



protecting and improving the environment

Newsletter 164

March 2015



A splendid revived street sign. More news inside...

In this issue: Trees, Conservation, Planning and Art

**Beeston and Local District Civic
Society**

invite submissions
for an
**Art & Photography
Competition**

**Title: The Essence of
Beeston: Past or Present**

At Beeston Library Gallery
From April 5th to May 15th



1st Prize	£25
2nd Prize	£15
3rd Prize	£10
People's Choice winner	£25

Please apply online at <http://goo.gl/forms/Mn1Ky8Eggc>
Or request an Entry Form and Rules by contacting

beestoncivicsociety@gmail.com / 07722 237152

Closing date for entry forms Saturday March 28th

EDITORIAL

As you can see, the Committee decided to print the front and back covers of the newsletters in colour from now on, so you will be able to see headline photos in more detail. We have suggested using the back cover to highlight a few more features of individual Blue Plaques, so please take a look at this issue and let me know what you think of this feature.

We have a few articles this time about trees and conservation, along with updates on the Blue Plaque scheme and Highfields, which I hope you find interesting.

I have also included reviews of many of our recent meetings, all highly informative and thought provoking.

Karen Attwood

CONSERVATION CORNER

Starting this issue, I'm going to be writing an irregular column in the Society's Newsletter on conservation news, thoughts, issues and general ramblings. If you have any topics you'd like me talk about, do get in touch. This time - Street Signs project update.

Street Signs for Old Houses - Project Update

In the last issue, you may remember a report about a pilot project to produce new Street Signs that match the original Victorian/Edwardian designs seen throughout Beeston. The idea is to place them on appropriate houses to enhance the character, amenity and appearance of the house, street and area.

Well... the first signs have now been produced by the company who made the Blue Plaques, and also placed up on the first house, and as you can see from the front cover, they look fantastic! If you would like to view the signs for yourself, you can find the signs on the corner of Glebe Street and Elm Avenue in Beeston, St John's Grove.

Do you have a house dating from on or before 1928? Is it on a street corner, end of street or T-junction? If you would like to enhance your property then please do get in touch. We are also interested in speaking to other Civic Societies and Conservation groups - these signs can be used in your areas too.

The scheme works thus; the society have paid for the pattern and moulds for the signs. The owners of the house pay for the manufacture and delivery of the signs. The society install the signs free of charge, and facilitate the process throughout with the manufacturer.

It remains for me to thank fellow society members Dr and Mrs Wilding for their support in being the recipients of the first signs in this project - without your help and enthusiasm it would not have happened. On behalf of the Civic Society - thank you.

Owen Rees

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MILLENNIUM TREE PLANTING

In December 2001 the society's millennium project, to plant 164 trees in King George's Park, Town Street, Bramcote during National Tree Week, was completed. A matched funding grant of £325.50, from the Greenwood Partnership Community Conservation Grants paid for the trees and Broxtowe Borough Council prepared the site, and provided the manpower, chestnut fencing and tree supports. The actual planting was done by civic society volunteers and 30 children from the nearby Village Nursery in Bramcote.

The 164 tree varieties comprised oak, ash, birch, maple and hawthorn, with one society volunteer providing a sweet chestnut from his own garden. They were planted in existing woodland in a patch of ground generously donated by Severn Trent Water. The area was to be known as Millennium Grove and a plaque was erected to record the name and the event. I hope it is still in situ.

Three years later the Greenwood Partnership came back to check on the trees and I accompanied their representative on the view. The trees looked healthy and had obviously been properly maintained by the council. However I haven't looked at them for a few years; perhaps I will put that right now I have been reminded!

Joyce Brown

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TREES IN BROADGATE PARK

In November 2007, together with class 6 from John Clifford Primary School and the help of Broxtowe Borough Council, we planted 13 trees in Broadgate Park. This was funded by a 75% grant of £425.00 from an anonymous donor via The Tree Council, an environmental charity.

