



**Beeston
AND DISTRICT
Civic
Society**

protecting and improving the environment

Newsletter 155

December 2012



A recent visit to Toton fields



Inside:

Reviews of Heritage Open Day Weekend 2012

Updates on the Big Tree Plant, Beeston Maltings & Blue Plaques

EDITORIAL

This edition of the Newsletter naturally concentrates on the Heritage Open Day Weekend that took place in September. Nobody can read Eileen Atherton's joyous account of her experiences at this event without already relishing the prospect of next year's happenings and having the chance to see and hear all that will be on offer. Also below, to add some earthy elements to the proceedings, is a report from Dick Hutchinson and Frank Mitchell of their visit to the Lilac Grove treatment works during the weekend, reminding us all of the continuing importance of engineering in our everyday lives.

Karen Attwood & Robert Dowling

HERITAGE OPEN DAY WEEKEND 6TH-9TH SEPTEMBER 2012

The weekend started with a bang on Thursday with the visit to **Chetwynd Barracks**, the first of 19 events. Captain Pascoe had retired not long after our visit in 2011, and so the arrangements had been made with James McCloskey who is the new person in charge. This year we were allowed to take 80 visitors on the tour, (including the Mayor of Broxtowe, Cllr Margaret Handley and her husband, John) the largest number ever; leaving us with a list of over 25 who were too late to get on this tour but wanted to be sure of a place for 2014!

Although I had only registered four people as needing the mini-bus, when it arrived most people decided they would rather use the bus than walk, and in the end it had to make three trips up to the auditorium! There we were treated to an entirely new presentation of the history of the site from its start when Lord Chetwynd obtained the site before the start of the first world war.

We then proceeded down to the two memorials, the first one being presented in 1960s and the second one to commemorate all personnel from the Barracks that have lost their lives in recent conflicts, such as Afghanistan. Many visitors were able to take pictures of the memorials and James McCloskey said that they always had a service there on Remembrance Day.

We then continued around the site, passing the small church, until we came to the Sergeant's Mess, where tea, coffee and biscuits were freely available, along with an opportunity to purchase 'The Chilwell Story' and also to see memorabilia that had been laid out as well as talk to the many personnel that had helped with the tour. In all, a very pleasurable two hour tour; James and his team had really done us proud.

There was nothing else happening on the Thursday, but on Friday a new venue was in store for visitors as **The British Legion** was opening their doors for the first time.



The doors opened at 12 noon and the Mayor and her husband arrived for their second tour of the weekend. The members of the legion had really gone to town and the number of medals on display as well as the pictorial history was a sight to behold.

My colleague, Barbara Selwood and I spent over one and a half hours there, including having a cup of tea and a cake, before we had to go and set up the Society's stand at the Bartons's site, ready for Saturday and Sunday.



Saturday saw the start of a busy two days; the first stop being **The Inham Nook Allotments**. They were busy getting ready for the Healthy Eating demonstrations by Jackie Henson who works for the NHS. The veg racks were brimming with produce ready for a good turnout. I also bumped into my colleague, Cllr Tim Brindley and his wife, who had come to support them.



Next stop was **John Clifford School** where a large group of people had arrived at the gates by 10.15am ready for the opening and in all 40 people had arrived by 10.30am, the official opening time, and we were split into six groups to be shown round the school. I was in Asst. Head Steve Teague's party; we started at the top of the school and worked our way down, finishing in the Nursery. Most people in my group had been at the school when it had been Nether Street Secondary Girls School, with Miss Herring as the Head Teacher, and we were telling Steve how the school had been arranged then and how the rooms had looked much bigger as a child; though they are definitely more attractive nowadays. A very interesting hour was spent there and thanks go to all the staff who gave up their time to show us around. The Head Teacher, Simon Thompson, also told us that the school was being visited by 'The One Show' in the following week (to be transmitted BBC1 on 24th September), as the school was unusual in having so many male teachers.



