

Rutland Record

No. 15 (1995)

Journal of the Rutland Local History
& Record Society



Rutland Local History & Record Society

The Society is formed from the union in June 1991 of the Rutland Local History Society, founded in the 1930s, and the Rutland Record Society, founded in 1979. In May 1993, the Rutland Field Research Group for Archaeology and History, founded in 1971, also amalgamated with the Society.

The Society is a Registered Charity, and its aim is the advancement of the education of the public in all aspects of the history of the ancient County of Rutland and its immediate area.

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COVER ILLUSTRATION: The Riding School of the Rutland Fencible Cavalry in about 1890

Published by the Rutland Local History and Record Society. Copyright (c) RLHRS 1994. ISSN 0260-3322.
Printed by Leicestershire County Council's Central Print Services, County Hall, Glenfield, Leicester, from camera ready copy prepared by T H McK Clough using Cicero word processing.

Editorial: "O Roteland, Roteland! wherefore art thou Roteland!"

with apologies to William Shakespeare

In April 1974, England's smallest county lost its independence. After a thousand years, Rutland had succumbed to bureaucracy. As Bryan Waites wrote in his first eloquent Editorial (*Rutland Record* 1 (1980) 3), it seemed that Rutland had "disappeared finally into Leicestershire." Certainly the Post Office was of that opinion, no matter what Rutland people thought. The new structure stabilised, though, and the relationship between Rutland and Leicestershire for the most part worked well, despite a constant undercurrent of "Rutlandism". However, political dogma appears to require that governments shall never cease to meddle with things, and a new Local Government Commission was set up to review local authorities and, where appropriate, to propose new arrangements. In his last Editorial, Bryan Waites could point to a hint of a new rosy-fingered dawn (*Rutland Record* 11 (1991) 2). The anonymous writer of the next Editorial was to emphasise that the "Roteland" which had been the dowry of Anglo-Saxon queens would not be "lost in a moment through the pushing of parliamentary pens" (*Rutland Record* 12 (1992) 46). Was this new-found optimism justified?

As in centuries past, Commissioners charged with duties of enquiry arrived in 1993 to gather information. Submissions were tendered by interested parties, including this Society. Rutland District Council pressed hard for unitary status, supported by a vociferous, even partisan, local press, almost to the point of pre-empting the outcome by using the catch-phrase "Welcome back Rutland" on its postal franking machine. Was that to be construed as an exhortation to the Commissioners, or as a salutation, *fait accompli*, to a newly reinstated Rutland? As in the syntactical challenge "time flies you cannot they go too fast", punctuation is all important! Leicestershire County Council, as expected, argued strongly for the status quo, though conceding that Rutland's historic identity might merit recognition.

In the summer of 1994, the Commissioners announced a range of options, with a unitary Rutland high on the list. Victory seemed at hand. During the subsequent public consultations, all parties criticised the Commission either for failing to offer the status quo or for the inadequacy of its consultation exercise. It emerged that the Commissioners were deeply divided in their opinions as to the ultimate status of Rutland, and after the closing date for responses, the trumpeting stopped while everyone awaited their final recommendations. These were made as this issue was going to press, and included the recommendation that Rutland should have unitary status and once again become a county. Shortly, ministerial responses will be declared and the future of Rutland will be defined - at least until the next review.

In many counties, the Commission's proposals have been found wanting and have provoked controversy. Leicestershire has been no exception, particularly as the retention of the status quo had in fact been called for so strongly. Many, including prominent members of this Society, doubted whether a unitary Rutland would be either practical or desirable, and most people realise that a return to the old Rutland, and the old ways, is quite impossible twenty years on.

Where, then, does this leave this Society, dedicated as it is to the study of the ancient county but with its journal founded after Rutland had already been overtaken by Leicestershire, and habitually co-operating with Leicestershire's Museums, Arts & Records Service? Leicestershire has managed this county-wide service since 1974, a service which has offered a tremendous range of professional expertise, from archaeology to zoology, and has responsibility for collections in every field including, of course, archives. No-one connected with the Service wishes to see everything which has been built up over the past twenty years fragmented. Rutland District Council, as far as is known, is of like mind and has no particular ambition to run its own museums or archives service; it evidently recognises that this could only be achieved in partnership with others - as indeed would apply in other areas and did so apply before amalgamation in 1974 (a point which, surprisingly, has not been made much of during the debate).

This Society is based at the Rutland County Museum. Its charitable aims are somewhat different from those of the Friends of the Museum, who have helped the museum directly, whilst this Society has set out to achieve its aims through publication, academic research, and practical work in the field. It seems appropriate for the two organisations to work separately and in their different ways towards the common goal of upholding the historic identity of Rutland. It will require more than sentiment to ensure that, if Rutland does indeed regain its independent status, it can then retain it effectively, without depending on the sycophantic pursuit of ephemeral government policies of the kind which seems to have marked, and perhaps marred, the District Council's recent history. It will require confidence and courage and co-operation. This Society's role, in part, will be to monitor the future Rutland to ensure that the historic and environmental evidence of its past is not harmed. It is indeed much more than the name of the county which is at stake.

Contributors

Tim Barfield, a professional ecologist with English Nature, has worked for a time as Assistant Regional Officer for Leicestershire. His interests include the plant communities of neutral grasslands and aspects of the historical ecology of Rutland.

T H McK Clough is Keeper of the Rutland County Museum. He has co-edited two research reports on prehistoric stone implements, compiled a volume in the *Sylloge of Coins of the British Isles*, and has written many archaeological, numismatic and other papers.

Andrew Mitchell is reading History at the University of Leeds. An earlier version of his article formed his Personal Study in A level History whilst he was at Rutland Sixth Form College.

Eileen M Denney was brought up in Whissendine and recently gave her Christmas Song book to the Rutland County Museum.

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The Flora of Valley Hay Meadows at Seaton, Rutland

TIM BARFIELD

Introduction

Seaton Meadows are two adjacent species-rich ancient hay meadows, total area 28.24 acres (11.43 hectares), situated on slightly sloping ground in the base of the Welland Valley at the lower south-east edge of Rutland, between the villages of Harringworth and Seaton (grid reference SP 915979). Their location is visible from some considerable distance

Conservancy Council (now English Nature). The meadows are privately owned and without public access, but parts of the site can still be seen from vantage points along the B672, and an entrance gate along the adjoining Harringworth to Seaton road. Although the general botanical interest of the Welland Valley is discussed in the *Flora of Rutland* (Messenger 1971, 118) this particular site does not appear to be described and may possibly have been



Fig. 1. Arches of the Welland Viaduct seen looking north-east across the triangular meadow area in midsummer. The hedgerow in the background lines one side of the B672. The abundance of flowering buttercup can be an eye-catching feature of the meadow at this time of year.

away as part is spanned by arches of the impressive Welland Viaduct (fig.1) which carries rail freight along the Kettering-Manton line, and provides a prominent architectural feature of the valley. The northern edge of the meadows is bounded by the B672, whilst a small backwater of the River Welland delimits them to the south, and is coincident with the Rutland/Northamptonshire county boundary (fig.2). The line of a former open drain, now largely covered and supporting a line of tall herb vegetation, serves to distinguish the two meadow areas, which have been scheduled as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) by the Nature

overlooked. This account hopes to provide a useful introduction to the most important surviving example of the old type of Welland Valley flood meadow.

Ancient meadows of this type with a continuity of "traditional", ie low intensity, agricultural management, are now very rare both in the Welland Valley and nationally; ten years ago the Nature Conservancy Council (1984) reported that since the war farmers had destroyed 95% of Britain's wild-flower meadows. This habitat is also highly fragmented across the continent. Although parts of the Welland Valley still retain an overall "green" character, apart from roadside verges, most of the

fields and meadows giving this impression differ in having been subject to treatments of artificial fertiliser and herbicide which, along with reseeding, account for their impoverished flora. In these situations the dominant plant is largely perennial rye-grass (*Lolium perenne*), an aggressive and domineering species, rather than the rich assortment of grasses and herbs which would have once been

sometimes be pronounced, for example after the melting of winter snows, when the river can become a roaring torrent up to half a mile wide (Maxim 1989, 93), and during summer flash floods, an example of which occurred during 1993, blocking the Harringworth to Seaton road which skirts the Meadows' south-western boundary. However, the extent and period of inundation has doubtless been

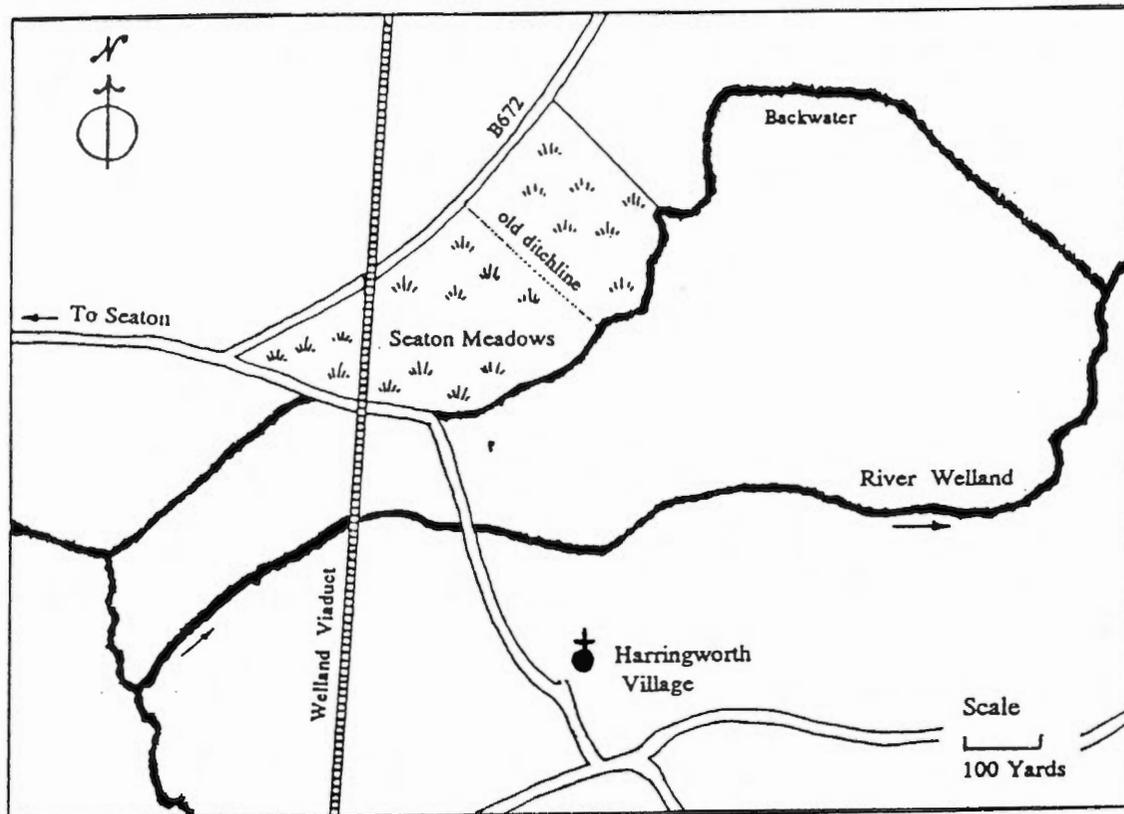


Fig. 2. The location of Seaton Meadows, Rutland, showing some of the main surrounding features.

characteristic. Many of these damaging activities (damaging from a nature conservation viewpoint, that is) were begun and promoted from the 1960s/1970s, when the River Welland was subject to extensive improvement works aimed at reducing the risk of flooding. The dramatic impact of such works on the river is well illustrated in the *Flora of Rutland* (Messenger 1971, plates 14a & 14b) which show the type of intensive canalisation undertaken, during which most of the trees which lay in the river's course, such as alder (*Alnus glutinosa*) and willows (*Salix* spp), were also removed. The former herb-rich flood meadows at the base of the valley, previously inaccessible for large parts of winter and spring due to water-lie, were thereby opened up to allow more intensive management. Consequently, valuable nature conservation sites such as the Barrowden Marshy Meadows, which once existed only a short distance downstream from Seaton Meadows, were sadly lost.

In spite of these activities, Seaton Meadows and other low-lying parts of the Valley still see water-lie during winter and spring. Periodic flooding can

much reduced by the river improvement works described here.

General Topography and Soil Types

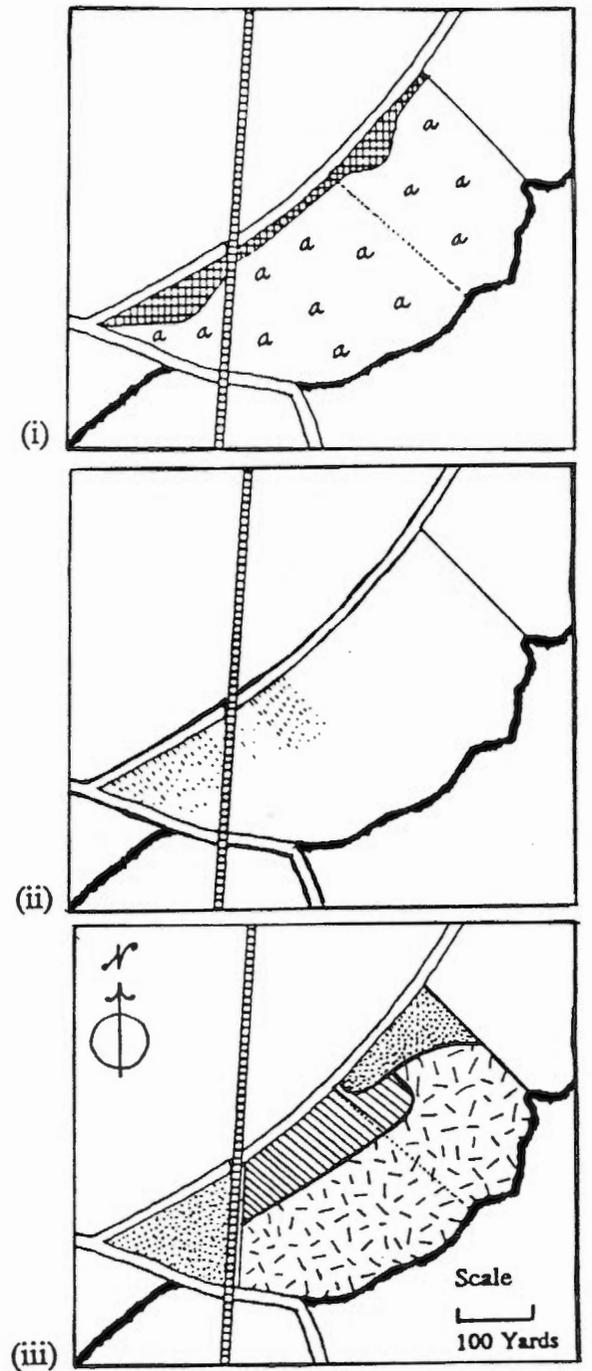
The general topography of the meadows can be roughly divided into three areas: (i) higher grassland in the north-western third of the site running adjacent to the B672, along with a triangular grassland area "separated" from the rest of the site by the Welland viaduct; (ii) lower-lying grassland towards the River Welland which is more liable to flooding; and (iii) seepage areas located near the central part of the site east of the Welland Viaduct approximately between the junction of (i) and (ii). There is in addition a strip of rough disturbed ground associated with the course of the viaduct, but this mainly supports ruderal plants (ie competitive weedy species) and will not be discussed here.

Reference to the 1:50,000 scale British Geological Survey solid and drift map (British Geological Survey 1978) indicates that the lower grassland is underlain by river alluvium, whilst the

higher grassland is underlain by a combination of alluvium and calcareous clays (fig. 3(i)). These two soil types have different draining properties. Although, due to its position, the river alluvium is more liable to flooding, its associated gravels and open structure mean that the soil profile is generally free-draining. In contrast, the fine particulate nature of the clay soils renders them liable to waterlogging, and consequently they take longer to drain and warm up at the beginning of the spring/summer period of plant growth. These soil characteristics thereby have an important influence on the growth of associated plants at this critical part of the season.

It is of interest to note that grassland on the higher ground of the meadows to the north and west exhibits ridge and furrow patterning (fig. 3(ii)). This type of parallel undulation results from long-continued ploughing and may date from any period after introduction of the so-called "heavy" plough (ie, a plough having the attachments of share, coulter and mouldboard which facilitated the ploughing of heavy land - particularly clay soils). Surviving ridge and furrow provides evidence of medieval field patterns, but in areas where there is a predominance of good soils, modern agriculture has left few remains; the greatest extent of these surviving features in England is considered to be found where the counties of Leicestershire, Northamptonshire and Warwickshire meet (Hall 1993, 21). The ridge and furrow found at Seaton Meadows is subdued and rather poorly defined. The most clearly defined pattern can be seen at the northern end of the triangular grassland area, and appears to continue along a band east of the Welland viaduct into areas of wet seepage vegetation. These features are clearly visible on aerial photographs of the site, and part of the area east of the Welland Viaduct is reproduced in fig. 4. It has been suggested that some of the shallow furrows in this particular area could alternatively represent the course of old tile drains but it has not been possible to determine this point. The extent of ridging may be affected by subsequent land use and the date of field enclosure. In the adjoining parish of Haringworth, there are remains of strip ploughing with known documentation from the sixteenth century (Hall 1993, 38). Clearly further research is needed at Seaton Meadows to confirm the age of these features at this site.

Seepage areas occur in places at the junction of the underlying calcareous clay and river alluvium. These hydrological features (also known as flushes) can be distinguished from springs, because water seeps out and across the soil surface rather than gushing forth from a central point. At certain times of the year the main seepage area is readily distinguishable due to the lime-green colour of the common spike-rush (*Eleocharis palustris*), a species



KEY:

- Calcareous (Upper Lias) Clay
- River Alluvium
- Ridge & Furrow Patterning
- MG4 Meadow Foxtail\Great Burnet Community
- MG5 Crested Dog's-tail\Common Knapweed Community
- MG8 Crested Dog's-tail\Marsh Marigold Community



Fig. 3. Approximate distribution of features of interest at Seaton Meadows referred to in the accompanying text: (i) associated soils; (ii) location of subdued ridge and furrow patterns; (iii) grassland plant communities.

which favours these wet situations, and this can be seen from suitable vantage points along the B672. The features can also be picked out on colour aerial photographs, showing up as a main rectangular area and a number of thin drainage lines (fig.4). Water seeps from higher ground of the meadowland near to the B672, diffusing down the slope to drain into the soil further down. The amount of water percolating through these areas differs according to the time of year, and there is probably a substantial

hampered by another spring on the hillside above (Messenger 1971, 116). In addition, at Wakerley Spring, Northamptonshire (SP 972996), situated on the far bank of the river opposite Tixover church, water issues as a bryophyte-dominated spring at the junction of alluvium and lower Lincolnshire limestone. Unlike Seaton Meadows, however, most of the surrounding grassland has been agriculturally improved, and its botanical interest is mainly restricted to a series of narrow watercourses fed by

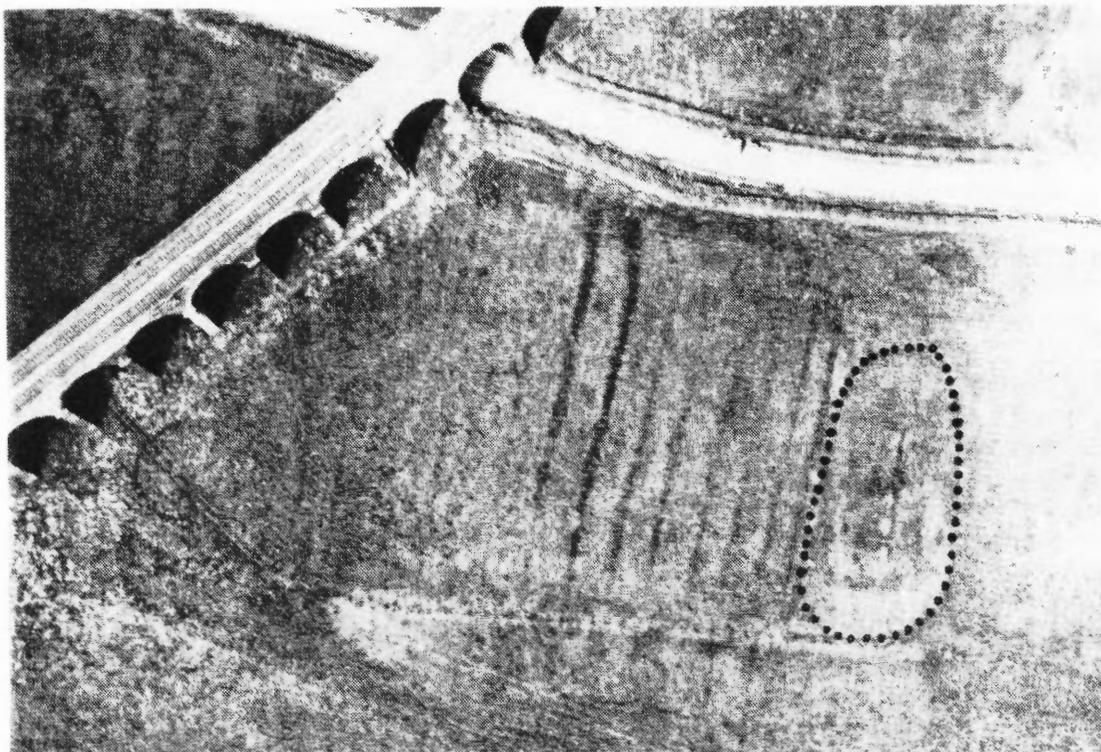


Fig. 4. Aerial photograph at 1:2500 scale of part of Seaton Meadows with the B672 and Welland Viaduct. Ridge and furrow (?and tile drains) can be picked out by the dark lines of wetter vegetation. The approximate location of the main seepage area is indicated. Taken from a colour print, flown 17 May 1992 (copyright Photoair, Yaxley).

time lag between periods of rainfall and the appearance of this groundwater on site. In places peaty deposits have developed. A spring is situated at the edge of the meadows and covered by dense scrub at the junction of the ditchline and the B672. Hydrological details of the site have not been investigated, but water from the spring which drains the fields above is mainly channelled below ground along the route of the old covered ditch. At times the water flow can be vigorous, evidenced by the fact it can be heard from the road. In the upper part of the grassland compartment north-east of this ditch is a smaller area of localised wet vegetation associated with a spring. This differs from the main seepage area however in supporting tall vegetation dominated by the hard rush (*Juncus inflexus*).

In the Welland Valley such aquifers are not restricted to Seaton Meadows; examination of the ground at Seaton Railway Tunnel indicates that construction of the cutting may possibly have been

this spring. These support a number of plant species locally uncommon in Northamptonshire.

Survival and Management

The survival of Seaton Meadows to the present time has not been through chance but has depended upon the sympathetic attitude of the local families who have owned and managed this site for generations. The difficult low-lying position of the site and the fact that aquifers drain into it have also been significant factors in favouring the retention of its native flora. In the face of recent farming subsidies and other incentives for agricultural intensification survival of such ancient meadows is all the more noteworthy. The maintenance of the particularly high nature conservation interest of this site was formally recognised by its designation as an SSSI in 1991.

"Meadow" describes a situation where the grassland flora is allowed to grow up, flower, set seed,

and is then cut for hay. This contrasts with "pasture", which is grassland that is grazed at periods throughout the growing season. Although these definitions would have once been clear-cut and well understood, with the advent of modern farming techniques they have become somewhat blurred and interchangeable. They are used in this account in their former strict sense, which is widely used by nature conservationists.

