Rutland is indebted to Tony Traylen for capturing some of its past for the interest of future generations.

His death will be a great loss to many people.

### **SOCIETY REFERENCE LIBRARY**

The books, maps and documents in the Society's reference library are now available for consultation by visitors to the Rutland County Museum.

The latest version of the library catalogue is reproduced on the Society's website at [www.rutlandhistory.org](http://www.rutlandhistory.org). There are also printed copies available at the museum.

The Society's library has been divided into two parts:

#### **Part 1**

Books of general interest to local historians are located in the Society's office together with maps and documents. There is also a filing cabinet with papers on each Rutland parish. To consult these, please send an email to: [librarian@rutlandhistory.org](mailto:librarian@rutlandhistory.org) giving your name, address and telephone number, as well as the area of your research. Alternatively, you can write to the Society's Correspondence Secretary (address as below). You will then be contacted by a duty librarian to arrange a mutually convenient time for your visit. It is not possible to allow open access to the Society's office.

#### **Part 2**

Books relating to Rutland and surrounding counties, together with guides to local or family history study are located in The Riding School at the museum. These are under the supervision of a member of the museum staff

and may be consulted at any time during opening hours by Society members and non-members alike. There is no need to make an appointment. Readers who wish to study a book will be asked to sign for it and take it to the Study Area. No books may be removed from the museum but photocopying as allowed by The Copyright Act is possible. The museum will make a charge for this service.

Although we do not normally allow books or papers out of our care, exceptions may be made for particular projects or in special circumstances. For this, please send your request for consideration by email to: [librarian@rutlandhistory.org](mailto:librarian@rutlandhistory.org) or by letter to Jill Kimber, Correspondence Secretary, RLHRS, Rutland County Museum, Catmose St, Oakham LE15 6HW.

### **REPRINTING THE HERITAGE OF RUTLAND WATER**

Following the launch of *The Heritage of Rutland Water* at Rutland Sailing Club on 25th November, sales exceeded all expectations, to the extent that, by the beginning of March, less than 50 of the first impression of 1200 were left.

At the March management meeting it was decided to order a further 1200 books. However, as the Lottery funding has now ended, the whole of the printing cost now has to be financed internally using the profit from the sales of the first print run and a slice of the Society reserves. Fortunately, the printers, Gutenberg Press of Malta, offered a large price reduction for a 10% reduction in page size, whilst maintaining paper quality and all other aspects of the book. This, together with an early order discount, makes the reprint a realistic proposition, providing that the Recommended Selling Price is increased to £22. The members' price will remain at £18.

The order was placed on 10th March and a lorry with 4 pallets weighing just over 3 tons arrived at Rutland County Museum on 11th April. We are back in business!



Left: Hon Vice-Chairman (and editor of this Newsletter) helping to off-load the 240 boxes of *The Heritage of Rutland Water* recently arrived from Malta. Also helping were Sheila Sleath, Mike Frisby, Peter Diplock and Richard Allen.

Copies are available in bookshops in Oakham, Uppingham and Stamford, the Rutland Water Tourist Information Centre, and the Anglian Water Bird Watching Centre, as well as the Rutland County Museum. See also the Society's website at [www.rutlandhistory.org](http://www.rutlandhistory.org)

## BRITISH ASSOCIATION FOR LOCAL HISTORY (BALH) AWARDS

The Hon Editor has recently been advised that Nigel Richardson's article on Uppingham's 1875-77 Typhoid Outbreak in *Rutland Record* 26 is a joint first-prize winner in the BALH Local History Awards 2008. The awards will be presented at the BALH annual local history day which is to be held at the Friends Meeting House, Euston Road, London, on 9th June. Both the author and our Hon Editor hope to be present.

This follows on from a similar success in 2006 when Tony Squires won an award for his article on The Medieval Park of Ridlington in *Rutland Record* 23.

The significance of these awards can be judged from the fact that the winners are chosen from some 800 articles appearing in 150 or more local history journals each year.

## SOCIETY WEBSITE

Reminder - the Society website can be found at:

[www.rutlandhistory.org](http://www.rutlandhistory.org)

It is a good place to keep up-to-date with Society activities and members are encouraged to make suggestions for new pages and relevant links to other sites. In fact we are willing to add any pages relating to the history of Rutland which have a well researched content.