Next stop was back to 'The Inham Nook Allotments' where I found Jackie supervising children chopping up vegetables ready for cooking a stir-fry, that they would eat later as their lunch. The publicity had stated that there would be a barbecue, which they had not planned on, so they hurriedly purchased a smaller barbecue set and started cooking up burgers and sausages that they already had in the freezer (I have apologised to the Allotments for the Society getting the details wrong in our publicity and causing any embarrassment).



Next I used the bus to go to **G.H.Hurt, Bartons** and **Christ Church, Chilwell**, arriving at **Hurt's** just before 1pm. Again, a slight boob because publicity said that they were only open until 12, but Anne assured me that they had always intended opening until 1pm, as they had in previous years. Again, they had had a large number of visitors, but Anne said that it had not been as hectic as the previous year, and they had had a steady flow, more easily coped with. Whilst I was there a lady was trying to find a cardigan suitable for sending to a relative who lived in Canada.

Next stop was our own stand at **Bartons** to see how we were doing. Our stand had had quite a lot of interest and sold a number of Heritage guide books and postcards. Since our stand was in the eating facilities section, I had an absolutely delicious chicken and mushroom pie and then went round the other events that were happening at Bartons, and saw the **Beeston & District Local History Society** display set in its own room, displaying the wonderful collection of old Newspapers as well as old Maps of Beeston that they hold (they really need somewhere to display them permanently). I also viewed the **Girl Guides** display in a small room (this was an extra not registered by the Society – perhaps next year if they join in they can register and be part of our publicity). I then went into the display by the **Beeston Camera Club**, 'Aspects of Beeston', where it was wonderful to see the pictures they had been able to take before all the changes because of the tram and refurbishment of Beeston Square. On the outside were people milling around waiting to get on a vintage Barton's or Trent's bus to the Boots D10 building (I was not booked until the 11.00.a.m.tomorrow tour).



Throughout the site there were also vintage cars and buses on display and I could have spent a lot more time there, but it was time for my stint manning our stand.

I did manage, though, to take a picture of the **Morris and other traditional dancing** arranged by Alistair of Sullivan's Sword at 3.30pm.

After a while Barbara came along and I was able to nip off to see how they were getting on at **Christ Church, Chilwell**, where they reported

that they had had a very successful day and were already planning on what more they could do for next year. I really enjoyed a cup of tea and a cake (or two) there; unbelievably they were not charging, and wouldn't even accept a donation. They said that they were very happy to be a part of this community event and did not see this occasion as in any way a fundraising opportunity.

After returning home on the bus I decided that I just had time to make a visit to **The Old Church Tower, Bramcote** before they closed for the day. Again they reported that they had had a very busy day, a lot of tours of the site of Bramcote Hall had taken place, and everyone was very enthused; and although it was now past 4pm, people were still coming in to see the Tower. The friends of The Old Church Tower told me that they have now managed to purchase the site so its future is secure.

On Sunday morning I arrived (with my sister-in-law and daughter) at the Bartons site to take the vintage Trent bus for the **Boots D10 Tour**, which left promptly at 10.40am with 15 people on board. The tour itself was absolutely brilliant and I just wish that my late husband could have lived long enough to be there himself, as his mother had worked in D10. We were shown around the outside, viewing the unloading bays on the right and the loading bays on the left. Inside, we were able to admire the extremely modern factory design (for its time when built in 1933); the factory design resembled a liner with the sweep of the stairs, and the Manager's office was made so that he could see all that



was happening on the factory floor.

On arriving at the restaurant floor we were offered tea, coffee and cakes and a booklet about the building of the site and memorabilia was laid out on tables.

It was an extremely interesting hour and a half, before the vintage Bartons bus took us back to Bartons at Chilwell.

