

# **Stapleford and District Local History Society**



**Newsletter No 10 – Spring 2001**

**50p**

**Free to Members**



## CONTENTS

- 1 Chairman's Report
- 2 Secretary's and Treasurer's Report
- 4 Were your Grandparents budding Thespians?  
by Barbara Page
- 11 An early prescription and Wireless Licence donated by  
Heather Fitzsimmons
- 12 Beyond the Sherwin Arms by Nigel Brooks
- 16 The Hemlock Stone and The Illustrated London News  
by Alan Clayton
- 19 MEETING REPORTS by Barbara Brooke  
Village & Town Bands by Chris Weir  
December Social Evening  
The Enigma Machine & Bletchley Park by Henry Balen  
Place Names of the East Midlands by Dr Paul Cavill  
Delights and Disasters of the 1960s by Alan Clayton
- 25 The Society's programme to the end of 2001
- 26 The year 1813 and Sir John Borlase Warren  
by Alan Clayton
- 32 East Street, Lot Street and Wesley Place by Ena Cordall
- 35 The woman who was tarred and feathered by Roy Allen
- 36 The Pullthrough by Malcolm Jarvis

## 6<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2001

### CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2000/2001

I am very pleased to report that the Society has had another excellent year. Evening meetings have been well attended and the interesting and varied talks enthusiastically received. Outings to the Galleries of Justice and Bromley House Library were well supported and much enjoyed.

The Society mounted displays at St Helen's Church Flower Festival in June and at the 'Celebrating Stapleford' Community Event in September. As a result of these, several new members were recruited and a number of artefacts and documents were added to our archives.

Our book 'Stapleford at the dawn of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century' was a huge success, all one thousand copies being sold in just over six months, leaving us in a very sound financial position. (More details about this later in the agenda)

Members have agreed that the Society shall pursue two new projects. We intend to produce a town trail, with accompanying leaflet, during the next six months, taking in the main places of interest in Stapleford. Our second, longer term, project is to cover the 'Home Front' in Stapleford in World War II and, as well as using research from documents and newspapers of the time, we intend to include some of the memories of people living in Stapleford then. A number of members have already volunteered to do research and to conduct interviews, for which purpose we intend to purchase a suitable cassette recorder shortly. We aim to conclude this project by the end of 2004, so that it can be published in time for the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the end of World War II in May 2005.

The Society's involvement in the Turnpikes Heritage Group continues and a display covering the history of transport and communication in the south Broxtowe Borough area will be mounted in a few weeks. This display is intended to highlight the group's work on the possibility of establishing a Heritage Centre for the area.

The Society is also involved, as part of a steering group, in a Broxtowe Borough Council led project interpreting the Hemlockstone and the newly recreated Bramcote Hills walled garden.

A new stone ball was placed on the Saxon Cross in St Helen's churchyard at the beginning of 2001, thanks to the persistent efforts of May Davis, a member of this Society. On 5 April several members attended an official ceremony to unveil the commemorative plaque marking this important millennium event, symbolising the spread of Christianity round the world and returning the Saxon Cross to its 19<sup>th</sup> century form.

Through the good offices of Beryl Robinson of the Turnpikes Group we have acquired, free of charge, two filing cabinets, no longer required by the University. Our President, Andrea Lowe, is currently sorting and indexing the Society's artefacts and documents which will be housed in the locked cabinets at Stapleford Library, accessible to members on application.



A welcome addition to the Society's facilities is our library, operating in the capable hands of Pat Kelly. There are now some 109 volumes available for loan to members.

This is my opportunity to thank all members who have helped the Society's activities in any way during the past year – supervising displays, selling books, writing articles for our newsletter, introducing new members, donating artefacts and documents, setting out the hall for meetings and clearing away afterwards. Special thanks go to the committee members for their extra contributions, in particular to Nigel Brooks and Alan Clayton for giving talks at our meetings, to Malcolm Jarvis for editing the Society's newsletter and to Barbara Page for her excellent work as Secretary, Programme Organiser and Treasurer.

I believe that now, after six years and with a highly successful first publication behind us, we can regard the Stapleford and District Local History Society as having 'come of age'. Thank you all for your friendship and goodwill towards our Society.

Barbara Brooke, Chairman

### SECRETARY'S AND TREASURER'S REPORT

Another busy and successful year – we have continued with an ever increasing number of regular attenders who are loyal, enthusiastic, hard working, co-operative and excellent at furniture removing.

The membership for 1999/2000 was the same as 1998/1999, 53, but as I predicted last year numbers have risen quite dramatically to 75, an increase of 41%.

We have now been in this Hall for over two years and I am sure we all appreciate the extra space to cope with an influx of visitors, to view goods on sale, articles and papers brought along by our speakers, items donated to the Society and last, but definitely not least, our collection of library books.

Having a library was always a long-term ambition of mine for the Society and so I was delighted when Pat Kelly, whom I have known for more years than either of us care to say, volunteered for the position of librarian. It is certainly a valuable asset to the Society and Pat has bought many new and second hand books to interest you, as you will see from the Statement of Account. I should like to thank Thelma Francis for the books she has donated during the year and to remind members that any gifts of books will be gratefully received.

I continue to send details of meetings to Radio Nottingham, the Nottingham Evening Post and the Stapleford & Sandiacre News. Details of meetings are also to be found at the Library, Broxtowe Borough Council Offices in Beeston, the Carnegie Centre and in the foyer of this Hall.

As well as membership, attendance at meetings has also increased. The lowest attendance was at the AGM, 28 compared with the previous year's 14, and the highest was 71 for Andrew Knighton's talk, against 64 the previous year. We had 70 visitor non-members during the year and our average attendance was 46, as against 41 the previous year. 25

people went on the visit to Bromley House Library and 24 to the Galleries of Justice. 12 of us also joined the Beeston Society on a day trip to Eden Camp.

Now to my second hat as Programme Organiser. During the past year we have had four new faces. Chris Weir, Bill Clarke (in place of Alf Bowley), Henry Balen and Dr Paul Cavill, as well as our regulars like Alan Clayton and Peter Hammond. An unexpected speaker was Nigel Brooks on 'Coal Mining'. At less than 48 hours' notice, owing to the sudden admission of Terry Fry to hospital, Nigel agreed to give this presentation, which he was still in the process of arranging. Who will ever forget the opening with all of us sitting perfectly quiet in absolute darkness, or the poignant songs later in the evening? Well done, Nigel! Next month we have a new speaker, John Hughes. In June Philip Jones returns after three years and in November we have Alan Oxley. The August meeting, 'A Debt of Honour', a video on the history and work of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission will be free, as it has been produced for presentation to non-paying audiences only, but I suggest a collection should be taken and the total amount sent to the Commission. Members of the Erewash Branch of the RAFA will be invited as one of their members is borrowing the necessary equipment to show the video from the Matlock Railway Society. I also hope to show extracts from an amateur video taken in April 1991 when my husband and I went on a Royal British Legion Pilgrimage and visited cemeteries in N E India. You will be able to see how well conducted Services of Remembrance are, a wonderful experience for relatives and friends.

I am still trying to arrange a visit to Bletchley Park but the coach firm recommended was rather expensive, as well as another visit to the Galleries of Justice, in particular the Police Galleries which we did not see last time and which are continually being expanded.

