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Special issue: Hidden voices

PLUS Surgery, medicine and military welfare during the British Civil Wars • The Suffragettes • Asylums at war • Slave trade legacies and much more
Welcome back to East Midlands History and Heritage, the magazine that uniquely caters for local history societies, schools and colleges, heritage practitioners and history professionals across the region, putting them in contact with you and you with them.

We're very pleased that most of the contributions to this issue come from members of local history societies or similar organisations, and those others who work outside of the university sector. This was always the ambition. We would very much like this trend to continue.

The next issue, December 2016, will be an open call, so there is no predetermined theme. If you want write for us, therefore, you can pick any topic from any period, just so long as it has a strong East Midlands connection. So if you are currently working on a community project, or a private piece of research, and would like to take your findings to a large audience, why don't you email us with the details at emhist@virginmedia.com.

We can also help with layout, sourcing, writing, and the research itself if need be, but the work remains your own. Keep a look out, too, for matching images that will help illustrate your articles (the higher the number of pixels, the larger we can make the image).

Dr Nick Hayes
Nottingham Trent University

Cover image - The Rebels arrive in Ripley, Print by David Bailey. David is member of the local Ripley U3A art group, Matlock Artists Society and the Matlock Portrait Group. He works and experiments with many different mediums: oil paints, water mixable oil, 3ks, etchings, watercolour. Bailey9sp@btinternet.com

Let us have details of your news and events. We'll take your stories about your community's history to a larger regional audience. We'd also welcome articles about our region's broader past. Contact us via our website at www.eastmidlandshistory.org.uk or email emhist@virginmedia.com

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Cover image - The Rebels arrive in Ripley, Print by David Bailey. David is member of the local Ripley U3A art group, Matlock Artists Society and the Matlock Portrait Group. He works and experiments with many different mediums: oil paints, water mixable oil, 3ks, etchings, watercolour. Bailey9sp@btinternet.com
Battle-scarred: Surgery, medicine and military welfare during the British Civil Wars

Historians of the British Civil Wars (1638-1652) are increasingly taking notice of these bloody conflicts as a critical event in the welfare history of Europe. Previous wars had seen military commanders demonstrate little concern or resources for the welfare of sick and injured soldiers, but during the British Civil Wars, Parliament’s focus on the ‘commonweal’ led to centralized care for those who had suffered “in the State’s service”.

These innovative measures were immensely significant as for some they led to improved medical treatment, permanent military hospitals, and a national pension scheme. For the very first time, Parliament publicly assumed responsibility for such matters, signifying acceptance of the State’s duty of care to its servicemen, and for the first time their widows and orphans too.

These themes are all showcased in a temporary exhibition, entitled ‘Battle-Scarred’, which has been curated by a team from Leicester’s Centre for English Local History led by Dr Andrew Hopper, at the National Civil War Centre at Newark Museum from 19 March to 2 October 2016. The exhibition builds on a grant from the Wolfson Foundation and comprises four rooms allocated to the themes of civil-war medicine, surgery, aftercare and welfare.

The exhibition's aims are threefold. Firstly, it hopes to change the public's perception of medical care during the civil-war period. Secondly, it seeks to provide visitors with a small window into the human cost of the British Civil Wars and to consider how the consequences of such wars persisted well beyond the peace treaties and settlements that concluded them. Finally, in the wake of more recent wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, it aims to encourage visitors to reflect on what we can learn today about medical and welfare practices from our seventeenth-century forbears.

The exhibition highlights the human costs of the catastrophe of Civil War. It focuses on the practitioners and patients, the servicemen and their families, by highlighting those efforts to save human lives during this disaster. It endeavours to challenge a popular misconception that seventeenth-century medical treatments were incompetent and ineffective, that medical practice was riddled with charlatans and quack doctors, and that in an age lacking modern antibiotics, those suffering from infection were doomed. Instead it points to some medical and surgical treatments that were effective, along with the establishment of the first permanent military hospitals by the Long Parliament at the Savoy and Ely House in London, where the patients enjoyed decent diets, laundered clean bedding and the administrations of a professional staff. Several thousands of petitions survive across England and Wales written on behalf of maimed soldiers detailing how they had survived their injuries but now needed financial support owing to their incapacitation from work. Accompanying them are thousands more petitions from war widows whose husbands lost their lives in the conflict. These petitions hoped to procure pensions, or one off welfare payments. But now they provide us with a valuable window into how voices normally hidden from history – the largely illiterate common soldiers and their widows – remembered this visceral conflict.

Further Reading:

Dr Andrew Hopper
University of Leicester
Voices from the past: The search for medieval graffiti in Derbyshire & Nottinghamshire

The study of historic graffiti has largely languished as an extremely obscure branch of historical and archaeological research. This despite Violet Pritchard’s ground-breaking book published in 1967 on English Medieval Graffiti, until recently.

About the authors

James Wright is a Buildings Archaeologist with a specialism in Medieval & Renaissance Architecture. He has worked in the field of historic graffiti for several years, and in particular at Knole House and the Tower of London.

Matthew Beresford is a Consultant Archaeologist and Director of Involve Heritage CIC. He is the Project Director for the Derbyshire & Nottinghamshire Medieval Graffiti Survey.

Six years ago, archaeologist Matthew Champion set up the Norfolk Medieval Graffiti Survey. Similarly surveys were quickly established in Suffolk and then for most of lowland England. To date there are now seventeen individual county surveys, including the Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire Medieval Graffiti Survey (DNMGS), run as a community project by Involve Heritage CIC. Historic England is currently consulting on a draft document of guidelines for good survey practice. Champion’s book Medieval Graffiti is appearing on the shelves of high street chain bookshops, and conferences are springing up looking at the subject. All of a sudden historic graffiti has become a mainstream hot topic. Why is this, and, how could this subject have been largely ignored for so long?

The answer in part may hang within our societal view of graffiti as a transgressive, moronic expressive. Bankers may be considered a mainstream artist these days but his anonymity (whilst possibly now an unnecessary conceit) continues to fuel the impression of it being an outsider form of expression. Many of us will be familiar with graffiti featuring names, initials and dates liberally coating our ancient monuments and listed buildings, as well as more everyday sites. The purpose of this type of graffiti seems to be linked to making public statements of ownership and penetration, sometimes into the deepest, farthest or highest part of a structure. Rare examples might date from the sixteenth or seventeenth centuries, but most of it is modern and in some ways can be considered destructive and selfish behaviour often carried out covertly. Graffiti then, according to this model, is bad behaviour not worthy of study.

Look a little deeper and there is often something older, more interesting and definitely exciting going on amongst the inscriptions. Graffiti begets graffiti. The act of carving on a wall attracts others to do the same. Buried amongst the nineteenth century tourist graffiti are often the scratchings of an earlier age.

