

Local History 2020

January 2020: COLWICK HALL - THE MUSTERS AND BYRON FAMILIES

Our meeting in January was a talk on Colwick Hall, the Musters and Byron families given by Dorothy Ritchie and enthusiastically attended by 50 members.

Dorothy began the talk by telling us that there has been a hall on the site since Saxon times and that the hall was the ancestral home of the Byron family. However, there is no evidence that Lord Byron ever stayed there.

Dorothy then took us back to the early history of the site. Colwick itself has been occupied since prehistoric times and the Domesday Book records a timber homestead owned by Sir William Peverell, the illegitimate son of William the Conqueror. The hall was occupied by the De Colwyck family until near the end of the 14th century when it passed to the Byron family through marriage.

In the 1530s Newstead parish was granted to Sir John Byron, although the family still regarded Colwick as their main residence. Sir John rebuilt the church next to the hall in the 16th century after the dissolution of the monasteries. He died in 1567 and was buried in the church. By the 1640s a later Sir John Byron was renovating Newstead and had run up debts of £28,000, so sold the Colwick estate to Sir James Stonehouse a London merchant to pay off his debts.

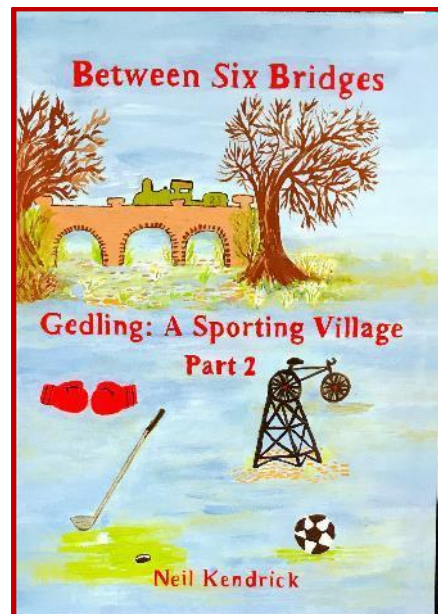
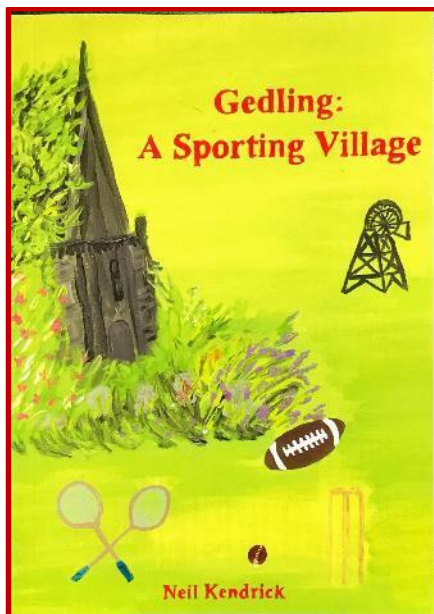
Sir James repaired the church in 1643 and added a steeple. He sold the estate to Sir John Musters, another wealthy London merchant and in 1684 Sir John had the church tower and chancel restored and battlements added to the nave. Around 1690 the manor house was rebuilt as a two storey brick medium-sized Georgian mansion. In the mid 1770s the next Sir John remodelled the hall to the shape we see today.

Terrible damage was done to the contents of the Hall by the Reform Bill rioters in 1831. They attacked the house, and after looting the contents they set fire to the building. The hall was restored but was sold in 1889 to Horatio Davies who only held it for a short time before selling it to the newly formed racecourse company. Colwick Hall was turned into a hotel in the 1890s. In 1923 the church was closed due to its condition and in 1937 the Byron monuments were moved to Newstead.

Thanks to Dorothy for a very interesting and informative talk.

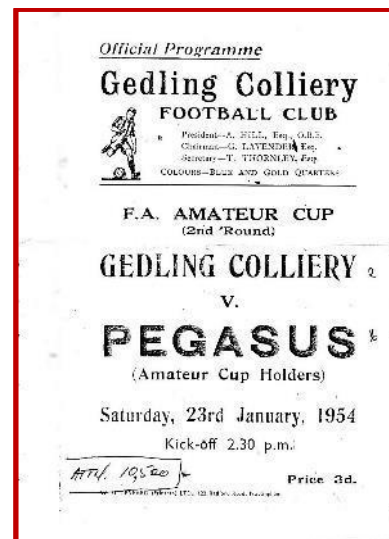
February 2020: GEDLING – A SPORTING VILLAGE

Our February meeting was another talk, this time given by our own Neil Kendrick on the sporting history of Gedling, based on the research he carried out for his two recent books on the subject.

