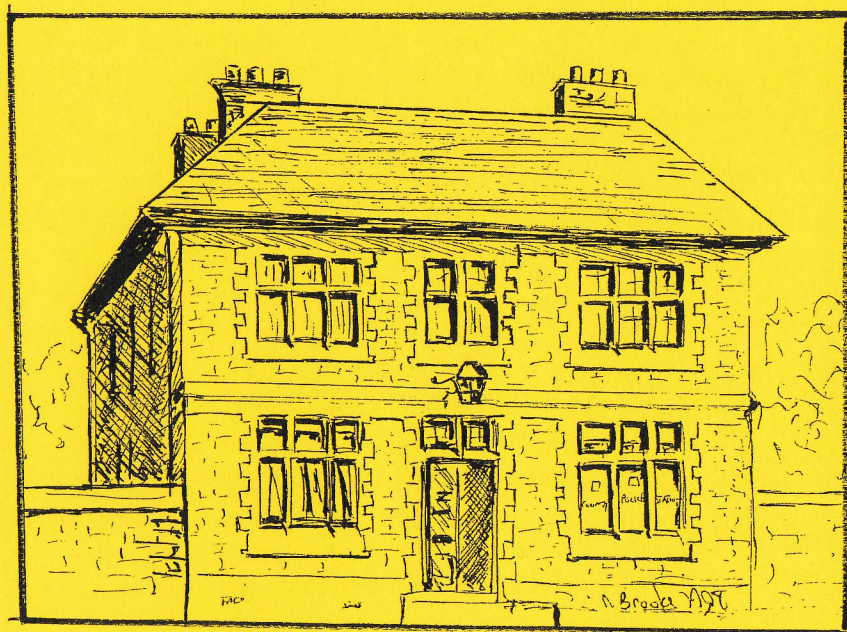


Stapleford and District Local History Society



Newsletter No 42 – Spring 2017

£1.00

Free to Members

CONTENTS

Meeting reports by John Shaw

- 1 Once upon a Pantomime
by Maureen Rushton
- 2 'The Life and Travels of Robert Bruce Napoleon
Walker – Revisited' by Stephen Flinders
- 6 The King under the Car Park
by Mathew Morris
- 9 Ted Peck – Bomber Command by Nigel Brooks
- 13 Stapleford Co-op by Nigel Brooks
- 17 Website News - John Shaw
- 18 22nd Annual General Meeting
- 20 Additions to the Society's Library and Archives
- 21 Walter Rowland – Master Boot Repairer by Colin Rowland
- 24 Wedding Reception Invoice 1950 – Nigel Brooks
- 25 A Stapleford Childhood by Stuart Archie Russell
- 33 Co-op Centenary Super Savers, 1972

MEETING REPORTS

8 November 2016

ONCE UPON A PANTOMIME

by Trevor Lee

What would you expect from a talk to a History Society about Pantomimes? Some songs, some dance, some old jokes, some funny hats, some interesting script quotations – and some history – and that's what we got, and all enjoyed. Oh yes we did!

After a song from Trevor, accompanying himself on his guitar, he explained that Pantomime owes its history to roots in Greek drama and especially Italian *commedia dell'arte* in the 16th century. A major part of the development in Europe was the Harlequinade. This was mimed. The Harlequin was the first person to use a slapstick, and the different coloured diamonds on his costume denoted different emotions. The show then developed into a Harlequinade plus a fairy story. We were told that remnants of the Harlequinade could often still be spotted, even in the most modern of Pantomimes. Sometimes something extra magical happens just before the mid-performance interval, which is what happened in the Harlequinade. The Pantomime became an English institution in the early 1800s and featured such people as Jo Grimaldi and Dan Leno. By 1850 it had become a firm Christmas tradition and always used to start its run on Boxing Day.

Every pantomime seems to feature a very similar group of characters, although they are called by different names. There is the hero (principal boy), the heroine, some goodies, some baddies, a dame and, usually, an animal.

Last year the Theatre Royal in Nottingham celebrated 150 years of pantomime. The first one in 1865 was The House That Jack Built (plus harlequinade). Trevor showed us posters and told us stories about some of the famous stars who had played there.

They included:

Douglas Bing	Billy Dainty
Jack Tripp	Barbara Windsor
John Inman	Mike & Bernie Winters
Les Dawson	Harry Worth
Norman Evans	Roy Hudd
Arthur Askey	Valentine Dyall
George Formby	Betty Driver
Julie Andrews (in 1950 – she was 16)	Ronnie Hilton
Tony Hancock	Lonnie Donegan

Trevor explained how in every show all through the years the plot was adjusted to include time for each star's speciality performance.

During the evening we sang nine songs (Trevor encouraged us to join in) including "I'm leaning on a Lamp-post", "The Hole in the Elephant's Bottom" and "Nobody Loves a Fairy when She's Forty", and we heard a lot of old (but still funny) jokes.

Trevor knew his subject and had planned it well. Although light-hearted, there were lots of interesting historical facts hidden in there. This was an excellent pre-Christmas presentation.

John Shaw

14 February 2017

The Life and Travels of Robert Bruce Napoleon
Walker – Revisited
By Stephen Flinders

Stephen began by saying that since he had given us the original talk in January 2012, both he and his wife had done a lot more research.

There were rumours in Heather's family that her ancestors had met Livingstone and fought at the battle of Trafalgar, also that one of them had met Mozart.

Keeping these stories in mind, Stephen and his wife, Heather, started investigating their family tree. This talk was about one of the interesting people they had found.

Robert Bruce Napoleon Walker 1832 – 1901
Heather's great, great granddad

Stephen started by stating that Robert died in 1901 and, as far as they could ascertain, his death was unmarked in any way. This would suggest an unremarkable life. But Robert's CV would seem to contradict this. He was:

A Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society, a Fellow of the Anthropological Society, a Fellow of the Geological Society, a Corresponding Member of the Zoological Society, a Corresponding Member of the Literary and Philosophical Society of Liverpool and a Membre Donateur de la Societe de Geographe de Paris.

He was certainly not an average person.

There is little information on RBNW on the internet, but Stephen and Heather found that a University in Santa Monica had a lot of letters that had been written by him, in correspondence with Richard Burton, the famous Victorian explorer.

They also found various books that mentioned him. One was by Mary Kingsley called *Travels in North Africa*. He was also mentioned in a book by Robert Hamill Nassan called *My Ogowe*, the main river in the Gabon. They also found the will of Gertrude Walker, which mentioned a Trafalgar medal and a ceremonial sword. RBNW does not appear in any English censuses. He was out of England nearly all his life. His second wife Clara is there, described as 'wife of an African trader'.

