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*Railway workers at Woodford Halse, c.*1900.

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NORTHAMPTONSHIRE PAST AND PRESENT

1982-83

CONTENTS

	PAGE
Notes and News	301
The Perambulation of Rockingham Forest of 1299. *B. Bellamy*	303
The Black Death in the Hundred of Higham Ferrers. *Norman Groome*	309
The Probate Inventory of an early Seventeenth century Northampton Mercer. *Mona C. Harrison*	313
The Records of Rothwell Horse Fair, 1684-1744. *R. F. Denington*	319
A Poaching Incident at Sudborough, 1837. *F. J. Mayes*	325
Public Opinion and the Kettering Grammar School Question, 1883-1888. *B. A. York*	329
Woodford Halse, the Village with a Heart of Steam. *J. W. Anscomb*	341
Book Reviews	353

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(FOUNDED IN 1920)
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President:
Sir Hereward Wake, Bart., M.C., D.L.

NOTES AND NEWS

Despite some difficulties the Society has had a good year. The lectures in October 1981 given by Mr. John Steane, a former editor of this journal now working in Oxfordshire, on "The History of Gardens in Northamptonshire", and by Mr. Michael Hurst, Fellow of St. John's College, Oxford, following the Annual General Meeting in May this year, on "Oligarchy to Democracy: Northamptonshire Politics, 1826-1918" were well attended, and were rewarding and stimulating occasions. The membership continues to keep up well, despite an inevitable rise in the subscription rate, and a generally worrying economic background. It is perhaps not widely known how well-supported ours is compared with other Record Societies: indeed it is envied for the size and loyalty of its membership. It is, of course, an old society (though not by any means the oldest) and its founders were well able to tap the wellsprings of local pride, which are strong in Northamptonshire and are, I believe, rooted in the fact that much of the county was missed by the Industrial Revolution of the 19th century, which created great towns, a sense of social dislocation, and brought in many migrants. On the other hand, unlike some of the more purely rural counties, vast numbers of people were not compelled to migrate away from their native county either, largely because of the spread of boot and shoe making. Whatever other reasons for Northamptonshire's interest in its history (and there must be others), this stable membership makes possible the continued publication of this journal, and the remarkable series of Record Society volumes, maintained over sixty years at an average of one new publication every two years. The first volume of *The Red Earl. The Papers of the 5th Earl Spencer*, published this year, has been the most expensive book the NRS has ever undertaken. However, it has been well received and there are hopes that it will recoup a proportion of its costs through sales both here and abroad. The book was carefully budgeted by Dr. Edmund King, the Society's hon. editor, and its treasurer, Mr. Arthur Farmer, but in order to keep up with inflation and to finance future publications, it has been necessary to raise the subscription. The next volume planned is a *Miscellany*, the first produced by the Society. It will be a slim (100 page or so) volume comprising three edited texts, "Estate Records of the Hotot Family", a set of medieval records edited by Edmund King, "The Daventry Tithing Book 1700-1818" edited by this writer, and the "Militia Lists for Nassaburgh, 1762", edited by Victor A. Hatley and Brian G. Statham. It is hoped to publish in September 1983.

Despite all this, it might perhaps be observed that the transitional stage in the life of the NRS which has been going on at least since the lamented death in January 1981 of the late C. V. Davidge, Chairman of the Council, is not yet over. It is partly, perhaps, a matter of generations: many of the leading supporters of the Society in the time of Miss Wake and Sir Gyles Isham have passed on, or are retiring. This year, Mr. S. L. Elborne, one of the original trustees, and a long serving member of the council, retired, and we record with regret the death of another trustee, the Marquess of Exeter, an obituary of whom appears on another page. We are pleased to say that one of these trusteeships has been filled by Christian, Lady Hesketh, but as yet no successor to Mr. Davidge as Chairman of the Council has been found. Meanwhile we are grateful to Sir Hereward Wake for continuing to combine this post with the presidency of the

Society for the time being, but it is a double burden which he should not be asked to shoulder too long. It is pleasing to report that the secretaryship of the Society, covered by temporary arrangements since the sudden retirement of Mr. Wright, has been taken by Mrs. Margaret Clarke. We wish her well in her new post, which is a key one in the effective running of the Society's business.

1982 has been a good year for John Clare, Northamptonshire's greatest literary figure, a poet more appreciated now than ever before, whose stock continues to rise. A John Clare Society was founded and in July held the first of what promises to be annual festivals at Helpston. There was an exhibition of Clare Manuscripts on view, a "Clare Trail" round the local terrain so important to him and his poetry, a performance of his works set to music, and an address from the president of the new society, Ronald Blythe, the author of *Akenfield*. So far more than 300 people from no less than 12 countries have joined, and anyone interested in doing so should contact Mr. George Dixon, the membership secretary, 8 Priory Road, Peterborough.

The first number of the Society's journal also appeared in July. Handsomely produced, it has 50 pages of illustrated articles by Eric Robinson, R. K. R. Thornton, Trevor Hold, George Dixon and Rodney Lewis. In his foreword its editor, Edward Storey, urges us to forget old romantic images of "poor, sad John Clare", and Clare "the peasant poet". Stressing Clare's originality, independence of mind and courage, we have to see him, Storey argues, as a major English poet, "as solitary in his vision as Van Gogh or William Blake". This autumn will see the appearance of Mr. Storey's new life of Clare, and on another page we print a review of *John Clare's Birds*, another volume in Eric Robinson's great project of re-editing Clare's works.

R.L.G.

Notes on contributors

B. Bellamy is an active amateur archaeologist and local historian currently working on areas of ancient woodland, with a special interest in Geddington Chase.

Norman Groome, a retired solicitor and a native of Higham Ferrers, is the author of a number of booklets on its history. A keen supporter of local history and a member of the Council of this Society, he contributed a piece to this journal in 1958.

F. J. Mayes, some of whose forebears were Northamptonshire people, lectures at Loughry Agricultural College, Co. Tyrone, N. Ireland.

B. A. York, a Kettering man, is senior lecturer at the West London Institute of Higher Education.

J. L. Anscomb came to Woodford Halse in 1939 as a shunter. From 1944 to 1974 he played an active part at every level of local government, being made a JP in 1949 and county alderman in 1958. A former chairman of the County Archives Committee, he is a member of the Council of this Society.

T. J. Hold, a poet and composer who lives at Wadenhoe, is a senior lecturer in the Adult Education Department of Leicester University.

Mona Harrison is the retired Deputy Head of Northampton High School and she researched for the school's centenary history *The First Hundred Years*, published in 1978. She is Chairman of the Northants Family History Society.

R. F. Denington was born in 1904 and lives in Slough. For most of his life he was a research chemist in the paint trade. He is a keen Workers' Educational Association supporter, being chairman of the Slough branch.

Acknowledgements and thanks are extended to Bruce Bailey Esq. for his drawing of Lyveden New Bield, to Leicestershire Record Office, F. A. Moore Esq. of Kettering, Northamptonshire Libraries, and to Northamptonshire Record Office for permission to reproduce photographs and illustrations in their collections.

THE ROCKINGHAM FOREST PERAMBULATION OF 1299

B. BELLAMY

Prior to the death of Henry II in 1189 the royal forests were in a state of continuous expansion, but the reign of Richard I saw the beginning of the steady decline that in time would see their virtual disappearance. Although some extension of the forests took place during the reigns of Richard and John, vast areas were also being disafforested and subsequent to the Forest Charter of 1217, still further disafforestment took place. Combined with this, the granting out of the forest of tracts of land by the sovereign to his subjects, saw the need for frequent perambulations to set out the limits of the constantly shrinking forest.

A number of perambulations were made in the 13th century, delineating the bounds of the Northamptonshire forests of Rockingham, Salcey and Whittlewood,[1] however, we are concerned here with the perambulations of Rockingham Forest.

The earliest extant perambulation of this forest is dated 1286.[2] This is a widely known perambulation although often misquoted. It is worth printing again here in full for comparison with the later medieval perambulation. It begins

> Bounds and metes of the Forest of Rockingham and Clyve. From a point south of Northampton and north of the Nene, right up to Walmesford (*Wansford*) and from there by the Royal Way right up to Stamford. From there, by way of the River Welland, south to Haverberge (*Harborough*) and from there by way of the highway to the stream of Maydwell, thus, by way of the same stream, east, right up to the walls of Northampton.

The effects of assarting, the granting out of the forest of tracts of land and the selling off of forest land as a source of revenue, caused a further perambulation to be made in 1299. This was confirmed at Lincoln in 1301 disafforesting all land outside its bounds. This much contracted perambulation excluded most of the southern part of Rockingham Forest, leaving three main areas of woodland within the districts of Rockingham, Brigstock and Kings Cliffe. The districts, or bailiwicks of Rockingham and Brigstock, which for administrative purposes were usually combined, contained the villages and lands of Rockingham, Corby, Pipewell, Great Oakley, Little Oakley, Barford, Little Weldon, Geddington, Brigstock, Gretton, Grafton and Stanion. Cliffe, or Clyve Bailiwick, took in this village together with Laxton, Duddington, Apethorpe, Fotheringhay, Hale, Yarwell and Nassington. Many outlying woods and fields of adjacent villages were also within the perambulation, but the property of religious houses, though within the limits of the forest, was specifically excluded.

In 1637 the forest bounds reverted to those of 1286, when Charles I reimposed the long disused forest laws in an effort to raise cash from the fines of forest offenders. Discontent over this was loudly voiced by farmers and landowners, bringing about a further perambulation in 1641,[3] which caused the bounds of 1299 to shrink even further.

The extent of the forest was delineated by "unremovable marks, meres and boundaries",[4] usually permanent features such as property or parish boundaries, streams, roads, hedges or wood boundaries. These were known "by matter of record or else by prescription".

[1] For perambulations of Salcey and Whittlewood Forests see G. Baker *The History and Antiquities of the County of Northampton*, 1822-30, Vol. II, p. 75. Northants Record Office Bru Exxiv 9.

[2] C. Wise *Rockingham Castle and the Watsons*, 1891, p. 129.

[3] This perambulation is printed in Wise, *ibid.*, p. 154-9.

[4] J. Manwood *A Treatise and Discourse of the Laws of the Forest*, 1598.

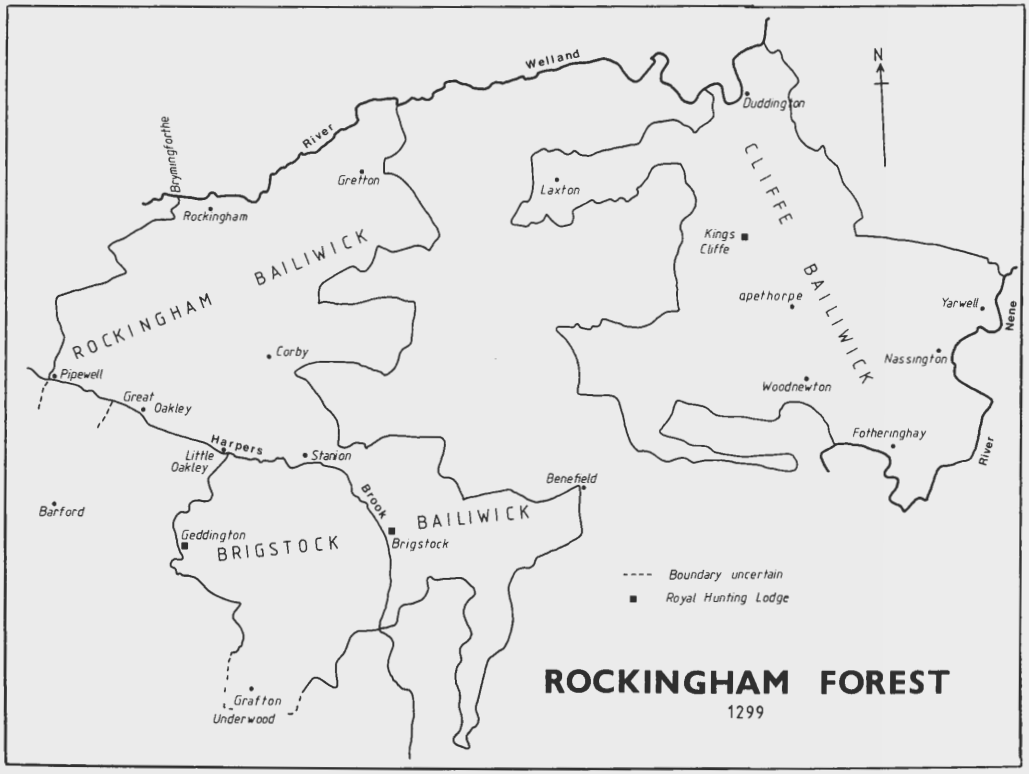

FIG. 1. ROCKINGHAM FOREST IN 1299

A copy of the perambulation of 1299 survives in the Northamptonshire Record Office[5] and a free translation of this is given below. It gives a wealth of topographical detail and many of the names can still be found on the latest Ordnance Survey maps. It also paints a vivid picture of the north Northamptonshire landscape in the 13th century. An apparently heavily wooded landscape with numerous hedged enclosures, yet already mainly agricultural with extensive open fields.

> The bounds of Rockingham Forest begin at Brymingforthe[6] on the banks of the Welland, and so ascending the road leading from Rockingham towards Carlton, and so between the two hedges[7] (hayas) as far as Fildenewaye that leads to White Cross (alba cruce). And so from alba cruce to Harpersbrook including those ditches that are called Smalgres, and so following the Harpersbrook through the Abbey of Pipewell including the wood of the king, called Kyngesgrove together with the assart called Harberwe[8] belonging to the kings vill of Barford together with the vill of Barford and

[5] N.R.O. Bru Exxiv 9. This is in fact a copy in Latin, made in 1634. It is completely unpunctuated and there are numerous omissions and incomplete words. A minimum of punctuation has been added here, and only the spelling of a few well known place names have been changed.

[6] This is the point where the small stream from Rockingham Park joins the Welland to the west of Rockingham. N.R.O. map Bru 126.

[7] These hedges survive as the bridle way that leaves the A427 Harborough-Corby Road in a S.E. direction from a point close to the Middleton turn (Grid ref. SP 84248960). This was known as Middleton Lane in 1641.

[8] Harebrow was one of the three parcels of waste-land in Rushton parish that Edward 1st granted to the townsmen of Barford in 1285. Bridges, Vol. II, p. 73. N.R.O. Maps 5064 & 345 of Rushton show an area of assarts near the Pipewell boundary, with a "Kings Close" nearby.

PLATE 1. THE FOREST BOUNDARY LEADING BETWEEN TWO ANCIENT HEDGES TO THE FILDENWAYE. (*Photo. B. Bellamy*)

its district, and so following the Harpersbrook as far as Risnebrigge.[9] And from Risnebrigge towards Hochenehay excluding the wood of Henry de Tychmersh[10] of the Honour of Huntyngdon. And so to Hecheneash[11] and then to the banks of the Ise. And so following the river bank as far as the mill of Bowgton up to Banecrosheved[12] including the vill of Geytington and the mill of Bowgton, and so up to the stream between Stereslee[13] and the wood of Werketon[14] following the stream to the district of Grafton. And so including the vill of Grafton and including the wood called Boleswyk or Baleswyk and also the wood of Burton. And then as far as the boundary of the Burtonbroke.[15] And so the Burtonbroke as far as Robleswood, then following the bounds as far as Balacre. And so including the aforesaid wood in the kings manor, and so excluding the wood of Crickele and the wood of Hugonis Daundelyn[16] and the wood of John de Ver and the wood of Twywell up to Plymeweleheved[17], and then up

[9] Risingbridge, the Harpers Brook crossing of the A43 between Stanion and Geddington, still carries this name. Places still referred to on modern Ordnance Survey maps, hereinafter denoted O.S.

[10] Henry de Tichmarsh was Lord of Newton in 1316 and held the lands of the Honour of Huntington. Bridges, Vol. II, p. 322.

[11] A map in Boughton House, dated 1604, shows a Hechene Hedge at a point on what was once the parish boundary of Geddington and Little Oakley at SP 89208478. North of this the boundary is marked "Kings Meare", which plainly alludes to the forest boundary. Further to the south, an area of woodland which survives today as Newton Spinney, is marked, "The wood of Henry de Titchmarsh, supposed". In a document in the Public Record Office (E 178/4318), Hochenehay & Hecheneash are Heathene Hegg & Heathen Ash.

[12] In the perambulation of 1641 this is known as Bancrofts, it also gives its name to a group of medieval assarts in this part of Geddington parish, called Bancrofts Closes. Names that are found in an altered form in the perambulation of 1641 are hereafter denoted (1641).

[13] This is probably the "Kings wood of Dereslegh within the bounds of Geddington Forest", *Close Rolls 1264-8*. Later, Great & Little Daisley, shown on a map of 1728 (N.R.O. map 3111) as being in the SW corner of Brigstock Park.

[14] Warkton Wood Field. Boughton House, map of estate 1714.

[15] Burton Brook is shown on the map of Brigstock Parks, 1728, and is the stream parallel to the Brigstock boundary, between Grafton Park Wood and Ekens Copse.

[16] This was probably in Cranford as Hugo Daundlyn held land there in the 13th Century.

[17] Plumwell, Brigstock Park 1728. Also, Plumwell Lawn N.R.O. map 1402-3. This then is in the area of Slipton Lodge.

PLATE 2. THE DITCH BETWEEN THE FIELD OF GLAPTHORN AND CARMLESTIBBING, with Carmlestibbing to the left and the Shortwood behind. (*Photo. B. Bellamy*)

to Prestcroftheved and so to Folwayhatche then to Grysengate and so up to Wynnecrosheved, and so between Wynnecros and the wood of the king as far as the field of Southborugh (Sudborough) and so including the aforesaid wood all the way to the Trenche[18] and then between Cotesle and the Snape[19] which is outside, so the Harpersbrook as far as Walhohatche[20] and so including Brigstock Cotesle and the Drilee and the Walhohatche as far as Schelleye.[21] And next up to Swettokesleye and so including Boleax, Oxenhawe, Langrehull, Farmingeshawe[22] and Oldelourd. And so excluding Soutborugh, Luffwyk (Lowick), Aldewyncle and Wadenho and their woods and from Swettokesleye right up to the garden of Andree de Lyvedene and the boundary includes his assart all the way to the wood of the king, called Swynehawe and so through the old ditch up to Foxmedebroke and from there leading as far as Sandeleyes. And so up to Beneske. . . ? And so right up to Bulderston Rode and including the Castle of Benifeld together with a yardland which Robert le Megre held with the wood called Banneho[23] eastwards and from the Bilderston Rode right up to Wrennimere leading between the kings wood and Cotechikk[24] as far as Sterrilond. And from Sterrilond following the boundary between Stanion and Great Weldon. And next between the wood of Stanion and Grestonhawe[25] and so including Grestonhawe and five yardlands in the manor of Stanion belonging to the kings

[18] Trench, a riding or clearing made for safety & travel.

