

LOCAL HISTORY 2022

March 2022: HISTORY OF GEDLING BOROUGH

We finally made it back to the Richard Herrod Centre for our March meeting, where we were given a very interesting talk by Dr Stephen Walker on the history and heritage of Gedling Borough.

We heard that Gedling is situated on the NE flank of Nottingham, with most of the population living in the SW corner, and that the borough is mainly rural with larger settlements. The geology of the area is varied with coal, magnesium limestone, Lenton sandstone and Sherwood sandstone, which has given rise to the use of noticeably different building materials in different areas of the borough.

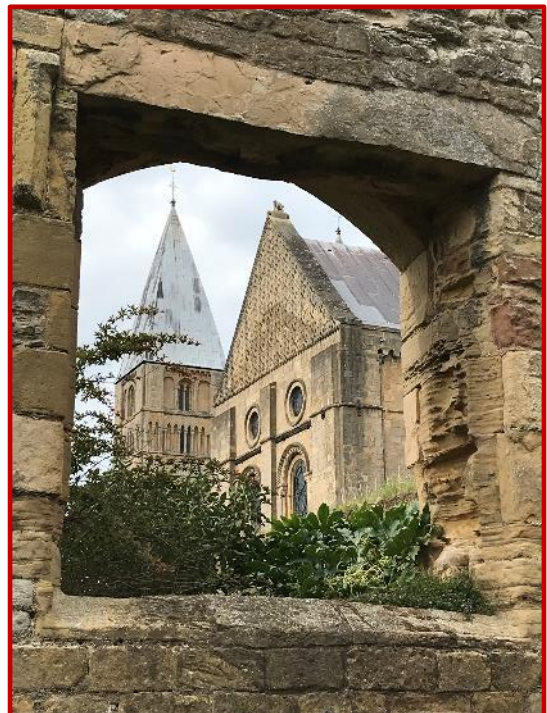
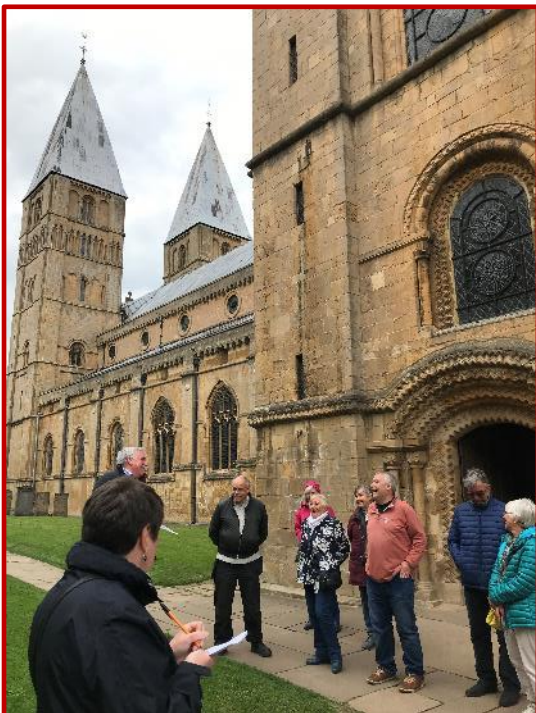
Stephen introduced us to the early history of Gedling from evidence of occupation in the Bronze Age through to Saxon and Viking occupation and the mention of Gedling in the Domesday book. Moving forward in time we were told that as a result of the Addison Act of 1919, councils were encouraged to provide space on the outskirts of cities for council housing and the first estate in the borough was built in Carlton in 1929.

The borough has a large industrial heritage with several coal mines in the area. The first was sunk at Babbington in the west followed by further mines moving east and deeper across the region.

As well as mining, the railways also played a central role with the Colwick marshalling yard being one of the largest in Europe. Brick making was also popular due to the presence of Keuper Marl in the area. Textiles played a major part with a cotton spinning factory owned by George Robinson between Linby and Papplewick and a Worsted yarn mill owned by John Hawksley and Robert Davison in Arnold which also had one of the earliest steam engines installed. Gedling also has a history of brewing with one example being the Carlton Brewery, housed in a Watson Fothergill building.

