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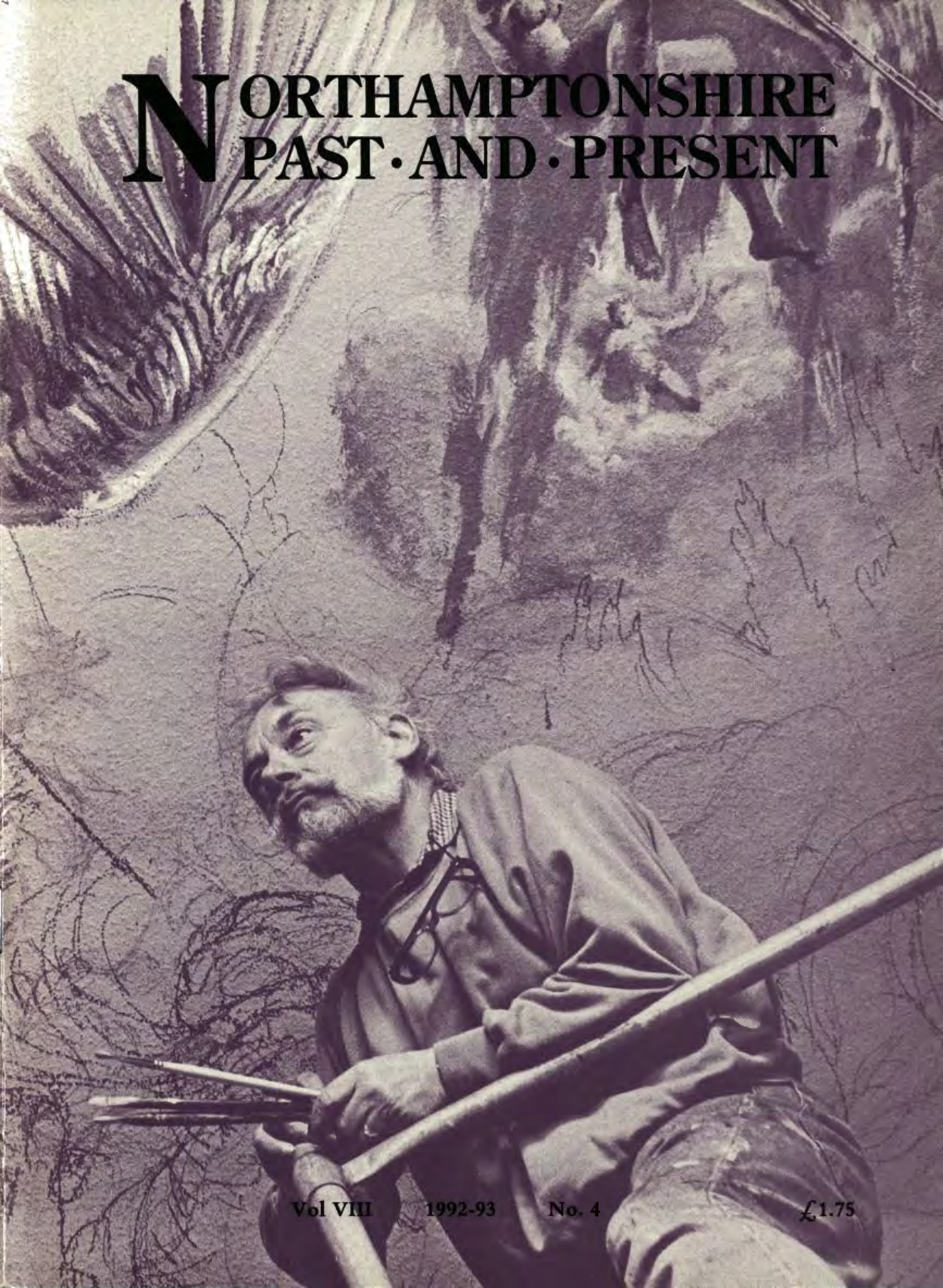

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NORTHAMPTONSHIRE PAST AND PRESENT

1992/93

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NOTES AND NEWS

When I remarked in this column last year that his lecture to the Society on the 1851 Religious Census was a mature Hatley performance I had no idea that it had been Victor's last. He died on 18 November 1991, the day last year's number of this journal was posted to members and bookshops. All that could be done was to insert a slip advising readers of the sad event. At the comparatively early age of 67 his death came as a shock to his numerous friends, many of whom attended his memorial service at St Matthew's Church on 30 December. Archdeacon Bazil Marsh's moving address on that occasion can be found on another page.

I first met Victor in 1965 when I was newly-arrived in Northampton. The occasion was a lecture on the history of the town in an evening course on 'The Future of Expanding Northampton', arranged by my predecessor. What struck me was that here was someone who, in addition to being full of local knowledge, was also scholarly and well-informed. I subsequently recruited him to teach a good many courses over the years at the University Centre. Victor was an engagingly witty companion, with a mordant sense of humour and a fund of knowledge on a wide range of subjects and places. How many of his friends, for instance, were aware of his membership of the Woolhope Naturalists' Field Club of Herefordshire? Above all, he perhaps knew more than anyone else of Northampton's history since the early 18th century and countless people, from serious academics down to callow students and schoolchildren, will remember his generosity with his time and knowledge with gratitude and affection. Certainly I do.

Such generosity may well have been why he never really engaged with his intended book on Georgian and Victorian Northampton, though I have a suspicion that he prevaricated so long because he could never really empathise with the brand of Nonconformist Liberalism which was so marked a feature of Victorian Northampton: Victor was always happier with the old Tory Corporation. That said, he leaves a fine series of published works, one of the best and most useful being his edition of the Northamptonshire Militia Lists for 1777 for the Record Society. At the time of his death he was working on *The Visitations of Bishop Magee*, a study of the Church of England in Northampton and district in the 1870s and 1880s, and it has proved possible to complete his typescript for publication. All going well, it should appear about the same time as this number, and will serve as the Record Society's memorial to Victor. There is also a good chance that his collaborators on the 1851 Religious Census study can bring their work to fruition.

Victor was a long-time member of the Society, taking his seat on Council as long ago as 1962. A link with the days of Miss Wake and Sir Gyles Isham, no one loved it more than he did, and his enthusiasm never flagged. In the recent move from Delapre Abbey he played his part, with Mrs Rosemary Eady and others, in the great sale of surplus books and journals, and in the clearing out of the Society's rooms. He is a man who, if sorely missed, will be remembered with great affection.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

The Record Society's Autumn lecture in 1991, 'History in the National Curriculum', was given by Commander Saunders Watson, recently chairman of the National Curriculum History Working Group and a former President of the Historic Houses Association. It was splendidly informative and it seemed a pity it did not attract more teachers. The Spring lecture this year was given by Dr Martin Gaskell, Principal of Nene College, on 'Homes Fit for Heroes', an exposition of housing policy since the end of the Great War. Whilst explicitly eschewing political controversy, Dr Gaskell made it perfectly plain what nonsense the effective cessation of council house building by recent governments is, in terms of the supply of housing for lower income groups.

R.L.G.

Notes on Contributors

H. J. K. Jenkins writes internationally on maritime operations in the West Indies during the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars. He is also deeply interested in traditional East Anglian vessels, and chairs the Fenland Lighter Project.

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Thanks are expressed once again to Northamptonshire Libraries and Information Service and to Northamptonshire Record Office for their help in the production of this number, and in particular for the use of illustrations from their collections.

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MEDIEVAL BARGE TRAFFIC AND THE BUILDING OF PETERBOROUGH CATHEDRAL

H. J. K. JENKINS

Professor H. C. Darby has commented on the stone obtained from the Barnack quarries, and its important role in such structures as the great church which later became Peterborough Cathedral. He has also pointed out that 'the wide distribution' of Barnack stone 'serves as an index of the waterway traffic' in the Fenland region during the medieval period.[1] The details of this transport remain obscure, however, and it is the present article's purpose to discuss the likely nature of the techniques and vessels associated with the freighting of Barnack stone to Peterborough.[2]

It must be emphasised that there is a shortage of direct and clear-cut evidence. The Curator of Archaeology, National Maritime Museum, has commented thus: 'Information about inland water transport in the Middle Ages is intermittent and disproportionate in volume to the building stone which we know was moved.'[3] Of necessity, this article is largely tentative in character, but it is believed that it will help to throw useful light upon various matters. If it instigates further enquiry and debate regarding the problems involved, then so much the better.

As discussed in a previous article in this journal, rivers were a most attractive highway for freight in the long centuries before modern engines of one kind and another revolutionised our approach to the question of transport. Thus, even waterways which were very imperfect by present-day standards were sometimes hailed as possessing high promise.[4] Within the realities of medieval transport, heavily dependent on living muscle for its motive power, the ease with which substantial weights can be moved *at low speed* upon water would certainly have been a major consideration.

Regarding practical implementation, however, it has to be remembered that the rivers of the southern Fenlands have varied greatly in course at different times, and that there is continuing debate on such matters. Moreover, a number of now-extinct waterways existed in earlier periods, and their former role is not always clear, *e.g.* their actual navigability in terms of heavy freight-work. Further, it seems possible that periodic flooding in medieval centuries could sometimes have allowed barges (at least when not too heavily loaded) to operate more or less regardless of recognised river courses. Similarly, the question of short coasting-runs between various river-mouths has to be considered as a possible element in a number of medieval freight routes. It is entirely possible, therefore, that the freighting of Barnack stone to Peterborough involved a number of different routes at various times, reflecting changes in the underlying conditions.

Notwithstanding what has just been said, the most likely route seems to be along the Nene, as indicated in the accompanying diagram. On this basis, the stone would have been brought on sleds from Barnack to the nearest point on the Nene, and this overland component might perhaps have been lessened with a short channel running some distance northwards from the river.

1. H. C. Darby, *The Medieval Fenland* (Cambridge University Press, 1940), pp. 104-106.

2. This article is an elaboration of material prepared during 1991, in connection with the development of Peterborough Cathedral's visitor centre. A copy of this material (typescript and drawings) is included in the Local Studies Collection of Peterborough Central Library: H. J. K. Jenkins, 'Notes on Medieval Barge Traffic . . .' *N.B.* For clarity's sake, the place-names Peterborough *etc.* are used throughout this present article, rather than earlier designations.

3. Letters, Hutchinson to Jenkins, 24 April 1991 and 17 January 1992, in the papers of the Fenland Lighter Project, Educational Development Centre, Cottesmore Close, Peterborough PE3 6TP.

4. H. J. K. Jenkins, 'A Survey of the River Nene in the Reign of James I' *Northamptonshire Past and Present*, Vol. VIII (1991-92), pp. 190-196.

In suggesting that the waterborne part of the journey began in the vicinity of Wansford, it is appreciated that there is some evidence that Barnack stone intended for Bury St Edmunds may have been loaded onto barges further downstream, in the Castor area. Two surviving marker-stones, popularly known as 'Robin Hood' and 'Little John', were possibly associated with that particular route. However the freighting of Barnack stone to Bury St Edmunds was a matter which caused a good deal of monastic friction in the medieval period, evidently resulting in serious interference and restrictive practices at times.[5] Thus, it seems reasonable to believe that stone *for Peterborough* could have been taken onto barges at a point much nearer to the Barnack quarries than Castor.

Assuming a route which involved loading in the vicinity of Wansford, the freighting of stone from there to Peterborough would have meant a journey of about 10 miles, measured along the Nene's course. There are, however, considerable problems in determining the characteristics of that same course in medieval times. Indeed, the river may well have changed dramatically from one year to another, due to silting, alterations in the scouring effect of the current, and other factors. Nevertheless, it seems very probable that the Nene, in its natural flow and free of human modification, contained a number of moderate rapids between Wansford and Alwalton, due to changes in level which are nowadays accommodated by locks and so forth.

In this context, the possible effect of damming (temporary or permanent) is a tricky question so far as it concerns the period when Barnack stone was being moved in large quantities. Matters are further complicated by the distinct possibility of multiple channels in parts of the Wansford-Alwalton river, with perhaps uncertainty as to which was the mainstream. Dams or weirs would clearly have affected water-levels to some extent, and their presence would not have ruled out barge traffic, thanks to the technique of portaging discussed hereafter. This point illustrates how uncertain the term 'navigable' can become when considering river transport in distant centuries. In its modern sense, navigable generally indicates the passage of vessels while constantly afloat, but in medieval times this interpretation might well have been viewed as too narrow.

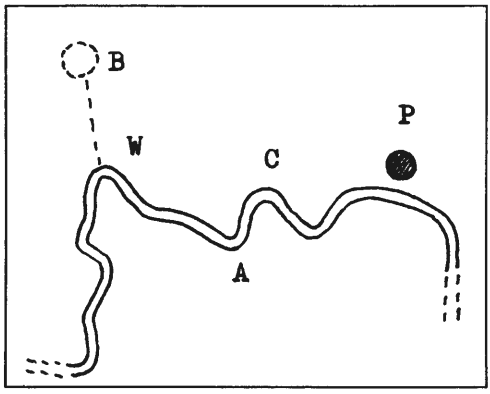

FIG 1: DIAGRAM OF PART OF THE MEDIEVAL NENE
B, general area of Barnack quarries; W, Wansford stretch; A, Alwalton stretch; C, Castor stretch; P, construction site at Peterborough. It is probable that, apart from other work, a great deal of dredging was carried out to facilitate the freighting of stone. *N.B.* The Nene's main channel is shown here running southwards from Peterborough towards Whittlesey Mere

However, considering the influence of the foundation associated with Peterborough, it is suggested that any existing dams or weirs between Wansford and Alwalton could have been temporarily breached, if the result was viewed as favouring the transport of stone – *i.e.* by returning the Nene to its natural levels. It is taken here that these natural levels, complete with rapids, would have been preferred.