Recent additions include:

The Society's Reference Library Catalogue.

A report with photographs on the launch of *The Heritage of Rutland Water*.

An updated list of the Society's publications.

A new Archaeology page.

Coming very soon - a link to Genfair, an online shopping mall where the publications of a wide range of family and local history societies, including RLHRS, are on sale.

Members can now contact the Society by addressing emails as follows:

General enquiries:

[enquiries@rutlandhistory.org](mailto:enquiries@rutlandhistory.org)

Reference library enquiries:

[librarian@rutlandhistory.org](mailto:librarian@rutlandhistory.org)

Correspondence secretary

[secretary@rutlandhistory.org](mailto:secretary@rutlandhistory.org)

Editor:

[editor@rutlandhistory.org](mailto:editor@rutlandhistory.org)

Webmaster:

[web@rutlandhistory.org](mailto:web@rutlandhistory.org)

## RUTLAND COUNTY MUSEUM & OAKHAM CASTLE EXHIBITIONS & ACTIVITIES PROGRAMME 2007 - 2008

### RUTLAND COUNTY MUSEUM:

22 March - 5 May

**Emergent Transitions: A thematic exhibition by Colin Dunn**

22 March - 20 April

**Easter Holiday Activities Programme**

9 May - 6 July

**The Twyford Guild of Artists: Paintings, pottery, textiles & photography**

11 July - 31 August

**Horsing Around - A 2000 year old Love Affair: the story of the horse**

### National Archaeology Week:

12 July

**Flint knapping demonstration**

12 - 13 July & 19 - 20 July

**Have a go at Roman Crafts**

17 July - 27 August

**Summer Holiday Activities Programme**

5 September - 5 October

**Featherstone's Furniture: Hand crafted furniture by Ralph Featherstone**

10 October - 23 November

**Rutland the beautiful and a few other places: watercolours by Ken Forrest.**

18 October - 2 November

**Autumn Holiday Activities Programme**

28 November - 4 January 2008

**Chasing Colour: Diverse paintings with an emphasis on colour by John McGain**

20 December - 5 January 2008

**Christmas Holiday Activities Programme**

### OAKHAM CASTLE:

19 July - 31 August

**Art at the Castle - Annual exhibition by local artists**

### JOINT MEETINGS PROGRAMME

Rutland Local History & Record Society (RLHRS) and the Friends of Rutland County Museum & Oakham Castle (FRCMOC).

Thursday 15th May, 7.30pm at Rutland County Museum

**RLHRS AGM**

**Village Research**

Langham Local History Group

Saturday 21st June, 7.30pm at Oakham Castle

(PLEASE NOTE REVISED DATE)

**Oakham on a Plate - Rutland in Russia**

Lars Tharp - Supported by Tennants

There will be a charge for this meeting and booking will be essential. Details to be announced.

Thursday 10th July, 7.30pm at Rutland County Museum

### **Early Rutland Houses**

Nick Hill

Surviving houses which date before 1550 are quite rare in Rutland. Nick Hill will speak about a new research initiative, which aims to review existing knowledge and add recent discoveries.

Saturday 6th September

### **Guided Historical Walk round Pilton and the Luffenhams in Rutland**

A 5 mile walk exploring aspects of the local history of this area.

Leaders Robert Ovens and Sheila Sleath

Meet at 2.00pm outside St John the Baptist Church, North Luffenham.

Saturday 20th September

### **Village Visit to Ridlington**

There will be a charge for this meeting and booking will be essential. Details to be announced.

The remainder of the 2008 / 2009 programme will be forwarded to members when details have been finalised.

### **THE GEORGE PHILLIPS AWARD 2007**

Sponsored jointly by the Rutland Local History and Record Society and Rutland County Council, and awarded annually to the project which makes the most significant contribution to conserving the character of the built environment in Rutland, the prestigious George Phillips Award was originally made possible by a generous donation to the Society by Patrick Coyne in memory of his grandfather George Phillips. Any new building, renovation or conservation project completed during the previous twelve months is eligible.