[19] Between 1327-30 Simon de Drayton was granted license to empark certain lands within Rockingham Forest, also 20 acres called Wynestros, adjoining these lands but outside the bounds of the forest. These lands were said to extend from Plumwell to the Snape (Snapes Wood, O.S.) and from Gotesle to Lound (Round Lown Wood, O.S.). N.R.O. map 1402-3 of Drayton Park firmly places this area to the west of Sudborough. There are many references to the wood of Gotesleye in the Close Rolls between 1241 and 1272.

[20] Wallow Hatch (1641) Wallow Lane Close, N.R.O. map of Brigstock Fields, 1723. SP 955833.

[21] Cherry Lap (1641) and O.S.

[22] Bullicks Wood, O.S. Oxen Wood O.S. Lang Hill Lodge. O.S. Fermyn Woods O.S.

[23] Banhaw Wood, O.S.

[24] Cothicke (1641) Cowthick Plantation, O.S.

[25] Grestinhawe, N.R.O. Brudenell Charters Ed.I. Grefin Furlong, N.R.O. Map of Stanion Fields 1737.

manor of Brigstock. And so as far as Stanegate and so to Corbybrig[26] excluding the wood of John de Stanion and the Corbybrygge, between the field of Corby and Great Weldon including those of Weldon up to the wood of the Earl of Cornwall[27] then following the boundary that leads between the wood of the Earl of Cornwall and the wood of Fynesheved[28] as far as the stream that leads towards Deene, and so ascending the stream to Corbyhauhe so following the bounds between the woods of Corby and Deene as far as the Grettonbrok and so including the wood of Corby and the Grettonbrook between the field of Kirkeby and the wood of Gretton right up to Yrealhawe and so by way of the boundary excluding Yralhawe and up to le Hok[29] then between the field of Kirkeby and the field of Bulwick and the woods of Gretton by way of the Old Ditches[30] as far as Henewykhawe.[31] And next leading between the fields of Gretton and Henewykhawe and so following through these between the fields of Gretton and Haringworth as far as the banks of the Welland and so including the vill and the woods of Gretton.

Bounds of the Forest of Clyve, begin on the banks of the Welland by way of the bounds between the field of Gretton and the field of Haringworth leading between the woods of Haringworth and Gretton excluding the vill of Haringworth with the fields and woods. And so between the fields of Bulwick and Deene right up to Edyewod[32] excluding both districts and then following the bounds that lead to Pyssende. And next right up to Stanewode and so up to Stonebrege and then up to Rysenebrigg and so up to Morheyhegge[33] and then between the field of Clive (Kings Cliffe) and the field of Blathewyk as far as Whyteston[34] and then right up to Alneydynge and so to Stelehul[35] excluding the wood of Lyndewode[36] with the Priory of Fynnesheved. And then to W . . . myeford and so including the field of Laxton with the wood and including that wood called Baswode that is in the Kings manor including the vill of Dodington (Duddington) and its fields and so to Dodington-forthe[37] right up to Waylands and so to those bounds that lead between the field of Weston (Collyweston) and the field of Dodington and so to Culverwell[38] and then right up to Cattesmere[39] and so to the Hornedstock[40] and so to the wood of John de Folkesworth excluding the aforesaid wood and next up to Cibbescros[41] and so up to the field of the vill of Walmesford and so including the demesne wood of the lord king, of Easton. And so to Walmesford by way of the banks of the Nene including the vill of Yarwell and the vill of Nassington and the vill of Foderingey right up to the field of Pyriho and so to Hoesinde[42] excluding the wood of the Priory of Fynnesheved in Wode Neweton that is called Hawe with watergalle[43] and the manor and fields of the same Priory[44] and excluding the aforesaid vill of the fee of Holt and Eketon and so through those ways that lead between the field of Suthwyk and the assart of Foderingey right up to Sky . . . stade excluding the vill of Sothewik and then up to Elm Ryding[45] and so to Totenhobrok[46] and next up to the wood of John Doyli and so

[26] This is the stream crossing on the A6116 to the east of Corby parish church.
[27] Edmund Earl of Cornwall held the manor of Rockingham in 1272.
[28] Priors Hawe (1641) Priors Hall, O.S. This is probably the Weldon Wood granted to the monks of Fineshade by the Earl of Cornwall. Bridges, Vol. II.
[29] Hook Gate (1641).
[30] Long Lane (1641).
[31] Bulwick Wood (1641).
[32] Edge Woods (1641).
[33] Morehey Woods (1641).
[34] Whyteston SP988970.
[35] Satehill (1641), in Kings Cliffe parish.
[36] Lynn Wood, O.S.
[37] Doddington Short, this was a waste within the forest that was assarted by the townsmen of Duddington in 1362.
[38] Culvernelles (1641).
[39] Cottesmore Coppice (1641).
[40] Hornedstock in Easton on the Hill, O.S.
[41] Gibbes Crosse (1641).
[42] The end of Howe Wood?
[43] Hall or Priors Hall with Watergalle (1641).
[44] The manor of Woodnewton was given to the monks of Fineshade by Henry Engaine. Bridges, Vol. II, p. 307.
[45] Alme Riding (1641).
[46] Tottenhoe Lodge, O.S.

between the wood of the said John which is excluded and the Shortewode[47] right up to Bradeleye including the chases[48] of Pyriho and Apethorpe and next between the wood of the lord king and the wood of William de Kirkeby[49] which is excluded by the bounds that lead to the wood of Glapthorn and then following the bounds that lead between the wood of the king and the wood of the Countess of Fife[50] and the wood of William Brown right up to Carmlestibbing.[51] And then through the ditch between the field of Glapthorn and Carmlestibbing up to Fretherikwellegate and so to Bomfeldhatche.[52] And then to Totenhoridying and so between the wood of John de Boill . . . and the wood of Frendshawe[53] right up to Undelespittes[54] and so to Horecros.[55] And then to Hawkesok[56] and so together with the way that leads to Barnevilldrybing between Edywode and Thorpword[57] including Edywode.

Hopefully this perambulation will serve as a starting point for local historians and field-workers to carry out further research on the bounds of 1299. With the aid of maps, documents and diligent fieldwork it may be possible to define the extent of the forest with some degree of accuracy and place many more of the features mentioned. Plainly, in the intervening centuries various features will have long since disappeared but we should not be too surprised to find that the majority still survive, although under different guises.

[47] Short Wood, O.S.
[48] A chase was a tract of private woodland within the forest.
[49] William de Kirkeby held the manor of Cotterstock until his death in 1290. Bridges, Vol. II, p. 459.
[50] Wife of the Earl of Fife, Lord of Glapthorn.
[51] Carmels Dibbing, Carbes Dibbing 1608, this was an ancient assart. N.R.O. Misc. Ledgers 141.
[52] Benefield Hatch (1641), formerly Tottenhoe.
[53] Frindshaw in Bigging in Oundell (1641). SP 988908, now in Benefield parish. N.R.O. field name map.
[54] Oundles Pittes. In the 1641 perambulation this is also in Biggin. The name probably refers to a quarry of some kind.
[55] Horsecroft (1641).
[56] Hawkes Okes Coppy (1641). Hawekesok was in the area SP 97359210.
[57] Thorp Wood in Deenethorpe, SP 970920.

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THE BLACK DEATH IN THE HUNDRED OF HIGHAM FERRERS

NORMAN GROOME

The Black Death, as the bubonic plague came to be known, reached the South of England from the Continent in the early Autumn of 1348. It spread from town to town, village to village, with alarming virulence, reaching Northamptonshire in the late Spring of 1349. Estimates have put the overall death rate at one third of the population. Markets and fairs were abandoned, courts were not held, harvests were neglected, houses and lands were left vacant for want of tenants, farm wages rose and prices fell.[1]

Most of the evidence of the number of deaths comes from the registers of institutions to vacant benefices in the Church which show that the mortality amongst the clergy was high, but in a few places Court Rolls exist which show the effect of the plague on the general population. At Higham Ferrers the records of the Borough Court are missing from July 1348 to June 1350 and none of the Manorial Rolls have survived for the year 1349. There are, however, records of some of the Courts of the Hundred of Higham Ferrers in the Higham Ferrers Borough archives, which are deposited with the Northamptonshire Record Office at Delapre Abbey, Northampton. These consist of two manuscripts covering the Courts held during part of the first half of 1349.

The Hundred was part of the Duchy of Lancaster estate and jurisdiction was exercised by the Steward in respect of Duchy tenants of those parts of the estate which had no Courts of their own. An exact definition of the jurisdiction can be found in the *Pleas of Quo Warranto* of twenty years earlier when jurisdiction was claimed in respect of the Duchy Manors in "Wollaston, Newton, Ecton, Mill Cotes, Cotes Bidun, Little Cotes, Easton Maudit, the vill of Strixton and the Duchy tenants in Irchester, Knuston, Raunds, Hargrave, Boseat and Ringstead".[2] It did not cover those Duchy holdings where the Courts had been granted away and so did not include Higham Ferrers Borough which had its own Court by Charter.

The Court was held at Higham Ferrers every third Monday by the Steward or his Deputy with the assistance of Adam, the Bailiff of the Hundred, and the Clerks who kept the records. It dealt with debts, breach of contract, detention of goods, trespass to land and similar cases in which Duchy tenants were involved. Plaintiffs appeared in person or by attorney. Defendants were first summoned and if they did not attend and were not excused for good reason, were attached to appear by two sureties, or by distraint on their goods. Cases recorded involved parties from all over the Hundred, most Parishes being represented and some plaintiffs came from outside the area: John le Wodere was from Godmanchester and Henry Duston, Cordwainer, from Northampton. Well known names appear; Richard Chamberlain who held the Bury Manor at Wollaston in right of his wife Katherine (formerly Berkeley) was sued by William Benetheton whose family also had a holding in Wollaston. Katherine's mother, Margery de Berkeley, was involved in a case brought by William de Nowers, Lord of the small Manor of Chester-By-Water. Cases proceeded from one Court to the next with tedious slowness, until they were abandoned or settled by agreement or the defendants brought to judgment.

[1] May McKisack *The Fourteenth Century*, 1959, p. 331 *et. seq.*

[2] *Pleas of Quo Warranto*, Record Commissioners, 1818, p. 580.

The first of the two parchment skins which have survived contains the record of the Courts held on February 2nd and 23rd, 1349. On February 2nd 33 cases were listed involving 60 persons, some of whom were concerned in more than one. Only five were disposed of and the remaining 28, after receiving the appropriate order for attachment, distraint or adjournment, went forward to the next Court. Most of the plaintiffs appeared by attorney, and few of the defendants actually appeared in Court. News of the spread of the plague in the South had made people stay at home. However none of the cases had ended because of the death of a party.

At the next Court, on February 23rd, there were 14 new cases to add to the 28 brought forward and 79 persons were now involved. The number of attendances was again low but there was no other indication that the business of the Court was slowing down. Three cases were abandoned and five were settled, leaving 34 to go on. One case was of special interest as it involved a partnership to purchase 40 quarters of salt for £4 at the previous Martinmas at Higham Ferrers and to sell it and divide the profit. If the parties survived the plague they would make a handsome profit. Many of the animals were left unattended by reason of the deaths of their owners and large numbers were slaughtered and salted down. The price of salt rose fourfold and although they could hardly have forseen what would happen the parties had made a good investment.[3]

The record of the next Court (on March 15th) is missing, and the parchment which contained it must also have included the major part of the Court on April 5th. One case was evidently too long for recording on the missing sheet and it appears at the beginning of the next one, which has survived. It concerns the seisure of a horse and mare at Ecton and a jury was summoned to decide it at the following Court on April 26th. The record then continues with details of the latter Court. Twenty cases had been disposed of at the missing Courts and a similar number of new ones had started so that there was again a full list. Once again there is no indication that any case had ended because of death or that business had slowed down. On April 26th there were still 34 cases listed of which five were settled and 29 sent forward to May 17th. Again few of the litigants attended. The jury in the Ecton case also failed to attend and were ordered to be summoned again for the next Court and were fined.

In the three weeks before the next Court things changed disastrously. In the 29 cases which were left in the list 51 persons were involved, 43 men and 8 women. By May 17th no less than 19 of them (17 men and 2 women), had died, including William the Clerk. When the new clerk went through the entries to make his list he wrote "obiit" over their names. In the Ecton jury case not only had both parties died, but also at least two of the jurymen.

Anyone accustomed to the tedium of reading such Rolls, following cases from Court to Court, trying to extract a glimmer of interest here and there from the meagre details of the formal entries, will appreciate the horror of seeing one after another of these people who, in the reading, have become familiar acquaintances, struck down so dramatically. The lines of the old play come vividly to mind—

> "One news came huddling on another,
> Of death, and death and death."

The record of the Court on May 17th follows, in spite of the danger. None of the parties attended and of the original 29 there were only eleven cases left. Two new ones were added and one was an action brought by Robert of Leicester against the Executors of John Paynel the Parson of Higham Ferrers Church for the return of a cup. Robert appointed no less than three alternative attorneys, presumably in case any of them died and the executors also appointed an attorney, but after the Court Robert withdrew his action. Whether John Paynel had died of the plague is uncertain. His successor was Richard de Melburn who himself was replaced by June 1350, but the date of his appointment is not given and the date of John Paynel's death is not known. Of the other ten churches of the Hundred, Irchester, Hargrave, Strixton, Wollaston

[3] Philip Ziegler *The Black Death*, 1969, p. 237.

and Bozeat had new incumbents during the year and Strixton had two. It seems that at least half the Parishes lost their parsons.[4]

There is little local evidence to supplement the Hundred Roll and the Bishop's Register but the Register of William Wulston of Wollaston mentions Roger and Agnes Benetheton, the parents of John Benetheton, who became Vicar in 1353. They were buried in the South porch of the church "being struck dead in the pestilence and in a single day placed there in a grave".[5] One of the effects of the large death rate was illustrated at Raunds where in 1351 much of the land escheated to the Duchy for want of tenants and the full burden of the rents fell on the remaining tenants.[6]

This Hundred Roll is a limited source to use to explain what happened in the first stages of the arrival of the Great Plague. Its geographical area is restricted; the litigants in the Court represented a limited sample of the population; and we can follow their fortunes for only a short period. Yet of this group of 51 adults it is possible to show that, within three weeks in early 1349, over one third died. In miniature we have here a graphic illustration of the virulence and force of the Black Death.

[4] John Bridges *History and Antiquities of Northamptonshire*, Vol. II, p. 157 *et. seq.*

[5] Register of William Wulston, Leicestershire Record Office ID 50/xii/58. David Hall *Wollaston*, 1977, p. 169.

[6] R. Somerville *Duchy of Lancaster*, 1953, p. 47.

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THE PROBATE INVENTORY OF AN EARLY SEVENTEENTH CENTURY NORTHAMPTON MERCER AND LINEN DRAPER

MONA C. HARRISON

On April 30th 1625, there was buried at All Saints Church Mr. Edward Collis, a mercer and linen-draper of Northampton, Mayor of the borough in 1618. He was survived by a wife and seven children, all but one under the age of 20. Doubtless his funeral was a grand affair and attended by many of his fellow citizens. To Mr. Lewis, the Minister of All Saints, he left 10s., with a further 20s. for the poor of the parish. He had also left 10s. to St. Sepulchres; 5s. to St. Giles and 3s. 4d. to St. Peters. He was a prosperous man leaving property in the Drapery, Abington Street, Butchers Street, and his eldest surviving daughter Mary got a "tenement . . . called the Peacocke". His younger children inherited property in St. James, Duston and Moulton. Ursula, his widow, got "the house wherein we now dwell", as well as an orchard and a house in Newland. William his eldest son, who was 24, presumably carried on the business. He was executor together with his mother, the only other boy, Edward, being 10 years of age.[1]

On May 19th 1625, an Inventory was taken of the goods and chattels in the house and shop for purposes of probate. This makes interesting reading, giving a clear picture of the stock and possessions of a prosperous citizen in the early seventeenth century.[2]

A true note and inventorie of the goods and chattels of Mr Edward Collis late of the towne of Northampton, deceased, taken by Randole Burgins George Cricke Nathaniell Sharp and Thomas Pendlton the 19th May 1625.

Imprimis. In the shop.

159 ells of Inderlings at 3/6 *	2 – 6 – 4½
243 ells of Inderlings at 4/- *	4 – 1 – 0
284 ells of Inderlings at 5/- *	5 – 18 – 4
126 ells of cloth at 7/6 *	3 – 18 – 9
215 ells of cloth at 8/- *	7 – 3 – 4
223 ells of cloth at 9/6 *	8 – 16 – 6½
50 ells of cloth at 10/- *	2 – 1 – 8
265 ells of cloth at 11/- *	11 – 0 – 11
179 ells of cloth at 12/- *	8 – 19 – 0
160 ells of cloth at 16/- *	10 – 13 – 4
110 ells of cloth at 18/- *	8 – 5 – 0
49 yds of Heavcloth 8/6 *	1 – 14 – 8½
62 yds of brod sacking at 6/6 *	1 – 13 – 7
79 yds of nar sacking at 5/6 *	1 – 16 – 2½
49 oyle skins at 10/- *	2 – 0 – 10
10 bassill skins at 5/- *	0 – 4 – 2
45 yds of troy canvas at 7/- *	1 – 6 – 3
24 yds of linsy woolsy at 9/- *	0 – 18 – 0
34 yds of linsy woolsy at 12/- *	1 – 14 – 0
55 yds of linsy woolsy at 13/- *	2 – 19 – 7
30 lb of linen flax at 9 *	1 – 2 – 6
32 lb of short hemp at 4 *	0 – 10 – 8
30 lb of London Browne thred at 21 *	2 – 12 – 6
5 lb of packthred and hearthred at 6 *	0 – 4 – 0
9 pr of whalbone bodies at 16 *	0 – 12 – 0
19 pr of whalbone bodes at 2/-	1 – 18 – 0

[1] Northamptonshire Record Office, Northants Wills. Book AV., 1621-1628, fo. 239.