Rapids could have been dealt with in one of two ways. The first method would have been akin to the technique of portaging, long used on undeveloped rivers in various parts

5. For comment on this, and related instances, *vide Victoria County History, Northamptonshire*, Vol. II, pp. 294-295.

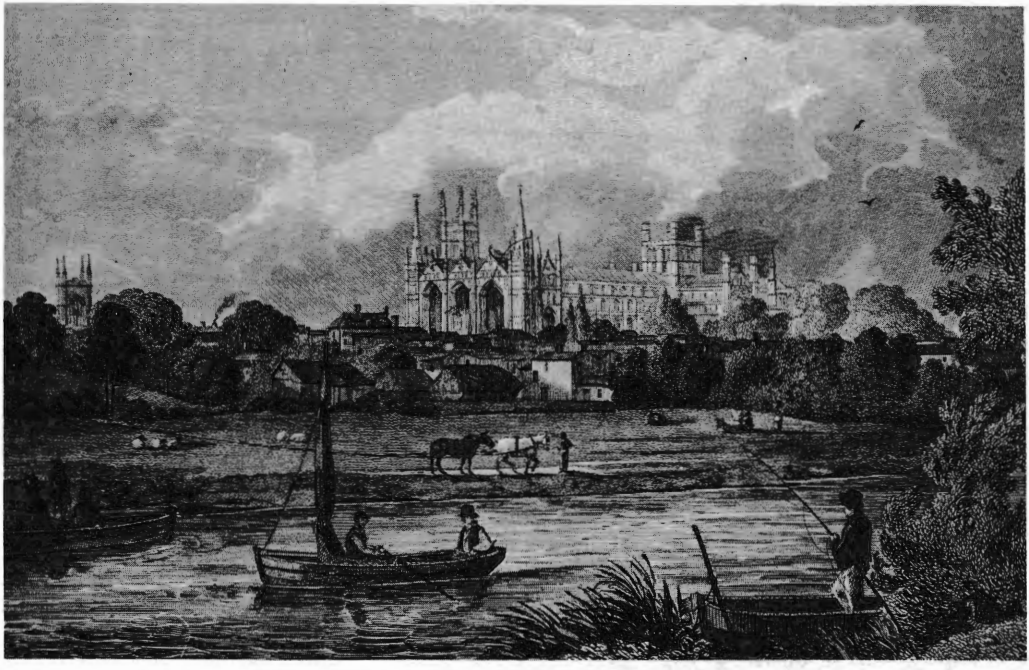

PLATE 1: CATHEDRAL AND RIVER
An engraving of Peterborough, 1831 *(Northamptonshire Libraries)*

of the world. Thus, upon approaching a stretch of rapids, the cargo would be landed and then dragged overland on sleds to a point just downstream of the hazard. Strictly speaking, a portage would also include dragging the barge itself, in a similar manner, so as to bypass the rapids prior to relaunching and reloading. But where a regular traffic in stone was involved, movement of barges overland would have been unnecessary. In practice, a separate barge (or barges) could have been maintained downstream of each set of rapids, and thus the stone, having been sledded overland, would simply be reloaded onto a fresh freighter for the next stage of its journey. In this way, the stone's descent of the Nene would have involved waterborne progress for the most part, punctuated with relatively short intervals of dragging on land. Procedures of this sort may have been used quite widely, overcoming a variety of waterway problems in various districts: such techniques are perhaps reflected in some instances of the medieval Fenland formula which referred to the movement of goods 'by land and by water'.

Since the rapids between Wansford and Alwalton were probably not very fierce, it seems more likely that the stone-barges there would have been manoeuvred through broken water by means of very long ropes running to each bank, with teams of men to tend them as necessary. Again, this second technique (sometimes referred to as 'tracking' a vessel) has been used widely in various parts of the world. The method described would have allowed passage of the stone in a single hull, constantly afloat. Moreover, since stone-barges would presumably have made their return upstream in an unloaded condition, this same technique would have been very suitable for negotiating rapids in both directions. While actually in the rapids, extra personnel would probably have been on board for the purpose of 'poling off' from various hazards along the river-bed.

In attempting to reconstruct the nature of

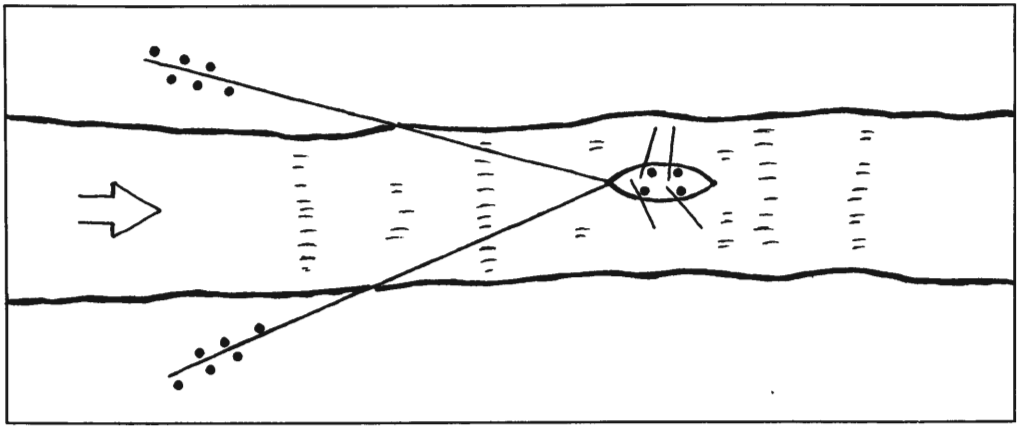

FIG 2: DIAGRAM TO ILLUSTRATE THE NEGOTIATION OF RAPIDS
Just a few men are indicated on each rope here, but the task could sometimes have required several dozen. Supplementary 'poling off', by additional men on board the barge, is also indicated

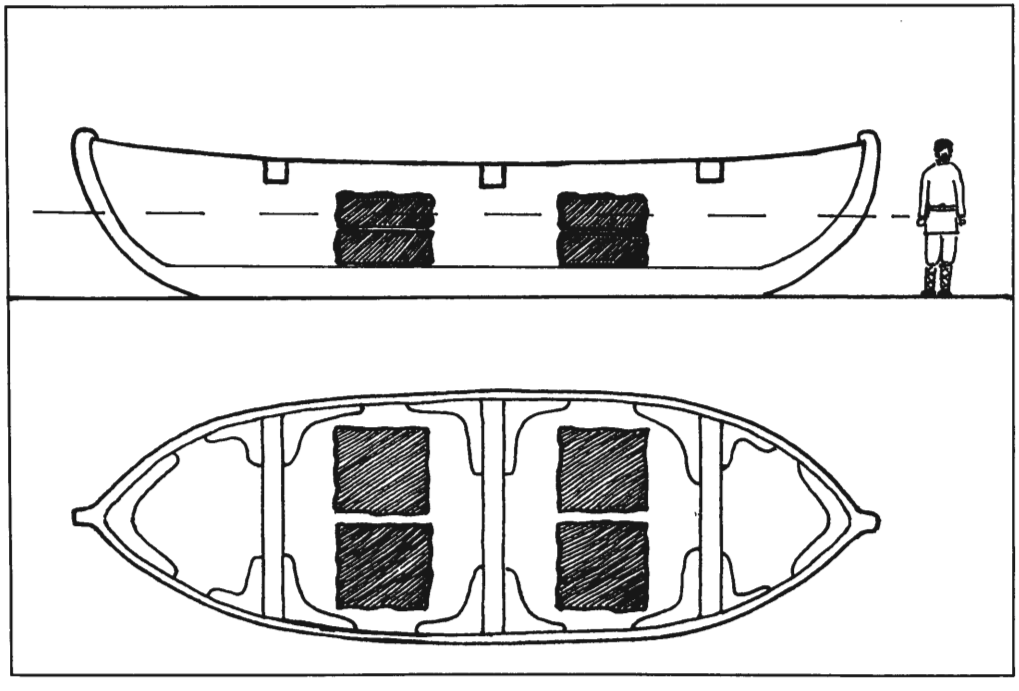

FIG 3: TENTATIVE RECONSTRUCTION OF A MEDIEVAL STONE-BARGE
Rough-and-ready building was probably the keynote. Not shown here, there might well have been heavy external wales of oak, end to end of the vessel, at various levels. The eight blocks of stone (shaded) would each have weighed about a tonne, and they are included simply to show the volume of a likely cargo. Shown 'double-stacked' here, they might well have been stowed differently for actual progress along a river

PLATE 2: THE BLOCKS OF STONE FROM WHITTLESEY MERE
During recent times, they have been moved to their present Engine Farm location, at the site of the now-drained Whittlesey Mere. (Photo: Neil Mitchell)

a medieval barge such as carried Barnack stone, there are undeniable problems due to lack of direct evidence. However, regarding the version shown in the accompanying drawing, the Curator of Archaeology, National Maritime Museum, has remarked that the 'general shape . . . seems perfectly plausible'.[6] In essence, it involves the flat-bottomed, double-ended (*i.e.* sharp, or at least rounded, at both bow and stern) style of construction which might reasonably be expected in a Fenland barge of the period.[7]

The vessel depicted would have measured about nine metres in length, with a beam of just under three metres. Ordinary laden draught would have been less than a metre. Immersed as indicated by the broken line (and taking the block co-efficient at a likely value of around 0.65) the total displacement would have been about 12 tonnes. Allowing for massive oak construction, the empty hull would have weighed about four tonnes, *i.e.* leaving a cargo-capacity of eight tonnes or so. When on a journey which involved rapids, though, such a hull might well have been loaded less heavily than this, thereby leaving extra freeboard available in broken water – something which a competent boatman would have desired.

It is impossible to say whether planking would have followed the clinker (overlapping) principle, or the carvel (edge-to-edge) one: clinker building seems more likely, however. In either case, the hull would almost certainly have been an open one, and there would have been a need for

6. Letters, Hutchinson to Jenkins, 8 July 1991 and 17 January 1992 – as note 3.
7. For discussion of the underlying requirements for such craft, and the consequences in terms of design, *vide* H. J. K. Jenkins, *Along the Nene* (Cambridgeshire Books, 1991), pp. 12-16.

massive cross-beams at gunwale-level so as to hold the sides in proper position when the vessel was loaded. It is probable that a medieval barge of this sort would have been roughly built: for example, the arrangement of wooden knees which braced the cross-beams might well have lacked true symmetry.

Presumably the exterior of the hull, at least, would have been given some sort of protective coating, but the composition of such applications in the medieval period is open to conjecture. In 19th and 20th century practice associated with the traditional freighters known as Fenland lighters, a mixture called 'charlico', made from coal-tar and horse dung, was generally considered essential as a safeguard against timber-boring creatures. It is not clear what materials were used for such purposes in the times before coal-tar was readily available.[8]

Medieval stone-barges of the sort outlined could have served satisfactorily on many routes within the region. As already noticed, Barnack stone found its way far afield, and it would appear that examples of it on the bed of the now-drained lake of Whittlesey Mere form an unintentional monument to some medieval barge accident.[9] The stone in question may possibly have been bound for Ely when it came to grief in the Mere's shallow waters, perhaps due to a combination of overloading and high winds which whipped up unusually steep waves.

The question of how cargoes of stone would have been loaded and handled on board a medieval barge is straightforward enough when considering individual pieces not exceeding 150 kilogrammes or so (blocks measuring, say, 50 cm x 50 cm x 25 cm). Simple manhandling, with several strong men lifting each stone, would have sufficed in such cases. However, for larger stones such as those indicated in the accompanying drawing, a crane or similar device would presumably have been necessary at each handling (*i.e.* loading or unloading). Once actually on board, sizeable blocks could well have been manoeuvred into place with crowbars and handspikes, the process being assisted perhaps by a lubrication of watery mud laid down as a preliminary upon the vessel's floor-boards. Ashore, wharves or similar structures allowing of a proper alongside approach would have been highly desirable, if not downright essential. Very large stones, weighing several tonnes apiece, would have posed considerable problems, calling for great skill from the personnel who dealt with them.

This point leads on to some comment regarding the number of men needed for the sort of operations envisaged on the medieval Nene. Under ordinary circumstances, on relatively quiet reaches, the propulsion of stone-barges probably involved quanting with long poles, or towing from one bank or the other by a small team of men.[10] A total complement of three or four per barge would have been enough for reasonable progress. Steering when under tow might well have been accomplished with a long oar trailed astern.

Negotiation of rapids would obviously have required a much higher number of men, probably several dozen. Equally, whenever loading or unloading was necessary (especially when large stones were being handled) plentiful manpower would have been essential.[11] Overall, though, the pace of such medieval barge traffic would presumably have reflected the period's leisurely construction procedures, and ideas regarding

8. For discussion of this matter, *vide* H. J. K. Jenkins, 'Charlico', *The Quant: Journal of the Norfolk Wherry Trust*, Spring Number 1991, pp. 34-35.

9. For some earlier comment on this, *vide* A. K. Astbury, *The Black Fens* (Cambridge, 1958), p. 44. In connection with a projected book on Whittlesey Mere, N. Mitchell has made a study of the four blocks mentioned, calculating their various weights as ranging from around three-quarters of a tonne to a little over one tonne, with the heaviest measuring 94 cm x 73.5 cm x 73.5 cm.

10. There is evidence that oxen were used, ashore, for dragging sleds that carried blocks of Barnack stone. For barges, though, men seem the more likely towing-agent.

11. At times, the barge traffic may well have involved substantial intervals between arrivals: thus, most of the men necessary for negotiating the rapids could well have spent the greater part of their working-day at some other labour, perhaps agricultural.

the brisk delivery of materials probably played scant part in the undertaking.

To summarise, it must be repeated that the nature of this subject, and the limits of the available evidence, mean that much of the present article has to be of a tentative nature. It should be remembered that, at different times within the medieval period, a variety of routes and vessel types may have been used for fetching Barnack stone to the Peterborough area. For navigation of the medieval Nene, though, the type of barge discussed here seems a likely one, since craft of around this size would have carried a worthwhile load while at the same time retaining considerable handiness in everyday operation.[12]

Whatever its uncertainties and possible errors, this article may at least occasion further discussion of medieval barge traffic – not merely as it affected Peterborough, but also within the context of the region's transport as a whole. However, unless some new and major archaeological find comes to light, it would appear that such discussion will necessarily remain tentative in many of its findings.

12. As late as Cromwellian times, at least one supporter of water transport advocated the use, on the Nene, of freight-boats with a normal cargo-capacity of around eight tonnes. Various advantages were claimed for craft of that size, including the point that they would be 'nimble' – *vide* H. J. K. Jenkins, 'A Mid-Seventeenth Century Scheme for Navigation on the River Nene', *Northamptonshire Past and Present*, Vol. VIII (1989-90), pp. 25-30.

Acknowledgement

A preliminary version of the basic material for this article was submitted to the following: Mr Richard Hillier, Local Studies Librarian, Peterborough Central Library; Mr M D Howe, Peterborough Museum Services Curator; Ms Gillian Hutchinson, Curator of Archaeology, National Maritime Museum, Greenwich. Warmest thanks are due to all three for valuable comment. Grateful acknowledgement is also due to Mr Neil Mitchell, Resident Engineer, Peterborough City Council, for information kindly furnished regarding Barnack stone evidently sunk in Whittlesey Mere during medieval times.