The clustered crosses can be interpreted not as devotional, but as signatures practice that involved an inscribed mark. Crosses one might expect to see carved in churches. They are often found near to the main doors and especially in porches. This practice may derive from a time when the porch was a location for parishioners to gather during business meetings. The answer in part may hang within our societal view of graffiti as a transgressive, moronic expressive. Bankers may be considered a mainstream artist these days but his anonymity (whilst possibly now an unnecessary conceit) continues to fuel the impression of it being an outsider form of expression. Many of us will be familiar with graffiti featuring names, initials and dates liberally coating our ancient monuments and listed buildings, as well as more everyday sites. The purpose of this type of graffiti seems to be linked to making public statements of ownership and penetration, sometimes into the deepest, farthest or highest part of a structure. Rare examples might date from the sixteenth or seventeenth centuries, but most of it is modern and in some ways can be considered destructive and selfish behaviour often carried out covertly. Graffiti then, according to this model, is bad behaviour not worthy of study. Look a little deeper and there is often something older, more interesting and definitely exciting going on amongst the inscriptions. Graffiti begets graffiti. The act of carving on a wall attracts others to do the same. Buried amongst the nineteenth century tourist graffiti are often the scratchings of an earlier age.

The circles are neatly cut and still have the central axial point visible from their structures. Another commonly held belief was that spirits would attempt to penetrate a building wherever the air could pass. Consequently ritual protection marks are most often found in the vicinity of doors, windows and chimneys. Pentagrams, chequerboards and knots – related to a belief commonly held in the medieval period that evil spirits and demons were curious creatures who would attempt to find the end of a line. It followed that the spirits were not particularly intelligent beings as the creation of an endless line led to the demon being literally pinned to the walls for all time. At a time when the belief in the incarnation of evil upon earth was seen as a very real and threatening presence, it was vitally important to the occupants of buildings to offer ritual protection to their structures. Another commonly held belief was that spirits would attempt to penetrate a building wherever the air could pass. Consequently ritual protection marks are most often found in the vicinity of doors, windows and chimneys.

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The church at Newark is far from an exception in terms of historic graffiti. Scoping sessions back in 2014 showed that many of our local church buildings, medieval palaces and stately halls bear evidence of inscribed graffiti stretching back hundreds of years. In April 2015, involve Heritage CIC was awarded a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund to conduct a two-year pilot project to survey a limited number of buildings within the counties of Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire. The survey area ranges from Newark and Southwell in the east of Nottinghamshire through to Mansfield in the west, and a collection of buildings in the Bolsover Region of North-East Derbyshire. As of May 2016, we have fully surveyed eight buildings in Derbyshire and seven in Nottinghamshire, and have identified, photographed and recorded well over 2500 separate pieces of historic graffiti. Southwell Minster, in Nottinghamshire, has over one thousand pieces on the ground floor alone, including medieval masons’ marks, animal motifs, ritual protection marks, architectural drawings, carpenters’ marks, and a whole plethora of intriguing imagery such as shoes, keys, figures and symbols. We have also discovered medieval test and, most excitingly, two examples of medieval musical notation. From the work undertaken by the survey, there appears to be a very wide-ranging ‘hidden language’ contained within our churches and medieval buildings. Some churches are heavily inscribed, while others contain just a few examples (and sometimes none). Common across the sites surveyed are the largely expected masons’ marks and cross inscriptions, but also a few select images of what are largely believed to represent the ritual protection marks described above.

For example, double-V motifs, often termed ‘witch marks’, have been found in such high-profile buildings as Knole in Kent and the Tower of London. Identical designs have so far been found as does the Minster.

The DNMGS project alone has so far worked with around fifty volunteers who have been trained and supported in survey techniques, recording methods and identification to the standard whereby small groups of project members are now able to go out and record churches on their own and capture the information needed.

The church at Newark is far from an exception in terms of historic graffiti. The marks are often very difficult to see, and support needed for each county is not easy to come by in the current climate. Interpreting and dating the graffiti can also be tricky. Some examples are easier than others: carvings of figures with specific clothing styles can usually be dated quite accurately, depictions of ships have characteristic designs which change over time, and illustrations of weaponry can often be dated according to known typologies. Much of the graffiti, however, cannot be dated so precisely. Church graffiti can sometimes be said to be pre- or post-Reformation, according to whether or not it was cut through traces of medieval wall paintings but was later painted over with the limewash of the reformers.}

The fact that graffiti in churches was often cut through by the highly coloured paintings that once adorned the walls points towards a ready collusion or likely acceptance by the church authorities. It was understood that the inscriptions represented a visual indication of the hopes, fears and desires of the ordinary people. Graffiti was in fact so common and in plain view that it does not appear to have been a transgressive act but was instead carried out as an utterly normal part of life.}

James Wright and Matthew Beward
The paupers of the past left behind very little information about how they lived. Parish registers, overseers’ poor books and other official documents recorded the necessary facts about them but offer only fragmentary details of their daily struggles. From these historians have reconstructed elements of the lives of the poor in a few communities, showing how they avoided the worst excesses of total destitution through a patchwork of local rate-payer funded relief, charity and personal coping strategies.

This article builds on that body of knowledge by extracting from the eighteenth and early nineteenth century parish registers of Stow-in-Lindsey, Lincolnshire, details of a small sample of the poor. It then illustrates the importance of other sorts of evidence through a brief analysis of a painting showing a dole being dealt in Stow church.

During the period studied Stow was an open parish of less than 500 people, most of whom owned or worked on small arable farms. The parish registers show that a few families remained in Stow for several generations but mostly the population was mobile. Among the records for two or three life-cycle events such as baptism, marriage or burial, and then disappearing. The absence from the parish of a resident clergyman, nobility and gentility meant that poorer people were in the hands of small businessmen, they made up the membership of the vestry which administered poor relief through overseers appointed from their own number.

One family that looked to the overseers for help in times of need was the Cockings. Robert Cocking’s first appearance in the records was in 1730 when he was paid sixpence (2½p) by the churchwardens for assisting the plumber with lead work on the church roof. Such occasional casual work was an important part of the patchwork of support for those poor who were able to do it. Often it was provided by the overseers but sometimes by private employers. It was not unusual for overseers to arrange apprenticeships for the children of the poor, who had little say in the matter; in Stow it was farm handywork for the boys and housework for the girls.

At least Francis Cocking could still have some contact with his son as he was apprenticed within the parish. Francis and his daughter, Sarah, continued living in the family home, sustained by occasional casual work and parish relief. It is also possible they received some help from relatives who were a little better off. Members of other branches of the family are not recorded as receiving parish support. In 1755 his eight year old son Hugh was apprenticed to a local farmer. It was not unusual for overseers to arrange apprenticeships for the children of the poor who had little say in the matter; in Stow it was farm handywork for the boys and housework for the girls.

Robert Cocking’s son Francis had three wives and twelve children, two of whom survived infancy. He earned money by weaving and casual work, and this may have been supplemented by whatever his wives could earn. The timings of entries in the parish registers suggest each of his wives died in or as a result of childbirth. After losing his third wife, in 1752, Francis cared for his two surviving children but it was becoming harder to make money from weaving and casual labouring work was seldom plentiful. Instead, he increasingly relied on the parish for help. In 1755 his eight year old son Hugh was apprenticed to a local farmer. It was not unusual for overseers to arrange apprenticeships for the children of the poor, who had little say in the matter; in Stow it was farm handywork for the boys and housework for the girls.