April & May 2022: SOUTHWELL

For our April and May meetings we enjoyed a guided tour of Southwell led by our very knowledgeable guide Mike Kirton. We met up by the Minster, where we were told the history of the site, and learnt that there had been a church on the site for over 900 years.



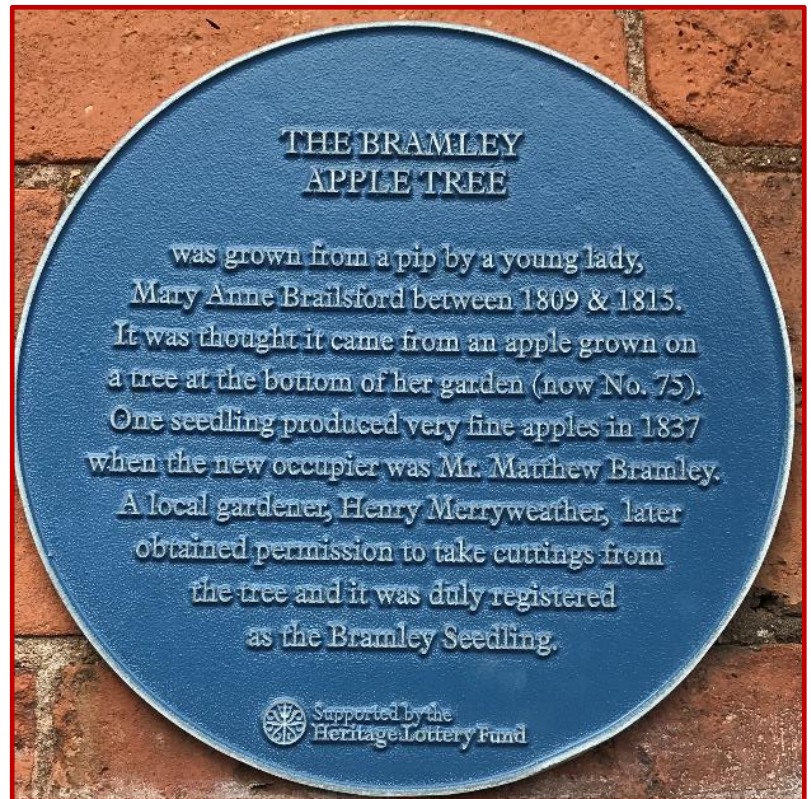
We moved on to the Bishop's Manor which was built in 1905 and is the residence of the Bishop of Southwell. Retracing our steps we carried on to the ruins of the Archbishop's Palace which was in use until the Civil War. The palace was wrecked by the Parliamentarians and later plundered by the locals.

As we walked towards Higgons Mead we passed by the Dean's Residence built towards the end of the 17th century by William Mompesson of Eyam fame. At Higgons Mead we were told that a Roman Villa had been discovered here some years ago.

We carried on along the road to two cottages, now owned by Nottingham Trent University and used for student accommodation.

One of these cottages was a butcher's shop owned by Matthew Bramley, and behind these cottages is the famous Bramley apple tree.

We heard that in 1809 Mary Ann Brailsford planted an apple pip from an apple being cooked to make a pie.



After the Brailsfords moved out, Matthew Bramley moved in and it was while he was living there Henry Merryweather a local nurseryman spotted the tree. He asked if he could take cuttings of the tree and the Bramley's Seedling was created. The tree is unfortunately now in decline due to honey fungus.



Leaving the garden we walked towards the Burgage, passing Hill House built by John Thomas Beecher, founder of the workhouse. Arriving at the Burgage, we were told the history of some of the houses, including Burgage Manor where Lord Byron lived from 1803-5. Mike also pointed out the entrance to the house of correction which was built in 1807 and closed in 1880. The original chapel can still be seen behind the building.

We finished our walk at the Saracen's Head pub built in 1396 and the location of the surrender of King Charles I to the Scottish Commissioners. This was a really interesting walk which we all enjoyed very much.

