

LOCAL HISTORY 2025

January 2025: LOCAL STREET NAMES

We started the New Year with an afternoon on local street names. Doreen supplied us with a quiz which we carried out in groups. The final results were very similar between groups and this lead on to a few reminiscences relating to some of the roads.

After a short break we had a discussion about the origins of local street names. These included local field names and features which predated modern developments and many related to local land owners and other people of greater (or less) fame.

Much local land was in the hands of ennobled families who seemed to be mainly related through marriage. This allowed for a wide choice of family names and locations of other family interests – much Duke of Devonshire land has street names related to Derbyshire. In more recent times names relating to local industry have been used.

Graeme informed us that there is a list of street names on the website that had been compiled as a project several years ago; [click to view](#). We may try to update this list if anybody is interested.

February 2025: LAW & ORDER IN NOTTINGHAM

This month we had a visit from Bob Massey, a well-known speaker on local history. He introduced us to the earliest ideas of policing and punishment prior to the introduction of the modern idea of a police force.

In the earliest tribal communities punishment took the form of dismissal from the tribe. This left the culprit homeless and friendless – in effect an outlaw. The Romans then introduced watchmen (who were slaves) to deal with criminals and fires. Apparently the Romans didn't develop Nottinghamshire much as the natives were very friendly. They had a camp at Arnold for passing troops to stay but tended to concentrate on areas occupied by more warlike tribes. After they left, policing went back to the tribal days.

With the arrival of the Normans, legal matters became more organised. Courts were operated locally forming an early legal system. Criminals could be fined. The idea of imprisonment was a fairly late development with fines or hanging being the main punishment. With the discovery of Australia an alternative punishment was transportation – an early form of imprisonment. It was only in 18th Century that we saw the start of the modern system of courts and prisons.

March 2025: HIGHWAYMEN, KINGS AND FOOTPADS

At our March meeting, Ian Moran took us on an entertaining trip along the Great North Road through Nottingham learning about the Highwaymen, Kings and Footpads that used the road through history.

From Newark Castle with its Civil War stories, we progressed through towns and villages to Scrooby, famous as the home of the Pilgrim Fathers.

April 2025: BEER & BIBLES

For our April meeting we met at the Old Market Square. From there, Kurt Hatton of the Civic Society led us on a circular tour of the city centre entitled "Beer and Bibles".

Along the way we were told about the various churches and chapels that we passed. Most of these have been repurposed for other uses including bars.

We also heard about the history of various pubs, some of which no longer existed. In one case it had been physically moved and we saw it in its current location as well as seeing its original site. The walk finished at the Castle.

May 2025: CARLTON 1883 to 1939

For our May meeting we had a talk by Graham Smith entitled *Carlton 1883 to 1939: Village to Suburb*.

He started by explaining the organization of the parish of Gedling which was changed little from the Norman Conquest until the 19th Century. From Victorian times there was a gradual development of modern ideas of authorities taking over parish duties.

Carlton grew during this period and because it was physically separated from Gedling, became a separate parish in 1883 and assumed its own identity. This was aided by the development of improved transport links and an increase in industrial activity, particularly brickmaking.

June 2025: CANALS

Our June meeting was a talk by Graham Woodward from the Civic Society on Canals. He started by explaining how the building of canals created a revolution in the transport of bulky goods. Previously, the maximum load a horse could pull on a rough road was one ton. By canal, the same horse could easily pull in excess of 20 tons. This reduced the transport costs considerably.

He then told us of the various canals in Nottinghamshire and why they were built as well as the different types of canals and the use of locks (and the risks involved if you didn't take care). He particularly told us about the Nottingham and Grantham canals with various photos of their present condition.

July 2025: D H LAWRENCE MUSEUM

A group of us ventured to Eastwood to visit the D H Lawrence birthplace Museum. This small museum, located in a pair of Victorian terraced houses, was where D H Lawrence lived the first two years of his life.

We were shown a short video about his life then taken round the various rooms by an enthusiastic guide. The contents of the rooms illustrated how they would have been furnished in Victorian times and included some items which had belonged to his family.

We were able to handle some of the exhibits and for many, this brought back memories of their childhood and grandparents.

August 2025: LACE MARKET

In our August meeting Mo Cooper told us about the people of the Lace Market area. This included maps of the area showing how it developed and photos of the buildings and their owners and workers.

Various interesting facts were illustrated including the lace pattern on the Nottingham Contemporary Gallery and the chapel in the basement of the Adams Building.

September 2025: MUD, MUNITIONS & MONUMENTS

Chris Weir joined us in September for a look at how Nottinghamshire was affected by the First World War.

Using pictures of the area of trench warfare in northern France and Belgium, together with artifacts, he introduced us to several local people who fought there, including two holders of the VC.

The pictures together with letters and diaries created an image of the conditions they lived and fought in. Moving to Nottingham, he touched on the role of munitions and factories at Kings Meadow and Chilwell including the monument to those who lost their lives in the Chilwell explosion.

October 2025: STOKE BARDOLPH

A group of thirty members had a guided tour of the Severn Trent facility at Stoke Bardolph. Despite a very heavy downpour at the start of the visit, we managed to stay dry.

The education officer started in a classroom (while it rained) and explained the history and function of the site, as well as how the sewage and drainage system worked.

A few myths were explained – Severn Trent does not release unscreened fluid into the Trent (more likely caused by builders connecting to the wrong pipe). The tour of the site showed us how the intake is initially screened to remove several tons per day of wet wipes, plastic toys, car keys and mobile phones.

The various settlement tanks also took out gravel and oils then bacteria was used to destroy other contents of the water. Finally, the clean water was tested to meet safe standards to release into the Trent. No chemicals are used in the process and the site generates its own electricity (and puts the surplus into the grid). The area is covered in wild plants which encourages an assortment of wildlife.

November 2025: SHERWOOD FOREST SCANDALS

Our November meeting was on the subject of the Top Ten Scandals of Sherwood Forest.

The speaker was Adrian Gray, a local historian and author. He kept the audience amused for over an hour with tales of scandalous behaviour among the well-known families of the Dukeries.

Most involved marriages and money - usually both. This was often due to the impoverished landowners marrying rich widows (often with a large age gap). For variety, there were a few divorces and bigamy.

We were also reminded that Sherwood Forest had shrunk considerably over the centuries. Starting as a royal hunting forest, many landowners had obtained land (and money) from the King then, when all their money was gone; they gave it back to the nation in the form of the National Trust.

December 2025: SOCIAL

Our December meeting continued the tradition of a social with quiz. We are fortunate to have among our number an expert on both local history and quizzes. Neil Kendrick set us a quiz of 40 questions ranging from local history, famous Nottingham faces, Nottinghamshire history and famous films and TV shows associated with Nottingham.

We then had refreshments and an opportunity to socialise, finishing with the marking of answers and award of prizes. Working in teams, our members proved fairly closely matched in knowledge but one team (the smallest) proved slightly more knowledgeable.