Again during National Tree Week we planted 5 flowering cherry trees, 5 ash and 3 lime in various parts of the park.

Within weeks these had all been vandalised and destroyed. No culprit was ever brought to justice, but a friend who lives close to the park told me that he had seen dog owners encouraging pit bull type dogs to destroy the trees. I found it hard to believe until I viewed an amazing video on line of this type of destruction happening.

Joyce Brown

A BRIEF HISTORY OF TREE PLANTING WITH THE BEESTON & DISTRICT CIVIC SOCIETY

2001 – planted trees in King George’s Park Bramcote (see earlier article for details).

2006 – planted 3 Red Oak trees in University Park near Keighton Hill after Ian Cooke’s talk to us and in appreciation of the University grounds. Local nursery children helped. (Civic Society donated cost).

2007 – planted 13 trees in Broadgate Park helped by John Clifford School. (see previous article for details).

2008 – following the conversation with a school, donated a fruit tree of their choice to each of the 14 local primary schools. Had presentations at Alderman Pounder, Chilwell, Roundhill School, Beeston Rylands Junior, and John Clifford. Grant from Notts Community foundation. Bought trees from Trowell Garden Centre.

2011 - 13 – started Big Tree Plant project which culminated in planting 7 replacement trees in St John’s Grove. No grant required as Notts County Council supplied trees and labour.

2013/14 – Big Tree Plant continued in Chilwell in conjunction with Broxtowe BC. 14 trees planted on 5 sites all with Tree Guardians.

2014 – To celebrate our 40th birthday, 40+ trees were planted in Bramcote Hills Park by children from Wandsworth Fields Primary School who were supervised by a person from Groundwork Nottingham and helped by The Conservation Volunteers. Trees were donated by the Woodland Trust.

2014/15 – beginning to start phase 3 of Big Tree Plant in Beeston Rylands in conjunction with Broxtowe BC. 14 trees have been planted.

Barbara Selwood

ARBOREAL VANDALISM OR REGULAR PRUNING?

Earlier this season the lime trees in Glebe Street were pruned very severely leaving them looking extremely ugly. Much criticism followed, so Owen, Caroline and I met with Dave Simpkin, (Forestry Manager) who is the lead officer on tree issues at the County Council, to find out why it was done.

At the early part of the 20th Century, some very attractive trees were planted in St. John's Grove.

Unfortunately arboriculture knowledge and thought was not the same as today. Lime trees can be very attractive – especially with plenty of space to grow. About 40-60 more years on, the chances are that local residents complained that the branches were overhanging the pavements, too high, blocking light from windows and other such comments.

The local council in their current wisdom and thinking, either responded to requests from residents, or of their own volition, pruned the trees.

Trees have a natural way to grow and will respond to dominant wind and weather conditions. However, if the natural growth is curtailed they will respond to that – growing extra branches or roots, with possibly more vigour and speed than before to counteract the damage. Thus the cycle of growth and pruning begins and after years of such treatment they will no longer be attractive or safe and will keep growing higher with potentially more rot developing in between the base branches, creating a situation where a branch or even a whole tree could be blown over with a small gust of wind.

When trees reach this situation – the ideal solution is to remove them and replace with more suitable trees, however, local councils these days are VERY constrained by finances and such luxurious options are usually not available. The increasing cost of regular maintenance has to balance with safety, aesthetics and landscaping within context. Leaving them well alone is not an option.

Hence the trees in Glebe Street and other local streets have received a



somewhat severe pruning this time, in order to stabilise them and to take them back to a safe height and one from which they can grow – with not too many branches at the crown that encourage disease and rotting. They were cut back to a uniform height, to give a more attractive look (if that is possible). Time will tell when they start leaf formation – and especially in a year or two.

