

LOCAL HISTORY 2018

January 2018: THE GODFREYS OF PARK HOUSE

A packed room met to hear about the life and family matters of John and Emma Godfrey of Park House, Carlton, as told by their great-granddaughter, Angela Keyworth.

Those local residents who have only been in the district for the past 15 or so years, possibly only know of the modern clinic that sits on the site now. Those of us with longer experience of the area will, no doubt, recall the wonderful Edwardian house that occupied the site, having seen duty for many years as a Health Clinic, before being demolished.

Park House was built for John and Emma Godfrey in 1901, on the proceeds made from the highly successful lace making business of Godfrey Brothers, based in High Pavement, in the Lace Market. The premises still exist and are in a conservation area.



Park House



Emma & John Godfrey

Angela told how she had determined that she would not continue her own mother's work on the family tree. But then, having been pointed in the direction of *Genes Reunited* by a former colleague, now-retired Angela dusted down her mother's records, and began her own work. This has resulted in her publishing a fascinating book about her family, their experiences and life in the Carlton area. Also in the book are poems, and some letters from "The Front" in WWI.

On a visit to All Hallows Church, Angela was amazed to find that, although she knew she came from a large family, there were so many records relating to the ancestry of her family. There are more than 500 names on the family tree, which stretches back to the 16th Century.

John's diaries, which apparently took a considerable amount of work transcribing and deciphering, have helped in identifying many photographs of the family, helping to round out the family history. This includes tales of heroism in WWI and the more mundane daily business.

How the family rose from humble beginnings, through to ownership of the first Carlton Post Office until eventually having Park House, complete with extensive gardens and an orchard and the equally magnificent house opposite, known locally as the Godfrey House. This was built for and owned by John's brother Isaac.

Emma, daughter of John & Emma married Ernest Bancroft and lived in a similarly sized house, Blackhill House, on Blackhill Drive. Alas, both of these houses have now been demolished, to make way for several more mundane houses and flats. Angela confided that she has mixed feelings about the replacement of the original houses with more modern buildings – perhaps a better fate than watching them fall into disrepair.



Blackhill House



Carlton's first Post Office

February 2018: ALBERT BALL

This month 20 members attended as Dorothy Ritchie gave us a very interesting talk on the life of Albert Ball. Albert Ball was born on 14th August 1896 at 301 Lenton Boulevard, the son of Albert Ball senior (later to be knighted) and Harriett Page. Albert and Harriett had four children; Hilda who died in infancy, Lois, Albert and Cyril.



Albert attended Lenton Church School then Grantham Grammar School. He later attended Nottingham Boys High School from where it was rumoured that he was expelled after an incident involving a bag of sweets at morning prayer. He then attended Trent College with his brother Cyril. Albert was not academic and preferred photography. He played the violin, liked modelling and was interested in engineering. He joined the Officer Training Corp at 13 and left Trent College when he was 17.

Albert volunteered on the 21st September 1915 and enlisted with the Sherwood Foresters as a Private. He was quickly promoted to Sergeant and at the end of October commissioned as 2nd Lieutenant. Keen to get to France he transferred to the North Midlands Division Cyclist Company. He

was posted to Bishops Stortford and later to Ealing where he learnt to fly at Ruffy-Bauman. Albert was an average but enthusiastic flyer who was not bothered about his appearance, but he did seem to attract several girlfriends.

On 18th February 1916 he went to France and joined 73 squadron carrying out 43 sorties in 13 weeks. He then joined 11 squadron and flew single seater fighter planes. It was here he started to get his reputation. Albert proved to be fearless and would take on up to 12 planes single handed. In July 1916 he was awarded the Military Cross and the DSO and Bar in the September. He was later awarded a second Bar to his DSO. He was awarded his medals by George V at Buckingham Palace in the November. Nottingham made Albert an honorary freeman in February 1917 aged 20.

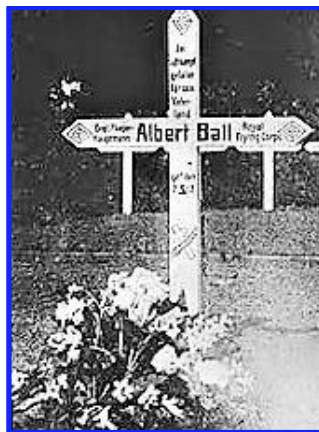
Albert was stationed back in England and was training new pilots, but pushed to return to France. On 2nd April 1917 he was again posted to France and by 5th May he had a total of 42 kills. In the early evening of 7th May Albert lead 11 planes to seek out a German fighter group. He was last seen flying after a German plane, said to have been piloted by the Red Baron's brother Lothar von Richtofen, into a cloud. When the plane emerged it was upside down and crashed into a ruined farmhouse.

Albert Ball died aged just 20 and was buried by the Germans with full military honours. On 8th June Albert was posthumously awarded the Victoria Cross. After the war Albert Snr bought the field where Albert crashed and erected a memorial to his son. There is also a memorial in the grounds of Nottingham Castle.