At the age of 19 Robert married a Margaret Moleworth, and also travelled to Africa and set up a Trading Post near the mouth of the River Ogowe. Although the Trading Post was on the coast, Robert did some exploring along the river.

By the 1860s he was rich. He was a trader and collector of African artefacts. He sent a lot of items back to England and there are collections in various museums attributed to him.

Collecting and trading was not all he did in Africa. Although he was married, he struck up a relationship with an African Princess Agnorogoule Ikoutou, and had two children with her. He openly and happily talks about these children in his letters. His son from this union, Andre Raponda Walker, later became one of the most illustrious Gabon natives, inside and outside Gabon, as a priest and writer.



During this very successful time in his life Robert used the boat, 'The Pioneer'. This boat had been used by David Livingstone and this may be the source of the rumour.

Robert's African adventure took a short break after his wife died. In 1876 Robert married a very young lady and soon moved to Marseilles to put his money and effort into a public ice rink. He was unlucky in his choice of partner, a William Shaw, who was a cheat and a con man, so this venture was a total failure and before long he was back in Africa (Gabon), this time negotiating and selling mining

franchises. His new young wife did not go with him and soon lapsed into alcoholism. Robert paid for her home in London. (When Stephen and Heather found this house, they discovered that it was in Mozart Street and had a blue plaque that stated that Mozart 'had written his first symphony there.)

Was this the Mozart part of the family rumour?

Robert himself continued to spend most of his time in Africa until he died in 1901. When he died he was a pauper and his death was unremarked.

Further research found that Robert's dad, Henry Walker, was in the Navy. In the Trafalgar Roll he is listed as a lieutenant serving on the *Bellepheron*. There is a story that after the battle there was a terrible storm and Henry, fearing death, wrapped himself in the English flag so that he would die proving his loyalty.

This answers the 'fought at the battle of Trafalgar' part of the family rumour.

Stephen pointed out that it was the *Bellepheron* that brought Napoleon to England. Perhaps that is how Robert got 'Napoleon' in his name.

In conclusion, Stephen mentioned that Robert was not the only 'unfaithful' partner. There is evidence that, while he was in Africa, his first wife Clara had four children with another partner. (At least two of these later claimed Robert as their father). Stephen showed us some of the research they had done to find these surprising facts.

In the first talk Stephen had only been able to show us a 'possible' photo of Robert Bruce Napoleon Walker himself. It was a picture of Princess Agnorogoule Ikoutou with two children. Also in the picture is a white man with a very long beard – quite possibly Heather's great, great granddad. Since then research led them to a collection of photographs in a university in France. Stephen and Heather were very pleased to find a positively identifiable picture of Robert Bruce Napoleon Walker – Heather's great, great granddad.

Stephen also told us about the 'adventures' he had finding Robert's grave. Heather traced it to Brompton Cemetery in London. They visited the cemetery with high hopes, only to find it completely

overgrown. They persevered with their search and found it on the third visit, after cutting down a lot of undergrowth. We saw a picture of Heather placing flowers on the grave of her great, great granddad.

One further addition to the story was that out of the blue Stephen received an email asking him what he knew about RBN Walker. This email was from another member of the family, a great, great cousin of Heather. The two families have met and exchanged information. The cousin has got the Trafalgar medal and the ceremonial sword.

Stephen's first talk was extremely interesting and it was fascinating to learn how much more had been researched and found. Stephen hinted that there might be a third version in a few years' time.

Stephen's talks are always full of detail, very well explained and peppered with humour. They are always well researched and prepared. There is a lot of information, and the personal stories about how the research has progressed add to the enjoyment.

John Shaw

14 March 2017

THE KING UNDER THE CAR PARK

by Mathew Morris

Mathew began by explaining that his talk was in two halves. Firstly, he would tell us about finding the body of the king and, secondly, about the process of the identification of the body.

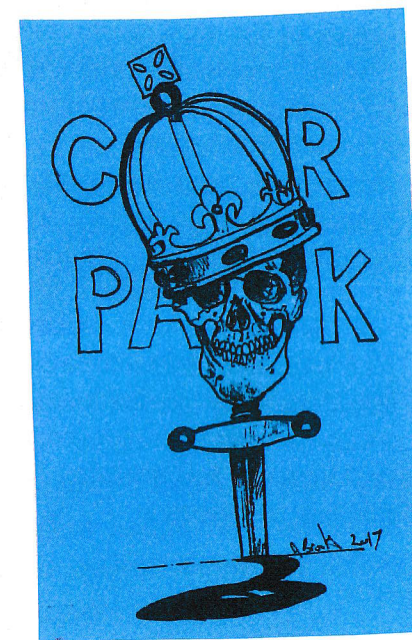
We heard a brief summary of the Wars of the Roses and that Richard III was the last Yorkist king on the throne of England. Henry Tudor wanted the throne. In 1485 on 22 August the two armies met at Bosworth Field. Richard had gathered his army in Leicester. During the battle Richard was winning and he led a charge against Henry, only to find himself isolated and without his horse. His dead body was taken to Leicester – most probably for display by the victors.

In a contemporary document John Rous wrote that his body was buried in the choir of the Grey Friars church (their official title then was the 'Order of Friars Minor'). This was a very useful pointer, but the church had disappeared during the time of Henry VIII's dissolution of the monasteries.

There was other evidence that the king had been buried in Leicester, but also myths grew up around Richard III and it was decided that his body had been dug up and thrown into the River Soar. In fact there is a plaque near a bridge that states this.

There was a map that showed the Greyfriars land and this could be traced onto a modern map.

The project was begun, led by the Richard III Society. Leicester University was happy to co-operate because it would give them chance to investigate medieval Leicester.



There was not much of the targeted land that was not built on. There was a playground and a couple of car parks. They decided to start in the county council car park. There were problems about fire

escape access and so Mathew, as project manager, decided to use the car park lines as a place to start digging.

Within a few hours they had found a bone from a left leg.

"It took six hours to find the king and five months to prove it was the king."

The grave itself was very interesting. It was an odd lozenge shape. There was no coffin and no evidence of a shroud wrapping. It is unusual to find a commoner buried in the east end of a church. The grave was too short so the body was not laid out properly. The conclusion was that he was buried either in a hurry or with no respect. The phrase used was "with minimal reverence".

The radio carbon dating was complete by December and the DNA evidence by February. Mathew explained that the identification of the body followed the modern framework that the police use. He gave us a list of these procedures.

He said that because of the very careful techniques used there was hardly a single 'wow' moment – more a slow build-up of evidence. The nearest thing to a 'wow' time was when the archaeologist exposed the deformed spine.