Now for my third hat – Finances. Copies of the Statement of Account for the year ended 31 March 2001 have been distributed. It does not appear to be as complicated as last year when the grants for the book had to be separated from the total, and liability for the printing of the book had to be included.

Meeting charges are up a little on the previous year, but we had a free Christmas meeting at which the raffle brought in more money. The sale of books etc looks very impressive because of our publication but we must improve our sales of other goods. Speakers' fees are quite modest considering the going rate now is at least £25 and only one asked for that amount. Three speakers, who did not want a fee, under pressure requested donations – two to charities and one to St Helen's Church.

Room hire is, of course, in advance for the year, plus the balance for the hire of the Maycliffe Hall for the book launch. Our taxation system never ceases to amaze me – no tax on the printing of membership cards, but the gummed library labels attracted VAT! Christmas Social expenses included the purchase of raffle tickets, Christmas serviettes and d'oyleys, of which plenty remain for future use.

Our balance of £4,399.44 is most satisfactory. Compare my first balance sheet in April 1996, with total assets of £139.67, and the fourth in April 1999, with assets of £955.87. Our Honorary Auditor is very impressed with our financial standing, as we have no liabilities outstanding, and with the handling of the accounts. He has suggested the names of several



Building Societies who have special deposit accounts for Societies which will be investigated. For the foreseeable future I see no reason for an increase in membership fees or meeting charges.

I commend the Statement of Account to the Society and suggest that a letter of thanks and a token of appreciation should be forwarded to Mr Gordon Smith, who has given freely of his time for the fifth year running.

Barbara Page, Secretary and Treasurer

### ELECTION OF OFFICERS

The following were elected unopposed, for two years:

Chairman	Barbara Brooke
Secretary and Treasurer	Barbara Page

### MILLENNIUM PROJECT COMPLETED

The Chairman presented facts and figures in connection with the writing, production and sale of 'Stapleford at the dawn of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century'.

### ANY OTHER BUSINESS

A proposal to invite a speaker on the evening of the Society's AGM was defeated, but it was agreed that the display of artefacts and documents presented on this occasion was a suitable additional focus for AGM evenings.

\*\*\*\*\*

## **WERE YOUR GRANDPARENTS BUDDING THESPIANS?**

by Barbara Page

Early last year Rev Jim Leverton, a former employee on the Concrete Plant at Stanton, telephoned me with regard to an old Minute Book he had found whilst engaged in the sad task of clearing the house of his late father-in-law, Sam Thomas, of Little Mill Close, 42 Rushy Lane, Risley.

The book contains the Minutes of General and Annual General Meetings of a local Dramatic Society, held at the Albert Hall, Stapleford, from 2 October 1925 onwards. On this occasion it was resolved that the words 'Wednesday Club' should be omitted in choosing a new name for the Society, to allow other than members of the Wednesday Club to be eligible

for membership. A suitable new name could not be decided upon that evening, so it was resolved to leave the choice to the Committee. The Officers and five others had been proposed, seconded and unanimously elected earlier.

A new set of rules was to be drawn up for confirmation at the next General Meeting and the membership fee was fixed at one shilling each per annum (5p to younger members of S&DLHS!). Mr W G Chapman had been re-elected President and the Committee had been empowered to sell the platform extensions, footlights, curtains etc should the opportunity arise. On 8 October the Committee met and compiled a set of rules to be presented to members and the name suggested for the Society was 'The Stapleford and Sandiacre Dramatic Society'. There were ten rules, including:

Rule V - Members shall be proposed and seconded on forms provided, and elected by the Committee.

Rule VII - If, in the opinion of the Committee, a member seriously menaces the welfare of the Society, the Committee may call on that member to resign.

Among other resolutions Mr Chapman, President, was empowered to treat with the Stapleford and Sandiacre Co-operative Society for the sale of the stage fittings at a minimum price of £8. The funds of the Society taken over by the Treasurer were £23.1.5. (about £23.07) as at 10 October 1925.

An AGM was finally held on 17 September 1926 when it was decided that the Society should be named 'The Wednesday Club Dramatic Society'.

From 1926 onwards there was always a lot of discussion and changing of minds about the plays to be performed at the Hall in Bramcote and at the Albert Hall.

In July of that year a unanimous decision had been made by the Committee to support the appeal by the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre for a share of the proceeds from one show (preferably a Shakespearean production). The Theatre had been erected at Stratford-on-Avon in 1879 but it had been destroyed by fire in 1926. In due time £10 was sent off, following the production of 'A Midsummer's Night's Dream'. Money was also required to repair a font broken during the rehearsals for this play!



During the late 1920s and 1930s plays produced included, 'The Admirable Crichton', 'Daddy Long Legs', 'Quality Street', 'Lord Richard in the Pantry', 'Mr Pym Passes By', 'The Boy comes Home', 'Peg o' my Heart', 'The Dover Road', 'Helen with the High Hat', 'Bird in Hand' and '9.45, A Mystery Play' in April 1931. (A copy of the programme is reproduced herein).

So many names are mentioned and at the back of the book are lists, presumably of members, including some addresses and an acting list, from Long Eaton, Sandiacre, Attenborough, Beeston, Risley and Stapleford. (Do please look at the Minute Book, which will be brought to meetings, to see if any members are your relatives.)

In 1934 Mr S D Thomas (Sam) appeared to become Vice Chairman. As from 19 September he signed the Minutes, and later became Chairman. In 1937 the annual subscription was raised to 2/6d (12.5p)!

The Minutes end abruptly in May 1939 when they were seeking a new Treasurer. The programme for 1939/40 was decided upon – a three act play in December and three one act plays sometime after Christmas, all to be presented at the Albert Hall. The financial results of the previous production had not been very good but it was decided that prices should not be increased when entertainment tax had to be paid. A proposal was put forward that a party of members should go to Stratford during the summer of 1940 to see one of the Shakespearean productions!

Did any of the proposed activities take place, or were members in the forces, on war work, fire watching or acting as ARP Wardens?

GET IT AT - -

# SAIL BROS.



STAPLEFORD

Wednesday Club Dramatic Society

PRESENTS

"9-45" A MYSTERY PLAY

By Owen Davis and Sewell Collins,

— ON —

Tuesday and Wednesday, April 21st and 22nd, 1931,

In the ALBERT HALL, STAPLEFORD.

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Painter, Decorator,  
Signwriter, &c.

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SANDIACRE.

Also at Stapleford.

## SCENES.

ACT I. Scene I. The Library in Robert Clayton's  
House, New York.

Scene II. An Ante-Room, The Ritz Hotel.

ACT II. Same as Scene I., Act I.

ACT III. The Same.

*Time: THE PRESENT.*

*The Action of the Play is continuous throughout.*

Producer      MRS. PALMER.

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Fine Selection of Ladies' and Children's wear.

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## PLAYERS

IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE.

Doyle	}	Police Constables	}	...	Mr. C. E. MASON.
Mack	}		}	...	Mr. J. C. MASON.
Mrs. Randall	...	...	...		Miss J. WATKIN.
Mary Doane	...	...	...		Miss D. WINROW.
Doane	...	...	...		Mr. W. ROSE.
Robert Clayton	...	...	...		Mr. J. WARDLE.
Inspector Dixon	...	...	...		Mr. J. WRANGHAM.
Doctor Norton	...	...	...		
Margaret Clancy	...	...	...		Mrs. D. WALLIS.
Tom Turner	...	...	...		Mr. J. BUTTERFIELD.
Hotel Maid	...	...	...		Miss E. WHALL.
Molly Clayton	...	...	...		Miss M. SPENCER.
Jack Glover	...	...	...		Mr. S. VARTAN.
Ruth Jordan	...	...	...		Miss G. DONCASTER.
Galliani (Maitre D'Hotel)	...	...	...		
James Everett	...	...	...		Mr. D. WALLIS.