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A PATRON OF PROMISE
CHARLES, 7th EARL OF NORTHAMPTON

PETER McKAY

Charles, 7th Earl of Northampton (1737-63), has been characterised as 'a person of great promise . . . (who) might have had a considerable influence on English taste' had not an early death in 1763 from consumption cut short whatever promise there was.[1] The purpose of this article is to examine such information as survives about his activities as an art-collector and patron.

Charles was born in Lisbon on 22 July 1737, the seventh child of Charles Compton and Mary Lucy, daughter and coheiress of Sir Berkeley Lucy of Broxbourne, Herts. Despite being a cadet son of George, 4th Earl of Northampton, Charles senior had been sent on a Grand Tour in 1717 which lasted for some three years.[2] The purpose of this Tour appears to have been strictly educational, designed to fit him for a post in the diplomatic service. This he achieved in 1728 when he was appointed *chargé d'affaires* in Lisbon.

It was not until 1745 that the family returned to England and between 1746 and 1753 Charles junior and his younger brother, Spencer (who later succeeded as 8th Earl of Northampton), were sent to Westminster School as boarders. Charles then went to Christ Church College, Oxford, while Spencer took the first steps towards a military career. By this time it would have been increasingly apparent that the young Charles (if he survived) would succeed to the Earldom and he and his brother appear to have spent at least part of their vacations at the family's main country seat, Castle Ashby in Northamptonshire.[3]

Quite when Charles (junior) set out on his Grand Tour is not recorded and such details as we have about it are sparse, but we know that in June 1757 he was in Padua for it was here that he met John Murray, the British Resident in Venice, and, more importantly, Robert Adam who was travelling homeward.[4] He also visited Venice in 1757; Lady Mary Wortley Montagu records he was 'here last year' in a letter written late in 1758.[5] Charles then appears to have proceeded to Rome where his presence is noted in April 1758.[6] The fact that his name is linked with Sir Brook Bridges (1733-91) in both Padua and Rome suggests that the two may have been travelling companions at this time. By May 1758 he was in Florence where, at the end of December, he received news of his uncle's death and his own succession to the Earldom of Northampton. He arrived back in London in April 1759.[7]

At each stage of his Tour, Charles made important contacts or commissioned important works of art. The significance of the meeting with Robert Adam will be referred to later. In Rome Charles was painted by Batoni, a full length portrait of considerable virtuosity now in the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge. Charles is painted dressed in a red velvet fur-lined cloak and leans nonchantly against a neo-classical table on which are a few books and a bust of Minerva. On the other side of the picture is a chair on the arm of which stands a whippet balanced against Charles' upper body. Despite the

1. E. K. Waterhouse, *Three Decades of British Art 1740-70* (Philadelphia, 1965), p. 43.
2. See P. H. McKay, 'The Grand Tour of the Hon. Charles Compton 1717-20' *Northamptonshire Past and Present* Vol. VIII number 4 (Northampton, 1986), pp. 241-55.
3. William Bingham, 6th Marquess of Northampton, *History of the Comptons of Compton Wynyates* (London, 1930), p. 181.
4. J. Fleming, *Robert Adam and his Circle* (London, 1962), p. 234.
5. *The complete letters of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu* ed. R. Halsband (Oxford, 1865-7), Vol. III, p. 195.
6. Historical Manuscripts Commission: Twelfth Report, Appendix, Part X *The Manuscripts and Correspondence of James, 1st Earl of Charlemont* (London, 1891), Vol. I, p. 247.
7. A. Fairfax-Lucy, *Charlecote and the Lucys* (London, 1990), p. 208 and *Horace Walpole's Correspondence* ed. W. S. Lewis (Yale 1937-82), Vol. 21, p. 272.

playfulness of the whippet, the whole composition is redolent of the antique. The Minerva is a bust version of the Minerva Giustiniani, a sculpture much appreciated by English Grand Tourists, while the pose of Charles himself is reminiscent of that of the Farnese Mercury. Even the lion feature on the table leg is probably taken from a fragment of a sarcophagus in the Capitoline Museum.[8] All these features can be found in other Batoni portraits, but they blend with particular felicity in the Northampton portrait.

Whilst the commissioning of a portrait from Batoni was almost standard practice for Grand Tourists in this period – Batoni painted some 154 known British sitters – very few of them ever bought any other paintings from him. Thomas, 2nd Baron Mansell (c.1741), Sir Watkin Williams-Wynn (c.1769) and Henry, 8th Baron Arundell (c.1774) commissioned original paintings; the Duke of Northumberland commissioned two copies after Raphael for Northumberland House. Henry Hoare II (c.1751), Sir Charles Turner of Kirkleatham (c.1751), Sir Matthew Fetherstonhaugh (c.1752) and Sir Humphrey Morice (1762) are also known to have acquired pictures from the artist in Rome.[9] When therefore Charles Compton commissioned *Hector's Farewell to Andromache* from Batoni, he was joining a select group of patrons whose taste, however, cannot be regarded as notably progressive. He differentiated himself from this group when, as a companion piece (presumably), he also commissioned from Gavin Hamilton the first of the latter's sequence of paintings based on the Iliad, namely *Andromache bewailing the death of Hector.* This commission is recorded by John Parker, Lord Charlemont's protégé, who flattered himself 'I should have been employed too' had not his reputation been undermined by James Russel and Thomas Jenkins in league with Pirenesi in the latter's quarrel with Charlemont.[10] Both the Northampton paintings are now lost, but the Hamilton was engraved by Cunego and a preliminary sketch by Batoni for his painting exists in Besancon. E. K. Waterhouse speculated that neither painting ever, in fact, arrived in England[11] but the Hamilton was displayed at the Society of Artists in 1762 while Horace Walpole records the Batoni as hanging in the Duchess of Beaufort's London house in 1760.[12] The Duchess was Charles' mother-in-law.

The art historian, Winckelmann, describes both paintings at considerable length in a letter to the connoisseur Wilhelm Muzell-Stosch dated 3 January 1761. The descriptions are such as to suggest that both paintings were finished (or very nearly so) by this date. Further, although the tone of Winckelmann's letter is propagandist, it hints at a degree of rivalry between Hamilton and Batoni in the execution of their respective commissions. The letter reads:

> . . . The latest in the arts concerns two paintings for Lord Compton. One is by an English *(sic)* painter, Hamilton, and depicts the body of Hector lying stretched out on a bed with his mother, Andromache, and other ladies of the Trojan royal house weeping over him. The composition of the painting is good and the figures are drawn with some expertise and taste. The heads are almost Grecian in their conception and their attitudes show the calm that the ancients sought, but the colours are hard, unattractive, coarse and somehow lacking in power; this will deter those who cannot look beyond the colouring from searching for and finding the good points.
>
> The other is by Pompeo Battoni and shows Hector leaving Troy for the last

8. A. M. Clark (ed. E. P. Bowron *Pompeo Batoni* (Oxford, 1985), p. 272.

9. A few other Britons acquired paintings (other than portraits) by Batoni or copies by him after earlier masters during the 18th century. Whether these were acquired from the artist or on the secondary market is not known. Some of them are now lost. *Pompeo Batoni* cited above pp. 54-5 and *Pompeo Batoni and his British Patrons* (Kenwood exhibition catalogue, London, 1982), p. 7 and 17-9.

10. *Charlemont MSS,* p. 247.

11. *Three Decades,* p. 43.

12. *Anecdotes of Painting in England (1760-95)* ed. F. W. Hilles and P. B. Daghlian (Oxford, 1937), p. 18.

PLATE 1: CHARLES, 7th EARL OF NORTHAMPTON
by Pompeo Batoni (*Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge*)

PLATE 2: ANDROMACHE BEWAILING THE DEATH OF HECTOR
Engraving by Domenico Cunego after the painting by Gavin Hamilton
(*National Galleries of Scotland*)

time, bidding farewell to Andromache, who is trying to hold him back, asking him not to risk his life for the sake of their married love and the love of their only son, who is being held by his nurse; the child is afraid of the plumes on Hector's helmet and is cowering back in the nurse's arms. The only good thing about this painting is the colouring, which is felicitous and gleaming like the school of Rubens; it lacks the manly tone of Raphael, Titian and their school, but it will take in all those who lack knowledge.

The drawing is not faulty, but the figures lack the Homeric spirit which they should have, and it seems as if the painter has had the sketch for this painting done by a young Frenchman of the Academy, some of whom adhere to him, in the coarsest way, and set up their easels with ideas like this. The attitudes of the figures are exaggerated, Andromache is behaving like a veritable Fury while Hector is performing a dancing-step like a pupil of Marcel (the Parisian teacher of 'mode gratie'). The heads are vulgarly conceived, Andromache looks like a hundred common faces to be seen not in Rome and Florence, but the far side of the Alps. Hector, who was a young prince, is lean and haggard like a soldier during the Thirty Years War. The architecture in the background shows no understanding of the atmosphere of the time.

If you want to pass on this criticism, I would be grateful if you would not mention my name, as Battoni is supposed to be a friend of mine and he is an honest man.[13]

13. J. Winckelmann, *Briefe* ed. W. Rehm (Berlin, 1954), Vol. II, p. 111.

Sir Thomas Robinson saw the Batoni in Rome in August 1760 and was similarly dismissive, describing it as '. . . il Signor Ettore, la Signora Andromache & il fammillo Astyanax on the Theatre in the Haymarket'.[14]

In the absence of either painting it is pointless to try to comment on these opinions, but it is clear that, while Batoni looked back to the earlier Roman masters, Hamilton's painting was conceived in the flat frieze-like style which characterised his Iliad paintings. These paintings were crucial in Hamilton's development and *Andromache bewailing the death of Hector* was the first in this important project – 'my great plan for life' as he referred to it in 1777.[15]

Charles appears to have left Rome for Florence in late April or May 1758. Horace Mann does not mention him in his correspondence with Horace Walpole until some months after he had left Florence. It is, however, clear from this reference, where Charles' character is being discussed, that Mann had formed some sort of acquaintanceship with him. It is also clear from the same correspondence that the future Earl of Northampton had formed a liaison with a Florentine lady which had to be broken off abruptly when news of the 6th Earl's death arrived in late December 1758.[16]

Not all Charles' time in Florence was spent in fashionable philandering and the enjoyment of the society of the smart Anglo-Florentine set which revolved round Mann and Lord Cowper. Although there is no documentary evidence, it appears that while he was there he commissioned a series of busts from Francis Harwood as well as a copy of the Medici Venus and another statue of a full sized figure which a Castle Ashby inventory of 1774 refers to as a Mars. All these still survive at Castle Ashby and comprise a unique collection of Harwood's work.

Very little is known about Harwood, but he is first recorded in Florence in 1753. In September 1758 he was commissioned to carve a figure of Equity for the triumphal arch originally erected outside the Porta San Gallo to celebrate the accession of Francis Stephen, Count of Lorraine, to the Duchy of Tuscany after the death of the last of the Medicis in 1737. In the following year a trophy for the same arch was ordered. From the contracts for both of these commissions, it appears that Harwood was collaborating with Giovanni Battista Piamontini whose studio he took over in 1762. Sir Lawrence Dundas and the Duke of Northumberland featured among his patrons as did Catherine the Great towards the end of his career. He died in 1783.[17]

Perhaps it was the prestige resulting from the Porta San Gallo contract which influenced Charles in selecting Harwood. The seven busts at Castle Ashby (which are all signed and dated) are as follows:

Julius Caesar	1758
Marcus Aurelius	1758
Sappho	1758
Cicero	1758
Seneca	1759
Faustina	1759
Homer	1760

The Seneca and Cicero are nude; the others are draped. All are mounted on identical socles of yellow marble which appear to be contemporary with the busts themselves. The full-sized Venus is neither signed nor dated, but appears to have been either in progress or finished by December 1759 when it is mentioned in a letter from Mann to George Bubb Doddington.[18] This Venus and the busts are marble, but the 'Mars' is plaster. While it has to be said that there is no documentary evidence to connect this Mars with Harwood, an inventory of 1774 shows it in the new 'Figures Room' at Castle Ashby

14. Quoted in *Pompeo Batoni*, p. 277.
15. See D. Irwin, 'Gavin Hamilton: Archaeologist, Painter and Dealer' *Art Bulletin*, Vol. XLIV (1962), pp. 87-102.
16. *Horace Walpole's Correspondence*, Vol. 21, p. 303.
17. See J. Fleming and H. Honour, 'Francis Harwood' in *Festschrift Ulrich Middeldorf* ed. A. Kosegarten and P. Tigler (Berlin, 1968), pp. 510-6 and R. R. Villani, 'La decorazione plastica dell'Arco di Porta San Gallo a Firenze' *Paragone*, No. 437 (Florence, July 1986), pp. 53-67.
18. Quoted in *Horace Walpole's Correspondence*, Vol. 25, p. 93.

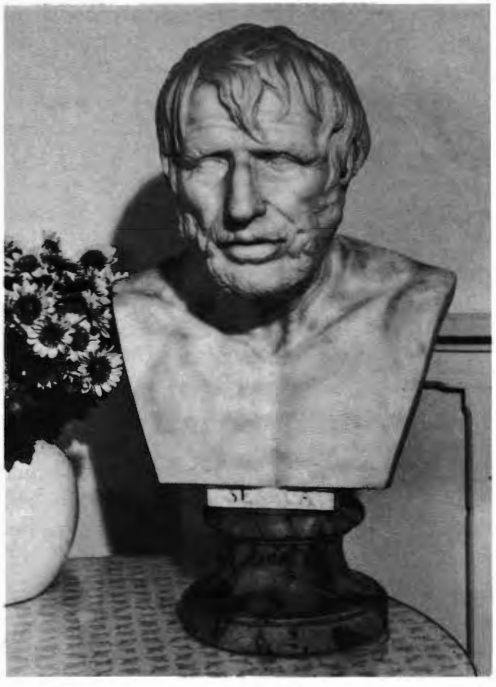

PLATE 3: BUST OF SENECA
by Francis Harwood
(*Marquess of Northampton*)

with the other Harwoods.[19] It is also of the correct size and stance to relate to the Venus and appears, in short, to be an essential element in the scheme for this room. The stance and the arrangement of the arms of this Mars appear to have been suggested by the Vatican Meleager, one of the best known statues of the age, but the torso seems to be modelled on that of a replica in black marble of the Borghese Ares.[20]

The late 1750s witnessed a turning point in English sculpture. If English painters had by this time managed to achieve a leading position in the home market *vis-à-vis* foreign competitors, the same was not true of sculpture. Roubiliac, Rysbrack and Scheemakers still dominated the market in England, producing work which was beginning to look rather outdated in the light of a growing interest in the classical originals, an interest for which the Duke of Richmond was catering when he opened his gallery in 1758 with Wilton in charge.