The flora of Seaton Meadows has developed to be adapted to the particular form of management which is typical of this type of river meadow. Between December and July the meadows are "shut up", which means that they are left unmanaged to allow a good growth of grasses and herbs. During high summer this culminates in an impressive display of flowering colour. During or after July, depending on the weather and when the bulk of species have set seed, there is a hay-cut. This removes the above ground vegetation from the site and inadvertently gives opportunity for the distribution of seeds of various native grasses and herbs around the Meadows, some of which, given suitable conditions, may go on to germinate. Regrowth of grassland vegetation during the remaining summer and autumn allows "aftermath" grazing (grazing following the removal of a hay crop), in this case by a flock of approximately one hundred sheep. The continuation of this hay meadow management on an annual basis is critical for maintaining the botanical interest of the site as, without it, rank grasses such as false oat-grass (*Arrhenatherum elatius*) would become prominent and choke the less competitive grasses and herbs which form the special interest of the Meadows.

Botanical Interest

A number of plant species which are uncommon in Rutland, or are considered to be declining here, occur at Seaton Meadows. These include the common meadow-rue (*Thalictrum flavum*) (situated near to a western boundary hedge) and slender tufted sedge (*Carex acuta*) (in a wet depression in the central part of the site). In a local context these are both species which may be restricted to the Welland area but would previously have been considerably more widespread along the valley. However, rather than focusing on individual species, it should be emphasised that it is more the particular combinations of plant species that are important in this instance. These intimate and characteristic combinations of plants which constitute recognisable units of vegetation are known as "plant communities".

Work towards recognising and classifying British plant communities has gained considerable impetus in recent years with the publication of the National Vegetation Classification (NVC). This classification has been coordinated at Lancaster

University, drawing on the efforts of various habitat specialists and with funding from the Nature Conservancy Council. The approach follows the so-called Continental System of plant community classification originally developed in France and Switzerland. Various texts have now been published describing the NVC habitat types, and others are in press. Volume 3 of the series (Rodwell 1992) includes grasslands and is therefore relevant to this study. This recognises three general grassland types, namely mesotrophic (on neutral substrates), calcifugous (on acid substrates) and calcicolous (on calcareous substrates). The text includes a key facilitating the placing of plant communities within the NVC scheme based on the floristic composition of representative sample quadrats, which is used in conjunction with various detailed descriptions and vegetation tables which are also included. These quadrats are (usually) square frames or plots of known internal area used to sample vegetation by recording the identity and cover of plant species within them, along with vegetation height and other associated physical features such as slope and soil type. Quadrat information taken from a site or group of sites can be combined to give a picture of the particular plant community under study. It is important however that these quadrat records are of sufficient size and number, and also that they have been recorded from areas regarded as being representative of the particular vegetation under study at that site.

Three different NVC grassland community types have been recorded at Seaton Meadows, and their distribution appears to be largely influenced by physical characteristics such as the soil type, water-lie, and the presence of water seepage areas (although it is a complex mixture of factors that will determine the specific composition of plant species and their abundance in any particular part of the site). The distribution of plant communities at Seaton Meadows has been determined by eye, and a map is provided in fig 3(iii). An important point to note in interpreting such maps is that plant community boundaries may not necessarily always be clearly distinct on the ground and can grade into each other as here. Nonetheless, such maps are valuable in giving a picture of community distribution within nature conservation interest sites.

The lowest-lying parts of this site comprise a community known as the MG4 meadow foxtail (*Alopecurus pratensis*)/great burnet (*Sanguisorba officinalis*) flood meadow grassland type. (The NVC initials simply provide a short cut method for vegetation description; in this case, "MG" stands for mesotrophic grassland (ie neutral grassland) and the "4" means that this is the fourth community in this habitat classification.). This vegetation typically occurs in river valley sites subject to periodic inundation by flood water, and is centred upon the

Midlands and parts of northern England. It is likely to have a very restricted distribution in Rutland and on present information is probably also rare in Leicestershire as a whole, being represented at only a few sites such as Loughborough Big Meadow (SK 540214), some vegetation details for which are provided in the *Flora of Leicestershire* (Primavesi & Evans 1988, 122 - habitat study 32). At Seaton Meadows it is associated with the areas of river alluvium, occupies approximately 16 acres (6.5 hectares), and is characterised by herbs such as the great burnet, meadowsweet (*Filipendula ulmaria*)

hoped that with continued sympathetic management their abundance will wane now that drought conditions appear to have ended. A notable feature of the site is the diversity of sedge (*Carex*) species which are particularly associated with the MG4 community here.

The MG5 crested dog's-tail (*Cynosurus cristatus*)/common knapweed (*Centaurea nigra*) grassland community is associated with those areas of the site which are least influenced by flood water. This community appears to occupy both calcareous clay and parts of gravel alluvium in the western triangular



Fig. 5. Parting aside tall grasses within the flood-meadow grassland reveals characteristic herbs such as great burnet (*Sanguisorba officinalis*), meadowsweet (*Filipendula ulmaria*) and meadow buttercup (*Ranunculus acris*).

and meadow vetchling (*Lathyrus pratensis*), with yellow-rattle (*Rhinanthus minor*), greater birds-foot-trefoil (*Lotus uliginosus*), common sorrel (*Rumex acetosa*) and meadow buttercup (*Ranunculus acris*). In September when the meadows have been cut for hay, but before stock have been introduced, the patches of great burnet can easily be picked out from the surrounding short grassland sward by their eye-catching purple-brown leaf stalks and characteristically shaped leaves. These same plants are hard to pick out in midsummer when they are overtopped by tall grasses (fig. 5). Numerous grass species associated with this grassland include meadow foxtail, yorkshire-fog (*Holcus lanatus*), and red fescue (*Festuca rubra*). There are indications that the recent prolonged period of drought conditions may have been responsible for the abundance of certain coarse grasses, particularly yorkshire-fog and meadow fescue (*Festuca pratensis*), but it is

area and also in the northern corner of the site. MG5 is found in other locations in Rutland but agricultural pressures have significantly reduced the total area. At Seaton Meadows it totals approximately 6.2 acres (2.5 hectares), and is characterised by the aforementioned species with pignut (*Conopodium majus*), lady's bedstraw (*Galium verum*) and ox-eye daisy (*Leucanthemum vulgare*), which favour these drier conditions, and by grasses such as common bent (*Agrostis capillaris*) and sweet vernal grass (*Anthoxanthum odoratum*). A sample quadrat of 4 sq m recorded in the western section of this community in 1991 had a total of 27 species of vascular plants and mosses, illustrating the diversity of this vegetation.

Seepage areas and adjacent wet grassland in the compartment immediately east of the viaduct are assignable to the MG8 crested dog's-tail/marsh marigold (*Caltha palustris*) community type. This vegetation is very localised in Rutland and the

Midlands and where it occurs typically occupies small areas associated with moving ground-water. At Seaton it has an area of approximately 4.2 acres (2.5 hectares). In Rutland the community type is known also from Empingham Marshy Meadows (SK 956090). It can provide a valuable habitat for a number of uncommon plant and invertebrate species (eg at Empingham plants include flat-sedge (*Blysmus compressus*) and early marsh-orchid (*Dactylorhiza incarnata*) at its only Leicestershire station). During spring/summer the seepage areas are very noticeable due to flowering marsh marigold and cuckoo flower (*Cardamine pratensis*). Their flora also comprises an assortment of other plants requiring wet conditions which at Seaton Meadows appear to be restricted to this part of the site, including ragged-robin (*Lychnis flos-cuculi*), common spike-rush, water horsetail (*Equisetum fluviatile*), marsh bedstraw (*Galium palustre*), carnation sedge (*Carex panicea*), spiked sedge (*C. spicata*) and the moss *Cratoneuron filicinum*. The main area shown in fig.4 and as recorded in summer 1988 measured approximately 18 x 50 metres. There is a gradation of plant species within the area as one proceeds from the aquifer down towards the valley. Above the issue is a wet/dry transition zone marked by ragged robin, creeping buttercup (*Ranunculus repens*) and white clover (*Trifolium repens*), whilst in the wettest parts of the seepage area common spike-rush and creeping bent (*Agrostis stolonifera*) are dominant. This leads down onto more level ground where soft rush (*Juncus effusus*) is characteristic. The seepage area and associated wet meadow also provides habitat for snipe (*Gallinago gallinago*), a bird which, due to habitat loss, is now uncommon in Rutland and Leicestershire.

Discussion

Seaton Meadows is an important botanical, landscape and historical feature whose conservation is

dependent on the maintenance of traditional farming practices. The conservation of its species-rich flood meadow communities (such as MG4) also requires seasonal flooding if it is to continue. Although meadows of this type appear once to have been widespread along the Welland Valley, this is probably now the only remaining example. In effect it constitutes an "ecological blueprint" that will be valuable in efforts to recreate similar meadows elsewhere in the valley, which should be encouraged under existing and possible future schemes to encourage sustainable farming practices. The adoption of such practices will be important in helping create a richer, more diverse and widespread natural heritage in this part of Rutland, which can be enjoyed by future generations. It is the opinion of this author that gravel winning proposals which have been put forward at various times would irreversibly damage the individual character of the Welland Valley and should be resisted in favour of more sympathetic schemes in keeping with its endearing and distinctive landscape.

Acknowledgements

Thanks are due to Mr John Crowden for kind permission to undertake botanical work at Seaton Meadows, to Ian Butterfield for various site details, to Michael Barfield who kindly read and provided comments on parts of the manuscript, to Rosemary Parslow and David Soden who assisted with survey work and community mapping, to Photoair, Yaxley, for permission to reproduce figure 4, and to Roy Walker, Chief Officer of the Joint Nature Conservation Committee, who allowed me time to complete parts of this account.

* * *

This account is dedicated to Guy Messenger who did so much to further the cause of botany in Rutland, and who died during 1993.

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Rutland Elections in the early Eighteenth Century

ANDREW MITCHELL

Introduction

The passing of the Triennial Act in 1694 was a catalyst in late-Stuart politics for two reasons. Because the Act restricted the length of a Parliament to no more than three years, it served to increase the frequency of elections and thus accelerated the growth of political activity. Furthermore, the very nature of the Tory and Whig struggle created a corresponding conflict within society that permeated below the level of the electorate. The period was dominated by the uncompromising attempts of the two parties to achieve ascendancy, the fluctuating fortunes of each only coming to an end with Whig triumph and Tory disintegration in the first election after the Hanoverian succession.

There were three main areas of conflict between the parties: the nature of government and role of the monarch, the religious settlement, and the objectives of foreign policy. The Tories championed divine right theories of government, sought to protect the privileges of the Church of England and were suspicious of the deep involvement in European affairs which had resulted from William III's accession. Conversely, the Whigs advocated contractual kingship, ardently supported the Protestant succession, sought to curb the privileges of the Church of England, and were committed to England becoming a major European power ranged against the absolutist Louis XIV (Speck 1970, 1). However, the party struggle began in a very real sense only shortly before William III's death, though it became intensified in every respect during the reign of his successor, Queen Anne, even if "to talk of a two-party system ... is a rather ludicrous oversimplification of the unique relationship which existed in Anne's reign between the parties on the one hand and the Crown and the administration on the other" (Holmes 1967, 9).

Nevertheless, there can be little doubt about the prominence of the clash between Tory and Whig, a clash encapsulated most thoroughly by the controversy over the trial of the Tory hero Dr Sacheverell. Much of the available evidence, for example Parliamentary speeches, division lists, political correspondence and pamphlet literature, supports this view. It is certainly apparent in the Parliamentary addresses prior to 1711 of the predominant political figure in Rutland, the Tory Daniel Finch, second Earl of Nottingham. His speeches contain contemptuous references to the unsuitability of "Whigs and Dissenters" for political office. Thus, in a letter to

a freeholder before the 1710 election, Nottingham urged his correspondent to vote for the Tory interest since

"I take for granted for I am sure you are persuaded that Mr. Noel and Mr. sherard [the Whigs] are by no means fitt to serve in Parl[iament]; to be trusted with all our civil & religious rights. The actions of the one [sherard] in Parl[iament] & the profest Whiggism of the other [Noel] out of Parl[iament] & his earnest recommendation of his colleague, notwithstanding his past behaviour, are sufficient to demonstrate what may be expected of them." ¹

A crucial aspect of historians' views since the 1960s has been the emphasis placed on the role of the electorate in the political struggle of Anne's reign. Professor W A Speck has demonstrated that voters were divided along party lines and that, because of the frequency of elections, political issues did not merely fade quietly away after polling day (Speck 1970, ch 2). During the period there was also a floating vote; indeed, much evidence suggests that many voters were swayed more by issues than by allegiance, or at least by the images of policy presented by the rather crude propaganda that poured out of London.

"There were those who voted consistently along party lines ... either through intellectual conviction, such as the Anglican clergy and the dissenters, or through self-interest, such as tenants who obliged their landlords ... rather than face eviction. But the extent of the floating vote is phenomenal ... Whilst there is plenty of evidence that material considerations influenced electoral behaviour to an considerable extent, it is also clear that in many constituencies voters were converted from one side to another by events and issues" (Speck 1970, 25-6).

In this respect, Rutland in 1710 and 1713 would certainly appear to fit in with Speck's model of early eighteenth-century electoral behaviour.

The electoral background in Rutland

Daniel Finch, Earl of Nottingham, was one of the most influential statesmen of the late-Stuart period. A High-Church Tory of strong beliefs, he commanded a good deal of respect at Westminster, despite the satirical alias "Don Dismal" bestowed upon him by contemporary commentators such as Jonathan Swift. In fact, his self-conviction and essential political ideology go some way towards explaining his defection to the Whig cause in 1711, and make this all the more fascinating.

Shortly after losing office during William III's ministerial purge in 1694 in favour of the Whigs, Nottingham bought the estate at Burley on the Hill in Rutland, and, after selling his Kensington residence to the King himself, took his family to live at Exton whilst construction of the new house began on the Burley site. Built at great cost and ranking on completion with such celebrated houses of the period as Blenheim, the house (and the estate) at Burley were to provide the basis of the prominent position of the Finch family in Rutland society for many decades.²

Rutland, although the smallest English county, was, in accordance with other constituencies, allocated two seats in the House of Commons. As Professor Speck has so thoroughly demonstrated, there is clear evidence to suggest that constituency seats were, for the most part, hotly contested throughout the period and that political conflict was by no means restricted to Westminster. There was, moreover, a distinct difference in emphasis between the voting patterns of the borough and county electorates during the period, and, whilst it would be fair to say that fundamental Tory strength lay in the shires, it would be a mistake to assume that the Whigs were merely treading water in these constituencies, as the Rutland polls of 1710 and 1713 go some way to illustrating.

It has been demonstrated that during Anne's reign the electorate was growing rapidly (Speck 1970, ch 2). One reason for the increase in the size of the electorate, though statistically a minor feature, was the ability of patrons to create new forty-shilling freeholders with the right to vote in country seats. Thus Nottingham, in the course of supporting his son's campaign in 1710, created over 300 new electors in the single week leading up to the election. Whilst this significantly indicates the strength of the Finch interests in Rutland, it was in fact a response by Nottingham to the discovery that his son's Whig opponents had themselves created over 100 freeholders in the previous year.³ Though clearly Nottingham's response outdid that of the joint effort of the Whig candidates, the conclusive point is that the action of the Earl was prompted by that of the Whigs, and seems to indicate that on their part at least, the attraction of a seat in the Commons overrode strict party obedience, or even more significantly, hints at an element of party ambiguity in the shires.

Rutland was an unusual entity. Its electorate of 602 was a mere one-fifteenth of that of the largest English county, Yorkshire, although larger than that of the average borough.⁴ Had it not been for the great influence bestowed on the Finches by the estate at Burley, or the presence of someone of Nottingham's status, the seat that was practically assured to the family's candidate would in all probability have been as erratically contested as the

other. Nevertheless, the county's geographical conciseness and relatively small electorate were advantageous financially to all the candidates and their agents. Expenditure on transport, material inducements, entertainment and campaign literature would be far less than that incurred, for example, by candidates in Yorkshire. Such savings were useful in an age in which candidates were expected to fund their own campaigns. Moreover, Rutland's size made the electorate more accessible to the candidates and encouraged higher than average turn-outs on polling day.

Nottingham had begun to cultivate the family interest in Rutland ever since the mid-1690s. Besides Burley, the surrounding areas of Hambleton, Egleton and Greetham became the family's core of electoral support. Most important perhaps was his domination of Lordshold in Oakham. Nonetheless, for a peer of his day, Nottingham's landed properties were not particularly extensive. Though one seat in the county effectively came under Finch domination, this was only the case from when his eldest son came of age shortly before the 1710 election. Therefore, prior to 1710, Nottingham, whilst attempting to secure his electoral interests, was having to contest the two Rutland seats with rival peers of considerable standing - including the Earl of Exeter, the Duke of Rutland and the Earl of Gainsborough.

Though the interest that the Earl of Nottingham acquired in purchasing Burley was significant, the image of the early eighteenth century electorate that bowed dutifully to the commands of its social superiors is extremely antiquated. In fact, it seems that only a very small percentage of the tenantry was enfranchised (Speck 1970, ch 3). Consequently, Nottingham deserves some credit for developing and maintaining electoral support and, more importantly, carrying this with him during and after his change of political allegiance in December 1711. It is this factor that appears to be the mainspring of Rutland county politics in the years 1709-15, and provides a focus for the examination of the elections in the county in 1710 and 1713.

The Rutland election of 1710 and its aftermath

Despite the somewhat unusual characteristics of the county, some of which, it has been suggested, were beneficial to the candidates, Rutland was in most respects a typical county constituency. It shared the national characteristic of a proportionately wider geographical distribution of voters than that which appertained in the borough constituencies. Moreover, the phenomenon of a high electoral turnover was especially evident.

Only two poll books for the period survive, one for 1710 printed at Stamford (fig.1) and a handwritten one for 1713 (fig.2). These provide a useful breakdown of the results. In 1710, in the village of

Wing, relatively neutral ground, the electors voted Tory with few exceptions. In 1713, as well as a more diverse distribution of votes, there are only two names which had appeared in the previous poll book - and only four of the remaining voters shared a surname with someone who had voted three years earlier. There are other places where comparable changes in the composition of the electorate occurred. Professor Speck arrived at a figure of 550 electors for Rutland during this period (Speck 1970, Appendix E). From an examination of both poll books I would argue that this should be advanced to at least 602 in 1713.⁵

Of the 519 who voted in 1713, 102 lived outside the county, a remarkable 20%. It would be easy to conclude that this was related to Rutland's small size and that many of these "outlyers", as contemporaries called them, lived only a short distance from the county boundaries. The importance of "outlyers" is implicitly denoted by a table entitled "Abstract of the Single Votes of the Preceding Poll" in the 1713 poll book. This lists the single votes as cast by both Rutlanders and "outlyers". In both cases, these indicated places where two prominent landowners, the Earl of Exeter and the Earl of Gainsborough, had territorial influence. Exeter was influential in southern Lincolnshire, particularly Stamford, which consolidated his interest in Rutland through the domination of "border" villages such as Barrowden, Caldecott, Lyddington and Tinwell. A resolute Tory, Exeter supported both Finch and the other Tory candidate, Richard Halford of Edith Weston, in 1710, but plumped for Halford in 1713. The "Abstract" confirms the importance of Exeter as a backer of Halford; of his 240 votes in 1713, half (119) were single, and a third of these came from places where Exeter's interest was dominant. Therefore, of his 1713 total, Halford owed nearly one-sixth to Exeter, a significant proportion.

In certain villages this was an unambiguous threat to the other candidates. Finch stood with the Tory Halford in 1710, but with the Whig Sherard in 1713. Barrowden, the epitome of an Exeter stronghold, rallied comprehensively behind the Tories in 1710, and three years later only three out of fourteen freeholders there used their second vote; eleven electors plumped for Halford, the only Tory candidate. A large village had therefore been lost as a result of Finch's flirtation with Whiggism.

Rather than being dominated by the external influence of landowners such as Exeter, or tightly controlled from within by one candidate, interest, or party, Rutland was a peculiar combination of both circumstances. The county's geographical conciseness limited the number of suitable candidates. Even Nottingham had been forced to advance unsuitable candidates before his son came of age. In 1710 there were four, each with their own pockets of support: John Noel (Exton, Brooke, Ridlington); Philip

Sherard (Whissendine and Teigh); Richard Halford (Edith Weston); Daniel, Lord Finch (Burley, Egleton, Greetham, Hambleton, Leighfield, Oakham). While Noel and Sherard were both staunch Whigs, Halford was an equally convinced Tory (one of the notorious 1704 "Tackers"), and in 1710 he was joined by Finch, who was returned along with Noel, thus:⁶

John Noel	290	(288)
Daniel Finch	268	(269)
Richard Halford	263	(264)
Philip Sherard	250	(248)

However, Halford successfully petitioned for the removal of Noel from his seat, on the grounds "that there have been many illegal practices on the behalf of Mr. Noel to gain and extort votes."⁷

The aftermath of the poll certainly smacked of controversy. The evidence of this controversy is too incomplete to permit the emergence of the full picture, although the suspicion must be that Nottingham himself had much to do with the campaign. Immediately after the new Parliament assembled on 25 November 1710, one of its chief concerns, as was customary at the time, was with electoral queries. In order to address the latter, a committee was formed on 29 November to oversee "privileges and elections". Lord Finch, hardly an uninterested party, was one of its members, though whether, as the committee numbered over 30 and he himself was an inexperienced member, he could have exercised a fundamental influence must be doubtful. It is also important to note that the Rutland petition should not be seen in isolation; the *Journal of the House of Commons* records numerous similar cases, involving both borough and county constituencies. Arguably less common was the length of time taken to deal with the Rutland case. It appears that it was common practice for the initial query to be announced in the Commons, upon which a date was set for it to be investigated. Noel's case was unusual in that it was considered on no fewer than five occasions. Whether this indicates uncommon complexity is unclear; more likely, each side was manifestly determined to prevail, suggesting the importance to the local factions of having one of their number elected. Certainly, it appears that it was local figures rather than the party machinery who instigated the case.

The case against Noel was first mentioned in the House of Commons on 5 December 1710. There were two petitions, one from the aggrieved Halford and the other from "several freeholders of the county of Rutland on behalf of themselves and other freeholders of the said county". Each petition claimed that Halford should be the rightful partner of Finch in the Commons, that he had been denied this right by "the corrupt and undue practices of John Noel", and urged the House to redress the injustice.

Though Halford's reason for petitioning was clear, that of the other petitioners was less so. Though there is no direct evidence, it seems likely that the petitioners had been prompted either by the defeated candidate or by Finch and Nottingham. The freeholders' arguments served to strengthen Halford's claim. His motivation could be seen as not merely selfish; rather, the petitions could be presented as upholding the electoral process and, moreover, could associate the Tories with upholding respectability and traditional institutions, something close to Nottingham's heart.

Both sides had time to prepare their cases before the petitions were re-read on 16 January 1711 and witnesses for the petitioners were examined. The petitioners' case was based on the claims that Noel had received votes from unqualified electors or those who could not prove their qualification and that votes had been inaccurately recorded. A particular example concerned someone who had not produced the necessary mortgage documentation. Noel appeared to blame Lord Finch for his predicament and, unusually, the *Journal of the House of Commons* recorded that "some words of heat had passed between Mr. Finch and Mr. Noell ... [and] they were required by the House to give their words and honours not to prosecute the matter any farther".

Further evidence, in the form of electoral lists, was considered two days later, and on 21 January a witness, Samuel Freeman, testified that, though entered as voting for Noel in the poll book, he had actually voted for Halford. Throughout the proceedings there is very little mention of the case for Noel, and on 23 January, by 187 votes to 98, the House voted to expel him, no doubt in considerable disgrace, and replace him with Halford.⁸

Admittedly, the affair is thinly documented, yet, notwithstanding the lack of detail, the main issues at stake seem to have been local political influence and constitutional propriety. Nottingham and the Finch family must certainly have benefited at a local level from the outcome in terms of enhancing their reputation and consolidating an already formidable core of support. This might have been decisive in Nottingham's ability to carry this support with him when he transferred his allegiance to the Whig cause later in 1711. If so, Lord Finch's success in the 1713 election could have been in part due to this otherwise inconsequential affair.