Another point that has been mentioned in various criticisms of the current pruning, was about the contractors who did the job. We have been assured, that all the contractors have very specific instructions as to what to do and how to do it, with regular communication each way, to ascertain that every small item in the job is correct and to the order. We are hoping that Mr Simpkin will come and give us a presentation at one of our meetings next year, when you will be able to grill him with all your queries and criticism!

Barbara Selwood

PLAQUE GROUP PROGRESS

Work continues on the Plaque Group's concluding task of preparing an explanatory leaflet, now to be called *The Plaque Guide*, and edited by Alan Clayton of the Beeston and District Local History Society. Each member of the Group has supplied material. Assembling accurate, well researched text with suitable illustrations for each of the 34 plaques is proving as time consuming as placing the plaques themselves, so we may have to be patient.

The Guide is likely to be about 44 pages in a leaflet format (one-third A4). It will be in colour and include a purpose designed map with some background on each of the subjects – authoritative content that can also be accessed by a wider audience through each of the four participating society's websites. The back page of our Newsletter includes a sample plaque description; something that could become a regular feature.

This is the tenth anniversary year of our Society's commitment to blue plaques in the Beeston area following the English Heritage model. In tidying up and preparing archive material I am indebted to Joyce Brown, Eileen Atherton and Robin Phillips for searching out our Committee minute references and plaque related correspondence with English Heritage going back to 2005.

Peter Robinson

OPTIMISM IN ARCHITECTURE

Optimism can be seen as a mental attitude that interprets situations and events as being the best they can be and an optimist holds the hope that future conditions will unfold as the best they can do. Indeed an optimum state may mean that even if the reality of a situation may not be fully comprehended, cheerfulness and positivity abound. A pessimist might criticise that approach as leading to a state of mind that believes everything is as it should be and that the future is already set out and not open to question.

I found a quotation from Paul Finch, the editorial director of the Architects' Journal: "Architecture is about optimism and possibility, not endless belly-aching".

I really enjoyed the meeting and the possibilities being discussed for our town. Yes, I suppose one could take a view that bad decisions are being made, commercial interests are prevailing, money is being wasted and that the inefficient tram works will go on forever. But I have made a choice to engage and to feel like I have at least some control over how I would like my environment to look and function.

The Civic Society is a fantastic medium through which to engage. Please do get in touch with us via the website or email and let us know what you think of any developments or anything else you would like to discuss. I would suggest that one of the Society's primary aims is to increase the optimism about our town's progress by engaging, challenging and counter suggesting.

Karen Attwood

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ONE SIZE DOES NOT FIT ALL

When a developer eyes a spot to place their latest project on, they will look at the local infrastructure, the surrounding buildings, and demographic data. This is all well and good: such things are essential to ensuring the new development fits into the area in a practical manner. No developer would want to spend a fortune on a building which was inaccessible by car; wasn't linked up to the mains or was of utterly no relevance to the people living nearby.

One thing they do neglect, however, is the *feel* of the town. Unless they actually live in the town they're designing for, how can they assess the underlying fabric of the town? I've lived in many places abroad and around the UK: each one has a different feeling, a different ambience, which became more apparent the longer I spent in each

place. How do we expect a developer to be sympathetic in their plans to this unquantifiable quality?

I was recently invited to speak to MA Built Environment students at The University of Nottingham. Due to some fantastic liaison work initiated and fostered by the recently knighted Sir Professor Martyn Poliakoff, these students are spending a chunk of their course using Beeston as a real-world 'laboratory': designing state of the art, cutting edge buildings for the second stage of development that will begin soon after the tram rolls into town.

This involves them taking into account a huge amount of raw data in detail; even carefully monitored how the sun moves across the area – important if you're planning to power the place with solar panels.

I was there to show a film about Beeston I recently released 'Beestonia: the Movie'. This is a 21 minute documentary I wrote and produced as part of HiveMind, a film production company I am part of. It is by no means an authoritative, thorough or chronological document of Beeston; but an attempt to capture something of Beeston's feel; to try and show how the present is not just a discrete thing; but informed and influenced by the past, and thoughts of the future.