June 2022: LACE MARKET THEATRE

June saw us take a very interesting tour of the Lace Market Theatre.

Our visit started with a welcoming cup of tea while Gill explained the history of the theatre. This year is an important year for the theatre; it's celebrating the 40th year of linking up with two theatres in Karlsruhe, and the 50th anniversary of when the company moved into its present location as the Nottingham Theatre Club.



The building itself is grade II listed, and was built in 1760 by Non-Conformists from the High Pavement chapter who split after an argument. They built brick walls and used salvaged beams from medieval buildings for the roof.

The front of the building was added later and is in the Dutch style. In 1785 the building was sold to Primitive Methodists who sold to Wesleyan Methodists in 1814.

The building was rented between 1836-42 by Mr Biddulph as a school where William Booth was a pupil. After Mr Biddulph left the building was used as a lace warehouse, then a grocery warehouse and later a paint store before becoming derelict.

In 1970 the building was bought by the Nottingham Theatre Club with the help of an interest free loan from the council. In 1978 they bought the land behind the building which enabled a bigger stage to be built.

A charitable trust was formed to raise money for the extension. The trust owned the building and the theatre club paid rent. The trust also gave grants to drama students. The trust acquired the land at the side of the building in 2004, but couldn't apply for grants. As a result the trust and the theatre club merged to form the Lace Market Theatre.



After the talk we were given a guided tour of the theatre. We were told the theatre seats 124, and produces 10 plays a year, one of which is by the youth theatre. Four plays a year are also staged in the studio which seats 50. The theatre is also very pleased to have received the Queen's award for Voluntary Services in the Queen's Jubilee Honours.

This was a very interesting visit, and I'm sure we're all looking forward to seeing many more plays here in the future.

August 2022: SHERWOOD

For our August meeting we were given a guided tour of Sherwood by our knowledgeable guide Mo Cooper. We started our tour outside Baguley Brothers funeral directors on Mansfield Road, where we heard the company was originally a transport company based further up Mansfield Road between 1901-1916 before moving into the funeral business. Mo told us that many of the houses, such as the one now occupied by Brigitte Bordeaux were private school academies.

From Mansfield Road we took a short walk to Private Road. As we walked up Private Road, we paused at several houses where Mo gave us information on some of the previous occupants. These included a Mr Crawford, physician and surgeon, Samuel Cartledge the owner of Mapperley brick works and lace manufacturer. In 1885 architect William Arthur Heazell occupied No. 27. He, together with his sons, designed a number of buildings in Nottingham including the building that was La Tasca restaurant in Weekday Cross and Oriel chambers on Long Row.

One of the most entertaining stories relates to No 32. In 1912 this house was occupied by Ernest Weekley the university professor of D H Lawrence. When D H Lawrence was 26, he visited his professor who unfortunately was out at the time. The professor's wife, Frieda entertained Lawrence in her husband's absence and shortly after this they began an affair and eventually eloped. The couple married in 1914 and both continued to have affairs throughout their lives.

We concluded our tour at the corner of Devon Drive, having been beaten by the rain. Mo told us that the alleged double murderer Dorothy Waddington had set up a nursing home at No. 32 Devon Drive.

This was a very informative tour and it was a shame we had to cut it short because of the weather.

September 2022: MANUSCRIPTS AND SPECIAL COLLECTIONS

For our September meeting we visited the Manuscripts and Special Collections department of the University of Nottingham. Our meeting kicked off with a very interesting talk on the origins of Robin Hood. There are multiple references to Robin Hood throughout the centuries, beginning in the late 13th century with the Wakefield court records.

The first literary mention of Robin Hood is in 1377 where he is referred to as a yeoman of the forest, and later Joseph Ritson (1752-1803) is recorded as having the most comprehensive collection of Robin Hood ballads. He expanded the stories to robbing from the rich to give to the poor. It should be said that most of the ballads were violent tales.

We moved on to the Sheriff of Nottingham which was a non-salaried job. Instead the sheriff received a cut of confiscated money and land. Two candidates for the role at the time of Robin Hood are Philip Marc and Eustace of Lowdham who was also sheriff of Yorkshire and prosecuted Robin Hood in Wakefield.