Matthew Brettingham Junior was in Rome between 1747 and 1754 buying statues and busts for Lord Leicester and a number of other clients including Lord Dartmouth and William Locke of Norbury.[21] For Lord Dartmouth he purchased busts of Seneca and Cicero copied from antique models by Simon Vierpyl who was in Rome between 1750 and 1756. Vierpyl – a pupil of Scheemakers – also produced work for Lord Charlemont. Wilton similarly was in Italy between about 1748 and 1755 and produced *inter alia* a Venus for Lord Rockingham and a Bacchus for Lord Tylney. Just a few years

19. Compton Family Documents at Castle Ashby No. 994. Exactly when this Figures Room was set up is difficult to tell, but when Horace Walpole visited Castle Ashby in 1763 he mentioned only the Venus and the Faustina both of which appear to have been in the Great Hall at that date. The room was therefore probably not created until John Johnson's rebuilding of 1771-2. Walpole also notes the date of the Faustina as 1748 (rather than 1759) and this incorrect date is adopted by R. Gunnis in the various editions of his *Dictionary of British Sculptors 1660-1851* and by Fleming and Honour in their article on Harwood cited above. H. Walpole, 'Visits to Country Seats' *Walpole Society*, Vol. 16 (Oxford, 1928), p. 53.

20. This black Ares or Mars was certainly in Florence in 1734 when it was illustrated in A. F. Gori's *Museum Florentinum*, Vol. III, Plate 37. It would therefore have been known to Harwood. I am most grateful to Dr. R. R. Villani for drawing my attention to this statue. Whether the Mars can be added to the Harwood corpus must, however, remain speculative unless and until some further documentary evidence emerges. Harwood's known works (as of 1986) are all referred to in note 44 of Dr Villani's article cited above, but it is perhaps legitimate to single out the funeral monument to William, 2nd Earl Cowper in Hertingfordbury Church (H. Belsey, 'A newly discovered work by Francesco Harwood' *Burlington Magazine*, January 1980, pp. 65-6).

Since Dr Villani's article was written, Christie's have sold two further busts by Harwood. The first on 6 July 1986 was of Oliver Cromwell dated 1759. The second, on 9 April 1987, was a portrait bust of a young negro in black marble. This bust, which can be traced to Stanwick Hall, the Yorkshire seat of the Duke of Northumberland, whence it was sold in 1922, is now in the J. Paul Getty Museum, Malibu, California.

21. 'Matthew Brettingham's Rome Account Book 1747-54' ed. J. Kenworthy-Browne *Walpole Society*, Vol. 49 (Oxford, 1983).

later, in 1758-60, an almost exact contemporary of Charles Compton and a near neighbour in England, John, Lord Brudenell, was in Rome and while there collected some 20 pieces of antique sculpture.[22]

The taste for classical sculpture was therefore growing in 1758, but was hardly yet commonplace. 'Is there really any taste for sculpture (in England) above that of a looking-glass-polished chimney-piece . . .' asked Horace Mann in his letter of 9 November 1753 to Horace Walpole. If the answer was a positive no in 1753, the issue was less clear in 1758. That Charles Compton should have commissioned from Harwood such a substantial scheme shows a person very sure of his own taste even though that taste was not yet universally accepted.

As mentioned above, Charles left Florence for home on receipt of the news of his uncle's death and arrived back in England in April 1759. Lady Mary Wortley Montagu was right when she said of Charles that 'he is of a humour likely to marry the first agreeable girl he gets acquainted with at London'.[23] He married, in September 1759, Anne Somerset, eldest daughter of the 4th Duke of Beaufort. What was probably the marriage portrait by Thomas Hudson is now in the possession of the Laing Art Gallery, Newcastle upon Tyne, and, even allowing for a certain amount of flattery by the painter, shows an extremely handsome young lady.

Meanwhile Robert Adam was, through Lord Charles Hay of Limplum (younger brother of the Marquess of Tweeddale), pressing for the employment which Charles had promised some two years earlier in Padua.[24] So, during 1759-60, plans and drawings were produced for two major projects. The first was for a new stable block and steward's house to replace the existing 17th century buildings. The second was for a rebuilding of the Great Hall of Castle Ashby House. Drawings relating to these projects are now in Sir John Soane's Museum in London as are a set of floor plans. These plans

PLATE 4: BUST OF FAUSTINA
by Francis Harwood
(*Marquess of Northampton*)

perhaps suggest that a more substantial refurbishment was envisaged, taking in all the space under the Great Hall roof which may already have been showing signs of deterioration; it collapsed in 1771. In the area of the Figures Room on the first floor plan there are some manuscript alterations presumably by Adam which make use of the 17th century oriel window to create an octagonal room. It is tempting to suggest that the Tribuna in the Uffizi may have been the inspiration for this little sculpture gallery. But no work was carried out for Charles' more immediate concern appears to have been the remodelling of the late 17th century parkland.

Although Robert Adam produced a landscaping scheme, 'Capability' Brown was also called in, and his 'Plan for the Intended Alterations' (which is vastly more imaginative than Adam's) was accepted. Both these

22. J. Dallaway, *Anecdotes of the Arts of England* (London, 1800), pp. 337-9.
23. *Letters*, Vol. III, p. 195.
24. *Robert Adam and his Circle*, p. 260.

PLATE 5: ANNE, COUNTESS OF NORTHAMPTON BY THOMAS HUDSON
(*Laing Art Gallery, Newcastle upon Tyne, Tyne and Wear Museums*)

designs survive in the archives at Castle Ashby. It appears from Brown's cash book that a contract for remodelling the parkland was signed on 14 October 1761 when Brown received £50.0.0 from the Earl for his Plan. Although Castle Ashby was a relatively early commission, it can hardly be claimed that the 7th Earl was blazing any new trails in employing Brown. Nevertheless it was certainly an important commission as far as the Earl was concerned and was potentially a great deal more expensive than any of the other acts of patronage he undertook. Perhaps this commission can also be taken as illustrative of the breadth of Charles' interests; they did not stop at paintings and sculpture.

Charles and his young wife did not, however, have much chance to contemplate the progress of Brown's work. The first (and only) child of the marriage, Elizabeth, was born on 25 June 1760 at the Northamptons' London house in Brook Street and shortly thereafter letters from Charles and Anne to the Duchess of Beaufort (now in the possession of Lord Chesham) begin to mention, somewhat ominously, Lady Northampton's 'cough'. It was perhaps this that persuaded Lord Northampton to accept an appointment as Ambassador to Venice, to return the greetings of the Venetian Senate to George III on his accession.[25] This appointment was announced on 16 May 1761, but because of the tardiness of the Venetian ambassador in London, credentials were not issued until 26 August 1762.[26] Charles therefore had the opportunity of officiating at George III's coronation on 22 September 1761.

The young Lady Elizabeth was dispatched to her grandmother at Badminton and the Northamptons and their entourage left London in late August 1762 for Venice. The Secretary of the Embassy, Richard Bagot, son of Sir William Bagot of Blithfield, Stafford (later Baron Bagot) was one of the party and travelling with him was the young James Wyatt (1746-1813). Whether the Northamptons would have known of this young recruit may be doubted, but it has been suggested that Wyatt's first significant commission after his return to England in about 1768 was due to this connection with the Compton family.[27] It is interesting to note that on the way to Dover the Northamptons stayed with Sir Brook Bridges at Goodnestone, Kent, for a day or two. Once on the continent the party travelled via Paris and Lyons and took the Mont Cenis pass to Turin. They reached Venice on 17 October.

Scarcely had she settled in Venice before Lady Northampton wrote to her mother about a young man who was to paint a portrait of her in the character of a Madonna with her daughter in her arms, the likeness to be taken from a miniature on her bracelet.[28] This undoubtedly refers to the portrait by Benjamin West now in the Bass Museum of Art, Miami Beach, Florida.

Benjamin West had arrived in Italy as a young man of 21 in July 1760. Ill health dogged these Italian years, but in Rome he came under the influence of Mengs particularly as well as other neo-classicists like Gavin Hamilton. It could well have been John Murray, whom West had already painted, who effected the introduction between the Northamptons and the young West, but there is no evidence for such a link.

However the commission occurred, it was somewhat adventurous of the Northamptons to employ a relatively unknown painter like West. And the form of the painting is unusual. It is a conscious essay in the style of Raphael even if the spacial relationships within the picture refer to Correggio's *Madonna and Child with St Jerome* which West had copied a month or two before he arrived

25. Lord Bute's younger brother, Lord James Stuart-Mackenzie, was originally proposed for the embassy, but the Venetians apparently felt somewhat slighted at the appointment of the brother of a peer and demanded a peer in his own right. Lord Northampton was therefore given the job instead. *Horace Walpole's Correspondence*, Vol. 21, p. 508, n. 10 and Vol. 23, p. 235. Walpole is not however the most reliable commentator when it comes to the Comptons.

26. D. B. Horn, *British Diplomatic Representatives 1689-1789*, Camden Society, 3rd Series, Vol. XLVI (London, 1932), p. 85.

27. J. M. Robinson, 'Temple of Delight', *Country Life* (4 July, 1991), p. 112.

28. Letter in the possession of Lord Chesham dated 29 October 1762.

in Venice.[29] It is not in the new neo-classical style for which Lord Northampton had shown his support some four years earlier, but refers back to an earlier brand of classicism which was to become more influential in German rather than British painting.

The story thereafter is a tragedy which all contemporary witnesses recognised. Lady Northampton, by now gravely ill, left Venice in April 1763 to try to recover her health in Naples – Charles accompanied her as far as Florence, but by this time he himself was also gravely ill; he had caught his wife's tuberculosis. Anne died in Naples on 18 May, and Charles finally presented his credentials on 29 May. In these ceremonies he was supported by, among others, Alexander, 4th Duke of Gordon, Lord William Gordon (son of the 2nd Earl of Aberdeen), Lord Warkworth (son of the Duke of Northumberland), the 2nd Earl of Massarene, Sir Roger Mostyn and Mr Thomas Dundas (son of Lawrence Dundas).[30] John Murray was so concerned about Charles' health that he withheld the news of Anne's death until the required ceremonies had been performed. There were doubts whether Charles could manage even this.[31] Immediately afterwards, he left Venice, some said for Lisbon, his birthplace. He managed to get no further than Lyons where he died on 18 October.

Tragic though his death undoubtedly was, the 7th Earl's influence stretched forward. In particular Charles' brother, Spencer, who succeeded him, continued to employ Brown at Castle Ashby and enabled him to produce one of his finer landscapes. Unfortunately this employment had to be terminated in 1774 when the 8th Earl went broke and left England to spend the rest of his life in Switzerland. Further, it is difficult to believe that Spencer would have employed Benjamin West in 1767 or 1768 to paint a large family group of himself and his family in his new park had not that Venice portrait of Lady Anne been commissioned some five years earlier.

It may also have been that, under the 8th Earl, Robert Adam managed to get something to his design built at Castle Ashby. Although the evidence is slight, it is probable that the Menagerie, a charming little eye-catcher in the Brown landscape, was built within a year or two of 1764. And for this date it is of a design far too advanced for Brown to whom Dorothy Stroud has assigned the building.[32] Any attribution to Adam can, however, be based only on stylistic evidence and must therefore be regarded as speculative.

And finally, what of the 'Figures Room'? As stated earlier, the Great Hall roof collapsed in 1771 and John Johnson of Leicester was employed to rebuild both the Great Hall and the Figures Room. Whether he saw Robert Adam's designs may be doubted, but somehow the octagon idea was retained. Unlike Adam, however, Johnson ignored the oriel window (by changing the floor level in the window bay) and used a basically square floor plan.[33]

The 8th Earl's bankruptcy in 1774 led to the sale of Batoni's *Hector's Farewell to Andromache* and presumably the Hamilton was sold at the same time. At all events, neither has been recorded since then. Lady Elizabeth Compton, Charles' daughter, inherited the Batoni portrait of Charles himself as well as the West and Hudson portraits of her mother. In 1782 she married Lord George Augustus Cavendish, later 1st Earl of Burlington of the second creation, and so it was that these portraits passed into the Cavendish family. In 1868, presumably

29. H. von Erffa and A. Staley, *The Paintings of Benjamin West* (Yale, 1986), pp. 14-23 and catalogue numbers 676 and 673.

30. There is a full account of these ceremonies in the *London Gazette*, No. 10324 (21-25 June). This is reprinted in *The History of the Comptons*, pp. 185-7. Lord Warkworth also gives a long description of his Grand Tour journal. Duke of Northumberland's MSS at Alnwick Castle, MS146.

31. *Horace Walpole's Correspondence*, Vol. 22, p. 151.

32. D. Stroud, *Capability Brown* (London, 1975), p. 107.

33. N. Biggs, *John Johnson* (Chelmsford, 1991), pp. 24-5. The room referred to is now the Billiard Room. In the late 19th century one of the walls was removed in order to turn the adjoining room into a Smoking Room.

as an act of family piety, the 3rd Marquess of Northampton commissioned Henry Duke to make copies of the Batoni and the Hudson; these were then at Latimer. At the same time a copy was also taken of Reynolds' portrait of Lady Elizabeth (now in the National Gallery, Washington). These copies are still at Castle Ashby.

If E. K. Waterhouse found Charles Compton 'the kind of young man for whom the neo-classical artist was lying in wait', he was only echoing Robert Adam's view that, 'with an estate of £17,000 per annum to work upon', the Earl represented a most desirable patron.[34] It is difficult, however, to see Charles as the sort of passive patron these remarks might seem to imply. The record shows that most of Charles' commissions were forward-looking, even adventurous. His early death at the age of 26 appears to have deprived them of the significance they might have commanded had he lived longer. Batoni's *Hector's Farewell* was apparently sold for £70 having cost £300, while the Hamilton made so little impact on contemporaries in England that it was lost without trace. Much the same can be said of the Harwoods; they are very much products of their period and would soon become unfashionable when antique originals began to become obtainable. It is interesting, though pointless, to speculate how the Earl's taste might have developed had he lived longer. As it is, however, the record is not unimpressive.

34. *Three Decades*, p. 43 and *Robert Adam and his Circle*, p. 260.