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After completing his apprenticeship Francis Cocking’s son, Hugh, became a farm labourer in a neighbouring parish. He married Elizabeth and they had a son whose name is not known, in the Stow records he is referred to only as ‘Cooking’s boy’. Hugh died around the same time as his father. As Stow remained Hugh’s parish of legal settlement, despite the fact he had moved to work out of the parish several years before, it was obliged to pay the costs of his funeral. His widow, Elizabeth, moved her son to Stow and the boy immediately received relief. Elizabeth did not stay but her son did and was maintained at the expense of the parish for the next nine years. The Cockings were, in part at least, maintained over four generations and this probably caused grumbling among the ratepayers who saw themselves as hard pressed for money.

In most of the years studied women received the majority of weekly collections. Usually they were widows but some, like Mary Cocking, appear never to have married. In the language of the time Mary would have been called a ‘bastard bearer’ when, in 1783, she became pregnant by Isaac Wilkinson. When this was known the overseers paid a warrant to be sworn against him but it is not clear what happened after that.

If the child lived Isaac would have had to pay around two pounds for laying-in and nursing costs and two shillings (10p) weekly, the mother would have been expected to pay expense (2½p) each week towards the child’s maintenance.
An Account of the Goods and Chattels in the Poor House belonging to the Township of Stow occupied by Mary Auckland.

Two Bedsteads with Bedding, Boulterers, Pillows, Blankets, Sheets and Rugs; Seven Chairs; Three Tables, Corner Cupboard, Side Oven, Fender and Fire Irons; Itilian Iron, Two Boxes; one Bucket; Platecase with Plates and Dishes; Two Iron Pots; Two small Irons.

Novr the 1 1830.

Inventory of poor house contents 1830

As Hitchcock and his colleagues have shown, however, the majority of pregnancies outside marriage did not go full-term or the child soon died and the mothers, almost certainly sacked from whatever jobs they had, moved elsewhere to begin new lives. This might have been the case with Mary Auckland as she does not appear in the records again until 1826 when she and another woman were paid by the parish for laying out bodies in preparation for burial.

This was part of the role identified in Shave’s study as “poor low nurse”, paupers paid by the parish to care for others who were sick or dying, often other paupers.

Mary Auckland, like Francis Cocking before her, lived in one of the parish’s poor houses. From the records we know these were constructed using the relatively cheap mud and stud method once popular in Lincolnshire. When she moved in an inventory was made of the contents and this is reproduced above retaining the original spellings, capitalization and punctuation.

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The inclusion of two bedsteads might indicate the house was equipped for couples or that paupers were expected to share their accommodation when necessary. Mary occupied this house until at least 1845 and was maintained using the relatively cheap mud and stud method once popular in Lincolnshire. When she moved in an inventory was made of the contents and this is reproduced above retaining the original spellings, capitalization and punctuation.

The second charity, the 1841 bequest of William Tomlinson, provided five pounds four shillings (£5.20p) per year for two shillings (10p) worth of bread to be distributed to the poor by the minister immediately after divine service each Sunday. The use of the word “immediately” in Tomlinson’s will suggests that being thought a fit recipient was conditional on church attendance. Tomlinson also said “that if any poverty could not come I would not have them forgotten.” It is likely that the minister had to make weekly judgements about the nature of the impotency that prevented potential beneficiaries from attending. We do not know what was taken into account in these judgements because there is nothing in the records about the administration of the charity. Fortunately there is an important record of the bread distribution in an 1860s painting in the Cartwright Hall collection in Bradford.

The painting, The Dole, Stow Church, Lincolnshire by James Lobley is a good if rare example of evidence that can supplement the data from parish poor records. Importantly, such representations can provide perceptions of the human condition that official documents cannot give us. Of course there are dangers in reading too much into any painting. Lobley held progressive liberal views and came from a working-class background (his father was a currier). The Dole was his best known work. Here he captures the human dynamics of what must essentially have been a sad event and these resonate with what we know from the records. The recipients of the dole are sympathetically represented, elderly and young people, the core of the deserving poor; notably working age adults are absent from the picture. The bread is stacked on the floor, the symbolic entry point of the church and the place where original sin is washed away and the devil renounced. It is also at the west end of the church, the furthest point from the high altar, perhaps reflecting ambiguity in biblical teaching and the church’s attitude to poverty. A loaf is handed by an expressionless, time worn parson to a young, sad faced girl who holds out her apron to receive it. The girl stands in a group of much older people. One, perhaps her grandmother, supports herself with a stick and looks on with dignified acceptance while another elderly, grim faced woman gathers her apron ready for her loaf.

Why is the loaf delivered into the apron? Was this simply the customary way in which women carried goods or was it designed to avoid physical contact between the pauper and her betters? The man has his hat in his hand; would his loaf be placed into it? Close to the artist the two ends of the spectrum of charity are represented, despair and hope. With despair on her face and wearing clothes that might reflect very prosperous earlier days, an elderly woman sits on a coffin stool waiting for her turn to come. The spirit of hope is in the form of a young, pauper girl; she stands apart from the main group, erect, hands behind her back, defiantly looking away from the artist and towards the south door. She holds the gaze of a middle class mother who is leaving the church with her well dressed daughter. Whether there is pity or judgement on the mother’s face is hard to say but the social distance is clear enough as she walks out, presumably to her lunch. The characters in the painting are anonymous, except perhaps for the minister, but in their portrayal Lobley has given them a small voice in their own history. The more we explore and attempt to understand all the evidence and not just the official records the louder and more distinct that voice will become.
Menace or inconvenience?

Nottingham City’s response to the 1913 Mental Deficiency Act

There can, perhaps, be few more ‘Hidden Voices’ than of those with a mental illness or disability. The early years of the twentieth century witnessed an on-going debate on the issue of the care and control of the feeble-minded, mentally defective ‘human rubbish’ or, as the Derbyshire Times described in 1900, the ‘Weak and Sickly’ Local suggestions could be stark and brutal. The Mayor of Portsmouth, for example, advocated ‘Lethal Chamber’ legislation. Whilst legislation in 1913 sought to codify such labels as feeble-minded, imbecile and idiot in terms of ability, in everyday practice these terms were generally applied very loosely.

In the Imberdes at Nottingham’s Bagthorpe Infirmary, patients were variously described as idiotic, feeble-minded, idiot from birth, imbecile from birth or, among the elderly, as imbecile from a specific age (presumably people with senile dementia). The term feeble-minded (i.e. those with moderate learning disabilities) generally implied those ‘persons who may be capable of earning a living but incapable from mental defect, existing from birth or from an early age, to compete with their normal fellows, or manage themselves or their affairs with ordinary prudence.’

Concerns about the decline of the race – aptly illustrated by the high rejection rates among army volunteers during the Boer War – underscored focused people’s minds on the fitness - physical and mental - of the population. It was widely feared, as Searle notes, that ‘Britain was breeding a race of degenerates.’ In the mind of Searle, the Eugenics Movement made considerable headway. Pauperism, insanity, imbecility, immorality and unemployment – all considered to be associated with learning disabilities - led to calls for government action for the betterment of the lives of ‘this class of person and the safety of their fellow citizens.’ Many argued that the key vehicle for this concern related to feeble-minded women having numerous births in the workshop. The Royal Commission on the Care and Control of the Feeble-Minded set up was set up in 1904 in response to pressure from organisations such as the National Association for Promoting the Welfare of the Feeble-Minded. Amongst the key findings of the Royal Commission was that the feeble-minded should be taken out of Poor Law institutions and prisons into newly established colonies.