The idiosyncrasies are obviously subjective; but the response among Beestonians has been very positive so we think we succeeded in some small way. The students seemed to enjoy it too. Many of them have yet to set foot in Beeston, but as the tone of the film is generally positive, they seem excited to do so.

I also advised them to engage with Beeston thoroughly: Facebook has some excellent discussion sites where the future of the town is discussed in a rational constructive manner – I particularly recommend *Beeston Updated*. I told them to read The Beeston Express, visit the library archives, but most importantly, engage directly with Beeston. Visit it. Walk around it. Talk to the people here. While it may at times seem vague, when designing a building these experiences will prove vital.

The best buildings, the best developments, in the world are those done when the developer fully understands – and loves – the area they build in.

Matt Goid

MORE EXCITING NEWS FROM HIGHFIELDS

I'm sure you all know by now that we have secured the Heritage Lottery Fund grant to upgrade and refurbish the park. The work will start in the summer, not end in the summer as reported in the local media. I have previously reported what is to be done, so I won't bore you with the details again, suffice it to say that it will be a great improvement from which we will all derive even more enjoyment.

At the last meeting and AGM, on 11 December 2013, Hilary Silvester was re-elected chair of the group and Ian Vincent of the croquet club was elected vice chair and nothing else changed - sounds very familiar! Hilary is a dedicated and committed chairperson, passionate about Highfields and determined to keep it safe as a local asset for the county, just as Jesse Boot intended. There are a few other things to note from that meeting. The cascade pump has been turned off due to the low water level in the lake (reported in the last issue). Steve Clarke, the park ranger, has completed his first, very successful and busy, year. The hockey centre is now the biggest in Europe and sent six players to play in India. Nottingham Civic Society hopes to promote more interest locally in Jesse Boot, especially now that there is American interest, so watch this space!

Now for the more exciting bit! On 27 January this year we had an extra meeting to discuss submitting an application to the Arts Council towards a grant for an "artwork" at the south entrance to the park - near the Djanogly Centre and the tram stop. This initial grant, if successful, will fund public workshops and consultations with a professional artist, who will then come up with designs based on the ideas submitted. We want everybody to get involved, so if you have any ideas please let me know or attend a workshop - they will be well publicised if the application is successful. It's a case of anything goes - a sculpture (could be expensive), a "gateway" entrance (without gates), a garden, any combination or something from your own imagination - this is your chance to be creative - and I'm sure many of you already are, so get your thinking caps on! Bear in mind that the park and some of the background buildings are listed, so the view needs to be maintained.

Joyce Brown

PLANNING

The role of the Society's planning sub-committee is to have a watching brief on planning applications submitted to the Borough Council and to report to the monthly Executive committee meeting. In practice the majority of applications submitted to the Council will not be of concern to us, but we are always particularly interested in those in Conservation Areas, those affecting listed buildings, those which may affect the amenity of neighbouring properties, or those which may have a major impact on our area such as within the town centre or for example the proposed developments on the Boots and Plessey sites. We may then either submit comments, (which could sometimes be commendations), or objections to the planning department. Committee members also attend the Council's Development Control Committee meetings if councillors will be debating and voting on applications in which we have an interest

However we always have to be mindful that our objections or comments have to be based only on certain criteria as dictated by for example the National Planning Policy Framework, the Core Strategy and saved Local Plan policies. Planners will take into account factors such as design, appearance and layout, loss of privacy or daylight, noise, smell, and traffic. They will not take into account the impact on property values, loss of a view or boundary disputes.

The Borough Council publishes a weekly list of all planning applications submitted and this can be found on their website under Planning and Building Control. Anyone who is interested in looking at a particular application can then either view the details on-line or go into the Council Offices and ask to look at it or talk to the Duty Planner.