After the very entertaining talk we were given a tour of the archive. We were told that the collection was moved to the university site at the King's Meadow campus in 2006.

The archive includes the papers of leading Nottinghamshire families, the records of local businesses and organisations, the papers of political, diplomatic, literary, scientific and academic figures, including D.H. Lawrence and some of the historical records of the University.

The special collections of published works include collections relating to 18th to 19th century drama, children's educational literature, the history of medicine, Icelandic literature, the French Revolution and rare books and pre-1850 stock transferred from general library holdings.

This was a very interesting visit and would be a great resource for those researching both local and family history.

Anne & Graham Palmer

October 2022: THE PARK

October saw us enjoy a guided tour of The Park with the very knowledgeable Kurt Hatton. Kurt started the tour by telling us that development of The Park commenced in the nineteenth century having been a hunting ground since 1252. Charles II sold the land to the Duke of Buckinghamshire and in 1663 the land was bought by William Cavendish, 1st Duke of Newcastle. In 1827 the 4th Duke engaged the architect Peter Frederick Robinson, who produced his plan for the layout of the park. The first house was built in 1829 and by 1832 40 or 50 more had been built.

The 5th Duke employed T C Hine to redesign the layout and the first house built after Hine took over was on Castle Grove in 1856. Hine also designed the 1st stock street lights in 1854/56, the 2nd stock were added in the 1870s and are still gas lit today.

Another notable architect responsible for developing The Park was Watson Fothergill and his earliest surviving house in Nottingham, built in 1873, can be found on Lenton Road. The largest single house built by Watson Fothergill can also be found in The Park, built in 1883 on South Road.

As we walked in The Park Kurt provided us with information on many of the large houses and pointed out many of the features included by specific architects such as the eight-pointed star incorporated into the houses designed by T C Hine.



In 1938, the 8th Duke sold The Park to the Nuffield Trust who then sold to Oxford University. Prior to this all plots were leasehold, but now homeowners could buy their plots. The Park estate remains private and is now managed by Nottingham Park Estate Ltd. Living on the estate

incurs both council tax and a local charge ('Park Rates') which covers maintenance of roads, pavements, the gas light network etc.

This was a very informative and interesting tour and we all look forward to doing the second part of the tour next year.



November 2022: GUTS AND GORE

November once again found us in the company of the very entertaining Ezekial Bone for his Guts and Gore tour.



We started the tour outside the Nottingham Contemporary near the original location of Garners Hill steps, where Ezekial regaled us with the story of the execution of William Saville. Saville

was infamous in Nottingham for murdering his wife and children and his execution was attended by an enormous crowd. A crush ensued and 17 people died and 50 were seriously injured on the Garners Hill steps.

We moved on to County Hall where we were told that Lord Byron had stayed at the Cock and Hoop and had watched executions from there, and that the last execution here was of Richard Thomas Barker in 1864. Outside St Mary's church we heard about some of the ballads of Robin Hood. These ballads spoke of violence and death, with one story telling of the death of Guy of Gisbourne and Robin Hood parading his head on a stick.

After hearing more tales whilst sheltering from the rain we moved on to the burial ground on Barker Gate. Here we were told about plague pits and overspill cemeteries. We were also told about the criminal activity of grave robbing and how family members kept watch over the recently departed for several days to prevent them being dug up by the resurrection men.

We were also told the story of the skull cup created by Lord Byron at Rufford Abbey. Byron had heard that there were several monks buried in the grounds of the abbey prior to it being deconsecrated. When his gardener dug up an unusually well preserved skull, Byron decided to make it into a drinking vessel. It is rumoured to have been filled with claret and passed around his guests. Ezekial went on to recite the poem written by Byron about the skull cup.

Our final stop was the Old Angel on Stoney Street which we were told was a stopping off point for prisoners on the way to the gallows for a final drink. We were also told that there was a chapel built into the pub. Another entertaining tour in the excellent company of Ezekial Bone.