A particular concern related to feeble-minded women having numerous births in the workshop.

The voluntary sector, in the form of the Nottingham and Notts Association for the Permanent Care of the Feeble-Minded and taking its lead no doubt from Mary Dendy’s home at Sandwellbridge in Chesterfield, resolved in 1912 to purchase Hopwell Hall in Derbyshire as a permanent home. Dendy had been in Nottingham in 1911 arguing for institutional care. With the Duke of Portland as Patron and Miss Florence Kipping as Secretary, the Association had already raised £1,300 for the cause. The Duke’s brother and local MP, Lord Henry Bentinck, was also a keen advocate for permanent care.

The Mental Deficiency Act was finally passed in 1913. It provided for a ‘division of those with congenital defects or impairment from a very early age into idiots, imbeciles, and the feeble-minded. It proposed institutional separation so that mental defects should be taken out of Poor Law institutions and prisons into newly established colonies.’ In practice, however, few were to be established in the first ten years. Dissenters were particularly concerned about loss of liberty. Joseph Wedgwood worried that ‘to many parents it is a terrible thing to send a child entirely out of their charge…mothers often feel more affection for a feeble-minded child. ’

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For all the panics about women in workhouses the law did not apply to those under the control of the Guardians, unless about to be released or removed to an institution.

Britain was breeding a race of degenerates.

Nottingham’s initial response was limited to forming a new Mental Deficiency Committee, adding to the existing Asylum Visiting Committee. The Nottingham Poor Law Guardians were furious for they felt they had far more experience of the feeble-minded. There were 200 remits in the imbeciles wards in 1911. The all-male Council Committee, needing two women under the legislation, co-opted two women Guardians. Caroline Harper and Mary Corner were experienced committee women as well as Guardians.
Lord Bentinck claimed there were at least 1200 defectives in Nottingham, but nobody knew for sure how many or where they lived. They decided to ask local clergymen to aid them in their quest, as well as consulting the Poor Law Board, the City Asylum and the Education Committee. A Mental Deficiency Officer, or Inquiry Officer, Percy Smith, and Dr Powell from the City Asylum as Medical Officer supported the committee.

The rhetoric of the 1911 petition seemed very muted. Rather than dealing with crime and immorality, the Committee’s instead focused on children and young people. Those who had heard the subject of the earlier concern continued to the responsibility of the Poor Law authorities, over whom the Committee had no control. In April 1915 the Board of Control announced a “restriction of all expenditure” for the “Exclusion of the European War”, curtailing any possible capital projects. Florence Kipping visited the City Asylum to take over the school at Hopwell Hall. The truth was the Association was struggling to remain viable. The Board declined. Neighbouring authorities such as Derby suggested joining up to create provision. Again, the Committee refused, as it did several times after.

In the first few years the Committee was not exactly busy. In 1915 Smith was deployed part-time to the Local Government Board. From the main stream of referrals came from the Education Committee, either those deemed in-educable or those about to leave a special school. In many of the cases, it was decided that they should stay at home. The War meant there was no need to set up services and clearly Dr Powell was not particularly keen on permanent care. When the Committee began sending more people to homes such at Brentry, Whittington Hall, Stoke Park and Monkton Hall, Starcross and Calderstones, it gave serious consideration to changing its own permanent institution. This was to be the future Ashton Hall, opened in 1926 with beds for 85 girls and women. For those still in the community the After Care Committee, reconstituted as the Nottingham Voluntary Association for Mental Deficiency, took on overall responsibility.

By MIKE SHUKKER

Canvasing in one of the poorest areas of East London in 1914, docker’s wife Melina Walker recalled one woman, who, when her husband called her a suffragette, felt flattered, “for those women have got pluck.” Such an epithet equally applies to those who worked on the Women’s Social and Political Union (WSPU) in Loughborough around the turn of the century and before the Great War. But how loud were their voices; how prominent was their support?

Of course, suffrage activities did not start with the creation of the WSPU in 1903. Before then, women arguing for the vote were labelled suffragettes. One such was Jana Rimmer who, on April 2nd 1915, addressed a Town Hall meeting in Loughborough on behalf of the National Society for Women’s Suffrage (which later merged into the National Union of Women’s Suffrage Societies or NUWSS). She “shirk at length on the pros and cons” of reform, holding her audience’s full attention as she spoke. According to the newspaper report it was a “harmonious meeting”.

December 1880 saw the formation of a Loughborough local women’s suffrage society, but it was “undercover which section to join,” the WSPU or the moderate WFL, which campaigned more through legal and peaceful means. Would the society wear the WFL’s orange and white, or the WSPU ones of purple, white and green? “It was intended that Miss Clifton (Secretary) and Miss Hardy (President) organised their first public meeting, addressed by Gladys Keen of Birmingham as a foundation in January 1895. She refuted the key arguments used against the WSPU and claimed that women “have not been running the country, which needed ‘mothering.’

In the January 1910 General Election Maurice Levy (majority 1,700) was one of 46 Liberals across the country targeted by the WSPU. Dorothy Pelch and Dorothy Buxton were responsible for organizing the campaign: a propaganda shop was opened in Gestetner and a series of meetings were arranged at various Market Place meetings the WSPU platform was “overturned,” and speeches made from the Fountain to the Fishmarket and were pulled with “orange peel and eggs.” On such occasions, the Police Station was often a safe refuge for the speakers. When Dorothy Pelch was threatened by the WSPU the case was suddenly removed near to Shepshed, highlighting the declining wages and economic position of women, the “larger and noisy” crowd made a police escort to the railway station necessary.

On January 29th, 1910, Emmeline Pankhurst spoke twice at Loughborough Town Hall. She attacked the Liberal poster of a woman saying: “Put women on our land.” a reference to the Conservative preference for import tariffs, by insisting that women had done such work before and so could stop price rises for themselves. Nor was she particularly concerned when Mrs. Buxton was arrested and said, “at least descended from aliens”, a reference to his Anglo-Jewish background. She continued that she did not object to his enfranchisement but did resent “at least descended from aliens,” a reference to his Anglo-Jewish background. She continued that she did not object to his enfranchisement but did resent “at least descended from aliens,” a reference to his Anglo-Jewish background. She continued that she did not object to his enfranchisement but did resent the WSPU’s “incitement” and “incitement” which had also been directed against the WSPU speakers. She was unsure herself to whom the vote would be given.