Mathew showed us that from the wounds on the skull the whole story of how Richard died could be indicated.

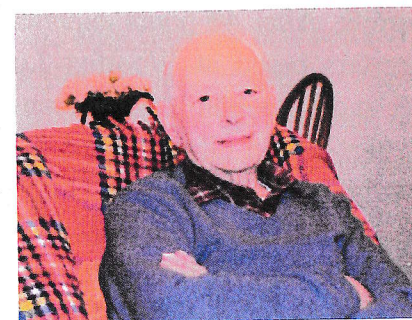
We learned a lot during this talk. We learned about the facts and the sequence of events. We learned about archaeological methods and procedures. We learned about many ways of collecting evidence, including DNA evidence and Isotope Analysis.

This was an excellent, very professional talk. Mathew was good at making some very technical things seem really simple. He was easy to listen to and kept our full attention all evening. I would strongly recommend this talk to anyone.

John Shaw

Ted Peck - Bomber Command

It was a dull Thursday in February when I visited Ted Peck at his home in Stapleford - although Ted's war time experience was anything but dull. I was met by a sprightly 91 year old, slight in figure and looking much younger than his years.



Edward Benton (Ted) was born on 9 May 1925 in the Custom House area of London. He was the only child of Harry and Elizabeth Peck and his father worked in the Bonded Tobacco warehouse in the Victoria Docks. He was not a particularly clever child at school and said he struggled a bit. Ted was better with his hands and would have liked to have gone into the furniture making business, but his father said that woodwork was a dying art. Having left school at 14 he became an assistant in the stores of Buck and Hickman. A week later WWII broke out and Ted can remember the Blitz, and sitting on the steps of his house with his father watching the docks go up in flames. Ted was too young to enlist, but joined the ATC (Air Training Corp). The family moved to Walthamstow and at 17 years and 3 months Ted joined the RAF, but had to wait another six months before he could commence his training as a flight engineer.

He had his basic training at Usworth near Sunderland with the final fortnight spent at Bridlington on aircraft recognition. After a week's home leave, he started his specialist training as F.E. (flight engineer) at St Athan in South Wales. He learnt all about engine fuel management

and how to balance the fuel tanks by transferring fuel. They were also shown how to manage the extinguisher systems. It was all about flying the furthest for the minimum amount of fuel. He spent 6 months at St Athan without actually running an engine. Ted passed his final exams and became a Sergeant with a big increase in pay from aircraftman second class (AC2). His first experience with a real aircraft was on a Short Stirling in Suffolk. After 40 hours experience on the Stirling he progressed to Lancasters based at Woolfox Lodge in Rutland. Ted found the Lancaster more straightforward than the Stirling, and the F.E's position was next to the pilot and the F.E's panel much more compact too. After a little over 10 hours on 'Lancs', Ted and the rest of his crew were posted to 622 Squadron at Mildenhall in Suffolk. After only 7 days on the Station, they received their first operation 'op'. After a pre flight meal of bacon and eggs, they set off at 20:14 hours on 26 August 1944 on their first mission to bomb Kiel Docks. The crew returned at 01:46 after 5½ hours in the air.

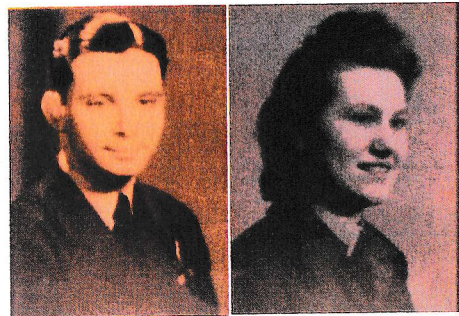
It was said the first five 'ops' were more dangerous due to inexperience, and the last five due to complacency. Seventeen Lancasters failed to return that night across Bomber Command.

Over the next few months they carried out 30 'ops', most of them in Lancaster NN709 H-for-How. The majority of the raids were at night, but a number were carried out in daylight. One daylight raid was on a dump at Pont Remy in Northern France - they were one of a 601 strong force. Another daylight attack was on an airfield in Southern Holland, at Eindhoven. "The good thing about daylight operations was that you could see your fighter escort - always a reassuring sight". One of their longest trips had them in the air for 5 hrs 50 mins in a group of 531 Lancasters whose task was to destroy transport routes to the town of Saabrücken to help ground forces who were preparing to take the town. On one day on 14 October they had two missions in one day.

A raid on the night of 23 October 1944 stuck in Ted's memory. It was a raid on the Krupps Works in the Ruhr, which was known to be heavily defended. "I'll never forget the run into the target, it was like an inferno, there was aircraft above and below us, and flack all over the place, and the beams from the search lights half blinded the crew". Ted saw more aircraft brought down that night than at any other time. His legs began to shake, the only time his fear manifested itself physically. He folded down the F.E's seat and braced his legs against it in order to stop the shaking - it only happened the once and he was able to control it after that. It was the scariest experience of his life. He was always too busy to be scared normally.

He never mentioned it to anyone else. "You kept your fear to yourself, you didn't want to let your mates down, you had to believe there was light at the end of the tunnel - as long as it wasn't a search light of course". After 5 hrs 20 minutes the crew were back at base, grateful to have survived. Occasionally they would see the military police come along and clear away a crew's lockers and beds, reclaiming RAF kit or sending on personal items, it was a sobering sight. Near the end of their tour, they had a close shave, when their mission had to be aborted before they reached their target. The rear gun turret became u/s, and the skipper decided to turn round and head for home. They released their bomb load over the sea, but one 500lb bomb failed to release, then a red warning light came on indicating the undercarriage might not be locked down. Ted initiated the emergency air system which blew the undercarriage into the locked position. The Skipper made a perfect landing without really knowing whether the undercarriage was capable of taking the weight, and the crew breathed a great sigh of relief. Their last op was in R-for- Robert as H-for- How was unfit for service. Their target was the marshalling yards at Duisberg. Due to low cloud they had to rely on instruments for releasing the bomb load at 21,000 feet. They returned home knowing they had completed 30 missions, and now classed as 'tour expired'.

No more bombing raids for Ted, the rest of the war was spent firmly on the ground.



Ted and Dorothy in their uniforms

After the war Ted married his sweetheart Dorothy who was in the WAAF at the time. Their first home was in Long Eaton, both finding work at Stanton Iron Works. Ted worked in the stores of the concrete plant, and Dorothy in the offices of the main works. They later moved to Stapleford. Sadly Dorothy died a number of years ago. In retirement Ted returned to joinery and made his own furniture. He leads a quiet life surrounded by photos and mementos of his earlier life and in May this year he will be 92 - one of the few remaining people who fought for their country in WWII, unsung heroes modest and selfless in their bravery.