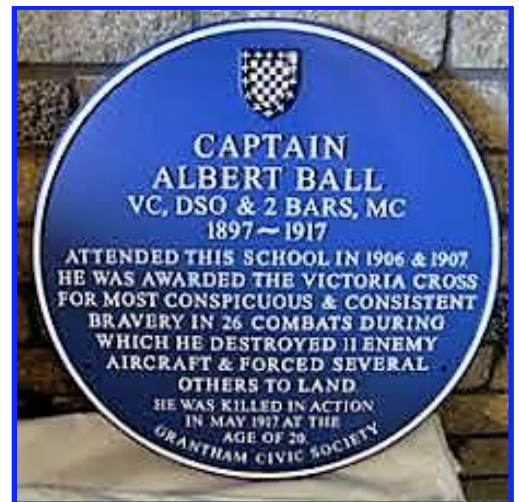
For further details on Albert Ball can be found on [Wikipedia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Albert_Ball).



Albert Ball VC, DSO & 2 bars, MC



German marker erected at Ball's grave in Annoeullin



Plaque at Grantham School

March 2018: NOTTINGHAM COUNCIL HOUSE

The Council House is constructed of Portland Stone from the same quarry used by Christopher Wren for St. Paul's Cathedral. The keystone of the central arch in the entrance arcade was salvaged from a London church after the Great Fire of 1666, but lay unused for centuries on a Dorset beach.

The terrace overlooking the Old Market Square has eight massive columns, above are 21 figures representing the activities of the Council, also modelled by Joseph Else, principal of the Nottingham School of Art. The frieze behind depicts traditional local crafts such as bell founding, mining and alabaster carving.



The Dome is one of the building's most striking features is definitely the great dome. This rises 200 feet above ground level and is visible for miles. The dome houses the chiming clock and Little John, a ten-and-a-half ton striking bell which is reputed to have the deepest tone in the country.



The Lions situated at either side of the steps leading to the front entrance of The Council House are two stone lions. Affectionately known as Leo and Oscar these two regal figures were sculpted by Joseph Else, principal of the Nottingham School of Art. The Lions, like the Council House, have become etched in the psyche of local people who will probably have clambered over them as children and used them as a meeting point with friends and lovers.

The imposing exterior of The Council House is complemented by a sumptuous, sometimes opulent interior. The first impression, as you enter the foyer through bronze doors, sets the tone with the staircase, columns and floors crafted from the finest Italian marble. Inlaid in the floor is a mosaic of the city's coat of arms.



The picture above the **grand staircase** is a reminder of the commercial history of the Old Exchange and shows local trade being conducted on The Council House steps in medieval times. It was painted by Denholm Davies, who also painted the four pictures that decorate the underside of the dome visible from inside the Exchange Arcade. A bronze statue stands in an arched alcove at the top of the first flight of stairs. The figure, called Spirit of Welcome, was modelled by Sir William Reid Dick, sculptor of the Roosevelt Memorial in London, and was a gift from benefactor Sir Julian Cahn.

In the right hand corner stands the 200-year-old Town Bell from Weekday Cross which was rung to announce executions.

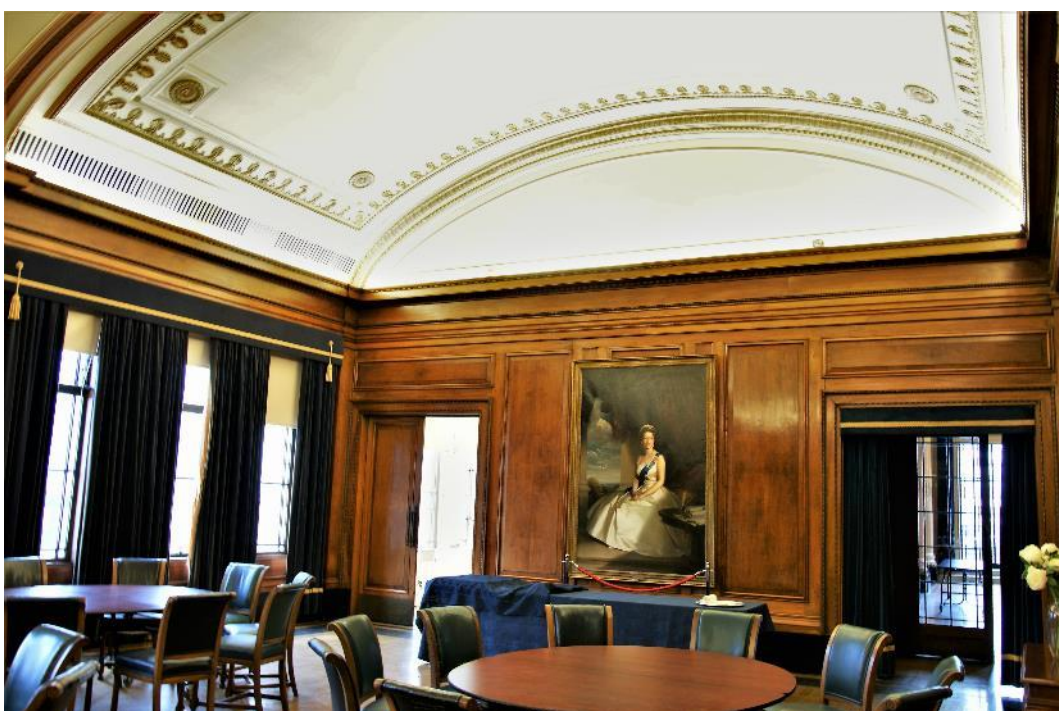
The first floor houses the largest and most impressive room in the building, the Ballroom, which was allegedly inspired by the ballroom at the Palace of Versailles. This is used as a reception hall for large civic occasions and as a banqueting hall and is the piece de resistance of the whole building.