POEM:

HENRY KINGSLEY AT BARNACK (1830)

Barnack, you say? Do I remember Barnack?
Not a thing.
All I know is what I've been told.
No, I've never been back,
but that's where I was born –
and where I almost said goodbye.
I was lucky the gardener needed his barrow,
or my career would have come to a
premature end,
aetatis six months.

It was simple jealousy:
a newborn baby, the youngster of the house,
spoilt, claiming all the attention,
and children can be very cruel.
There was the wheelbarrow, there the pond,
there was I, gurgling in my cot.
They wheeled me to the pond and dumped
me there.
And there I lay, sinking to my doom,
until the irate gardener rescued me.

I'm told there was an awful to-do:
they were sent to their rooms with
a spanking, without supper.
Neither George nor Charlotte remember
it now.
Neither do I.
I remember nothing of Barnack;
I can't even remember the gardener's name.

TREVOR HOLD

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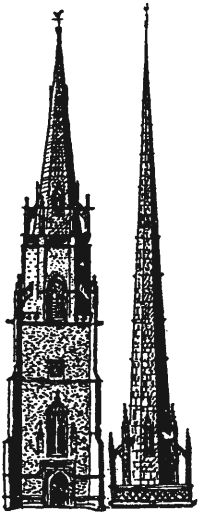

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POTTERSPURY'S CLERICAL MATHEMATICIAN

J. D. CLAMP

On the wall of the north aisle of the parish church of Potterspury, Northamptonshire, there is a memorial tablet in white and black marble *(Plate 1)*. Many churches have similar plaques commemorating those who have been loyal churchmen or benefactors, or members of the local gentry. What makes this one worthy of a second glance? Already aware of the connection between John Hellins and the school at Potterspury it was nevertheless a surprise to see the letters FRS after his name. The Royal Society of London, organised for the study of natural science, is generally considered to have been founded in 1660. Charles II took much interest in its proceedings and in 1662 granted a charter to the *President, Council, and the Fellows of the Royal Society of London for Improving Natural Knowledge.* The king's support, and the membership of several bishops, gave the Society valuable protection and allowed it to operate without incurring any suspicion that experimental science was a subversive activity likely to promote atheism. Research into how this particular 18th century parson could have become a fellow of this august body, in itself is not unique but rare enough to warrant further investigation, revealed a most interesting story, one not fully told before. It tells of a man who began his life in the poorest of circumstances but by his own efforts and genius, and some patronage, became not only a clergyman, but a distinguished mathematician and astronomer, and was recognised as such by being made a Fellow of the Royal Society. Hellins also left a legacy in Potterspury, where, with the help of the Duke of Grafton and the National Society, he established the village's first day school in 1817.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Towards the middle of the 18th century John Hellins was born at Ashreigney in Devon, the son of a poor labourer. It is not known whether he had any brothers or sisters. Most published references to him say that when he reached sufficient age (possibly as young as 10 years old) he was apprenticed by the parish to a cooper at Chulmleigh, just a short distance from his birth place, and remained at this trade until he was 20 years old. The Poor Law of 1601 ordered that in each parish the churchwardens and overseers of the poor should be empowered to levy a poor rate and use it for, amongst other things, apprenticing pauper children. Research into the archives, and in particular the apprenticeship papers relating to Chulmleigh, have so far not revealed the presence of anyone carrying out the trade of cooper in that village about 1760-70. There is no doubt, I am sure, that he learned some trade or other, and perhaps Polwhele in his *History of Cornwall* has the correct answer when he says that Hellins in fact learned the art of a cooper by 'looking on' and worked at that business till about 20 years old. If he was indeed a parish apprentice one wonders whether the parish overseers of the poor, in their effort to reduce the chance of his possible future dependency on the parish rate, realised that this was no ordinary boy they were helping. Probably using the opportunities for self-education afforded by suitable textbooks such as Emerson and other mathematical books published around that time, he taught himself elementary mathematics without help from a master. To be able to do this, it may be assumed that he must first have learned to read and write (Polwhele says that his early education at best did not extend beyond the four rules of arithmetic) at a time when only something like half of labouring men were literate. A local schoolmaster, after conversation with him, realised that John Hellins was more than a mere maker of pails. And when, soon after, an opportunity occurred for a young man to teach at a neighbouring school he recom-

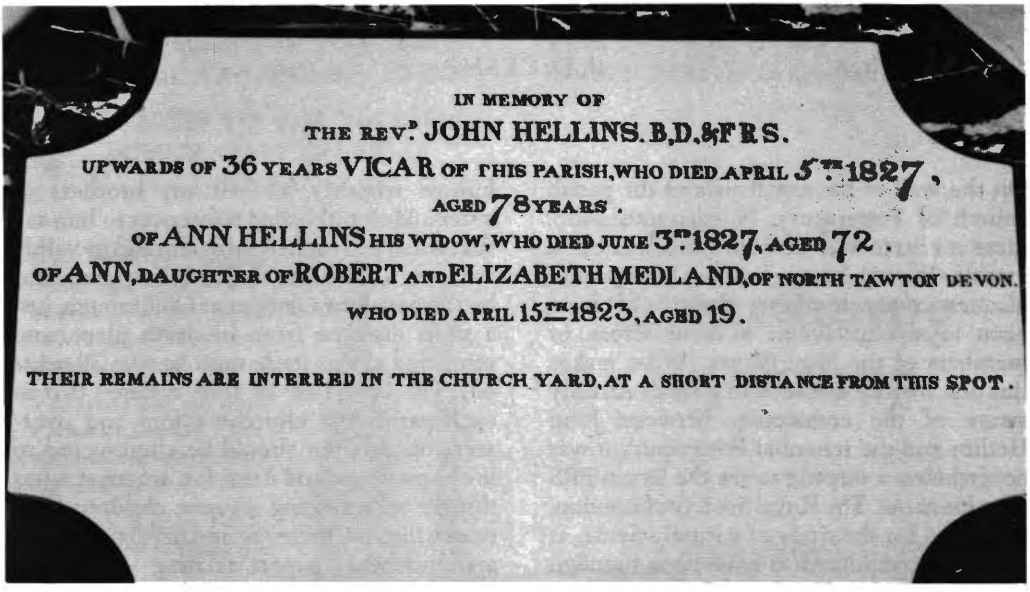


PLATE 1: HELLINS FAMILY MEMORIAL, Potterspury Church

mended him. And so Hellins became master in a small school at Bishop's Tawton near to Barnstaple, Devon.

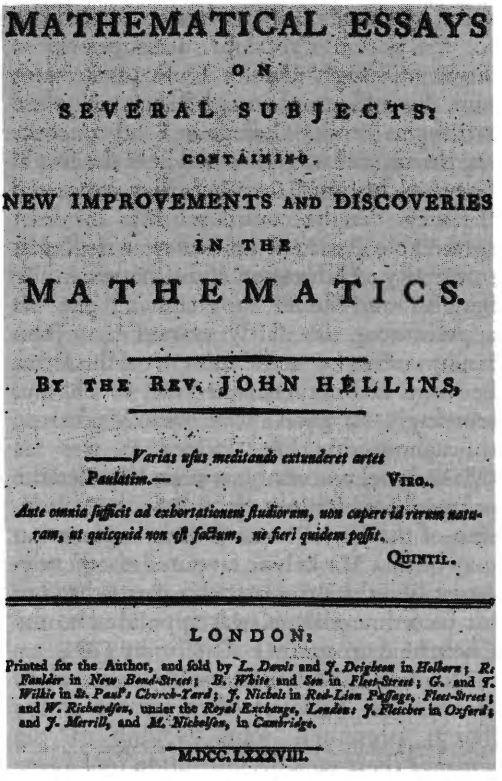
Whilst there he had the good fortune to make the acquaintance of Malachy Hitchins,[1] vicar of St Hilary and Gwinear, Cornwall, a meeting which was to change John's life for ever. With Hitchins's influence, he was, at Michaelmas 1773, made Assistant in the Royal Observatory at Greenwich under Dr Nevil Maskelyne,[2] the Astronomer Royal, where he would have received £86 per annum. The Assistant had free lodgings and ate at the Astronomer Royal's table. Perhaps some indication of Hellins's abilities at that time may be judged from the qualities to be required for an Assistant which Maskelyne wrote down in his memorandum book: 'To understand Arithmetic, Geometry, Algebra, Plane & Spherical trigonometry, & Logarithms; to have a good eye & good ears, be well grown, & have a constitution to enable him to apply several hours in the day to calculation, & to get up to the observations that happen at late hours in the night. To write a good hand, and be a ready arithmetical compute. If he knew something of Astronomy & had a mechanical turn so much the better. To be sober & diligent, and able to bear confinement. Age 20 to 40.' In 1774 Maskelyne went, with some reluctance according to his own account, to Scotland to carry out the experiment on the gravitational attraction of the mountain Schehallion for the Royal Society and for which, on his return, he was given the Society's highest award – the Copley Medal.[3] Hellins was left in charge of the observatory at Greenwich for the six months he was away. On his return, Maskelyne was not best pleased by what he found, but more of that anon.

1. Revd Malachy Hitchens, MA (1749-1809); according to his friend Polwhele, in his *History of Cornwall*, he worked as a miner when a boy; worked at Greenwich as a computor and his observations are recorded by Maskelyne[2]; later, as a comparer, he verified the calculations for the 'Nautical Almanack', a work which he performed until his death.
2. Revd Nevil Maskelyne (1732-1811); DD, FRS (1758); Astronomer Royal (1765); Copley Medal for *Observations on the Attraction of Mountains* (1775).
3. Sir Godfrey Copley (d.1709); FRS (1691); founder of the Royal Society's Copley Medal; MP Aldborough (1678-1681), Thirsk (1695-1705); ejected by Parliament (1643); restored (1660).

Hellins remained at Greenwich until March 1776 and while so employed he studied Latin and Greek and qualified himself for holy orders, and became curate at Constantine in Cornwall in 1779. How he was employed for the three missing years is not clear but it is remarkable that all this happened within about a decade of his teaching in the small school at Bishop's Tawton.

During his time at Greenwich, besides studying the classics, he extended his knowledge of mathematics because in 1780, while still in Cornwall, he submitted a paper, entitled *Theorems for computing logarithms,* which was communicated by Nevil Maskelyne to the Royal Society, which considered it to be of sufficient importance to be published in their *Philosophical Transactions* for that year. The Royal Society met regularly (and still does) to read and discuss scientific papers submitted to them; and the more important of these are published in the annual *Philosophical Transactions*, first issued in 1665. This was the first of nine papers by Hellins published by them between 1780 and 1811.[4] In 1782 was published *A new method of finding equal roots of an equation by division.*

According to Polwhele, either before or after he left Cornwall, John Hellins was teacher of mathematics to the children of Lord Pomfret[5] which may explain why in 1783 Hellins moved to Northamptonshire to become curate at Greens Norton (about three miles from Lord Pomfret's seat at Easton Neston) where he remained until 1790. According to Baker,[6] in 1785 he issued proposals for publishing *Mathematical Essays on Several Subjects: containing New Improvements and Discoveries in Mathematics*, and a book of that title was indeed published in London in 1788. The book contains seven essays altogether and the first two appear to be those already mentioned as having been published in the Royal Society's *Philosophical Transactions* in 1780 and 1782 respectively. A list of subscribers, 238 in all, reads like a roll



MATHEMATICAL ESSAYS

ON

SEVERAL SUBJECTS:

CONTAINING

NEW IMPROVEMENTS AND DISCOVERIES

IN THE

MATHEMATICS.

BY THE REV. JOHN HELLINS,

——*Varias usus meditando extunderet artes*
Paulatim.— VIRG.

Ante omnia sufficit ad exhortationem studiorum, non capere id rerum natura, ut quicquid non est factum, ne fieri quidem possit.
QUINTIL.

LONDON:

Printed for the Author, and sold by *L. Davis* and *J. Deighton* in *Holborn*; *R. Faulder* in *New Bond-Street*; *B. White* and *Son* in *Fleet-Street*; *G.* and *T. Wilkie* in *St. Paul's Church-Yard*; *J. Nichols* in *Red-Lion Passage, Fleet-Street*; and *W. Richardson*, under the *Royal Exchange, London*: *J. Fletcher* in *Oxford*; and *J. Merrill*, and *M. Nicholson*, in *Cambridge*.

M.DCC.LXXXVIII.

PLATE 2: TITLE PAGE OF HELLINS' *MATHEMATICAL ESSAYS,* 1788

of local clergy and gentry and includes the Duke of Grafton, the Duke of Marlborough, the Earl of Huntingdon, and the Earl and Countess Pomfret, together with 12 bishops, including the Archbishop of Canterbury. There are several names from Devon and Cornwall and many Cambridge Fellows, a few from Oxford, and 10 Fellows of the Royal Society including its President, Sir Joseph Banks. In 1787 he published a revision of Fenning's *The Young Algebraist's Companion* (a book he himself may well have made use of).

It would seem that Hellins was not completely committed to the life of a village parson and probably only saw it, as many others did, as a means of obtaining an income and a house so that he could continue with his scientific work, because in 1790, spon-

4. (R)oyal (S)ociety archives.