In August 2013 Ted was presented with his Bomber Command Clasp by William Tucker the Lord Lieutenant of Derbyshire

Stapleford Co-op

I was somewhat dismayed when the Ilkeston Co-op closed in 2013. I thought that the Ilkeston Co-op would survive for a thousand years. I had attended two family weddings and also saw a number of pop groups there in the early 1970's, including Atomic Rooster and Screaming Lord Sutch. As if things could not get any worse, our own Stapleford Co-op sadly closed in November 2016, along with ATS and Deacon House Warehouses Ltd.

The Co-op was such an important part of our lives - in the early 1980's when we first moved to Stapleford we did our weekly shopping there before we had a car and defected to other super markets. The Co-op was also important in the social lives of many of the inhabitants of Stapleford. The Stapleford Methodist Players performed some of their classic productions at the Albert Hall on Albert Street - "The Potting Shed" (May 1971), "Lord Arthur Saville's Crime" (October 1971) and "The Ghost train" in January 1972.

The Co-op in Stapleford has its origins in 1870 when a group of Stapleford worthies persuaded the Nottingham Society to open a branch in Stapleford. The first site was a stable on Toton Lane. The inhabitants of the town were not happy with this arrangement and arranged to buy the stock from the Nottingham Society and opened their own shop on 19 October 1872. Takings during the first week were £36 19s. (95 pence), and after the first quarter £395 5s.(25p) and a farthing (there would have been 48 farthings in 5p!). Out of this a dividend of 2s. (10p) in the pound was paid to members.

In 1880, the Albert Street shop was opened and a literary institute was soon established. In 1895 a club and billiard room were added.

In 1900, the Sandiacre Society, which had also started out in a stable, amalgamated with Stapleford and the central premises of the Sandiacre Society became known as No. 2 branch.

In 1901, the Northwood Street estate was bought and stables and a slaughter house were built along with the houses on the street.

In 1905 the Albert Street shop was enlarged to incorporate a drapery and furnishing department with offices and boardroom. In 1906 No. 3 branch was built along with four houses on Brookhill Street.

A fish and fruit department was opened at No. 1 branch on Derby Road opposite Halls Road in 1910 and sometime later a dairy department was added. The society branched out into surrounding villages with a shop opening at Stanton Village in 1909 and later branches were opened at Wollaton, Bramcote in the Albany district and Stevens Road, Sandiacre. A dairy was opened at the Albert Street premises in 1926 to produce pasteurised bottled milk. Up to this time it had been supplied as loose milk with customers received their milk from measuring cans and hand churns in to their own containers. This was a big step forward for a Society which only had 3,000 members at the time.



Tea pot produced in 1922 to celebrate the jubilee of the Co-op Society

The literary institute which had been formed in 1880, became the Stapleford Literary Institute and Working Men's Club in 1882. Draughts, dominoes and a game called "Fox and Geese" were enjoyed by the members. Newspapers and periodicals including "Funny Folks", "Ally Sloper" and "Scraps" were provided for the members.

Concerts and lectures were arranged with the first lecture being "Midnight Scenes in New York" by the Rev. Fred Ball. Unfortunately they did not have sufficient funds to cover the expenses so the Committee had to pay 6d (2.5p) each to cover costs. The Ilkeston Choral Society gave a performance of Handel's "Messiah" in the Albert Hall. Refreshments for the performance were nine gallons of ale, three bottles of wine, one ham, bread, cakes, tea and coffee.



Tailoring Dept, corner of Nottingham Road and Albert Street

A tailoring and outfitting shop, a cafe, a fruit and imported meat shop were also opened in 1926.

Some cottages in Wesleyan Walk were converted into a warehouse in 1931 with a garage for vehicles, and the old warehouse was made into an education centre with four billiard tables and a reading rack.

The dairy in Pasture Road, opened in 1952, and was equipped with the most up to date facilities. There was an office block and laboratory, staff canteen, dry store, compressor room, boiler house and fuel store.

In 1932, during the Diamond jubilee, the Secretary of the Society Mr. S. Garnet, wrote: "What a wonderful team spirit there has been throughout and when the centenary is reached we trust the same road of progress will have been travelled bringing sunshine and happiness to many families as in the past."

The centenary was reached in 1972, when a number of events were held including a coach and horses parading through Stapleford and Sandiacre on Saturday 30 September 1972. The Albert Street premises would survive for another five years before being demolished in 1977, after providing loyal service to the people of Stapleford for 97 years.

The information for this article was taken from the Co-op Centenary News, published by the Greater Nottingham Co-operative Society Ltd, Public Relations Dept, in 1972.

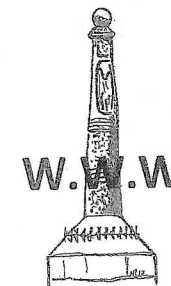


Teapot made for the 1932 Diamond Jubilee of the Society

Nigel Brooks

Website News

www.staplefordlocalhistory.co.uk



Did you know we had a website?

It has been going for a few months now and has attracted quite a lot of interest.

We get enquiries from all over the world.

We get asked for copies of the local historical publications.

We get family tree enquiries.

We get street-finding enquiries.

We get notices from other historical societies.

We are hoping to expand the range of things we do on the site and if you have any ideas please tell us.



If you have an interesting story about Stapleford

History please let us know :-

Johnshaw111@gmail.com

22nd ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, 11 APRIL 2017

CHAIRMAN AND SECRETARY'S REPORT

This has, again, been an interesting and successful year for our Society. We are now well settled into St Helen's Church Hall with good sound and vision, comfy chairs and plenty of space.

Talks have been stimulating, two of them by our own members. Nigel Brooks spoke about British Legion Poppies and John Shaw talked about his family connection with war in Egypt.

Eileen Bloor and I have led two walks round the Stapleford Town Trail, one as part of Broxtowe's Guided Walks programme and the other as part of Heritage Open Days weekend. I have also led the local U3A History Group on the second half of the trail and have given them a talk on the life of Admiral Sir John Borlase Warren.

The Society had a stall at the *Nottinghamshire Local History and Archaeology Day* on 9 July at The University of Nottingham Lakeside, which attracted a good deal of interest from visitors to the very comprehensive event.

This Society was one of the four local groups which formed the Southern Broxtowe Blue Plaque Group. Having completed the installation of 34 plaques, we produced a guide giving details about the subjects of the plaques and their sites, together with a map covering the whole area. This was launched by Sir Neil Cossons at a crowded special meeting at Beeston Town Hall. All Society members have received a copy.