Caroline Penn

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N2 and HS2

In early February the Society contributed to a consultation on a proposed Nottinghamshire Joint authority, shorthand N2. Information about the proposed authority – intended to encourage more integrated working between Nottingham City and boroughs within the County - was available on the Nottinghamshire County Council website. We noted that while the views of authorities were sought there was little awareness of the proposals or their significance beyond councillors and officials. We also note that a decision on the location of the HS2 East Midlands's station to be announced on 2 February has been postponed until after the election.

In time these major decisions will affect us all. Watch this space.

Peter Robinson/Judy Sleath

NEW MEMBERS

We have been joined by many new members over the last couple of months and we would like to welcome everyone.

We look forward to seeing you at our meetings and events.

Do get in touch with us via email/website and events.

CONGRATULATIONS

Congratulations to one of our members, Professor Martyn Poliakoff, who was knighted for services to the chemical sciences in the 2015 New Year Honours.

EVENTS

MEETING REPORT - CANALSIDE HERITAGE CENTRE, NOVEMBER 2014

It was with much interest and pleasure that the Beeston Civic Society learnt of the plans and progress of the Canalside Heritage Centre project described and illustrated by Julian Owen, Architect, one of the Trustees of The Canalside Heritage Trust and whose firm is responsible for the design of the building.



Sadly, the Lockside Cottages, built in 1796, the year of the 'Short Cut' construction, has been allowed to deteriorate in recent times. After the arrival of the Railway, Beeston Rylands expanded in size and the canal was used extensively, but over the last 20 years Canalside Cottages have gradually fallen into disrepair. The last cottage occupancy was in 1990 and, happily, this building is in a reasonable structural state for renovation so it will be possible to recreate the original appearance of the outside.

Rich oral history accumulating from the families of lockkeepers and from relatives and friends of previous cottage residents, has helpfully informed and inspired the projected developments. Much useful information has also been gathered about the buildings and of earlier community life at the Canalside from artists' paintings and early photographs of the area. Julian Owen expressed an interest in seeing any other such material that our members and the general public may possess.

Plans and models for the exciting new development are already in hand. The estimated cost is £865,549. A successful launch appeal for funds was held in carnival style at the Boat and Horses in the Rylands and donations have been received from a number of trusts. Nottinghamshire County Council has given generously from its Local Improvement Scheme while our Heritage Open Day produced a useful contribution. An anticipated grant from the Canal and River Trust would allow the project to go ahead.



**Architect
Julian Owen**

Materials for the work are to be brought to the development site by barge. While the frontage of the existing cottage will be retained and restored, the inside will be developed to allow for an exhibition area and public amenities. A Café is also proposed with possible links to the catering training institutions at local colleges. Indeed the developers hope to involve community interest in much of their project. For example, they foresee the possibility of demonstrating and training – to interested groups – building techniques to be employed in the renovation work itself. Further, an allotment is planned which will supply fresh goods for the café

and be maintained by local school children. There are also an exciting number of imaginative plans for involving the local community among which are a 'Narrow Boat Project', a 'City Card' scheme for cycle hire, and provision for a Fishing Tackle Shop for the fishermen.

Jean Cameron

FIND OUT MORE: To find out more, why not visit their website [here \(www.canalsideheritagecentre.org.uk\)](http://www.canalsideheritagecentre.org.uk) and find out how you can help, and support this fabulous local project.

MEETING REPORT - COMMEMORATING THE WAR _ STRIKING THE RIGHT BALANCE, DECEMBER 2014

Our Christmas meeting with guest speaker Anna Soubry MP was seasonally cold! A lack of heating in the room meant that we all sat there wrapped up in our coats and scarves. However, this only marginally detracted from an enjoyable evening.

Speaking on the subject of Commemorating war Ms Soubry's role as a Minister for Defence with responsibility for Veterans gave depth and a personal aspect to much of her talk. This then developed into a wide ranging discussion, with much audience participation, on commemorating armed conflicts from the First World War to the present day. The evening was rounded off by welcome mince pies, sausage rolls and glasses of wine.

