

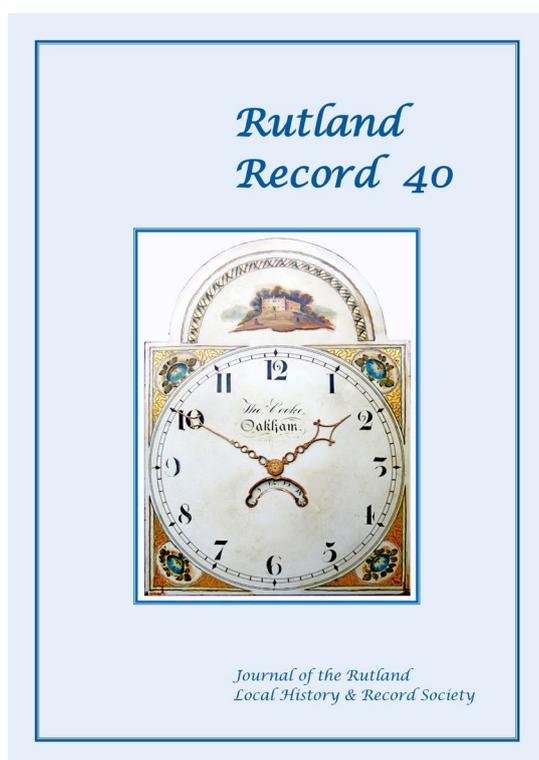
RUTLAND LOCAL HISTORY & RECORD SOCIETY

Registered Charity No. 700273

Rutland County Museum, Catmose Street, Oakham, Rutland, LE15 6HW

***** PRESS INFORMATION *****
***** NEW PUBLICATION *****

Society publishes fortieth issue of Rutland's annual local history journal



Forty years ago, in 1980, the Rutland Record Society published the first issue of its annual journal, *Rutland Record*, under the editorship of the late Bryan Waites. This month the Rutland Local History & Record Society, as it is now known, has produced the fortieth issue of the journal, alongside an index volume of the last ten issues.

The new edition begins with an article by Professor Alan Rogers in which he discusses and transcribes a survey of the manor of Preston with Uppingham which was produced in 1595, towards the end of Elizabeth I's reign, for William Cecil, lord Burghley, who had acquired the estate in 1588. The survey describes all the various parcels of land and buildings in the manor and gives the names of his tenants – over a hundred names appear – and how much they paid in rent. In Uppingham we find names familiar to Rutland historians such as Chesilden, Fawkener and Digby amongst many others; in all 58 properties are mentioned, including 39 buildings including at least two inns or taverns, the Swan and the George. In Preston we are told of 48 tenancies, and here Fawkener and Digby

appear again, and so does Sir John Harington of nearby Ridlington. The village had not only a malt mill but also a bakehouse and a windmill; Widow Dawson had a cottage but also a 'new house'. We begin to see a picture of two busy and flourishing places, their inhabitants going about their day-to-day business, going to the market in Uppingham, and working in the fields and woods which belonged to the two settlements: but they also had to pay their annual rent, which might range from a few pence to fifty shillings or more. It is quite unusual to find so much detail at this date, and the survey is really useful to both local and family historians.

In a second article, Sheila Sleath has set out to trace the history of one Thomas Cooke, an Oakham watch and clockmaker whose business flourished in the town throughout much of the nineteenth century. Sheila reveals that his premises were on the north side of Oakham High Street, adjacent to what is now Walker's bookshop – a prime position in the town, and tempting enough for 'some rogues' to attempt a break-in early one Tuesday morning in March 1830: they were disturbed by the family and took nothing, but a reward of £50 was offered if they were caught and convicted. Thomas Cooke eventually retired and ended his days in Penn Street, where he died in 1883 aged 90. The business was taken over by his son John.

Sheila's article also covers the history of several other local watch and clockmakers, often itinerant traders as was usual for the time, and sometimes with German and Jewish ancestry such as Matthias Houser or Abraham and Samuel Samuel. Houser took over John Cooke's business, and provides a link to a much more recent and well-known family firm, for in 1905 his daughter Louisa married John Charles Ford, an Oakham upholsterer, whose son Bert Ford carried on that side of the business and lived until 1997. This study shows that we do not have to look too far to find direct connections between the modern era and that of Queen Victoria and even earlier.

The third article in this issue, by Uppingham local historian Vivian Anthony, gives an account of the life in Uppingham of Chancellor William Wales, previously vicar of All Saints', Northampton, who became rector of Uppingham and lord of the rectory manor in 1859 and stayed until his retirement in 1879 at the age of 75. This was a period of considerable social turbulence in the town, much of it to do with outbreaks of typhoid and arguments about improving sanitary conditions but also coloured by the somewhat abrasive relationship between Chancellor Wales and Edward Thring, Headmaster of the burgeoning Uppingham School, and how each of them perceived that education in the town should develop. While Thring was developing his school, Wales became chairman of the governors of the town's National School which catered for the children of the parish and secured the building of a new school. As rector, Wales was able to oversee considerable alterations and restoration work to the parish church, which resulted in enough and better seating for the congregations, which were growing at the time – as indeed were those of the several non-conformist chapels in the town – and would number several hundred people every week. When William Wales retired, he left a flourishing church but, perhaps through no fault of his own, a rectory manor in financial disarray due to the misappropriation of funds on the part of the steward, William Henry Brown, who was soon to be struck off. Wales retired to Leamington Spa, where he died ten years later, and a memorial to him was erected in the east window of Uppingham church.

This fortieth issue closes with reports of work carried out locally during 2019, including finds recorded with the Portable Antiquities Scheme in Rutland such as a Roman brooch in the form of a cockerel from Leighfield. There is a summary account of the community archaeology dig carried out at Oakham Castle, and annual reports on the activities of record offices and local societies with an interest in the history and archaeology of the county.

The Society's Honorary Editor, Tim Clough, who has produced the past 25 issues, said, 'Once again, we are grateful for the expertise of contributors with a special interest in Rutland's long and varied history. *Rutland Record* is free to members, and we encourage anyone with an interest of Rutland's past to join us – full information about our other publications and our activities, including our meetings and how our programme is affected by the coronavirus epidemic, is given on our website, www.rutlandhistory.org'.

Copies of the new publication can be obtained as usual from the Rutland Local History & Record Society at the Rutland County Museum for £6.00 (plus £2.00 p&p), via local bookshops, or on-line via www.genfair.co.uk. ISBN-13: 978-0-907464-61-7.

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