A new information plaque, explaining the origins and history of Stapleford's Saxon Cross, was unveiled in July in St Helen's churchyard by the Mayor of Broxtowe, Councillor Graham Harvey, in the presence of a sizeable crowd. The University of Nottingham Medieval Combat Society Re-enactment Group, in full Saxon armour, mounted guard over the speakers and later entertained the crowd with mock battles.

Our Archives group has started the online indexation of the Society's interesting material about Stapleford, led by Keith Goodman. This will be a long haul, but should result in easy access to our resources in the future.

Now it is time to thank all members for their co-operation and work during the year, especially the Treasurer, Pat Hodgkiss, and Committee members, Eileen Bloor, Nigel Brooks, Keith Goodman, John Hodgkiss, Pat Kelly, John Shaw and Margaret Watt. A special thank you goes to Lillian and Tony Britton, who serve refreshments, and to Robert

Butler, who arranges for our accounts to be audited by C J Lucking & Company. The efforts of all these people make the smooth running of our Society possible.

As you know, I am standing down from the position of Chairman of the Society, which I have held since April 1997, and also from the position of Secretary, which I have held since the resignation of Barbara Page in April 2005.

It has been a privilege and a pleasure to chair our Society and I am sure we can all look forward to many more interesting and stimulating years ahead.

Barbara Brooke, Chairman and Secretary

REPORT OF THE TREASURER AND MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY

The figures are very much in line with the previous year. In January Helen Jarvis repaid the £1,500 loan made to Malcolm in connection with the publication of a historical book which was very much appreciated.

Membership figures were on a par with 2015, but the present year shows a decline. It is very difficult to attract new members. I have asked some people but they are just not interested in history of any description. An average of 27 members attended the meetings during the year.

Thanks to Robert Butler for arranging the auditing of the accounts and everyone for their support during the year.

Pat Hodgkiss, Treasurer and Membership Secretary

ELECTIONS

The Officers were elected unopposed, as follows: Nigel Brooks as Chairman, John Shaw as Vice Chairman, Pat Hodgkiss as Treasurer, Membership Secretary and Secretary.

All Committee members had indicated their willingness to continue, so they were automatically re-elected for one year: Eileen Bloor, Keith Goodman, John Hodgkiss, Pat Kelly, Margaret Watt.

Barbara Brooke was proposed as an additional Committee member by John Shaw, seconded by Nigel Brooks and unanimously approved.

ADDITIONS TO THE SOCIETY'S LIBRARY 2016/17

Sandiacre History Group Newsletter – No31, no.32
Basford Bystander, No. 166
Local History News, Nos. 119, 120, 121
The Local Historian, Volume 46, No.2, no.3, no.4
East Midlands History and Heritage, Issue 03
Don't be late on Monday by Mark Ashfield
The Leen Valley by Claude Bartholomew
Nottingham's War - Evening Post
The Nottingham Meadows in the 1970s by Bernard and Pauline Heathcote
Memories of Nottingham – True North
Nottingham 1897 – 1946 by Douglas Whitworth
The Changing Face of Nottingham by Geoffrey Oldfield
Victorian Nottingham in Old Photographs by Michael Payne
Arthur Mee – A Biography by Keith Crawford
Off to War - Stories of Ilkeston District Soldiers, Sailors and Airmen 1914-1918 by Grant Shaw, Ilkeston & District LHS
The Nottinghamshire Heritage by Chris Weir

ADDITIONS TO THE SOCIETY'S ARCHIVES 2016/17

New plaque at Saxon Cross – reports and photos
Launch of Guide to 34 local plaques - report and photos
Bramcote Green Flag Park – report and photo
Copy Schools Endowment Deed by Dame Caroline Warren 1836
(2 schools in Toton, 3 in Stapleford)

Walter Rowland – Master Boot Repairer

Walter Rowland was my grandfather, born in 1880 at Hyson Green, Nottingham. He left school when he was about eight years old and went to work down the pit. When he was twenty he moved to London and worked in the Woolwich Arsenal. Later he moved back to Nottingham and worked in the lace industry.

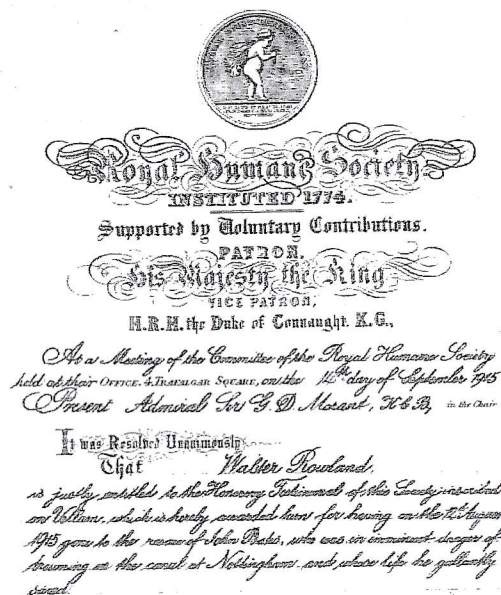


Walter Rowland aged twenty

He met my grandmother, Sarah Cook, who was born in Somercotes, Derbyshire, whilst she was working on one of the fish stalls in the Old Market Square. She said she couldn't help but notice a handsome young man wearing a high collar and a bowler hat paying more attention to her than to what he was buying. They were married six years later on 'Goose Fair Saturday', 7 October 1905 in Beeston Parish Church.

They lived in Beeston for about fifteen years where five of their six children were born. Nearby lived Thomas Barton, founder of the Barton Bus Co. Grandad could clearly remember the first bus Thomas Barton bought. He could also remember when the Humber Cycle Works, later Humber Motor Cars moved to Coventry.

Grandad's only athletic interest was swimming. When he was thirty-five he was awarded a Royal Humane Society Certificate and had tea with the Lord Mayor of Nottingham, for saving the life of a young boy who had fallen into the Wollaton Lock.



Grandma Rowland could vividly recall the disastrous explosion at the Chilwell Ordnance Factory on 1 July 1918 which killed 139 workers. She was at home in the kitchen making some jam when suddenly the house shook and she was lifted off her feet. She guessed what had happened.

Mainly owing to the illness of my grandma, granddad took up boot making and repairing, and about 1920 he bought a shop on Derby Rd. Stapleford, where he was in business for nearly forty years.

His two hobbies were watch repairing and photography. He was taking photographs in the early days when wet plates were used. His favourite pastime was watch repairing. An uncle who was in the trade taught him the rudiments of repair work and as he was mechanically minded he quickly acquired the skills. He once bought a watch for £80 and sold it for £150. I can remember many times going to Nottingham to get him some parts for a watch he was repairing. Grandad was always the person who repaired the watches of financier Terah Hoooley, and he once restored a prized possession – a watch with photographs of the whole family inside. He retired in about 1955 and died in 1967 at the age of 87 years.