[2] N.R.O., C. and D. testators, 315.

7	pr of whalbone bodes at 2/6	0	18	8
2	peeces & a halfe of fustian at 28/- per pce	3	10	0
3	peeces & a halfe of fustian at 18/- pce	7	13	0
7	grosse of thred & horn buttons at 6/- gr *	0	3	6
12	grosse of silke buttons at 2/-	1	4	0
3	peeces & a halfe of wtt tuft fustian at 6/-	6	6	0
2	peeces of paragon at 3£ a pce	6	0	0
20	yds of say at 18d	1	18	0
34	yds of say at 20d	2	16	8
15	yds & a halfe of say at 2/4	1	16	2
5	yds of say at 2/2	0	17	4
7	butts of blu thred at 4s	1	8	0
51	yds of Dutch say at 3/6	8	18	6
11	yds & halfe of sempeternum at 2/2	1	3	10
3	peece twisted say at 38/- per peece	5	14	0
3	peeces of Jelliboges at 40/- per peece	6	0	0
3	peeces of nonsopretty at 28/- per pce	4	4	0
5	peeces of Rander bolter at 5/-	1	5	0
2	peeces of fine bolter at 9/- per	0	18	0
115	ells of wtt bolter at 9/- per	2	6	3
60	ells of browne cloth at 6/- *	1	10	0
88	ells of wtt cloth at 7/- *	3	16	0
	Remnats of blu linin at 11/-	0	11	0
		163	14	6

39	ells & a halfe of wtt ossenbrige at 10d	1	12	6
3	ell & halfe of lockram at 12d	0	3	6
1	parsell of Inkle & thred & garlicks 3£	3	0	0
1	parsell of wtt thred at 55/-	2	15	0
13	yds of Spanish satten at 3/8	2	7	8
	Remnants of striped stuffe — 7/-	0	7	0
1	parsell of statute lace & finge 4£ 2s	4	2	0
2	yds of tuftaffty at 9/- per yd	0	18	0
20	yds of stuff for sleaves at 20s all	1	0	0
18	yds of fustian at 14 *	1	1	0
28	yds of bolster ticks at 12 *	1	8	0
3	peeces of sackcloth at 18/- per peece	2	14	0
38	ells & ½ of holland at 20 *	3	4	2
74	ells of holland at 2s	7	8	0
24	ells & ½ of hollms at 17 *	1	18	9½
22	ells & ½ of hollm at 2/4 per	2	12	6
37	ells of sleatia cloth at 17 *	2	12	5
20	ells of sleatia cloth at 20 *	1	13	4
28	ells of sleatia cloth at 2/4 per	3	5	4
7	ells of sleatia cloth at 22 *	0	12	10
6	ells of sleatia cloth at 2/10	0	17	0
26	ells of sleatia cloth at 28 per *	1	19	0
25	ells & half of sleatia at 2s per	2	11	0
58	ells of sleatia cloth at 16d per	3	17	4
1	parsell of callico & guives Inst 5£ 5s 6d	5	5	6
4	lb & ½ of cutte silke at 29s per	6	10	8
27	yds of blu linine at 12 *	1	7	0
6	yds of blu linine at 7 *	0	3	6
26	ells of ell cloth at 12 *	1	6	0

PLATE 1. THE BRASS (*c*1640) OF GEORGE COLES,
a mercer and linen draper of Northampton of a generation or so later than Edward Collis. Coles and his two wives are modishly attired, as befits those engaged in one of the most profitable trades of the 17th century. It is in the church of St. Sepulchre. (*Northamptonshire Libraries*)

13 yds of blu linine at 10 *	0	–	10	– 0
Bustia & stufe & silke & poynts 5£	5	–	0	– 0
38 yards of buffine at 9 *	1	–	8	– 6
laces & candles & other smale weare 50s	2	–	10	– 0
Cruell & Inkell & Caddis & thred 3£	3	–	0	– 0
5 firkins of hony at 5£	5	–	0	– 0
2 peeces of Rayshigs canvas & other grosstice 5£ 6s	5	–	6	– 0
1 boxe of lawnes of divers sortes 6£ 7s	6	–	7	– 0
1 boxe of narro lawnes at 2£	2	–	0	– 0
1 boxe of vellett lace at 4£	4	–	0	– 0
19 lb of silk lace at 26/- per lb	25	–	14	– 0
8 peeces of lawne at 6/- per pc	2	–	8	– 0
4 peeces & halfe of fustian at 26/-	5	–	17	– 0
72 elles of hollon at 20 per *	8	–	0	– 0
32 ells of holland at 2/1 per	3	–	6	– 8
42 ell of hollan at 2/6 per	5	–	5	– 0
1 parsell of cambrick 8£	8	–	0	– 0
20 lb of peper & wax & other things 4£ 14s	4	–	14	– 0
19 ells & ½ of hollen at 3/- per	2	–	18	– 6
15 ells of hollen at 4/- per	3	–	0	– 0

1 box of ribbons of silke 5£	5 – 0 – 0
1 parsell of pins 42s	2 – 2 – 0
1 parsell of sisters thred at 56s	2 – 16 – 0
whalbone & papers & waytes & scales & marker & chests & other things	7 – 10 – 0
	188 – 5 – 11
20 lb of whalbone at 6 per *	0 – 10 – 0
1 barrel of sope at 53s	2 – 13 – 0
6 lb of paragon blu at 10d	0 – 5 – 0
flax. brassell. rossen. blockwood. 17s	0 – 17 – 0
1 bar of pytch 2 lb at 2s per	1 – 10 – 0
1 lb of tallow at 28d	
2 hogsheads. 2 tierces. 1 fatt. with other lumber.	2 – 5 – 0

[**these items appear to have been costed in pence*]

In the matted chamber.

1 drawing table; 1 cort cubbert; 3 chairs; 10 quishin stools; 1 bed; 1 joynt press.	5 – 12 – 0
2 feather beds; 2 bolsters; 4 pillowes; 1 rugg; 3 blankets; 5 curtains; 1 flocke bed.	7 – 0 – 0
1 orris coverlet; 3 carpets; 1 cubbert cloth; 12 quissings; 1 bearing cloth.	7 – 5 – 0
6 gownes; 3 clokes & other apparrell.	40 – 0 – 0
3 silver boules; 1 silver salt; 18 silver spoons.	13 – 0 – 0
1 musket & head peece. 2 trunks. & other implements.	2 – 3 – 4

In the chamber over the hall.

1 bed stead & trundle bed & foote pane. 2 tables. 5 joynt stooles; 1 cubbert; 2 chests; 1 cheaire.	4 – 0 – 0
2 flocke beds; 1 mattrice; 3 bolsters; 2 pillows; 2 coverletts; 3 blankets; 5 curtains & vallan	4 – 0 – 0
1 warming pan; 1 pr landirons & other implements	1 – 3 – 0
12 bord cloths; 7 dosen napkins; 18 pillobears; 30 pr sheets; 4 cubbert cloths & other linnin	13 – 0 – 0

In the hall.

2 tables. 8 stools. 2 chaeries. 1 cubbert.	1 – 15 – 0
1 bible with other books; 30s. 8 quissins; 8 brasse cansticks.	2 – 0 – 0
1 lb & 14 lb of pewter at 8s 4d; 3 basins ewers 15s.	4 – 19 – 0
2 iron grates fire shovle & tongs & other implements.	0 – 10 – 0

In the little kitchen.

2 botles; 1 brasse pan; 30s. 80 lb pce brasse 4s per 26/8	2 – 16 – 8
1 brasse bason; 5 postnets; 3 dripping pans; 4 spitts.	1 – 2 – 0
2 skimers. 1 chaffing dish & payles & mealer & other implements.	0 – 13 – 4

In the parloare.

1 bed stead. 1 trundle bed. foote pane. 1 chest. 2 stools.	1 – 10 – 0
1 feather bed, 2 feather bolsters, 2 pillows & 2 rugg, 2 blankets.	5 – 0 – 0
1 pr curtains & vallance, 1 warming pan with other implements.	0 – 6 – 0
2 shuger loves & suger candy.	1 – 0 – 0

In the great kitchin & chamber closet.

2 bed steads, 2 chaeries, 2 chests & barrells.	2 – 0 – 0
1 table tubber & wood with other lumber.	2 – 10 – 0

In the stable.				
2 lb of hops; 4£. timber & bord & lath 4£.	8	–	0	– 0
1 corn, 3£. hay & coles & wood & other lumber.	4	–	6	– 8
Debts spearate	190	–	4	– 0
Debts desperate	99	–	16	– 0
I Ready Mony Inst.	62	–	0	– 0
	498	–	0	– 0
Sum total	850	–	0	– 5½

Witnessed by Randalle Burggins, George Cricke, Nathaniell Sharp, Thomas Pindleton.

MATERIALS IN THE SHOP: A GLOSSARY

Bassill: tanned sheepskin.
Bolster Tick: linen for bolsters or pillowslips (pillowbeares).
Bolter: coarse cloth for sieves.
Buffin: inferior camlet; coarse woollen cloth.
Bustia: cotton cloth.
Caddis: woven tape; coarse serge.
Calico: weft of cotton, warp of linen; cotton cloth.
Cambric: fine linen.
Candlewick: cloth for servants clothes.
Canvas: coarse linen.
Crewel: two-threaded worsted yarn.
Fustian: coarse twilled cloth with linen warp and cotton weft. Tuft Fustian: with a "pile".
Garlicks: linen from Silesia.
Hair Thread: very fine thread; hair made into thread.
Hollands: fine linen from Holland.
Hollmes: a kind of fustian made in Germany.
Inderlings: coarse hempen cloth.
Inkle: linen tape for binding.
Jellybag: cheesecloth or flannel; nightcap of knitted silk.
Lawn: fine cambric.
Linen: fabric of flax.
Linsey-Woolsey: of linen and wool; warp of thread, weft of worsted.
Lockeram: coarse linen for shirts and smocks.
Nonsopretty: linen tape with woven colours; decorative braid.
Ossenbrig: a German linen.
Packthread: coarse thread for sewing packages.
Paragon: double camlet.
Poynts: ties for clothes.
Sackcloth: hempen material coarser than canvas.
Satin: twilled silk.
Say: thin woollen serge; light twilled fabric of wool and silk.
Sempiternum: twilled woollen stuff.
Serge: loosely woven twilled worsted.
Silk: product of silkworms.
Sister's Thread: fine white thread for netting and lace, made in convents.
Sleasia: fine linen.
Sleave: floss silk.
Statute Lace: lace woven according to the statute of the year; probably a native-made lace for those forbidden to wear foreign lace.
Stuff: worsteds of long or combed wool.
Taffeta: glossy silk.
Tufttaffety: taffeta with the pile left on.
Thread: of twisted flax or cotton.
Thread Button: cotton threads over a wire ring.
Velvet: silk fabric with short thick pile.
Whalebone Body: stiffened bodice.
Worsted: long-stapled wool.
Woollen: short-stapled wool.

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JESUS MUNDI SALUS
this willow-world shall be my sanctuary,
this house a quiet retreat from a hostile state

GAUDE MATER VIRGO MARIA
for what else in this world can I rejoice?
my wealth a fine, my body
perennial hostage to my faith?

JESUS BEATUS VENTER QUI TE PORTAVIT
what rejoicing can there be
for one born to imprisonment?

MARIA VIRGO SPONSA INNUPTA
how shall blessings spring from slime and dung?

BENEDIXIT TE DEUS IN AETERNUM MARIA
who would not grieve and say
that God had cursed him forever?

ET IPSE FUNDAVIT EAM ALTISSIMUS
but in praise of His Passion,
the Man of the Trinity,
I have raised this prayer to the sky

VERBUM AUTEM CRUCIS PEREUNTIBUS QUIDEM STULTITIA EST
words are fragile, treacherous:
this stone, no sneak-thief, shall be
my monument.

MIHI AUTEM ABSIT GLORIARI NISI IN CRUCE DOMINI NOSTRI XP
God forbid that I should glory
save in the Cross of His Son

TREVOR HOLD

THE RECORDS OF ROTHWELL HORSE FAIR 1684-1744

R. F. DENINGTON

Records of Rothwell Fair survive in two toll books for the years 1684-1720 and 1739-1744. In the first period they are called Horse Fairs or sometimes "Great Horse Fairs", whilst in the latter period they are called Nag Fairs, when, it seems, mostly mares were sold. During the later part of the period the Hill family held the Lordship of the manor of Rothwell, Edward until 1705, then the Reverend Nathaniel until 1732, when George Hill succeeded. The entries of the early 18th century are sprawling and carelessly written whereas the entries of the later period are neat and orderly and countersigned as having been received by G. Hill.

The administration of the fair centred on the stewards' booth where there were two people, the scrivener and the purser. The scrivener made two kinds of entry. One concerned the sales made at the stewards' booth and the other was of the tolls collected elsewhere by the watchmen. In most cases only the amount of the toll was recorded, but at other times a reference was made to a place in the street, at the milestone or at someone's place, such as Astells, Badiners, Bodymers, Carters, Daulbys, Foxes, Goodmans, Minsens or Smiths. Of these surnames, only Goodman and Daulby occur in the record as inhabitants of Rothwell. Before 1720 there were two of these watchmen but in the later period there were six. Before 1700 most of the watchmen served at only one or two fairs, but one, Thomas Black, was a watchman at five. Up to 1720 there are four names with several years' service: Wm. Flavell 1700-8, Thos. Parker 1709-16, Jo. Morrice 1715-20 and Jo. Dunsmore 1716-20. In the second period four names appear regularly: Sam Alderman, Bryan Glover, Thos. Lane, and Sam More, whilst invariably the purser was Richard West and the scrivener Robert Dexter. For twenty two years (with two gaps) Robert Tebbutt was the scrivener. Others of the Tebbutt family were pursers; Samuel, Benjamin and Nicholas. John Alderman, known from wills of the time to have been a friend of Robert Tebbutt, was his purser from 1698 to 1702.

The importance of the toll book is shown by the completion of the accounts of the cash received, even when other entries are only fragmentary. The expenses of the day, which varied according to how many watchmen were employed, were deducted and a final cash total entered. This toll book was a legal requirement started by the Tudors to combat the sale of stolen horses. The first Act dates from the time of Philip and Mary and required a record of the horse, the seller and the buyer. Queen Elizabeth added the requirement that the seller should have some other person to declare that the seller was the rightful owner of the horse, and he was called a *voucher*. It was further ordered that the buyer should have a copy of the entry at a fee of one penny and this perhaps explains why so few sales were registered at the stewards' booth. Could it be that those in the business did not want to pay the copy entry fee and preferred to complete their deals in the street? Although legally horses could only be sold at a market or fair, diaries of the time, such as Thomas Isham's of 1672-73, give instances of private sales, sometimes at high prices. Sir William Hazlewood paid sixty pounds for two colts presumably for the local races, which are also mentioned. Rothwell fair is mentioned for the low prices of its horses. Fairs at Northampton, Boughton Green and Brixworth were visited by the Ishams and a comment is made of the strings of unsold horses returning from the fairs. The toll at Rothwell was fourpence: twopence each from buyer and seller unless either could claim freedom from toll. This was usually by virtue of an old charter right, but this was not often specified in the toll book. William Marriott claimed by virtue of the Higham Charter, and in 1697 John Goodman claimed his freedom because he was buying a six year old black bald horse for £12 to work on land at Weedon belonging to Eton College. The Royal Charter

PLATE 1. ROTHWELL MARKET PLACE WITH ITS 16th CENTURY MARKET HOUSE, a photograph taken before the building was roofed in 1892. (*Kettering Library*)

which founded Eton gave its tenants freedom from toll throughout the kingdom.

The total income from a day's tolls varied from eleven to forty five shillings and is the only trustworthy statistic that can be obtained from these records. It is some measure of the trading activity of the locality, and its year to year variation could be compared with other trade indices. Comparison has been made with Hoskins' data on National Harvest fluctuations, but no correlation could be found, and causes for the variations must probably be sought in more local circumstances. The fair was held on Trinity Monday varying in date each year from May 20th to June 20th, and it is possible that the weather, or competition from neighbouring fairs or markets of fixed date, may have had an effect. Table 1 shows the total tolls that can be extracted from the records, in decade columns.

	1680s	*1690s*	*1700s*	*1710s*	*1720s*	*1730s*	*1740s*
0	—	11s 7d	15s	—	33s 10d	—	28s 2d
1	—	20s 4d	10s 10d	12s	—	—	36s 1d
2	—	14s 2d	11s 8d	19s 10d	—	—	38s 2d
3	—	12s 5d	13s 10d	20s 4d	—	—	40s 9d
4	21s 11d	11s 3d	15s 9d	9s	—	—	45s 6d
5	11s 4d	—	15s 11d	13s 2d	—	—	—
6	25s 4d	—	17s 6d	23s 4d	—	—	—
7	19s 9d	—	—	20s 4d	—	—	—
8	11s 6d	12s	22s	27s 10d	—	—	—
9	—	15s 6d	17s 7d	16s	—	42s	—

Table 1. Total yield of tolls at Rothwell Fair 1684-1743.

These figures fluctuate widely but if taken in five year periods, appear to indicate that trade was declining in the late seventeenth century followed by some improvement in the mid-18th century: the Nag fairs of the 1740s seem very much busier.

The price of a horse is often quoted as a single figure but these records show that at any one time it is probable that there will be a wide difference between the highest and the lowest prices. Some generalisation can be made by comparing averages and the associated price range. A few horses were sold for prices well above the average and a much larger number at about half of the average price. The following table shows the number of prices and their average in three categories—Gelding, Horse and Mare—together, in five year periods, with the total number of animals priced with its average. These figures do not include all the horses at these fairs, as many were sold away from the stewards booth but the total number can be recovered from the total toll and this number is given in the final column.