I just had time for a quick bite at home before setting off to see the start of the **Beeston Heritage Trail Walk** led by Professor Beckett with over 20 participants. Professor Beckett explained the origins of the Beeston settlement whilst we were sat at the podium and then started walking up Foster Avenue to describe the building of the new Council

Offices and up to Roundhill School to talk about the CLASP building method of the School in the 1960s and then about the extension to Beeston Library. At this point I left the walk to do my final stint on the Society's stand and dismantling it at the end of a very interesting 2012 Heritage weekend.

Eileen Atherton

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Dick Hutchinson and Frank Mitchell were among the six visitors to the **Lilac Grove Treatment Works** as part of the Heritage Weekend. Dick was alarmed on arrival at Lilac Grove 'Treatment' works to be issued with a hard hat, high visibility jacket and plastic gloves! Rubber boots were also available for those with light footwear. To add to his anxiety was the unusual phenomenon of a warm dry sunny windless day - there would be no breeze to blow away the horrible odours to be expected as they were exposed to the outpourings of 20,000 Beeston lavatories! A preliminary compulsory viewing of a safety video, which warned that if they were to fall into a particular tank they would be sucked downwards, increased his pulse rate even more!

They were reassured by their guide, a senior engineer of Severn Trent, along with the Area Education Officer, who led them over the various stages, ensuring that none of them fell down the hatch they opened to let the group see the torrent of sewage pouring in from all the street drainage as well as household drains. Only 10% is raw sewage and on the day of the visit it was not particularly malodorous. Heavy rainfall could overwhelm the system and large storage 'storm' tanks are installed here for future cleansing. In the event of enormous rainfall, high level approval must be granted to allow it to be discharged directly into the Beeston canal.

Treatment begins with mechanical filtration to remove solids such as nappies, contraceptives and other items which should not have been flushed down the toilet. These are dried and collected by private contractors for recycling. Further filtration collects 'solids' and these are taken away daily by tankers to other depots such as Toton and Stoke Bardolph. Much of this is sold after treatment as agricultural fertiliser. Final processing is in the wide shallow pans where the circling arms drip the, by now, liquid sewage through the stone filters which contain phage type bacteria. These digest their pathogenic cousins before the rather cloudy liquid is discharged into the Beeston Canal. The discharge is tested daily because certain chemicals illegally or accidentally poured down the drain may kill the friendly germs. It

seemed to Frank that water was passing so quickly through the filter beds as to hardly give time for the bacteria to do their job. Something to ask about next time, he reckons!

The engineer from Seven Trent also dealt with ancillary matters during the tour such as new developments, redundant buildings, improper use of sewers, disposal of solid waste and the regulatory functions of the Environment Agency. His explanations were always very clear. He obviously had much knowledge and was able to give it in lay peoples' terms.

This public access to the works on Heritage Open Day was mainly the result of several years of perseverance by our late meetings secretary, Mick Atherton. It is a great pity he died before he was able to visit. Without it we would still have the night carts or backyard latrines. It was therefore regrettable, as Frank reflected, that the party only had one person who appeared to be below pension age to see this modern successor of our heritage of Victorian engineering.

Article based on combined input from Dick Hutchinson/Frank Mitchell

THE BIG TREE PLANT



After a very enthusiastic start about a year ago, when we found many potential sites to plant trees and many people to help look after them, we had to cull them down and rather

disappointingly, as reported in the Spring 2012 edition of our Newsletter, we were left with only five sites.

Then the project went dormant while Nottinghamshire County Council took over the responsibility for street trees from Broxtowe Borough Council. Gradually the 'sap' began to rise; the County Council responded and were willing to carry on with our project, even though considerably reduced. They suggested suitable trees for each site. Our next job was to contact the people who lived in the houses nearby, to check that they were enthusiastic and would water the newly planted trees if required.

The result is that we will plant three winter flowering cherry trees on the triangle of land at the junction of Glebe Street and Bramcote Road, two Elm (disease resistant) and two Sycamore between numbers 11 and 23 Devonshire Ave. These latter trees have been chosen specifically to fit in with the current street trees. The nearby residents are happy to look after 'their' trees.