Colin Rowland



All communications to be addressed
to Registered Office:
ALBERT ST., STAPLEFORD

Telephone: 2316 & 2317 Sandiacre
Postal & Telegrams
Stapleford, near Nottingham

26th July 1950

M. rs. Cooper, 91, Ilkeston Road, Trowell.

BOUGHT OF THE
**Stapleford & Sandiacre
Co-operative Society Ltd.**

Central Stores: No. 1 Branch: Derby Rd., Stapleford No. 7 Branch: Stevens Rd., Sandiacre
ALBERT STREET, No. 2 Branch: Market Place, Sandiacre No. 8 Branch: Bramcote
STAPLEFORD. No. 3 Branch: Birley St., Stapleford No. 9 Branch: Spencer Av., Sandiacre
No. 4 Branch: Stanton-by-Dale No. 10 Branch: Hickings Lane, Stapleford
No. 5 Branch: Wollaton Bazaar: Station Rd., Sandiacre
No. 6 Branch: Albany

CWS Lec/S. 168-L. 11

BAKERY DEPT.

To Providing 33 Teas @

4/6d per head..... 7. 8. 6.

4 Teas @ 2/6d per head. 10. -.

£ 7. 18. 6.

*Received with Hanks
H. Martin*

STAPLEFORD
SANDIACRE
CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETY LTD.

THIS AMOUNT MUST BE PAID WITHIN 28
DAYS TO QUALIFY FOR DIVIDEND.

My parents had their wedding reception at the Albert Hall in Stapleford in 1950-
a far cry from today's prices when wedding receptions tend to cost in the region of a
few thousand pounds.

Nigel Brooks

Introduction to A STAPLEFORD CHILDHOOD

The Gibbons Family have been in Stapleford since at least 1841. By 1871 they were living on Toton Lane and were farming the triangle of land between Toton Lane and Eatons Road, now occupied by the Gibbons Avenue housing estate. Their home was Crawkham House at the top of the site adjacent to the boundary with Fairfield School.

During the first half of the 1900s the family consisted of Albert George, his wife Lizzie Maud and their four daughters – Millie (b.1898), Alice Mabel (b.1900), Elsie (b.1902) and Ena (b.1904).

During World War II Ena's son, Archie Russell, was sent to stay with his grandmother (his grandfather having died in 1933) and his aunts. This is his account of life in Stapleford at that time.

Keith Goodman

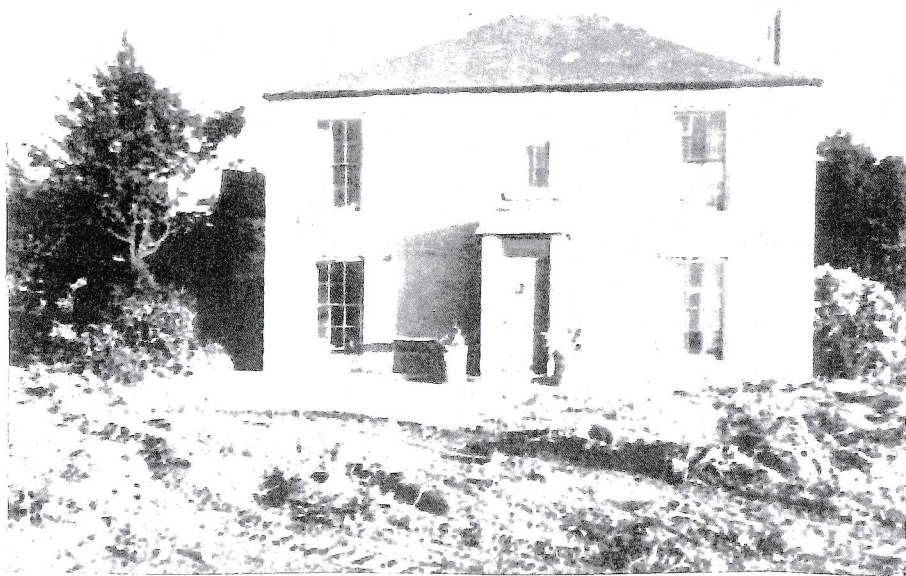
A STAPLEFORD CHILDHOOD

by Stuart Archie Russell, Biggleswade, Bedfordshire

December 2016

I was born in the White House, some nine months prior to the outbreak of the Second World War. The White House in question was a clapboard cottage in Headcorn, a small village east of the Medway in Kent – and that entitles me to be known as 'A man of Kent'. However, my time in the Garden of England was limited on account of the aspirations of Herr Hitler. My Mother amused my children by telling them that when the Luftwaffe were returning home after raids on London, they would target my pram with unused bombs. They missed! That aside, a German invasion then became a very real possibility, I was 'evacuated' to Mother's family home in Stapleford. Thus began my childhood at Crawkham.

My grandfather, Albert Gibbons, had died before my parents married, and the farm was run by my Auntie Milly, the eldest of his four daughters. She married Stanley Thomas, a solicitor, and lived in Briar Gate, Long Eaton. Sadly, Uncle Stanley died before his time and Milly returned to Crawkham. Auntie Alice was the other lady in



Crawkham House



Joe Rhodes and Polly

my young life, the only daughter not to marry. In later years I surmised that her beau may well have perished in the Kaiser's War. Nevertheless, a very independent woman who trained as a chiropodist and practised in Nottingham in partnership with a Miss Crosskill. The other daughter, Elsie, who was married to Eric Riley, lived in Derby. Grandma (Lizzie) Gibbons presided over the household and my upbringing. Other nearby relatives included Nell Littlewood, Grandma's sister, who lived where the twitchell from Eatons Road joined Brookhill Street. Her son, Uncle Harry, was a policeman - more of him later. Another couple I saw much of was Alice and Charlie Atkey, who were I believe, very distantly related. Their home was in Mapperley. Uncle Charlie had the Austin agency in Nottingham and had a role in the Fire and ARP Service during the war. I always enjoyed going to see them, Charlie kept bees as a hobby and managed to convince me that I was an invaluable help to him!

To live on the farm and follow each season with its attendant crops and cycles of activity was literally wonderful; as the pigs, hens, fruit and vegetables grew, I grew with them. It was my home, I was loved and, although I did not know it at the time, I would re-connect seamlessly with almost forgotten parents one day in the future.