	Gelding		*Horse*		*Mare*		*Overall*		*Total*
Period.	*No.*	*price* £	*No.*	*price* £	*No.*	*price* £	*No.*	*price* £	*No.*
1684-89	15	8	31	12	8	11	54	11	271
1690-94	22	9	18	10	12	10	52	10	211
1695-99	22	9	22	11	10	7	54	10	—
1700-04	25	9	7	8	16	11	48	10	199
1705-09	18	8	13	10	17	7	48	8	220
1715-20	10	7	5	8	—	—	—	—	304
1739-43	28	6	24	5·5	50	4·5	102	5	695

Table 2. Average prices of horses sold at Rothwell Fair, 1684-1743.

Comparison of the figures for the 1740's with those of earlier years shows the considerable increase that has taken place in the business of the fair. The lower prices may be related to greater quantity, but there seems no way in which quality can be assessed.

The actual details about the horses entered by the scrivener varied widely. Colour and any white marks were almost always noted, blaze, star, snip or feet, of which the most frequent combination was white on the hind feet with a blaze or a star. Occasionally height or age was mentioned, as in the case of the twelve year old mare with foal standing at fifteen hands which was sold for £4. 7s in 1702. In other cases where age is entered it is usually 3-4 years in a range of 2-7 years and in the height range of 13-16 hands, the usual figure is 14-15 hands, but the number of entries is too small for any conclusion to be drawn. Black is the predominant colour throughout the whole of the period of the records, and in all categories. Two thirds were black with white feet or some other white mark. Brown was far behind with only eleven per cent in a spread of thirteen colours. This is very different from the colour distribution found at near-by Boughton Green in 1627, when amongst twenty colours, bay and grey were most frequent with black as a third colour. This clear difference in colour distribution suggests that a recognisable breed of Midlands horse was developing during the seventeenth century.

The people drawn to the fair for the buying and selling of the horses came not only from neighbouring parishes but from all over Northamptonshire and beyond. London buyers figure prominently, particularly in the earlier years, when about thirty names are given, some of them taking as many as a dozen horses at a time. Altogether more than half the horses were sold out of the county, mainly to the South and East. Those sellers whose sales were registered at the stewards booth, came mostly from a wide area in the county west of Rothwell and over the border into Warwickshire and from across the Leicestershire border along the area from Walton to Rutland. The five parishes with the largest number of entries are Wellingborough (13), Spratton (10), Long Buckby (10), Badby (10) and Rothwell (10). These figures seem to show that there were no large scale horse breeders trading in this area as was found in other places such as Yorkshire. Wellingborough (with thirteen sellers and two buyers) seems something of a horse trading centre. In addition to buyers and sellers there were fourteen people vouching for sellers, mostly from Wellingborough itself, but also from places within

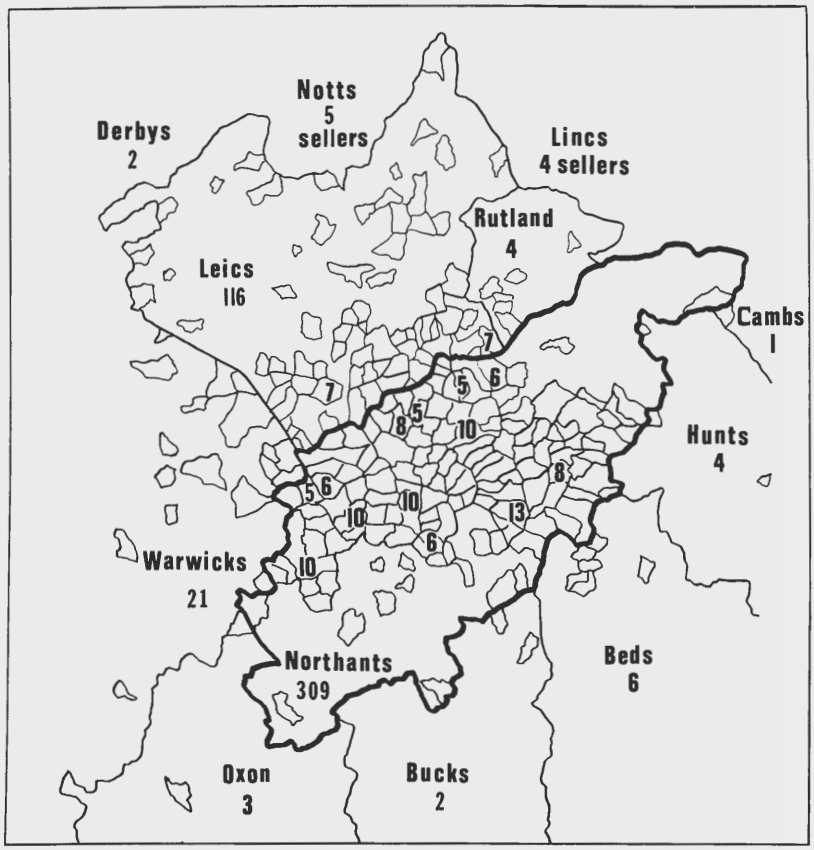


FIG. 1. PLACES IN NORTHAMPTONSHIRE AND BORDERING COUNTIES
from which sellers of horses came to Rothwell Fair 1684 to 1744

eight miles. It is also possible that local trading took place on the street and no record was kept at the stewards booth. Two surnames frequently found are Goodman and Marriott, each with eight different Christian names and usually residing at Badby or Long Buckby, sometimes buying, sometimes selling or vouching, and their entries are found in all periods of the record. Other outstanding names are those of Wade and Lovell who, each in his own time, sold the best horse of the fair. Indeed, Hugh Lovell of Boughton managed this honour on two occasions: 1696 he sold two stoned horses to Joshua Johnson of Briston, Norfolk, for £40, and again in 1701 he sold a black gelding to William Chaloner of Steeple Claydon for £17.12.6.

The voucher, originally, was expected to be known to the toll collector as well as to the seller, but this could only happen in purely local trading at markets. At Rothwell, when sellers came from Nottinghamshire, their vouchers came with them from the same area and it is unlikely that the Rothwell scrivener would have had knowledge of them. As would be expected, seller and voucher came from the same parish in about half the cases and very seldom were they more than fifteen miles apart. At greater distances, the contact may have been a business connection. Possibly this was the case with Thomas Boyer of Dudenton who, in 1739 vouched for four different sellers coming from ten to twenty miles away from Dudenton: Raunds, Spratton and from Ileson and Eastwell in Leicestershire. Great distance may indicate some special connection, but it may also be an error of transposition in the record. The normal

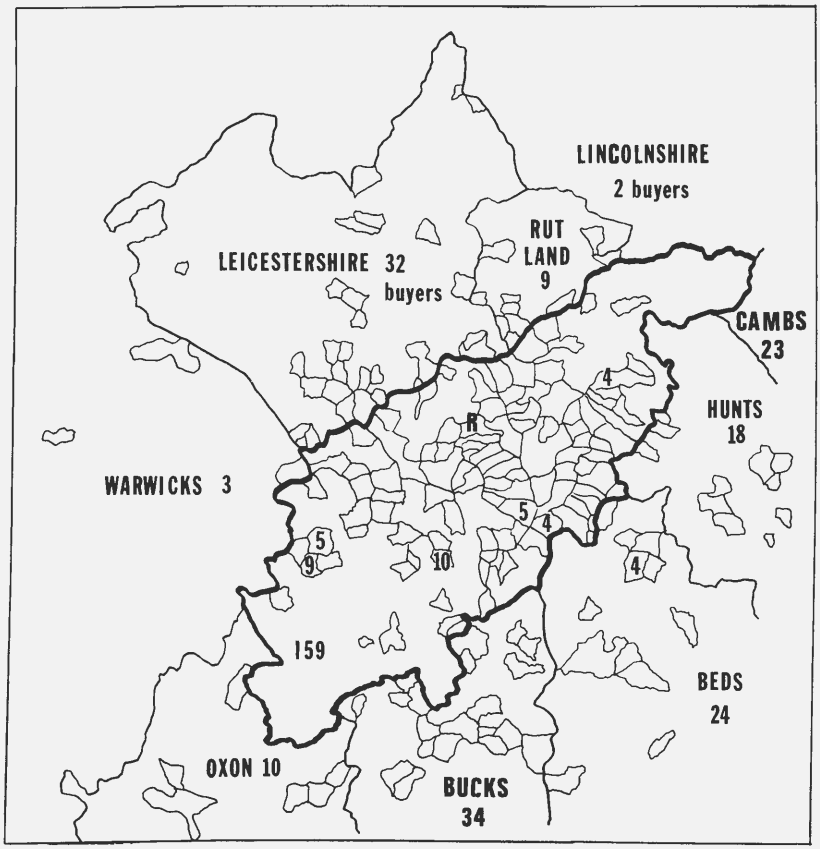


FIG. 2. PLACES IN NORTHAMPTONSHIRE AND BORDERING COUNTIES
from which buyers of horses came to Rothwell Fair 1684 to 1744

order is buyer, seller, voucher, but some scriveners reversed the order of buyer and seller, and at times the two different forms occur on the same page. If transposition does occur it may be inferred from the context but can never be proved, as in the following case. In 1707 there was only one entry as follows—

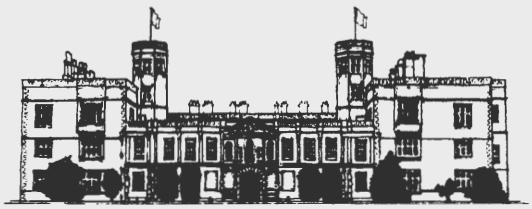
> Thomas ffrench of newton in the co of bucks
> hath sold to Henry bull of Marson in ye Co of Nor
> one bro gelld with a star & too white feet be four
> vo moris ward of Cole ashby pric 11 - 2 - 0

This may be a correct entry but if Thomas French came from Newton Longueville he would be thirty two miles from his voucher at Cold Ashby, whilst Marston Trussell is only seven miles distant. The natural conclusion is that an accidental transposition has taken place by the writing of "hath sold to" in place of "hath bought of", though there is no way of proving it. There were twenty five sales recorded in which the voucher was a Rothwell man and in only four of these sales did the voucher-seller distance exceed twelve miles. The furthest was about one hundred miles to Wintringham in Lincolnshire, whence came Thomas Williamson with two horses, selling to buyers from Oundle and Horton with John Daulby as the voucher.

Buyers at the fair came from distant places as far apart as Durham and Somerset: in all twenty four counties are represented. Most of those from afar appear to have bought riding

horses, mares or gelding, although some bought pairs of stond horses presumably for the carriage trade. The general movement of horses was to the South and East; Cambridge, Essex and Norfolk buying but not selling, whilst Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire selling but not buying. From Warwickshire came a number of sellers, the furthest from Idlecote, and the only buyers came from the Nuneaton and Hilmorton area, and that was only after 1700. South Leicestershire provided sellers at all times, selling stond horses particularly in the early years of the Horse Fairs, but buyers were not prominent until the Nag Fairs of the 1740's when the main trade was in mares, by that time largely used for road work. Some buyers came more than once and made multiple purchases such as Stephen Apethorpe and his father-in-law John Webb from Cambridgeshire buying twelve horses in five visits, or the Tidys of Guildford in Surrey buying eight mares in three visits. Thirty seven persons from London parishes are mentioned in the records but many of them purchased no more than a single riding horse. The big buyers were the horse dealers or horsecoursers, and only seem to appear before 1700. Their presence later can be inferred from the watchmans reference to tolls collected for ten or a dozen horses on the street. Before 1700, seventeen of these dealers purchased more than one hundred horses. Edward Horton of St. Martin's in the Field is noted six times buying twenty eight horses.

These records include a few incidental details. A sale after sunset (when the fair closed) was appended in 1742 when Mr. Weanham bought a horse giving his address as the *Boot and Crown* in Rowell. In 1710 an exchange was arranged where the consideration included "Forty hundred of pitt coales to be delivered at the dwelling house of Mr. Smith at or before the fourth of August". This deal was arranged at the fair on the fifth of June.



Castle Ashby

The Centre For All Occasions

Castle Ashby House is the 16th Century Home of the 7th Marquess of Northampton and is situated on the A428 Northampton to Bedford road. The House was originally built in the shape of an 'E' and then in 1635 the South Wing was added to enclose a courtyard. The House has a fine collection of furniture and paintings of the English School.

The House and Grounds are available for numerous occasions. Rooms can be hired individually or en suite, with full catering facilities. The chef and his staff can offer anything from a "Ploughman's Lunch" to a full Banquet. It is now possible to hold Conferences, Exhibitions, Private parties, Wedding receptions and the ever popular Medieval Banquets in the superb setting of this Elizabethan Mansion. The 7,000 sq. ft. courtyard and 200 acres of formal gardens and English Parkland, lend themselves to Rallies and Events of wide and varied natures and, of course, to the film industry as a photographic backdrop.

A POACHING INCIDENT AT SUDBOROUGH, 1837

F. J. MAYES

On Monday the ninth of January 1837 at about eight o'clock in the evening, acting on a tip-off, John Bushnell, a keeper on Lord Cardigan's estate, and fourteen assistants lay in wait for poachers in Deenethorpe Wood. Eventually at about one in the morning they discovered a gang of about twenty five who, judging by the haul of eighteen dozen rabbits and a hare which were recovered later, were well advanced in the act of snaring game. When the two groups met there was a fierce fight which lasted for about half an hour before most of the poachers made off leaving their spoils and over 600 yards of rabbit netting behind them. Three of the poachers were apprehended. They were John Newton and Robert Lee, both aged 40, and Samuel Swann, aged 25.

Both of the Northampton newspapers, the *Mercury* and the *Herald*, gave accounts of both the incident and the subsequent trial of the three accused. Interesting differences appeared in the two reports. The *Mercury* gave a description of the affray with the byline of the *Lincolnshire Chronicle*. The *Herald* has exactly the same account except that it has been shortened by the omission of several phrases or sentences. One phrase however may or may not have been omitted for reason of lack of space. This stated that the poaching "had for some time been meditated by a desperate set of men residing at Sudborough (a notorious harbour of these gentry)".[1]

The trial took place on February 27th, 1837. The defence's case seemed to rest on the question of exact identity, for according to the newspaper reports all three defendants admitted they were present on the night in question but Swann and Lee denied being where the fighting took place. The defence also produced two character witnesses; Mr. Jonas Tebbutt and a Mr. Southam who stated that he had "never heard that they were poachers". If the newspaper reports about Sudborough being notorious for poaching and the prisoners admitting they were in the woods at one in the morning were true, it seems very likely that the entire village would know who were the poachers.

The judge summed up at great length and he concluded "it would be destructive to the interests of this great country, if the feeling got abroad, that this offence might be committed without moral wrong. It is true, the law is severe,"—(up to 14 years transportation)—"but it acted the same for the rich as for the poor. The crime of poaching often led to the most serious offences, and therefore, it ought to be marked with due punishment." It sounds very much as if the judge is anxious to defend this law against a general feeling that it was not morally wrong. The three were found guilty but recommended to mercy on account of good character, and having large families (Newton had seven children, Swann two, and Lee eight).

The prisoners were sentenced to one year's imprisonment with hard labour. Had the story ended there it would have been of interest but by no means unusual. There were an average of 281 commitments for poaching each year between 1826-1829 for example.[2] However one part of the trial, as reported in the press was slightly mysterious. The defence cross-examined three of the keepers and their questions were mainly about the weapons used that night. One stated that the poachers had bludgeons, or long staffs. He claimed the keepers were armed with bludgeons, staves and guns which were not discharged. All three keepers were however asked

[1] *Northampton Mercury* 21 January 1837.

[2] E. J. Hobsbawm and G. Rudé *Captain Swing*, 1973, p. 57.

PLATE 1. THE FACE OF A NORTHAMPTONSHIRE POACHER:
James "Socket" Elmore, a Kettering Shoemaker, who boasted in old age that he had had many a Christmas dinner in the County gaol. The photograph probably dates from the 1870s. (*F. A. Moore*)

whether their side had spears. The first keeper said "I heard that some had spears, but I did not know that". The other two denied that they saw *any* spears that night.

The implication seems to be that the keepers played a more aggressive role than their evidence at the trial suggested, whereas they stated that they were attacked by the poachers whilst trying to apprehend them. Once again the local newspapers can throw some light on this. Both papers, at the end of their accounts of the fight, state that: "On Tuesday morning the body of one of the poachers was found lying dead in a field, about 80 yards from the scene of the conflict. On examination of the corpse, no wound or contusion was discovered that could account for this fatal result. On Wednesday an inquest was held on the body of the poacher, who was recognised as William Mays, of Sudborough, the brother of a man in Lord Cardigan's employ as a carrier to London. On a post-mortem examination, the surgeon gave it as his opinion that the deceased died from over-exertion, and a verdict of 'found dead' was returned."[3]

So perhaps this was the reason for all the questions about spears? Was William Mays killed by the keepers or did he really die of "over exertion"? Before we attempt to answer these questions another becomes apparent if the Sudborough parish registers are examined. Was the body really that of William Mays? The registers contain an entry for the burial of a Samuel Mayes (sic) on January 13th 1837 (aged about 37 the registers would suggest). Was Samuel the poacher and William just a newspaper's misprint?

The answers to these questions lies amongst a bundle of papers in the Northamptonshire Record Office. The papers of Canon Lawson, Rector of Sudborough 1889-1919, contains the (apparently poorly remembered) words of a song entitled "The Sudborough Poacher".[4]

[3] *Northampton Mercury, op. cit.*

[4] N.R.O. 308 P/15/9.

The words are reproduced below but they seem to confirm the following: the dead poacher's name was Samuel, not William. Newspapers seemed to be just as prone 150 years ago as they are now to getting people's names wrong. Possibly William was the name of the brother who worked for Lord Cardigan?

The poachers, at least, maintain that Samuel was stabbed to death. Hence, perhaps, all the questions about spears at the trial?

Samuel seems to have obtained posthumous fame at least locally, becoming a kind of folk-hero despite the newspapers having got his name wrong!