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— SHOES. —

**D**URING the last ten years our Society has handed nearly £400 to various local charities and institutions including the local branch of the St. John Ambulance and the Children's Care Committee. The more support the Dramatic Society receive from the public, the more we are able to give to charity. Needless to say the expenses of producing a Play are very heavy.

Our thanks are extended to local tradespeople whose advertisements have made possible the publication of this leaflet

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*Ant-Chloral et Pot Brom  
pro infants*

*Magee*

*To Dr. Magee*

A copy of an early unofficial prescription, the original of which was presented to our Society by Heather Fitzsimmons.

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## BEYOND THE SHERWIN ARMS by Nigel Brooks

In Bramcote church there are interesting memorials to the various families associated with the village over the centuries. The present church is dedicated to St Michael and All Angels and was built at the expense of John Sherwin in 1861. A number of the older plaques were brought from the earlier church up the hill, the tower of which can still be seen today, the remaining parts of the building having been demolished.

The oldest plaque is to Henry Hanley who died in 1650. There is an interesting epitaph where the first letter of each line spells out the name Henry Hanly, as follows:

Heaven holds that soule who tooke such care  
Everlasting feasts for others to prepare  
Nature ne'er taught to doe such excellent things  
Reason forbids such acts as damage brings  
Yet these (the fruits of faith) by Hanly done

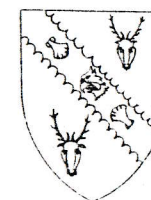
Hanly will make to live when we are gon  
And let his name immortal bee, though dead  
Never forgotten, who soules & bodies fedd  
Live Hanly's name the basis sure was good  
Your house is richer downe, then when it stood

The rest of the tablet lists the villages that benefited from his will, eg 20 shillings was left to the poor of Beeston and the same amount to the poor of Stapleford and Toton etc. The upper half of the monument shows his arms depicting three black goats with golden horns and hooves, in heraldic terms this can be described as 'argent a fess Gules between three goats courant Sable armed and unguled Or' (see fig 1). Before the dissolution of the monasteries the Bramcote estate was owned by Sempringham Priory in Lincolnshire. In 1564 the estate was bought by Thomas Hanley, then after the death of Henry Hanley in 1650 the estate was purchased by John Sherwin and remained in this family, or the related family of Longden, for more than 280 years. The Sherwin and Longden families lived in Bramcote before this date and are mentioned in the parish registers. Ellen Longden, the daughter of Robert Longden, was baptised in 1562, then in 1579 we find the name Thomas Sherwin. The Sherwins also held public office

within the county – Robert Sherwin was the Sheriff in 1602 and the Mayor of Nottingham in 1623 and a John Sherwin was Mayor in 1667. The Sherwin coat of arms can be described as 'Argent on a bend engrailed Azure between two bucks head cabossed Sable and eagles head erased between two escallops Or' (see fig 2).



*fig 1. Hanley.*



*Fig 2. Sherwin.*

There is also a wall monument to John Longden, who died in 1818, and his wife Charlotte, who died in 1848. Their son John succeeded to the Bramcote estates in 1825 and changed his name to Sherwin. In 1860 he assumed the additional name of Gregory when he inherited Harlaxton Manor in Lincolnshire. He married Catherine Holden of Nuthall Temple, Nottinghamshire and their monument can be seen on the north wall of the chancel near the altar. They had no children and, when Catherine died in 1892, Bramcote Hills passed to her brother Henry Holden. The last of the Holden squires of Bramcote Hills was Major Frank Holden, who died in 1937. The Gregory coat of arms can be described as 'Gules on a chevron between ten crossing crosslets Or three crossed crosslets of the field' (see fig 3).

There is a brass plaque showing the Holden coat of arms in memory of Harry Henry Holden and to his only son (who must have been one of the earliest victims of a motorcycle accident) Elmhurst (Tony) Holden, killed in 1911. The Holden arms can be described as 'per pale Ermine and Sable a fess between two chevrons counter charged' (see fig 4).

On the wall of the church can also be seen a diamond shaped board painted with the arms of Sherwin and Gregory on the left (sinister) side and Holden on the right (dexter) side. This is known as a hatchment and was displayed



outside the house of the deceased (in this case John Sherwin Gregory) during the period of mourning, after which they were taken to the local church. The hatchment also shows the two family crests, a sheaf of wheat and an eagle. Until fairly recently this crest and the initials JSG could be seen on a plaque on the side of the gardener's cottage opposite the Hemlock Stone. This has now been incorporated into the wall of the newly recreated formal garden.

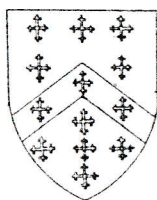


Fig 3. Gregory.

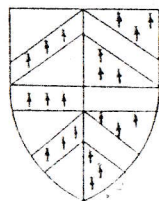
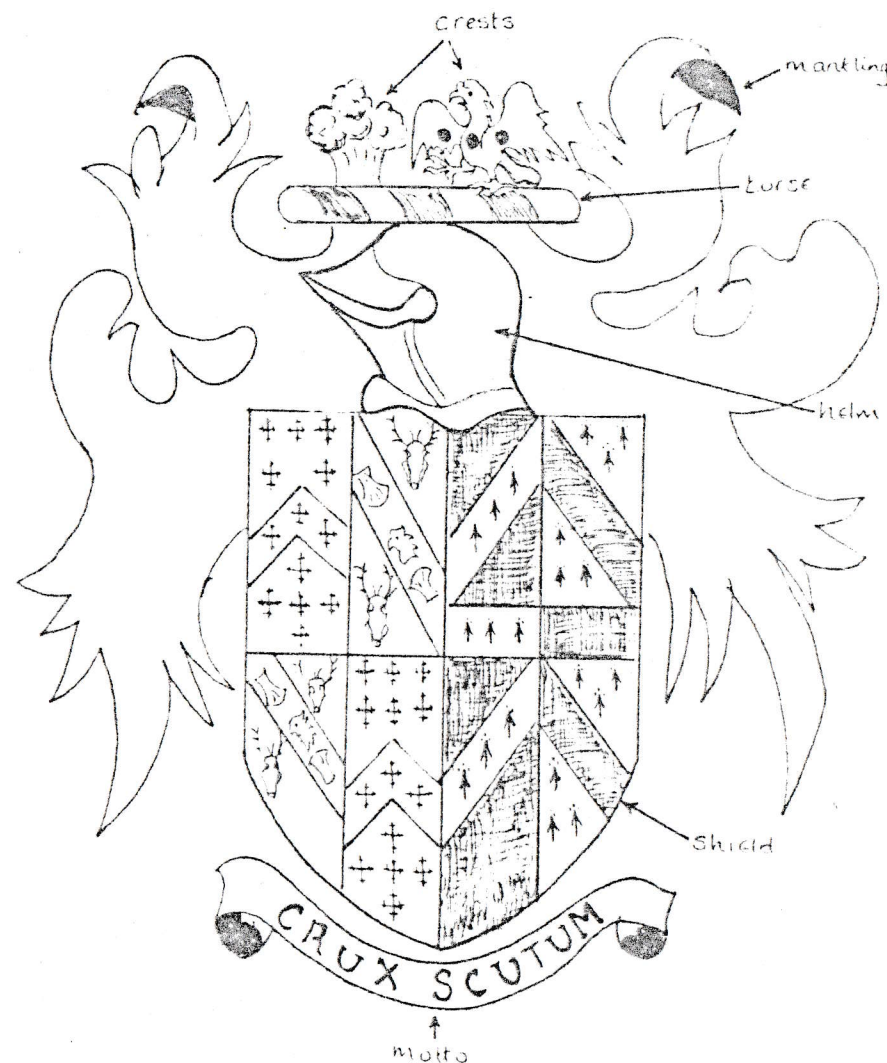


Fig 4. Holden.

