

LOCAL HISTORY 2024

April 2024: LANDMARKS AND DATES IN GEDLING

Over fifty members gathered to hear an informative talk about Gedling given by Neil Kendrick. He told us the history of buildings which we see regularly as well as many that are sadly no more.

He started with All Hallows Church and the early history of the two settlements of Gedling in Norman times and touched on a variety of places and famous people located within a mile of the church. These included the Wars of the Roses, various farms, cricketers and the colliery, finishing with the Gedling Bypass – apparently they had considered the road in the 1930s.

May 2024: NETHERFIELD LAGOONS

A group of members spent a fascinating afternoon walking round the Lagoons learning the history and seeing the natural history of the site under the guidance of two volunteers from Gedling Conservation Trust who own the site..

Originally the River Trent flowed north of the site but gradually changed course over several hundred years. The pits were dug to extract gravel then with the introduction of the colliery, used for coal washing. Water was extracted from the river and pumped to the colliery to wash coal. The resulting slurry was then piped to the slurry lagoon where most of the debris settled. It then passed to the deep pit to settle further before passing through more pits to be clean enough to return to the Trent.

On the closure of the colliery, Coal UK transferred the site to the Gedling Conservation Trust to create a nature reserve. The slurry lagoon still has a thick crust with water underneath and is home to marsh plants. The whole site has developed plenty of tree cover but is maintained to provide varied habitat. The range of plants support a fascinating assortment of insect life which in turn encourage a varied mixture of birds with a choice of wetland as well as tree and grassland habitats.

With lovely views and benches to relax, one could spend hours listening to the birdsong. I'm sure some of our members will be paying a return visit.



June 2024: NOTTS COUNTY F. C. STADIUM TOUR

Two groups had a guided tour of the ground lead by Les Bradd, a former player at the club. We learned how the club is also a hospitality venue catering for anything from birthday parties to conferences. The latest extension is an adjacent building called the Nest which will cater for up to 1400 people. The pitch was a slight disappointment as it is currently brown but very close examination revealed tiny blades of grass from the reseeded. We were entertained by the irrigation system which can water the whole pitch in three minutes.



July 2024: ST ANN'S ALLOTMENTS

A group of us had a visit to the historic St Ann's Allotments site. We were skilfully guided through steep narrow pathways between high hedges by Mo Cooper who told us the history of the Grade 2 listed site. Originally formed as large pleasure gardens for the wealthy home owners of Nottingham in the early 19th Century, the plots were sub divided to provide more smaller gardens for Nottingham residents with a variety of large sheds to create a place to entertain friends. After the First World War there were up to 200 people living on the site.

In the later part of the 20th Century there were plans to build across the site and some of the allotment holders arranged to have the site listed as a historic monument. This led to the formation of a charity to look after the historical aspects of the site and includes tours, various training courses and community involvement.

We visited the Heritage Garden called "Oliver's Garden" in memory of the last occupant. A Victorian glasshouse and a large shed demonstrate how they were used in the past and an array of fruit, vegetables and flowers are still grown there.



August 2024: WILLIAM BOOTH BIRTHPLACE MUSEUM

Our August meeting was a visit to the Museum based at William Booth's childhood home in Sneinton. The visit started in the little square outside the small terraced house where William Booth was born.



We were then given an film show about the life of William Booth and the founding of the Salvation Army.

This was followed by a trip across the road to St Stephen's church where he attended services as a child. As well as his christening, his parents married in the church and late in Victorian times, D H Lawrence's parents also married there.



We then returned to tour the museum which is laid out across three houses and gives a feel for the layout of houses of the era.

September 2024: FRAMEWORK KNITTERS MUSEUM

A group of us went to Ruddington to visit this unique museum.

We started with an introductory talk and a video. We then split into three groups to visit the various buildings of the museum.

At one end of the site is a small row of knitter's cottages and a slightly larger one for the manager.

On opposite sides of a garden are a framework shop and a circular knitting shop. In each of these areas, a volunteer was on hand to explain, making a very interesting visit.



October 2024: THE COURTS OF NOTTINGHAM

David Colyer gave us an amusing history of the many Courts that had existed in Nottingham. Sadly we were unable to see his slide show due to technical problems, but his stories kept us entertained. Many of these were based on his personal experience, both as a solicitor and a judge.

November 2024: NATIONAL JUSTICE MUSEUM

A large group of members visited the National Justice Museum (previously the Galleries of Justice) located on High Pavement where we had a guided tour.

The impressive building was originally the Shire Hall where various courts met over the years and our tour started in the high ceiling court room located on the first floor of the building. We were told who sat (or stood) where and how trials were conducted.

From the dock, we followed the route of a convict down the narrow stairs to the male cells where we got an idea of the dark, cold and cramped conditions they were kept in prior to trial and until the carrying out of their sentence. Most convicted criminals were either hanged or transported "across the seas".

Below the male cells were the female cells which were slightly warmer as the occupants were set to work carrying out laundry for long hours. We finally saw the oldest cells below which were carved out of the sandstone.

Throughout the tour there were posters about various criminals who had been tried there as well as a variety of tools of justice ranging from stocks to a gibbet.

On returning to the court room we were able to take part in a re-enacting of a case from over 200 years ago. Fortunately none of our members were sentenced to death, although one was nearly transported. We were then able to look around various further exhibits.



December 2024: SOCIAL

For our Christmas meeting we had a social afternoon with a Beetle Drive organized by Doreen.

Although most of us had been to a Beetle Drive in the past, in most cases it was over fifty years ago and we had forgotten the rules. We quickly picked them up again and had a fast paced sociable afternoon with a break for refreshments.