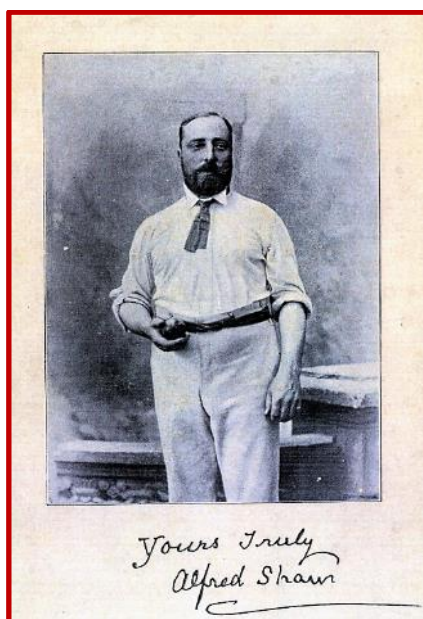


Neil commenced with a brief life history of himself, recalling how a 6 page pamphlet celebrating 100 years of school cricket turned into a 5 chapter book, and this led to a regular column in the parish magazine and subsequently the publication of several books about Gedling, including two about its sporting history.

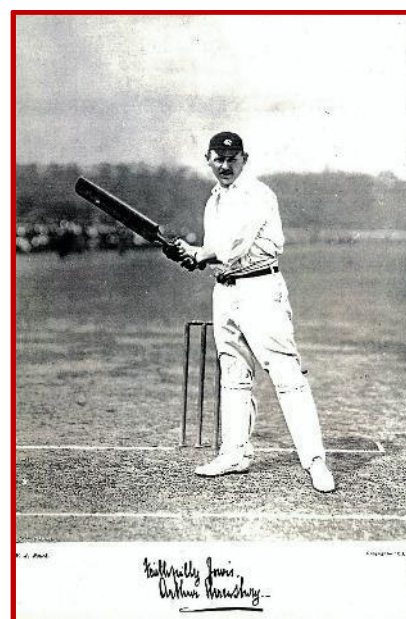
The first tale concerned Gedling Colliery FC (now Gedling Miners' Welfare) and their exploits in the FA Amateur Cup of 1953-4 against then-holders Pegasus, one of the most famous names in amateur football at the time. A home crowd estimated to have been about 7500, saw the Miners put up a brave fight, but succumb to a 2-6 defeat. Two years later Bishop Auckland won 4-1 at Plains Road, and a member of our audience told us later that he had played in that match!



Next, we heard about Alfred Shaw, who was born in Burton Joyce and bowled the first ever ball in a Test match (he was also the first bowler to take 5 wickets in a Test innings. Shaw also organised the first British Isles rugby tour of Australia. He was certainly one of the best cricketers of his generation and was hailed as such by W. G. Grace. He lies in All Hallows' graveyard roughly a cricket pitch length from Arthur Shrewsbury, a world class batsman. He tragically took his own life, wrongly thinking that he had an incurable disease.



Alfred Shaw



Arthur Shrewsbury

Neil then went on to talk about some local venues, such as the Phoenix Boxing Club, now located on Burton Road, which produced Carl Froch most famously. Neil mourned the loss of many grounds, such as Blackhill Drive cricket ground, He also mentioned that Carlton Le Willows school hosted county representative games of cricket and testimonials for Derek

Randall & Tim Robinson. We learnt of the Cooper Cup – a knock-out charity cricket competition started in the 1930s, which continued into the 1970s, with a brief revival in 1988. Sadly, the cup itself has not been seen since.

I don't have enough space to cover everything that Neil spoke about – but it can all be found in his two books!

Our thanks go to Neil for a fascinating presentation.

Graham Palmer

April 2020: SHAW & SHREWSBURY AND THE LIONS

This article is a follow up to the talk given by Neil Kendrick to the Local History Group in February 2020.

With sport in 2020 prematurely ended or in some case not even begun, it is perhaps good to look forward to 2021 and an amazing year of sport that awaits us. Carried over from this year: the Olympics, The Euros and The Ryder Cup - added to everything else 2021 has to offer. For a sport lover, a veritable feast - for a rugby fan, a veritable feast plus the ultimate - the British and Irish Lions Tour. In 2017 we had the rather strange image of captains Sam Warburton (Lions) and Ritchie McCaw (New Zealand) awkwardly holding aloft the Series Trophy after a dramatic drawn game in the final match of the tour.

The British and Irish Lions, the fifth biggest sporting franchise in the world (bettered only by the Olympics, Football World Cup, NFL and English Premiership), pits the 'cream' of British and Irish rugby players against the best of the Southern Hemisphere - New Zealand, South Africa and Australia in a four year cycle. In 2021 the Lions will tour South Africa. But where does the story begin? Twickenham? Murrayfield? Cardiff? The public schools? One of London's Elite Gentleman's Clubs? For the answer we need to look a little closer to home.

Alfred Shaw and Arthur Shrewsbury were both Nottingham men - Shrewsbury from Lenton but living much of his adult life in the Queen's Hotel on Arkwright Street near Nottingham Station (the still distinctive building is one of very few buildings that remain of the once vibrant and thriving Arkwright Street). Shaw was born in Burton Joyce but spent his latter years when not playing cricket at the house now appropriately named 'The Willows' at the top of Stoke Lane, Gedling.