The real work at Crawkham was accomplished by an inseparable duo, Joe and Polly. Joe Rhodes could and did do everything on the farm and Polly was a shire horse of gigantic size. On Polly's vast back my little legs stuck out horizontally. But what fun it was to go with Joe to take Polly to be shod in Sandiacre. With so little traffic, we three could walk in perfect safety down to Derby Road, over the railway and the Erewash, and finally the canal bridge and crossroads would take us to the forge in Town Street. On the return Joe would lift me on to Polly's back.

Another man, Cook, helped on the farm, a wartime placement as he seemed too old for active service. When the apples, pears and plums ripened, the extra manpower needed was always forthcoming from a regular band of men living close by. All of them worked in local factories feeding in to the war effort, but once off-shift would come and pick fruit. The only name I can recall is that of Maurice

Dakin. By the farm gate there was a warehouse, used partly to stack produce for onward transmittal, and by the door, whatever was in season for sale to the general public, mornings only, and all the local housewives would come for their fresh (still got soil on) veg, fruit and eggs. At the more heroic end, five tons of rhubarb at a time would go to the jam factories – the carrier was Mr Curnow, who used to let me pretend to drive his lorry.

Two of my most prized possessions were a red second-hand red tricycle, which I would ride at high speed from the house, down the slope of the cart way to the gate. Sometimes I didn't fall off. The other was a very splendid wheelbarrow, made by Duke Atkin and scaled down to my size. Mr Atkin was a carpenter in the employ of the Co-op and had a workshop at the end of Northwood Street. A very gentle man, as I recall. Another person I saw on the farm was Harold Turland. Mr Turland had an allotment between the cartway and Toton Lane and a small shed for his tools. He would tell me what he was about when I saw him and I have often mused since about the co-existence of such large and small scale productivity.

Just beyond the gate, at the top of Victoria Street, was the house, yard and store of J Topps and Son, painters and decorators. I always enjoyed going there and loved the smell of paint and turpentine. One of the boys, Donald, although older than me, would frequently come to the farm and we would play together. He would tell me about the Boy Scouts, which led eventually to my becoming a Wolf Cub. Later in our lives, he a Structural Engineer and I an Architect, we worked together on a project on Tees-side. Sadly, he died following heart surgery in the early 70s. To the other side of the gate was a row of terraced houses. In the one nearest lived Elsie Brooks. Mrs Brooks came most mornings to help Grandma and many a time I would go back home with her. We would chatter away, she spoke of her husband Ernie who worked in a factory and liked to go to 'the match' on a Saturday afternoon – I had no idea what a match was other than something to light the fire with! When a little older, a school friend lived in the same road as Tommy Lawton when he played for Notts County. All was then made clear, but I still did not know which of the Nottingham/Derby teams Ernie

supported. Mrs Brooks was kind but firm, if I erred I was scolded and her ultimate sanction would be to 'tell a policeman'. This generally had the desired effect, but also one of puzzlement. Uncle Harry officially represented the Law, but I only saw him off-duty when he would come up to the farm and take me ratting. With pigs, poultry and other food a-plenty, rats thrived. Uncle Harry and his ferrets, together with my puny efforts to stop up some of the holes, restored the balance. Uncle Harry would surely not commit me to a prison cell?

Entertainment as such was wholly self-generated. In winter evenings I was encouraged to draw. Once taught, I read avidly, my Aunts had some old Chatterbox Annuals which I went to time and again. I was fascinated by the illustrations – all engraved. Rupert Bear Annuals at Christmas were looked forward to. We played cards, beginning with Snap, which was very noisy. I eventually became quite good at Pontoon, which was played using a bag of pre-war Co-op tokens instead of money. My Aunts would often have bridge parties of an evening, in later life I learned that Auntie Milly played bridge at County level.

The first time I was taken to the cinema was to see 'Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs' at the 'Palace', which was effectively the last building in Stapleford before crossing the County boundary into Sandiacre. I was hugely excited by the whole experience, but absolutely terrified by the wicked witch. During summer weekends we might go to the Hemlock Stone, have a picnic somewhere or walk over to the Trent at Toton and take the ferry to the far bank – the ferry was a large rowing boat. The walk back always included a stop at the Cosy Cafe.

Winter snow, for children at any rate, was a welcome diversion. Snowmen, snowfights and sledging. I could sledge down the cart way, but slowly, since the gradient had to allow for Polly pulling the dray either way. The best place to go was Stony Clouds, there were three runs as I remember it – big hill, little hill and electric shock. The last ran from the big to little hill over a line of frozen tractor tracks. When I became old enough I joined a Cub Pack, and Miss Meads was Akela. We had a great time, the best outside where

we would learn about tracking and natural history. We went to different places, developed useful skills and even at our young age made the promise to 'Do my duty to God and the King and help other people'. One evening I was running late, we were to meet at Bramcote Hills, so I asked Aunt Alice to take me in the car, a very pre-war Austin Seven. On urging greater speed, I was put down very firmly with 'I am already doing 40 miles per hour'.

People that I recall were an interesting variety, but reflected the place from my own perspective. Willy Farr, who lived on Eatons Road and worked on the railway, had perfect manners and was a joy to speak with. I played with Neville Morley. His dad was amazing with model aeroplanes and lived in Alexandra Street. Mr Baggs was Vicar at St Helens and I was at school with his son Michael. Mr Hammond was Minister at the Baptist Church - I went to Sunday School there (morning and afternoon) since a neighbour who taught there took me. An adoptive Uncle, Frank Harrison, was an auditor with an office on Nottingham Road. He was something of a pioneer motorist and did a deal of 'route recording' for the AA. Splendid fellows with motorcycles and sidecars, who always saluted members. Dr Vartan, long retired, took time and trouble to tell me much about old Stapleford. Dr Sherowit had a practice this side of the canal in Sandiacre and he played bridge with my Aunts and was our pre-NHS doctor. Telling me I had to have my tonsils removed, I asked when. "Two weeks' time" was his reply, at which I relaxed. That was so far ahead there was no need to worry. Another medical connection was with Dr Boyd, a mild mannered Scot, who frequently took me to school with his son, Gavin. He was, of course, one of a minority who could run a car during the War. Also, my gratitude to an unknown engine-driver at Nottingham Victoria Station, who took me up onto the footplate of the engine when seeing Father off after one of his few visits.