The Rutland election of 1713

Nottingham's shift to moderate Whiggism in 1711 caused a dilemma for the party managers. There were now three possible Whig candidates - Finch, Sherard and Noel. Surprisingly, Sherard was chosen ahead of Noel to stand with Finch, the most likely reason for this being the intense mutual dislike

between the latter and Noel. Nevertheless, Noel was no static bystander in 1713, throwing his full weight behind Sherard though significantly not supporting Finch. The Whig selection should not distract from the position of the Tory Halford. There is every likelihood that a partner was available for him, but against such formidable opposition he stood alone, hoping to secure a greater percentage of the second votes of Finch supporters rather than allow these to go to Bennet Sherard, who had replaced his cousin Philip as the Whig standard bearer.

Nottingham's political conduct and aims in Parliament were often directed by his great zeal for the church and hatred of the ministry. In opposing the government's desire for an end to the European war in 1711, endorsing the cry "no peace without Spain", Nottingham sided with the Whig leadership, reaching an agreement with them whereby, in return for his support against the government, they would withdraw their opposition to the Occasional Conformity bill. Yet Nottingham, though exercising considerable political influence, had no definitive group of followers (as is often incorrectly supposed), and very few Tories joined him in his Whig alliance, hardly surprising given that the former were enjoying increasing political predominance in the wake of the Sacheverell trial and subsequent Whig disappointment in the 1710 election.

The 1713 poll in Rutland saw the return of the two Whig candidates directly contradicting the national trend:⁹

Daniel Finch	312	(307)
Bennet Sherard	301	(298)
Richard Halford	240	(239)

The main reason for this was not the lack of a second Tory candidate (although Finch might well have received fewer second votes for Halford's Tory supporters had this been the case), but the strength of the Finch interest. Nottingham was well known as the recognised champion of the Anglican Church. In his letters, both personal and political, there are countless references to "our Ch.", and in a letter to a freeholder c.1710 he writes bitterly:

"Nor shall I need to insist upon the unhappy divisions in our Ch. maliciously contrivd by [its] worst enemies, i.e. the pretended friends of it by the cursed distinction of high & low Chirch; which has so weakened it, that al, who continue Stedfast in their Affections to it are the more obligd, nay there is an absolute necessity to unite in its defense, & to prevent ass much as in them lyes, whatever has the least appearance of tending to its ruine, which nothing can so certainly affect as an ill-chosen Parl."¹⁰

Such belief in the upholding of constitutional "purity" was typical of Nottingham, and though less appealing to those inclined towards the Whigs, attracted considerable support from many Rutland

freeholders, and especially the clergy. Professor Speck has shown, using evidence from a computer analysis of the poll books, how the Finches maintained a substantial core of support between the elections:

"This was the hard core of Nottingham's followers, who polled for the earl's candidates even though these changed from Tory to Whig between the two elections ... therefore, just under ten per cent of the Rutland freeholders who appear in both the 1710 and 1713 poll books polled for Finch and his partner on both occasions" (Speck et al. 1975, 80).

However, I am sceptical regarding his assessment of the motivation and relationship between the candidates.

It appears that at first Nottingham had certain reservations about campaigning with Sherard, after the election rather complacently implying that these had derived from Sherard's inexperience:

"Besides the difficulties I had to struggle with in opposition to Half[or]d & his Supporters, I had some of those not small from my Ld Sher[ar]d who has indeed acted very justly and honourably towards my Son, but his eagerness to succeed and his apprehension of failing in it made him propose me to some methods of managing this election which would have extremely hazarded it, tho perhaps not wholly disappointed it: but by the help of his friends I persuaded him to acquiesce in my ways of proceeding & the Success has convinced him & confirmed them that I was in the right." ¹¹

Speck acknowledges Nottingham's initial unwillingness, but assumes that this was because the Earl believed a partnership unnecessary to secure his son's re-election. However, there is evidence to suggest that it was Nottingham's acute tactical awareness at a local level, and not his pride, that dictated his actions. In a long letter written after the 1713 election to his brother William, then based at the Inner Temple, Nottingham gave an account of his activity prior to the poll. ¹² Three freeholders had allegedly approached him before the election to tell him that "they would give Single votes for Halford, because my son was joined with Ld. Sherard". Apparently Tory sympathisers, they claimed that Nottingham had promised not to join with Sherard. He asserts that this was not true, but even if it were, "they could not in honour absolve themselves from their engagement to my son". It seems that Halford indeed represented a serious threat to the success of Lord Finch, but if Nottingham made too public his determination to defeat the Tory (ie, by standing with Sherard), the consequences for his son would be the loss of a significant number of crucial second votes (enough to ensure defeat) from Halford's supporters, as insinuated by the three freeholders.

Yet Nottingham was fortunate, for he possessed a decisive trump card, the information that, for

some unknown reason, all the more mysterious given the equally strong though contrasting ideological fervour of those concerned, Halford had at one point considered standing with Noel. Whose idea this had been is not clear, but in the voters' eyes Halford had committed a cardinal sin. The reaction of the three freeholders ("they declared [that they] would give a single vote for Ld. F[inch]") indicates the contempt in which Tory voters held Noel, particularly after his disgrace in 1710, though, as Nottingham himself notes, their sincerity should not be taken at face value given that the last thing they desired was to antagonise him. ¹³

Therefore, Nottingham's anxiety to defuse the Halford threat signifies that he saw the alliance with Sherard as a means of securing his son's election, not solely because he opposed Halford's essential ideological inclinations. In the process he eventually accepted, as well as the necessity of the partnership, that Sherard would through it achieve greater support. The other Rutland candidates thus became, in an extreme sense, instruments for Nottingham's wider aims. However, though an obstinate and determined character (Horwitz 1968), the Earl showed considerable concern for his freeholders. As has been shown (Speck et al., 1975), the electorate resisted what little intimidation and bribery existed, the main culprit of such practices being the rather dubious John Noel. Without having to resort to similar methods, Nottingham received a good deal of support at the polls, but in personal rather than political terms he also commanded great respect from the freeholders within his areas of influence. His popularity derived from his willingness both to hear their opinions or complaints, and to oversee their general well-being. For example, he re-thatched and repaired cottages at any time, not merely during election campaigns, though it was no coincidence that he negotiated favourable rents during periods of electioneering.

Political ideology does not then appear to be the foremost concern of any candidate. Nottingham's official advocacy of Whig policies at a national level was motivated by his underlying hatred of the ministry and his desire for religious unity. However, it may also have reflected a desire to retain political influence following the anticipated demise of the Tory Queen Anne.

Conclusion

The Finch change of alignment had a very disruptive effect on the voting patterns of the county. Tory voters especially were faced with a dilemma of loyalty to party or to candidate. There were 351 freeholders who polled at both elections; that 162 of these (26% of the electorate) changed their party allegiance indicates the extent of the Finch interest (Speck et al, 1975). In terms of the national context,

this was an outstanding accomplishment for Nottingham. The Whig party was disillusioned after the election in 1710 of the largest Tory majority since 1685. Whig fortunes were up to a point revived by the schism in 1712-3 between the Jacobite Tories and the Hanoverian (or "whimsical") Tories; if this had not developed, then the 1713 election would have threatened to be equally disastrous for the Whigs (Holmes and Speck, 1967, 28).

However, though in Rutland the Whig interests appeared to be secure under the guidance of Nottingham, the Tory element in the role of the "opposition" should not be under-estimated. Nottingham himself had gathered a number of freeholders at Burley in December 1709 and urged them on the day of the poll not to worry about previous promises which they had made.¹⁴ Significantly, the 1713 poll book lists forty-seven "persons who gave & broke their promises to Ld. F[inch]". In fact, Nottingham's own letters show an awareness of, and concern for, the influence upon the Rutland poll of "outliers", most notably Exeter and Gainsborough, who actively supported Halford, and who operated schemes similar to the one below which was brought to Nottingham's attention:

"To these illegal practices I must adde a proceeding which is base & treacherous, a message was sent (I know not from whom) to one place in my name to solicit for Half[or]d, after Ld Finch was joined with Ld Sher[ar]d, & one of Ld Ex[ete]r's servants in his

way to Braunston boasted that he had a letter from Ld Gainsbo[rough] to his tenants at Braunston requiring them to vote for Half[or]d as well as Ld Sher[ar]d but having no such letter to justify him, he had no success at Braunston tho[ugh] he very confidently but very falsely made use of Ld Gains[borough]'s name ..."¹⁵

Nevertheless, the county was on the whole governed not by social and economic ties but by free will, a conclusion reached by Professor Speck:

"When the swing in the county [i.e. to the Whigs] as a whole was greater than in Oakham, at the heart of Finch's interests, then the conclusion seems inescapable that most Rutland voters returned Finch and Halford in 1710 and Finch and Sherard in 1713 because they wanted to, and not because they felt obliged to do so." (Speck et al., 1975).

Though this is in accordance with current historical thinking regarding the extent of the floating vote in the early eighteenth century, the motivation of candidates and their patrons at a local level took on an ambiguous nature, and there is little doubt that the case of the Earl of Nottingham and the county of Rutland is extremely untypical of the contemporary national trend.

Acknowledgements

The author wishes to acknowledge the assistance of Mr & Mrs G Finch with whom he discussed some of his findings.

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The Riding School of the Rutland Fencible Cavalry

T H McK CLOUGH

Introduction

Two substantial buildings stand facing each other across Catmos Street in Oakham. On the eastern side is Catmose, itself once the residence of Gerard Noel Edwards, and on the west is the Riding School which he built in 1794-95 for the Rutland Fencible Cavalry (fig.1). Today, two hundred years later, Catmose, greatly altered and bereft of its stables and coach house, now accommodates the offices of Rutland's local authority, and the Riding School has become the Rutland County Museum.

The building of the Riding School was prompted by events following the declaration of war on Britain by the new French republic in 1793. As well as the enthusiastic raising of volunteer forces in virtually every part of Britain, regiments of a new Fencible Cavalry were also to be raised to serve as regular army units for home defence purposes - they could not serve overseas.

The formation of the Rutland Fencible Cavalry in March 1794 was the result of an offer from Edwards, who was MP for Rutland. He was duly appointed Commandant of the new regiment, with the rank of Lieutenant Colonel. Recruiting proved to be so successful that the permitted strength of the regiment was soon increased from four troops to six, and Edwards was promoted full Colonel in July 1794. As noted in one of the Rutland Local History Society's early publications (Traylen 1978, 84-9), the Rutland Fencibles were soon serving in other parts of the country. Their garrison duties included a posting to Scotland, and they also made an offer, not taken up, to serve in Ireland. However, in common with so many of the local regiments which were formed at this time, they proved to be short-lived, and were disbanded in March 1800.

Like many others of a similar social standing, Gerard Noel Edwards (1759-1838) seems to have

had great enthusiasm for the local military establishment as an expression of patriotism. He had already held a commission in the Rutland Militia, and was also to play a leading role in the formation and command of the Rutland Volunteer Infantry in 1798. In that year he inherited the estates of his uncle, Henry Noel, 6th Earl of Gainsborough, and by Royal Licence adopted the surname and arms of

Noel. It was under this name that he commanded the Volunteer Infantry, with the rank of Lieutenant Colonel (later Major, when the corps was re-formed in 1803 with a smaller establishment). It must have come as something of a disappointment to him that both the regular Rutland Fencibles and the volunteer infantry corps, finally disbanded in 1810, had such short lives, but their formation and

existence were inextricably linked to the progress of the wars with France (Steppler 1992, 68-70). In 1813 he succeeded to his father-in-law's baronetcy, becoming Sir Gerard Noel. However, Col Edwards, as, like his contemporaries in 1794, we shall call him, was responsible for the building of what is surely one of the most substantial monuments to the domestic military history of the Napoleonic Wars in this country, in the form of the Riding School, remarkable testimony to his enthusiasm (fig.2).

It would seem that Col Edwards set about the planning and construction of "a very capital riding-house, which he intended for the service of his Majesty," almost as soon as the regiment was formed in the spring of 1794. However, the only contemporary notice of the Riding School appears to be the short reference to it in the *Gentleman's Magazine* (1796, pt i, 186-7) just quoted, and no mention of it in local newspapers such as the *Stamford Mercury* has yet been found. Until recently, therefore, nothing further was known about its construction.

Now, however, the discovery of a small bundle



Fig. 1. The Riding School from the north-east, with the stable block in the foreground (Leicestershire Museums, Arts & Records Service).

of bills, receipts and accounts amongst the Exton MSS, as noted in an earlier *Rutland Record* (Clark 1992, 88), has enabled us to record considerable detail about the building of the Riding School, the sources of the materials used, the men involved, and the progress and costs of the work. The record is not comprehensive, for there are other documents, for example the actual day books, which, had they been present, would have enhanced our knowledge, but it seems appropriate in this bicentenary year to review the information which the bundle contains.

Not all of these documents relate to the Riding School. One or two clearly refer to alterations and repairs to Catmose itself, including work on the wine cellar and the installation of a water closet in

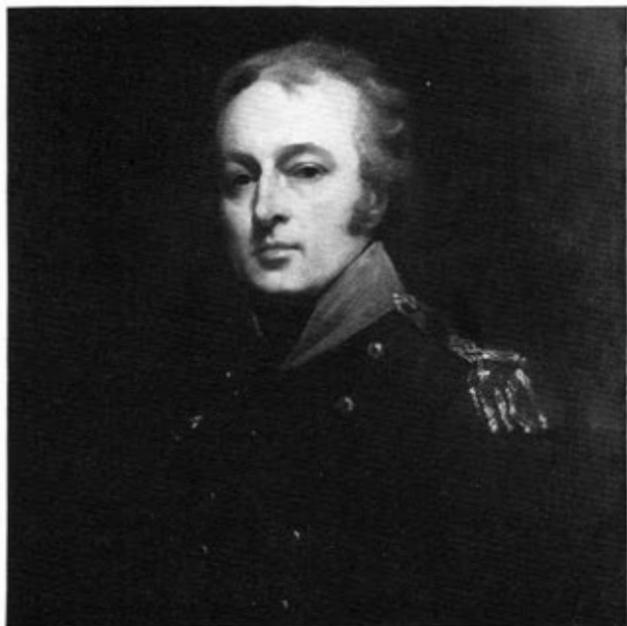


Fig. 2. Sir Gerard Noel [Edwards] Bt., by Raeburn, ?in the uniform of the Rutland Fencibles (private collection).

1795 (some seventeen years after Joseph Bramah's improved flushing system was patented in 1778). Others record work done on property elsewhere in the town. Some give no clue as to what property they relate to, but are dated too late for them to refer to the Riding School. These are not discussed here, but from them it is obvious that the relatively young Col Edwards was full of energy and that a great deal of work was in progress on his property.

Many of the papers which do concern the Riding School clearly say so. They fall into several categories: a small group of important day book records by the supervisor of the work, whom we now know to have been John Myers, and a bill for his work as carpenter; bills for the supply and carriage of sand, lime, tiles, stone, timber, ironmongery and sundries; a bill for mason's work giving structural details; and a bill detailing materials supplied by the blacksmith. Together, these documents give a fascinating insight into the

construction of the Riding School over a period of about a year from mid-May 1794 - "Myself making preparations & setting out the School" writes Myers - to the late spring of 1795 when the work was virtually finished. The first hint of the building in regular use is found in an isolated bill for the supply of sawdust, for the exercising floor, in October 1795. Most of the bills are receipted by those to whom the money was due, or their representatives, and it is clear from this that while some were settled instantly, others were paid in instalments, and some were not completely paid until two years after the project began.

We also find a passing reference to the buildings which stood on the site before the Riding School. These are shown on a 1787 map of Oakham (fig.4, LRO DG7/DE3443) as in the ownership of the Earl of Harborough, so the property must have changed hands in the few intervening years. Both in Myers' carpenter's bill and in his day bill there is reference to the pulling down of the old buildings, and in the former there is a payment to Francis Robinson for "getting away" the old thatch. Fortunately, his bill is also in the bundle, and from this we learn that at least part of the demolished buildings had been a malting. A later note in one of the fieldbooks which accompanies the 1787 map shows that the southern

Fig. 3. A note referring to the Riding School (LRO DG7/1/81/4).

end of the new structure was built on a parcel of waste land where Robert Thorpe had previously had a small barn and a yard (fig.3).

The new building was to prove a very substantial one, and demonstrates an imaginative method of roofing a large, unobstructed exercise area by using massive timbers to support its double-pitched roof (fig.19). Pevsner (1984, 497) describes it succinctly, but rather oddly, thus: "Spectacular roof trusses with central king posts plus paired crown-post arrangement." Structural engineers, modern building regulations and specifications in mind, tend to look at it and shake their heads! At one end of the large riding area, there was a stable block with tack rooms, which gave onto a yard, and above this there was room for fodder storage (a quantity of seed was found under the floorboards during alterations following its acquisition for the museum). Later, perhaps, a small annexe was provided to cover an underground cistern which collected rainwater from the roof for use in the stables. At the southern end, a large house, now known as Catmos Cottage, provided officers' quarters with, we are reliably told, a gallery overlooking the riding area. It is assumed that the stables and the house are contemporary

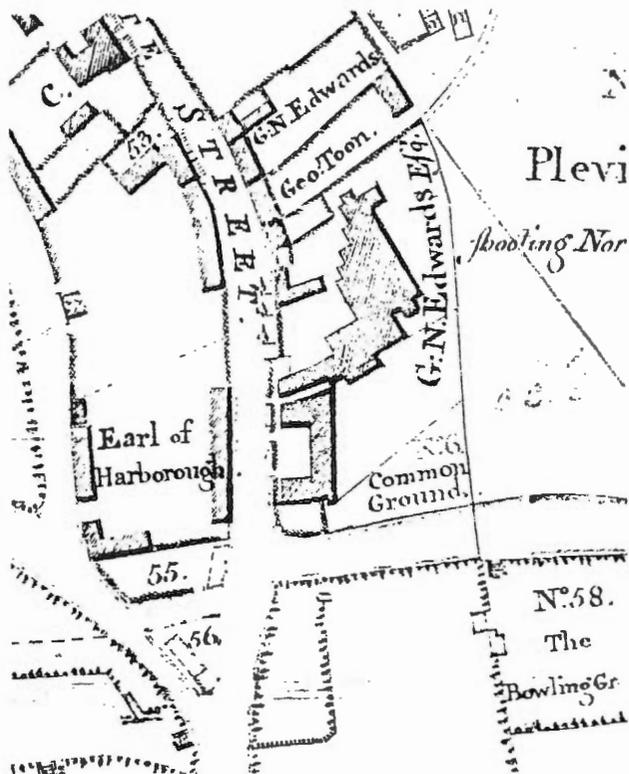


Fig. 4. Extract from the 1787 map of Oakham, showing the Earl of Harborough's property, including a malting, opposite G N Edwards' large house at Catmose (LRO DG7/DE3443).

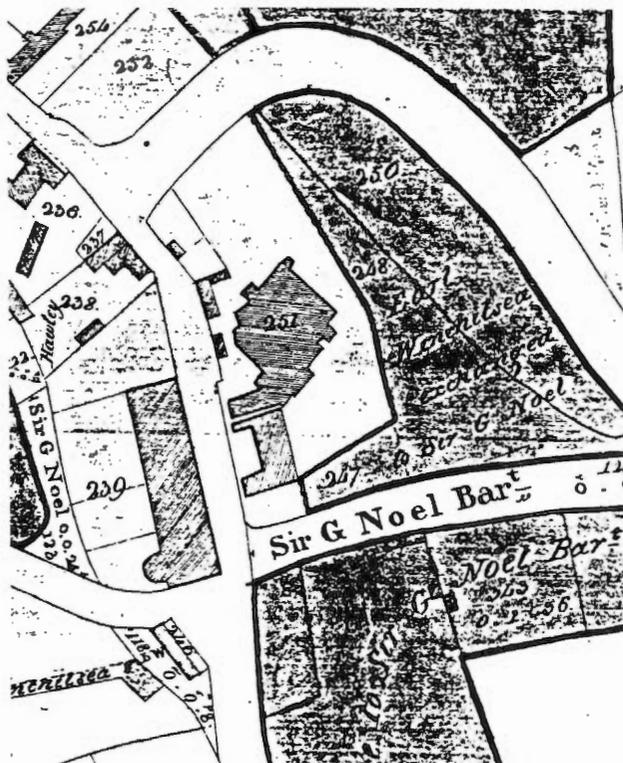


Fig. 5. Extract from the 1836 Enclosure Map of Oakham, showing the Riding School, with its southern end overlying parcel 55 of the 1787 map, opposite the pre-enclosure junction with the Stamford road (LRO Ma/En/R36/1).

with the Riding School, but their construction may have followed on from the completion of the main hall. This is not clear from the records, although it would appear from the day book sheets that John Myers was engaged in planning further work in January and February 1795. He was here again in 1806, but no details are given. The building is shown on the enclosure map of Oakham of 1836 without the cistern annexe (fig.5).

Later alterations provided living accommodation for private use, and in the mid 19th century the Rutland Agricultural Society's new Poultry Hall butted onto the rear of the Riding School. Part of that building was destroyed by an accidental fire in during the Second World War. A surviving photograph (fig.6) shows that the fire very nearly spread



Fig. 6. The interior of the Riding School roof, showing how close the Poultry Hall fire came to destroying it (Leicestershire Museums, Arts & Records Service).

into the Riding School. It is our good fortune that it did not; as it is, one of the purlins was scorched.

The stable block became the offices first of the Oakham Urban District Council, and then of the treasurer's department of Rutland District Council. The Riding School not only continued to be used for its original purpose by the local troop of the Leicestershire Yeomanry until after the Great War, but also served as the venue for agricultural shows, the sermons of itinerant preachers and other events. It was used as a depot for bottled fruit (fig.9) and as a temporary home for some of the Belgian royal carriages in the Great War. In 1969 the Rutland County Museum opened in the Riding School, and this became part of Leicestershire County Council's Museums, Arts & Records Service in 1974.

The residential part of the building, now known as Catmose Cottage (fig.7), remains in private occupation, but over the past 25 years the museum has gradually expanded into the stable block and now into the 19th century addition, as well as taking over the Poultry Hall. Although there have

thus been many alterations to the Riding School, in the main its original structure survives. The remarkable roof, which according to the documentation must originally have been tiled rather than slated as now, has undergone repair and strengthening, and apparently now requires further structural support, but most of the original timber members, once lime-washed, are still in position, though



Fig. 7. The southern end of the Riding School c.1890 (Leicestershire Museums, Arts & Records Service).

disfigured by shakes and shrinkage. The Riding School is now a listed building, and in terms of its structure is probably unique. It remains a lasting monument to the patriotic generosity of Gerard Noel Edwards, as well as to that of his descendant Charles Noel who in 1967 gave the building to Rutland County Council for use as a museum. In his honour, the latest addition to the museum, No 2 Catmos Street, includes a meeting room to be known as the Colonel's Room. Its opening in 1995 will coincide with the bicentenary of the building.

One other matter may be resolved by these accounts. It has sometimes been rumoured, but as no more than hearsay, that French prisoners of war were employed in the construction of the Riding School. The discovery in the garden of Catmose Cottage of an unofficial Napoleonic officer's eagle badge, now in the museum's collection (accession no 1979.31; fig.8), tended to support that theory.

Now, however, an alternative seems more likely. In John Myers' day book sheets there are several references to the employment of "soldiers as labourers" or for other work, the last such entry being dated 21 June 1794; and on his carpenter's bill there are repeated instances of two soldiers being employed as carpenters (presumably since this was their trade), with the last entry dated 12 July. Could these men have been prisoners of war (if so, from where?), or were they in fact men from the ranks of the Fencibles? It is known that towards the end of July the new regiment was quartered in Lincoln (where they would appear to have caused a



Fig. 8. A unofficial Napoleonic officer's badge found in the garden of Catmose Cottage (Leicestershire Museums, Arts & Records Service).

disturbance), and from then on they were posted successively to other parts of the country (Traylen 1978, 96-7). It does indeed seem most likely to have been men of the Fencibles who helped in the busy initial stages of the building of the Riding School until the date of their first posting, and that the prisoner-of-war theory must be discounted unless other evidence points to the contrary.