SUDBOROUGH POACHERS SONG

In 1837 it plainly doth appear
A bloody scene was felt most keen
Until death did draw near

(1) Poor Samuel Mayes of Sudborough town
A lad of well known fame
Who took delight both day and night
To hunt the lofty game

Chorus
Mourn all you gallant Poacher men
Poor Mayes is dead and gone
Whilst our hero brave lies in his grave
As ever the sun shone on

(2) With nets so strong we marched along
Unto brave Deenethorpe town
With nut brown ale that never will fail
Was many a health drunk round

(3) Brave lunar light did shine that night
As we to the woods repaired
True as the sun the dogs did run
To chase the timorous hare

(4) Then to (injure) the Poachers
The keepers they did start
And in that strife took poor Mays' life
They stabbed him to the heart

(5) For help he cried but was denied
There was no one that by him stood
And there he lay till break of day
Dogs licking his dear blood

(6) Brave Jim Stevens never will fail
To praise poor Mayes' name
His courage as displayed is known
It travelled through the plain

(7) With dog and gun he n'er will run
Although the law does not maintain
Poor Mayes' blood, spilt to the wood
Was vengeance's crimson blood

(8) Farewell dear heart for I must part
From my wife and children dear
Pity my doom it was too soon
That ever I came here

(9) Farewell those dear brave lads
What'ere revenge they held
(on) That cruel man with murderous hand
Which caused me for to yield.

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE LIBRARIES LOCAL HISTORY PUBLICATIONS

Available through any library in Northamptonshire, local bookshops, or by post from Northamptonshire Libraries, 27 Guildhall Road, Northampton NN1 1EF: allow £1.00 (£1.50 for AVIATION IN NORTHAMPTONSHIRE) for postage.

Northamptonshire Libraries

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An illustrated history, 1784-1980 £8.50

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by J. Stafford £3.25

PUBLIC OPINION AND THE KETTERING GRAMMAR SCHOOL QUESTION 1883-88

B. A. YORK

In British history the period between 1867 and the end of the nineteenth century is often seen as the beginning of the Democratic Age. Many town workers were granted the parliamentary franchise in 1867 and their fellow labourers in county constituencies received it in 1884. Political meetings attracted mass audiences. Locally-controlled rate-supported Board schools came into existence after 1870, and ten years later education was made compulsory throughout England and Wales. Before the end of the century the number of local newspapers multiplied and a national popular press became established. This article examines the impact of local public opinion in Kettering on the grammar school problem between 1883 and 1888. It is particularly concerned with the influence of the two local newspapers and of public meetings, especially in the form of the Vestry. It illustrates how the condition of Kettering's endowed school, previously only on occasion a matter of public interest, became an important issue in local politics in the new age of democracy.

The minutes of the Kettering Vestry from 1884-86 are an important source for assessing the state of town opinion and especially of Nonconformist attitudes about local grammar school education. Until 1862 the Vestry had been the governing body in the management of most of the town's affairs. After that date other bodies, in the form of elected Boards, took responsibility for the Vestry's main functions. However, Vestry meetings, which all ratepayers could attend, were still called to debate town matters and to give vent to the airing of grievances.[1] During the 1880s the immediate cause of public concern about the condition of the local grammar school was the appearance in 1883 of a letter in the Liberal *Kettering Observer*, which had begun publication in September of the previous year. The Conservative *Kettering Guardian* had been launched in response one month later. Both weekly papers attempted to influence public opinion on local and national issues.

During the last three decades of the nineteenth century in Kettering political battles between the Conservative and Church, and Liberal/Nonconformist parties were fought over many issues, but the central one was that of education. In the provision of elementary education rivalry between the supporters of the non-sectarian Kettering British school and those of the Anglican National schools had existed since the early 1830s but the major struggle really began after the passing of the 1870 Education Act. The subscribers to the British school greeted the Act enthusiastically and called for the immediate election of a School Board to establish rate-aided unsectarian schools.[2] Although the Church party was probably in a minority among ratepayers, by emphasising the question of cost it was able to prevent the establishment of a Board until 1890 in spite of attempts by Dissenters and Liberals in 1870-71 and 1876-77. However, not even the considerable efforts of the Church could provide enough elementary school places to cater for the increase in the number of working class children during the 1880s. The first election of the Kettering School Board in 1890 was bitterly contested by the two parties. The Liberals won and then thereafter maintained control throughout the thirteen years' existence of the Board.

[1] For a discussion on the composition, powers and work of the Vestry, see S. A. Peyton's introduction to *Kettering Vestry Minutes, A.D. 1797-1853*, Northamptonshire Record Society, 1933, i-xxvi.

[2] *Northampton Mercury*, 5 Nov. 1870; Kettering British School Committee Minutes, 1863-82, meeting of friends and subscribers, 7 Nov. 1870.

SCHOOL BOARD

And HIGH RENTS!

VERSUS

NO SCHOOL BOARD

And LIBERTY !!

Brother Townsmen,

A Placard has been circulated bearing 25 Signatures stating that if a SCHOOL BOARD is to be established in this Town, the individuals signing such a document PLEDGE THEIR WORD NOT to RAISE the RENT of THEIR COTTAGES.

HOUSEHOLDERS, do not allow dust to be thrown into your eyes, and then be *misled by such a statement.*

INCREASED TAXATION

MEANS INCREASED RENT.

Be early at the Poll, and *Vote against a School Board, and for your Liberty.*

PLAIN TRUTH.

DASH, PRINTER, KETTERING.]

PLATE 1. A CHURCH AND CONSERVATIVE HANDBILL very typical of the fierce partisan campaign waged over the Education Act in Kettering in 1871. The success of the Church party was a notable defeat for the Dissenters, and Kettering resisted a School Board for another twenty years. (*Bull Collection, Kettering Library*)

The conflict between the parties, evident in the issue of elementary education, was also present, though to a lesser degree, in the question of Kettering grammar school. As was customary in endowed schools founded during the sixteenth century the Kettering school had nearly always possessed an ordained clergyman as master,[3] and until the mid-nineteenth century the governing body had consisted almost entirely of Churchmen.[4] Religious instruction in the school had been in accordance with Anglican practices. However, when the school trustees began an attempt to reform the institution in 1853, under the terms of the 1840 Grammar School Act, the Kettering Dissenters were determined to gain improved representation on the governing body and, if possible, the exclusion of religious teaching. The ensuing three-cornered negotiations between the Anglican trustees, a committee of leading local Nonconformists and the court of Chancery involved some acrimonious debate between the first two. However, the Dissenters were, in the main, satisfied with the final form of the scheme of 1854 for the school, which named four Nonconformists on the new governing body of fifteen and instituted a written conscience clause. The parties of Church and Dissent managed to cooperate in 1853-54 although underlying disagreements, which became evident three decades later, were present.

During the 1880s the Liberal Nonconformists in Kettering were not so concerned with the "religious question" as such in regard to the grammar school but with the general educational issue of how to improve the work of the institution. Indeed the grammar school problem would probably not have arisen at all if the initial success of the Chancery scheme acquired in 1854 had been long lasting. Under the mastership of Frederick Tearle from 1856-64 the Kettering school, given its size, became one of the most successful in the country with one third of its pupils being boarders. Unfortunately under his successor, Thomas Widdowson (master, 1864-96), the school underwent a period of decline, which began about 1872. This occurred in spite of a rise in the value of the endowment and an increase in the town population from 7,184 in 1871 to 19,454 in 1891. In particular the number of boys attending declined and, partly as a consequence, the curriculum became narrower than during the 1856-72 period. The initiative for reform was taken by Dissenters in 1883. The trustees responded by seeking to obtain a new Charity Commission scheme, which was finalised in 1888.

By 1879 only 23 boys were on the register of Kettering grammar school but not until four years later was there a public reaction to the impoverished condition of secondary education in the town. It was begun by a letter, under a pseudonym, in the Liberal *Kettering Observer.*

> Can you give to the public the names of the present trustees of the Kettering Grammar School? It might perhaps inspire us with some hope that . . . an effort might be made to restore it to the condition in which it was handed over to the care of the present headmaster. . . . I am told that the income yielded by the school property has nearly, if not more than doubled in the last ten or fifteen years. It may, therefore, be assumed that the income of the master is proportionately augmented. Ought we not, then, to expect increased efficiency? Yet . . . the school is sinking, not only in the estimation of the public, but in the number of those seeking the advantages which such an establishment is supposed to confer. . . .[5]

The *Observer* decided to pursue the author's case but initially commented that "a splendid educational institution has gradually dwindled down into an insignificant little school with about a score of boys".[6] It then published a

[3] The exceptional period was 1755-99 when John Warner, a layman, was master. Kettering grammar school was founded in 1577 although there may have been an earlier song school. (See B. A. York, "The Origins of Kettering Grammar School", *N.P.P.*, **VI**, I, 1978, pp. 21-27.)

[4] During the period 1800-54 the only Nonconformist trustee was the Baptist manufacturer, John Cooper Gotch.

[5] *Kettering Observer*, 22 June 1883.

[6] *Ibid.*, 6 July, 1883.

series of articles under the title KETTERING GRAMMAR SCHOOL: PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE, which prompted correspondents to call for an enquiry and a new scheme.[7] Typical of the letters was one from A HATER OF SHAMS, who congratulated the *Observer* on its enquiries and

> wondered whether anything that shall benefit the boys of Kettering and neighbourhood will come of it.
>
> Surely this is cause for another enquiry to be made before the Commissioners of Endowed Schools, for it is a sin and a shame for a charity like this to be absorbed in teaching 20 to 30 boys. . . .
>
> I suppose the present Trustees . . . will average over 70 years of age, and do not care for any change. Young blood is wanted, business management, and another obvious change, all of which must tend to make the school what it ought to be—an educational blessing to the town, which at present it is not.[8]

The establishment of rival local newspapers in 1882 was a crucial development in local politics. Reflecting national patterns Kettering Liberals and Conservatives established organised parties during the 1870s. Their respective papers greatly assisted the growth and extension of political and social opinions. In particular the *Kettering Observer* not only first raised the grammar school question in 1883 but pursued it doggedly. It received so many demands for copies of its articles that it decided to publish them as a separate pamphlet.[9] This began by noting how the endowment had recently increased in value. A short sketch of the history of the school followed but the lengthiest section was on the contemporary condition of the school.

> How is the school to regain the position it held in the early days of Mr. Tearle's mastership; or rather, how is it to attain the far higher position it ought to attain with such an income as it has looming in the future? . . . All will agree that if Kettering School is to take its place as an establishment for the complete education of boys destined to be engaged in business; and as a preparatory school for the Universities—and not for Uppingham then the course of instruction must be widened, the number of masters must be increased and the school premises must be improved.

The author emphasised that in a new scheme "The Trustees should have the power of removing masters, else the office is apt to become a sinecure". He concluded by warning the governing body that "With a decreasing School and an increasing income they are in a somewhat novel dilemma, and the Trustees will incur grave responsibility if they do not act promptly". The *Observer* by presenting its case over a period of six weeks and then reprinting its articles as a pamphlet had stirred public opinion.

By October 1883 the trustees were well aware of the strong feelings in the town, especially among Dissenters. The pressures on them increased during the following year. For example, in June 43 Nonconformists presented the Charity Commission with a memorial, which called for a new scheme and the immediate appointment of a second master.[10] At the end of 1884 a Vestry meeting, chaired by John Wallis, a leading Dissenter and Liberal, gave overwhelming support to the view that the trustees ought to be able to dismiss the master, that

> . . . a more extended use be made by the funds . . . a much greater number of boys should be taught, an undermaster should be appointed, and . . . a new scheme must be obtained that will be more in harmony with the spirit of the times.[11]

Prompted by Wallis a general resolution calling for immediate reform of the school "in such a manner as to educate the large number of scholars residing in the town who require much more than can be obtained from the elementary schools" was passed unanimously.[12] Although the *Kettering Ob-*

[7] *Ibid.* and 27 July, 3, 10, 17, 24 Aug. 1883.
[8] *Ibid.*, 24 Aug. 1883. ". . . another obvious change" was a reference to the mastership of Widdowson.
[9] *Kettering Grammar School: Past, Present and Future*, Kettering, 1883.
[10] *Kettering Observer*, 13 June 1884.
[11] Kettering Vestry minutes, 11 Dec. 1884.
[12] *Ibid.* See also *Kettering Observer*, 12 Dec. 1884.

PLATE 2. THE GRAMMAR SCHOOL AND MASTER'S HOUSE
in Gold Street, Kettering built in 1857. The building survived until 1964. (*Kettering Library*)

server gave lengthy coverage to this meeting, its rival, the Conservative *Kettering Guardian* carried no report.

As a result of these developments the Charity Commission began to investigate the condition of Kettering grammar school seriously. Before a new scheme was finalised in 1888 however, there was disagreement between Kettering's Dissenters and the trustees about some of the proposals. Much of the debate was conducted in the press and Vestry meetings. Some views expressed were ill-informed and confused but it is certainly possible to follow the arguments concerning five crucial aspects: the use of existing legislation and administrative procedures for reforming the endowed schools; finance; the religious question; the curriculum; the role of the headmaster.

The use of existing legislation and administrative procedures

The Charity Commission had in fact taken an interest in Kettering grammar school five years before the *Kettering Observer* launched its campaign. In 1879 assistant commissioner C. H. Stanton's conversations with the trustees revealed that the standards of attainment, the range of the curriculum and the number of boys had all declined during the 1870s. The trustees clearly blamed the headmaster, Thomas Widdowson, for the deterioration.[13] Stanton's main recommendation was that a good second master, able to teach commercial subjects, was needed. He believed that if the school were to be reorganised under a new scheme Widdowson

[13] P.R.O., Ed. 27/3663, Stanton's report to Char. Comm., 13 March 1879.

might be induced to leave. There were no immediate developments because Widdowson made it clear that he would not resign even if adequately compensated.[14]

However, in 1883 the Nonconformists launched their offensive and the trustees felt obliged to contact the Charity Commission again. After several letters, the Dissenters' memorial in June 1884 and the Vestry resolution in December, the slow-moving Commission finally sent Stanton to Kettering again in May 1885. Indeed in the spring of 1886, William Toller, leading Baptist and a school trustee, complained to the Commission about its lethargy while Vestry meetings were blaming the trustees for procrastinating.[15]

During Stanton's second visit to Kettering the trustees pressed upon him the need for rapid action, again blaming the master for the school's poor reputation. Stanton concluded that Widdowson did not possess the confidence of the town and agreed that a new scheme was urgently needed.[16] Undoubtedly THE major problem preventing a fresh start for the grammar school was Thomas Widdowson's freehold of the mastership. The trustees reluctantly accepted the Charity Commission's insistence that Widdowson's position was legally protected.[17] However, Dissenting opinion continued to argue that the master was likely to negate the beneficial effects of the new scheme if he were to continue in office.

The draft scheme became available for public view in July 1886. At a Vestry meeting in the following month John Wallis argued that it was less satisfactory than previous arrangements.[18] He emphasised that part III of the proposed scheme made full provision for the establishment of a good school but unfortunately the whole scheme was nullified by clause 25, which stated that "the provisions of Part III . . . shall only come into operation after the present master ceases to hold the office now held by him". The Vestry meeting agreed that the interests of the townspeople ought not to be sacrificed to those of one individual. A committee was appointed to put several recommendations to the trustees, especially that clause 25 was "so objectionable that so long as it remains in force the Scheme will be of no use to the Town".[19] The *Kettering Observer* believed that Widdowson was a very happy individual to enjoy a protected freehold on the headmastership and although it welcomed most parts of the draft scheme it criticised the continued dominance of school life by the incumbent master.[20]

Because of opposition to the draft scheme W. N. Bruce of the Charity Commission eventually agreed to meet the Vestry committee together with the trustees in November 1886.[21] Unfortunately no record of this private meeting has survived. Bruce, however, must have argued persuasively because he was able to convince the committee of the need to accept the draft scheme in principle. Although the committee continued to insist that the trustees alone, and not the headmaster, should be responsible for appointing assistant masters, Bruce had achieved his objective in largely quelling opposition to the contentious provisions of the new scheme.[22] No further Vestry or other public meetings on the grammar school issue were held. The scheme was finally authorised on February 21st, 1888.

The scheme instituted a governing body of eight representative governors of the town authorities and, initially, eight co-opted governors. The *Observer* was pleased because in July 1886 it had proposed the case for a higher proportion of Dissenters on the governing body. Of the eight co-opted trustees, three, including William Toller, were Dissenters.

[14] *Ibid.*, Widdowson to Stanton, 26 June 1880.
[15] E.g. Vestry meetings of 23 July and 26 Nov. 1885.
[16] P.R.O., Ed. 27/3663, Stanton's report, 8 May 1885; Messrs. Lamb and Holmes, solicitors, West St., Kettering, Trustees' Minutes Book, 2, 8 May 1885.
[17] T.M.B.,2, 19 Feb. 1886.
[18] *Kettering Guardian*, 6 Aug. 1886.
[19] *Ibid.* Kettering Library (Ket 36.1), "Kettering Grammar School: Proposed new scheme (1886), Alterations recommended by the Committee appointed by the Vestry to confer with the School Trustees", 11 Aug. 1886.
[20] *Kettering Observer*, 23 July, 1886.
[21] Kettering Library (Ket 36.1), Vestry committee to Bruce, 23 Nov. 1886. W. N. Bruce, who later played a leading role in Welsh education, was the son of Lord Aberdare, the Liberal politician.
[22] *Ibid.*

The two representative governors appointed by the Kettering magistrates were (naturally) Churchmen, but the electoral body of the town authorities, which had a majority of Nonconformists, elected six Dissenters including John Wallis, and John Stockburn, the leader of Kettering Liberals. Nonconformists had therefore secured, for the first time in the grammar school's history, a majority (of two) on the governing body.

Undoubtedly a new scheme was introduced in 1888 because of the pressure of public opinion through the press and Vestry meetings in Kettering after 1883. Although the Charity Commission had first expressed interest in the condition of the grammar school in 1878 reform would have been delayed further if public opinion, and especially Nonconformist pressure, had not galvanised the trustees into action in the mid-1880s.