Caroline Penn

MEETING REPORT - NEW DEAL FOR BEESTON, JANUARY 2015

There was much optimism on display at the talk given by John Delaney (Head of Built Environment) and Phillip Horsfield (Head of Legal Services), both from Broxtowe Borough Council. The audience at John Clifford School enjoyed a frank, respectful and pretty positive interchange.



It soon emerged that everything on the drawing board and beyond was being considered under a cloud of financial constraints, many schemes under consideration being rendered impossible by the situation. However, that did not hinder a list of positive outcomes, some revealed exclusively at the meeting, the main one being that the newly restored exterior of St John's church will be uplifted, a very pleasing sight for people arriving by tram (and any other transport for that matter).

John followed the introduction with an estimated timetable for works over the next few months, which included:

- Tram work complete March
- Bus/tram interchange work start March, and therefore bus station will close
- Bus terminus relocating to Humber Road/Regent Street while the bus station is closed/Taxi rank will move to Church Street
- Secure cycle hub and extra car parking will be provided at Beeston train station, followed up later with replacement of station steps and possibility of lift access to the platforms
- Old Beeston Market will be cleared
- Final tenant will move in to new square development in April
- Temporary car parking facilities to be built on Fire station site in April
- The Built Environment students at University of Nottingham have been designing their vision for Phase 2 (the plot where the old fire station stood and current bus station stands and adjoining vacant areas) and there will be an exhibition of their work in June
- Key decisions on Phase 2 after May 2015
- Trams should be running by August

All along, the Council representatives encouraged for input from the community. They want to mould outcomes in line with people's views. The poll conducted last year has informed spending last year (eg. improvements to shop fronts and special events). It was clear that Beeston town centre is attracting a lot of interest from developers, partly because of the proximity of the park-and-ride car park (at Bardill's) only a few minutes away by tram. Some items were discussed during an extensive question and answer period, but deemed impossible due to funding constraints:

- A living wall or mural on the ugly works access wall to the Square on Station Road
- Upgrade to the Square podium
- Leaving Phase 2 as open space
- Underground parking/tram

Phillip outlined eloquently the impossibility of attracting retailers here if they do not see for themselves the correct profile of potential customers. We were left with the clear impression at the end of the meeting that despite lack of funds and the difficulties of the last few years, our area is changing for the better and attracting interesting prospects for further development.

The audience, Civic Society members and Beeston residents were encouraged to communicate via the Council Offices address or by email at pabc@broxtowe.gov.uk

Karen Attwood

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MEETING REPORT – AN UPDATE ON THE TRAM, with TRAMLINK, FEBRUARY 2015

An overflowing audience listened with interest to eight representatives from 'the Tramlink Team', who gave a presentation of all aspects of the tram through design, construction, testing and forthcoming operations. Joining us were Graham Bethel, Project coordinator from Tramlink; Richard Horsley, Tramlink; Jamie Swift, Tramlink; Trevor Stocker, Nottingham Trams Ltd; Daniel Patterson, Nottingham Trams Ltd; Steve Tough, Notts City Council; Ashley Jackson, Taylor Woodrow Alstrom and designer Ignacio Sequeros Hernandez.

Ignacio started by outlining the testing now taking place on the 22 new trams in the city, which are being run on existing lines. Most of the tram track will be completed very soon despite ongoing problems in a few locations eg. Gregory Street and Devonshire Avenue. The new communication system is being installed and the final overhead wires are being placed and tightened. Overnight testing on new lines will start soon and the tram will start to run as soon as these tests have been carried out. The latest estimate is 'mid year' as the tests on the trams, track, traffic control and communication system is complex.

Trevor advised that 120 drivers have now been appointed and undergoing extensive training and scenario planning. Customer Service manager Daniel was introduced and we were told of plans for maximum support when the tram is up and running, with help points at every stop.

Steve outlined that 85 small business have received support for troubles during construction and land compensation claims are being

dealt with. The public hotline has taken 9000 calls and 6500 emails during the construction period.