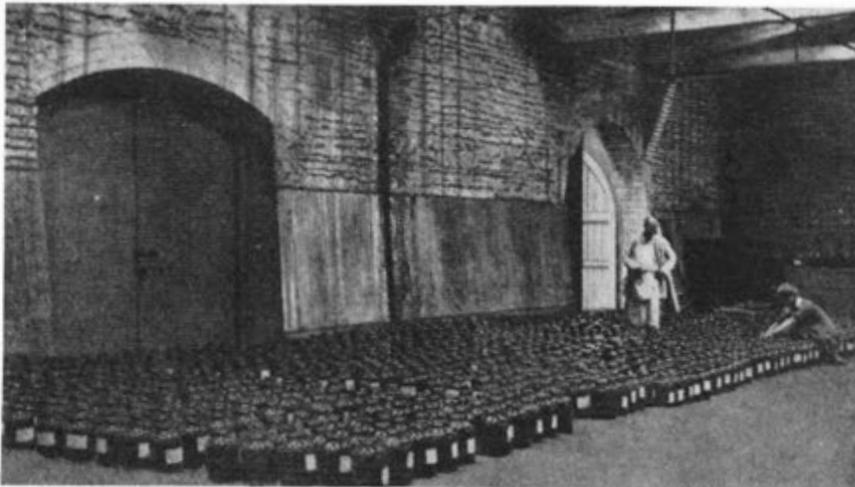


Fig. 9. The Riding School in 1917 in use as a depot for jars of bottled fruit, assembled by the Agricultural Section of the Women's Legion. Note the protective boarding which skirts the lower part of the walls, none of which survives today (from War Service Legion and Women's Legion 1915-18; see also below, pp.235-6).

The tradesmen

A wide range of local tradesmen were involved in supplying and transporting the materials for this ambitious undertaking. Most of these materials were supplied from the immediate area with building stone from pits at Barleythorpe, lime and sand from Whitwell and Barnsdale. The roof tiles came from Grantham, and much of the timber was purchased in Stamford, but the massive trusses of the roof, which originate from the Baltic, called for special arrangements. The list of tradesmen and workmen whose names are known either from their own bills or from a mention in those of others is as follows:

James Almond, blacksmith
- Ashbourn (Grantham), timber
Joseph Baker, labourer
Thomas Battson, sea/river carrier
Edward Birchnell, mason
John Birchnell, mason
John Brown, stone quarryman
John Brownsworth, barrow maker
Francis Bulamoor, tiles
Thomas Carter (and boy), carrier
Thomas Chapman, carrier
John Cholthorne, sawdust
Thomas Clark, sundries
- Cook, -
E Gunnis, mason or quarryman
Christopher Harrison, - (witness)
Thomas Hart, labourer
John Horspool, scaffold fleakes
John Keal, tiles
Robert Jelly, stone
John Mason, ironmonger
John Maydwell, carrier
John Mould, timber
John Myers (and apprentice), carpenter and supervisor
William Newbat (Grantham), timber
Francis Robinson, removal of thatch
George Royce, stone carrier, malt
John Rudkin, tiles, carrier
John Short (Grantham), tiles, carrier
Thomas Smith & Son (Stamford), timber
James Tacy, sundries
G Toon, rope
W Toon, rope
Isaac Tucker (Whitwell), lime, sand
Joseph Veazey, carrier
R Watson, hair
Charles White, - (witness)

There is also mention of Mr Bellairs, of the Stamford banking family - a Richard Bellairs is known to have been commissioned as Major in the Fencibles (Traylen 1978, 86-7), and the following are amongst those named in the unconnected documents in the bundle: Benjamin Bland, wheelwright;

John Brown, thatcher; Robert and John Clark, masons; Nathaniel Halliday, drain builder; Samuel Hargrave and Daniel Medbree, stone quarrymen (Barleythorpe); John Simpson, clockmaker and locksmith; John Tucker, sand; and T Woodroffe, (green) paint. This last list is not exhaustive, for the names of various occupiers and neighbours could also be extracted from the documents.

No special study has been made of these tradesmen here, but simultaneous research by members of the RLHRS on the 1787 map and survey of Oakham Lordshold in the Finch MSS previously mentioned enables us to identify with some certainty where at least some of them lived. They include James Almond, who had a house with outbuildings and a yard at the junction of Old Bull Lane and Newgate Street (roughly where Oakham Library now stands); John Maydwell, who had a house with outbuildings and a yard on the north side of the High Street, with several closes and open field land in Oakham and Egleton; John Mould, with a house on the south side of the High Street, the property extending through to South Street, and three closes; Francis Robinson, whose domestic property stretched from the corner of the Market Place through to Castle Lane (now called Burley Road), and who occupied a considerable amount of land including demesne land in the open fields; George Royce, who had a windmill in the open field, the maltmill house and another house, both in Mill Street, and other property; G Toon, whose yard adjoined Catmose, almost opposite the new riding school; and Joseph Veazey, a near neighbour of one John Brown in Northgate Street. Whether this John Brown, who farmed land in the open fields, can be identified with either the stone quarryman or the thatcher of this name, or indeed with the John Brown who had been allocated a small amount of land in the enclosure of Barleythorpe some 20 years earlier, remains to be seen. All of these would seem to have been men of reasonable substance, especially John Maydwell, Francis Robinson and George Royce. John Myers does not appear, but it seems likely that his yard was in Deans Lane (Dean Street, once known as the Dead Lane), which was in Deanshold rather than Lordshold, since a tradesman of this name appears, though much later, in White's 1846 Directory.

The Supply of Building Materials

Lime and sand

Several of the documents relate to the supply of lime and sand, for making mortar, by Isaac Tucker of Whitwell. The lime was evidently burned at kilns at Whitwell and Barnsdale Hill, and the sand and probably the limestone were dug from the Barnsdale pits. The site of the latter is plain to see in a field to the north of the road to Stamford, adjoining

The Riding School of the Rutland Fencible Cavalry

Barnsdale Lodge (SK 911093), and the Barnsdale lime kilns lay a little way to the north beside the Exton avenue (SK 909098).

Considerable quantities of lime and sand were required, and for the most part were transported, occasionally by the cart load but mostly by waggon, by Joseph Veazey. The price of lime was 1/1d a quarter, 80 quarters making a load, and sand cost 10/10d a load. Carriage was 1/6d per cart or 3/0d per waggon, except on the few occasions that Royce carried it. He charged 4/6d - did he have a bigger waggon, or was he simply more expensive? The various bills overlap, and this makes them difficult to correlate. However, several itemise the deliveries day by day, and these provide an impression of the rapidity of the work. For example, between 9-27 June 1794, eight loads of lime and 22 loads of sand (sometimes two a day) were delivered.

Veazey was illiterate, and on Tucker's behalf made his mark on the forms of receipt prepared by Myers. Not all the bills themselves are wholly literate, and the heading of one of them gives a splendid example of the phonetic rendering of the vernacular. It reads: "The A Caunt whot Joseph Vezey as fetchet"!

A much smaller amount of lime and sand appears on a bill from George Royce, but the source is not stated - it may not have been Barnsdale. Isaac Tucker also supplied sand "for the garden works", presumably at Catmose itself, in 1795.

£44/19/0d "for unbairing Earth and geting stones at the pit in barley thorp field for the use of [Collonell Noell Edwards'] Buildings at Oakham." The sum of these two differs slightly from an undated but related account for £58/15/10d, which is of interest because it describes the size of the pits, the depth of overburden (around 2.0 m), and the depth of stone

1794 The A Caunt whot Joseph
 Vezey as fetchet
 Lime 20 1/1d
 19-- 2^o lime 20
 21-- 2^o lime 20
 22-- Lime 10 1/1d 10
 24-- 2^o lime 20
 27-- 2^o lime 20
 29-- Lime 20 1/1d 20
 June 2-- Lime 10 1/1d 10
 5-- Lime 20 1/1d 20
 6-- Lime 10 1/1d 10
 7-- 2^o lime 20 1/1d 20
 8-- 2^o lime 20 1/1d 20
 9-- 2^o lime 20 1/1d 20
 10-- 2^o lime 20 1/1d 20
 11-- 2^o lime 20 1/1d 20
 12-- 2^o lime 20 1/1d 20
 13-- 2^o lime 20 1/1d 20
 14-- 2^o lime 20 1/1d 20
 15-- 2^o lime 20 1/1d 20
 16-- 2^o lime 20 1/1d 20
 17-- 2^o lime 20 1/1d 20
 18-- 2^o lime 20 1/1d 20
 19-- 2^o lime 20 1/1d 20
 20-- 2^o lime 20 1/1d 20
 21-- 2^o lime 20 1/1d 20
 22-- 2^o lime 20 1/1d 20
 23-- 2^o lime 20 1/1d 20
 24-- 2^o lime 20 1/1d 20
 25-- 2^o lime 20 1/1d 20
 26-- 2^o lime 20 1/1d 20
 27-- 2^o lime 20 1/1d 20
 28-- 2^o lime 20 1/1d 20
 29-- 2^o lime 20 1/1d 20
 30-- 2^o lime 20 1/1d 20
 Total 16 5 0

The A Caunt whot Joseph
 Vezey as fetchet
 for the carriage of 160 loads of lime
 at 1/1d per load
 and 22 loads of sand
 at 10/10d per load
 from Barnsdale lime kilns
 to the pits for
 the works at
 Catmose

16 5 0
 The mark of J. Vezey

Fig. 10. One of Joseph Veazey's accounts for the carriage of sand and lime (LRO Exton MSS).

Stone

Most of the building stone, a fossil rich ironstone, came from stone pits specially opened for the purpose at Barleythorpe, about a mile and a half (2 km) from the building site, by John Brown and Charles White. The 1st edition 25" Ordnance Survey map of 1884 shows an old quarry to the east of the road to Melton and north of the Barleythorpe kennels, and this was probably the site (SK 811100). Two receipts survive relating to the stone pit, one dated 10 June 1794 for £13/10/0d "for getting a stone pitt in Barley thorp field", and the other dated 4 August 1794 for

quarried (about 1.75m). The two pits which were opened measured 24.2 x 14.3 m and 10.9 x 9.8 m respectively. The bill is reproduced here (fig. 11).

George Royce carried at least the greater part of the stone, if not all of it, charging 1/6d a load. His bill for carriage, including a small amount of sand and lime, and the hire of a cart for 14 days at 1/0d per day, amounted to £34/5/10d. Three hundred and fifty-four loads of stone are accounted for in the

period 26 May - 18 July 1794. The rate of delivery was quite remarkable, often in multiples of six or seven loads per day and exceptionally up to as many as 28 in a single day. Taking distance into account, this might imply a maximum of four waggons or drays making six or seven return journeys from Barleythorpe to Catmose in a day - after all, this was summer and there was plenty of daylight.

Brown and White were paid promptly, but Royce was paid in instalments for the carriage and for a substantial malt bill of £69/4/6d, the account not being wholly settled until 13 May 1796, two years after the first load was carried.

going to Uppingham for 2 loads of stone, though why this was necessary (the Uppingham stone probably would have been of similar quality to that from Barleythorpe, though slightly different in colour) is not specified. We also learn from another document that in 1796 a somewhat smaller stonepit was opened, also at Barleythorpe, by Samuel Hargrave and Daniel Medbree. Whether this was connected with the Riding School (which seems unlikely in view of the date) we cannot tell.

What might not otherwise be appreciated is that once the stone had been quarried, considerable effort seems to have been expended in "filling in the stone pitt place in the field." This took place in the new year 1795, and, including carting rubbish out to Barleythorpe, occupied some 200 man-days. Most of the labourers were paid 1/2d a day, while Thomas Hart, amongst others, only received 8d and the carter's boy had 6d.

An account of getting the Stone pit,
 at 9m in Barleythorpe field
 79-4 length of pit
 47-0 width of pit
 5-9 1/2 Depth of stone 798-5 at ft. yard 10 --- 33-5-4
 79-4 unbaring
 47-0
 6-9 Depth of earth above stone
 932 yards 4ft at ft. yard 3 --- 11-13-1
 Another pitt got
 35-10 length
 32-2 width
 6-10 Depth of earth 310 yards 6ft at ft. yard 3 --- 3-17-7 1/2
 5-7 Depth of stone 238 yards 9ft at ft. yard 10 --- 9-19-9 1/2
 £58-15-10

Fig. 11. The bill from John Brown and Charles White for the stone pit at Barleythorpe (LRO Exton MSS).

James Almond, the blacksmith, also put in a small bill for work at the stonepit, namely for supplying several wedges of different sizes, for facing two hammers, and for fitting a new top to the "pump sweep" - perhaps groundwater was a problem in the stonepits, for a later bill refers to drains from the pits, which, if correctly identified, were relatively low-lying.

A much smaller account, for £5/0/2d, including loading, was received from E Gunnis for coping stones: 15 yd 2 ft (= 47 ft) at 4/0d per yard; 45 ft at 6d per foot; two springers at 1/0d each; and half a crown for a stone for the top of the coping. The source of the stone has not been identified, but Gunnis may be presumed to have been supplying limestone rather than ironstone. The money - apart from the odd 2d, that is! - was received on his behalf by the illiterate Robert Jelly, with Edward Birchnell acting as witness to the receipt - he was one of the masons who built the walls of the Riding School.

There is also an entry in Myers' day bill for

them are in the form of memoranda, one specifically referring to pages in a (missing) day book. Another mentions pantiles, but the type of tile is not otherwise described on the remaining bills, apart from the separate listing of ridge tiles, and flat tiles seem just as likely. When they were replaced by the present day slates is not known.

All the tiles were supplied from Grantham by John Short, except for a few which he had to buy in from "another Man". They were delivered, in the main, by Short himself or by John Keal on his behalf. A few were delivered by John Rudkin or John Vickers. Short receipted most of the accounts in person, but when the largest of his bills was paid (£128/2/6d) John Keal signed the receipt as well. One was paid to an illiterate Francis Bulamore, and there are two or three unsigned notes of payments for which the evidence "so Day Booke" is adduced. It appears that John Myers was not a perfect book-keeper!

This is one group of accounts which do not actually say that they relate to the Riding School,

Tiles

As with the accounts for lime and sand, those for the supply and carriage of roof tiles overlap, and do not seem to correlate completely in the absence of a full expenditure record. Two of

though it seems clear that they do from the period over which the tiles were supplied and paid for (June 1794 - March 1795), which coincides with the construction period. The laying of 141 sq yd of tiles is included in the last account (fig. 12).

This is the most useful of these accounts and is reproduced here. It summarises the delivery of a total of 23,105 tiles and 450 ridge tiles. The prices of the tiles are clearly stated: at £2/10/0d per 1000 they were just over ½d each, with the ridge tiles exactly five times the price at 3d each, and costing twice as much to transport. A thousand ordinary tiles made an average load. Most of the tiles were supplied in the summer, but some of them had to be delivered "in witter & the roades bad". The cost of this more difficult delivery worked out at £2/10/0d per 1000 rather than £1/15/0d, ie the same as the price of the tiles themselves. The "other man" from whom Short had to buy 1300 tiles charged slightly more for them - £2/15/0d per 1000. This account was settled in full on 30 March 1795.

Col Edwards bought further tiles, pantiles and a quantity of bricks from John Short in 1796 for an unspecified purpose. Perhaps it may also be noted that nowhere else in the surviving accounts is there any reference to bricks, although they were in fact used for interior walling and possibly for forming corbels to add support to the main trusses, although these may be later. They may have been supplied from brick-works within the Noel estates, in which case they would not need to be bought in.

Although John Short has not yet been identified, it may be noted that two surviving Grantham poll books for elections in 1818 and 1820 list other brickmakers of the same surname. They were not resident in Grantham, there being a Henry at Woolsthorpe (near Colsterworth, Lincolnshire), a William at North Luffenham, and a Robert at both Whissendine and Cottesmore (Rutland), but retained their voting qualification at Grantham.

Timber

The most obvious feature of the building is the massive timber structure of the roof, with its single span of 54 ft. To achieve this required timbers of exceptional quality and length, in sufficient quantity to construct the eight main trusses, each comprising one horizontal and two diagonal principal members. To these must be added the other members - centre posts, crown post assemblies, purlins, rafters and laths - needed for the roof, and also the joists and

Date	Description	Cost (£ s d)
August 5th	Tiles & Carriage Delivered from Grantham	
	To 19000 at 10 p. m. 2-10-0	47-10-0
	To Carriage of 19 loads off. Town 2-15-0	33-5-0
	To 450 Ridge tiles at 6 p. tile 3d	5-12-6
	To Carriage of 2 1/2 Tons tiles in Counties Double in weight so the Carriage is 900	1-10-0
December 1	To 2450 tiles Delivered at Oakham at 2-10	7-2-6
	To 1300 tiles having to buy them of another man & his Charge was	3-11-6
	To Carriage of 2450 tiles & to pay an extra pence it being in witter & the roades bad	7-2-6
	To Carriage of 1300 tiles	3-5-0
	Labour for laying on 141 sq yd of tiling at 6 p. square	17-12-6
	To extra labour N ^o 22 Days work at 2/6	2-15-0
	To 5 1/2 Days work at 2/6	0-11-0
	Total	£129 17 6

Fig. 12. John Short's final bill for tiles for the Riding School (LRO Exton MSS).

floorboards for the stable block and, eventually, the quarters.

The surviving papers do not include complete coverage of the timber supplies required, but they enable us to identify the main suppliers and also itemise the principal members. The type of timber used was at first uncertain, although several retired carpenters or joiners who visited the museum referred to the main timbers as "memel", this properly being a tall, straight and relatively knot-free fast-growing oak imported from the Baltic via the Lithuanian port of that name. However, in 1978 the Timber Research & Development Association identified the timber as high quality *Pinus sylvestris*,

commonly known as European redwood or red or yellow deal. Now we find reference in these bills to "fir timber" or "deal timber", supplied in sizes which can only refer to these beams. It may be that "memel" is a term in fact used more widely to include other types of timber from the same source. Likewise, strictly speaking, "deals" are fir or pine boards or planks of a certain maximum size, but the use of the term "deal timber" also implies whole timbers of the sort from which, as will appear, deals were then sawn. Certainly more than one type of timber was used, for at least the upper vertical member of each crown post assembly appears to be of quite a different wood from the main members of these trusses.

Some thirteen large fir timbers were supplied on different dates in May and June 1794 by Thomas Smith & Son of Stamford, described on their printed bill heads as coal, deal and timber merchants. One of their bills is reproduced here (fig.13). One Thomas Smith (perhaps the son) died in 1809 at the age of 45, and after this the business was carried on by his widow Ann. He is thought to have lived at 19 St George's Square, a property which extended down to Wharf Road, and probably had a wharf at Water-side.

The timbers which Smith supplied varied in length from 21 ft to 53 ft, and all were 12 inches or more in section. They were all carefully measured and were charged for according to cubic timber measure - for example, a 38 ft timber described as measuring $12\frac{1}{2} \times 12\frac{1}{2} \times 12\frac{1}{2}$ inches amounts to $41\frac{1}{4}$ cu ft. For the first eleven pieces, the price was 1/4d per cu ft, and for the last two 1/6d per cu ft. The total volume of these thirteen pieces was 555 cu ft. For all that, no individual timber was long enough to form a single span (56 ft would be required, allowing for a 12 inch bearing at each end), though several would have done for the diagonal members (28 or 29 ft would be needed for these). It would appear that Smith & Son supplied other large timbers, since there is mention of two other substantial amounts for "Fir Timber per Bill",

Stamford,

Bought of THOMAS SMITH and SON,
Coal, Deal, and Timber Merchants,

1794 June 9	To Deals & Bill	11:2:11
20	Fir Timber & Bill	20:11:9
21	Fir Timber & Bill	10:1:6
24	Fir Timber 24	
$20 \times 31 = 39 \text{ ft} \times 12\frac{1}{2} \times 12\frac{1}{2} \times 12\frac{1}{2} = 133 \text{ ft}^3$ $8 \times 38 \text{ ft} \times 12\frac{1}{2} \times 12\frac{1}{2} \times 12\frac{1}{2} = 118 \text{ ft}^3$		
	81 $\frac{1}{4}$ at 1/6 Money	6:6:12
12	11 $\frac{1}{2}$ ft 1 1/2 In Platters	1/9 3:13:6
18	12 ft 1 1/2 In d°	1/6 1:1:0
10	20 ft 2 1/2 In d°	5/10 2:18:4
Settled June 23: 1794		59:0:0
	2:15:10	38:9:9

Dis^t ^{at} ^{the} ^{Deals}

Fig. 13. Thomas Smith & Sons' statement for timber supplied in June 1794, including two large timbers totalling $84\frac{1}{4}$ cu ft, and allowing a deduction of 11/0d made when the deals were examined (LRO Exton MSS).

but no itemised account of these survives.

A further ten pieces of "deal timber" were supplied by Newbat & Ashbourn of Grantham in September 1794. These ranged in cubic measure from $61\frac{1}{2}$ cu ft to $80\frac{1}{4}$ cu ft. The bill is less detailed than Smith's, but by analogy it may be reckoned that if the largest piece measured $12\frac{1}{2} \times 12\frac{1}{2} \times 12\frac{1}{2}$ it would have been about 73 ft long rather than 80 ft, or if $13\frac{1}{2} \times 12\frac{1}{2} \times 12\frac{1}{2}$ like one of Smith's pieces, then only (!) some 64 ft long. We have to suppose that the timbers were supplied to match as closely as possible the required length, and that the overall dimensions did not have to be exact - indeed the actual beams do vary significantly along their length by as much as 2 inches. Newbat & Ashbourn, perhaps not surprisingly, charged a high price for these longer timbers, 2/3d per cu ft. They totalled $679\frac{1}{2}$ cu ft and cost £76/8/10½d. Unquestionably they will have been used to form the main members of each truss assembly.

Perhaps the most interesting discovery regarding the timber in these papers is a small receipted account (fig.14) from Thomas Battson for the sea freight of two pieces of fir timber, measuring together 147 cu ft, by a vessel named the *Two Brothers*, from Hull to Spalding, and thence by boat up the Welland, which was very much navigable at this time, to Stamford. This is probably the closest we can get to identifying the route by which the timbers must have travelled from the ports of the

Baltic region to the east coast ports of England for forward distribution. There is a corresponding entry in John Myers' carpenter's bill for £3/4/6d for the "fright" of these two pieces from Hull to Stamford, which would appear to be different from anything supplied by Smith & Son, although there is no separate bill for the timbers themselves.

Much other timber and deal was required. Some of this is included in Smith's bills, though again we

with Thomas Chapman. The sheer quantity may be indicated by an entry in one of Maydwell's bills for the carriage of 2840¼ cu ft of deal timber - it seems that Newbat & Ashbourn reckoned 50 cu ft to weigh a ton, so even if the deals were not so heavy this still approximates to 56 tons, charged at 2¼d per cu ft, while the carriage of loose deals, which required more handling, cost more at about 11d per cu ft (£1/5/0d per cu yard is quoted). On this basis we

*Mr. J. Myers Oakham Dr for freight of 2 Timber
by the Two Brothers from Hull June the 14th 1795
To 2 pieces of fir Timber 147 Feet for sea freight 1.0.0
at 16 per Ton 50 Feet to the Ton - - - - - 2.7.0
for Boat freight at 6 per Ton from Spalding - - - - - 0.17.6
Total 10 Shos Battson 10.00
74 3.4.6
6.19.6*

Fig. 14. Thomas Battson's bill for carrying two timbers by boat from Hull to Stamford (LRO Exton MSS).

lack sufficient detail for it to be itemised. He certainly supplied large quantities of deals between June 1794 and May 1795, although maybe not all of them were required for the Riding School, since this is not specified. Some would appear to have been defective, for a modest allowance of 11/0d was deducted from one of the bills (fig.13).