Finance

The original letter in the *Kettering Observer*, which began the public pressure for reform of the school, claimed that endowment income had more than doubled during the previous ten to fifteen years.[23] The *Observer's* editorials emphasised this point and also maintained

> . . . there must be a higher scale of fees, and the tradesmen of the town, some of whom now send their sons away to be educated, ought to be prepared to pay accordingly . . . low fees and a first class school are incompatible.[24]

At the Vestry meeting in August 1886, John Wallis maintained that the annual income of the endowment had increased tenfold from the £70 at the time of Widdowson's appointment and might increase to £1,000 within three years.[25] Although the Dissenters overestimated the rate and size of increase, what was particularly galling to them was the fact that the master was the major beneficiary and yet they saw Widdowson as the principal cause of the school's decline. A situation where the master was enjoying a steady (unearned) increase in salary from the endowment but where fees were so low that even an effort to attract more scholars would not significantly increase Widdowson's income from that source, was quite unacceptable. There can be little doubt that the master was not greatly moved to increase his work load by enrolling more boys when his own financial situation was so comfortable.

The *Observer*, reflecting the underlying philosophy of "payment by results" (then operating in the elementary schools) believed that "The Master, and any assistants, should be paid largely by capitation fees, for that is an incentive to labour".[26] The Vestry committee of 1886 proposed that fees should be between £4 and £8 a year, a scale which was adopted in the final scheme. Indeed the 1888 scheme initiated a formula for the emolument of the master, which would encourage him to seek enrolment of pupils. He was to receive half of the annual income of the endowment. Additionally, however, half of the new higher fees were to go to him.[27]

Undoubtedly the consistent expression of public opinion with regard to the level of fees and the method of payment of the master influenced the grammar school trustees and the Charity Commissioners, who ultimately produced the 1888 scheme. Other suggestions, which did not gather substantial support, came to nothing. For example, a correspondent of the *Kettering Guardian*, who called for the sale of some endowment property in order to provide capital for a new school building, received little support.[28] His proposal, though perhaps more far-sighted than others, foundered without public backing.

Although Dissenting opinion was basically satisfied with the financial arrangements of the 1888 scheme the trust's revenue still did not provide an adequate grammar school for Kettering in the late nineteenth century, given the other difficulties, notably the presence of Widdowson. The low recruitment of pupils continued and this prevented the

[23] *Kettering Observer*, 22 June 1883.
[24] *Ibid.*, 23 April 1886.
[25] *Kettering Guardian*, 6 Aug. 1886.
[26] *Kettering Observer*, 10 Aug. 1883.
[27] *Kettering Grammar School, Scheme approved at the Court of Windsor, The 21st Day of February, 1888*, clause 23.
[28] *Kettering Guardian*, 18 Dec. 1885.

trustees from a further increase in fees during the early 1890s. Until they could rid themselves of their master there was little hope of expansion.

The Religious Question

The *Kettering Observer* in its articles, KETTERING GRAMMAR SCHOOL: PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE strongly objected to the provision in the 1854 scheme for instruction in the "Principles of the Church of England" of boys whose parents did not object.

> Was there any need of the latter statement. . . ? The school is open for boys of parents of all denominations; and had the passage run—"in the Principles of Nonconformity", Churchmen would naturally have asked, "which sect?" as Nonconformists will now as naturally ask, "which party?"[29]

On paper the Dissenters did make gains for the 1888 scheme stated that the master need not be in holy orders and this raised the possibility of a layman being appointed as Widdowson's eventual successor.[30] Moreover, on the controversial subject of religious instruction the Dissenters were basically satisfied for under the new scheme it was simply to be "in accordance with the principles of the Christian Faith . . . under such regulations as shall be made . . . by "the Governors".[31] In practice, however, instruction and worship continued as before 1888, although of course the conscience clause remained operative.

In fact the controversy between Anglicans (mainly represented by the school trustees) and Dissenters was really about the overall nature of grammar school education rather than religious instruction and worship as such. Fundamentally it was a politico-religious party argument. The Conservative *Kettering Guardian* did not express its views as frequently as its rival newspaper. It reported meetings but produced little editorial comment and few letters on the grammar school issue, compared with the *Observer*. However, one correspondent did complain about the domination of public meetings by Liberals. He accused them of thinking "nothing can be done for the good of the town, unless it is in the hands of a Radical clique".[32] This kind of assertion was typical of much of the debate between the supporters of both sides.

The Curriculum

In one sense the history of secondary education in England and Wales during the second half of the nineteenth century can be seen as the struggle to broaden the curriculum and overcome the traditional domination of classics. Not surprisingly in Kettering one of the dissatisfactions with grammar school education was the concentration on Latin. A complaint about Widdowson was that he was a classicist to the point of neglect of other subjects. When Assistant Charity Commissioner Stanton met the trustees in May 1885, he was told that "the town" believed Widdowson neglected "commercial education" even though most of the boys were sons of tradesmen and farmers.[33] The Liberals and Nonconformists not only wanted a commercial school or department as a means of offsetting the influence of Widdowson, but also because of their own belief in the value of commercial education and curricular reform. The general argument was succinctly expressed by one Dissenter in 1886:

> There were good elementary schools as they go, although . . . more accommodation was needed. . . A great many of the working people would be glad to send their children to a commercial school . . . the (grammar) school did not meet modern requirements, and the remedy would have to be other subjects taught there.[34]

One of the main protagonists of a separate commercial school was the Nonconformist Thomas Wallis, who had been outvoted by his fellow grammar school trustees, and consequently called his own public meeting in 1886 to muster support. He wanted a

[29] *Kettering Observer*, 10 Aug. 1883.
[30] *Scheme*, 1888, cl. 64.
[31] *Ibid.*, cl. 47.
[32] *Kettering Guardian*, 23 April 1886.
[33] P.R.O., Ed. 27/3663, Stanton's report to Char. Comm., 8 May 1885.
[34] C. Wilmot at public meeting, *Kettering Observer*, 23 April 1886.

"third grade" school, which "would occupy a place between the National and British schools, and the higher classical schools".[35] In a later speech to the Vestry in October 1886, Wallis said

> that he believed what the majority required was a thoroughly good commercial school. They looked upon the present school as a Grammar School where the instruction given was classical and as there could be no Radical change while the present master was at the head of it, they felt that it would be better to have a third grade or Commercial School entirely independent of Mr. Widdowson and in that way they would get rid of a feeling that there was against sending boys to a school where Mr. Widdowson was the Head Master.[36]

Wallis probably did command the support of a substantial majority of town opinion on this issue as his proposal was supported by the *Kettering Guardian* as well as the *Observer*.[37]

For financial reasons the Charity Commission vetoed the establishment of a separate commercial school. The endowment was insufficient to maintain two schools. Nevertheless public pressure ensured a significant broadening of the grammar school's curriculum under the 1888 scheme. In comparison with the 1854 curriculum Greek was omitted but modern languages, science, commercial subjects such as book-keeping and land surveying, drill and music appeared on the official curriculum for the first time. However, in spite of the improvements the Nonconformists were proved correct in their belief that the new curriculum would not be a complete practical success until the classicist Widdowson either resigned or retired, even if an additional master or two were introduced to teach the new subjects.

The role of the headmaster

From 1883 the *Kettering Observer* and leading Dissenters continually emphasised that changes of any kind could not succeed unless Widdowson was removed. They regarded the mastership as a sinecure unless the Trustees were given the power of dismissal.[38] In August 1883, a letter from "G.S." in the *Observer* stated: "It apears to me that the master and the funds ought to be under the control of the Trustees. As it is the Master can simply do as he likes".[39] At the same time another correspondent argued that when the Trustees appointed Widdowson

> They must . . . have known that their income would increase . . . and yet they handed the whole over to the headmaster, without any control over him, however he may act—whether for the benefit of the school and the town, or for his own ease and emolument.

The *Kettering Observer* itself, in August 1883, had no doubt that the grammar school ought to be

> the leading educational institution of the town. At present . . . it is doubtful whether it could be safely used as preparatory for the higher class public schools. Our neighbours—Wellingborough and Oundle —have better schools than we have . . . here we are simply stagnating in the matter of education. No one who has a promising lad would think of sending him to the Grammar School.

Indeed parents were sending their sons to other local endowed schools, especially Wellingborough.

The *Observer* acknowledged that Widdowson was a "thorough scholar"

> But . . . a school to be efficient must not only have a good scheme but also masters qualified to teach specific subjects. We should . . . doubt the capacity of a man who undertook to teach not only the classical, but the modern languages, as well as the sciences and mathematics.[40]

At the time Widdowson was the sole teacher and according to an advertisement in the *Kettering Guardian* purported to teach Latin, English, mathematics, natural science, French, German and drawing.[41]

[35] *Kettering Observer*, 6 Aug. 1886.
[36] *Ibid.*, 29 Oct. 1886.
[37] *Ibid.*, 23 April 1886; *Kettering Guardian*, 13 Aug., 26 Nov. 1886.
[38] E.g. see *Kettering Observer*, 10 Aug. 1883.
[39] *Ibid.*, 17 Aug. 1883.
[40] *Ibid.*, 31 Aug. 1883.
[41] *Kettering Guardian*, 20 July 1883.

At a public meeting in April 1886, considerable support was given to William Stoker, a Baptist and Liberal, who claimed that the trustees did not have sufficient control over the master and therefore over the conduct of the school.[42] The *Kettering Observer* reinforced the argument.

> It is no secret, it was mentioned at the meeting, but it was not strongly emphasised as it should have been, that the present headmaster . . . holds his appointment for life . . . the headmastership, with its life interest, is the crux. . . . With this in the way, it is not quite so easy to construct a new scheme.[43]

In 1885 C. H. Stanton had emphasised in his report to the Charity Commission that Widdowson did not possess the confidence of those in Kettering who could be expected to use the school.[44] Although unpublished, his view was supported by the school trustees and particularly the Dissenters, yet it was not within the powers of the Charity Commission to offset what was in effect the master's freehold. What the public disliked about Widdowson was not his teaching as such but his refusal to take boarders, his inability to appoint assistants to widen the actual taught curriculum and above all his unfortunate manner in handling human relationships. He was disliked as a man and after 1883 refused to acknowledge that the condition of the school was a matter of public concern. He was undoubtedly lethargic and complacent. It was argued that he had not striven to improve the school. The "Master needed jogging".[45] John Wallis expressed the view of leading Dissenters at a Vestry meeting in October, 1886, when he maintained that Widdowson

> was always willing to take scholars—and to help them so far as they had the desire to learn, but he had not the courage or the tact to puff his school, or the knack of doing that which would make it popular.[46]

The campaign against Widdowson had in fact reached its height at a Vestry meeting in August, when Wallis had argued that the whole value of the new scheme would be negated by the confirmation of Widdowson in the mastership. Thomas Wallis, himself a trustee and brother of John, spoke critically of Widdowson and the safeguarding of the master's position.[47]

However, even after the Dissenters had been talked into accepting the position of Widdowson as master of the one post-elementary school possible, the Vestry committee, led by John Wallis, fought, mainly unsuccessfully, for the right of the trustees alone, rather than that of Widdowson, to appoint, control and dismiss any assistants.[48] The trustees supported the Vestry committee's view, but to no avail. The school governors would only enjoy this right *after the departure of Widdowson.* The Charity Commission would not remove a right which the incumbent already enjoyed. With regard to the appointment of assistants the only joy for Dissenters and trustees alike was the clause in the 1888 Scheme making the appointment of at least one assistant obligatory.

Even given that surviving evidence is weighted heavily against Widdowson, it must nevertheless be concluded that he was the major factor inhibiting the progress of grammar school education in Kettering during the 1880s. His reputation was the decisive factor in determining how many boys attended. The institution did not command the confidence of the parents and therefore it stagnated in spite of rapid population growth in the locality. Clause 28 of the 1888 Scheme, which stated that "the Governors may dismiss the Head Master, other than the said Thomas Widdowson" was to be the major obstacle to a sustained growth and development of Kettering grammar school. Public opinion had not been enough to overcome that problem.

[42] *Kettering Observer*, 23 April 1883.
[43] *Ibid.*
[44] P.R.O., Ed. 27/3663, 8 May 1885.
[45] *Kettering Observer*, 29 Oct. 1886.
[46] *Ibid.*
[47] *Kettering Guardian* and *Kettering Observer*, 6 Aug. 1886.
[48] Kettering Library (Ket 36.1), Vestry committee to Char. Comm., 23 Nov. 1886.

However, it is doubtful whether a new scheme would have been introduced as early as 1888 if there had been no Liberal and Nonconformist pressure in the years after 1883. The introduction of a commercial school on the existing foundation was prevented by financial considerations, yet, as we have seen, curricular change was closely associated with the incumbent of the mastership, as the reformers recognised. The 1888 scheme brought mainly *theoretical*, rather than *practical* changes to school life. Not until the retirement of Widdowson eight years later did it begin to develop as its critics wished. By then it was too late for the Kettering school to match the standards of many of the successful endowed schools in the area. Moreover secondary education had become a matter of growing national concern and the County Council grammar school opened in Bowling Green Road in 1913 as a result of the 1902 Education Act went far beyond the scope of proposals put forward during the 1880s. Then the Liberals and Nonconformists in the press, in Vestry and other public meetings had stirred social opinion on the grammar school question, but overall they achieved little of what they wanted. The main obstacle to change in the 1880s was Widdowson and his legally protected position: in spite of the grammar school issue being part of the party political battle, even the school trustees and the local Conservative newspaper agreed that they could not support the continued incumbency of Thomas Widdowson in the mastership.

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RIVAL SWEEPS, 1768

The following advertisement appeared in the *Northampton Mercury* of November 7th, 1768:

This is to give NOTICE

THAT JOHN MITCHELL and ENOCH WOOD, in the Horse-Market, Northampton, Intend to follow the Business of CHIMNEY SWEEPING. All Persons, therefore, that chuse to employ them, may depend on having their Orders punctually obeyed. By their humble Servants,

JOHN MITCHELL
ENOCH WOOD

N.B. Chimnies (*sic*) on fire will, upon Notice given them (*sic*), be immediately put out.

The next issue of the *Mercury* (November 14th) carried this counterblast:

JOSEPH YOUNG
In the Horse-Market. NORTHAMPTON

Takes this Opportunity to acquaint his Friends and Customers, that he carries on, with Care and Diligence, his usual Business of a CHIMNEY-SWEEP; and can assure the Publick, that the Persons advertising last week in this Paper, not having been bred in any business, boldly assume That of Another, in which he was regularly bred up and instructed, and which was derived down to him from his Ancestors.

In sable Dress, I use the Art,
That's Black; yet uncorrupt my Heart,
No other Care disturbs my Head
Than how to earn and get my Bread.
When Lords and Country 'Squires command,
Myself and Imps are strait (*sic*) at hand;
Smoke condens'd from ev'ry Hole I rake,
Ready Pence for ev'ry Jot I take.
When out at Top my Head I peep,
I 'wake the Maids with *Chimney-sweep*;
The Cook she brings a friendly Meal,
The Butler waits with Horn of Ale.
In ev'ry Place I'm welcome made,
And brisk pursue my Sooty Trade.

The Northampton pollbook for the general election of 1768 contains the name of Enoch Wood, labourer, Horse-Market, but no entry for John Mitchell. Joseph Young is listed as a chimney sweep living in the Horse-Market. He voted for Captain The Hon. Thomas Howe RN, but Wood favoured Sir George Osborn and Vice-Admiral Sir George Brydges Rodney, so there may also have been a measure of political animosity between Young, "regularly bred up and instructed" in his calling, and the interloping Wood.

Whatever the case, Mitchell and Wood did not succeed in establishing a lasting partnership in Northampton. Neither man is recorded in the pollbook published after the general election of 1774. Young, on the other hand, does appear in this book, and also in the pollbook for 1784. He and his team of sooty "Imps" obviously gave good service to householders, as he so proudly proclaimed in his rhyming advertisement in 1768.

VICTOR A. HATLEY.

WOODFORD HALSE
THE VILLAGE WITH A HEART OF STEAM

J. W. ANSCOMB

The Great Central Railway which for nearly 70 years found employment for a large proportion of the working population of this area, and made this village what it is today, ceased to operate on Saturday, September 3rd, 1966 and memories are already fading as a generation arises that does not know what the village was like in the heyday of the railway.

For nearly 70 years there was always somebody about the streets at all hours of the day and night, either going to work or coming home. The huge embankment, now an eyesore cutting the village in two, was ablaze all night with electric light to aid the shunter in his work. It resounded with the crash of wagons being marshalled into train loads for despatch to destinations as far apart as Grimsby and South Wales, Neasden and York, and now it is a scene of desolation with just a bridge and the embankment left to remind us of the engineering skill that fashioned the iron highway through the parish, linking the North with London and the South. There is no-one left who can remember the coming of the railway and what the village was like when the total population was just over 500. The population more than doubled in less than five years. The 1891 census figures show a population of 527 and the 1901 census 1220, and one cannot but wonder how the people faced up to such a sudden change. Probably the first inkling the local inhabitants would have that a railway was to be built through the parish would have been about the year 1889 when the surveyors were most likely taking levels to plan a route for the proposed extension of the Manchester, Sheffield and Lincolnshire Railway, from Nottingham to London. The first official notice that the proposed railway would take a definite route would be when local landowners received a notice, dated November 1st, 1890, from the Railway Company, informing them that application was being made to Parliament for powers to extend the railway to London, and that they also proposed to acquire certain lands from them.

A form was enclosed, which they were asked to return, to say whether or not they would agree to this being done. At least one of these notices has survived, it is addressed to Mr. John Bird of Woodford Halse and informed him that the Company proposed to acquire his cottage, garden and outbuildings, which were at the bottom of Scrivens Hill. However, the first application made to Parliament was thrown out and in 1891 an amended Bill was submitted and passed by Parliament in 1892, receiving the Royal Assent in 1893. The general public would get to know of this by a notice in the *Northampton Daily Chronicle* of November 25th, 1891, which said that the Railway Company was making application to the next session of Parliament, for powers to build the railway and listing the parishes through which it would pass, Woodford cum Membris being named amongst others, on the route. At the same time a copy of the route through the County was deposited with the Clerk to the Peace which differed from the one deposited in 1890 and we find, for some reason not now known, the route through the parish had been changed. Now, instead of crossing Scrivens Hill, it was to keep close to the Charwelton brickworks and come through the parish nearly parallel to the Red Road and Phipps Road, the route with which we are familiar and now abandoned.