Seven floor to ceiling windows open onto a balcony overlooking the Old Market Square. Many a VIP has stood on this balcony and waved to an appreciative crowd below. There are columns embellished with gilt and a highly decorated ceiling hung with beautiful suspended light fittings in the Art Deco style.



Two minstrels' galleries and a fully sprung walnut dance floor complete this beautiful room.

Next to the Ballroom is the Dining Room which is used for smaller receptions. The walls are panelled in walnut; there is an Italian marble fireplace and an oil painting of the Queen decorating one wall.



Also on this floor is the Lord Mayor's Parlour and waiting room. The Lord Mayor's Parlour is panelled in carved walnut, while his sitting room makes use of antique oak panelling recovered from Aston Hall in Derbyshire.

Throughout the Council House the original furniture and fittings by Waring and Gillow continue to enhance the building's grandeur, together with the many gifts which have been presented to the city through the years.

The room also contains photographs of the Queen and Prince Philip given to the city by the royal couple in 1955. A visitors' book dating back to the 1960s is kept here and contains the signatures of dozens of celebrated guests including Tony Blair, Margaret Thatcher, Prince Charles and Princess Diana.

Along the corridor is what is arguably the most important room in The Council House, the Committee Room. This is where most of the important decisions are made by the Executive Board and various committees. The main feature of this room is the horseshoe shaped walnut veneer table and a number of paintings of Nottingham by local artist Thomas Hammond.

The second floor houses the Sheriff's Room. The feminine feel to this room is down to the fact that it was formerly the Lady Mayoress's Room. Unlike the dark wood panelling, heavy furniture and marble fireplaces that feature in most other rooms, this room is decorated in the Adam style, with soft green and gilt. The centre piece of this room is a magnificent crystal chandelier and its two matching wall lights.

There are two main rooms on the **third floor**. There is the Members' Room, so called because it is an area where councillors can prepare for meetings, do their Council work in quiet or just relax with a cup of tea.

As with the Lord Mayor's Parlour, the oak panelling around this room was acquired from Aston Hall, and stained glass panels celebrating the arts hang in the windows.

The large walnut table was originally in the Board Room at the Raleigh Industries head office and was donated to the city when the bicycle factory closed.

The third floor is dominated by the Council Chamber, where councillors meet for full Council meetings. The seating here is arranged in a semi-circle, so that no-one is more than 26 feet from the Lord Mayor, who chairs the meetings. High above his dais is an eye-catching panel bearing two Latin inscriptions. They proclaim:

"Law are made for the welfare of the citizens and the city" and "it is the highest justice to give each man his due".

The acoustics in the Chamber are aided by fabric covered seaweed panels on the walls which date back to the 1930s. The original 1930s light switches, which twist rather than flick on, are also still in use.

Text taken from Nottingham City Council website

April 2018: GENERAL CEMETERY TOUR

For our April meeting we were given a guided tour of the General Cemetery by our very knowledgeable guide Kevin Powell from the Nottingham Civic Society. We visited 32 graves in all, with Kevin apologising that only four were for females.

We heard that in 1836 the General Cemetery Company was established by an Act of Parliament. The company purchased 12 acres of land for £6,000 and the cemetery opened in 1837. Following the Enclosure Act four additional acres were added and then later a further four acres for Dissenters.

By 1923 over 150,000 people had been buried on the site, however the Medical Officer for Health raised concerns about dangers to public health if burials continued on the site and a Bill was passed by Parliament which effectively prevented further burials, apart from those of close relatives.

After the Second World War, the Company went into voluntary liquidation and the Cemetery became the property of the Crown. In 1956 the Crown passed responsibility for the Cemetery to Nottingham Corporation, selling them the freehold for 1 shilling.

Some of the notable graves we visited were Marshall Hall; a medical man who declared blood-letting to be a waste of time and laid down the ground rules for animal experimentation.