5. Polwhele, *History of Cornwall*, Vol. V, p. 107.

6. G. Baker, *History & Antiquities of the County of Northampton*, Vol II, p. 222.

sored by Davies Gilbert,[7] he was a candidate for the post of Professor of Astronomy at Trinity College,[8] Dublin. Unfortunately for him, his old employer, Maskelyne, when writing to Trinity College in 1790 concerning the time that Hellins had held the fort at Greenwich some 16 years earlier, expressed the view that he considered him the least serviceable Assistant he had ever had.[9] His inferiority of education and situation in life he also considered to weigh against his appointment. It's fairly certain that John Hellins never knew the contents of this letter because Hellins remained in touch and seemingly on good terms with Maskelyne throughout his life. Indeed it was he (Maskelyne) who, only six years later, led the proposal for Hellins's election to the fellowship of the Royal Society! One explanation may be that Maskelyne favoured another ex-Assistant, John Brinkley, who, partly through his recommendation, was appointed to the Chair of Astronomy at Dublin in 1791.[10]

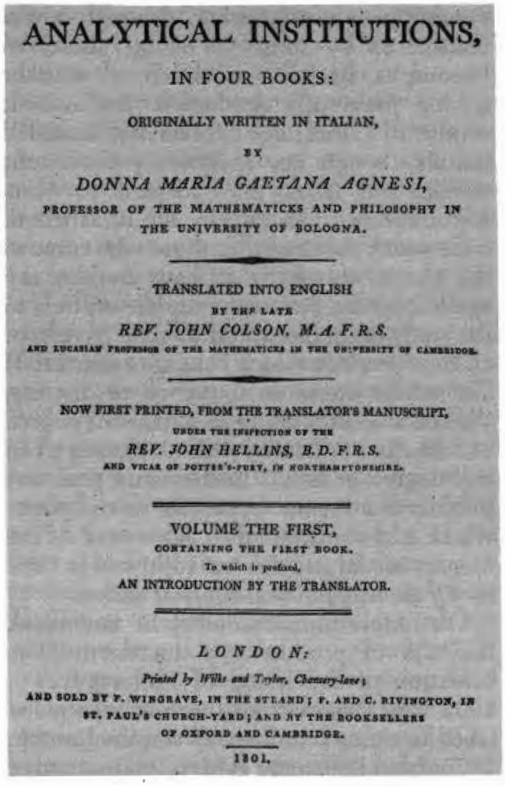
Dublin's loss was Potterspury's gain when Henry, Earl Bathurst (then patron of the living) presented John Hellins to the vicarage there, and his institution took place on 2 September 1790. Before the end of the year he was appointed a Surrogate of the diocese of Peterborough and was therefore able to issue marriage licences and probates of wills.[11] Potterspury (with a population of 1,144 in 1801) was like other large villages in south Northamptonshire in which the male population worked mainly on the land and the women and girls were employed in lace making. His parochial work there continued for almost 37 years alongside his scientific achievements. In 1791, soon after he arrived in Potterspury, he wrote two of the tracts in Maseres's *Scriptores Logarithmici.*

In 1794 the Society published another of Hellins's papers entitled *Dr Halley's quadrature of the circle improved: being a transformation of his series for that purpose, to others which converge by the powers of 80.* In the winter of the same year he found time to make the journey to North Tawton in Devon where he was married on 10 November to Ann Brock.[12] He and his bride then returned to Potterspury.

In April 1796 he wrote a letter to Nevil Maskelyne giving a detailed account of a thunderstorm at Potterspury in which a large pollard ash tree was struck by lightning and destroyed (or as he so colourfully described it, *rent to shivers*).[13] His letter shows that he was well aware of the true nature of lightning. He continued his description of the actual strike by saying, 'Then came a bright flash of lightning, much like the flash of a large cannon when it is fired at dusk of evening; and about four seconds after it, a loud explosion very similar to the report of an heavy piece of artillery, and after that a roll of thunder.' Not the sort of metaphors one would perhaps expect a country parson to use. One may only conjecture that he might have had first-hand experience of these things whilst working at Greenwich or during his time in Devon. He certainly seems to have had some knowledge when Windham,[14] the minister of war, was projecting his new military system in 1806 John Hellins furnished all the calculations and tables on which it was based. In his letter he also gives details, in a most scientific manner, of the weather before, during and after the storm, the size and shape of the hailstones which fell, and measurements of the weight and size of the pieces of wood from the tree and the distance they were projected. He also relates the experience of and the frightening effects on those who were near at the time, including a flock of sheep.

Just a month later, on 5 May 1796, the following recommendation was placed by Nevil Maskelyne before the members of the

7. Davies Giddy (1767-1839); name changed to Gilbert (his wife's); President of Royal Society (1827-1830); Treasurer of Royal Society (1820).
8. John Nicols, *Illustrations of Literary History*, Vol. VI.
9. Derek Howse, *Nevil Maskelyne*, p. 138.
10. *Ibid*, p. 155.
11. *(N)orthampton (M)ercury*, 2 October 1790.
12. North Tawton parish records; Devon Record Office.
13. RS archives; L & P.XI.10.
14. William Windham (1750-1810); Chief Secretary for Ireland (1783); Secretary of War (1794-1801); Secretary of State for War and the Colonies (1806-1807).



ANALYTICAL INSTITUTIONS,

IN FOUR BOOKS:

ORIGINALLY WRITTEN IN ITALIAN,

BY

DONNA MARIA GAETANA AGNESI,

PROFESSOR OF THE MATHEMATICKS AND PHILOSOPHY IN THE UNIVERSITY OF BOLOGNA.

TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH

BY THE LATE

REV. JOHN COLSON, M.A. F.R.S.

AND LUCASIAN PROFESSOR OF THE MATHEMATICKS IN THE UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE.

NOW FIRST PRINTED, FROM THE TRANSLATOR'S MANUSCRIPT,

UNDER THE INSPECTION OF THE

REV. JOHN HELLINS, B.D. F.R.S.

AND VICAR OF POTTER'S-PURY, IN NORTHAMPTONSHIRE.

VOLUME THE FIRST,

CONTAINING THE FIRST BOOK.

To which is prefixed,

AN INTRODUCTION BY THE TRANSLATOR.

LONDON:

Printed by Wilks and Taylor, Chancery-lane;

AND SOLD BY F. WINGRAVE, IN THE STRAND; F. AND C. RIVINGTON, IN ST. PAUL'S CHURCH-YARD; AND BY THE BOOKSELLERS OF OXFORD AND CAMBRIDGE.

1801.

PLATE 3: TITLE PAGE OF HELLINS' EDITION OF *ANALYTICAL INSTITUTIONS,* 1801

Royal Society:[15]

> The Revd John Hellins, vicar of Potter's Pury, Northamptonshire, and author of several improvements in the mathematics, which have been published in the philosophical transactions, being desirous of becoming a fellow of the Royal Society, we whose names are underwritten, do of our personal knowledge of him recommend him as deserving that honour, and likely to prove a worthy and useful member.

There then followed the signatories of ten members, who after the initial reading were to make the proposal on 10 separate occasions between 12 May and 15 December as the custom then was. Today, with so many more scientists, a greater number have to propose a new member. A ballot of members took place on 22 December and he was duly elected and joined the most coveted and illustrious fellowship of the Royal Society. The ten signatories were Nevil Maskelyne,[2] Antony Shepherd,[16] Samuel Vince,[17] Abraham Robertson,[18] Davies Giddy,[7] William Wales,[19] Alexander Aubert,[20] George Shuckburgh-Evelyn,[21] John Lloyd,[22] and Joseph Huddart.[23] The same year saw the publication by the Society of his paper entitled *Mr Jones's computation of the hyperbolic logarithm of 10 improved; being a transformation of the series which he used in that computation, to others which converge by the powers of 80. To which is added a postscript, containing an improvement of Mr Emerson's computation of the same logarithm.*

1797 saw the birth of his only child, a son, who was born on 23 October and was baptised William Brock Hellins in his father's church on 27 November.[24] William[25] was to

15. RS archives.

16. Antony Shepherd (1721-1796); FRS (1763); Plumian professor of astronomy at Cambridge; Fellow of Christ's Coll, Camb; Master of Mechanics to George III; canon of Windsor; friend of Capt Cook.

17. Samuel Vince (1749-1821); A Suffolk bricklayer; mathematician and astronomer; FRS (1786); Fellow of Sidney Sussex Coll, Camb; MA; professor of astronomy, Camb; Archdeacon of Bedford (1804).

18. Abraham Robertson (1751-1826); astronomer and mathematician; FRS (1795); Savilian professor of Geometry (1797-1810) and of Astronomy (1810-1826).

19. William Wales (1734?-1798); mathematician; FRS (1776); observer to Hudson Bay transit of Venus expedition (1769); and to James Cook's second (1772-1774) and third (1776-1780); mathematical master at Christ's Hospital, London (c.1781-1789).

20. Alexander Aubert (1730-1805); astronomer; FRS (1772); built private observatory at Loampit Hill, Deptford (1786) and at Islington (1788).

21. Sir George Augustus William Shuckburgh-Evelyn (1751-1804); mathematician; FRS (1774); MP for Warwickshire (1780-1804).

22. John Lloyd (1750-1851); FRS.

23. Joseph Huddart (1741-1816); hydrographer and manufacturer; FRS (1791); made fortune by manufacturing of patent cordage.

24. Potterspury parish records; (N)orthampton (R)ecord (O)ffice.

25. Revd William Brock Hellins (1797-1859); Matric 1814 (aged 17); BA, Lincoln College, Oxford; curate, Bow alias Nymet Tracey, Devon (1829); Asst Chaplain (1837); Chaplain County Gaol, Exeter (1839-1859).

be the first of the descendants of John Hellins to become an Anglican Minister, so beginning a dynasty which was to continue until the death of Canon Edgar William James Hellins, John's great-grandson, at Marnhull Rectory, Dorset, in 1946.[26, 27, 28]

One year later, John Hellins was given the Royal Society's highest honour when they awarded him their annual Copley Medal following the second of his papers to be published in the *Philosophical Transactions* for 1798, and entitled *An improved solution of a problem in physical astronomy, by which converging series are obtained, which are useful in computing the pertubations of the motions of the Earth, Mars, and Venus, by their mutual attraction.* The other paper also published that year was *A new method of computing the value of a slowly converging series, of which all the terms are affirmative.*

He contributed other writings on mathematics to the *British Critic* between 1795 and 1814. Some of the subjects covered were *Wale's Method of finding the longtitude,* Agnes's *Analytical Institutions,* Keith's *Trigonometry,* and Baily's *Doctrine of Interest and Annuities.* In 1801 he supervised the publication in London of the four volumes of the translation from the Italian by John Colson, FRS of *Analytical Institutions* by Donna Agnesi. A copy of this publication in the library of the Royal Society is inscribed in John Hellins's handwriting: 'For the Royal Society, from Revd J. Hellins.'

In 1800, when he was already over 50 years old, he received the degree of Bachelor of Divinity at Trinity College, Cambridge, having been a 'Ten Year Man'. Ten Year Men were generally clergymen without a university education who wished to dignify themselves with a degree. Under certain conditions it was possible, although it was considered by some to be an abuse, to become a Bachelor of Divinity without having previously graduated. An ancient statute of Cambridge University, intended mainly though not exclusively to benefit monks and friars, was adapted to post-Reformation conditions by the Elizabethan code which declared that 'those who come to the University after they have attained the age of 24 years, devote themselves entirely to the study of theology, if they shall have kept all the exercises, which belong to masters of arts whose attention is turned to divinity, shall be able after ten years to take the degree of bachelor of divinity, without having taken any degree in arts.'[29] In the same year was published a second appendix to the paper which had contributed to the award of the Copley Medal and this was followed in 1802 by *Of the rectification of the conic sections.*

On a more mundane level, he undertook the task of producing a document 'The valuation of the living of Potterspury' in 1808 which shows that there was no glebe land, no tithes (Potterspury was enclosed in 1775) but a house and garden and orchard of half an acre. The clear annual value of the living after deductions was stated to be £63 6s. 7d. He also produced a very detailed memorial or statement in pursuance of an Act for registering and securing the charitable donations relating to the parish of Potterspury and Yardley Gobion.[30] In it he gives his own personal views on the poor way in which some of the charities had been handled by the trustees, which indeed they had.

His last publication in the *Philosophical Transactions* was in 1811 and was titled *On the rectification of the hyperbola by means of two ellipses, proving that method to be circuitous, and a process in which a new theorem for the rectification of that curve is discovered.* A treatise on the same subject by Robert Woodhouse, FRS[31] was

26. Revd John Hellins (1829-1887); 1st son of [25]; BA, MA, All Souls College, Oxford; Chaplain County Gaol, Exeter (1859-1879).

27. Revd Charles Tertius Hellins (1833-?); 3rd son of [25]; ThA, AKC, King's College, London; vicar of Thuplow, Cambs; rector of Haddon.

28. Canon Edgar William James Hellins (1872-1946); 2nd child of [27]; BA, MA, LLB, St Catherine's College, Cambridge, DD; rector of Marnhull, Dorset (1908-1946); Prolocutor of Lower House of Convocation of Canterbury; Editor of *Canterbury Chronicle of Convocations.*

29. D. A. Winstanley, *Unreformed Cambridge,* p. 69.

30. Potterspury parish church records; transcript in NRO.

31. Robert Woodhouse (17??–1827); mathematician and astronomer; BA, Senior Wrangler and first Smith's prizeman (1795); MA (1798); FRS (1802); Plumian professor of mathematics at Cambridge (1822).

also written and both were discussed by an eminent Oxford professor and mathematician in the *Gentleman's Magazine* of January 1815. The article, originally written for the *British Critic*, was sent to John Nichols by Archdeacon Nares, whose concern in that publication had ceased, asking him to please insert it in the *Gentleman's Magazine*. The writer says that the distinction between the two authors was very obvious in respect that 'Mr Woodhouse borrows largely from books; Mr Hellins takes from his own store. The former delights in gallicisms and is often obscure; the latter is plain and perspicuous.'[32] Perhaps the distinction in styles may reflect their respective early education; one an outstanding Cambridge scholar and the other virtually self-taught but none the less a force to be reckoned with. Interestingly, Nares who seems to have taken a great interest in Hellins, in his letter to Nichols, refers to John Hellins as 'a most worthy and learned, but much neglected man (as to preferment)'.

Perhaps John Hellins's most lasting local achievement was his eventual success in starting a day school in Potterspury in 1817. I suppose this is not surprising when one considers the great changes that education, albeit not of a formal kind, had wrought in his own life, and who better than he to see the need in his own village which he described as 'a populous parish abounding with poor labouring men who are unable to give their children good instruction, or pay for it'. He must surely have been reminded of his own early life when he wrote that. The National Society for Educating the Poor in the Principles of the Established Church, whose title succinctly states its aim, was brought into being in 1811 to help finance the setting up of schools and the training of teachers, and to be the undoubted mouthpiece of the Church in education questions. By 1830 the Society had achieved one of its aims – to provide schools in most parishes in England. The setting up of the Northamptonshire branch of the National Society following a meeting in 1812 called by the Earl of Northampton, at the instigation of the Bishop of Peterborough, and held in the County Hall at Northampton under the chairmanship of the Lord Lieutenant,[33] may have prompted Hellins to think of a full-time school at Potterspury, and letters written to them show that the question of starting a school had been in his mind for some time. In January 1817 he wrote to the Revd Robert Baxter, secretary of the Northamptonshire Society, informing them that his hopes of seeing a National School established in the parish had been unexpectedly revived by the part the 4th Duke of Grafton was disposed to take in it.[34] The Duke's father had earlier taken an interest in education in the parish when, in 1808, he paid Jane Gleadack, a member of the Potterspury Congregational church, £4 for half a year's schooling for ten poor boys of Potterspury and Yardley.[35] By March of 1817, John Hellins was pleading the case for assistance from the Society by reporting that the room to be used as the schoolroom (belonging to the Duke) could not contain more than 50 children, whereas he expected from 70 to 100 (an overestimate as it turned out) to be willing to attend, and it would therefore need to be enlarged. By the end of March he wrote and informed them that the school had opened and that the Duke of Grafton had obtained a teacher who was to be paid £60 a year, £40 of which was to be subscribed by the Duke, who would also provide a school-house for him free of charge. Hellins also hoped to obtain about £6 or £8 per annum from two other land owners but he writes 'it would be imprudent to solicit subscriptions from the farmers at rack-rent'; an interesting observation when one considers that the Duke was most probably the landlord of these farmers.