#### Glossary

Gules	red
Azure	blue
Sable	black
Or	gold
Argent	silver
Fess	horizontal band across a shield
Chevron	a V shape across a shield
Courant	running at speed
Unguled	hooves
Armed	having teeth, claws or horns

#### THE ARMS OF JOHN SHERWIN GREGORY





## THE HEMLOCK STONE AND THE ILLUSTRATED LONDON NEWS

Alan L Clayton

With the great interest being shown at present in Stapleford's unique geological feature and the legends associated with it, it seems topical to offer to Newsletter readers something in my series based on old newspapers and magazines.

The first ever issue of the magazine *The Illustrated London News* appeared on 14 May 1842 and was published weekly right through until 1971 when it was reduced to a monthly issue.

The first volume covered the 32-week period from 14 May to 31 December 1842 and in week no 12 there began a series of short articles on "Nooks and Corners of Old England". Surprise, surprise, the third in the series - week 14, dated 13 August was this drawing and article about our own Hemlock Stone! In fact Nottinghamshire seems to have had privileged treatment in the magazine's first year. Out of twenty-one articles in the "Nooks" series no less than six were from the County - Thurgarton Church was no 1, then followed Shelford Church, Hucknall Torkard Church, Wilford Church and finally Newstead Abbey. In addition Nottingham and district featured in several other items in those first few months of the magazine; town views, elections, cricket, mobs(!) marriages, bankruptcies and so on, but maybe more on some of these in a later Newsletter.

To revert to the HEMLOCK STONE (note: not 'HEMLOCKSTONE') the engraving is one of the very first to have survived. The earliest known is a very crude one from 1818. Now what face of the Stone is shown? Is it the one most favoured in pictures, i.e., from the south looking towards Trowell Moor? In which case where are the trees in the background - or were there none in those days? Or is it looking towards Blue Bell Hill and Stapleford, but does this fit in with the slope of the rock formation? Or maybe there is a certain amount or artistic licence in the drawing? Your views please to the editor or myself.

The short article is eloquently written, almost romantically. It does also refer to a Doctor Stukeley's

## NOOKS AND CORNERS OF OLD ENGLAND.



THE HEMLOCK STONE,  
BRAMCOTE HILLS.

Here is a prominent object in the landscape, which attracts the eye of the tourist between the Bramcote Hills. It has an eccentric form, rude, rocky, and picturesque; and affording evidence of one of the pleasant freaks of Nature or of time, and thrusting itself upon our notice much as does a man with giantude of height and limb, when he worms along before us in the streets. There is nothing about him very beautiful or interesting, but you look at him in spite of yourself. So with this Hemlock Stone, which is a mass of rock rising upward from the soil to an eminence of thirty feet (as tall as any three giants, to say the most of them), and growing at the summit its one solitary sprig of foliage, the single friend of its bleak and bare bosom, and, as it would appear, not over green in its affections. The cold weather beating of a few more winters, will doubtless wear away and alter the features both of rock and shrub. The material of the Hemlock Stone is of the same material as that of the adjoining hills, and Doctor Stukeley's opinion is, that it is the remnant of a quarry, the stone of which has been dug or cut from around it. If the doctor is right, our previous interesting conception about time or nature is very handsomely overturned; but it is still not the less a feature of remark in the landscape, in which it preserves its singularity.

Illustrated  
London News

Vol I No 14

13 August 1842



early theory that the Stone was the remains of a quarry - frankly this is the least likely of the possible explanations for its existence, a view borne out by subsequent authorities. It is unfortunate that the quarry theory is the one included by Broxtowe Borough Council on the information board currently at the Stone. Hopefully this board is going to be replaced when the later stages of the Hemlock Stone project get under way!

I like the reference to "one solitary sprig of foliage" on the summit. In an article of 1836 there is mention of "a straggling aloe bush" on the top. Perhaps the same foliage? Even today one can see straggling flora - a bramble maybe but not the same plant as mentioned around 160 years ago! Whatever the plants were or are, I doubt whether any were 'hemlock' but the origin of the name "Hemlock Stone" is another (and very long) story. Incidentally, it is two words, but occasionally one does come across the name written, incorrectly, as a single word.

Contrary to a largely held view that little has been written about the Hemlock Stone, quite a lot can be found if one takes the trouble to search. Some scientific, some romantic, some theoretical, some plainly imaginary, but all add up to a fascinating picture of the prominent feature on the slopes of Stapleford Hill.

We will, I know, be hearing more about the Hemlock Stone through the project, in the coming months, so I shall wait and see what happens before possibly writing any more.

Alan L Clayton

## MEETING REPORTS

### VILLAGE AND TOWN BANDS by Chris Weir

Although he cannot play any musical instrument Chris Weir has been fascinated by bands since 1972 when he heard a live band performance in a public park in New Brighton.

In England since medieval times there has been a long tradition of 'waits', musicians employed by towns to play on ceremonial occasions. They played such instruments as the sackbut (an early trombone), kirtle (bassoon) and serpent (a crooked bass string instrument covered with leather). A wood pipe was also blown to sound the alarm in the town. All the musicians wore special liveries with the coat of arms of the town on their sleeves.

The records show that Nottingham's musicians led the mayor making event and also played for merry making at St Ann's Well. Following the Municipal Corporations Act of 1835, leading to the re-organisation of the local government of towns, such official groups were done away with. However, musical activities carried on at weddings, in church, at local events and with performances in nearby great houses. Church wardens' accounts at Hucknall show the church paying for new strings for instruments and Whysall parish church extracted promises of good behaviour in church from the musicians!

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century there were many technical improvements to musical instruments but their high cost was often a problem. Nevertheless, the idea of local bands continued to spread, many as community activities or connected with places of employment. Most of the new municipal parks that were all the rage in Victorian times boasted ornate bandstands where concerts were given by local bands on Sunday afternoons. Bands played at the opening of new railways, buildings and at big events.

By 1900 there were 40,000, mostly amateur, brass bands throughout the country and more than 200 band contests took place at national venues such as Belle Vue, Manchester, and the Crystal Palace. Bestwood Colliery Band



played summer seasons at Skegness, typical of many bands that were engaged to entertain summer seaside visitors.

However, with the growth of cinema and other forms of commercial entertainment, local amateur bands started to decline and now, in the television age, there are very few remaining apart from very successful, well known bands, such as that of Grimethorpe Colliery which still plays, despite the fact that the colliery to which it belonged has been closed for some years.