Before a near capacity audience at Oakham Castle on 13th December, the George Phillips Award for 2007 was presented by Viscountess Campden to Oakham School for the new Littles boarding house in Chapel Close. Pick Everard were the architects and Palmers of Oakham were the builders. The first runner-up, and Highly Commended, was Welland View, a new thatched house at Tippings Lane, Barrowden, owned by Mr and Mrs Conway. Their architect was Rutland Planning and the builder was Brown and Jones. The second runner-up, and Commended, was a two storey timber framed extension to The Hollies at Main Street, Glaston, owned by Mr and Mrs Dean. The architect was The Wilmot Partnership and the builder was Hyland Vaughan.

The Society's President, Edward Baines, opened the proceedings and introduced Wing Commander Rob Toy, chairman of RCC Planning Committee, who gave an illustrated account of each of the three short-listed projects before Lady Campden presented the award, in the shape of a Rutland horseshoe, to the winner. She then presented certificates to both the runners up.

In addition to the George Phillips Award the Society has this year instituted a second award for projects involving the renovation and/or conservation of existing smaller buildings. This award, the Rutland Historic Building Award, also in the shape of the Rutland horseshoe, was presented to the owner, Mr Richard Brown, for the renovation of The Saddle Room, a small stone-built store at Caldecott. The architect was Richard Dunit and Stuart Glavesham was the builder. Edward Baines introduced the award and Elizabeth Bryan explained why a new award was needed and why this project was chosen.

After the Awards Ceremony, Bill Learoyd of the Stamford Geological Society gave an enjoyable and instructive talk on the Geology of Ketton Quarry. His talk covered the geological history of the quarry, how the different rocks developed over time, why they are so important and how they are used today.

Alan Curtis gave the vote of thanks at the end of the meeting.

*Chris Wilson*

Details of the George Phillips Awards and how to make a nomination for the 2008 competitions are available on the Society's website at [www.rutlandhistory.org](http://www.rutlandhistory.org)

Alternatively, please contact Jill Kimber, Correspondence Secretary, RLHRS, Rutland County Museum, Catmose St, Oakham LE15 6HW, or [secretary@rutlandhistory.org](mailto:secretary@rutlandhistory.org)

### **BOOK REVIEWS**

*Some Pages in Oakham and Barleythorpe History*

**Kari J Sillanpää**

**Published in 2007 by Viafor**

**Price not stated**

Copies of this little book arrived in Oakham recently courtesy of the author, who is the Society's only member resident in Helsinki. This requires a little explanation: in his covering letter, Mr Sillanpää says that in 1959, in fulfilment of a student project on the British system of government, he found himself reading what he could discover about Rutland: 'it was not very much: people there were busily working in agriculture, which seemed a sensible thing to do in an inland county, and besides this they for some reason hunted foxes.'

Some thirty years later, while pursuing his long-standing interest in the history of the sixteenth century, Mr Sillanpää discovered that manorial institutions still existed today, and, what is more, that lordships of the manor were coming on the market. Amongst them was that of Oakham Deanshold and Barleythorpe, one of a number being sold off by the Church Commissioners. This brought back memories of his student essay: and so he bought it.

Now, in a modest 34 pages - half of which are garnished with nicely reproduced historical engravings, mostly of royal personages and largely drawn from his own collection - the author sets down a few of the cogent details of Oakham's manorial history: though it is not until two-thirds

of the way through that he admits that there was in fact another manor, Oakham Lordshold.

Covering as it does Rutland personages ranging from Queen Edith to the Yellow Earl in such a small compass, this can hardly be expected to be a work of deep scholarship - nor does the author claim it to be such: yet it reveals the depth of one modern lord of the manor's interest in the history of what he surveys from afar. Oh, and the Church Commissioners have retained the mineral rights....