We hope that they will be ready to plant during National Tree Week, during the week of 26 – 30 November. We will try and email members nearer the date with details and perhaps you will be able to join us.

Stop Press: I received a message from Notts County Council recently to say, *"The highway operations team cannot begin the county's tree planting works until mid-late January 2013"*.

Barbara Selwood

UPDATES (and their meaning)

Below is the latest tram update, kindly supplied by Sarah Alton NET Communications & Marketing Project Manager, Nottingham City Council. She has promised to keep me updated via a new email link she is in the process of setting up, and I in turn will keep you updated.

The word "update" and its meaning and implications has set me thinking; does it actually mean "up to date"? According to my dictionary, it is a verb meaning "to bring up to date", or in the computing world it means "to amend, so as to produce a new version" - now that sounds about right! Since plans for NET have been announced and the future of Beeston Square has been mentioned, rumour and conjecture have been rife, and between them and "updates" I have frequently been confused; not always knowing which update is actually the latest!

So I am not entirely sure where I heard that Wilkinsons will not now be demolished until after Christmas, which is good news for our Remembrance Day Ceremony and Christmas Lights switch on. It will also give more time for Beeston Parish Church to obtain the necessary funding to move the gravestones so that the eventual view of the church from Beeston Square will be a pleasant one. Every cloud has a silver lining, as my grandmother used to say!

Beeston is dear to my heart and I am looking forward to the coming of NET and the refurbishment of the square. I am determined to remain positive and upbeat whatever I may hear from any source, and

eventually sometime in or around the year 2014 I am expecting to see trams running. However at about the same time I also expect to be receiving further updates on the future of Beeston Square!

On that particular subject (**Beeston Square**), I am reliably informed by the local planning department that nothing is happening at the moment, nor is anything about to happen. It is anticipated that there will be a planning application submitted eventually, but it is not thought to be imminent. And I have heard lots of rumours to the contrary!

Joyce Brown

Extending the tram to Beeston and Chilwell, from Sarah Alton, *Communications & Marketing Project Manager, Nottingham City Council*

If you have visited Beeston town centre recently you can't help but notice some changes which are starting to take place. The changes are part of a multi-million project to extend the tram to Beeston and Chilwell.

Site clearance and demolition work along the tram route are almost complete and the vast majority of works currently taking place involve moving the different types of utility services away from the tram route. Once utility services have been moved, the main tram infrastructure works, such as laying the tram tracks and installing tram stops and other equipment can start.

You may also have seen works associated with the tram are taking place to widen the junction of Queens Road and Meadow Lane, and once complete, works will take place at the Queens Road/Station Road junction. This will improve road capacity along the A6005 and provide an alternative route to Chilwell Road which will be subject to the tram works during 2013.

Overall the construction of the tram extensions, which will also go to Clifton, is expected to take approximately three years to complete.

Evening drop-in information sessions are to be held in Chilwell, at Eskdale Junior School on Tuesday 4th December, and in Beeston, at the Town Hall on Thursday 13th December. Come along any time between 5:30pm and 8pm to find out the latest tram construction news. For more information visit: www.thetram.net/phasetwo or call: 0115 924 24 54.

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SOUTH BROXTOWE BLUE PLAQUE SCHEME, ANNUAL REPORT, OCTOBER 2012

Our area covers Attenborough, Beeston, Bramcote, Chilwell, Stapleford, and Toton; all to the south-west of Nottingham in the southern portion of the Broxtowe Borough Council area, where each of the participating societies are active.

This a truly collaborative venture driven by a small working group led by the Beeston and District Civic Society. It includes representatives from the Beeston and District Local History Society, the Stapleford and District Local History Society, and the Bramcote Conservation Society. The working group will wind up once the plaques are complete and explanatory material has been published.