Yet in Loughborough’s women’s suffrage heritage grew from early suffragist meetings in the 1870s. In the early 1900s, there appears to be a local link between suffrage issues, the local WSPU and the active local ILP branch. Clearly, Levy’s approach to women’s suffrage as the division’s MP led to his seat being targeted in 1910. Unfortunately, there are no traceable local WSPU records, leaving little chance of tracking local actions except through the local newspapers and J. Jenkins’ publication. The implication being that the WSPU target was the local women’s suffrage organisation. Yet in Loughborough’s women’s suffrage heritage grew from early suffragist meetings in the 1870s. In the 1880s, there appears to be a local link between suffrage issues, the local WSPU and the active local ILP branch. Clearly, Levy’s approach to women’s suffrage as the division’s MP led to his seat being targeted in 1910. Unfortunately, there are no traceable local WSPU records, leaving little chance of tracking local actions except through the local newspapers and J. Jenkins’ publication. The implication being that the WSPU target was the local women’s suffrage organisation. Yet in Loughborough’s women’s suffrage heritage grew from early suffragist meetings in the 1870s. In the early 1900s, there appears to be a local link between suffrage issues, the local WSPU and the active local ILP branch. Clearly, Levy’s approach to women’s suffrage as the division’s MP led to his seat being targeted in 1910. Unfortunately, there are no traceable local WSPU records, leaving little chance of tracking local actions except through the local newspapers and J. Jenkins’ publication. The implication being that the WSPU target was the local women’s suffrage organisation. Yet in Loughborough’s women’s suffrage heritage grew from early suffragist meetings in the 1870s. In the early 1900s, there appears to be a local link between suffrage issues, the local WSPU and the active local ILP branch. Clearly, Levy’s approach to women’s suffrage as the division’s MP led to his seat being targeted in 1910. Unfortunately, there are no traceable local WSPU records, leaving little chance of tracking local actions except through the local newspapers and J. Jenkins’ publication. The implication being that the WSPU target was the local women’s suffrage organisation. Yet in Loughborough’s women’s suffrage heritage grew from early suffragist meetings in the 1870s. In the early 1900s, there appears to be a local link between suffrage issues, the local WSPU and the active local ILP branch. Clearly, Levy’s approach to women’s suffrage as the division’s MP led to his seat being targeted in 1910. Unfortunately, there are no traceable local WSPU records, leaving little chance of tracking local actions except through the local newspapers and J. Jenkins’ publication. The implication being that the WSPU target was the local women’s suffrage organisation. Yet in Loughborough’s women’s suffrage heritage grew from early suffragist meetings in the 1870s. In the
Inspiring news for small community-led Heritage Projects in the East Midlands

Against the odds, a small community-led Heritage Lottery funded project based in Nottingham has reached its year of the National Lottery Awards in the category for ‘Best Heritage Project’. ‘Slave Trade Legacies: The Colour of Money’ received a small grant of £9,700 from the ‘Sharing Heritage’ pot in 2014 for a year-long project. It subsequently beat off stiff competition from over 600 organisations to reach the public voting stage in this year’s National Lottery Awards – the annual search for the UK’s favourite Lottery funded projects. Winners of the seven National Lottery Awards categories will each get a £3,000 cash prize to spend on their project, an iconic National Lottery Awards trophy and attend a star-studded glittering Awards ceremony in London, broadcast on BBC One in September.

Project coordinators Lisa Robinson, Director of Bright Ideas Nottingham, and Helen Bates, a PhD student from the University of Leicester, were surprised and delighted at the recent news. They had no idea when they originally planted the project just how much positive interest it would attract from local people and local, regional and national institutions. The volunteer-led project explores the extent to which UK heritage sites acknowledged their links to slavery and the transatlantic slave trade. The project, launched in March 2014, sought to critically assess the interpretative materials and guide-training materials offered to public. Eventually it recruited 40 core volunteers, and many others who contributed on a casual basis. Volunteers were largely, though not exclusively, from the African-Caribbean community. One key objective was to discover how the transatlantic slave trade impacted on the wealth of certain individuals and sites in Britain. Slavery is often viewed today solely as an American problem. Britain’s heritage sites instead focus on the role in the abolition of slavery, ignoring the large profits British merchants made through the trade. As Lisa Robinson explained: “This was not a ‘Black history project’ in the traditional sense of the term, it was a project about dared stories. We wanted to give local people the opportunity to challenge local narratives that keep hidden the various contributions that different communities made, and in particular to focus on the origins of the money used to build and develop these estates over the centuries.”

The group visited many sites, three of which were in the East Midlands, to explore each’s differing experiences in relation to the interpretation of the links to slavery and Black History. The first site was Richard Arkwright’s iconic cotton spinning mill at Cromford, the world’s first successful water-powered mill, built in 1772. The site was linked to the University of Nottingham’s Global Cotton Connections project. The Mill was in a state of the process of developing a new visitor centre that would include an exhibition area and offer new learning materials. Yet there was little or no explanation to tell the story of the origins of the raw cotton. The guide simply said: “It came on a pack horse from Liverpool.” In part the reticence on site to highlight slavery as part of the process was due to the lack of precise historical research. Indeed, some of the local mill owners – like the site we visited in Derby – had abolitionist sympathies which seemed strangely out of kilter with the relaxed attitude to slavery and to the amount of slave labour. As Dr Susanne Symond and Dr Louise Turner noted: “It is clear that the Derwent Valley Mill owners were aware of the inhumanity of slave labour even if their own personal values, informed by many instances by strongly held Christian beliefs, led them to condone both the slave trade and, perhaps more importantly, the institution of slavery.

A very similar story also emerged when the volunteers visited the second East Midlands site, the Abbey. The Abbey was purchased from Byrom by Thomas Wildman in 1817. At the time it was in a ruinous state. John Murray, Byrom’s publisher, described it as “crumbling to ruin ... crumbling into dust.” Wildman embarked on a scheme of restoration together with alterations, additions and embellishments. Architectural historian, Rosalyn Cooper, noted that his “income derived largely from the West Indies” but believed that by the time he purchased Newstead this was “severely reduced”, even if his building works continued without “curtailment.”

Wildman’s Queensland plantation in Jamaica, and his ownership of 431 enslaved people, resulted in him receiving a compensation payment of £4,585 in 1833 when slavery was abolished by Act of Parliament, allowing further work on the property. Volunteers who assessed the interpretation of Wildman’s legacy were disappointed that Wildman’s slave-ownership was not openly discussed. When questioned, the guide actually said: “Wildman never visited Jamaica and his plantations, so there is no need to mention it. It is not relevant.” It was thus perceived as having no influence on his architectural and artistic interests, or his renovation work. Again, further research needs to carried out on the potential links between Wildman’s income from his Jamaican island and the money he was spending in Nottinghamshire.

The final East Midlands site visited by the volunteers was Boughton House in Northamptonshire. Archivist, Grisini Powell, offered a presentation on the site’s Black History links on which he bestowed feedback. The majority of the material covered related to the activities of John, 2nd Duke of Montagu (1788-1884). In 1722, he petitioned George II to be made governor of the Caribbean islands of St Vincent and St Lucia. In 1728, St Vincent was classed as a neutral island, and a refuge for Africans who had escaped slavery. When the Governor of the Leeward Islands warned the Duke of the risky nature of any plan to settle St Vincent, he wrote stating that: “you had no thoughts to settle it” and that he just wanted to “keep ... friends” with those living on it. The Duke’s plans to settle St Lucia were a complete failure and French forces from nearby Martinique drove his expedition from the island in a matter of weeks. The Duke also petitioned George II in 1728: “proposing that the Island of Tobago may be granted to me instead of St Lucia and St Vincent...” but his request was denied. He appears then to have lost interest in pursuing his hopes for acquiring Caribbean estates.