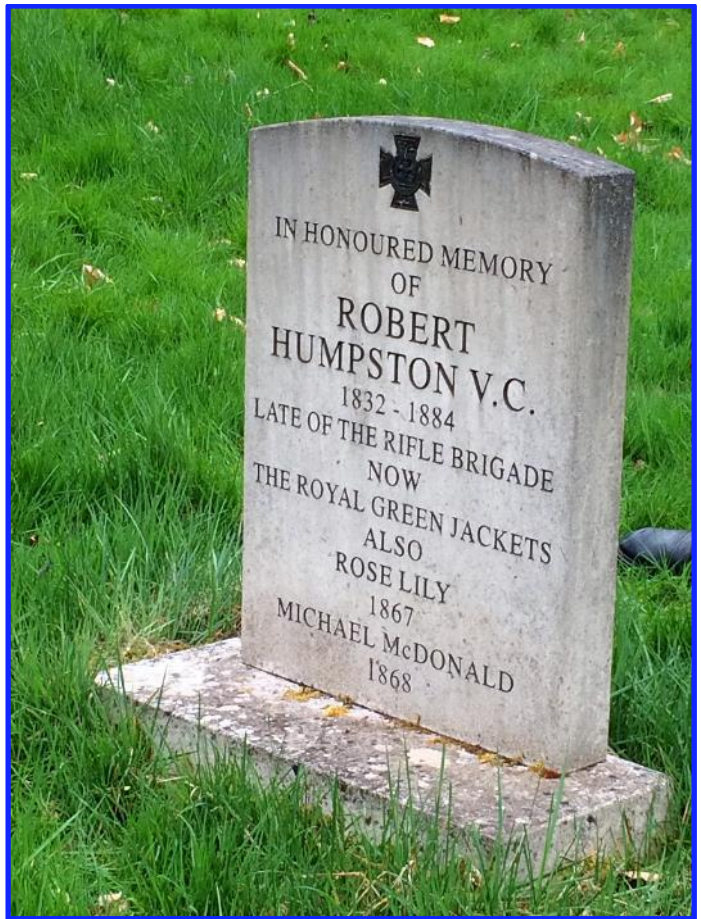
Daft Smith Churchill; director of the cemetery who drowned on the SS Forfarshire made famous by Grace Darling. This is one of the earliest graves in the cemetery.

Others include Charles Taylor Bell who pioneered cataract surgery, William Hugh headmaster of High Pavement School, John Player seed and tobacco merchant, Richard Birkin lacemaker who bought Aspley Hall, Laurence Bright architect.

We saw the graves of Nottingham's very own Sharpe; Isaac Chetham who was raised through the ranks by Wellington and Queen Victoria's unofficial jester; William Frederick Wallett

There are 322 war graves in the cemetery from the first and second world wars along with the Crimean war. One such is Robert Humpstone VC, who attacked and captured a Russian rifle pit above the main road to Sebastopol.





May 2018: GEDLING VILLAGE WALK, Part 2

We were more fortunate this year with the weather as 29 of us enjoyed a gloriously sunny day for our walk led by the very knowledgeable Neil Kendrick.



Our first stop was outside the barber's shop on the corner of Waverley Avenue which we learnt used to be a shoe factory until it moved to Main Road. We then moved on to Denmark House which is purported to have been bought by the Prince of Denmark for Vesta Tilley, the music hall performer.

Next we were told that the Inn for a Penny used to be called the Royal Oak and is the oldest pub in the area. We stopped on Danehurst Drive (off Brooklands Drive) which used to be a farm where a political party held its annual garden party.

As we walked along Shearing Hill we saw the house where Arthur Shrewsbury the famous Nottinghamshire & England cricketer lodged. As well as being an excellent cricketer, Shrewsbury organised the first football tour to the USA and the first Lions tour to New Zealand.