The actuality of war did not impact on my consciousness very much. The abnormalities of wartime were my normalities, that was how life was. The proximity of Chilwell Depot, the vast Toton Railway Sidings and Rolls Royce in Derby ensured nights in the Anderson Shelter every now and then. It was located in a copse in

Polly's field and at the time seemed quite an adventure. Later on, the still air of summer mornings would be punctuated with the sound of aero-engines being tested. Perhaps the most poignant memory was that of Grandma taking to putting a shot of gin in her afternoon tea. That recollection I solved many years later. What I did not know at the time was that Father, as Flight Engineer in a Lancaster, had been shot down bombing German supply lines south of Paris the night after D Day. The crew were all 'Missing presumed killed'. Quite naturally, Grandma needed a bracer. Some three months later a telegram was delivered to Crawkham. Not by the Telegraph Boy, but by the Postmaster himself. Mr Anness brought news of Father's safe return to England.

Although the serious shopping was done at Griffin and Spalding in Nottingham or The Midland Drapery in Derby, I was in and out of many of the small shops in Stapleford. Albert's grocery shop in Church Street was stocked with tins, floor to ceiling, and he had a delivery-boy, who looked about 90, who took orders out on a two wheeled trolley. Miss Cooper sold sweets from a shop near the Beer-Off in Victoria Street and she enjoyed my patronage. Mrs Hall's Ironmongery at The Roach was useful for odds and ends for the farm. There was a Newsagency near the traffic lights. I would go there to collect the Beano and Dandy each week. Mr Dable had a butcher's shop at the top of the hill towards Bramcote - I heard he committed suicide, but that sort of thing was not discussed with children. The Cycle Shop, run by Mr Hooley, was brilliant. He rebuilt my first full sized Raleigh bike, it looked like new by the time he finished it. Towards the far end of Church Street Mr Bassett had a cobbling business in the front room of his house - it seemed that he could repair anything with leather. The Post Office was in Derby Road and close by Boots the Chemist, managed by the redoubtable Mr Winstanley.

My formal education began with Mrs Ripley, in a school-room next to the garage in her back garden. The house was on the corner of Nottingham Road and Ewe Lamb Lane, the latter no more than a dirt track in those days. There must have been twenty or so pupils. We each had little blackboards and chalk and so began a

basic tuition in the 3 Rs. Almost Victorian in concept, Mrs Ripley taught and the older pupils helped the younger ones. I vividly remember reading a story about a pig to Delia Bennett who patiently helped and corrected me. My less academic claim to fame was when I was learning to ride another child's 'fairy cycle'. I eliminated one of Mr Ripley's blackcurrant bushes. Aged six, I went on to Greenholme School, which I believe is still in existence on the Lenton side of Nottingham. It was a 5d. return Barton bus ride each day. If I went to the stop outside Bancroft's Garage, I would occasionally miss the bus because I had become totally absorbed watching the mechanics. Cue for Headmistress to tell me off. Mrs Dewsall-Skeggs did not take prisoners - she was fearsome in the extreme and ran the place with a rod of iron. She told me she knew my Aunt and would be communicating my transgressions. Young as I was, I had serious doubts about Aunt Alice's choice of friends. Notwithstanding, the teachers, all ladies, were kind and capable. In the summer, lessons on the lawn made a welcome change from the classrooms. We used an adjacent playing field and my attainments on Sports Day were generally better than the results on my report. Two years later several of us went as boarders to Bramcote Hall, sadly now demolished. After that, five years at Trent College completed my school days.

It was indeed a full and happy childhood in a truly wonderful community - I look back on it fondly. Never mind the cold bedrooms, the kitchen range on a winter's morning made up for it. It was touching that many I had known were kind enough to send me cards on my majority, even though I had moved away. The family had re-grouped after the war ended. Father concentrated on pig breeding at Crawkham for a few years, but returned to the RAF when Crawkham was acquired for a school and housing. Home then was wherever he was posted.

I have in my own home an antique long-case clock that was in the drawing room at Crawkham, which is a constant reminder of such good days at such a bad time in our island's history.

CENTENARY SUPER SAVERS

with Treble
dividend stamps

Co-op
Silver Seal
MARGARINE 1lb 4¹/₂p

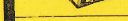
Chesswood
GRILLING
MUSHROOMS 7oz 15p



Batchelors Pkt

Co-op
Plain or S.R.
FLOUR 3lbs 11¹/₂p

CO-OP
99 Tea
7¹/₂p
Per Qtr.



Batchelors Pkt

FOR QUALITY AND PRICE ORDER
YOUR FAVOURITE CUT OR JOINT OF
MEAT FROM OUR BUTCHERY
SECTIONS.

QUAKER
OATS 1 1/2lb 11p

Wonderloaf
Now available
at your store

Wine & Spirit



Kelloggs
CORN
FLAKES
Giant 11¹/₂p

Dried Fruit - Currants
- Sultanas
- Mixed Fruit 1lb 10p

ROBERTSONS
JAMS 1lb
All Varieties 12p

Co-op
Suet 8oz Pkt. 6¹/₂p

TYNE BRAND
STEAK pie filling
4 Varieties 22p

Batchelors Pkt
Soups
all varieties 4¹/₂p

KRAFT 3oz 9p
Philadelphia Cheese

HEINZ TOMATO
KETCHUP 15oz 11¹/₂p

Mazola
Pure Corn Oil
15oz 18p

BIRD'S
Custard Powder 8¹/₂p
Family Drum
DAILY DELIVERIES OF FRESH FRUIT
AND VEGETABLES AT KEENEST PRICES.

wine & spirit
Bargains

DOUBLE CENTURY
Sherry 88p

BOPORSA 52p
Spanish Table Wines

Sodap CREAM
CYPRUS SHERRY 56p

Clan Dew 73p
Lambs Navy/
Lemon Heart
RUM 1 1/2 bottles £1.48

Co-op PALE
or BROWN ALE 24p
(4 x 1/2 litre N.R. Btlts) pack

Co-op (4x 1/2 litre N.R. Btlts)
LAGER 26p

Check out these Co-op prices from 1972

PRICE LIST of items for sale at Society Meetings
At any other time please apply to the Chairman

Stapleford Town Trail	£1.00
Town Trail DVD	£4.00
Stapleford Tea Towels	£2.95
Leather bookmarks	£0.80
Local views – cards with envelopes	£1.00
Pen & ink drawings by Jack Vernon	£1.00

Full colour illustrated maps of Stapleford + Borlase Warren Coat
of Arms, framed (produced to order) £14.00

Society Newsletters – back copies available at reduced prices

.....

CHAIRMAN – Nigel Brooks 01332-673206
TREASURER/SECRETARY – Pat Hodgkiss – 0115-9469152
Website: www.staplefordlocalhistory.co.uk

**The deadline for submission of items for the next
Autumn 2017 issue of the Newsletter is 30 September.
Material can be given to any committee member or the
above-named.**

This is YOUR newsletter! We'd love to hear from you!

Front cover
Stapleford Police Station in its early days
By Nigel Brooks