This was a very interesting and unusual talk, much appreciated by the large audience.

Barbara Brooke

### DECEMBER SOCIAL EVENING

A very pleasant evening was enjoyed by all who attended this event. Alan Clayton had prepared a display of photographs and clippings from newspapers over the last century – local, national and international, about which members were invited to answer questions. On a more frivolous note, everyone had been asked to supply a photograph of themselves when a baby or toddler. Members then had to guess the identities of those portrayed. Needless to say, the first competition proved much easier than the second, where guesswork was the order of the day! The draw for the raffle prizes then took place, followed by a delicious supper supplied by members.

Barbara Brooke

### THE ENIGMA MACHINE AND BLETCHLEY PARK by Henry Balen

Mr Balen, who had been in the Intelligence Corps in World War II, started his talk by telling us something of the development of cryptography, including the substitution cipher of Julius Caesar and the 36 discs cut from a log of wood that housed the jumbled letter code of President Thomas Jefferson of the USA.

Bletchley Park, where Mr Balen served as a Lance Corporal from 1943 to 1946, was a large Victorian building set in beautiful grounds and was the

HQ of the Intelligence Corps. Although more than 9,000 people worked there, drawn from all the armed forces and the top brains in the country, no one outside knew about their work. Internally, no one spoke about their activities outside the room where they worked.

Early on, most of the staff were billeted on families in Bedford and were bussed to work daily, but eventually a large military hutted camp was built in Bletchley Park grounds. A Commanding Officer was then appointed who did not know how to handle a unit with such diverse staff, where there were no salutes, no short hair cuts and no military discipline!

Enemy messages were sent in to Bletchley Park by teleprinter or motor cycle courier from Listening Intercept Centres round the country, such as Beaumanor Hall in Leicestershire. Young women WRENS took down the Morse Code messages, often in groups of letters and figures, that looked completely meaningless. It was often possible for WRENS to recognise the 'fist' of Morse senders and thus were sometimes aware of the movement of enemy personnel. Other clues that helped decipher enemy messages was the German regimented method of operation – numbering messages, sending them at the same time of day on subjects such as the weather and giving the full rank and address of the recipient. Although key words to the various codes were changed every twelve hours, requests were often made for repeats of earlier messages that also acted as extra clues.

Enigma machines, developed by the Germans from a system originated by businessmen before the war, were based on a normal QWERTY typewriter keyboard, allied to four rotor wheels, electrical contacts and a 26 hole plugboard. The various German forces each had a different Enigma operating system so that each separate code had to be broken by the allies.

Many tactics were developed to help crack the complexities of the Enigma Codes, including 'Bombes', sophisticated electro-mechanical machines that could try out millions of possible letter permutations.

Early German successes in breaking the British naval codes led to successful attacks on North Atlantic fleets. After breaking the German naval Enigma system the Allies were able to attack German submarines and other vessels, allowing vital supplies to get through from the USA to Europe.



Mr Balen sited examples from other theatres of war where Enigma code breaking had played a key role in turning the tide of war, like the Battle of Midway Island in the Pacific Ocean and the ability to bomb the German V2 rocket production sites.

This was a fascinating, very wide ranging talk, after which many members expressed interest in a History Society outing to Bletchley Park.

Barbara Brooke

### PLACE NAMES OF THE EAST MIDLANDS by Dr Paul Cavill

The origin of place names in England is a complex one. In the East Midlands, one of the early areas to be invaded and settled by the Angles and Saxons, the remaining earlier Celtic and British names are those of rivers and natural features, such as hills, cliffs, woods, pools and rivers. Some of these were used or adapted by the Romans when they invaded, such as the River Trent, first mentioned in Roman records as Trisanton, 'the strongly flooding one'. When the Angles and Saxons settled in an area, their vocabulary gradually took over. Many Celtic people moved away to the west, and those who remained were absorbed into the life of the new villages and hamlets.

At the end of the 8<sup>th</sup> century the Vikings began to attack England, pushing inland up the rivers. Eventually, wanting to settle, they brought an army to press their territorial claims. The final treaty with King Alfred divided England between his Wessex to the south and west and the Viking Danelaw to the north and east, of which the East Midlands was part. The local shire counties formed in the early tenth century were named after and had as their administrative centres the important towns where the Viking army was based.

Many words are similar in Anglo-Saxon and Norse, such as 'church' and 'kirk' and 'bridge' and 'brig', so that it is not always easy to be certain where names came from. However, endings and personal names are very different. Both Sneinton and Nottingham come from Old English, the 'ton' village and 'ham' homestead of Snot's people, the 's' at the start of

Nottingham being dropped after the Norman invasion, as they found it difficult to combine with the 'n'.

The settlements in the Trent valley have mainly English names, being settled before the Viking invasion. Those with Viking names usually start with a personal name and end with 'by' village, 'thorpe' farm or 'thwaite', clearing. Along the smaller rivers in Leicestershire tiny settlements with Danish names were established on unused, less fertile land. Leicester, meaning 'roman fort on the banks of the River Leire', has a cluster of Celtic names in the centre, surrounded by a circle of mainly Anglo-Saxon names, with an outer circle of Viking names. Breedon on the Hill is made up of three elements, each meaning hill, 'bree' Celtic, 'don' Anglo-Saxon and the modern 'hill'!

Dr Cavill gave the meanings of some local names, all including 'ford', Radford 'red sandstone ford', Shelford 'shallow ford', Stapleford 'post by the ford'. Bramcote means 'cottages in the broom' and Beeston 'village where bent grass blows'. Moorbridge means 'bridge on waste land', Baulk Lane 'land by an unploughed boundary' and Rye Croft 'an area for growing rye'.

Much more recent names, such as Hell Hole, Purgatory and Bedlam suggest that the land in question was of no use and such names as America, Botany Bay or World's End described land far away at the extremity of the village.

We all came away amazed by the complexity of the formation of place names and impressed by Dr Paul Cavill's wealth of knowledge!

Barbara Brooke

### DELIGHTS AND DISASTERS OF THE 1960s by Alan Clayton

Alan had set out a large selection of newspapers and magazines from the 1960s before starting his talk. He showed slides, taken from his papers, to illustrate some of the events about which he spoke and afterwards everyone had the chance to browse and find news items for themselves.



The 1960s was a varied and interesting decade that opened with the glamorous wedding of Princess Margaret and Anthony Armstrong-Jones, followed in 1963 by that of Princess Alexandra and Angus Ogilvie. The other major royal event was the Investiture of Prince Charles as Prince of Wales at Caernarvon Castle in 1969 by a very young looking Queen.

In the sphere of politics, Prime Minister Harold MacMillan made his 'wind of change' speech, Nelson Mandela was sentenced to life imprisonment and Indira Gandhi became Prime Minister of India. John Kennedy succeeded Eisenhower as President of the USA in 1961, but was assassinated two years later. His brother, Robert Kennedy, was also assassinated, as were Martin Luther King and President Verwoerd of South Africa. The East Germans sealed the border round Berlin and built the Wall, necessitating the airlift of food and goods and restricting access to the city for the next thirty years.

Russian Yuri Gagarin was the first man to orbit the earth in his Vostok 1 spacecraft on 12 April 1961 followed by American John Glenn in 1962, spurring the space race between USSR and the USA. Three years later Gemini 6 and 7 made the first space rendezvous and in 1968 Apollo 8 made the first manned orbit of the moon. Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin were the first men to land on the moon from Apollo 11 in 1969.