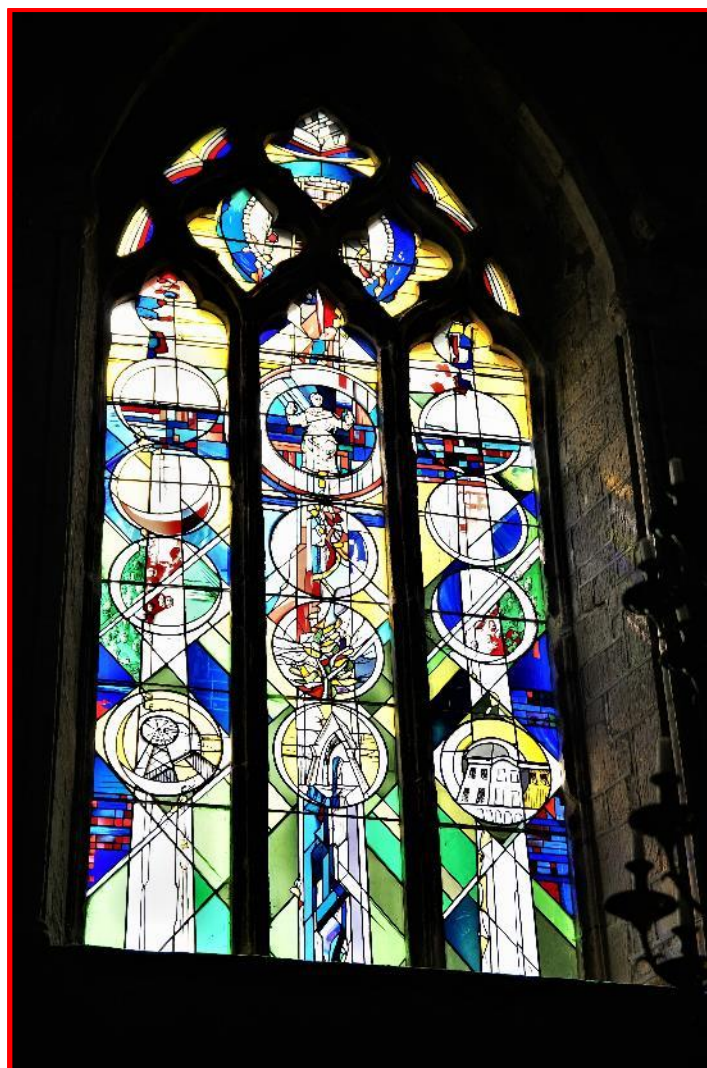
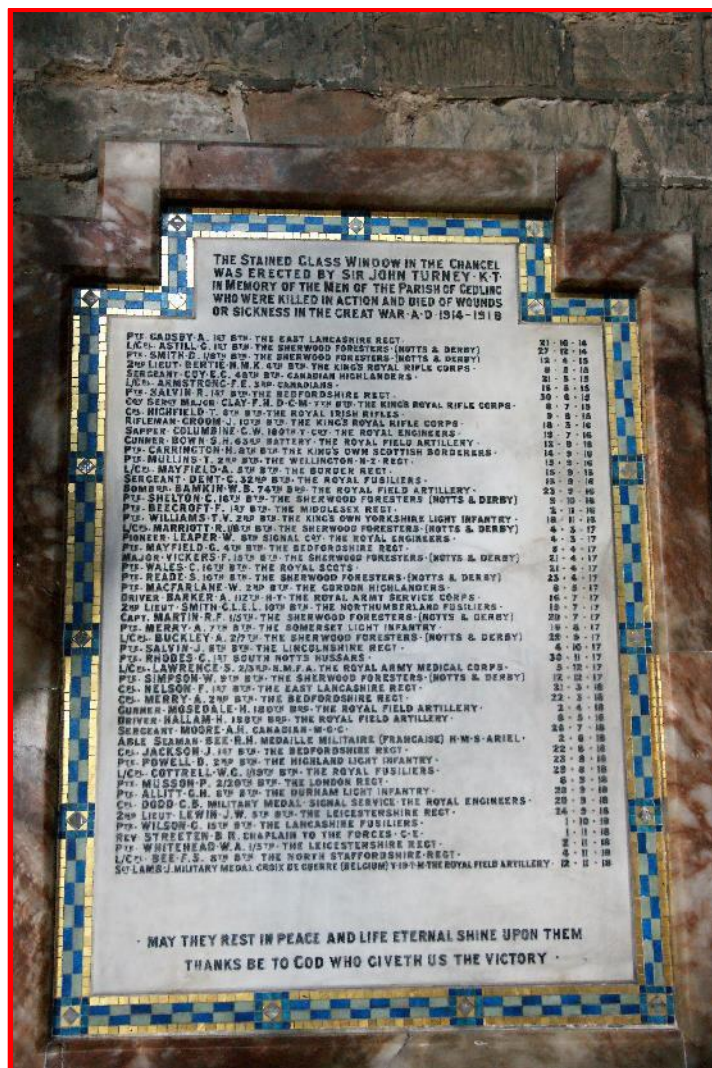
Passing Gedling Station we moved on to All Hallows Church.

The church is grade I listed and was built by the monks from Shelford Abbey. On the North wall is the memorial tablet to those men of Gedling who gave their lives in the First World War.

Further along on the wall is a fragment of what is believed to be the cross which was situated at the road junction with Main Road. Behind the small altar is a painting by Jovenet, which is believed to be the oldest item in the church. Passing the choir stalls, Neil told us of the three wall seats (sedilla) and two stone bowls (piscina) being atypical as one is more usual.

Neil went on to tell us about the theory that Francis Lovell, known to be Richard III's 'oldest and dearest friend' lies buried within the church. One theory is that Lovell died whilst crossing the River Trent following the Battle of Stoke in 1487, although his true fate remains uncertain. Some investigations have been carried out but have currently proved to be inconclusive. Fingers crossed for a positive outcome soon.

Once again thanks go to Neil our excellent guide.
Anne Palmer



June 2018: KELHAM HALL

25 of us enjoyed a very interesting tour of Kelham Hall. Our guide for the afternoon was the owner, Jonathan Pass, who was very entertaining and explained the history of the hall and his plans for its future refurbishment as a country house hotel.

The present hall is the third building to have stood on the site with two former halls having been damaged significantly by fire. All three halls were built for the Manners Sutton family, whose links with Kelham date back to the 12th century. The current hall was designed by the architect Sir George Gilbert Scott in the Gothic style, however in 1900 the family ran out of money and could not complete the hall as intended. Among the items left out due to cost were a grand marble staircase and several marble columns. The grand staircase was replaced with a very ordinary wooden one.

As a result of their financial problems, the family had Kelham House built on the opposite side of the road and moved out of the Hall. The Hall was purchased by the Society of the Sacred Mission in 1903 and run as a theological college until 1972 when the monks moved out due to dwindling numbers. The monks made several additions to the hall and the Great Chapel dedicated in 1928 was a masterpiece. It was almost square with a great central dome, (62 feet across and 68 feet (21 m) high) the second largest concrete dome in England. The main accommodation building at the front of the Hall was completed in 1939 to house the Monks and the theological students.

The Hall played its part in both World wars when it was occupied by military personnel. During World War II Texas and Oklahoma oil men who were involved in drilling for oil at the nearby Eakring oilfield were also billeted at the hall. There is a museum in the hall dedicated to these oilmen and the important role they played in keeping Britain moving.

This was a very informative and entertaining afternoon.