What remains unknown is whether Montagu simply came to the conclusion that developing landed estates in England was a safer commercial option, or had his interest in financial gain from direct participation in the Caribbean slave-based economy started to wane because of ethical concerns? And was this due to increased social interaction and contact with Black people? The Duke was known to have shown an interest and encouraged the young Black composer and writer, Ignatius Sancho, when he was a small boy, and also the Jamaican scholar, Francis Williams (reputedly sending the latter to Cambridge). There is evidence, too, that he took an interest in the education of other Black children, including offered to the poor in a Great Montagu house, which was based on the Boughton estate and who was educated during the 1740s by the local schoolmaster in the estate village of Wivelisley. Of particular importance was the attitudinal shift in the Duke’s earlier interests in pursuing commercial ventures to his later direct involvement in the freeing of slaves. He assisted in engineering the rescue of the African Noah, Abuya Suleman Dhalis, in 1733 and then later Dhalis’s servant. A letter from the Duke to Dhalis, when he had returned to Africa in 1736, stated that he hoped that he remembered “with pleasure the friendship that we had for you both.” His expression of goodwill suggests the 2nd Duke of Montagu had developed a belief of equality in race and religion, and an enlightened and surely a seldom-heard view in Britain at that time. His letter to Dhalis informs us of his belief that...
Asylums at war: Duston War Hospital, 1916-1919

In early 1917, Duston War Hospital opened its doors to sick and wounded Allied servicemen. ‘This new Hospital was not actually new at all, but one of twenty-four asylums requisitions as part of the British war effort’, Duston War Hospital went on to care for thousands of men until its closure in 1919. But what happened to its civilian inmates during the war? Duston War Hospital was in fact the Northampton County Lunatic Asylum, known locally as Berrywood, and the largest asylum in Northamptonshire. Opened in 1876, it was the only institution in the county dedicated solely to the care of the pauper insane. Asylums were central to national medical care in early-twentieth-century England. They worked in conjunction with local workhouses, infirmaries and charities. County asylums housed those deemed to be incapable of caring for themselves, either temporarily or permanently. To enter, individuals or families had to prove that they could not cope with their condition but were unable to afford the full cost of their care. Poor Law Unions often sponsored patients paying for part, or all, of their stay.

County asylums were large institutions. Populations of 500 to 1000 patients were not uncommon. The Berrywood asylum complex routinely housed over 800 patients. The largest hospital buildings contained acute and chronic wards, private patient rooms and an infirmary, whilst the grounds contained a separate working farm, an infectious disease hospital, and a residential block for so-called ‘idiot’ children (those with learning disabilities). Berrywood also had a commercial laundry, a recreational hall, and several craft workshops. Patients were divided according their age, gender, health conditions and social class, and housed accordingly in different parts of the asylum. Many patients were frail and elderly, or those suffering from degenerative neurological conditions.

Daily life was regimented, monotonous and disempowering. Inmates were rarely granted any privacy and had very little say over their day-to-day lives. The standard of care varied hugely between asylums, as did staff attitudes towards their charges. While some staff were dedicated to their patients, others were not. Historians like Peter Bartlett, Anne Borsay and Michael Finn have demonstrated that decades of chronic under-investment meant that most asylums were overcrowded and in serious need of repair.

The outbreak of the First World War led to massive changes in asylum provision in England and Wales. Mounting Allied casualties underscored a national hospital bed shortage. Authorities were forced to look for alternative hospital sites. Despite the enduring stigma of the state-run home hospital with aristocratic lady-nurses, the military authorities preferred the decidedly less glamorous locations of schools, asylums and workhouses. Such institutions were ideal—most were semi-urban with large grounds and ready access to railway lines and main roads. Berrywood was therefore not a natural choice for a war hospital. Berrywood’s rural location made it difficult for both staff and visitors to get there. This may explain why it was not requisitioned until August 1915, about five months after most other asylums. Transport issues continued throughout the war. Many of the new Hospital’s wartime staff had to catch a specially scheduled bus from Northampton to get to work.

Once Berrywood was selected for war service in August 1915, change came rapidly. It appears to have been the practice of the Board of Control and the War authorities to empty selected asylums within a three-month deadline. The problem was that Berrywood had approximately 1113 patients in August 1915. Asylum officials undertook the herculean task of finding them beds in other asylums at a time of natural bed shortages. One patient was transferred to South Yorkshire as the asylum officials struggled to find suitable accommodation.

By November 1915, all of the patients were dispersed across eight ‘asylums in the East Midlands area.’ Once the asylum buildings were empty, the War Office embarked on a significant remodelling programme. The new ‘war hospitals’ were almost unilaterally condemned as inadequate for the care of the military patients.

The fact that the same buildings had been previously been regarded as suitable establishments for sick children, the elderly and the mentally ill was quietly ignored.

The physical conditions within asylums only added to the stigma. Daily life was regimented, monotonous and disempowering. Inmates were forced to take over more and more buildings as the war progressed.

The remodelling was as much driven by the extreme surgical needs of the new patients as by the state of the buildings. The First World War created trauma on an horrific scale. Sharpnel and machine gun bullets tore apart muscle and shattered bone. Gas burnt away eyes and corroded lungs. Food shortages and disastrous sieges caused malnutrition and epidemic disease. Very few asylums had dedicated operating theatres in 1915. In some asylums, corridors were improvised to ensure that they were wide enough for surgical trolleys. Not all renovations were based on medical need. Berrywood was ‘far too pleasant’ for cosmetic reasons: new plumbing and light colour schemes offered military patients and staff a bright clean environment, and discouraged them from dwelling on their injuries or the fate of the previous inhabitants. Military and civil authorities, medical staff and patients were at pains to disassociate the residents of War Hospitals from the residents of asylums. All participating asylums were temporarily renamed to facilitate this.

It must be stressed that the War Hospital’s scheme initially did try to accommodate the needs of the former inmates’ families and friends. Orders were circulated in early 1915 that asylums should be grouped together: patients would only be moved to asylums within a designated region. This would mean visiting relatives would be ‘unable to visit friends in various hospitals over a wide area’. The practicalities of war and the stigma of mental illness swiftly undermined these good intentions. The need for beds never diminished. The War Office was forced to take over more and more buildings as the war progressed.

Visit www.eastmidlandshistory.org.uk or email embhist@virginmedia.com

DR CAROLINE NIELSEN
This necessitated the repeated movement of civilian patients. Berrywood had accepted 133 patients from Rubery Hill Asylum in Birmingham in March 1915, only for these patients to be moved again in September and October. It is little wonder that the 1920 report highlighted that some relatives “felt deeply a disagreeing comparison” when they considered their loved ones’ “care.” We can only guess at the impact of these transfers on patients and their families. It is undeniable that the transfers caused hardship and suffering to all those involved. Visiting patients became an area of contention. The central Board of Control argued that “it could not be expectable, nor indeed would it be right” for families and friends to visit as they previously had done. Visiting was either curtailed completely or limited to one relative at a time. The distances involved further curtailed the contact. The majority of Berrywood’s patients were from working-class backgrounds. Many were unable to visit due to the cost of travelling long distances. The War Office was willing to reimburse individual relatives, but only if the patient was “dangerously ill” or “the mental state of the patient is likely to be adversely influenced”. Sadly, this meant that the payments were usually only approved in the midst of a tragedy when families travelled to comfort the dying or, at most, in graveyards. Remembrance was a frequent occurrence. Wartime asylums had high mortality rates. The historians John Lewis Crammer and Claire Chatterton have argued that overcrowding, malnutrition and a series of cold winters facilitated the spread of deadly infectious diseases like influenza and tuberculosis.