Jamie said trams will run 6am to midnight, 7 days per week, every 8-10 minutes. The tram from Beeston will not terminate in Nottingham, it is a full cross city service. Lots of information will roll out from Jamie's team over the next few months.



There followed a lively question and answer session, lasting about an hour, which dealt with both broad issues and more detailed queries. Various topics were covered, including individual junctions and barriers, compensation for residents, tree planting, grey pole ownership and traffic flow, some discussions leading to differences of opinion between some audience members.

However I think there was a general feeling that we had been given a very helpful and comprehensive update.

Karen Attwood

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

DATES FOR YOUR DIARIES – Beeston & District Civic Society meetings and speakers

13th March 2015 Professor Mark Gillott from The University of Nottingham Built Environment Department – 'The design, delivery and use of Zero Carbon Homes'

10th April 2015 – Gareth Davies, Project Manager at Trent & Peak, 'The Archaeology of the Tram'

These Meetings take place at John Clifford School, Nether Street, Beeston NG9 2AT at 7.30.p.m.in either The Committee Room or the Junior School Hall.

For your information, from our chair Judy Sleath.
I have now booked at The Pearson Centre for our next season of talks starting in September 2015 through to April 2016. We will still be meeting on the 2nd Friday at 7.30pm.
The Pearson Centre has a hearing loop.

Guided Walks for 2015

Interested in learning more about the area? Why not join us on one of our guided walks for a lovely evening stroll and a chance to discover the history and importance of places you walk past every day.

Professor Beckett will once again be leading guided walks of Beeston this year. Full details below.

Chilwell and Beeston Victorian and Edwardian Housing Estates -
Sunday 21st June

Churches and Chapels of Beeston - Sunday 19th July

An introduction to Beeston - Sunday 13th September

More details on all walks at www.beestoncivicsociety.org.uk

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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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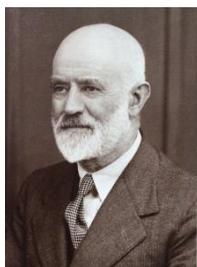
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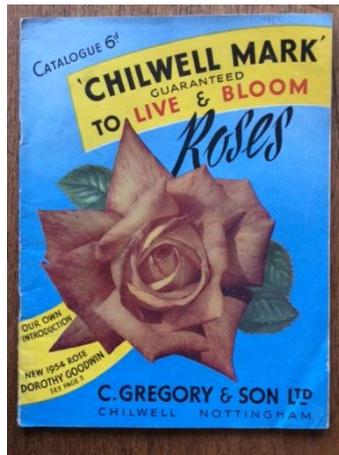
The next Newsletter is due to be published in June 2015

Gregory's Roses helped to put Chilwell on the world map in the 1950s, 60s and 70s.

Charles Gregory (1867-1940) began business in



1897 as a nurseryman and florist specialising in roses, first at the Old Close Nurseries on High Road Chilwell and later in both Chilwell and Stapleford. His son **Charles Walter Gregory** (1908-1980) joined the firm in the mid 1920s, taking over after his father's death in 1940. Both were active and well respected in the community.



Gregory's built up a national and international reputation for their quality '*Chilwell Mark*' roses. They received many awards over the years, breeding new rose varieties and displaying regularly at the Chelsea Flower Show. In the 1960s Gregory's Roses was one of the top three rose growers in the country, with the largest rose fields in Britain. Both nurseries continued in parallel until Old Close was sold in the 1960s. The plaque is mounted on '*The Old Sick Club*', at 309 High Road, Chilwell, originally the premises of a local friendly society established in 1771 and later the offices of Gregory's Roses. Local historian Robert Mellors writing in 1920 believed the building to date from 1812.

Peter Robinson



Toton Nursery in the 1920s. Charles Walter Gregory left and Walter Gregory right at the table, (all photos courtesy Rosemary McCarthy)