Anne Palmer



July 2018: HOLME PIERREPONT HALL

24 of us visited Holme Pierrepont Hall. We were met by the owner and very entertaining guide, Robert Brackenbury, and commenced our tour in St Edmunds church adjacent to the Hall.

There has been a church on the site since 1201, and the current medieval church was largely re-built in 1666 by Henry Pierrepont, 1st Marquess of Dorchester. In 1878 T. C. Hine added the chancel.

There are several memorials to the Pierreponts with the earliest being for Sir Henry Pierrepont who died in 1499. The grandest is for Sir Henry Pierrepont who died in 1615 and Robert explained the coats of arms that form part of this memorial and the jokes the family had included.

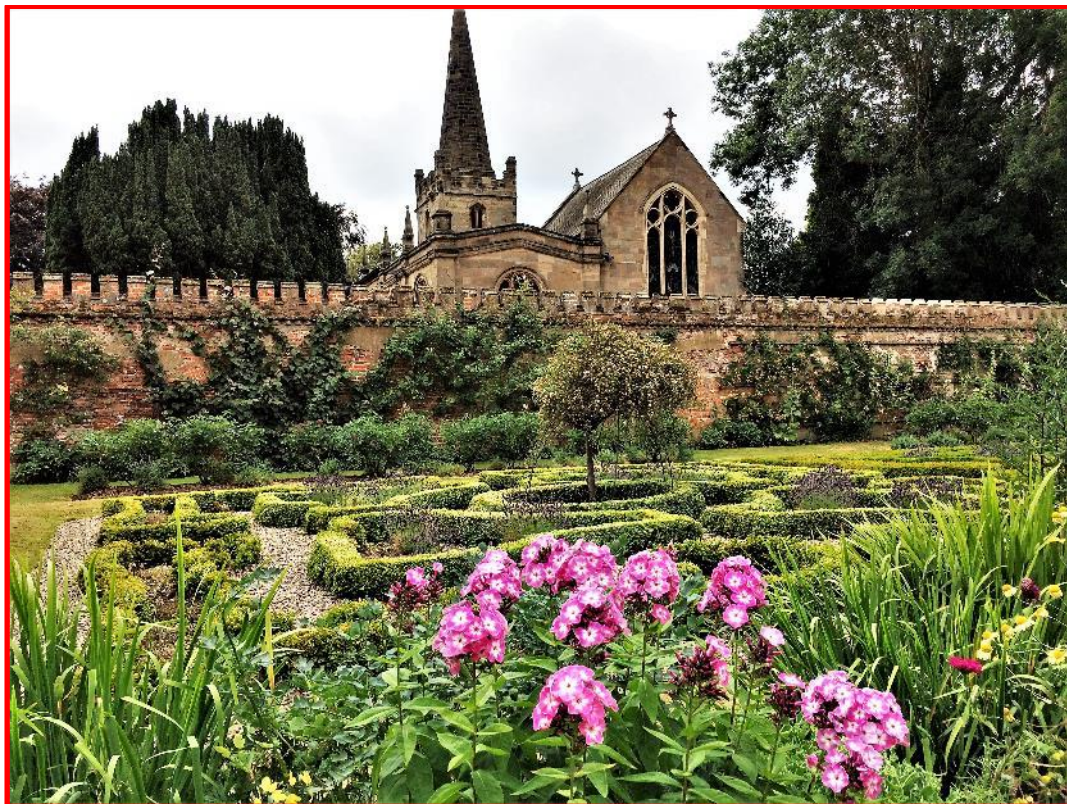
We then moved on to the house. Holme Pierrepont Hall is the family home of the Brackenbury family, who are direct descendants of the Pierrepont Family who have lived on this site since 1280.

The Tudor manor house dates back to 1500, with later additions and alterations having been made to the hall since then. Holme Pierrepont Hall is one of the most historically significant country houses in the East Midlands, with some of the earliest brickwork in the county. We heard how the house was put up for sale in 1941, but was removed from the market when it didn't sell. It was then lived in by Sybill Argles, daughter of the 4th Earl Manvers who died with no heirs in 1967. The house was then put up for sale again and was purchased by Robert's parents to keep the hall in the Pierrepont family.

We were given a tour of the front section of the hall where Robert continued to entertain us with stories about his ancestors, the house and some of the contents. For example, the Victorian bidet coffee table which he tells school parties is a baby's bath to avoid awkward questions. We heard about Georgina Brackenbury (1865 - 1949) the renowned artist and suffragette and the last Countess Manvers, Marie Louise Pierrepont, a prolific and accomplished artist. There are several examples of their work hanging in the hall.



After the tour of the house we explored the lovely courtyard garden which had been restored after receiving a lottery grant. We also explored the wider garden which had some interesting specimens in it.



We had a thoroughly enjoyable afternoon at this hidden gem with many of us promising to return on one of the Hall's open days.

August 2018: NEWSTEAD ABBEY

24 of us had a very enjoyable trip to Newstead Abbey. We started our tour in the chapel where we were told the history of the abbey. The priory of St. Mary of Newstead, a house of Augustinian Canons, was founded by King Henry II in about 1170. In the late 13th century, the priory was rebuilt and extended. It was extended again in the 15th-century, however, the ecclesiastical buildings were largely ruined during the dissolution of the monasteries.