Other materials supplied by Smith included a grindstone for 7/0d, a quantity of 1½ inch and 2½ inch battens, and a number of poles up to 39ft long, and in June 1794 John Mould supplied four oak trees for the use of the Riding School at a cost of £9/13/6d. These are likely to have been used fairly green rather than after long seasoning, and perhaps were made into lintels and so on - none appears to be obviously visible now.

It may be noted that all the timber supplied by Smith & Son has reference numbers, and these probably corresponded to their own day books or ledgers. Their early bills were settled promptly, as were those submitted by John Mould and Thomas Battson. However, Newbat & Ashbourn waited nearly five months for their money, and Smith's bill of May 1795 was not paid for twelve months.

Many of the deals were then sawn up on site, as can be seen from Myers' day book sheets, where the sawing of at least 20,000 ft (in modern terms, over 6 km) of deals and the "sliting" of over 1200 ft, plus the sawing of battens into laths and several days' worth of sawing oak and old oak, can be accounted for.

Several bills or receipts for the carriage by road of all this timber have survived. John Maydwell carried much of what Smith & Son supplied, as well as stone, sawdust, and other materials, and he seems to have shared the transport of the large timbers

may calculate that the weight of each of the eight principal trusses originally approached 3 tons - rather less now after 200 years of drying out and the effects of 25 years of central heating.

One can imagine the excitement - and, no doubt, cursing! - that these massive loads must have generated as they passed clumsily on groaning wheels along the turnpikes from Grantham and Stamford towards Oakham. They cannot have been easy to manoeuvre, and a hint of the difficulties encountered is reflected in Newbat & Ashbourn's bill, where £1/16/3d is added for "Repairs of Carrig" - clearly something must have collapsed under the weight. William Newbat also charged four guineas for "four journeys to self" from Newark to Oakham, and there is an entry in Myers' day book sheets recording the payment of 7/6d to the "tole Barre" for long timber.

Ironmongery and blacksmith's goods

There are three bills for iron goods, one for £18/13/6d and another for £3/7/3d from John Mason the ironmonger, and a much more substantial one for £72/0/3d from James Almond the blacksmith. Mason's first bill (fig.15) was paid in May 1795 and his second a year later, while Almond was paid in instalments, the debt not being finally cleared until 1796.

Most of the items on the ironmonger's bills, which cover purchases from 16 May 1794 to 20 June 1795, are various kinds of nail. Usually supplied by the pound, quarter or half stone, or stone, they included sprigs, spikins, fine and large nails, and nails of more specific price or size. Fine nails were 5/6d and large ones 5/0d a stone. At least half a ton of nails would appear to be accounted for.

Several dozen screws were also required, but they do not figure very prominently.

Quite a range of other items was supplied by Mason, from shovels and spades at 3/0d each to two quires of paper for 6/0d. The list includes two pairs

25	2 Stone Nails 10g chews	1-5
26	2 Stone fine Nails	2-9
6	7 1/2 Nails	1-4-0
31	2 Stone fine Do	2-9
31	1 7 1/2 Nails	4-0
2	Stone Large Nails 10--0	
10	2 Stone fine Do	11-0
1	7 1/2 Nails	4-0
4	1 Stone fine Do	5-6
16	2 Stone Large Do	10-0
3	Stone Large Do	15-0
17	2 Stone Do	10-0
3	1 1/2 Nails	2-3
1	1/2 Do	0-1
1	Stone fine Nails	5-6
1	Stone Large Do	5-0
25	2 1/2 Nails 1 1/2 Do	3-1
Stone	1 Stone fine Do	5-6
3	1 Stone Do	5-6
X	Stone Do	2-9
1	Pad lock 1 1/2 Cunt	1-7
X	Stone Nails	1-5
Jan 17	7 qt Paint	2-9
1	1/2 Oil	1-0

Fig. 15. An extract from John Mason's ironmonger's bill (LRO Exton MSS).

of "cumperces" [compasses] (6d each), a wimble (1/0d), several spike bits, a hammer, a "plain" [plane] iron (6d), two steel plated saws (5/6d each), soft soap, oil and "grees", several pounds of paint, a padlock and a pound of candles. In February, a fine plated lock (4/6d), a "skutchin" [escutcheon] and half a dozen 3 1/2 inch screws were called for.

James Almond's long bill (fig.16) is one of the most interesting in the group, for amongst his extensive list can be found all the custom-made ironwork required to fit up the members of the eight principal truss assemblies. The main difficulty in assessing this bill lies in working out whether the number of sets of bolts and other fittings actually coincides with these eight trusses, because of the way in which some items are described or combined in the bill, but the quantities do seem to be approximately as expected. Study of the trusses today shows that each required the following:

For the king post: 1 large stirrup with 2 staples, 1 bolt and nut, 10 spikes; 1 king post bolt with 1 large nut, 2 staples, 2 bolts and nuts.

For each of the two crown posts: 1 king post bolt with 1 nut and plate, 2 staples, 1 bolt and nut, 4 spikes.

For each wall joint: 2 broad head bolts with nuts and plates; 1 stirrup with 2 staples, 8 spikes, 2 screw bolts.

For each valley joint: 1 strap with 2 staples and spikes.

The king post bolts, or king bolts as some are described, are in the shape of giant tuning forks, with the arms embracing two sides of the king post, and the long stem passing down through the main horizontal member. The extremity of each arm is everted (like the calkin of a horseshoe) and held in place by a large staple driven into the wood. One bolt passes through both arms and the post, and is secured by a nut, and usually five spikes are driven through each arm (not all are now present). The king post is further held in place by a large stirrup, at right angles to the arms of the king post bolt,

1796	The Smiths Bill of the work done for the Riding School by Jas Almond Blacksmith	
May 23	for 5 sets of Barrow	0-15-0
June 7	for 2 hooks 10 1/2 # at 5 1/2 #	0-1-1/2
21	for 4 screw bolts nuts & 15 1/2 #	1-2-7 1/2
23	for a Bolt lengthen to Carriage	0-1-6
27	for the first king post Bolt & 32 #	16-0
28	for Stirrup & bolts to do	38 # 0-19-0
30	for 4 Broad Bolts & plates 35 #	0-17-10 1/2
July 2	for 2 long Bolts w/ 0 1/2 #	1-10-4 1/2
10	for 3 Wimbles pieces & 3 full cord	0-3-9
13	for pins & Cent hooks 25 1/2 #	0-10-7 1/2
9	for 2 screw Bolts w/ 1 1/2 # nut	0-1-6
9	for 2 New hooks 6 1/2 # put on	0-2-1 1/2
11	for King post Bolt & 32 #	0-16-0
14	for 4 broad head bolts & 36 #	0-18-0
18	for 2 long Bolts 6 #	1-10-3
18	for Bolt & braces to do 31 1/2 #	15-1 1/2
25	for King bolt & broad head	36 # 3-0
26	for Stirrup & bolts w/ 6 1/2 #	1-10-7 1/2
27	for Wimbles & 3 full cord	0-3-9
27	for King post Bolt & stirrup 32 #	0-16-0
29	for 4 broad head bolts 35 #	0-17-6
31	for King Bolt & 2 long bolts w/ Stirrup & 4 broad head 40 #	15 1/2 # 3-15-6

Fig. 16. The first part of James Almond's blacksmith's bill, including the first king post bolt (LRO Exton MSS).

which passes under the main horizontal member, where the stem of the king post bolt passes through it and is secured by a large nut. The extremity of each arm of the stirrup is similarly turned out and held by a large staple, and two bolts pass through the two arms of the stirrup. Spikes are not used here. Each king post bolt weighs in the order of 32 lb, and each stirrup with its bolts about 36 lb. The crown posts are secured by similar bolts which are even longer because the arms support the crown post and the stem has to pass through both the diagonal and the horizontal members and the spacing timber between them. There is no stirrup at this point, so the bolt is provided with a plate to prevent it from drawing into the wood.

Where the diagonal and horizontal members meet at the wall, they are secured by two broad head bolts about 2 ft apart which pass through both timbers, and by a smaller stirrup at an angle to the joint. These are held in place by staples and spikes, but bolts are not used. Only the arms of these

stirrups are visible, the rest being concealed in the walls. The broad head bolts each weigh about 9 lb, the stirrups 18 lb.

Besides these specialised components, Almond also supplied assorted other nuts, bolts, staples, hooks, screws, straps, rivets, cramps and spikes. Several things had to be modified or mended - for example, three wimbles had to be extended to 3 ft in length, presumably to drill the holes for the long bolts through the posts, and it appears that one of them later had to be mended. Various bolts had to be lengthened, shortened, or "shot" [threaded]. The timber chain had to be mended four times, no doubt reflecting the problems of raising into position the great weight of the assembled trusses one by one.

Sundry supplies

Several small accounts or receipts from various other tradesmen have also survived. They help to fill out the picture by indicating the range of materials necessary for the building project, and they also provide evidence of the relatively specialised nature of many trades. These bills, of which some are corroborated by a mention in John Myers' day book sheets, may be summarised thus:

An account in the name of the late G Toon, receipted by W Toon, for the supply of ropes and cords between May and September 1794. The account was not settled until the following April, after G Toon's death. Specifically, the types of rope supplied were:

- Scaffold cord, either at 1d a yard or 2/6d a bunch (presumably of 30 yards);
- Ropes, at 1/0d or 1/6d each;
- Job ropes sold by weight at 10d per lb;
- Cart rope, at 5/6s.

The account implies that these were needed for other buildings besides the Riding School.

A receipt from an illiterate John Horspool for 18 scaffold fleakes at 1/4d each (day book reference).

An account from James Tacy for a new bucket at 4/0d, a new carrying tub at 12/0d, and a parcel of "scaffolding poles" at £1/15/0d (day book reference).

An account for further wooden items from John Brownsworth, namely two new barrows, one of which needed painting (10/0d and 11/6d respectively); a new barrow body (7/6d); mending a borrowed barrow (2/6d) and putting new feet on two barrows (1/0d each); and a "peck axe" shaft and a spade tree (8d each).

A receipted account from Thomas Clarke for various cramps and for two pick axes at 3/3d each (day book reference).

A receipted account from R Watson for quantities of

hair, presumably ox hair, for plaster and mortar, delivered between March and November in an unspecified year, but for the Riding School and thus attributable to 1794 or 1795. The price ranged from 1d for a quarton (a quarter of a dry gallon) through 2½d for half a peck (a dry gallon) and 4½d for a peck to 1/6d for a stone. The implication is that a bushel of hair (four pecks) was equivalent to a stone.

A receipt from Francis Robinson for carrying away the old thatch from the malting (day book reference). As mentioned above, this item is important in enabling us to identify what had stood on the site before the Riding School was constructed. Were it not for the 1787 survey, we would not know that from this passing reference that Robinson was one of Oakham's most substantial farmers.

A receipt from an illiterate John Brown - perhaps neither the stone quarryman nor the thatcher? - for riding four ranges of wood in Barnsdale Wood. It is not clear what relevance this has to the Riding School, but there is a matching day book reference.

Three receipted accounts from John Maydwell for the expenses and carriage of sawdust from Melton Mowbray and Stamford to the Riding School in October 1795. This will have been required regularly for maintaining the riding surface. Curiously, the receipt for the load from Melton Mowbray also has written on it the name of John Cholthorne in a different hand in Greek characters. The significance of this is quite unknown. As already seen, Maydwell also carried quantities of timber and stone for the project, which obviously brought him considerable trade in his capacity as a carrier.

Stonemasonry

John and Edward Birchnell were the masons engaged to do the building work, and for this they charged £125/13/0d. Their account, reproduced here (fig. 17), is particularly useful as it specifies the measurements of the work done and the labour costs. These, of course, are to be added to the costs of the materials supplied by others. In the bill, we have confirmation that the front and back walls were set at 2 ft 6 ins at the bottom and 2 ft exactly at the top; likewise, the end walls tapered from 2 ft 7 ins to 2 ft and then again to 1 ft 8 ins at the gables. This work varied from 2/2d to 2/8d a yard, while the relatively minor task of filling up to the level of the tiles was only 9d a yard. The more ornamental work, using the finer stone supplied by Gunnis from an unspecified source, varied in price from a mere 2d a foot for laying the tabling on the pediment (which is the main feature of the frontage) to 7d a foot for the "Rubd and Geaged Blew Stone arches & Key stones." Only one item might undermine the confidence of present-day colleagues in

the County Council's Department of Property: the reference to "rough foundations when arched over hols." What holes, exactly?

Building and carpentry

As already shown, the supervisor of the works was John Myers. As well as being a carpenter, he was responsible for making drawings, setting out the works, obtaining materials, organising the workforce, keeping accounts and, eventually, paying the

Carpenter's Bill for the Ride No 1, from 12 May to 6 December 1794, totalling £185/13/11d (fig.18);
 Labourer's Day Bill No 4, from 15 May to 27 December 1794, £89/1/10d;
 Day Book Sheets, from 15 May to 27 December 1794, £91/19/9½d;
 Days Works Done, from 6 December 1794 to 28 March 1795, £34/6/7d;
 Labourers Work Doon ... at Oakham & the Stone Pitts, from 3 January to 31 March 1795, £14/9/2d.

Apart from a few intrusive entries which may relate to work done at Catmose, these accounts concern only the Riding School, and in conjunction with the other documents already discussed enable a fair estimate of the progress of the works to be arrived at. There is also a degree of overlap, or of correspondence, with the accounts submitted by the other tradesmen. Certainly Myers appears to have had every intention of keeping a clearly detailed record of expenditure, since one of the first things he did was to spend 1/8d on "a Booke for to set downe mens time." This author rather wishes he had succeeded!

In fact, the day book entries for labourers' work are not in the main especially useful except as general indicators of the intensity of the work done and the amounts paid out. For example, most of the entries in the day book

Bill of masons work done by John & Edward Birchnell at the Riding School doonly. John & Edward Birchnell Measure & mason set January 3rd 1795. Labour only

1376--2	of putting & calling on to the sheet to 2" thick at bottom & 1/2" at top, at 1/2 yard Superficial	2 1/2	42-13-5
333--1	of calling to back sides in the yard at 1/2 yard Superficial	2 1/2	33-6-2 1/2
317--3	of calling to back side 2 1/2 at bottom & 1/2 then to top 1 1/2 at 1/2 yard	1 1/2	20-3-10 1/2
222--4	of rough foundations when arches were built & all is collected from		
67--C	of beam filling up to the top of 1/2 yard Superficial	1 1/2	14-16-1
151--8	of perspective of a course being all & manifest to plants at 1/2 yard	1 1/2	1-17-9 1/2
243--8	of taking sand on the pavement at 1/2 yard	1 1/2	0-9-1 1/2
115--1	of Rub and Gravel to be used in the road Key & this at 1/2 yard	1 1/2	3-7-1 1/2
			£ 125-13-0-13

Fig. 17. John and Edward Birchnell's bill for mason's work at the Riding School (LRO Exton MSS).

bills: no mean feat for a project of this size, which clearly was put in hand almost as soon as the idea had been formulated by Col Edwards. For all this work, Myers charged 3/0d a day. Early on, he made journeys to Melton, Grantham, Stamford and Lynn, seeking and ordering materials, especially the timber, and a year later he returned to Grantham to pay for the roof tiles.

The set of accounts which he left, so far as they survive, is incomplete, but five of the relevant documents are in his hand, as, indeed, are very many of the receipts:

sheets refer to labourers, or indeed soldiers (as discussed earlier), "on Diferent Works", without specifying what was actually being done.

However, we can see that there was a tremendous peak of activity about a fortnight after the project began. From the end of May until mid June 1794, a period of some three weeks, around 430 man days were worked. During the busiest week, probably 30 men or more were on site, and almost certainly work was proceeding seven days a week - Myers repeatedly enters "My self 7 days £1/1/0d", and his apprentice worked similarly long hours.

Carpenters & Sawyers North Dean at the
 Riding Schooll for Capt. Edwards Regt
 1794. By John Myers

Mar 18. My self making preparations & L d d
 getting out the Schooll &c --- 7 Days 1-1-0

My self pulling down old Buildings 7 Day 1-1-0

My self sawed the gutters for Grantham & Stamford 0-6-0

My Men on the above Jobs &c --- 5 1/2 0-12-10

To 2 Letters --- 0-0-8

24 To My Men on the Works N^o 7 Days at 4/Day 0-17-6

My self on Do --- N^o 3 Days 0-9-0

My self & horses to Linn to saw timber & so on 1-8-6

Each paid to Francis Robinson for getting away 4 loads 1-0

Each paid for making 3 wheelbarrows --- 1-10-0

So sawing 1190 ft of Timber at 1/2 2-6 --- 1-9-9

To 2 men soldiers each 16 Days at 1/2 Day 1-17-4

To 2 of My Men each 7 Days --- at 1/2 Day 1-15-0

31 My self on Do --- 7 Days --- 1-1-0

My Men on to ad wood for Mr. Thomas & Co 14 Day 1-15-0

To 2 Soldiers on Do --- 8 Days --- 0-16-0

Men hewing ad oak wood sawing 287 7 Day 0-17-6

Each paid for N^o 18 ft saw for 1/2 day at 1/4 1-4-0

June 2 My self --- 7 Days --- 1-12-6

My Men on Do --- N^o 13 Days --- 0-7-0

Soldiers as Carpenters 3 1/2 Days --- 0-4-10

To 2 Letters & 2 Day books --- 0-1-0

9 My self attending the Different Works 1-1-0

My Men on Solt & Limde frames N^o 14 Days 1-15-0

Soldiers as Carpenters 9 3/4 Days --- 0-19-6

To sawing 9380 ft of Timber & 152 of Oak --- 0-15-6

To 4 Dozen of Battens ad onto lath --- 1-4-0

14 To 2 salt saws for Boards &c --- 0-5-9

21 My self --- 7 Days 1-1-0

My Men on Do --- N^o 18 Days --- 2-5-0

Soldiers as Carpenters --- 12 1/2 Days 1-4-6

To each paid for the freight of 2 pieces of
 timber from Hull to Stamford --- 3-4-6

Each paid to Mr. Bardsley for adraft --- 0-5-0

£ 36-6-2

Fig. 18. The first page of John Myers' carpenter's bill for the "Rideing Schooll". Note the range of activities itemised, from pulling down old buildings to sawing timbers and making wheelbarrows. Note also the references to "soldiers as carpenters" and the "fright of 2 pieces of timber from Hull to Stamford" (see fig. 12). (LRO Exton MSS).

This period coincides with the arrival of great quantities of stone and other raw materials, all of which would have had to be unloaded and stacked ready for building, and such a figure seems quite acceptable. Throughout, Thomas Carter and his boy were fully employed with their cart.

As elsewhere, though, it is difficult to reconcile the various records. For example, on the day book sheets for 9 June, Myers records labourers working 52½ days and soldiers working 48½, while on the labourers day bill for the same date he records labourers working 94¼ days "at Sundry wages", and does not mention soldiers at all; at the same time, the carpenter's bill includes Myers himself, his men, and soldiers as carpenters as well as specified amounts of timbers sawn. From the latter, the huge quantities of timber handled and sawn can be assessed, as already noticed above, but only one entry really points to a specific stage in the construction of the building, namely that for 28 July 1794 - "My men framing the roof No 28 Days £3/10/0d." This, it may be noted, was well before the delivery in September of the longest timbers, which raises the question how much framing could have been done before they were received. Later in the year, the pressures eased and often he was then working only three days a week on the Riding School, and correspondingly fewer days were worked by his men.

The roof timbers could not be raised into position until the walls were ready to receive them, but all the trusses and other components would have been prefabricated. On many of the assemblies, the carpenters' marks can still be seen, indicating how they should go together.

The great event of raising the roof timbers must

have been a feat worthy of celebration. Little wonder, then, that we find an entry recording "Extra Expences Collected such as Bear [beer] ... & Extra help for geting up great Beames." However, before the roof could be finished, winter came in with some apparent vigour, for on 24 and 31 January, and again on 21 February, we find Myers paying three labourers for "throwing snow of the

Buildings." At about this time he spent two weeks drawing and a further week on "Estimates and seting out new works." Exactly what this entailed we cannot know from the accounts, which cease at the end of March 1795 with a journey to Grantham to pay John Short for the tiles, but they may refer either to the stables or to the house at the southern end. Either way, by the late spring of 1795 there stood a splendid new building where only a year before there had been an old malting awaiting demolition.

The result of all these labours was indeed, as the *Gentleman's Magazine* had described it, a "very capital riding-house."

Acknowledgements

My thanks are due to Lady Campden for kindly allowing me to publish this paper in advance of the general availability of the Exton MSS, and to my colleagues in the Leicestershire Record Office, especially Jenny Clark, for their co-operation. John Smith, Curator of Stamford Museum, helped with information about Thomas Smith & Son, and put me in touch with Malcolm Knapp of Grantham who kindly searched for John Short, the brickmaker. Sue Curtis typed my transcripts, a task probably more difficult than working from the originals.

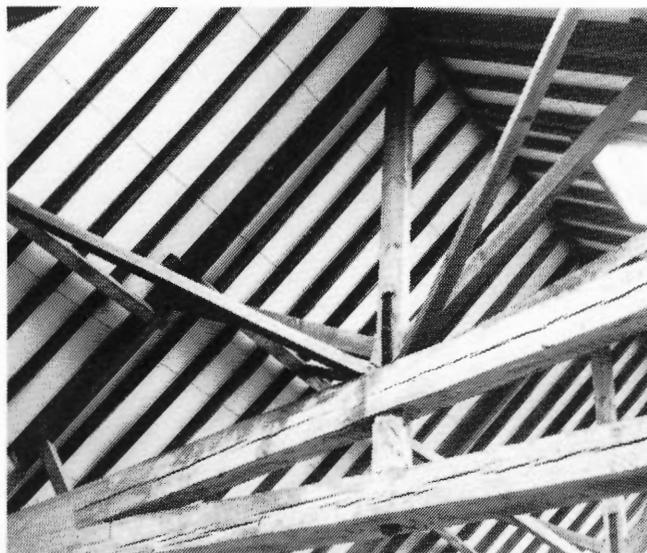


Fig. 19. Part of one of the main roof assemblies, photographed by James Levisohn ARPS soon after the Riding School was converted into a museum.

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Primary Source

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Fig. 20. A medallion issued to celebrate the achievements and character of Col Noel [Edwards] (Leicestershire Museums, Arts & Records Service).