*Tim Clough*

### *Saints in the Landscape*

By **Graham Jones**

Published in 2007 by **Tempus Publishing, Chalford, Stroud** ([www.tempus-publishing.com](http://www.tempus-publishing.com))

Price: **£16.99**

ISBN: **978 0 7524 4108 5**

*Saints in the Landscape* is the sort of book you think you will dip into for five minutes, perhaps to check a church dedication, but actually emerge from a couple of hours later, having been led on by one fascinating detail after another. Whether you are interested in a particular saint (say, St. Denis, patron of horse-fairs, promoted by Royalty and, notably for us, by Robert Grosseteste, the famous Bishop of Lincoln who in his early years was prebendary of Empingham) or intrigued by which saints were associated with particular landscape features (St. Michael with high places, St John the Baptist with wilderness) you will find the information here.

Dr. Jones says the work is ongoing and he welcomes contributions but he has, himself, laid the foundation: his many years of research are here represented in text, an index (warning: the print is tiny) and amazingly detailed maps. These show the distribution of saints' names through most of Britain and thereby make good his claim that the choice of dedication was not random but follows patterns, which with his help we can follow.

*Auriol Thomson*

### *To the Manor Drawn*

By **Leslie Ann Boshier**

Published in 2007 by **Pier 9, an imprint of Murdoch Books, London** ([www.murdochbooks.co.uk](http://www.murdochbooks.co.uk))

Price: **£7.99**

ISBN: **978 1921259890**

*To the Manor Drawn* is a collection of observations of English country life by an American anglophile. After many years travelling and working round the world experiencing societies and wealth most of us only read about in glossy magazines, the author came to live in Rutland with her city financier husband. They fell in love with, and eventually moved to Stocken Hall, then a neglected former mansion in the parish of Stretton, giving up city life for the 'slower' pace of rural living and its wild-life neighbours.

Each chapter of *To the Manor Drawn* is a description of a different aspect of rural living. The author's affection for her new surroundings is evident in the humour and

colour of her narrative. Every experience is brought vividly to life through her keen observation of the minutiae of her weather influenced surroundings, and traditions such as 'Spotted Dick' and 'Welly Wanging'. It is an ideal book to dip in to as time and opportunities arise, especially when you fancy a good laugh.

*Anon*

### **EARTHQUAKES IN RUTLAND**

Whilst those members with clear consciences may well have slept innocently through the earthquake that rattled England in the early hours of 27th February 2008, many of us in Rutland genuinely felt the earth move - hardly surprising, since the epicentre was near Market Rasen in Lincolnshire and the tremor registered 5.2 on the Richter scale. This was the biggest earthquake felt in the British Isles for a quarter of a century, but 250 years ago another Rutlander, Thomas Barker of Lyndon, was recording instances of similar phenomena in his journals.

His first reference was to a tremor felt on 30th June 1748, but in 1750 he records that there were 'a very uncommon number of earthquakes in England, the two first at London and others in different parts'. In fact he lists eight altogether, on 8th February, 8th, 12th and 15th March, 2nd April, 23rd August, 30th September and 1st October, a truly surprising number given how few of the 200 or so tremors registered in Britain can normally be sensed by us.

The major event that he records was of course the disastrous Lisbon earthquake, or rather the series of earthquakes, of 1st November 1755, thought nowadays to have approached 8.7 on the Richter scale. Perhaps as many as 100,000 people in Iberia and the western Mediterranean lost their lives in the quake itself and the ensuing tsunami and fire. There had been a slight quake in Rutland and neighbouring counties on 1st August, but Thomas Barker records that on 1st November 'in England &c as far as Sweden, the waters both in Sea and ponds were unaccountably & strongly agitated, without any sensible earthquake, at the very time that a most violent one almost destroyed Lisbon, Mequinez &c and greatly damaged other places, with the loss of multitudes of lives. And all November and December earthquakes were frequent in Europe and Africa, and some in America, and though less common, they did not cease toward Spring...'

The final reference is found for 14th September 1778, when 'the earthquake which was felt ... in Cheshire, Lancashire &c was observed by some people here, both the sound and shake; but as there was a strong wind at the time, neither of them were so much taken notice of as they might probably otherwise have been'.

And the source for this information? Of course, it is in our Society's publication, John Kington's *The Weather Journals of a Rutland Squire* (1988). If you haven't got your copy yet, it is still available and reduced to £5.00 (£3.50 to members) plus £1.30 p&p. So, if you have an interest in phenology, what are you waiting for?

*Tim Clough*