The first ten plaques were unveiled between August 2010 and November 2011:

1. **Thomas Barton**, our first plaque, was unveiled in Chilwell by Sir Neil Cossons in August 2010.
2. **Arthur Mee** in Stapleford, March 2011
3. **Admiral Sir John Borlase Warren** in Stapleford, May 2011
4. **Beeston Village Cross**, Church Street, Beeston, May 2011
5. **Arthur Cossons**, Church Street, Beeston were also unveiled in May 2011
6. **General Ireton** in Church Street, Attenborough, July 2011
7. **Thomas Humber**, Humber Road, Beeston, August 2011
8. **John Clifford**, Evangelist, Church House Nursery in Nether Street, Beeston, September 2011
9. **Bendigo**, Bare-knuckle fighter, at his cottage site, 92 Wollaton Road, Beeston, October 2011
10. **Edward Lowe**, Astronomer, Broadgate House, Beeston, November 2011

In 2012, so far six are fixed and a seventh (BD Shaw) has been delivered and is waiting to be fixed and an eighth (William Walleth) has been ordered and should be ready to unveil in early December:

11. **Henry Hurt**, Chilwell, May 2012
12. **Chilwell Explosion**, Commemorating the dead. St Mary's Attenborough, July 2012
13. **Chilwell Explosion, Orchard Cottage**, near the seat of the explosion, July 2012
14. **Beeston Manor House**, Middle Street, Beeston, August 2012

15. **Francis Wilkinson**, Anglo Scotian Mills, Albion Street, Beeston, August 2012
16. **Beeston Lad's Club and Hetley Pearson**, Station Road, Beeston, September 2012
17. **Colonel BD Shaw**, explosives expert, 185 Queens Road, Beeston, November 2012
18. **William Walleth**, The Queen's Jester, 220 Station Road, Beeston, December 2012

The following four are subject to various approvals:

19. **Sir Louis Frederick Pearson CBE**, Broadgate Park, Co-founder of Beeston Foundry Company
20. **Charles and Walter Gregory**, founder and son of Gregory's Roses, 307 High Road, Chilwell
21. **St John's School**, Nottingham Road, Stapleford
22. **Wesleyan Place Methodist Chapel**, Nottingham Rd, Stapleford

A further six are under consideration:

23. **George Wilkinson**, Wilkinson Avenue, Beeston
24. **Richard Beckinsale**, Actor, Cator Lane, Chilwell
25. **Henry John Pearson, The White House**, Bramcote, Co-founder of Beeston Foundry Company
26. **Banker Smith**, Bramcote
27. **Bramcote Old Church**, Town Street, Bramcote
28. **The Charlton Family**, Chilwell Hall

The plaques themselves are locally produced in enamelled cast aluminium by Leander Architectural in Dove Holes, Derbyshire, and, when fixed, become the responsibility of the property owner. Diameter varies between 14" and 18", prepared to designs based on English Heritage guidance.

The cost of supply, delivery and fixing is approximately £300 a plaque, intended to cover material costs only. Research, design, ordering, fixing and, frequently, unveilings are organised voluntarily as part of a single service. Whenever possible each plaque is self-financing, supported by donations from owners and other interested parties, so that costs to the participating societies are minimised. Thus there should be no capital or maintenance costs arising out of the scheme to this Society.

Additional funding will be sought for explanatory material.

Peter Robinson, Chairman Blue Plaques' Group

UPDATE ON BEESTON MALTINGS



As I reported in the last newsletter, demolition is proceeding and, as far as I am aware, has not yet been completed. Unfortunately, our plans for a photographer to go on site between the stages of clearing the debris and the large machines arriving did not happen. No-one was allowed to enter the site due to it being very unsafe. The photographers from Trent & Peak Archaeology have been very patient and hard working, managing to take photos at the different stages of demolition using a long range camera. I have yet to see any results, but I think this may have been more effective than the original intention of one quick visit to the site.

We have also received the set of 25 photographs which we ordered from English Heritage Archives. These were taken in November 2000, just before the Maltings closed.