The end of the war did not signal the end of the asylum War Hospital. Berrywood was one of the first to be transferred back to civilian hands in early 1919 and its patients slowly returned to their former home. This was not the case with other asylums. Many were kept by the military until the early 1920s. Asylum patients did not usually benefit from the military’s temporary stewardship of their homes. Faced with mounting costs and terrible conditions, the military authorities repeatedly attempted expensive building repairs. Some hospitals, including Berrywood, spent years requesting compensation from the War Office.

The First World War centenary offers us the opportunity to reflect upon previously hidden wartime experiences. The lives of those who spent the war in the East Midlands’ asylums are one of the most hidden of all. Their experiences remain largely untold. Visiting patients were given the opportunity to reflect on previously hidden wartime experiences and the hardship to all those involved. Visiting patients were given the opportunity to reflect on previously hidden wartime experiences and the hardship to all those involved.
served the full sentence. In the meantime to transportation, nine received pardons on 1st instant, but instead slowly strangled whereupon ten of the remaining prisoners tendered a plea of guilty on the understanding that their lives would be given up before they got there”. They were lifted, eventually, 3 at a time in the night they passed through Eastwood, reaching Gilt Brook. Here the trap was sprung. The rebels were instantly break the neck, but instead slowly strangled. Thirty – Brandreth, Turner and Ludlam – were ignored the graffiti written up on the courthouse Oliver's role in the October trial of the Pentrich men. Meanwhile, in July at a trial in York of “a multitude of false High Treason, along with 45 men of Pentrich, South Wingfield, Alfreton and Heanor, were indicted at the Derby Assizes on 26th July 1817 as having committed High Treason, along with “a multitude of bandits”. Meanwhile, in July at a trial in York of the Pentrich men, and the newspapers were prohibited from reporting the case until after the verdict. The jury apparently ignored the graffiti written up on the courthouse wall stating “GIBBON REVERED OLIVER”. The Derby juries were carefully selected. The Grand Jury consisted of grandees who supported the government, while members of the main jury were farmers from the opposite side of the county who had been carefully vetted to ensure their “lethargy”. The trials lasted ten days. Three – Brandreth, Turner and Ludlam – were convicted of high treason, and sentenced to death. Fourteen of the accused were imprisoned. Of those sentenced to transportation, nine received pardons on 1st instant, but instead slowly strangled whereupon ten of the remaining prisoners tendered a plea of guilty on the understanding that their lives would be spared. Hanging these days did not instantly break the neck, but instead slowly strangled the victim to death. The men were lifted, eventually, to have their heads severed by shotts after the axe blow failed to achieve this. All three were buried in one deep, unmarked grave in St Werburgh’s churchyard, not far from the place of execution. Thompson has spoken Pentrich as “one of the first attempts in history to mount a wholly proletarian insurrection, without middle-class support”. He notes that “these conspirators were not all the unlettered yokels which some historians would have them be”. We should see the Pentrich Rising as a significant step in the long story of the fight for universal suffrage and a just society. The role of the government in using agent’s provocateurs caused a national scandal at the time, but the stories of the events were soon largely forgotten. The Pentrich and South Wingfield Revolution Group have been set up to commemorate these events. Support has already been given by Derbyshire County Council, local town and parish councils along the route in Belper and Nottinghamshire, Derby University and many local organisations, with the active participation of descendants in England, Australia, and the U.S.A. A range of events is planned for 2017. This will include:

- A day festival at Pentrich Village on 26th June 2017, supported by English Heritage.
- A festival of walks, including 14 guided walks to tell the story of the uprising and its participants, supported. The story is being told through a variety of ways, including art, music and drama. An exhibition of work by local artists, inspired by the rising, is already underway. A face- workshop is planned in October 2016 led by singer and songeriser Leser Simpson.

We are keen to use these events publicised as widely as possible and would be happy to provide speakers to come to your organisation to talk about the Pentrich Revolution and the bicentenary. In the first instance please contact: Roger Tanner or Sylvia Mason, or email sylviamacon@uwclub.net

An exhibition of work by local artists, inspired by the rising, is already underway. A face- workshop is planned in October 2016 led by singer and songeriser Leser Simpson.

On the evening of Monday 13th October 1851, thirty or more men from the Mansfield area were making their way along the Bilsthorpe Road through Rufford Park, with the shadowy purpose of taking game.

The road was a public thoroughfare, but it cut through land recently enclosed by John Lumley-Savile, the Earl of Scarbrough. The enclosure of common and waste lands had reduced poor peoples’ access to communal resources of food, grazing, fuel and timber. The effects of enclosure were worsened by the impact of the reformed game laws. The Game Act, 1815, the Night Poaching Act, 1825 and the Game Act, 1831 made hare, rabbit, deer, and named forms of bird such as pheasants and partridge the private property of landowners, which they could legitimately protect by force, and increasingly did. The 1831 Act also set out that wild animals could only be taken by persons possessing a licence, a far wider than the beyond the reach of most working families. Sometimes the two processes came together and enclosed land was turned into a fenced game park. The animals that roamed the newly-enclosed land were mainly used for sport by the landowners. The workers’ perspective was that this game was a God-given right that had been unfairly taken away (a legitimatised in the Book of Common Prayer).

Incidents of violence between poachers and gamekeepers were a common aspect of mid-Victorian society and probably peaked around mid-century. Most of the stories we have encountered were framed in narrative. These were amongst the poorest of the poor. The prosperous days of framework knitting had passed. New machines had been introduced that needed fewer operators and fashions had changed. In 1833 a local doctor described the condition of workers as “unhealthy and dyspeptic … pale and emaciated”. Many reported, “were they not fed on clothed, domiciled and living in extreme poverty.” Many would regularly go out to the hares and foxes to catch game. The land owners were equally determined to stop them. They hired, from the same community, keepers to guard their property. These were not people skilled in negotiation; these were individuals who were prepared to defend their masters’ property with all the force that they could muster. Often individuals or small groups of workers found themselves being set upon by well-armed gamekeepers. Mostly this would result in a beating; sometimes the poachers would be taken before the court to receive at best a fine, at worst a severe custodial sentence. Poachers knew the violence that could be meted out to...
them and by the same token they were prepared to defend themselves and to protect their catch. That night it was decided that the best form of mutual protection would be to seek game as members of a large group. The Rufford Park gamekeepers knew that the poachers were coming and what time they would arrive. William Bisson, one of the keepers, later said: “We expected them to come, as it was a nice wind and a little rain and we thought the snow would go down by that night.” Certainly members of the poaching gang were known to the gamekeepers, and vice versa. The gamekeepers were armed with pistols and heavy flails, ready to break off anyone who resisted them.

The poachers, too, had picked up large stones as they walked and put them into their pockets, ready to use in defence should they be spotted. They intended to make their way toward Inkersall Farm, carrying their heavy nets on their backs. Their purpose was to set them at the side of the road nearby. By this time they had walked several miles from the centre of Mansfield.