32. *Gentleman's Magazine*, January 1815, p. 18.

33. *NM*, 14 March 1812.

34. George Henry Fitzroy, the great-grandson of the 1st Duke of Grafton (who was the natural son of Charles II and Barbara Villiers) was born in 1760, the eldest of 17 children. As Earl of Euston, he was returned with the younger Pitt as MP for Cambridge University in 1784 and remained so until he became the 4th Duke in 1811. He then took up residence at Wakefield Lodge in Potterspury. Like his father, he exercised much political influence having control of six parliamentary seats in Suffolk and Norfolk.

35. NRO, The Grafton Papers.

The new schoolmaster, Thomas Hall, came from the National Society's Central School in London. The teaching there was based on the educational theories of Dr Andrew Bell who advocated the *Madras* or monitorial system, which was dubbed the 'steam engine of the moral world' because classes were conducted using methods similar to those in factories. The eight-week teacher-training course was referred to as 'learning the system'. The Society held that a longer training would 'over-qualify' the teachers and cause them to leave teaching, and its low cost was considered to be one of its great advantages!

Just a month after the school opened, John Hellins was happy to report that:

> One effect of this school is visible in the streets of the village, in which, during school hours, hardly a boy is to be seen; whereas, before it was opened, fifty might be seen and heard every day, some playing, others quarrelling, cursing, swearing, and throwing stones at each other. Another effect, owing chiefly to the excellence of the master, is, that the boys in general like it very well; so that little ones not more than 6 years old, of their own accord, practise the formation of letters at home, evenings after they return from school. A third effect of the school is, that the boys now attend Divine Service every Sunday, under the eye of their Master; before it was opened, the greater part of them spent Sunday like any other day of the week.

The attendance at church 'under the eye of their master', besides curbing their obvious boisterous natures, had the added advantage of increasing the congregation, but probably more importantly it meant that they would not or could not join the Dissenters who, according to Hellins, instructed their boys and girls on Sunday in their Meeting House. In 1780 the Independents had built themselves a fine chapel and manse on a site, originally a farm called Pedder's Farm, which they had used for worship since about 1690, and were therefore well-established in the village.

Although we do not know exactly how old the children were who attended the school, by the remarks about the swearing and stone throwing it is probable that he is referring to older children, but his writing does tell us that children as young as six attended. By 1821 he is complaining that many who reach the age of ten or eleven are taken away and sent to work for the farmers and he is of the opinion that this circumstance is occasioned by some who have no good will towards the school. It is clear that the school was not intended to be one exclusively for boys but Hellins writes that no application for admission had been received from girls who, he says, were employed in lace-making from the age of five. The Revd Gowen Evans, writing to the National Society in 1832, in answer to a query about the education of girls in the village, said:

> There are in the parish many lace making schools and some of the mistresses hear them read, but the parents of the children are so tenacious of the profit arising from lace making that they rather discourage them.

There is nothing to suggest that things were any different in John Hellins's day.

The vicar, inspite of his obvious delight at the early success of the school, was still not at all happy about the accommodation and outlined to the Society the situation as follows:

> . . . with 50 boys attending, the different classes were so near to each other that the voice of one was an annoyance to the other and the air in the room became very unwholesome to breathe.

In June 1817 he was again pleading for assistance from the Society and asking that they increase their offer from £50 to £100 and also informing them that the Duke was prepared to take any extra expense upon himself. He was also to pay for the slates and books (such as those used in the Central School in London). His letter ends thus:

> How great a benefit to this parish and its neighbourhood the instruction of such an increased number of poor children would be, not only to the rising, but to future generations . . . begging leave to offer this one observation, that if, for want of money now, the new schoolroom should be built on a small scale, it is likely to remain so for ages.

John Hellins, if nothing else, was a realist! The Society was obviously convinced by his arguments because his request for assistance was favourably received and they agreed to contribute up to £100 towards the maintenance of the same. So the walls and roof of a new schoolroom, considered to be large enough to contain 80 scholars, allowing eight square feet to each (according to Dr Bell's allowance of space) was under construction by the Autumn of 1817. By March 1818 Hellins was able to acquaint the Society that:

> . . . the walls of our new schoolroom were built & the roof put on, last Autumn; and that the floor of it has lately been laid with bricks, the inside walls have been white-washed, the desks are put up, and the windows are prepared to receive the glass; so that I shall soon have occasion to apply for the money promised by your committee towards the expense of erecting it.

This schoolroom, somewhat changed, forms part of the present day primary school at Potterspury.

In 1822, 'notwithstanding the lack of patronage of some in the parish and the opposition of the sectaries of the village' (an understandable attitude when one considers the objectives of the National Schools), John Hellins attributed much of the success of the school to be due to the schoolmaster whom he describes as 'a man of good morals and good manners, who has an acquisition of Grammar far above what would be expected of a person of his situation, and is diligent in the school'. Hellins's letters also tell us that Thomas Hall, on Sundays, taught reading and writing to a few boys and girls of more advanced age who made him a very small compensation for pens and ink, and his trouble. When writing to the National Society he often makes further references to the opposition by the Independents in the parish.[36]

While John Hellins was mainly concerned with his day school, he informed the National Society in 1822 that there was 'a Sunday School for girls, into which at first, only twelve were admitted; and the whole charge of providing books for them, and paying a person to teach them to spell and read, and the Church Catechism, was for many years defrayed by Mrs Hellins: of late years the number of girls admitted into it has been doubled; and at present there are no fewer than 30.' This increased attendance at the Girls' school he says was in consequence of the support given to it by two of the Duke's daughters, Ladies Laura and Isobella Fitzroy. This school had the effect of reducing the attendance at the Nonconformists' Sunday School, and mention is made of this fact in the Independents' Meeting Minute Book.[37] John Hellins says that the National School also had an effect when he writes, 'the boys and girls which used to attend a Sunday School in a Meeting House in this village, have decreased in number from three score to less than one score'. This was certainly not true after 1823 when the Revd James Slye[38] became the pastor of the Independent church, reviving their fortunes and increasing the number of children in the Sunday School from 36 to 106 in his first year. By the next year the number had increased to 140. By this time, however, John Hellins was advancing in years and he mentions his failing health in one or two of his letters.

On 5 April 1827, John Hellins's remarkable life came to an end and his funeral took

36. According to Michael Reed, in his book *The Georgian Triumph 1700-1830*, interdenominational bickering prevented any state aid to education until 1833.

37. NRO, Meeting Minute Book of the Congregation of Protestant Dissenters, Potterspury: 1740-1892.

38. Revd James Slye (1795-1876); Pastor of the Independent Church, Potterspury (1823-1873).

PLATE 4: CEREMONY RENAMING POTTERSPURY PRIMARY SCHOOL
the John Hellins Primary School, 4th May 1990. The author of this article is at the beck (centre). On the right is His Grace the Duke of Grafton (*photo: the author*)

place at Potterspury on 9 April. His wife, Ann, followed him on 3 June. Their grave is on the north side of the churchyard and is distinguished by a tall marble cross, the whole surrounded by a wrought-iron fence. The plinth is inscribed on one side: Here Rest JH + AM + AM and on the opposite side: Looking unto JESUS.

This simple inscription gives no indication to the casual visitor as to why this rather elegant monument was erected. Indeed very few people in the village, until quite recently, knew of its existence and some of those who did were under the mistaken impression that it was erected to the memory of plague victims! JH and AM obviously refer to John Hellins and his wife Ann. AM refers to their niece, Ann Medland who is also buried there. Incidentally, John Hellins's son, William, married her sister, Elizabeth (his first cousin), in August 1827 in the church at North Tawton where his mother and father were married.

The eulogy addressed to the Royal Society by their new President, Davies Gilbert (one of the signatories to the proposal to make John Hellins a fellow of the Society and also the sponsor of Hellins for the post of Professor of Astronomy at Trinity College, Dublin) at their annual meeting on St Andrew's Day succeeding Hellins's death, contained the following reference to him: 'he was one of those extraordinary men, who, deprived of early advantages, have elevated themselves by the force of genius and of industry, to a level above most blessed with a regular education. . . . Retired to a small living in Northamptonshire, Mr Hellins became a pattern of philosophical calmness and content.

Far from the madding crowd's ignoble strife,
His sober wishes never learn'd to stray.

He seems to have said –

Curtatis decimis, modicoque beatus agello,
Vitam secrete in rure quietus agam.

I have known Mr Hellins for above forty years, and I can testify to his virtues."[39]

One wonders whether the speaker remembered, when he spoke of John Hellins in this way, the reactionary opinion he (Davies Gilbert) expressed in 1807 that:[40]

> Giving education to the labouring classes or the poor would be prejudicial to their morals and happiness; it would teach them to despise their lot in life, instead of making them good servants in agriculture and other laborious employment. Instead of teaching them subordination, it would render them fractious and refractory.

Here we have the paradox of someone praising a man, who if the writer's ideas had been adopted, would probably have still been a cooper with little more than the status of a labourer. Can we believe that the eulogist had changed his views so much in 20 years or was it that he, inspite of himself, recognised Hellins as the unique being that he undoubtedly was? How many labourer's sons had become clergymen in the Church of England at a time when those in holy orders were mostly from the gentry, or the educated classes? Perhaps he was lucky that he began his ministry in the West Country where many parsons were non-resident and pluralist. For this underprivileged boy to eventually become not only a vicar but a Fellow of the Royal Society is really quite remarkable.

Postscript

In recognition of the achievements of John Hellins and in particular his contribution to the education of the children of Potterspury, at a ceremony on 4 May 1990 attended by many parents, present and former pupils, staff, and distinguished guests including the local Member of Parliament and the Chief Education Officer, together with a representative of the Royal Society, His Grace the 11th Duke of Grafton officially renamed the school at Potterspury, *The John Hellins Primary School* and marked the occasion by planting a walnut tree in the school grounds. The one disappointment was no descendant of John Hellins could be found to attend this important occasion.

39. *Gentleman's Magazine*, February 1828.
40. Quoted by Roy Porter in *English Society in the Eighteenth Century*, p. 181.

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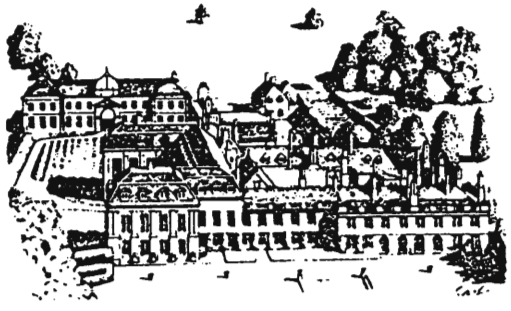

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WOOTTON HALL AND THE HARRIS FAMILY

DOROTHY RICE

The move of the Northamptonshire Record Society and the County Record Office to Wootton Hall Park seems an appropriate moment to look more closely at the history of the hall and of the family which has been most associated with it. From the latter half of the 18th century until the first decade of the 20th century the Harris family were Lords of the Manor of Wootton. Theirs is a fairly common story of advance and decline within a couple of centuries, spanning seven generations. Family success is dependent on several factors; perhaps the most crucial is the ability to produce male heirs, but financial stability and advantageous marriages are also very important. In his preface to *Five Northamptonshire Families 1540-1640*, Professor Habakkuk draws attention to another significant factor – 'the responsibility of personal character for changes in family fortunes.'[1] All of these played their part in the history of the Harris family. After four generations the direct male line failed and the family estate passed into a second phase, through a nephew, for a further three generations before a much more serious breakdown of the line. The financial success of the early Harris yeomen seems to revolve around farming interests coupled with very profitable marriages. John Harris II did particularly well in the marriage stakes and also extended his interests into horse dealing. One can clearly see in him the Habakkuk qualities of 'thrust and ambition'. The members of the second family phase seemed more content to enjoy with 'modest aquiescence' the profits and lifestyle that had been established. They lived the lives of gentlemen while renting out the bulk of the estate to local farmers. Wootton Hall has fared rather better in the battle for survival. The original house was found to be decaying after just over 100 years but instead of this being the end of the story a new hall was built which looks set to continue for some considerable time.

In Domesday Book Wootton was divided into two manors held respectively by Walter the Fleming of Wahull (now Odell) and Countess Judith, the niece of William the Conqueror. During the 13th century the Wahull manor was in the hands of the Bidun family of Lavendon and it is likely that they were the only significant resident lords of the manor before the Harris family. They were probably responsible for the building of the church and maybe also of the manor house, described in deeds dating from 1669. By the end of the 13th century both manors were held by the Preston family of Preston Deanery and from then on Wootton had a series of non-resident lords of the manor.