Contracts for the work were let in September, 1894, but when work started in this parish is not known. We do know that the

FIG. 1. THE IMPACT OF THE RAILWAY ON WOODFORD AND HINTON as shown on the Six inch O.S. map of 1927. It shows the connections made by the Great Central Railway with the East and West Junction Railway. It was intended that passenger trains from Marylebone would use the south junction to run direct to Stratford on Avon, but it was used for that purpose for only one month, August 1899. The junction from the north was used until the line closed in 1966.

Parish Council, in May 1895, was complaining to the contractors, Messrs Walker Scott & Co., that their men were creating a nuisance and a danger, by sleeping in barns and outhouses, and they asked them to provide accommodation. The contractors replied, saying that they were preparing to erect huts for the men and it is said that remains of these huts could be seen in a field on the Eydon Road at late as 1939. From a newspaper account of 1898 it would appear that at least 500 men were based on the village while the work was going on.

It is most likely that one of the first tasks undertaken would be the cutting to enable a junction to be made with the East & West Junction Railway, at what was to become known as the West Junction. The land and premises of Dairy Farm near here had been bought and stables, workshops and stores, were set up there to receive the materials, such as cement, bricks and timber, for the stations and bridges up and down the line. Sand and ballast for the railway was obtained from the ballast pit adjacent to the station and the 1901 edition of the Ordnance Survey shows a siding into the pit.

In 1956, a retired signalman, Mr. Simeon Merrivale of Byfield, told how the building of the Great Central line was a great help to the East & West Junction Railway (it became the Stratford-upon-Avon and Midland Junction Railway during 1908) as *nearly* all the material for the new line was hauled by them. All the blue bricks for building Catesby Tunnel and the many bridges in the area, came to West Junction, as the signalbox on the E. & W.J.R., was known. The wood for fencing the line came to Moreton Pinkney Station and was taken by road to where it was required. The first locomotive to be used on this section of the line also came to Moreton Pinkney and was conveyed by road to Greenhills Cutting for handing over to the contractors. The traction engine used to do this was owned by Parson Smith of Woodford and was driven by Mr. Fred Ward. Mr. Merrivale entered railway service in 1898 at Moreton Pinkney and became signalman at West Junction in 1908 serving there until he retired in 1946. He claimed to have been present when the new signalbox for Woodford South Junction was opened for the first time, by signalman Jack Coulson. He said that the junction was never used by passenger trains, only by ballast trains, but here his memory was at fault, as it is known that the junction was used for one month, in August 1899, by a regular passenger service, the 5.20 p.m. from Marylebone to Stratford-upon-Avon, arriving there at 8.30 p.m. In September that year the service was worked via Woodford Station and the South Curve was not used again. Through coaches between Marylebone and Stratford began to work on June 16th, 1902; the best time for the 93½ miles was 2 hours, 5 minutes. The last through service was withdrawn on February 1st, 1936. Use of the South Junction was discontinued in October, 1900, Woodford South Junction signalbox was abandoned, the junction taken out and the running lines from the E. & W. Jct. Rly. had stop-blocks fitted to them and were used as storage sidings until the line closed in 1965. Mr. Merrivale recalled a few anecdotes of early happenings at the junction. The fields around Dairy Farm were, he said, crowded with huts for the navvies, store sheds, carpenters shops and stables. The farmhouse was occupied by a ganger, employed by the contractors and it gave lodgings to a few of the navvies. A load of beer came every few days and there were plenty of men about to dispose of it. The ganger on that section of the E. & W. Jct. Rly. used to call when on his rounds and on calling one day, he was met by the landlady and told there was no beer to be had, as a little bird had been whispering. It seems that she had got word that an excise officer was to pay them a visit and all the beer had been taken away the previous night and buried in the bank at the Eydon Road cutting where a bridge was being built, until he was safely away again. There is no doubt that the place was being run as an unlicensed public house.

The navvies were a rough lot, used to hard living and if they could not find lodgings, would make a dug-out, roof it with turves and live in it until they moved on. One of the gangers had a rough and ready way of

PLATE 1. STATION STAFF AT WOODFORD AND HINTON STATION *c*1900.
This and the other photographs in this article and on the front cover were taken by S. W. A. Newton, a Leicester photographer who recorded the building of the entire Great Central line, 1894-99.
(*Leicestershire Record Office*)

selecting prospective employees, if the seat of their trousers was patched, they could move on, but if their knees were patched they were sure of a job.

According to the parish magazine of June, 1895, the Navvy Mission Society was already at work in the village and a missioner, by the name of Cox was expected to arrive shortly. The September magazine reported that a Mission Room had been opened on the 10th of August in the field known as Flax Furlong. One hundred navvies, with their wives and children, had attended the opening. Flax Furlong was a big field which had been cut into four pieces, first by the East & West Junction Railway and then by the Great Central. Unfortunately, Parson Smith does not say on which portion the mission room was built, it is assumed that it was on the eastern portion, next to the Great Central main line. In the November magazine he records that a home for navvies was opened on Saturday, October 19th, 1895, at a house called Banksey Villa, by Sir H. E. L. Dryden. The house had been taken by a Miss Adeline Pym and converted for this purpose and it was said that this was the first home for navvies in the country. Parson Smith says "The whole establishment is kept very clean and comfortable by Mr. Emmanuel Henninger, the caretaker". The house was actually called Banksia Villa and is now No. 7 School Street. It was in what one might call a strategic position, right opposite the *Hare & Hounds*, one of the two fully licensed public houses at that time, for it was Miss Pym's

intention to do what she could to prevent the navvy spending his money on drink. This is made plain by a newspaper account of another of her good works, the opening of a free reading room for navvies. The account is taken from the *Northampton Mercury* of July 17th, 1895 and is as follows:

A HAVEN FOR NAVVIES

At Woodford Halse, near Byfield, in this County of ours, a work is being carried on which merits the greatest respect and admiration. We have concerned in this work a class of men almost unknown to many of us, whose habits and customs differ widely, as a consequence of the character of their work, from our ordinary British workman. The circumstances of their calling are such as will excite the deepest sympathy. Those knowing Woodford Halse must be aware of the great changes made in this formerly quiet village by the advent of the Manchester, Sheffield and Lincolnshire Railway Company's works, which bring navvies from all parts to work here. Among these navvies, then, the work to which we refer is being carried on by a lady whose whole life and energy are entirely devoted to them and their welfare. The public reading room has been opened in connection with the work. Those who have been brought into contact with Miss Adeline Pym cannot but feel the sincerest admiration for her and her work. Struggling against many obstacles and almost insurmountable difficulties, she has remained at her post, and has the privilege of seeing in Woodford the practical result of her labour. The first practical outcome of her work was the opening of the free reading room for navvies, which admirable institution is under the patronage of Woodford's vicar and Moravian minister. As a counter attraction to the public house, this room is invaluable. Men, who otherwise would spend their time and money in the public house, crowd in night after night, sure of a happy evening. Among these men Miss Pym moves, talking with them, sympathising with them, and welcoming them, till she has become in the minds of the navvies their "Own Young Lady". The influence she gains over them is used to prevent them wasting their money on their inveterate enemy DRINK; while the manner in which she interests herself in each one individually wins their hearts completely. And, now a word about the room itself. Necessarily it must be a word of praise, for the attractions of the room are so many and so varied, that no-one could turn away from the sight without an admiring word. The little room is compact and comfortable, and all its arrangements neat and attractive. Games are provided in abundance; writing materials and papers. Yes, newspapers, magazines, picture papers and comic papers, the latest morning paper, an evening paper, the *Labour News* and, of course, the *Mercury* itself. It is a pleasing sight to see the room filled with navvies in their working clothes (for this is essentially their own room and they go in and out exactly as they please) some bending over dominoes and draughts, and others reading or looking at pictures, writing or playing. Ask them, and one and all will say unhesitatingly that a place like this is the greatest boon and pleasure to them, and that they always enjoy their evenings now that their long days work is done. Thinking of the self denial continual and absolute, which the carrying on of this work entails and thinking of the men among whom the work is carried on, and of their needs, and of their affection and admiration for those who help them, can we resist offering for Miss Pym and her work our heartiest sympathies and prayers.

Another cutting has come to hand, bearing no name and no date, but headed,

WOODFORD NAVVIES HOME; MISS A. M. PYM'S AFFAIRS

At the London Bankruptcy Court, on Friday. Mr. Registrar Brougham suspended for two years the discharge of Miss Adeline Mary Pym, late of Woodford Junction, Northamptonshire. The debtor, who has been engaged on philanthropic

work, in 1895 opened a "Home for Navvies" at Woodford Junction. She had removed to Staines in 1898 on completion of the railway works at Woodford and opened a navvies home there at a cost of £1,200. The liabilities were £2,320, with no available assets. The offences alleged were insufficient assets and books.

It is a pity that there was not a happier ending to the story of Miss Pym and her work for the navvies.

The reading room she opened was situated on the east side of Church Street, at about where No. 19 now stands at Kings Corner. The field was known as Parsons Close and must have been a very pleasant spot if one can judge by the picture of the north end of the field as depicted in an old parish magazine. There is no doubt that the reading room, opened by Miss Pym, was the parish reading room that at one time had been open from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. each weekday and from 7.30 p.m. to 9 p.m. on Sundays for the use of the men of the village, many of whom would be unemployed. The coming of the railway gave employment to all who needed it and the reading room became redundant and closed.

A description of the depot as it was on the eve of opening is given in the *Northampton Herald* of June 25th, 1898. In this it will be noticed that the railway had changed its name from the Manchester, Sheffield & Lincolnshire Railway to the Great Central Railway, this was done on August 1st, 1897. The newspaper article is as follows:

> The new Great Central Railway, which, it is expected, will be opened shortly, will have an important centre at Woodford Junction. Already sheds for 48 engines are approaching completion, as well as a shed some 300 feet long for repairing wagons and a building in which to mend wagon sheets. A well has been sunk near the station some 75 feet deep to supply the locomotives with water, which is to be pumped up to the sheds some ¼ mile away by a powerful engine. There are no less than eight signalboxes in the parish, one of which contains 76 levers. Three are for main line traffic and four for the sidings which will be extensive, accommodation being provided for standing somewhere about 1,000 wagons. Woodford is to be a sorting depot, besides which, in addition to the above mentioned, it is quite probable that there will eventually be carriage works there. On Friday last week the Directors of the line were conveyed over the route from Quainton Road to Annesley Junction, the train consisting of an engine and tender and two coaches. They arrived at Woodford Station at about five o'clock and made a short stay. It is expected that the line will shortly be running goods trains and that passenger trains will run before the year ends. It is not so many years ago since to travel by train Woodford's inhabitants had to go to Weedon or Fenny Compton. Soon they will have a station, at which most trains will call, in their very midst. The new line bids fair to become the best route from the North to London. Messrs. Melcombe Brothers of Bedford are now building some 200 cottages for the accommodation of the Railway Company's employees, so that the population will shortly be considerably increased.

By 1898 the major works were completed, the track ballasted and the rails laid, and on July 25th, 1898 the first coal train came through. These heavy loads consolidated the track and the first passenger train to run came through on March 15th, 1899. Prior to that, the directors of the railway made an initial trip on March 9th and the Parish Council, at its meeting on March 6th, resolved to instruct the clerk to draw up an address to present to the directors, as they passed through Woodford, but the train, an engine and two Coaches, would not stop, even for a minute, and so the thanks of the Parish for the blessings conferred by the building of the railway were not presented. It is assumed they were sent by post as the Council did get an acknowledgement from the Directors. The schoolchildren were let out of school to see the first passenger train go through and the vicar, the Reverend F. A. Smith, took the first ticket to Brackley.

PLATE 2. A RUSTON EXCAVATOR AND NAVVIES
at work on the construction of the line at Brackley. (*Leicestershire Record Office*)

PLATE 3. DINNER-BREAK FOR MEN WORKING NEAR BRACKLEY VIADUCT.
The viaduct was 755 feet long, 62 feet high and had 20 arches and 2 girder spans.
(*Leicestershire Record Office*)

The coming of the railway must have made a great difference to the lives of the people in this area. Gone would be the fear of unemployment, a regular wage at a better rate of pay, and no fear of being stood off in inclement weather, improved the lot of the working men and their families and it would seem that a wave of optimism took hold of the village. It was thought that the village would grow into a sizeable town as rumours spread that the main workshops of the Company would come to the village. The newly formed Parish Council was quite active and in 1898 they decided that the roads of Woodford Halse should be named and this they proceeded to do, obtaining enamelled iron plates to attach to the houses on the various roads. Unfortunately for them, the power to do so was one of the functions of the Rural District Council and not of the Parish Council, and in June 1899, the district auditor, when the Council's accounts for 1898 were submitted for audit, surcharged the Councillors for illegally spending money on the project. Fortunately, they managed to get the surcharge lifted and so did not have to pay for their enthusiasm. One of the plates can still be seen (1982) attached to No. 28 Church Street. This episode may have prompted the Council in 1901 to apply to the County Council to be granted urban status, which, if it had been granted would have given them all the powers of a Rural District Council and more. However, the County Council advised them to wait a little longer before pressing their application and we hear no more of it.

This spirit of optimism was, it seems, sensed by the editor of the *Daventry Express*, as in the issue for March 14th, 1903 there was published an article purporting to be written by someone from London, who travelled to Woodford in search of a person named Dale. It pokes gentle fun at the Woodfordians of those days, a little exaggerated perhaps, but not too much, as a good footpath to the station entrance did not come until the 1950s and water was a trouble for nearly as long. The post office mentioned was in High Street, nearly opposite the old *Hare & Hounds* public house. It was demolished at about 1959 when the corner was improved. Here is the article, it is entitled A CITY OF THE FUTURE, BY A PILGRIM.

The following article, addressed to the "Newspaper for Woodford" near Rugby, has been forwarded on to this office as it appeared the *Daventry Express* is the paper for Woodford.

I had taken my seat in the train at Marylebone Station and assured myself that I was "right" for the North. Just then a telegram was put into my hands by a messenger from my office, and hastily tearing it open, I read the words "Martin Dale supposed to be at Woodford". I had intended to go to Rugby but fate, or rather the missing Dale obliged me to break my journey at Woodford. The morning was what is described as "wretched", the rain was pouring down and the wind was cold. When the train pulled up at my destination, I asked a porter if it was Woodford. "Yessir" said he, "the City of the future." "Why my lad," I replied, "a city takes a long time to build." "Thats right enough sir, but look at all the buildings already up." I crossed the line and picked my steps to the entrance to the goods yard. I thought a city of the future would be sure to commence with good pavements and accordingly expected them to reach as far as the station. I had evidently reckoned without the book and my next step forward landed me over the boot-tops in mud. With such a sudden shock to my dreams of a lovely city, I then carefully picked my way, but only to slip on what should be the pavement. My best silk topper went flying: a little boy picked it up, wiped it on his coat sleeve and handed it back to me. I asked him the way to the post-office. He directed me uphill but said I had better hire a boat, or wait until the roads were scraped. "When will that be," I asked. "Oh, they wont think about it until the fine weather comes and then it wont be necessary, see." "Thats to save the rates I suppose." "Rates be blowed" he replied, "they're high enough for what we get, 5/- or more

PLATE 4. THE LOCAL BRANCH OF THE NAVVY MISSION AT CALVERT, NOTTS.
All along the line as it was being built evangelical efforts were made to "save" and "reform" the navvies and their families. (*Leicestershire Record Office*)

PLATE 5. TYPICAL INTERIOR OF A NAVVY MISSION.
This one was at Hucknall, Notts. (*Leicestershire Record Office*)

in the pound." "How do you know so much about these things?" "Well, yer see, father talks about them and other people talk to father, and as this is a city of the future they tell us youngsters about them." My youthful guide then turned down a side street. The rain had by this time stopped and I watched him until he had turned the corner at the bottom. Before he got there, however, he had slipped three times and gone ankle deep at least another three, and the last I heard of him he was calling across to another boy, "Eh, Jimmy, bring the boat across". "Dear me" I thought, there must be an abundance of water here." Just then a railwayman overtook and accosted me with, "Eh, mestur, ha does'ta loike t' city o' t' future?" I could'nt go into raptures over it, and I didn't want to say anything derogatory for fear of offending the embryo citizen, so I merely took off my hat and looked at it. Silence is more eloquent than speech sometimes and it must have been so on this occasion for my companion at once launched on a sea of grievances. "These 'ere pavements are a disgrace to civilisation. The roads are filthy in weather such as this, we cant get any water—". "Water," I interrupted, "You surely have plenty, for I just heard one boy calling to another, to bring a boat." He laughed, and said "Thats only a skit, there's plenty of water in the wrong place, but its drinking water I mean." "But surely your Town Council, or Urban District Council, or whoever is your governing body has seen to that." "Thats just the trouble, the water supply is in the hands of a few persons who turn it on and off—mostly off—at their pleasure, we only get it 'on' an hour or two a day and the authorities don't take any notice of our Parish Council." "Why dont you complain to the Local Government Board." The man merely shrugged his shoulders and said "Cant say." He bade me good-day and turned down another street and I marvelled at his courage and the courage of his fellows and especially of the women and children in facing a journey along a street little better than a ploughed field. After plunging nearly up to my knees in mud and enduring the laughter of the children at my sorry plight, I eventually reached the post-office. "Have you a telegram for Smithers?" I asked of the postmaster. "Yes, sir" replied the brisk young man behind the counter, as he reached for the buff envelope and handed it to me. I tore it open and read; "Dale found, no need to trouble further." That was the best news I had received in Woodford and finding there was a train to town in a few minutes I plunged once more through the mud and reached the station, thankful to be on my way to a present city and with a feeling of devout pity for the present inhabitants of the "City of the Future".

There is no doubt that the people of Woodford really did think that the village would grow into a sizeable town, but many years were to pass before a major building project was undertaken and although the number of houses has more than doubled the railway that transformed the village is no more. The station is now the winter quarters of some fairground people, the embankment has been planted with trees and where the locomotive sheds once were is being developed as an industrial estate. Not many of the staff remained with the railway, a few went to Banbury and Northampton, but most went into factories at Daventry and Banbury so the village is now a dormitory, the men travelling out to work.