A Childhood at Stocken Hall

Recollections of Peter Fleetwood-Hesketh 1907-1918

Introduced and edited by SUE HOWLETT

Introduction

Drivers on the south-bound A1 entering Rutland may occasionally notice a large roadside sign proclaiming a Jacobean mansion "For Sale or To Let". Stocken Hall (figs.1, 2), best known in the recent past for giving its name to the adjacent prison, was saved from proposed demolition in the late 1970s by the efforts of the Rutland Local History Society

future owner of Stocken Hall had been born Charles Hesketh Bibby in 1871. Educated at Eton and Cambridge, he was called to the Bar in 1895, becoming High Sheriff of Lancashire in 1901 and serving in both the South African and First World Wars. Having inherited the estates of his uncle Charles Fleetwood-Hesketh, the former Charles Hesketh Bibby adopted by Royal Licence the surname and arms of Fleetwood-Hesketh. In 1900, at the age of

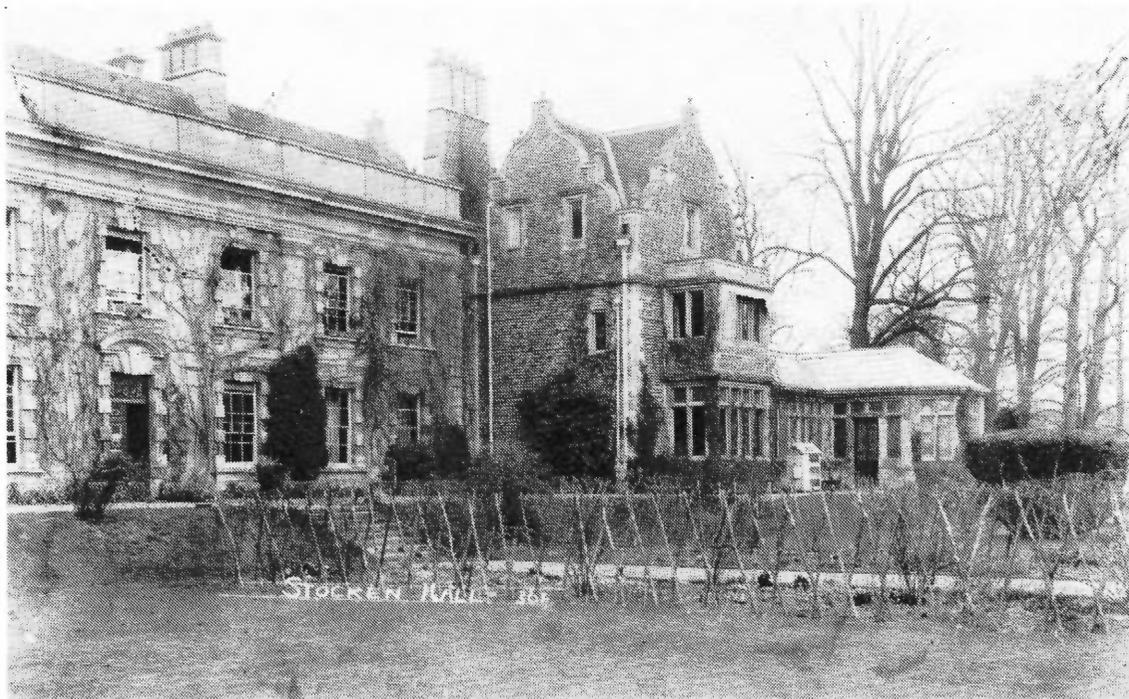


Fig. 1. Exterior of Stocken Hall, in an early 20th century photograph by Dalby of Stamford (Leicestershire Museums, Arts & Records Service).

and other concerned groups, and the ministerial decree of Mr Michael Heseltine. Since then it has undergone substantial renovation by a property developer who vowed in 1991 to restore the building to "something like its former glory".¹ Once more, however, it awaits a tenant or purchaser who in uncertain times has the vision and resources to restore the life and fortunes of this most beautiful house. It is a silent and poignant contrast to the days leading up to the First World War, when Stocken Hall must have echoed to the laughter of children and the labours of indoor and outdoor servants, a happy family home and the centre of a well-ordered estate.

The names of Fleetwood and Hesketh are probably better known in Lancashire, where the

29, he married Anne, eldest daughter of Sir Thomas Brocklebank, head of another great Lancashire shipping family.² Their main estates and first home were near Southport, but in 1907 Stocken Hall was purchased from the Ancaster estate,³ offering space for a growing family, rural tranquillity, and the nearby attractions of the Cottesmore Hunt, in whose country the estate lay.

In their new home at Stocken Hall, Charles and Anne Fleetwood-Hesketh brought up, with the help of nursemaids, governesses and numerous servants, their family of three sons and three daughters. Peter, author of these *Recollections*, was the second son. His keen and vivid memories, recorded in immaculate longhand five years before his death, provide a fascinating child's perspective of country

house living in the idyllic years of the Edwardian twilight. His childhood in Rutland brought Peter Fleetwood-Hesketh many memorable experiences, described below, including hunting with the "Yellow Earl" (Hugh Lowther, 5th Earl of Lonsdale) and misbehaving in dancing lessons at Burghley House.

The years of the Great War brought personal changes also for Peter Fleetwood-Hesketh. In the summer of 1914 he was sent away to school at Fonthill, near East Grinstead, Sussex, and in 1918 followed his elder brother to Eton. The period referred to at the close of the *Recollections* as "the sad time" was to end with the unhappy breakdown of his parents' marriage and their formal separation in 1923. In 1935 his father, now Major Hesketh, married his second wife, Gladys McPherson. Surviving employees of the Stocken Hall estate still remember the welcome celebrations greeting the newly-weds' return from their honeymoon. The period of Major Hesketh's control of the Stocken Hall estate, and his influence on the lives of the villagers and children of Stretton, was to last in total for over thirty years. It ended for ever, with so much else of English life, with the Second World War and the death of Major Hesketh in 1947.

A selection from the *Recollections* is reproduced here, unaltered save for orthography. Footnotes amplify or explain various points where additional information allows. The full *Recollections* include a number of passages of little or no relevance to Rutland or to life at Stocken Hall, and these have been omitted.

The Recollections

We moved into Stocken in 1907 when I was two ... Originally built in the first half of the seventeenth century for John Brown of Stamford, [Stocken Hall was] a typical Jacobean house of three gables facing east and west. It later passed to the Heathcotes who enlarged it and added a handsome Georgian south front in the middle of the eighteenth century, and further additions were made by Lord Francis Cecil, when a tenant in the 1870s ...

To begin with, Lord Ancaster's agent, Mr Binns, continued to manage the estate for my father, until he got his own. Mr Binns had a beard and used to come over from Grimsthorpe in an open two-seater car. It may have been a one-cylinder de Dion Bouton. The estate, covering over three thousand acres, comprised several farms, the village of Stretton and much woodland, the largest of the woods, called Morcary [or Morkery], comprising 600 acres of primeval forest two and a half miles long and three quarters of a mile deep, lying to the north of the house, in Lincolnshire.

Stocken had, indeed, a certain magic quality. Though no more than a hundred miles north of

London, one mile from the North Road and eight and nine respectively from the nearest towns of Stamford and Oakham, it had an atmosphere of peace and solitude and utter remoteness.

The sounds I recall mainly were the loud cawing of vast numbers of rooks, circling above the tall trees in which they had their nests and often settling in masses on the ground, making a tremendous noise which we called "the Rooks' Parliament". In the summer, a wood pigeon would call from the wistaria outside my mother's bedroom window to receive a distant reply, like an echo, from the other end of the park.

The only traffic that was audible, on a still day, was the very occasional motor-bicycle on the North Road, nearly a mile away; and at night, a slow goods train a mile in the other direction, puffing its way along the Midland and Great Northern Joint Railway. And sometimes the stillness was broken by the diesel pump in the engine house at the farm.

From the south side of the house, the lawns fell in terraces to the park, which after a dip that occasionally flooded to make a temporary lake rose to a considerable height, from which a splendid view could be had, looking back, with the house below you, and above and beyond, what appeared to be endless forest, whose level horizon vanished out of sight both to the east and to the west.

At the far end of the park there were two ponds, the larger called Panter's Pond, after the white-haired head gardener, ⁴ whose cottage stood near it. My father stocked these ponds with Loch Leven and Rainbow trout, but they did not do well owing to an insufficient flow of water, and had to be replenished every year.

The terrace along the south front was continued by a long walk which eventually led, through several iron gates, to an enormous kitchen garden, with the cricket field beyond and the home farm behind the greenhouses along the north side. The farm was like a small village, with cottages for the farm hands, Grundy the chauffeur, Baker the joiner and their families; houses for the head keeper and one for the bailiff, joined to a very modern, ⁵ electrically operated dairy; and the agent's house.

There were only two approaches to Stocken: one entering the park from the south, through four gates in the mile and a half from the village of Stretton; the other from the north, called the Stone Ride, a straight mile cutting through Morcary. Beside it, among the trees, stood a simple stone cenotaph, marking the spot where General Thomas Grosvenor's horse, "Black Butcher", dropped dead. It is in the form of an altar tomb surmounted by an obelisk. On one side is carved a figure of the horse. On the other, the following epitaph:

Within Old Morcary Wood you hear the Sound
Of Lowther's voice encouraging the Hound

Pass ye not heedless by this pile of Stones
For underneath lie honest Butcher's Bones
Black was his colour but his nature fair
Where'er the Hounds went Butcher would be there
Tho^s Grosvenor pays this tribute to his worth
A better hunter ne'er stretched Leathern Girth. ⁶

At that time Stocken had belonged to Sir Gilbert Heathcote of Normanton, whose daughter Elizabeth was Grosvenor's wife. Grosvenor was a keen follower of the Cottesmore hounds, of which Sir Gilbert was Master from 1802 till 1806, and lived at Stocken. He was one of Wellington's generals and became a Field Marshal. He bred Wellington's charger here, called "Copenhagen" after the battle, finally buried in state at Stratfield Saye ... Copenhagen's statue, carrying that of the duke, stands at Hyde Park Corner, opposite Apsley House.

In addition to the Stone Ride, Morcary was intersected by a number of unmetalled rides. The clay ground was so sticky that in wet weather horses' hoofs would sink in a long way and to remedy this my father had some of the rides burnt, to make a reasonably hard surface.

For much of the time, herds of fallow deer, having escaped from the neighbouring parks at Grimsthorpe or Exton, would roam in Morcary, much to the annoyance of my father who said they ate his young trees. They did, however, sometimes provide one of the most beautiful sights I remember, when large numbers of them, thirty or forty perhaps, would leap over the Stone Ride, streaming one after another, forming a high arc from one side to the other. When suddenly appearing in the headlights of the car at night this mobile living arch was an extremely pretty sight ...

I remember on 14th October 1908, aged three years and eight months, a fox was killed in the park at Stocken and, mounted on Rachel, our donkey, I was blooded by Lord Lonsdale (the "Yellow Earl"), ⁷ at that time Master, who gave me the brush. My father insisted on us all keeping hunting diaries and this is the first entry in mine. I still remember the feel of wet blood on my cheek. I was told later that I sat up and said "Look, people, I like it"!

Another early memory of Stocken was the annual visit of ploughboys who came in on a winter evening, curiously garbed, and stood at the end of the drawing room and sang strange and ancient songs for our entertainment. One began "Good Master and good Misteress" and continued with blessings for all, including "all the little children, growing round the table"! ...

When we were children, I suppose the people we saw most were each other and our nurses, although we were on intimate terms with our parents, particularly my mother (we were a bit afraid of my

father sometimes), and we of course made friends with all the servants, both inside and outside the house, on the farm, stables, garden and everywhere else

I think the nurse we all remember and loved best was Bertha Jones, the daughter of a farmer in North Wales. She was delightful, kind and amusing. There were also always nursery-maids ... My mother's maid was Kitty Jones, dark, Welsh, extremely witty and perhaps slightly mischievous, but we loved her and she made us laugh. She occupied a long room on the top floor at Stocken, between the night nursery and the school room. It was really a sewing room, and Miss Strickland, a sempstress from Oakham who came for weeks at a time, used to work there with Kitty (who had originally, I believe, been a parlourmaid) ...

One winter's afternoon at Stocken when I was about six, I asked my father if I might go out for a walk by myself, to which he consented, no doubt thinking that I would only be out a short time. There was snow everywhere and I set forth. I thought it would be nice to walk over the fields to Clipsham, a village about two miles away, and come home by way of our own village of Stretton, making a triangular route of some five or six miles (I did not calculate the distance but knew the way well enough). When I was half way to Clipsham darkness fell, but it was a clear night, lightened by the white snow, so I went on.

I had no particular idea of the time, nor that I was doing anything wrong. I had completed the round, not at all fatigued, to within a quarter of a mile of home and was coming into the park when I saw advancing towards me a long line of lanterns and heard voices. I just wondered what was going on. It still did not occur to me that this was a search party sent out to look for me, the next step planned in the whole operation being to drag the ponds. When I was seen, one of the men came up to me and said in a tone of great solemnity, "You've broken your mother's heart." I was very surprised and could not understand why I had been the cause of such anxiety and commotion. I just thought I'd been for a walk, with official consent! I suppose I had been out for a couple of hours or so.

When I was escorted into the house my father would not see me and left next morning for Southport, where we were all to follow the day after, without doing so. But he had left instructions with my mother that she should beat me, a thing that neither of them had ever done to any of their children. Obediently, she went through the formalities. I bent over and with the guard-rail of a baby's high chair she painlessly tapped my bottom three times. Duty was done; honour satisfied.

It must have been about the same period of my life that I was again in disgrace; again at Stocken. One afternoon a game of hide-and-seek all over the

garden was arranged, but apparently more for the grown-ups than the children, and I was considered too young to take part.

On a terrace outside the billiard room was some kind of pit about six feet long and four wide, with steps down to somewhere underneath, and a hinged wooden lid which, when shut, formed part of the terrace and could be walked on. With nothing else to do I sat on a low wall close by, and presently the hiding party appeared round a corner. There were my father and two or three others and they decided to hide in the pit. As they gently lowered the lid

window corresponded with the one out of which I had emerged.

The only way to get downstairs was down a short flight of steps on to the very landing where the guardian nursery-maid sat posted outside the door of the night nursery, reading a book. So there was no question of escaping unobserved, but imagine her surprise at seeing me descend the few steps opposite to her when she believed me to be safely incarcerated behind her. I swiftly continued my escape down the next flight of steps and though my success may have been due to my own alacrity, I suspect that, seeing



Fig. 2. Exterior of Stocken Hall, photographed by Dalby of Stamford (Leicestershire Museums, Arts & Records Service).

before disappearing under it, they said to me in a stage whisper, "Don't tell them where we are!" In due course the search party came in sight. I rather resented being excluded from the game, so pointed to the pit and said, "They're in there." The lid immediately flew open and five angry heads appeared and I was immediately sentenced to bed for an indefinite period. A nursery maid was posted outside the door of the night nursery to make sure I did not escape.

However, determined not to be beaten, I made a plan. The room was lit at one end by a large three-light mullioned window, and at the side by a dormer window, high up above the dressing table, opening on to a wide gutter behind the parapet extending the length of the house. I climbed on to the dressing table and, from there, through the dormer window on to the lead gutter, walked along it and into one of the servants' bedrooms whose

the absurdity of the whole situation, she made no effort to capture me. I think reason must have returned to the grown-up company downstairs and I do not remember any further developments.

Among the employees at Stocken was a carpenter named Baker. His job was a responsible one, as not only did he have his joiner's shop but he also looked after the electricity supply. This was generated by a diesel engine in its own house at the farm, but the current was stored in an accumulator house near the stables. It supplied all the electric light in the house, the stables and the farm. It also provided the power necessary to blow the bellows of the organ which my parents had installed in the billiard room.

On the farm there was an entirely electrically operated dairy, probably very advanced for those Edwardian days. There was a herd of Lincoln Red cattle from whose milk the cream was extracted

every day by a revolving separator, then poured into large flanged earthenware vats on slate shelves round the walls, one for each day of the week. Finally it was made into butter in an electric churn. Mrs Cooper, the bailiff's wife,⁸ who looked like an elderly Dutch doll, was in charge. We called her "Mrs Noah". She had a bright red patch on each cheek and black hair parted in the middle, tightly brushed back. She also used to make delicious cream cheese of a softness that one never seems to get in modern cream cheese.

Since the electricity was entirely home made, my father was always afraid of too heavy a strain being made upon it. Consequently he insisted that no light should be left on unless actually in use, with the result that at night a great deal of the house was in darkness which was not very convenient and, if you were afraid of ghosts, rather frightening. And Stocken was known to be haunted.

The penalty for leaving a light on was one penny. As each of us received an allowance of only sixpence a week this meant groping our way along dark passages to get from one room to another.

Among our neighbours in Rutland were the Grettons, who lived ... at a splendid house called Stapleford - I remember going to children's parties there, as well as staying there much later. The family consisted of Colonel and Mrs Gretton, their son Johnny and daughters Kathleen and Molly. At one children's party some rough boy hit me on the head (accidentally I am sure) with his elbow and I cried in pain. At another, the first cinematograph film I had ever seen was shown. It was extremely funny, and showed a bicycle proceeding on its own, with no rider, through all kinds of vicissitudes, including crossing a ford. I cannot imagine how it was done, but it was very funny

When my grandfather died at Algeciras in 1911, my grandmother and Aunt Daisy Brocklebank came to live at Allexton, near Uppingham and therefore within reach of Stocken.⁹ Daisy was a remarkable horsewoman and very successful four-in-hand driver, having been taught by Edwin Howlett in



Fig. 3. The Marchioness of Exeter (left) and Mrs Fleetwood-Hesketh, as depicted on the frontispiece of Country Life on 22 November 1913 (photographed by H Barrett).

Paris in the 1890's ...

On 22nd November 1913, the frontispiece of *Country Life* was a photograph of Lady Exeter and my mother, both mounted, at a meet of Lord Exeter's hounds at Burghley (fig.3). On 1st December I came home from hunting on Cocky about three in the afternoon and as I rode into the park towards the house I noticed that all the blinds were down. I supposed this was to exclude the bright sunlight, but on meeting my father learnt the sad explanation that our dearly loved grandmother had died in London that day. On his instructions I conveyed the news to Cuthbert, but as he was only two and a half I don't know to what extent he took it in.

I believe that both my parents had always, as children, unlike in some families, been on very close terms with their parents. I never knew my father's, as they had died long before I was born, but my mother's I remember well, particularly her mother, a "grand lady" of the old school with the kindest of hearts and a keen sense of humour, highly intellectual but with no trace of pretentiousness, and a very competent amateur pianist. At Allexton she had a Lanchester landaulette - snub-nosed, like our own -



Fig. 4. The dining room at Stocken Hall (National Monuments Record)

and in this dark blue vehicle she sometimes came the fifteen odd miles to visit us at Stocken, driven by her chauffeur whose name, appropriately enough, was Highway!

On one of her visits my father - a demon for punctuality, though not lacking in humour - punished me for being late for lunch by making me learn the words of an unusually gloomy hymn - No. 84, the first of the *A & M* Lenten hymns, whose words are as follows:-

Once more the solemn season calls
A holy fast to keep;
And now within the temple walls
Let priest and people weep.

But vain all outward sign of grief,
And vain the form of prayer,
Unless the heart implore relief
And penitence be there.

We smite the breast, we weep in vain,
In vain in ashes mourn,
Unless with penitential pain
The smitten soul be torn ...

I cannot have been more than eight at the time, and Grannie kindly spent most of the afternoon with me helping me to learn this dour saying lesson. (I can't remember whether I had to learn the whole thing, probably not.)

About three weeks later she was coming over to lunch again. When, on the stroke of one o'clock, she had not yet arrived, my father, notwithstanding her age and dignity, and that he was her son-in-law, rudely insisted that we should all go into the dining room (fig.4) and begin lunch. After a few minutes the door opened and her white-haired, lace and silk clad figure swept gracefully into the room, reciting the words of Hymn No. 84, thus getting her punishment in before anything more could be said. I think my father appreciated the joke. Indeed, I think she was one of the few women for whom he had much respect ...

Every Sunday we all walked to Stretton church, a mile and a half each way, there and back, for the 11 am service. (Later we went on our bicycles; and much later, when grown up, by car.) My mother played the hand-blown organ. My father read the lessons. Campbell, the head gardener, and his wife, sat in a pew to our left. (I remember the steam coming out of Mrs Campbell's mouth as she sang when the church was cold.) The Thraves's, who had one of the farms, sat on our right facing inwards.¹⁰ In front, also facing inwards, sat the choir. The boys used to make faces at me to make me laugh. Once they succeeded, whereupon my father pulled my hair hard, so that my involuntary mirth was immediately replaced by involuntary tears.

Our pew was immediately below the pulpit, and if the sermon reached a length of ten minutes, which my father considered quite long enough, he would

ostentatiously pull out his gold watch and place it prominently on the book rest in front of him, plainly visible to the preacher. ¹¹

Every Thursday afternoon Lucy, Roger and I were taken in the Lanchester by Grundy to Burghley, just beyond Stamford - a distance of 8 or 9 miles - for the dancing class. This took place in the great Tudor hall, where a very proud lady called Miss Stewart came down from London each week to teach the "*jeunesse dorée*" of the neighbourhood the waltz, polka, lancers, and the wielding of Indian clubs, which could be quite dangerous. If you let go one of your clubs while swinging it, you were lucky if it did nothing worse than slide across the polished floor to the other side of the room.

Miss Stewart always brought with her an assistant called Phoebe. I think this was a "title of office" because the assistant was not always the same person, but was always called "Phoebe". Sometimes when she called out sharply for Phoebe, I mistakenly thought she called "Peter", so advanced from wherever I was, only to be humiliated by my foolishness. Our dancing was done to the accompaniment of a loud and twangy upright piano, played by Miss Denning, whose father owned a music shop in Stamford ...

One of my particular friends in those days was David Burghley, ¹² the eldest son of the house, almost exactly my age (his parents were great friends of my parents). When we misbehaved during the dancing class Miss Stewart would turn us out of the room, which of course delighted us as we could then enjoy ourselves much more, with the freedom of the rest of the house to play in. His sister Winifred has also always been one of my favourite friends.

A nursery maid usually came with us to the dancing class, but on one occasion we went unattended, save for Grundy, the chauffeur, whose normal speed, no doubt on my father's instructions, was 30 m.p.h. So we challenged him on the North Road (A1) to drive the Lanchester as fast as it would go and it reached 45 m.p.h. Whether this was really its maximum speed I do not know.

In 1911 my father and Lord Exeter went off to Canada together, where the latter bought a large tract of land in British Columbia, and my father a small plot in Kamloops. My mother took us to see them off from Liverpool in the ship *Laurentic* of the White Star Line. As we were waving on the landing stage - they, high up on the deck and we far below - the ship's siren suddenly gave a shattering blast, upon which I burst into tears. Aged six, I was utterly taken by surprise. When he returned from Canada, my father said he had been much moved by the fact that I was the only one of the party who cried at his departure!...

It was fashionable in those days to have a yacht, large enough to accommodate family and crew. My

father's at that time was a sailing-yacht, a yawl named *Elfreda*, of 130 tons. Unlike most sailing yachts then, she had no auxiliary engine and depended entirely on the wind. If we got becalmed, a flag signal had to be sent up to ask some steam-propelled boat to tow us into harbour. I don't remember this happening very often. *Elfreda* must have had a considerable amount of accommodation, enough to take the entire family - the nursery was in the middle, lit by a skylight and with a bath sunk in the floor - my father's valet, my mother's maid, a captain and a crew of fourteen. Various small boats hung on davits round the deck, including a dinghy, a cutter and a motor launch ...

Elfreda's huge sails were hoisted up and down by the sailors, half a dozen or more holding a rope under the supervision of a senior member of the crew, rhythmically co-ordinating each tug of the rope, calling what sounded like "Wertriop, Wertripull ..." which I suppose meant "One, two, three, UP; one two three PULL ..." etc. The anchor was raised and lowered by means of a windlass, whose radiating arms were pushed round by the sailors. My father belonged to the Royal Yacht Squadron at Cowes and we sometimes started our coastal cruises there, but more often on the west coast of Scotland. I was a bad sailor and was only really happy when we were at anchor in a harbour. There one became familiar with the sight of other yachts belonging to relations, friends or others ...

In the summer of 1914, my father took Lucy, Roger and me on a cruise to the Norwegian fjords. The ship was *Arcadia*, of the Royal Mail Steam Packet Company. My mother stayed at home with the three younger children, Cuthbert, Joan and Elizabeth, then only about six weeks old. Lucy and I were both very sick on the boat crossing the North Sea. I think we landed at some place and rode ponies.

Then the news came by wireless that war had been declared with Germany. The captain did something which must now seem rather extraordinary. He called together all the passengers in the big dining saloon and asked them to vote - those who wished to continue the cruise, and those who wished to return to England. Lucy, Roger and I obviously wanted to go on with the cruise, but my father was desperately in favour of going home as quickly as possible. When it came to voting with a show of hands he not only insisted on our supporting him in voting to go home (much against our wishes!) but made us stand on the table to make sure our uplifted arms were seen by those counting the votes.

Anyway, the result was a majority in favour of abandoning the cruise and going home. Meanwhile my father had sent cables home to agents at Stocken and Southport, with instructions to take all kinds of drastic measures, which I believe they wisely did not entirely carry out.