Other forms of transport were also in the news; the Canberra made her maiden voyage in 1961 and the QE2 in 1967. The Torrey Canyon hit rocks off Lands End, causing massive pollution, and Concorde made its first flight in 1969. Dr Beeching started his savage cuts of the British Railways network and Donald Campbell was killed on Lake Coniston, attempting to break his own world water speed record in Bluebird. Sir Francis Chichester made his solo voyage round the world in 1966 aboard Gipsy Moth IV.

The Aswan Dam and the Severn Bridge were constructed, but severe earthquakes caused great destruction around Anchorage, Alaska, Skopje in Yugoslavia, Agadir in Morocco and extensively in Iran. Many Welsh children lost their lives when their school was engulfed by a huge landslide at Aberfan in 1966; in the same year many art treasures were lost in floods at Florence.

Some memorable films of the Sixties were 'Sons and Lovers', 'Goldfinger' and 'From Russia with Love' and the songs of the Beatles and the Rolling Stones dominated the charts. Cassius Clay became Mohamed Ali, Marilyn Monroe died and Elizabeth Taylor married – again! It was the era of Mary Quant, Twiggy and the mini skirt and trouble between Mods and Rockers at the seaside.

Locally, the railway route up the Erewash Valley was closed to passengers, Nottingham Playhouse was opened in 1963 and the Jaguar pub in 1965. The A52 Stapleford Bypass was opened in 1964 and the M1 northwards in 1966.

For some members the most important event of the decade was England winning the World Cup in 1966! For everyone it was fascinating to be reminded of a period that seemed so familiar, but which ended more than thirty years ago!

Barbara Brooke

#### The Society's programme for the remainder of 2001

All meetings are held at St Helen's Church Hall, Frederick Road,  
starting at 8.00pm

- |              |  |
|--------------|--|
| 14 May       | The History of Spondon by John Hughes  |
| 11 June      | Memorial Cards – A Victorian celebration of death<br>by Philip E Jones                                       |
| 9 July       | Nottinghamshire – The Unknown County<br>by Geoffrey Oldfield   |
| 13 August    | A Debt of Honour – a video presentation on the history and<br>work of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission |
| 10 September | The Story of Melbourne by Bill Clarke  |
| 8 October    | The Story of Sherwood by Terry Fry   |
| 12 November  | The Origins of Barton buses and the Barton family<br>by Alan Oxley   |
| 10 December  | Christmas Social Event   |



## THE YEAR 1813 AND SIR JOHN BORLASE WARREN

Alan L Clayton

In my steadily growing collection of old journals, I keep finding occasional items of local interest which enables me to form a basis for this series of articles about old newspapers and magazines. This is now the seventh, all of which so far are from the 18th and 19th centuries - and here is another one looking at a date in 1813. Elsewhere in this Newsletter there is one from 1842.

In the Obituary to Stapleford's Sir John Borlase Warren, included in Newsletter No 7 \*\* it was noted that "the last of his public services was in the capacity of Commander-in-Chief of his Majesty's naval forces on the North America station." In Newsletter no 4 \*\* I quoted a short piece of 1810 about Admiral Warren in Nova Scotia and I have now come across some further reference to his command in North America in the form of correspondence printed in the issue of "*The Globe*" for Wednesday May 26 1813.

The news summary in the paper includes the following:

"A Cabinet Council was held yesterday, when the dispatches from Sir JOHN WARREN were taken into consideration."

Later on are the following letters which are probably the dispatches referred to:

"Admiralty Office, May 25. 1813.

Copy of a letter from Admiral the Right Hon. Sir John Borlase Warren, Bart. and K.B. Commander in Chief of his Majesty's ships and vessels on the North American station, to John Wilson Croker, Esq dated on board the *San Domingo*, off Annapolis, Chesapeake, April 20, 1813."

"SIR - I request you to inform their Lordships that in proceeding up this Bay, off the river Rappahannock, five sail of armed vessels were discovered; I immediately ordered the *Maidstone* and *Statira*, with the *Fantome* and *Mohawk* brigs and *Highflyer* tender, to pursue them into the river. However it falling little wind, the signal for the boats of the squadron, manned and armed, was

( \*\* Back numbers of these issues are obtainable from the Society.)

repeated, and they were all sent in under the direction of Lieut. Puckinghorne, of this ship; and after a most gallant attack from the officers, seamen and marines in the boats, and a determined resistance from the enemy's vessels, who were carried, with the loss of two killed and 11 wounded on our side.

I beg leave to refer their Lordships to the enclosed letter, from Lieutenant Puckinghorne, for further particulars of this brilliant affair, which I trust will meet with their Lordship's approbation.

Lieutenant Brand having formerly lost an arm, and being so unfortunate as to lose his remaining one, as a volunteer on this occasion, I trust their Lordships will confer a mark of reward for the misfortune of a most courageous, zealous young man.

I have the honour to be, &c.

JOHN BORLASE WARREN."

(Then follows this letter to the Admiral from Lt Puckinghorne.)

His Majesty's Ship *San Domingo*, in the  
Chesapeake, April 13, 1813

"SIR - In pursuance of orders to proceed with the boats of the squadron you did me the honour to place under my command, and attack the enemy's vessels at the mouth of the Rappahannock, I have to inform you that, after rowing 15 miles, I found they were four armed schooners drawn up in line a-head, apparently determined to give us a warm reception; notwithstanding their formidable appearance, and the advantage they would necessarily derive from mutual support, I determined to attack them, the issue of which is such as might have been expected, from the brave men you did me the honour to command, and is as follows, viz.

*Arab*, of 7 guns, and 45 men, run on shore and boarded by two boats of the *Marlborough*, under Lieutenants Urmston and Scott.

*Lynx*, of 6 guns and 40 men, hauled by her colours down on my going alongside in the *San Domingo's* pinnace

*Racer*, of 6 guns and 36 men, boarded and carried, after a sharp resistance, by the *San Domingo's* pinnace.



*Dolphin*, of 12 guns and 98 men. The guns of the *Racer* were turned upon her, and then gallantly boarded by Lieutenant Bishop, in the *Statira's* large cutter, and Lieutenant Liddon in the *Maidstone's* launch.

It would be an injustice to all those officers and men, were I not to bear testimony to their gallant and intrepid conduct; it was such as to merit the highest encomium. (formal or high-flying praise - Oxford Dictionary))

I herewith enclose a list of the killed and wounded, and have the honour to be, &c.

(signed) J. PUCKINGHORNE

The Right Hon. Sir J. Borlase  
Warren, Bart & K.B. &c.

A List of Officers and Men killed and wounded in the Boats of his Majesty's ships *San Domingo*, *Marlborough*, *Maidstone*, *Statira*, *Fantome*, and *Mohawk*, under the command of Lieut, Puckinghorne, in the River Rappahannock on the 3d of April 1813.

*San Domingo* - Killed - Robert Twigg, marine. Wounded - J Puckinghorne, slightly; - Flint, Lieutenant Royal Marines, severely; - Brand, Lieutenant, arm amputated; - Thomas Barns, marine, severely; James Foster, marine, ditto; Patrick O'Neal, seaman, ditto; John Lee, seaman, ditto; Michael Coyle, seaman, slightly.

*Marlborough* - None killed or wounded.