Sir John Byron of Colwick was granted Newstead Abbey by Henry VIII in 1540 and was succeeded by his son Sir John Byron of Clayton Hall. It then passed to John Byron, an MP and Royalist commander, who was created a baron in 1643. He died childless in France and ownership transferred to his brother Richard Byron. Richard's son William was a minor poet and was succeeded in 1695 by his son William, 4th baron Byron. The 5th baron, known as "the Wicked Lord", ruined the estate to spite his son for what he considered to be an inappropriate marriage. His vicious plan, however, was thwarted when his son and grandson died. On his death the title and Newstead were left to his great-nephew, the poet George Gordon Byron.

Byron lived at Newstead between 1808 and 1814. During that time, he kept his menagerie in the chapel and carried out shooting practice in the great hall.



Newstead contains some of Byron's personal items of furniture, letters, manuscripts and portraits, plus his gilt wood bed, pistol and the desk at which he wrote much of his finest poetry. We also saw the painting and heard the story of Byron's beloved dog Boatswain, who died of rabies in 1808.

After Lord Byron's death, Newstead was bought by Thomas Wildman in 1815, and by William Webb an African explorer who knew David Livingstone in 1861. After his death in 1899, the estate passed to each of his surviving children and finally to his grandson Charles Ian Fraser. Fraser sold Newstead to local philanthropist, Sir Julien Cahn, who presented it to Nottingham Corporation in 1931 who still look after it today.

Overall, this was a fascinating tour, and an insight into the interesting history and the interior of a building that not many of the group had entered before.

September 2018: NOTTINGHAM INDUSTRIAL MUSEUM

This month 18 of us had a very interesting visit to the Nottingham Industrial Museum at Wollaton Park. We were given a very informative presentation on how the industrial revolution in Nottingham affected the textile industry. In 1859 the textile revolution started with the invention of the stocking frame knitting machine by William Lee, a clergyman from Calverton. This invention was in use for over 100 years, with its principals of operation still in use today. By the 1780s there were 2,000 framework knitting machines in Nottingham and 18,000 in the East Midlands. This was 90% of the machines being used in the country at the time, putting Nottingham at the centre of the textile industry.

Lace making around Nottingham grew out of the stocking knitting trade. In 1799 there were six lace makers in Nottingham and by 1832 there were 186. The invention and manufacturer of lace making machines replaced the time-consuming manual process and drove the rapid growth of lace making.

The first machine to make lace was an altered hand knitting frame. Then came the Heathcote machine in 1808 and then the Leavers machine in 1813; both made lots of cheap plain net lace which could be hand-embroidered. However, the Jacquard Card machine made pattern lace in widths of up to 9ft. We were given a demonstration of the Leavers machine with Jacquard equipment attached.



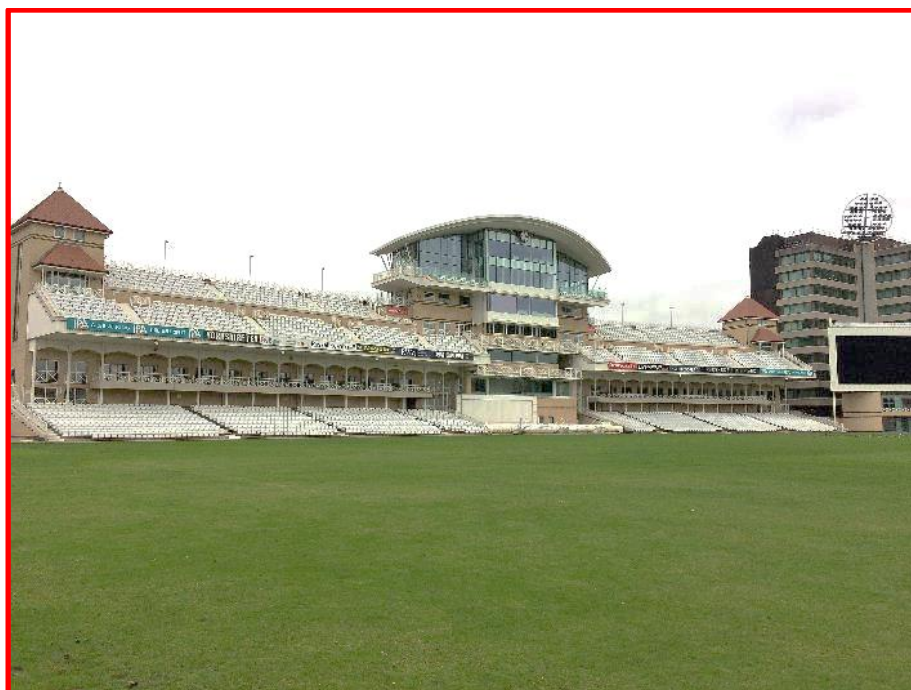
After the presentation we were free to explore the rest of the museum. We looked around the steam hall and examined the Basford Beam engine. Installed at Basford Pumping Station, it lifted fresh water 33 metres from the sandstone below and supplied it to the city. This is relevant to our November meeting when we are having a talk about Thomas Hawksley, a civil engineer who brought clean water to Nottingham.



This was an enjoyable afternoon made very interesting by our excellent knowledgeable guides.