We were told that by returning so promptly we had forestalled German mine-laying in the north Sea, only to be told later that the mines had already been laid and we had been lucky not to hit one! Rounding the north of Scotland in the night we passed an enormous liner, all lit up, going in the opposite direction. It turned out to be the *Kaiser Wilhelm der Grosse*, racing to its home port, as we were to ours ...

During 1917 and 1918 we saw a good deal of the Londonderry family.¹³ There were several reasons for this. They had a small Victorian house,



Fig. 5. Sylvia "Daisy" Brocklebank, Commandant, Agricultural Section, Women's Legion (from War Service Legion and Women's Legion 1915-18).

a sort of hunting box, called Springfield, near Oakham, and Lady Londonderry, very much helped by my aunt Daisy Brocklebank, who also lived in Rutland, started a wartime organisation called the Women's Legion as well as something called the Women's Land Army (fig.5). In this connection, my Uncle George Westinghouse sent over from America as a gift the first farm tractor ever used in this country.¹⁴ In the Second World War he presented the British with a Spitfire. Lastly through this connection and partly because Roger was in the same house at Eton and a great friend of Robin Castlereagh, Robin and his sister Maureen became friends of Lucy, Roger and myself. They used to come over to Stocken and we paid return visits to Springfield.

Maureen was very keen on amateur theatricals and made us all take part in various plays in Oakham, no doubt to raise money for some good cause. One of the plays was called "Browne with an 'E' ". In another, the meat had failed to arrive so the French chef had to resort to killing the cat

(called "Mimi") in order to provide dinner for the guests. This was my part and I remember my opening lines, spoken with a simulated French accent - "Hélas, poor Mimi! It grieves me, it desolates me, to shorten your days." I was then twelve. Roger's part was taken away from him at the last minute, I know not why, and given to a young woman called Lexy Wilson. By that time the programmes had already been printed, with Roger's name on. Lest anyone might think that the boisterous female figure striding about the stage in female attire was him, Roger insisted that before each performance the change of cast should be announced from the stage.

Once when we were staying at Springfield Lady Londonderry's father, old Lord Chaplin, was also staying there, a charming relic of the Victorian age, then nearly eighty and a bit absent-minded. One evening he came down to dinner with all his fly-buttons undone. Next morning before breakfast he went to the front door and exclaimed "Nice balmy morning!" "You're balmy," was Robin's disrespectful reply.

During the summer holidays I was, as usual made to have a tutor. This time the tutor, Mr Newitt, came to stay, rather than me being sent away to stay with him as was previously the case - Dr Turner at Castle Bytham, Brown at Bexhill and Brutton at Aylesbeare Vicarage in Devon. So as not to waste the tutor, Roger and Robin had to do lessons with him too. I am afraid we did not treat Mr Newitt with as much respect as we should. Robin always got top marks, Roger second and me a long way last.

These were the last holidays before my first half at Eton, where I joined Roger and Robin in Mr Lubbock's house, nicknamed by those not in it "the House of Lords", because of its high proportion of boys of noble rank and a few of royal birth. To balance things out, however, there were several brewers' sons as well as those of bankers ...

At the end of the 1914-18 war the organist at Melton was the very young Malcolm Sargent, whose parents lived in Stamford.¹⁵ He used to give piano lessons in the neighbourhood and among his pupils was my eldest sister Lucy. We all enjoyed his visits to Stocken, not only because of the music, but because he was most amusing. He organized an orchestra of amateur players who practised and gave concerts in Stamford. His leading violinist was my mother, and he used later to tell us that, when playing with music, each time she reached the bottom of a page she would lay her Strad on her knees, turn over the page and then resume. This he found very trying to his patience and that of the other players, but he did not dare remonstrate in case she left the orchestra, and since she was by far the best player he could not afford to risk losing her. In due course he became famous but always remained our faithful friend for the rest of his life.

Postscript

Peter Fleetwood-Hesketh's *Recollections* end abruptly at this point with the simple words: "The sad time." His later distinguished career included following his father into the Duke of Lancaster's Regiment of Yeomanry, and the publication of *Murray's Lancashire Architectural Guide* in 1955. Following his death in 1985, the handwritten pages remained at the Fleetwood-Hesketh family home in Lancashire, and photocopies were kindly made available to me in 1989 by the author's nephew when I was researching the history of Stretton and Stocken. I would like to thank Mr Robert Hesketh and the author's daughter, Miss E Fleetwood-Hesketh, for their kind permission and assistance in allowing the publication of these memoirs, and Mrs M Plunkett for photocopying the manuscript.

Thanks are also due to Mr P Dales of Rutland District Council for his help in providing detailed information about Stocken Hall, and Mr George Goodwin, a former employee of Major Hesketh,

for his reminiscences. Life for both family and employees on the Stocken Hall estate is recalled in the memory of a few survivors, and in these vivid *Recollections*, which provide a fascinating insight into a lost golden age in this privileged corner of Rutland.

The house itself now stands newly restored, an evocative mix of building periods and styles, once described by Pevsner as the best of Rutland's eighteenth century houses.¹⁶ The imposing Baroque south front of 1720-30 offers a conspicuous contrast to the Victorian Dutch gables of the south-east corner and east side, and the remaining seventeenth century north front and gables. The future of Stocken Hall is at this stage still uncertain, despite many detailed proposals. We may all hope that, having been saved from the annihilating fate of Sir Gilbert Heathcote's Normanton Park, which was demolished in 1925, Stocken Hall is on the threshold of a new phase in its chequered history, as a distinguished home or workplace for future Rutlanders.

Notes and References

1. *Rutland and Stamford Mercury*, Friday 27 September 1991, page 5.
2. *Who Was Who 1941-50*.
3. The early 17th century house had been enlarged in 1877 and let to Lord and Lady Francis Cecil. After his death in 1889, she married in 1892 Capt (later Admiral) Philip Tillard, and lived at Stocken Hall until 1907 (*Victoria County History, Rutland*, II (1935) 145).
4. Reuben Panter had succeeded William Panter as head gardener to Lady Cecil in about 1890, and from 1910 to 1914 also served as groom (Kelly's *Directory of Leicestershire & Rutland* (1888); Matkin's *Oakham Almanack* (1892 onwards)). See also n.10.
5. In Matkin's *Oakham Almanack* James Grundy appears as chauffeur from 1910-15; no joiners are mentioned; the head keeper was successively T Knight (1908-09), Donald Mackenzie (1910), - Smith (1911-14), and Charles Dorling (1915 onwards); the bailiffs were J Elder (1910), G Baker (1911-12), H Merry (1913-14), and - Cooper (1915 onwards); the agents, or secretaries, were J Mellor (1910-13), C W Brighton (1914), and H V O Ritchie (1915 onwards).
6. This obelisk survives, but with its inscription now barely legible. The name of Lowther in line 2 has at one time been deliberately obliterated.
7. Hugh Cecil Lowther, 5th Earl of Lonsdale (1857-1944). See *Who was Who in Rutland: Rutland Record* 8 (1988) 281, and Shephard Krech III, The Fifth Earl of Lonsdale in the Arctic 1888-9, *Rutland Record* 11 (1991) 25-38.
8. A bailiff named Cooper appears in 1915 (see n. 5).
9. Peter Fleetwood-Hesketh's maternal grandfather was Sir Thomas Brocklebank, 2nd Baronet (1848-1911). His widow, Lady Agnes Brocklebank, moved from Irton, Cumbria, to Allexton Hall with her daughter Agnes Sylvia, known to the family as "Daisy", for whom see *Who was Who in Rutland, Rutland Record* 8 (1988) 262-3.
10. John Allan Campbell is listed in Kelly's *Directory of Leicestershire & Rutland* (1908) under Stretton as "head gardener" (but this position was occupied by Reuben Panter, see n.4), and in Matkin's *Oakham Almanack* from 1910 to 1917 as "J Campbell, forester". Joseph Thraves was tenant of Manor Farm, Stretton. His son, William Thraves, was one of the young men of Stretton killed in the Great War (see G Phillips, *Rutland and the Great War* (Salford 1920) 158).
11. The rectors were the Rev H R Fleming (1909-10), the Rev S R Barnes (1913-14), and the Rev W H Barry (1915 onwards)(Matkin's *Oakham Almanacks*).
12. David, 6th Marquess of Exeter, 1905-81, winner of the 400 metres hurdle gold medal at the 1928 Olympics.
13. See Anne de Courcy, *Circe, The Life of Edith, Marchioness of Londonderry* (London, Sinclair-Stevenson, 1992). Edith Helen Chaplin was the elder daughter of Henry Chaplin (created 1st Viscount Chaplin in 1916), and was married to Charles Castlereagh, 7th Marquess of Londonderry. She became founder, President and Director of the Women's Legion, and was made DBE in 1917. Like Stocken Hall, Springfield lies empty and shut up today.
14. The American George Westinghouse was married to Violet, twin sister of "Daisy" Brocklebank. He sent donations totalling over £7000 which were used in the purchase of tractors. The statement that these were the first farm tractors in England is erroneous, but tractors of American origin were perhaps first used in Rutland in 1916 "under the management of the commandant [of the Agricultural Section Committee], Miss Brocklebank." See *War Service Legion and Women's Legion 1915-18*, 48, 54-6, and G Phillips, *Rutland and the Great War*, 205-11, which has some of the same plates. See also above, p.216, fig.9.
15. Later, of course, Sir Malcolm Sargent of Promenade Concert fame.
16. Niklaus Pevsner, *The Buildings of England: Leicestershire and Rutland* (1st edn, Harmondsworth 1960) 282.

LEICESTERSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL UNIT

St Andrew's Church, Hambleton (SK 899075)

On 7 December 1992, the Unit conducted an evaluation here prior to proposed drainage works. Two small test pits were hand dug, but no archaeological strata were confirmed, although a stone spread in one pit could represent early structural remains. As this was 0.4 m below present ground level, they were not threatened by the proposed drainage improvements.

Oakham, Bull Lane (SK 863088)

In January 1993, the Unit conducted an evaluation on the N side of Bull Lane in advance of development. It was directed by the author and funded by J S Clark & Co. The area lay within the historic core of Oakham and was shown as inhabited on Speed's 1610 and Cullingworth's 1787 maps of the town. Five trenches 2 m square were excavated on the sites of the proposed new dwellings at a distance of more than 10 m from the street frontage. Two pits were found containing respectively medieval and post-medieval pottery and probably represent backyard activity away from the street frontage. This work was followed by a watching brief in June and July 1993 during site levelling and the cutting of new foundation trenches. In addition to the retrieval of more medieval material, pits and trenches containing late 17th and early 18th century pottery and clay pipes dating from about 1610 to 1750 were also found. Most of this archaeological evidence was found by Mr Gary Till, an amateur archaeologist employed on the site. This is the first excavated evidence of medieval activity in this area of the town. (Leicestershire Museums A5.1993).

Oakham, 11 Market Place (SK 86210881)

There was an evaluation of a small development to the rear of this property in May 1993. Any potential archaeological information had been destroyed by 19th century development. The evaluation was financed by Mr Kim Ng. (Leicestershire Museums A157.1993).

Whitwell (SK 92600821)

In April 1993, the Unit carried out an excavation on works associated with an extension to the Whitwell Day Sailing Centre, on the N shore of Rutland Water. Although there was no structural evidence, a spread of Romano-British pottery, slag and flint may indicate additional settlement activity in the vicinity of a Romano-British farmstead excavated by Malcolm Todd in 1976 (Todd 1981). The work was funded by MGL Peterborough. (Leicestershire Museums A149.1993).

Reference:

Todd, M. *The Iron Age and Roman Settlement at Whitwell, Leicestershire* (Leicestershire Museums, Art Galleries & Records Service 1981).

Elaine Jones

LEICESTERSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL & HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Oakham, Ashwell Road (SK 864095)

On behalf of the Society, Alan McWhirr and David Smith recorded the main elements of a 19th century brickyard before they were demolished. Detailed measurements of the kiln were made, which was of an updraught intermittent type, known as a Scotch kiln.

LEICESTERSHIRE RECORD OFFICE

The new Leicestershire Record Office opened to the public on 8 February 1993, followed by the official opening by HRH the Duke of Gloucester on 13 May. We expected increased demand, but were taken aback by the scale of it, with over 15,000 visits in the first full year (February 1993 - January 1994). Life in the search room was hectic, especially in the first months, and our new arrangements were fiercely tested. At the same time other demands on our services also increased. The number of enquiries increased and the demand for copies continued its inexorable rise. Sales of publications increased by over 400%. The number of accessions rose significantly, and the demand for talks and visits reached unprecedented levels, as everyone, it seemed, wished to see the new Record Office. With so many changes to become accustomed to, under such pressure of demand, it is a tribute to the staff that the public response to the new Record Office has been so overwhelmingly positive.

The weight of demand delayed but did not prevent progress on other fronts. By the end of the year, work on the final re-ordering of the strongrooms was progressing steadily, and further developments of the computerised location index had been introduced or were under consideration. A thorough review of searchroom arrangements had produced a number of practical improvements, and a full customer survey had provided our first detailed profile of our users, and revealed high levels of satisfaction with the office's services and facilities. Other signs of normal Record Office life had also returned strongly. A satisfactory number of parochial records surveys were completed. The Genealogical Research Service had a successful year. A significant amount of conservation work had been done, and a comprehensive survey of the archive collections' conservation requirements was in preparation. There was still a considerable amount of work to be done in reorganising the Leicestershire Collection, but the benefits of bringing together the archives and the local studies collection were already very clear.

Users of the searchrooms have benefitted from a much more comprehensive range of electoral registers and trades/telephone directories on open access and from

the better arrangement of the parish transcripts which are now in classified order. The library of books on the open shelves has been carefully selected to include all the standard texts and important county works and is steadily being added to as new titles appear or in response to requests from staff and searchers for old favourites. The availability of Leicester and county newspapers on microfilm has added a new dimension to the research facilities of the Office, and has proved extremely popular with searchers throughout the year.

The number of archive accessions received rose again this year to an unprecedented level just in excess of 250. Some of the deposits were no doubt collections held back while the Record Office was closed to the public, but it is equally likely that many came in because of the publicity generated by the office's re-opening in a new location. This is reflected generally by the increased number of small, miscellaneous collections which were brought in alongside the usual deposits of local government, church and business records.

Despite some minor obstacles created by the removal, cataloguing work on the Exton MSS continued steadily. By the end of the year, around 550 boxes had been completed, but since the total number of boxes, including further material newly transferred from Exton, was now approaching 700, the end was not yet in sight. Further funding for the work was provided from the Museums, Arts & Records Service's resources to supplement the Leverhulme Trust grant. It is anticipated that the cataloguing work will be completed with the funding remaining in 1994. However, since the formidable task of rearranging and renumbering this enormous collection will remain after the cataloguing is completed, it is likely to be well into 1995 before it can be made available to researchers.

Having achieved all this, it was deeply ironic to have to contemplate the possibility of the Record Office being "disaggregated" as a result of local government review. Quite apart from the difficulty, disruption and cost involved it was impossible to imagine how anything other than a significantly poorer service could result.

Accessions received in 1993:

- DE 4425 Rutland County Council records; rents of teachers' houses, awards of grants, specimen forms and civil registration papers, 1920s-1974
- DE 4187 Barrowden School log book, 1871-1916
- DE 4331 Records of the Leicestershire and Rutland (Insurance) Executive Committee, 1947-1974
- DE 4308 Aerial photographs of Leicestershire and Rutland taken for the Ordnance Survey 1960-1975
- DE 4316 Sketch plans of ?Oakham Church and genealogical notes on William Peachie, vicar, c1643
- DE 4360 Photographs of oil-paintings by W Boddington of Edith Weston, 1960s
- DE 4436 Burley-on-the-Hill - print from an architectural text book, 1894

Select list of other sources:

- Cant, G. *Cant family history: descendants of the Uppingham Cants* (1991)
- Rutland Marriage Index, 1754-1837*, parts 5 and 6 (1993)
- Uppingham Gazette, 1869-1870* (microfilm)
- Waites, B. *Oakham Heritage Trail* (1993)
- Carl Harrison, County Archivist*

LINCOLNSHIRE ARCHIVES

During 1993-94, reader visits to the Search Room rose by 88 to 8828. The number of individual readers grew by 10%. Income from admission charges and the sale of publications has enabled us to purchase the National Probate Index 1858-1935 on microfiche.

Lincolnshire Archives has continued to take part in many special events throughout the county, including Heritage Roadshows and the Lincolnshire Show. A photographic exhibition of the Brownlow Collection has been touring museums, libraries and historic houses. A series of talks entitled "Spring into Family History" was given by staff genealogist Lynda Rippin on Saturday mornings; they attracted such an enthusiastic response that another series of talks is planned for the autumn.

The first phase of sorting and listing the Brownlow Collection has now been completed. Archivists are currently selecting items such as estate records and household accounts for detailed cataloguing. The final list should be published in 1995, when the records will become available in the Search Room.

An exciting new project with Sleaford Library was launched in July. The library has purchased microfilm copies of parish registers for the Sleaford area, and has installed our computer index so that library visitors can search by name and place to find out what sources are available at Lincolnshire Archives, and order copies of the documents or plan a visit as appropriate. We hope that other libraries will be encouraged by the initiative taken by Sleaford Library.

We have received no new accessions of documents relating directly to the Rutland area, but the following may be of interest: Engineering plans from Mirrlees Blackstone of Stamford, 1930s-1980s (ref MIRR, at present unlisted and unavailable, but not including agricultural implements); and plans of Blackstone & Co, Stamford, and Stamford Girls High School (ref AN (addnl), unlisted, but could be made available upon written request in advance of visit).

The opening hours of the Search Room are now: Monday 1.30-7.15 pm, Tuesday-Friday 9.00 am - 5.00 pm; Saturday 9.00 am - 4.00 pm. The daily admission charge has increased to £1.20. Annual membership, including free admission to the Search Room, a free quarterly newsletter and 10% discount on publications, costs £30. Our newsletter is available to non-members for £2 per annum.

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE RECORD OFFICE

The last year has seen life in the Record Office bedeviled by unforeseen problems, which even halted the consolidation of processes consequent on the move to our new premises. Long term illness of two members of staff meant that duties had to be re-organised as the number of users of the Record Office's services continued to grow.

In addition, there had to be a further re-orientation of staff to deal with pressures on our records management

function. These were due to the removal of County Council staff to new premises. As with most such events, nothing is as straightforward as it might seem: departments sometimes split three ways and record systems had to be established to enable information to be equally available to all. About 900 people and all their equipment and files were moved, some people moving twice, in three months.

The number of accessions to the Record Office has also continued to increase since our move. Several very large collections, for example that of Northampton General Hospital, including minute books from 1743, have been received. The collection, however, which might prove of most interest to the inhabitants of Rutland is that of Berry Brothers and Bagshaw, since it includes that county.

We were very excited by this deposit of valuation notebooks, the so-called "white books". There are about 600 of them, dated from 1898 to 1980; and they relate to valuations for tenant right (tenancy transfers), sales, contents valuations, compensations for damages by fire, &c., stock taking and dilapidations, and probate valuations. The information obviously varies with the type of valuation, but generally the entries are comprehensive even if the notes are difficult to follow in some places. Inventories are detailed, room by room. There are indexes to the properties covered at the front of each book.

A new venture has been the advent of all the parish registers on microfiche. This project has also required intensive and prolonged efforts on the part of members of staff as we strove to ensure that all the film copies were completely accurate. Obviously this was an essential part of the process both for the archival preservation programme and for success in the eyes of the public. Preservation extends to the ease with which we can now print out copies of the registers, although we have also discovered a market in the fiches themselves.

For further information about the Record Office, or if you have any questions, please write to Rachel Watson, County Archivist, Northamptonshire Record Office, Wootton Hall Park, Northampton, NN4 8BQ. A full report of the work of the Northamptonshire Record Office, April 1993 to March 1994, with a list of accessions, will be published at Christmas.

RUTLAND COUNTY MUSEUM

As forecast in the last issue, attention has been focused on the development of No 2 Catmos Street, adjoining the museum, with the aim of opening the new facilities in the spring of 1995. This has also involved research on a number of documents in the Exton MSS, the results of which are published elsewhere in this issue.

The numbers of researchers visiting the museum, including people from North America and the Antipodes, continue to increase. Most enquiries are about family history matters; of these, some are relatively (!) simple, while others are intensive and often very fruitful. The museum's set of Rutland parish register microfiches has been greatly used, as have the reference files of town and

village photographs. School and GCSE or A level projects have also generated enquiries. About 130 study visits were recorded in 1993, and many other brief enquiries were also dealt with.

Amongst the additions to the museum's collections enumerated below, attention is drawn in particular to the large collection of agricultural ephemera, H14.1993, which comprises in the main manufacturers' advertising material and instructions for equipment and products. This has provided the museum with a very significant range of supporting documentation for its major collection of farm implements, and has already been drawn on for display purposes.

Also worthy of note are the George III tankard won by R W Baker for 10 acres of Swedish turnips in 1858 and, more intriguingly, the salver which he won for a short-horn ox at the Oakham Show in 1831. This, it transpires, was the first prize to be awarded at the first Rutland Agricultural Society's Oakham cattle market. It became the subject of a dispute when it was withdrawn from Francis Needham of Wyomondham, when it emerged that he had not possessed his animal for long enough, and was given instead to Baker (Clough 1982, 74-5).

The museum is indebted to the Museums & Galleries Commission/Victoria & Albert Museum Purchase Fund for a grant towards the purchase of R W Baker's silver tankard, and to Mrs B Walters of Alberta and her family for donations in memory of her parents Frank and Bessie Grant, once of Rutland, which facilitated the purchase of the agricultural catalogues and of Baker's salver.

Reference:

Clough, T. H. McK., The Formation of the Rutland Agricultural Society, *Rutland Record* 2 (1981) 70-77.

Selected acquisitions:

- H57.1992 *Correction:* the date of these items, listed in *Rutland Record* 14, is 1841, not 1941
- H7.1993 Lists of subscribers to James Welch and to Isaac Memorial Fund, Cottesmore Hounds
- H9.1993 *International News* no 16, 1968, illustrating Oakham and Uppingham branches of International Stores
- H14.1993 Collection of agricultural equipment manufacturers' catalogues &c
- H18.1993 Railway handbill, cheap tickets to Oakham for Show day 1953
- H23.1993 Silver tankard and silver salver awarded to R W Baker in 1831
- H24.1993.3 Report of Inquiry into amalgamation of Leicestershire and Rutland police forces, 1950
- H26.1993 Christmas song book used for Christmas Singing at Whissendine (see below, p.242)
- H40.1993 Five property and agricultural sale catalogues, Manton, Morcott and Oakham, 1940s
- H44.1993 Drawing of Wing church and rectory, ?by Alicia Wilkins, 1830s/1840s
- H51.1993 Postcard: Maj Gen Lord Ranksborough taking the salute, Oakham, 1914
- N1.1994 DCM, MM and First World War campaign medals awarded to Amos William Hibbitt
- H2.1994 Certificate of Baptism, 1881, and apprenticeship indenture, 1897, of G Hetterley

T H McK Clough, Keeper

RUTLAND HISTORIC CHURCHES PRESERVATION TRUST

The Fourth Sponsored Cycle Ride was held in superb summery weather on 11 September 1993. Over 250 cyclists and walkers enjoyed a splendid day out around Rutland's 72 churches and chapels - all open and manned by friendly welcoming people. The number of churches visited on the day rose from 58 to 63. £15,137 was raised by sponsorship, with half being returned immediately to the sponsored churches, a remarkably good increase of £1,144 compared with the 1991 Ride.

Grants totalling £13,000 and a loan of £2,000 were paid to six Rutland Churches during 1993/94, as work was completed. Five parish churches and two Methodist chapels applied for help with urgent repairs early in 1994 and were promised a total of £22,750 in grants. In this way the Trust was able to give support to communities, often in small villages, who committed themselves to very considerable works in order to keep the fabric of Rutland's beautiful old churches in good order.