As I mentioned last time, the final photographic report, digital and hard copies, together with the English Heritage Photographs will be deposited between Local Studies at Beeston Library, Nottinghamshire Archives and the County Heritage Environmental Record (HER).

Barbara Selwood

FIRST WORLD WAR MEMORIAL at ATTENBOROUGH

The Civic Society is proposing to replace the recently damaged First World War Memorial at Attenborough railway station. The agreement of East Midlands Trains has not yet secured and further support is being sought. Further updates to follow...

Brian Loughborough

GROVE FARM WIND TURBINES

The widely reported decision of the Broxtowe DC to reject the University application was because of the impact on the strategic development at the Boots site. There seems to be a critical distance for

the acceptable inter-visibility (and probably other matters too) between dwellings and wind turbines; that distance seems to be just over the half kilometre mark. It remains to be seen what the City decision will be about the two turbines that are proposed to be constructed on land within the unitary authority boundary. The Broxtowe decision was confined to the one turbine that would be constructed (just) within the borough.

I suspect that we will hear more about the matter.

Brian Loughborough

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RECENT PLANNING APPLICATIONS

19 Hallams Lane (12/00236/FUL) - Proposed extensions and alterations to existing bungalow to form two storey house. We objected and our response to the council was:-

"The proposed building will be too dominant and out of keeping with the surrounding dwellings. It will be very prominent because the road and site are on an incline. It will have a detrimental affect on the neighbours to the rear of the site resulting in lost of amenity and will have a negative impact on the Conservation Area. "

The application was taken to the Development Control meeting and it was approved by a small majority. I was very interested in what the Heritage Officer, Suzanne Dempsey, had to say about it, just before the councillors voted. (Broxtowe Council shares Heritage Officers with other local authorities. At that time Suzanne was working for Rushcliffe Council, but now she works independently.)

Suzanne commented that the boundaries along Hallams Lane *"are strong, mainly formed by brick or stone walls and/or vegetation."* She considers that 19 Hallams Lane is a *"leaky part where the buildings are low and sense of enclosure is missing,"* and she pointed out that this site is very prominent and because the plot is shallow any building, especially two storeys, cannot 'hide' or be screened in any way. She suggested that *"the replacement of the hawthorn hedge with the wall gives a stronger and more defined boundary". . . "The dining room window will appear above the wall topped by a sedum (green) roof which will appear to 'float' above the wall – a creative interpretation of the vegetation above walls so characteristic of the area." . . . "The vertical timber cladding can be read as a reference to the mature trees behind which buildings are partially glimpsed in the more typical areas of Hallams Lane."*

She also pointed out that high quality materials will be used, which are appropriate to a Conservation Area and that contemporary features are not in appropriate there.

She finally said, *"I imagine that all of your members enjoy being able to place buildings roughly within their time, be they 19th century workers' terraces, Georgian townhouses, or between the wars mass built semis. Houses of many periods co-exist cheek by jowl in Conservation Areas, and they tell us about the evolution of those areas, as well as wider social trends of the time. It is my strong believe that high quality, sensitive, contemporary design has a place in most Conservation Areas. Authentic buildings that are true to their age and do not attempt to ape older buildings will tell future generations of the building methods and materials of the early 21st century, and how we liked to live at the time. They add a new chapter to the history of the Conservation Area. I am confident that no. 19 Hallams Lane will succeed at doing this."*

(permission obtained from Suzanne to reproduce her comments)

In view of that last comment, I shall watch with interest as the new house takes shape!

A planning application (12/00231/FUL) for Super Drug and Jonathan James on Beeston High Road has been approved for "Change of use from retail (Class A1) to restaurant and takeaway (Class A3 / A5)". It will improve the night economy for the centre of Beeston. However, it was then followed by another planning application (12/00499/FUL) which added in "or public house and takeaway (Class A4/A5)". You may think that there are enough pubs along the High Road already! The decision is still pending consideration.