*Maidstone* - None killed or wounded.

*Statira* - Killed - William Bowes, seaman. Wounded - John Sleigh, midshipman, severely; Evan Edmonds, seaman, ditto; Robert Boyd, seaman, ditto; Wm. Spencer, seaman, ditto.

*Fantome* - None killed or wounded.

*Mohawk* - None killed or wounded.

Total - 2 killed. 11 wounded.

(And finally the newspaper quotes these two letters; the second does not refer to Admiral Warren but I include it out of interest.)

"Extract from a letter from Captain Lumley, of his Majesty's ship *Narcissus*, addressed to Admiral Sir J.B.Warren, and transmitted by the Admiral to J.W.Crocker Esq.

*Narcissus*, Cape Henry, N.55 W. distant 32 miles, March 30 1813.

I beg leave to acquaint you, that in obedience to your signal made to me yesterday morning, to chase the stranger, in the southeast quarter, no time was lost in weighing our anchor and making all sail after her, and by our superior sailing we got within gun shot at half past three, when she hoisted American colours, and commenced firing her stern chacer at as, which she continued to do until nearly along side, when she struck; on our boarding, she proved to be the *Revenge*, American privateer brig, belonging to Norfolk, commanded by Mr Woodbury Langdon, of two hundred and twelve tons and eighty-nine men, pierced for eighteen guns, but had only twelve mounted, ten twelve-pounders, and two long nines."

(and secondly)

"Copy of a Letter from the Hon. Captain Percy, of his Majesty's ship *Hotspur*, addressed to Admiral Lord Keith and transmitted by the Admiral to John W Croker, Esq.

*Hotspur*, at Sea, May 13, 1813.

MY LORD - I beg leave to acquaint your Lordship, that, after a chase of five hours, I this day captured the French ship letter of marque *L'Imperatrice Reine*. She is pierced for twenty guns, having only two on board, with a complement of fifty men, and five passengers: ten of her guns were thrown overboard during the chase. I have the honour to be &c.

(signed) JOCELINE PERCY, Captain."

*The Globe*, an evening paper published in London began in the latter half of the 18thC and a masthead is reproduced in this article. You will note that the price is "Six-pence halfpenny" of which the newspaper tax accounted for threepence halfpenny (the tax stamp is on the top right hand corner). As I have written in the past, a price well above the means of any, other than the wealthy in those times.

Elsewhere in this same issue of *The Globe* are two other items of local interest, the first being a long list of bankrupts including: "James Wheatley, of Nottingham, mercer."



[illegible]



## EAST STREET, LOT STREET AND WESLEY PLACE – PART 2

by Ena Cordall

I was delighted to read the article in the Autumn 2000 newsletter about the East Street, Lot Street and Wesley Place area of Stapleford, because I could relive parts of my childhood, knowing that what I might have thought of as 'daydreams' were really fact.

I recall watching Mr Elliot breaking-in horses. Even as an adult in the early fifties I would take a stroll down East Street. I am glad that the 'wrong uns' who blinded the police officer were no longer around, as I would make it part of my patrol as a Police Officer on a Sunday morning. I was never threatened, indeed had a good relationship with most of the folks in this area. My grandmother told the tale of a young man from East Street who had stolen a large bird (turkey, goose or similar) being chased by game keepers and others from the Bramcote Hills House estate. Some may not know that where the ambulance station, allotments and new housing estate have been built in the Central Avenue/Ewe Lamb Lane area, there used to be quite a bog, but the young man knew how to negotiate it better than most of those chasing him. When he arrived at East Street one resident was standing outside her back door ponching clothes in the dolly tub and, as the miscreant passed her, she stretched out her arm and grabbed the bird, which rapidly disappeared under the soap suds and washing. Without faltering, the lad went into the house, up the stairs and into the roof. It was a common attic running along all the houses, and, whilst up there, he stripped off his wet clothes, before dropping down into his own home and huddling under the bedclothes, not having risen from a good night's sleep of the innocent. This tale ends by saying a good supper was enjoyed by most, as the evidence had got 'clean away'.

I made many trips to Mr Fewkes's butcher's shop at the corner of Nottingham Road and Upper Orchard Street (or Church Walk) and used to stand and stare into Ginty's windows. They almost came down to the pavement, and the woodwork never seemed to have been painted. The putty was almost non-existent and how the huge plate glass panes stayed in, I don't know. The articles on display were the same year in and year out. This was to my advantage on one occasion. I was only about six years of age and dearly wanted a tinsel star, but hadn't enough pocket money until long after Christmas. In fact it was midsummer before I was

finally able to buy it. I can't remember ever seeing a man working in the shop, but have fond memories of Mrs Ginty as a rather tall, gaunt lady who was extremely kind and patient, especially to small girls with very little pocket money.

I was not afraid of the younger son when I was a small child. There seemed to be more mentally disadvantaged people about in those days, some were very disruptive and noisy, but this young man was neither, always dressed in children's clothing, as if he would never grow up. He was made an honorary air raid warden because, when the sirens sounded, usually at night, he would dash out into the road waving a lamp to direct the Luftwaffe away from Stanton. Mr Bancroft of Bancroft's Garage at the top of Pinfold Lane, who was the chief warden, thought it better to have him in the control centre where an eye could be kept on him!

Mrs Gissing's shop also has a special association for me. I think it had some psychological input into my choice of career in adult life. I had been taken as a tot, barely able to walk, to my grandmother's house on Nottingham Road, and had, somehow, slipped out of the gate and made my own way towards her shop. I then went into the centre of the road and held up the traffic. I wasn't at all fazed or tearful, just determined and as soon as I was put on the pavement I was back in the road, before the driver was back in his car! Mrs Gissing was prevailed upon to shut her shop and return me to my family.

On my errands to shops in Stapleford I was mystified and a little afraid of two elderly gentlemen who used to stand at the gate of the lace factory and house on Nottingham Road. They were not very tall and slightly rotund and could well have been twins. Their mother lived to a great age and was, I understand, a martinet. The gentlemen had never married, I was told, because she would not let them. It must have been during the summer/autumn that they 'took the air' at the gates as I only recall them wearing linen jackets and panama hats. There was a meadow to one side of the buildings and an orchard on the other. The only time I admit to 'scrumping' was in this orchard and I remember getting a right telling off when I got home as we had apple trees of our own. When Ryecroft Street was developed the trees were destroyed and grubbed out. I wonder what happened to the two men? When they had gone, the factory and house were used for various purposes including a wood turning factory where



small articles such as biscuit barrels, candlesticks etc were produced. Eventually Sandiccliffe took over the site.

My grandparents were Methodists, my grandfather being a local preacher. I have the grandmother clock the Chapel elders gave to them when they married. As a child I was taken by my grandmother to the Chapel at the top of Pinfold Lane. I was so put out at not being given a hymn book each week that I decided to take my own. It had a red cloth cover and was the same size as the chapel hymnals, but the contents were rather different, mine being a lurid tale of the French Revolution. The elders took exception to this and also to my standing on the pew to sing, so it was agreed that I should attend the Sunday School, although under the required age. I was banished up the stairs into a room that had half the contents covered in brown paper sheets, and required to sit on a very low bench – so far so good – then I was supposed to learn a nursery rhyme ‘Twinkle, twinkle little star’ but my authorised version did not include things about tea trays in the sky, which is what was being sung here. I protested and was hurried back to grandmother. I think it was by mutual consent that I henceforth attended Bramcote Church of England Sunday School.