When not playing cricket for Notts and England, Shrewsbury was along with W.G. Grace England's greatest batsman. Shaw, a slow bowler and the man who bowled the first ball in test cricket. They were sporting entrepreneurs organising regular cricket tours to the Southern Hemisphere and the USA, they also owned a sports shop on Carrington Street and a factory on Waterway Street.

On the 2017 tour the Lions badge which features the crests of the four home countries had 'Since 1888' inscribed below. In 1888 a rugby team left these shores to play a mixture of rugby and Australian Rules Football against teams in Australia and New Zealand. The tour was organised and managed by Alfred Shaw and Arthur Shrewsbury. There were 20 players in the touring party, mainly English but including three Scots and one Welshman.

The clubs the players represented are clubs that now fall within the Rugby League 'umbrella' though it was many years before these clubs broke away to form a professional league and eventually become a different sport from union. Clubs such as: Batley, Swinton, Salford, Rochdale Hornets, Bramley, Halifax and Dewsbury sent players Down Under.

Sailing from Gravesend aboard the S.S. Kaikoura on 8th March 1888, landing on April 24th, and playing their first game (a victory over Otago) on April 28th. In total they played 53 matches over a 6 month period including 19 games of Aussie Rules football, winning 27 matches and though playing no test matches played all the major provincial and academic sides. They also won six of their 19 Aussie Rules games

By contrast in 2017 Warren Gatland's team played 10 games in New Zealand, there were 41 in the initial squad and a back up team of 25 people. Any players injured particularly early in the

tour were replaced whereas on Shaw and Shrewsbury's tour the captain R.L. Seddon was drowned in a sculling accident in Maitland on the Hunter River and was not replaced. On the Lions tour of Australia in 2013, Lions captain, Sam Warburton and England's Manu Tuilagi laid a wreath on Seddon's grave.

So, in 1888 and rather inauspiciously, began a great rugby and sporting tradition - no first class flights, no kit and formal wear sponsored, no TV rights, no sponsorship deals, payment of a kind, though no lauding speeches from rugby aristocracy or books and films made about them. Nevertheless, a sporting dynasty was born.

Shaw and Shrewsbury returned to Nottingham where they continued to represent their county and country with some distinction. Shrewsbury spent the last year of his life on Shearing Hill Gedling, dying a tragic death in 1903, Shaw died in 1908. They are buried almost forgotten in Gedling Churchyard.

At a time when much is being said about the re-opening of Gedling Station as a Visitor Centre, a Tolkien link to the village is an understandable attraction, it would be apt if consideration was given to two local men who have left a sporting legacy beyond measure.

Neil Kendrick

June 2020: DOWN THE RABBIT HOLE FINDING SIR JOHN BORLASE WARREN

The following article was submitted by U3A member, John Buglear:

I have known my friend Roger for many years. These days we can only talk over the phone whereas in the years BCV (Before Corona Virus) we would meet at his favourite pub, the Sir John Borlase Warren at Canning Circus. Neither of us had heard of Sir John was, and none of the bar staff I questioned about his identity over the years knew who he was either.



Recently I read 'The Challenge: Britain Against America in the Naval War of 1812' by Andrew Lambert. This was a historical episode I knew nothing about, save that it probably had something to do with why the White House was painted white.

For a serious work of history, the book was a very good read. Before going into details of the naval engagements, the author explains what he contends were the two factors that lead to the US, clearly the weaker of the two parties militarily, to take aggressive action against Britain. The first was the sharp divide in the American politics of the time between those, primarily merchants in New England who believed greater prosperity would come from more engagement in world trade, and others, prominent among them landowners in the South who argued that the acquisition of more territory was the answer.

The second factor was the Napoleonic wars that were raging across Europe. In these circumstances the US president, James Madison, who favoured territorial expansion took two courses of action, launching an invasion of Canada and engagements with Royal Navy ships. The former came to an end with defeat at the Battle of Detroit but the latter continued over several years, largely because the Royal Navy could spare few ships from battles with French fleets for its 'North America Station'. The identity of the head of this force was Admiral Sir John Borlase Warren. At last, I knew who he was!

Although he was an important navy commander his reputation was muted by leading what was a sideshow to the events in Europe and tarnished by being held responsible for the defeats his ships suffered. This is probably unfair as he had meagre resources, and he faced strong lobbying from London to station his ships to protect the West Indian trade rather than blockade American ports. Given what he had, the results of the challenge he faced were as good as could be expected; essentially a 'score-draw'. Some of the American ships his sailors faced were the largest afloat and one, Robert Fulton's 'Demelogos' was the first steam powered warship.

Sir John Warren is something of a local hero. He was born at Stapleford Hall, the family home of the Warrens, local landed gentry, where he returned to live in his final years. Aside from his naval career he was an MP and appointed 'ambassador extraordinary' to St Petersburg.

Stapleford Hall was demolished in the 1930's but as well as the pub at Canning Circus, there is a commemorative plaque in Stapleford and a short from it a new pub, the 'Admiral Sir John Borlase Warren'. One web source refers to several pubs in Nottinghamshire bring named after him but these are the only ones I could find.