Land to the West of Toton Lane Stapleford (12/00585/OUT) a mixed use development incorporating a maximum of 775 N^o dwellings etc.

We have responded - "This site is in the Green Belt and as in the Broxtowe Borough Council Core Strategy, has been removed from the list of preferred sites for future development."

Elm House Nursing Home 22 Elm Avenue Beeston (12/00514/FUL) - Change of use from Nursing Home (Class C2) into 8 no. flats (Class C3)

Our response - "This proposal is inappropriate over-intensive development in a Conservation Area, one that is near the Town Centre. The development will change the nature of the area, especially as this

is a cul-de-sac. St, John's Grove Conservation Area consists of mainly large residential houses and the introduction of such flats would be contrary to character of it.

This is a particularly quiet area of Beeston. When the Nursing home was in occupation, there was not much extra traffic involved and would be during working hours usually and visiting times during evenings and weekends. The proposal is for 8 apartments, 6 of which are for three-bedrooms which very likely will be used for multiple-occupancy thus creating further intensity of use of the building.

The proposal allows for 8 car parking spaces which would be totally inadequate for multiple occupancy apartments and would result in additional on-street parking, with consequential disturbance and loss of amenity to the nearby residents.

The proposed rear extension is too large, being extremely near to the large Beech tree causing possible root damage and too close to the neighbours especially nos. 10 and 8 Glebe Street, causing further loss of amenity to residents.

There is a fine example of a recent return from multiple-occupancy to a restored family house further along Elm Ave, very much in keeping with this Conservation Area. This planning application is an opportunity for the planning officers to ensure that St John's Grove Conservation Area is retained with its historic aspect and quiet residential character, by recommending that Elm House Nursing Home is now converted back to two dwellings with appropriate alterations using suitable materials."

There are a group of local residences who are responding with similar objections as above. This is still an on-going application and may well go to the December Development control meeting.

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If any member of the Civic Society is interested in helping look through the weekly planning lists online, we would appreciate the extra help and "pair of eyes". Please let me know babsel@ntlworld.com

Barbara Selwood

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FOLK MEMORY OR MERE COINCIDENCE?

On the first Sunday morning of each month a number of people carrying various tools may be observed converging from four directions to meet near the entrance to the Alexandrina Plantation Local Nature Reserve at the top of Sandy Lane, Bramcote. These are members of The Friends of Bramcote Ridge, whose working parties have met

regularly at this spot for the last fourteen years. A few yards away, on the bank bordering the bridle path which connects Sandy Road to Thoresby Road, is a cast iron post, dating from 1933, which marks the point at which the boundaries of the parishes of Beeston, Wollaton and Bramcote meet.

In choosing to gather here before dispersing to work on conservation throughout the two adjacent LNRs (Alexandrina Plantation and Sandy Lane Open Space LNR) the group members had only convenience in mind. Their focus, after all, is the preservation of this wonderful area of old oak and mixed woodland, open grassland and sandstone outcrops with its rich and diverse habitat for wildlife. But was there a subliminal force at work, some ancient folk memory perhaps, an evocation from the land itself?

Research shows that the junction of the three parishes mentioned above was in all probability an ancient meeting place, Motteram Cross Gate, the site of a moot held near a thorn tree, a name derived from Old English: *gemōt* – moot and *ōorn* – thorn, hence moot thorn. A cross might have been a later indication of this meeting place (*). The only physical marker now is the LNR name sign at the top of the lane on the edge of the reserve. Thorn trees, however, are still present on the site, and perhaps are descendants of the original tree. Sandy Lane, earlier known as Toadlands Lane, continues to mark the boundary between Beeston and Bramcote, the eastern side being officially in Beeston despite a fairly recent change in the postal address.

So it is too romantic a fancy to believe that some ancient sub-conscious power is at work, leading the Friends, who endeavour to preserve the Ridge for the flora and fauna whose habitat it is, to gather at the very spot of the moot of generations long gone?