October 2018: TRENT BRIDGE CRICKET GROUND

14 of us revisited Trent Bridge Cricket Ground to see the areas we didn't have time to see last year.



We kicked off the tour with a visit to the new media centre. We weren't allowed to visit the new restaurant as it hasn't been officially opened yet, but we did go into the Sky studios. We were all

surprised by how small the rooms were. We also visited the radio studio where Alex Hales hit the ball through the open window when Dave Bracegirdle was commenting.

After this we visited one of the banqueting suites and the practice nets. We then moved on to the pavilion where we saw the very basic away team dressing room, and the basic physio table hidden away with the washing machines.

We moved on to the Long Room and through to the museum. We were told that it was a rotating exhibition with just a few artefacts on show at any one time. We saw Arthur Shrewsbury's pads and Harold Larwood's MCC jumper from the body line tour of 1932/33 and Notts CCC cap. The jumper and cap were bought from a pub Australia after it closed down.

We finished at the newly installed World War I memorial, commemorating the six Notts cricketers who lost their lives during the war.



Unfortunately, we didn't have time to visit the library, so we will have to wait until next time to see the 16,000 books in the collection. For more on the history of the club and other areas visited, please see the [report from October 2017](#)

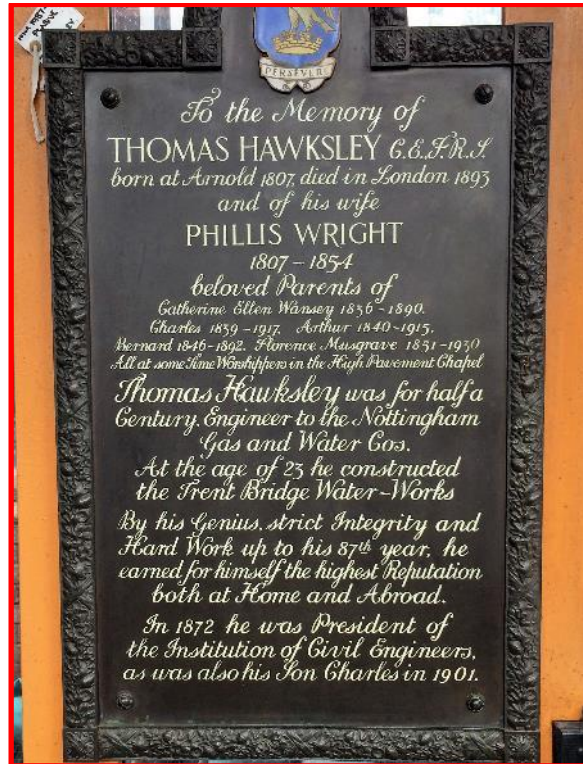
November 2018: THOMAS HAWKSLEY

This month saw us remain indoors for the first of our winter meetings. As part of the bicentennial celebrations of the Institution of Civil Engineers we were offered a talk by Tony Keyworth on the celebrated Victorian engineer Thomas Hawksley.

Hawksley was born in Arnold in 1807 and was largely self-taught from the age of 15 onwards - despite his education at Nottingham High School - having at that point become articled to a local firm of architects under the supervision of Edward Staveley that also undertook a variety of water-related engineering projects.

Locally, he remains particularly associated with schemes in his home county. He was engineer to the Nottingham Gas Light and Coke Company and Nottingham Water Supply Company for more than half a century, having, early in his career, completed the ground breaking Trent Bridge waterworks (1831). This scheme delivered Britain's first high pressure 'constant supply', preventing contamination entering the supply of clean water mains. He followed with Park Pump Station on The Ropewalk (still there), Bestwood Pumping Station (recently a Restaurant and Health Club), had a significant involvement with Papplewick Pumping Station, built Mapperley Reservoir, Belle Vue Reservoir (both

still in use), Redhill Reservoir (still in use) and Papplewick Reservoir which is no longer in use but can be visited.



Hawksley first rose to national prominence at the time of the Health of Towns inquiry in 1844. His advocacy of a constant supply of water to consumers brought him immediate acclaim. This approach led him to be appointed to many major water supply projects across England, including schemes for Liverpool, Sheffield, Leicester, Lincoln, Leeds, Derby, Darlington, Oxford, Cambridge, Sunderland, Wakefield and Northampton. He also undertook drainage projects, including schemes for Birmingham, Worcester and Windsor.

In 1852, Hawksley set up his own engineering practice in Westminster, London. He was the first president of the Institution of Gas Engineers and Managers (serving for three years from 1863), a Fellow of the Royal Society, and was elected President of the Institution of Civil Engineers in 1871 (a post his son Charles later occupied in 1901).

He achieved national and international fame for his work as a designer of Dams and reservoirs and pumped water supply schemes.

Hawksley died in Kensington in 1893 and is buried in Surrey. Thomas Hawksley was the first of four generations of eminent water engineers, having been followed into the profession by his son, Charles Hawksley, grandson Kenneth Phipson Hawksley, and great grandson, Thomas Edwin Hawksley (died 1972). The Institution of Mechanical Engineers still holds an annual lecture in his memory.

This was a fascinating talk on a remarkable man, whose work has saved countless lives over the last 150+ years.