In the cottages at the rear of the Chapel lived an elderly lady who was finding life rather tiresome when it came to little personal tasks that are so often taken for granted. I went with my mother to visit her and whilst there my mother would wash her hair and cut her nails etc – no National Health Service in those days. I recall this because the lady had had a very large family, about twelve children I think, but after the First World War they had all moved away, most abroad, and the nearest was in Scotland over 300 miles away.

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### APPEAL TO MEMBERS

**In this edition of the newsletter it is good to have a first contribution from Ena Cordall relating some of her childhood memories of the locality.**

**Can YOU remember anything of Stapleford schooldays, any important events or anecdotes? We should be delighted to hear from you!**

### THE WOMAN WHO WAS TARRED AND FEATHERED

by Roy Allen

I remember an interesting incident during the late 1930s. At the time it was a regular errand of my cousins and I to take our grandparents' dinner, and on one occasion when it was my turn I had to call at Hyde's chip shop, situated at what is now the junction of Nottingham Road and Wesleyan Chapel Walk. The shop was owned by a Mrs Hyde. This lady was about the same age as my grandmother, Mrs Emma Fullwood (married to John Henry Fullwood, referred to in 'Stapleford at the dawn of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century' – The Boer War). Whilst I was asking Mrs Hyde for fish and chips, I noticed an elderly lady also standing there. She was dressed all in black and had a yellow complexion. This old lady asked Mrs Hyde which family I was from. Mrs Hyde told the lady I was one of 'Pem' Fullwood's grandsons. Although my grandmother was called Emma, she was known locally as Pem. The elderly lady turned to me and said, 'Tell our Pem, Nan Gollin her cousin sends her best wishes, and remember me to her'. I collected the fish and chips I had been sent for and returned to my grandparents' house. My grandmother told me that Nan Gollin was her cousin. My grandmother then informed me that Nan Gollin was the last female to be tarred and feathered in Stapleford. I was not told the reason for this punishment, nor who carried it out or where. As it was the custom at that age not to ask questions, I did not delve any further. I believe that what happened would have taken place around the late 1800s. I do remember that Nan Gollin lived in a cottage on Isaac's Lane in Stapleford, and that she had a son called Charlie. Poor Charlie was subjected to teasing and would chase those who teased him.

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James Choulerton, born 1882, mentions in his memoirs a Mrs Gollin as living in cottages set back off Church Street near to where the bakery was.

The 1881 Census shows Gollin families as living on: Isaac's Lane, Eaton's Road, Eaton's Lane, and two families on South Terrace.

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With regards to John Henry FULLWOOD of The Sherwood Foresters (Notts & Derby Regt), enquiries at the Public Records Office at Kew show him to be Lance Corporal 69028 FULLWOOD J.H. of the Notts & Derby Regt, who enlisted on 6th January 1915 and was discharged from the services on 14th December 1918. Fortunately his discharge papers have been preserved by his Grandson Roy Allen and copies of photographs and papers have been lodged with the Sherwood Foresters archives who send their thanks for the information, all of which was missing from their records.

Editor.



And finally

### THE PULLTHROUGH.

All ex service personnel who have handled firearms will remember the pullthrough. But have you ever thought how it came into being. For those not familiar with this simple but effective piece of equipment, it is a length of strong cord longer than, and thinner than the barrel of a rifle. The barrel being the tube that the bullet travels along after the charge in the cartridge placed in the barrel has ignited and propelled the bullet out of the only opening, the barrel, after you pull the trigger. At one end of the pullthrough is a piece of light metal tube about three inches long, and thinner than the inside of the rifle barrel, containing lead filler. At the other end the cord are two in built loops, each about two inches apart, and about two to three inches from the unattached end of the cord. When the rifle has been fired several times residue is left in the barrel by discharged bullets and this residue has to be cleaned out. Prior to the onset of World War One, the British Armies used a long rigid piece of wood or metal with a piece of cloth attached to push down the barrel to clean them out. As can be expected these pieces of wood or metal either broke or stuck in the barrel causing the weapon to ineffective, or useless. Now for fighting forces that was a severe problem. During the first part of World War One, Acting Corporal M2/137563 Walter J. HAVILL of the Army Service Corps, whose role was supply and repair of logistics, got so fed up of having to repair blocked or damaged rifles that he devised this simple and effective piece of equipment. The weighted end of the pullthrough would be fed down the rifle barrel, and in the loop furthest away from the other end of the cord a piece of thin worsted cloth folded up and referred to as 4" x 2" due to the recommended size, would be inserted, the other end would be pulled through the barrel and repeated until the rifle barrel was clean. After the barrel was found to be clean a second piece of cloth this time with rifle oil on it, would also be pulled through, slightly oiling and preserving the metal and ensuring the weapon to be ready for use. You are probably going to say, what happens if the cord breaks inside the barrel. That is where the second in built loop, near to the end of the cord, comes into use. Walter also devised a thin long rod with a small hook on the end, which could be pushed down the barrel, hook into the end loop, and pull the broken cord out. This simple but effective device enable the British Armies to equip everyone who handled a rifle or pistol, to have with them an effective piece of

service equipment. This consisted of a small tin which housed, the pullthrough, a small oil bottle, and pieces of 4" x 2". This could easily be carried in pouches the soldiers carried. It was found that broken cords in the barrel were rare, enabling the rod to remove them to be kept with supplies for the unit. This small invention enabled the Armies to be more effective, and, it is in use today the whole world over. How do I know about this. I served in the Armed Forces and regularly used the pullthrough, and the carried the small tin housing the oil bottle, 4" x 2", and the pullthrough, but never wondered about its origin until last year. Through The Royal British Legion at the Ilkeston Branch, of which I am a member, I had occasion to visit an address in Ilkeston where the subject of military history came up. I was shown newspaper cuttings regarding one Walter J. HAVILL, a serviceman who had invented the pullthrough. Walter was discharged from the War having been wounded badly. He pondered about life in the army and, just thought up the idea of the pullthrough. He submitted the idea to the Army and the idea was taken up. Such was the success of the idea that we still use it today. I cannot tell you much more other than that. However for those who remember Forces discipline, we all remember the Sergeant Major's commands, "What is the weight of the Pullthrough?" etc. Should you not know the answer, find a friend, or family member who has or had experience of the piece of equipment, and get your answer.

No prizes for the correct answer, but answers next edition.

Editor.



**PRICE LIST of items for sale at Society Meetings**

**At any other time please apply to the Secretary or Chairman**

Stapleford Tea Towels £2.95

Leather bookmarks (5 colours) £0.80

Local views – framed priced individually

Local views –hand painted cards £0.80  
(with envelopes)

Heart of Stapleford maps 1904 £0.50

Framed full colour illustrated maps of Stapleford + Borlase Warren  
Coat of Arms (produced to order) £5.00

As above, but in gold frame £8.00

Society Newsletters – some back copies available at reduced prices  
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NEWSLETTER EDITOR – Malcolm Jarvis - 0115-932 3457

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The deadline for submission of items for the next Autumn 2001 issue  
of the Newsletter is 30 September.

Material can be given to any of the above named.

**This is YOUR newsletter!**

**We should love to hear from you!**

Front cover: The Hemlock Stone by Nigel Brooks