** see the origins of the Placenames and Fieldnames of Beeston by Ivan Morrell at <http://www.beeston-notts.co.uk/morrell1.shtml>*

SA

PUBLIC TALKS

The first part of the Society's first meeting of the new Season took the form of an Open Forum, chaired by Peter Robinson. Peter gave a resume of why the Society had been formed 39 years ago, when the Civic Trust had come to our inaugural meeting. Peter gave examples of how the Society had been able to try and improve certain planning decisions. We had successfully objected to the widening of Town Street, Bramcote; were instrumental in the listing of 'The Grange', now used as Beeston Police Station; and had encouraged the installation of bottle banks and supported the Council in starting recycling. The Society had also been instrumental in creating a zebra crossing near

the Square at the bottom of Foster Avenue. These were but a few examples of where the Society had been able to have a positive influence in our area.

We then moved on to questions and comments from the members on what they wanted us to achieve in the future, what we are doing right, and how we could improve. Items discussed included :- Conservation areas, Planning, Heritage Open Days, Meetings, Speakers, Blue Plaques, our Newsletter, our Website, Heritage Walks, Publications, and what to do to celebrate our 40th Anniversary. After our refreshment break, we were treated to a very interesting slide show by Iris and Derek Martin of the Beeston Camera Club.

Eileen Atherton

The second meeting of our 2012/13 programme followed the pattern requested by members. A notice board session dealing with current topics of interest - wind farms, planning matters, the "tram" preceded a presentation by Alan Dance, a member of our kindred organisation the Local History Society, who told the somewhat melodramatic tale of "The Chilwell ghost house". This otherwise plain cottage building having spent some time as an apple store survived until 1952/3 when the site was overwhelmed by the growth of the conurbation. The road known as Ghost House Lane survives as a footpath and country lane with "proper" road signs in the middle of the Inham Nook.

Widespread interest was generated in the area by the disappearance of a pedlar, his alleged murder and the subsequent reported haunting of the house where the foul deed was believed to have been committed; providing a fascinating piece of social history. Alan's paper was an excellent example of how local resources, publications, including newspapers of the time, and indices of census material can be applied to illuminate the classic questions facing the historian in trying to piece together what actually occurred.

Brian Loughborough

COMMITTEE NEWS

The Civic Society's Annual General Meeting took place on FRIDAY 9th November 2012. A full report will be included in the next newsletter.

MEMBERS NEWS

Welcome to all our new members, one of whom is Councillor for Chilwell East, Joan Briggs.

Obituary

One of our members, Dr. De Ville, died aged 97 on 19th September 2012. A memorial service was held for him at St. Barnabas Church, Inham Road, Chilwell on 3rd October. There was no burial or cremation because his body had been donated to medical science. Eileen went to the Memorial Service to represent the Society and also as one of his Ward Councillors. Dr. De Ville was very interested in local affairs and always attended the Chilwell West CAT Meetings.

EVENTS

14th December 2012 - Xmas Meeting

Ross Bradshaw, founder of **Five Leaves Publishers** - joint organiser of The Lowdham Book Festival with Bookcase, an Independent bookshop in Lowdham

11th January 2013

Steve Dance, Head of Planning & Building Control, Broxtowe Borough Council . **'Beeston & Developments'**

8th February 2013

Bob White, former head of Corporate Affairs Nottingham City Council **"You would never believe It"** some anecdotal and amusing reflections on 30 years of managing public relations.

8th March 2013

Sarah Alton, Ioan Reed-Aspley and Matt Orchard. A further update on **NET phase II development.**

<p style="text-align: center;">ALL MEETINGS TAKE PLACE IN THE UPSTAIRS MEETING ROOM AT BEESTON LIBRARY AND COMMENCE AT 7.00.P.M.</p>

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Disclaimer

The views and opinions expressed in this Newsletter are those of the individual authors and not the official stance of Beeston and District Civic Society unless explicitly stated.

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The next Newsletter is due to be published in March 2013