The largest undertaking recently has been at St Edmund's, Egleton, where restoration of the roof and stonework amounting to over £65,000 was carried out. Roofs were also re-slatted at St Andrew's, Hambleton, and a leak into the vestry at St Andrews, Lyddington, was rectified. Two 15th century windows in the chancel at St Peter's, Barrowden, were re-leaded, and work has continued with repairs to stonework and roof leading at All Saints', Oakham. Ashwell Methodist Chapel received structural repairs and woodworm treatment, and the roof of Ryhall Methodist Chapel was renewed. Work was put in hand on structural repairs at Ketton and Empingham Methodist Chapels; at St Mary's, South Luffenham, the tower is being repaired, and further roof renewal, stonework and glazing is planned at St Nicholas', Pilton. St Nicholas', Thistleton, has been promised help with a major roof repair, and a dangerous boundary wall has been renewed at St Mary's, Edith Weston.

Since its inception in 1954, the Trust has always considered it important to encourage work to be put in hand at an early stage, to prevent further deterioration and cost. Trustees are also aware that maintenance of ancient buildings is on-going and increasingly expensive, and hence that they need to keep as good a reserve as possible for the future. The Trust has been very grateful for donations from churches, individuals, organisations and Rutland District Council, and it is very much hoped that these will be maintained so that the Trust can continue to help preserve the lovely churches of Rutland.

Linda Worrall, Honorary Secretary

RUTLAND LOCAL HISTORY & RECORD SOCIETY

The accession of the Rutland Field Research Group for Archaeology and History to the Society was recognised by the alteration of the Constitution to record the Group as one of the three bodies from which the Society is

formed. The Group continues to operate under the leadership of Mrs Elaine Jones, with a separate sub-committee and representation on the Society's Executive Committee. Some very worthwhile results were achieved in the archaeological field, as reported below.

The appointment of the Local Government Commission to advise on county structures suggested an official recognition of the fact that the long-established counties are an important part of our country's heritage, and should be recognised as such where possible in local government administration. The future relationship of Rutland and Leicestershire is still the subject of hot debate. Our Society was invited to give verbal evidence to the commissioners when they came to Oakham in June 1993. A delegation representing the Society was appointed by the Executive Committee to do so and to follow this up with a written statement. The views expressed were well received by the Commissioners and were to the effect that the Society was in favour of Rutland resuming its status as a separate county and that in the event of this happening a Heritage Committee should be formed to administer such services as museums, libraries, archaeological services and custody of records in the area at present occupied by the county of Leicestershire.

The key post of Editor remains unfilled. While most of the work of editing the *Rutland Record* has fallen to Mr Tim Clough, the editorial sub-committee has been enlarged to spread the burden of other editorial work. An *Index* to the first ten *Rutland Record* issues compiled by Mr John Field has been sent out to all paid-up members. There was also an opportunity to have the first ten issues bound at very modest charge by Mr Trevor Hickman. Other publications in the course of preparation are the field books accompanying the 1787 Oakham map (an Occasional Publication), and a detailed study of the Burton family of Toilethorpe (Research Series).

The Buildings Sub-Committee continued to monitor planning applications and make the views of the Society known to the Rutland planning committee where appropriate. It has also obtained the first two of what should be a series of plaques to draw attention to notable figures in the history of Rutland. These have been placed on the original buildings at the two Archdeacon Johnson foundations of Oakham and Uppingham schools.

Dr Philip Lindley, of the Department of the History of Art at Leicester University, gave the Bryan Matthews lecture at the AGM in May, on "The Coming of the Renaissance to England." The summer coach trip took a party of our members to Southwell Minster, followed by a tour of the town guided by members of the Southwell Local History Society, and in the afternoon by a visit to Laxton museum and its open fields. Market Overton was the venue of this year's village visit.

The Society continues to be in a strong financial position and to welcome an encouraging number of new members.

John Crossley, Honorary Secretary

Archaeological Sub-Committee

During the year the Group was pleased to see an increase in members showing an interest in archaeology - especially the new volunteers who have joined our field activities. However with over 50 villages, of which more

than 30 are mentioned in Domesday and are therefore Saxon or earlier, there is a great need to build up teams of well trained "bare-foot" archaeologists in our region if information is to be retrieved before ploughing and development destroy the archaeology.

We were sad to lose two long-standing members of the Field Research Group, Dr Philippa Williams, who died in September 1993, and Gordon John Day - "Happy Day" to us. He joined the Group in about 1974, excavated at Nether Hambleton, and field walked at Wardley in advance of the A47 improvements, and at Burley Road in Oakham.

The "tradition" of the archaeologists' Christmas Dinner was enjoyed at the Sun Inn, Cottesmore, while the Summer Picnic was at Launde Abbey. The arrangements were made by Maureen Dodds.

Representatives attended the Leicestershire Archaeological Advisory Committee and the Council for British Archaeology (East Midlands). Sue Davidson and Jenny Naylor attended a training excavation at Drayton Roman villa in August 1993 run by Leicester University and the Leicestershire Archaeological Unit. Elaine Jones was sponsored by English Heritage on a two-day "Project Management in Archaeology" course at Bradford University for the Institute of Field Archaeologists in September 1993. Robert Golding organised and recorded the field walking survey of a field in Oakham parish as part of his A level archaeology project.

The Leicestershire Archaeological Unit pottery and flint specialists led a training session on the preliminary finds identification from our Oakham field survey.

This year's field activity results are:

Egleton (SK 8707)

Field walking in October 1993 produced pottery and prehistoric flint. Report forthcoming. (Leicestershire Museums A308.1993).

Empingham

The Paper Mill field shown on the Sterndale Bennet field name map of c1940 was walked in February 1994 by David Carlin, Clive and Elaine Jones at the request of David Tew. No evidence of a mill was seen.

Oakham, Crown Street (SK 861086)

An archaeological watching brief during development produced pot sherds dating from 11th to the 15th centuries. Any possible structural evidence had been destroyed by 19th century development but the pottery does indicate medieval activity in this area of the town. Most of the material was retrieved by Mr Gary Till, a lorry-driving archaeologist employed on the site. (Leicestershire Museums A127.1993).

Oakham, 49a High Street (SK 859088)

A watching brief in June 1994 on redevelopment produced evidence of two pits containing some early medieval calcite gritted pot fragments. (Leicestershire Museums A126.1994).

Oakham, Rutland Memorial Cottage Hospital extension and car park, Cold Overton Road (SK 85510895)

A watching brief was conducted in August 1993. No structural remains were seen but a few sherds of medieval pottery and one Roman pot sherd were collected. (Leicestershire Museums A321.1993).

Oakham, South Street (SK 85910869)

In January and February 1994 a salvage excavation and watching brief on a development south of Highfields produced part of a *Grubenhäus* or "pit-hut" with 5th/6th century Saxon pottery. A complex of pits and a trench containing early medieval, Saxo-Norman Stamford ware, and earlier pottery lay east-west across the site. A cess-pit with a Stamford ware cooking pot and organic deposits lay beneath an old stable block. Part of a very large ditch, which might possibly mark an early town boundary, was found parallel to South Street. Possible prehistoric pits in the bedrock were barren of finds and therefore judged to be natural features. Full report forthcoming. (Leicestershire Museums A10.1994).

Oakham Parish (SK 9709)

A Romano-British occupation site was found as a result of field walking in December and January 1994. Substantial surface deposits of brick and tile, over 600 sherds of pottery dating from the late 2nd to the early 4th century AD, and some painted wall plaster were found. Some coarse pottery, possibly Late Iron Age, and three sherds of Saxon pot were also collected along with prehistoric flints. Saxo-Norman, medieval and post-medieval pottery was also found. Although Roman material has previously been found in Oakham, this is the first hard evidence of Roman occupation in the parish. Full report forthcoming. (Leicestershire Museums A319.1993).

Oakham Parish (SK 8608)

Pottery, slag and prehistoric flint were found during field walking led by Robert Golding in November 1993. Report forthcoming. (Leicestershire Museums A318.1993).

Owston, Leicestershire (SK 77560798)

A bag of pottery received from Mr Gary Till and collected at Owston resulted in a salvage excavation and recording of a large pit cut during construction work. Saxon, Saxo-Norman and medieval pot fragments were recovered from the site. (Leicestershire Museums A282.1993).

Ridlington (SK 8201)

Field walking in March 1994 resulted in the discovery of a Romano-British iron smelting site on a hill overlooking the Eye Brook and the Rutland/Leicestershire boundary. Full report forthcoming. (Leicestershire Museums A47.1994).

Ridlington (SK 8301)

Field walking produced evidence of a second, more dispersed spread of iron slag associated with Roman pottery.

Whitwell, Old Rectory gardens (SK 92450875)

A watching brief on a development showed that this area was once part of the medieval village because a drain and limestone rubble deposit associated with 15th century pot sherds were found. (Leicestershire Museums A46.1994)

Whitwell excavations (SK 924086)

Sqn Ldr Adams, site director, reports:

Prior to the planned re-covering of the medieval building site, the opportunity has been taken to carry out several investigatory tasks. To ascertain what earlier construction may be evident, the surface of the paved passage at 22 m E of datum, consisting of worn upright stones, was lifted. At the northern end a skull (probably of a deer) was found buried just below the stone, layer resting on a collection of iron smelt lumps.

The significance of this is yet to be determined. Virtually no other artefacts were found to help date the passage. The large S-N cross drain at 25 m E was excavated but very few artefacts were found - the largest limestone cover slab, approximately 2 m in length, was too heavy to lift by hand. It could be a re-used primitive grave cover.

A further investigation has been commenced on the remains of the main south wall of the complex at a point 10 m E x 5 m N. This wall area has been rebuilt at least three times. The top layers of stone were presumably the remains of the latest temporary wall of a small building used by workers during the period of iron stone recovery and treatment (c17/18th century). The removal of the top two layers of stone shows that they were built partly on the northern edge of the remains of the second wall but mainly on the ironstone grit floor surface of

the adjoining room. Sectioning of the second wall and original levels is to be continued.

Acknowledgements

The RLH&RS would like to thank the developers and land-owners who have kindly permitted us access to record these archaeological sites. The Leicestershire Archaeological Unit specialists have given invaluable help in finds identifications. Finally I would like to thank the team of volunteers who have assisted in these projects, namely: Fred and Olive Adams, Vicky Brophy, David, Hazel and Rachel Carlin, Sue Davidson, Bax English, Robert Golding, Clive Jones, Jenny Mallett, Carolyn McLean, Jenny Naylor, Ann Newton and Eunice Rawlings.

Elaine Jones, Chairman, Archaeological Sub-Committee

Christmas Singing in Whissendine Recollected by EILEEN M DENNEY

In the late 1880s a group of members of the Whissendine Primitive Methodist Chapel decided to go Christmas Singing on Christmas Eve. I am not sure about the date, but it was before 1890 because in that year my grandparents, Edward Sharpe and Mary Ann Goodman, were married, and they went singing before they married.

So it was on Christmas Eve that this little band, with two strong lads carrying the harmonium, met outside Jubilee Villa - the last house of Stapleford Road. As the church clock struck midnight, so the melodious strains of *Christians, awake! Salute the Happy Morn* floated over the area. Another item was sung before moving on to the next stop, and eventually the whole village had had the chance of hearing the news of the Saviour's birth, finishing something around 4.00 am.

As soon as she was old enough my mother, Eveline Mary Higham, *née* Sharpe, was allowed to join in, and eventually took over the accompanying of the singing. She told me of how the group used to go to Ashwell in a wagonette in the early evening and sing round that village, getting back to Whissendine in time to start at midnight. This did not appear to have been a regular occurrence, as I do not remember it happening.

I was allowed to join in at the age of 13, and thoroughly enjoyed the experience. The one thing which sticks in my mind during the first year was Mrs Stanhope and Mrs Holmes meeting the group at the village green with buckets of steaming hot tea. These ladies would, I think, be some of the original members. Other names I can remember are the Rodgers, Curtis, Sharman, Knight, Hibbett and Sharp families, along with my own. There were no doubt others, whom I did not know or of whom my mother spoke, but I have forgotten. Several village folk used to join at the start but did not finish the course.

In the early 1930s we were invited to sing at Leesthorpe Hall - not on Christmas Eve but a few nights earlier. We boarded the local bus around 6.00 pm to Leesthorpe Turn and walked the mile or so to the Hall,

where villagers had been invited to listen to us. At the close we walked back to catch the bus at about 9.00 pm, with a worthy donation. Each Boxing Night, two men called at the houses in our village with collecting boxes for donations towards Leicester Royal Infirmary.

As the village grew, it was later when we finished, and it was usually about 6.00 am when I got home. In the mid 1930s, my mother handed over the accompanying of the singing to me. The book attached to this story [see note below] is one of the original books used by the group, and my mother guarded it with her life.

Naturally, we had requests. One was to sing *The Christmas Anthem* at the Vicarage Cottage (the Misses Horne), and several for *Little Hark*. This was *Hark! The Herald-Angels Sing* to the tune of *Children of Jerusalem*. Pleasant to listen to, and easy to sing.

It is over 50 years since I left Whissendine, my last Christmas Singing (it was never called Carol Singing) being 1937, so I cannot complete the story of the Whissendine Christmas Singers. I believe it continued after the second world war, but for how long I know not. Perhaps someone who reads this story will be able to add information on the closing years. It is part of the history of Whissendine which could easily be forgotten, if it has not already been forgotten.

There is doubtless much I have left out, forgotten over the years, except for personal anecdotes. My mother used to talk of one snowy Eve when she sat on the organ stool and it sank into the snow - as she pedalled, her knees were nearly up to her chin. She loved her Christmas Singing, and in 1991, the Christmas before she died, she told the residents of her home stories of this part of her life. She and I, like many others, were brought up to realise it was part of our life, and we enjoyed it.

Editorial note:

These reminiscences relate to the Christmas Song Book given by Mrs Denney to the Rutland County Museum, H26.1993.

Reviews

At Sea with the Scientifics : The Challenger Letters of Joseph Matkin. Edited by Philip F Rehbock, Honolulu, University of Hawaii Press, 1992, 415 pp, cloth. \$38.00. ISBN 0-8248-1424-X

One day, in the near future, a plaque should be placed on a very ordinary terrace house in Penn Street, Oakham - No 37, to be exact. Why should this be? After all, the house is only 100 years old, hardly long enough to acquire immortality. Yet, on closer examination of its history you will find that here lived a circumnavigator, a man who in 1872 left Portsmouth in *HMS Challenger* on a voyage of more than 68,000 nautical miles in a thousand days at sea, a voyage which crossed the Equator eight times and reached far south into Antarctic waters.

A team of scientists led by Professor Wyville Thomson was supported by a crew of 243 and amongst this crew was an Oakham man, Joseph Matkin (1853-1927). He was born in Uppingham, the second of four sons of Charles Matkin (1817-74). Charles had been a bookseller in Lincoln and married Sarah Craxford of Barrowden in 1851. By 1855 the family had moved to Oakham and set up their printing and stationery shop, which remained a successful business for well over 100 years and was managed by three generations of Matkins.

Joseph attended school in Oakham until 1865, when at the age of about 12 he was sent to school in Billesdon where he apparently boarded. In 1867 he entered the merchant marine service, sailed for Australia but returned in 1868. He was discharged but made another voyage to Melbourne where he worked in furniture and upholstery shops for one year, returning again to England in 1870.

Joseph entered the Royal Navy in 1870, by now a "veteran" of 16 years of age. He served on two ships, being ship's steward's boy on the *Audacious*. It was in this capacity that he transferred to *HMS Challenger* on 12 November 1872. The voyage of the *Challenger* was a pioneering expedition sponsored by the British Government and organised by the Royal Society and the University of Edinburgh. The aim was to chart circulation, depths, and content of the seas; to scour the oceans for marine life; to observe climatic phenomena and to investigate and collect physical, chemical, geological, botanical, and zoological data. Such was the magnitude of the voyage that 50 volumes of reports were eventually published. Second only to the voyage of the *Beagle*, the *Challenger* expedition laid the foundations for the modern science of oceanography.

Yet, despite all the documentation by scientists and officers, we should never have had a "lower deck" point of view if it had not been for Joseph Matkin. Probably for the first time, we have an example of an ordinary crewman writing a large collection of letters to his relatives during the whole three-and-a-half years of the voyage, which reflected his journal. In this he described scientific observations undertaken, events on board and commented at length on the peoples and the countries visited on the circumnavigation. He received correspondence from his relatives at various ports-of-call and he also received back copies of newspapers including the *Lincoln, Rutland & Stamford Mercury*.

His three journals were mailed home and apparently lost, but many of his letters were kept by the family and eventually Scripps Institution of Oceanography, University of California, San Diego, acquired a substantial collection of these in a letterbook donated by Matkin living in North America. Professor Rehbock started to analyse these in conjunction with some relatives and also with bodies such as the British Museum. After seven years' work we now have a fine edition of the letters, with selected illustrations, published, most appropriately, by the University of Hawaii Press - Hawaii was one of the ports-of-call made by the *Challenger*.

The book is dedicated to the descendants of Joseph Matkin and it is interesting to read of Professor Rehbock's visits to Rutland to seek out information - "Matkinizing" as he describes his journeys. It was by accident, however, that the then Rutland Record Society heard about these developments, and it is ironic that we natives knew nothing about the Matkin letters at all whilst this was a very well-known matter for discussion thousands of miles away on the edge of the Pacific. Once a glimmer of news reached the editor of the *Rutland Record* he was able to contact Professor Rehbock and persuade him to write an article outlining our famous Oakham citizen, which he did in such a masterly manner in *Rutland Record* 12 (1992). If the reader will consult this preview article, illustrations showing the family etc. can be found, also a very good selection from Matkin's letters. Oddly, this article is not listed in the Notes or Bibliography of *At Sea with the Scientifics*.

Matkin's style is clear, cogent and factual. He is a keen observer and gives a true and unbiased picture. Considering that he was only 22 years old when the voyage ended, he displays considerable maturity and writing skill. He has pithy remarks about places such as Lisbon - "dirty and ill-paved, it smells of beastly garlic, so do the people". Near Gibraltar he comments "The Spanish soldiers are worse than the Portuguese, they wear blue coats, green trousers and cocked hats, and look about as fierce as maggots ...". There is a description of a shark catch "about six feet in length. He was a long time dying, for after his tail was cut off, and his entrails (including 14 young ones) taken out of him he was as lively as ever ... the old gentleman (surely old woman?) is now being eaten for dinner in the mess".

Matkin had very good descriptions of famous places such as the entrance to Sydney Harbour, Japan, Hawaii and the Falklands. During the voyage, in 1874, he received news of his father's death and earlier he was most concerned about how his brother Will had somehow dishonoured himself and the family. However, there are relatively few references to family matters in his letters.

Professor Rehbock provides a very useful introduction which gives the necessary context and, within the text, which is arranged chronologically, there are appropriate comments elucidating the letters. Each section is prefaced by a quotation. There is a short conclusion which adumbrates Matkin's contribution and attempts to rationalise his type-casting as a middle-class Victorian living in the Age of Equipose. The Appendices consist of a valuable Chronology of the Life of Joseph Matkin; a Calendar of his letters; newspaper

extracts; a List of Books for *HMS Challenger*; an Abstract of the Voyage; and copious notes and an index.

In 1878 Matkin moved to London and was employed as a clerk in the Lower Division, Local Government Board, Whitehall until 1894. In 1880 he married Mary (Pollie) Swift of Oakham, and their first son, Charles, was born in 1881. In all, they had six sons. In March 1894, Joseph retired from the Civil Service and returned to Oakham to live at 37 Penn Street. In 1903 his mother died and about ten years later he appears to have separated from his wife and gone to live in London. He was struck by a motorcycle on 27th October 1927, and died of complications in St Pancras Hospital aged 73.

This is a fascinating book and serves to remind us that great things often emerge from the most unlikely connections. Who could believe that a modest English market town and a small terrace house could lead us to a major circumnavigation? Mysteries remain however. Why did Joseph go to sea at all? Why not stay in the family business with his elder brother? Why was his seafaring career so short? Why did he retire so early, at 41? Why, though connected with a printing firm, did he never print and publish his accounts? How did he come to separate from his wife after 33 years of marriage? Above all, how did he become so literate and how did he persevere for three-and-a-half years with his meticulous journals and letters? What was the motivation?

Bryan Waites

Rutland in Old Photographs. Compiled by Tim Clough. Alan Sutton Publishing Ltd in association with Leicestershire Museums, Arts & Records Service, 1993, 160 pp, paper, £7.99. ISBN 0-86299-528-0.

This is a lovely collection of fascinating photographs from yesterday in Rutland. Photography is the only known method by which man can freeze time; in the fraction of a second that the shutter creates the exposure, a unique moment in the history of mankind is captured, never to be, indeed impossible to be, repeated. Photography is the instrument that creates tomorrow's memories, and every family has many examples tucked away. What a joy it is that some come to light and are made available for the wider public to see.

Tim Clough is in a very good position at the Rutland County Museum to see many such photographs from the past and to assemble them into an anthology such as this, and it is my hope that this book will stimulate others to search in their own archives for such treasures that they are willing to share with the interested many.

People frequently bring old family portraits in for us to copy so that they can distribute them to their wider families, and more often than not we hear the regret that the subjects were not clearly identified. As we create our own memories in adding pictorially to our own histories, please do identify the people depicted. In a hundred years' time, your future will thank you for it.

This delightful book will, I am sure, find its way onto bookshelves in many homes, especially in Rutland where it will be looked at with interest, with nostalgia, and with perhaps a touch of regret for the passing of those simpler days. I congratulate the author on his vision in compiling such a book and commend it unreservedly.

Brian Nicholls

Rutland: A Portrait in Old Picture Postcards. Compiled by Andrew Jenkins. SB Publications, 1993, 98 pp, paper, £6.50. ISBN 1-85770-027-9.

When it comes to social history, the world has been enriched by the invention of the humble postcard. Photographically recorded at little cost, time has been encapsulated for generations to come. Immediate evidence is available of how people dressed when going about their daily lives. We can also see transport over the last 150 years or so, the advent of the automobile and the aeroplane, the decline of the horse and the steam driven railway. The picture postcard is now an important historical record, far from its original intention - to remember places of interest on holidays and to share the experience with family and friends. Before the coming of the public telephone, the postcard was used to send messages or news of disasters such as factory fires and railway accidents by enterprising photographers of the day. Cards illustrated music hall stars of the period (the forerunners of the pin-up?), and brought photographs of royalty into every home.

This fine collection contains much of the foregoing, a lovely pictorial record of village scenes, of buildings which no longer exist, or if they do, evidence of how they looked before progress caught up with them.

To be hyper-critical, I feel that there is a general flatness or lack of contrast in many of the reproductions, but that should not deter anyone from the chance of acquiring a copy of this splendid little book. As usual, in the case of local histories, I suspect that the most likely purchasers will be Rutlanders, especially those whose village or property is depicted. I am pleased to recommend this book in the hope that more gems will come forward, collected together as in this work, and thus made available so that we can see more of our past. It does, however, beg the question: are we taking the trouble so faithfully today for tomorrow?

Brian Nicholls

Ketton in Rutland. By J Martin Goodwin, Stamford, Spiegel Press, 1993, 94 pp, + 217 illustrations, index, paper, price not stated. ISBN 0-902544-14-4.

The author has drawn on a very wide range of sources and has amassed a very good selection of photographs for this book. It is very disappointing, therefore, that they have not been used to provide a well documented and reliable local history of Ketton. There is much which seems irrelevant or is simply wrong (we are told that Edward the Confessor was a Norman!). The earlier part of the book calls to mind the shallower entries in 19th century directories, and much of the latter part seems to be a random compilation from local newspaper cuttings. At least two of the maps are reproduced at so small a scale as to be illegible. The sources of many illustrations are not acknowledged, but there is a credit to a non-existent Rutland Record Office. Books of this sort are not intended to be academic in content, but they should be sound. The errors introduced by those which are not, as here, tend to be perpetuated. There certainly is much useful local history material to be quarried out of this book, but it will have to be very carefully used.

T H McK Clough

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