As the last of the poachers passed by, the keepers got ready. Quietly they picked up their wooden flails ready for the attack. With the poachers some distance away, the gamekeepers stepped out onto the road, keeping to the shadows. With keepers Frederick Brock, William Roberts and Samuel Herod at the front, they managed to get close to a group of three or four poachers who were setting their nets. They were seen! A stone flew through the air at the gamekeeper. It landed with a dull thud at the feet of Herod. He was clearly well known to the local constabulary. Samuel Sims was arrested the day after at Nottingham's Infirmary, where he was being treated for a broken arm, he said to his fellow keepers.

As they charged into the field two more poachers wereบอก med to the ground but not before they had shouted and waved for help. Frederick Brock testified, “Annoyed another man down and struck him three times on the legs in defense of his life. I drew it out of his pocket and killed him.” Almost immediately the main body of thirty or more men appeared on the scene. A volley of stones flew through the air. All of the gamekeepers were hit, some of them several times. One stone hit Brock’s loaded pistol which was held in his waist band. The gun went off, firing the shot into the ground. The flash from the gunpowder set fire to his clothing. Now the poachers were not only being attacked with flails, they were being shot at too. More stones flew through the air, punches were thrown, curses uttered with threats of dire actions being taken. The gamekeepers struck out at all within range. Brock was hit by a stone and by heavy flails. From a position on a small bank a poacher threw a stone which hit keeper Roberts on the side of the head. He immediately sank to the ground. Keeper Charlesworth was hit several times at close range and, though not knocked out, he was severely concussed.

Within ten minutes it was all over. The poachers gathered their wounded and ran as fast as they could away from the scene. The gamekeepers did not give chase to their own. They could see that Charlesworth was badly injured but it was Roberts who gave the greatest cause for concern. It was apparent to all that the wound to the head was severe. “I’m done,” he said to his fellow keepers. He was carried gently through the woodland to a cottage some 150 yards away. Meanwhile, unseen by either poachers or gamekeepers, Samuel Sims, nursing his broken arm, creased his way into the woodland where he stayed hidden, making his escape early the next morning.

News of the altercation soon spread and the authorities were quick to round up suspects, including Bowskill, a besom maker from the rock houses in Mansfield, who was arrested the next day. He had been rounding many times by Nottinghamshire newspapers as being involved in various felonies and whores setting their nets. They were seen! A stone flew through the air at the gamekeeper. It landed with a dull thud at the feet of Herod. This was the signal for the mayhem that followed. Roberts and Herod led the charge forward, shouting as they went. The stone thrower and a companion aimed at the gamekeepers. It landed with a dull thud at the feet of Herod.

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The trial caused a sensation. It was reported in newspapers throughout the land, from Dundee in the north, to Truro in the south, from London in the east, to Tralee in the west. Broadsheet posters were printed outlining the trial and songs were written, placing the poachers as the gallant heroes of the tale. Their voices were no longer hidden; they became a part of local folk lore.

The song Rufford Poachers by Rattlejag can be heard on YouTube. Condemned from Rufford Park Poachers by Sam Millard available at Rufford Country Park

A buck or doe, believe it so, a pheasant or a hare, was sent on earth for everyone quite equal for the share. So poacher bold, as I unfold, keep up your gallant heart, and think about those poachers bold, that night in Rufford Park.
News and notices

What is happening at Delapré Abbey, and why do we need you?

BY FAYE MORRISSEY

Delapré Abbey is a beautiful Grade II* Listed building situated in around 500 acres of grounds and parkland, and is only one mile from Northampton town centre.

Following the success of a Heritage Lottery Fund application in 2013, a £6.3 million project has been underway since early 2015 to do substantial repair and restoration works.

The Abbey will be opening its doors to the public for the first time in its 900-year history in February 2017, with the Delapré Abbey Preservation Trust managing the building as a fantastic historic venue for local, national, and even international visitors.

The restoration is progressing at a pace. The exterior work on the Abbey is more or less complete - the stonework has been cleaned and repointed, roof work mended, and windows conserved and repainted. Construction of the new conservatory. This will support a cafe, and there will also be a restaurant located in the Billiard room.

Work is now focussing on the restoration and conservation of the building, setting the scene for the exhibitions and displays of the Abbey telling the 900-year story.

For all of this to be a success and for the Abbey to open with a bang, Delapré Abbey Preservation Trust is recruiting for a large number of volunteers to get involved and be a part of the most exciting, ‘new’ heritage attraction in Northamptonshire. There will be lots of different roles and opportunities for people to choose from, including showing people around the house, keeping the beautiful gardens in tip top condition, and helping with events and educational activities.

This is a very exciting time for Delapré Abbey, so the Trust is hoping to attract people who are passionate about their community, who have time to give something back, and who want Delapré to flourish.

Volunteers will be an essential part of the team and we would love to talk to anyone with an interest about getting involved.

Page Morrissey, Assistant Community Engagement Officer, Delapré Abbey Preservation Trust

DON’T MISS OUT ON BEING A VOLUNTEER AND BEING A PART OF SOMETHING SPECIAL!

Contact Delapré Abbey Preservation Trust on 01604 760817 or email info@delapreabbey.org

Visit the Volunteer Recruitment video on the website: www.delapreabbey.org

SOMETHING SPECIAL!

DON’T MISS OUT ON BEING A VOLUNTEER AND BEING A PART OF SOMETHING SPECIAL!

Step back in time at the 1620s House and Garden

The 1620s House and Garden at Donington le Heath, formerly Donington le Heath Manor House, has undergone a stunning refurbishment in order to tell the story of its former owners and residents.

This rare and beautiful house is a surviving example of a family homes built in the 13th century and then modernised in 1618. The house has been home to many families over its 100-year history, but the Digby family, which included the Gunpowder Plotter Sir Everard Digby, lived in the house for over two hundred years. It is towards the end of the Digby ownership that the newly refurbished house is focused, showing how people lived in late Elizabethan and early Jacobean times.

Visitors can now see the beautifully restored period rooms and talk to our volunteers about the history of the house, the families that lived here, and about life in the 1620s. The house is set in beautiful 17th century style gardens with labelled plants and flowers, an orchard, herb gardens and a maze.

Light refreshments can be enjoyed in the Old Barn Tea Room, where a range of merchandise is also available.

The site will continue its lively series of events that use re-enactment, crafts, hands-on activities, drama, and specialist demonstrations to interpret the history of the site and life at the time.

Lorna Brown
Lancashire County Council

The site is open from 10.30am – 4.30pm from Thursday to Sunday, Bank Holidays and throughout August.

In the next issue – Samantha Ball and Katherine Onion, The Workhouse Southwell, owned by the National Trust, are currently researching into its 20th century history for the December issue of EMHH. Hopefully this will prompt further research and discussion on welfare provision across the region into poverty, maternity provision, old age, etc. in Poor Law and Public Assistant Institutions.

The Workhouse is currently holding an exhibition, ‘From Workhouse to Welfare’, until Sunday 6 November 2016, 12noon-4pm (Wednesday to Sunday, Bank Holidays and throughout August).