SOME NOTES ON RAILWAYS IN NORTHAMPTONSHIRE 1960-80

Readers who have noted developments during the last two decades will have had much occasion to regret the widespread closure of railway lines and stations. This was greatly accelerated by the after-effects of the Locomotivemen's Strike in 1955 which virtually closed down British Railway's services for a duration of 17 days, during which a great deal of passenger and freight traffic was permanently lost to road competitors.

In the west of the county the former Great Central main line, and connecting line via Banbury were closed. At Woodford Halse these had employed a thriving locomotive depot and wagon shops. Eventual discontinuance of the lines concerned caused redundancies among hundreds of guards, signalmen and other traffic staff. Those who could find alternative work by local bus journeys soon became accustomed to regular day-work, and indeed many grew to like the convenience of static, Monday-to-Friday hours.

The G.C. main line, as it was in its heyday, has been amply described by two former Loco. Shed-Masters who have written books published by Ian Allan: *Steam in the Blood* (R. H. N. Hardy, 1949-50) and *Steam was my Calling* by E. S. Beavor (1952-54) (published 1971 and 1974 respectively). These are now out of print, but copies of them can be obtained on loan from county libraries.

The loop line of the North Western main line now serves only Northampton and Long Buckby, while the Midland main line is reduced to stations at Wellingborough and Kettering. These busy junction stations, which formerly had locomotive depots, now have only signing-on depots, with solitary diesel shunting locomotives. The erstwhile North Western and Midland branch lines, which formerly served the county, have disappeared with their respective stations.

Such is the march of electrification and dieselisation, with the ubiquitous lorries scooping up traffic wherever it can be found. Alas, there appears no future for reinstating lines which have already been withdrawn.

The passenger lines of Northamptonshire are already electrified, whereas electrification of the Midland main lines has not progressed beyond those due to reach Bedford from London. No further plans are as yet published, but it appears that present planning will extend routes eastwards. In the foreseeable future further extensions are likely to be forecast to Derby, Nottingham and Sheffield.

E. S. BEAVOR.

OBITUARIES

THE MARQUESS OF EXETER

With the death at the age of 76 of the Sixth Marquess of Exeter K.C.M.G. in October last year, the N.R.S. lost a Trustee of 48 years' standing. In 1933, as Lord Burghley, he was one of the first of the newly formed Trust which has ever since administered the Society's Endowment Fund to safeguard the historical treasures in its care. He was then 28, and an M.P., his father, the Fifth Marquess, having been President of the Society since its formation in 1920 until his own death in 1956.

Inheriting the title and ancestral home, Burghley House near Stamford, the Marquess could trace a direct line to the first Baron, created by Elizabeth I, and builder of the house. This has been broken in a sad way by the loss of his only son in infancy, though he had four daughters by his two marriages.

To older generations Lord Burghley will always be the lanky, cheerful and heroic athlete, a champion hurdler. He won medals in several Olympic Games, his greatest achievement a record-making 400m hurdles which gave him a gold medal. He set track records which were unbeaten for many years. His career in athletics was cruelly cut short by the arthritis which later crippled him. Nevertheless, he continued all his life to support amateur athletics, and was an influential president of both the A.A.A. and the International A.A. Federation.

His life was full of peaks, which he scaled with ease. His other sporting love was hunting, and he was joint master of the East Sussex and Old Berkshire Hunts, and for ten years master of the Burghley Hunt. He served twelve years as Conservative M.P. for Peterborough, known in Westminster as "the busiest man in Parliament". He had key army posts in the last war, and was Governor of Bermuda for two years. As chairman he organised the London Olympic Games in 1948, and was later president of the British Olympic Association until 1977. He has been president of the English Tourist Board and of the B.T.A., Mayor of Stamford, and was Rector of St. Andrew's University. He was created Knight Commander of the Order of St. Michael and St. George in 1945.

He is succeeded by his brother, Lord Martin Alleyne Cecil. M.C.

MR. PHILIP COX

Mr. Philip Cox, an honorary member of the Northamptonshire Record Society, died on December 16th 1981. A Kettering man, he was associated all his working life with the Dalkeith Press, the printing firm at Kettering founded by his father in 1924. His formal retirement took place in 1977, but until September 1981 he retained a connection with Dalkeith in an advisory capacity.

For nearly thirty years the Dalkeith Press printed *Northamptonshire Past & Present*, and the firm was also responsible for two volumes in the main series of N.R.S. publications. Mr. Cox took the keenest interest in this work, which he supervised personally. In particular he knew how to collaborate with the late Miss Joan Wake, for whom he had tremendous affection and respect. She was not the easiest of editors to please, and often changed her mind, sometimes when the text was ready for final printing; nevertheless, Mr. Cox was always good humoured, and nearly always succeeded in making alterations according to Miss Wake's requirements. It was a remarkable partnership, and a fruitful one for historians of Northamptonshire.

A personal reminiscence of Philip Cox will not, I trust, be deemed out of place in the context of this tribute to his memory. One morning I arrived at Dalkeith with a batch of galley-proofs for the 1777 militia lists, one of the N.R.S. volumes printed by the firm. Mr. Cox received me in unwonted silence; then, with a twinkle in his eye, he glanced at his watch and said: "Victor, I'm giving you ten minutes to get to the bus station and out of Kettering before I hand these galleys over to the compositors. They'll be after your blood when they see all the alterations you've made in their work!" He was a man of business who was content with nothing less than the highest standards of printing craftsmanship, and I am pleased and proud that I had the opportunity of co-operation with him in the production of a book.

VICTOR A. HATLEY.

BOOK REVIEWS

THE COURT AND ACCOUNT ROLLS OF PETERBOROUGH ABBEY, A HANDLIST

by JANET D. MARTIN

(*Dept. of History, Leicester University*, 1980.

Price £1.20 from booksellers or direct from the Dept. of History at £1.20 plus 20p p. & p.)

In 1978 the Record Society published as a volume a detailed description by Mrs. Martin of the cartularies and registers of Peterborough Abbey some of which will be edited and published as Anthony Mellows Memorial volumes in coming years. The archives of this great Benedictine abbey were in part dispersed at its dissolution in 1538 and those left later pillaged by Cromwellian soldiers in 1643. Today almost no medieval charters survive as individual documents and it is Mrs. Martin's purpose in this booklet to list all the surviving rolls of court proceedings and of accounts, the other two important classes of surviving records. Mrs. Martin has divided both series into such groups as they will most naturally now fall considering the small numbers that have survived in each. The arrangement is easily comprehensible, and should make for easy comparison with other lists of similar monastic administrative records. In making use, however, of this handlist the need to have a list of the abbots with their dates of appointment from, say, 1273 at hand has been felt to be a desideratum, and perhaps it would also have been useful to print an index to the names of the bailiffs, collectors and other officials mentioned.

Careful inspection of photocopies of the first 3 Easton account rolls (p. 40) suggests that a few amendments need to be made to this published list. Henry Chapman's roll dates from the reign of Henry VIIth not Henry VIth. There is a reference in it to the widow of Robert Dycon (not Eyton) which would serve to confirm this if it had been necessary. The Polebrooke court rolls, recorded as not to be found (p. 31), have happily turned out to be in their box all the time. There are 9 of them running from 1520 to 1539, plus a record of 2 great courts of the sacristan for Polebrook similar to the Peterborough ones listed on page 15. The untraced Fletton account (p. 45) is presumably still at Elton Hall, and the two missing hostiller's accounts (p. 47) have now been found amongst the papers of Mr. W. T. Mellows, the former Cathedral Treasurer and Archivist, who had evidently had them repaired but had not replaced them. With them also is an Irthlingborough court roll of April 10th 1537.

One is somewhat comforted to find that Mrs. Martin has found at least two court rolls whose day of the week does not correspond to the day of the month of the year in which they were held. These mistakes also occur quite frequently in the dating clauses of charters. On page 4 1972 is the right date and the Duke of Buccleuch's MSS are generally called the Montagu (Boughton) collection. In so far as this is the first comprehensive list of these rolls published it is perhaps inevitable that a few more will come to light. For instance in the Northamptonshire Record Office are two Oundle account rolls of 1471-2 and 1491-2 and a further two summary Oundle accounts ("onus") of 1510-1 and 1511-2 in the Westmorland collection.

P. I. KING.

JOHN CLARE'S BIRDS

edited by ERIC ROBINSON and RICHARD FITTER *illustrated by* ROBERT GILLMOR

(*Oxford University Press*, 1982, Price £6.95)

James Fisher—one of the most literate of our major naturalists—once described John Clare as "the finest poet of Britain's minor naturalists and the finest naturalist of all Britain's major poets". He knew from personal observation "about 145 wild birds, of which 119 can be

identified as county records—65 of them 'first records' ". Clare's poetry has been quarried again and again by the compilers of "wild life" anthologies. As recently as 1980, the Folio Society devoted one of its editions to Clare's *Bird Poems*, illustrated with woodcuts by Thomas Bewick. Now Eric Robinson, currently working on the collected edition of Clare's poetry for Oxford English Texts, and Richard Fitter, author of several wild-life guides, have joined together to produce an anthology of Clare's writings on birds, both poetry and prose. The prose predominates and is often of a higher literary quality than the poetry which has been chosen rather for its natural history content than its poetic merit. Such a specialist, "diversionary" anthology is perhaps inevitable with a writer like Clare, whose poetic muse relied on hard, keen observation and who is prized today in some circles as much for his usefulness to the social and natural historian as for his purely poetic achievement. To the modern ornithologist, the arrangement of the anthology may appear odd. What the editors have done (as with the punctuation, or lack of punctuation, in the texts themselves) is to follow Clare's own example. In his check-list of birds, he adapted the order given in one of the few bird-books in his small personal library, the anonymous *Natural History of Birds* (published in 1815). Thus it is that grasshopper warblers fly cheek-by-jowl with sky-larks and redbreasts perch next to redstarts. The great drawback of this bird-by-bird layout is that poems or prose which encompass more than one species—for example the poem "Birds in Alarm"—are ruled out.

The editors have uncovered much new or unfamiliar material, but many readers will regret their decision to avoid the old favourites: you will look in vain for "Little Trotty Wagtail" or "The Red Robin". I personally regret the absence of such fine poems as "The Skylark" and "The Fern-Owl's Nest", but feel compensated by items new to me, such as the prose on the nightingale (p. 45) and bittern (p. 79) and poems on the cornbunting (p. 29) and the heron (p. 77):

> High overhead that silent throne
> Of wild and cloud betravelled sky
> That makes ones loneliness more lone
> Sends forth a crank or reedy cry
> I look the crane is sailing oer
> That pathless world without a mate
> The heath looked brown and dull before
> And now tis more then desolate

Calling on their respective specialities, the editors have prefaced the anthology with scholarly and thought-provoking essays on "Clare the poet" and "Clare the naturalist". They point out that Clare learnt his natural history by diligence and sheer hard work. His early poems about birds are derivative and lacking in first-hand knowledge; many of his later bird poems, written in his madness, lack clear focus. "But in the bird poems of his mature years he makes us follow him, on hands and knees, through the undergrowth of Royce Wood or Puddocks Nook, till we almost touch the bird's nest with our noses." They rightly point out that Clare was a pioneer in his interest in bird song, though the poem they cite as his "most ambitious effort" in this regard, "The Progress of Rhyme," seems to me to be one of his feeblest. One other small quibble: we are told that Clare's patron, Lord Milton, was a keen observer of birds, but social differences debarred the two from discussing their common interest at any length, if at all. "Such conversation could not have made him a better poet, but it could have made him a better naturalist and more useful to posterity." Do the editors really intend to imply that a naturalist is more useful to posterity than a poet?

But tiny quibbles apart, this is an extremely attractive book, handsomely produced by the publisher and exquisitely illustrated by one of our finest living bird artists, Robert Gillmor. You certainly don't need to reprint Bewick when you have a Gillmor to hand: see, for example, his illustration of *Caprimulgus europaeus* on p. 65. It is a book for the nature-lover rather than the

literature-lover; but if it sends those useful naturalists to Clare's greater poems (including those great bird poems excluded here) then it will have served a valuable purpose to posterity.

TREVOR HOLD.

SHORTER NOTICES

A really interesting and fresh impression of life in Edwardian Bugbrooke is to be found in *And the King Passed By*, a modest little volume recently issued in typescript form. Edited by Heather Toynbee, head teacher at Bugbrooke School, it consists of extracts from letters written by village children for homework which Mr. F. H. Wright, headmaster of the school for 32 years down to 1919, used as the basis for a village weekly newsletter. The children wrote about their families, village incidents and general matters of interest, and from their work Mr. Wright compiled a composite newsletter which he wrote on the blackboard. The children then copied it, took it home and it was then sent to relatives and village exiles all over the world. Mrs. Toynbee recently came across a collection of these letters from the years 1907-1914 in a school cupboard, and facsimile extracts, illustrated with drawings made by present-day pupils, form the text of this booklet. In the fresh and spontaneous words of some of the children (though there is a vein of Victorian moralizing in others) a graphic picture of incidents and events in village life emerges: of farming, fruit picking, travelling entertainers, life on the Grand Junction Canal, visits to Northampton and Towcester, meets of the local hunts, Temperance Missions, and the shock caused by the tragic drowning of one of their fellow pupils.

Mr. Wright was obviously a remarkable teacher who carried his interests into the classroom. He involved the children in astronomy and meteorology and was an enthusiast for the brave new technology of that era of early motor cars, aeroplanes and airships. His greatest enthusiasm was for wireless, and he rigged up his apparatus in the schoolroom and involved the children in his experiments. As one entry records

> While experimenting with Wireless on Tuesday night, we were surprized to find that with our latest arrangement we were able to hear both Eiffel, Harfleur and Germany on a small Aeriel consisting of a single wire only thirtyfive feet high and slanting down with a length of fifty feet. "Cleethorpes" was beyond our power.

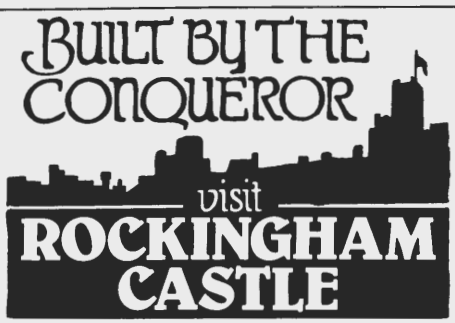
The school received an official permit from the Postmaster-General, and "Bugbrooke Wireless Station" even got an official number "W.F.X.". Dignitaries arrived to inspect the apparatus, and the school attracted the attention of national and foreign newspapers and photographs of teacher and pupil at work with their apparatus were published. They were even visited by one lady from Salt Lake City, Utah, who had read about them. Mrs. Toynbee's 82 page booklet is available from Bugbrooke School, or Barry Road Teachers' Centre, Northampton, price 50p. It is possible that an expanded version will be produced as a hardback.

Rather more expensive, but in a different way just as interesting is the second issue of *Rutland Record* (price £3.50, from Rutland County Museum, Oakham LE15 6HW). With four main articles and a number of shorter ones on a range of topics including news of the location and scope of records of the former county, Rutland maps, and museum and local projects reports, it keeps up the standard set in No. 1. Pervading it there is a strong sense of a group of activists determined to preserve interest in, and extend knowledge of the history of that small county now subsumed administratively (if not emotionally) in Leicestershire. Amongst the articles are pieces on Archdeacon Robert Johnson, the 16th century founder of Oakham and Uppingham Schools; Thomas Barker of Lydon Hall, an intellectual 18th century squire, the compiler of a remarkable run of annual observations on the weather locally; the founding of the Rutland Agricultural Society in the 1830s; and a piece on the size of Rutland farms in

MR. WRIGHT AND THREE OF HIS PUPILS AT BUGBROOKE SCHOOL USING HIS WIRELESS APPARATUS IN 1912.

1871. Some confusion in the printing of paragraph two of the latter piece seems to have crept in. Its author, in seeking to make the point that information from the 1871 census Enumerators' Books can be usefully correlated with the returns of Agricultural Statistics, which began in 1866, seems to suggest that the census material gives information about such matters as crops. Clearly some transposition seems to have occurred in the printing of that paragraph and the following one. Overall, however, the issue is readable, well illustrated and printed, and is a credit to the newly formed Record Society. One of the most interesting aspects of the journal is the evident desire of its compilers to show people what untapped sources of local history there are for Rutland, and to persuade schoolchildren and others to get involved in their interpretation and use. It would be interesting to know how far they are succeeding.

An educational objective is to be discerned in two publications produced by the archeaological units operating in our own county, *Upper Nene 400 BC—400 AD*, a 22 page summary of present knowledge about the Nene valley from Northampton to Irchester in the Iron Age and Roman periods, particularly reviewing recent excavations carried out by the County Archaeological Unit, and *Saxon and Medieval Northampton* by John Williams, the chief archaeologist of the Northampton Development Corporation. These reflect the approach of modern archaeologists to the public, who, they are only too well aware, pay for their work as archaeologists employed by local authorities. It is therefore important not only to dig in a professionally competent way, and to write up the results in the archaeological journals, but to keep the public informed through open days on sites, and the production of booklets, written in as clear and in as jargon-free a manner as possible. Their success is shown in these two volumes. In the *Upper Nene 400 BC—44AD* the importance of local sites, both old and new, is carefully explained by David Windell using maps, photos, and line drawings in a clear, if necessarily brief, way. The area is not particularly rich in major sites, but what there is is most clearly explained. *Saxon and Medieval Northampton* neatly fits into the chronology outlined by the above booklet and carries the story forward to the early 16th century. An expanded version of an



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earlier publication, the rather badly titled *Northampton, the first 6000 years*, this account should be on the shelves of everyone interested in local history and at the price is a remarkable bargain. With a wealth of very clear maps and some exceedingly good graphic reconstructions of such finds as the now famous mortar mixers near St. Peter's and early Saxon buildings, and a clear and reasonably full text, it outlines what is known about the obscure origins of Northampton, its rise to prominence as an English provincial town, and its long decline in the later middle ages, which seems to have started remarkably early, before the end of the 13th century. The *Upper Nene 400 BC—400 AD* is published by the County Council, price £1, and *Saxon and Mediaeval Northampton* by Northampton Development Corporation at £1.25. Both are available in bookshops. R.L.G.

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