By the 17th century, Bridges tells us that 'The manor is now sunk and the Lordship divided amongst several freeholders'.[2] This is not actually true – the manor had been bought in 1669 by Sir Richard Raynsford of Dallington (Lord Chief Justice) and it passed to his son Francis and from Francis to his three daughters, Frances, Katherine and Lucy and then to their descendants.[3]

The Harris family was first linked with Wootton in 1686 when John Harris (of Harpole and later Weston Favell) married Elizabeth Kerby of Wootton, a significant marriage in Harris fortunes since the Kerby's had been one of the major landowning families of Wootton since at least the middle of the 16th century. It is probable that John and Elizabeth set up home in Wootton, because when their son Daniel married in 1714 he was described as being a yeoman or gentleman of Wootton. He married Mary Cowley of Harpole – perhaps meeting her while visiting the rest of the Harris family who were still in Harpole. On his marriage,

1. M. E. Finch, *The Wealth of Five Northamptonshire Families 1540-1640*, Northamptonshire Record Society, 1956, xi.

2. J. Bridges, *The History and Antiquities of Northamptonshire*, Vol. 2, p. 392.

3. Harris Papers, NRO ZB/76/28.

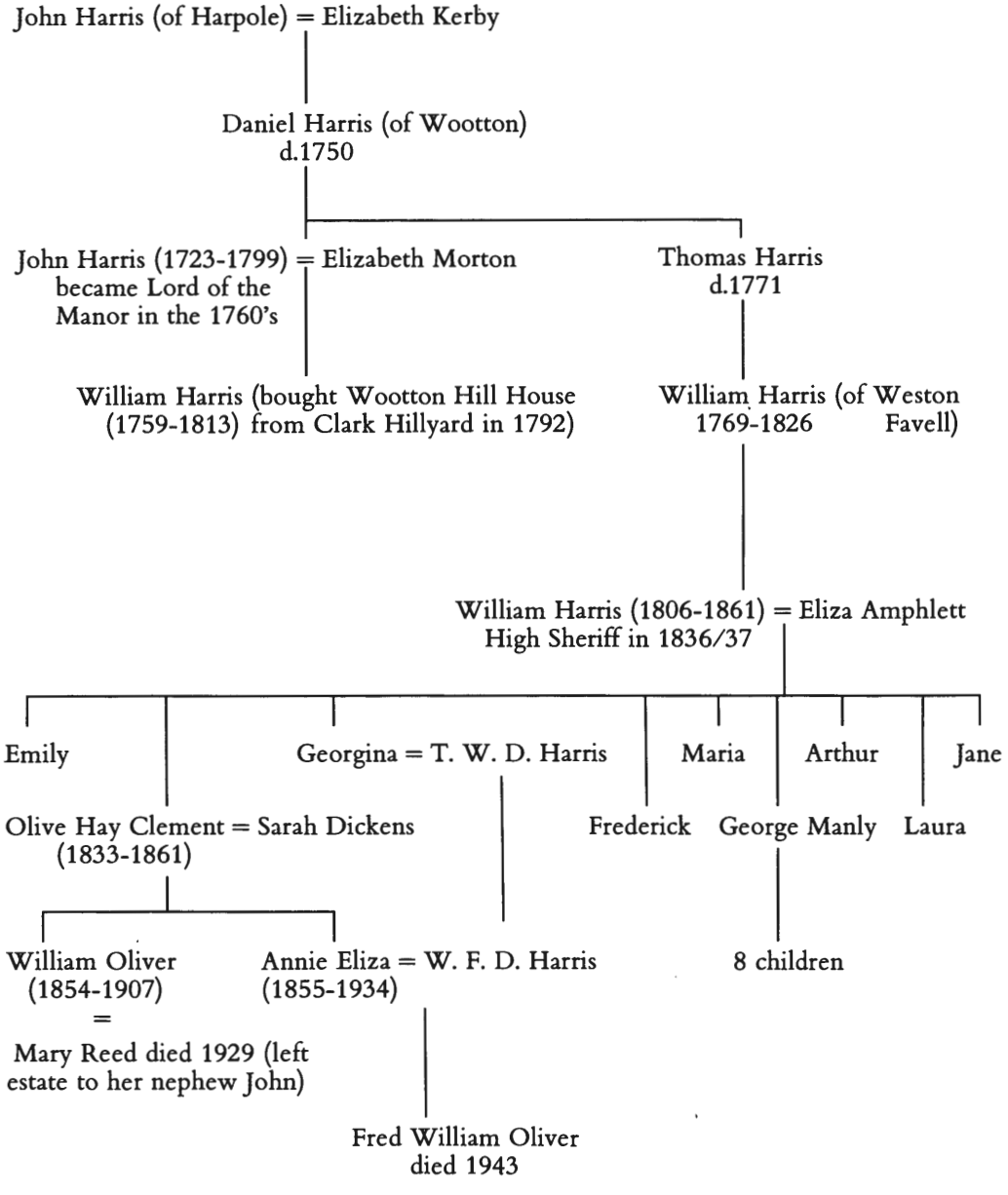

FIG. 1: HARRIS FAMILY TREE
(simplified version)

Daniel's uncle, William Kerby, settled a house and half a yard land on him. Daniel later indulged in some further property dealing but he remained only one of several substantial landowners in the parish, which at that time was farmed on a typical Midland Three Field system. Daniel and Mary had three sons – John who stayed in Wootton, William who became a tanner in Olney, and Thomas who went to live in Weston Favell (perhaps because of his grandparents).

John II inherited his father's property in Wootton which by then included all the Kerby estate but he had his sights set on even grander things. In the 1750's he was described as a horse dealer and with Northampton being a major horse market this must have been a profitable occupation. In 1753 he married Elizabeth Morton and the change in his fortunes became even more noticeable. The Morton family were probably second only to the Kerby's in the amount of land and property they held in Wootton.[4] The marriage settlement was very generous; £1,000 in cash plus houses and closes in the village and five yardlands in the open fields. Not content with this John soon began to buy up more land and property. In 1761 he took a big step forward and bought the first third of the Manor of Wootton from the descendants of Francis Raynsford. Over the next five years he bought the other two thirds to establish himself as undisputed Lord of the Manor.[5]

He chose a good time to do this as the face of Wootton itself was about to undergo dramatic change through Parliamentary Enclosure. When the Act was passed in 1779 John Harris accounted for 18 of the 50 yardlands of the parish. This together with his manorial rights gave him 530 acres out of a total of 1,688. Most of his allotments were in two large areas – one at the extreme west of the parish and one to the east of the village. A third, much smaller allotment of only 33 acres was made in a prime position to the west of the village overlooking the valley of Wootton brook and with views towards Blisworth.[6] This is where the story of Wootton Hall begins.

PLATE 1: WILLIAM HARRIS (1806-61)
High Sheriff 1836-7
(From a painting in the possession of his great, great grand-daughter Mrs P. Warner)

It would seem likely from its size and situation that this plot was intended for the establishment of a family estate but events did not quite go to plan. Perhaps John Harris had over-extended himself in the previous years or perhaps the cost of enclosure itself took its toll. Whatever the reasons, he had to take out mortgages on his estates and in 1780 he sold five acres of this small plot to Clark Hillyard and his wife Susannah.[7] Clark Hillyard was a member of Northampton

4. *Ibid.* ZB/76/several docs.
5. *Ibid.* ZB/76/28.
6. NRO. Wootton Enclosure Award 1779.
7. Harris Papers, NRO ZB/76/38.

PLATE 2: GEORGE MANLY HARRIS
(From a pencil sketch in the possession of his grand-daughter Mrs. E. C. H. Butlin)

Corporation and in 1780 Mayor. He proceeded to build a substantial house in white Kingsthorpe stone known as Wootton House. Harris fortunes presumably soon recovered as 12 years later John's son, William, bought back the land plus the house for £945.[8] It is impossible to speculate on why Clark Hillyard was willing to sell in such a short space of time but he seems to fit into a pattern that historians call 'pseudo gentry' where town aldermen built 'manor houses' and laid out grounds but rarely founded true landed dynasties.

The Harris family remained Lords of the Manor throughout the 19th century but the actual inheritance did not run smoothly. In 1813 they had their first succession problem when William Harris died without issue. He left the entire estate (including property in several nearby villages) in trust for William, the third son of his cousin William of Weston Favell. Why he picked William, who was only seven years old at the time, is a mystery and the other aspect of the affair is the involvement of the Spencer family, with the 2nd Earl becoming one of three trustees. Young William was removed from his parents and made a Ward in Chancery with Earl Spencer as his guardian. A letter from the 7th Earl confirms that William Harris lived with the family in London and went everywhere with them. He attended Charterhouse School and then took up a commission in the army.[9] For one of the leading families in England to become involved with the third son of a Weston Favell labourer is an interesting case of aristocratic patronage. Perhaps the answer lies in a mutual friendship with the Hillyard family. Clark Hillyard II was certainly close to Lord Althorp through a common interest in agriculture, and they were also all probably involved in the local Whig network.[10]

We know nothing of the fate of the house over this period but in 1832 William Harris took up residence, having left the army after some unspecified trouble. (This could have been involvement with a lady: although he married Eliza Amphlett of Kempsey, Worcestershire, in 1832, their eldest child Emily was born in 1831). Most of the Harris land was rented out to tenant farmers and William concentrated on raising a large family and becoming involved in local affairs – as a JP for the county and also as High Sheriff in 1837. The estate was still in the hands of trustees and the Spencer involvement was maintained. In 1842, Frederick Spencer, later the 4th Earl, applied for the Chancery court to name him and William Flesher new trustees. In 1844 these trustees applied for an Act of Parliament to enable them to sell some of the estate and buy alternative property. After life with the Spencers, William obviously thought that

8. *Ibid.*

9. Private Family Papers.

10. R. L. Greenall, 'Three 19th Century Northamptonshire Agriculturalists' in *Northamptonshire Past & Present* Vol. VIII, No. 1, pp. 433-55.

PLATE 3: WOOTTON HALL, THE SOUTH FRONT
(By George Clarke of Scaldwell c.1845)

his house was too small and 'inconveniently situated with reference to the lands of other proprieters'.[11] Permission being granted in 1846, an exchange of land took place with the Rector of Wootton, Rev. John Lighfoot, whereby William Harris took over the Rector's land situated alongside his house. In 1849 Whellan refers to the house as Wootton Hall but still describes it as 'a large handsome square mansion' which implies that the wings were not built at least when he surveyed the area.

For nearly 30 years the family and the house enjoyed a settled existence during which time William's eldest son Oliver Hay Clement was married to 18 year old Sarah Dickens whose father was the blacksmith in Wootton. All the indications are that William disapproved of his son or the marriage. He was presumably disappointed that Oliver did not take up the army commission that had been obtained for him by Earl Spencer.[12] Oliver turned to drink and in 1861, at the age of 28, he was found dead with a lump on his head – presumably from a fall. He had, however, already produced a son, William Oliver, and a daughter.

Unfortunately for the rest of William's children, he died just four months after Oliver and 12 years short of gaining full control of the estate. He did his best to ensure their welfare by drawing up a new will shortly after Oliver's death. He left his children £500 a year (the maximum allowed by the trust) for 500 years! No mention was made of Oliver's widow and two children but by the terms of the trust young William Oliver inherited the entire estate – in spite of the efforts of two of his Uncles, Frederick and George Manly Harris, to prevent this. As soon as William Oliver was 21 he applied for a change in the terms of the trust – helped, no doubt, by his mother's second husband, John Marsden, a lawyer! He was successful in his appeal and George Manly had to leave Wootton Grange, where he had lived with his own family and his two unmarried sisters. George's income from his father's estate

11. Act of Parliament, NRO YZ4587.
12. Private Family Papers.

ceased but his sisters continued to receive the £500 a year for their lifetimes.

This period also saw a decline in the fortunes of Wootton Hall. William Oliver married Mary Reed (the daughter of Sir Charles Reed of Northumberland) but he had poor health and spent little time in Wootton – preferring the milder climate of Devon. Wootton Hall was rented for many years by Thomas Phillips, the Northampton brewer, and later by James Dalgleish Kellie McCallum, the Chief Constable for Northants and also by Charles Becke, a local solicitor and Borough coroner. William Oliver died without issue in 1907 – a final blow to the Harris dynasty. His wife Mary inherited the whole estate and she returned to Wootton with plans to have Wootton Hall altered and improved. When work began in 1911, however, extensive dry rot was found and the whole building was demolished. It seems somehow fitting that the house and the Harris family line should die together. The hall, however, against the odds, gained a second lease of life when a new house was erected just south of the original structure. A similar design was used but on a larger scale and Bracknell brick was the main material with some Ketton stone.[13]

Mary Harris lived there until her death when everything was left to her nephew, John Reed of Northumberland, on condition that he changed his name to John Harris Reed. He fulfilled this condition but had little interest in Wootton and remained in the north of England. The furniture was sold by auction in 1929 and the Hall stood empty for many years. The Harris connection with Wootton was maintained for some time, however, as William Oliver's aunt, Georgina, and her husband Thomas Harris rented 700 acres (almost half the parish). Their son Frederick took over Home Farm and married his cousin Ann Eliza – William Oliver's sister. As Frederick's parents were also cousins this was probably not a good idea as their only son, Oliver, was mentally retarded. He died in 1943 and with his death went the last link between the Harris family and Wootton. Descendants of George Manly Harris still live in Northampton but not called Harris as the line of descent is via his granddaughter.

Wootton Hall was occupied by the army during World War Two and shortly afterwards sold to the County Council to become the County Police Headquarters. Wootton Hall Park has since become the home for several other local bodies. Apart from the Record Office these include the fire service and the archaeology unit. Most of the land continued to be farmed by tenant farmers until the late 1970's when it was sold to the Development Corporation to form the basis of Northampton's Southern Development.

13. *Notes and Queries*, Vol. IV – Wootton Hall, p. 65.

OBITUARY

VICTOR A. HATLEY

The following is the address given by Archdeacon Bazil Marsh at the Memorial Service at St Matthew's Church, Northampton on 30 December 1991.

When Victor was a boy the pattern of his life was already settled. He would follow his father in a career in the Midland Bank. When he was just 21, the death of his father gave him the opportunity of deciding what he would do. He decided he said, without any hesitation: I am going to be a librarian. He went to Durham to read History – a course to be recommended to any who would desire maximum benefit from Higher Education – and it is significant that the subject he chose for his Thesis was one which had to do with the life and service of a local community. He chose the Watford Board of Health as his subject.

I cannot help feeling that the Midland Bank was the poorer for losing him. His rare gift of being able to understand and grasp the detail of the most complicated of transactions, and his gifts of creative imagination, surely made him one who would have made annual profits larger and therefore annual reports more cheerful. The Bank's loss was scholarship's gain, and our gain.

Librarianship is about collecting useful information, and storing it in a way which makes it easily retrievable and therefore readily available to those who need it. Victor became a master of this art, as witness the college library shelves and those of the personal library at his home. In comparing notes with each other, many of us here today have found that we had the same experience, of mentioning to him some question whose answer we did not know, some piece of information we would be glad to have, and of Victor responding instantly with information from his own memory and immediately afterwards with material gathered from his library – to be followed within 24 hours by a brown envelope containing photocopies of relevant material – and guidance as to where to go next for further information. All on a wide variety of subjects, ranging from the history of Northampton and its shire during the last three centuries to the American Civil War, ships of all kinds, especially fighting ships and naval warfare, the work of Rennie Mackintosh in Scotland, and in Derngate and in a drawing room in The Drive, railways and industrial archaeology, the War on the Eastern Front, 19th century censuses, particularly the religious ones, the histories of the Spencer, the Wake and the Catesby families, the footwear industry. Add to these the curious business of the Puritan who took over Whiston, making it a Puritan conventicle, and the ardent Catholically-minded young men who founded the Guild of St Alban after the turn of the century in Northampton – and *more.* The range of Victor's interests and knowledge was stunning!

At the time of his death, he was helping with the projects of at least a dozen people. Names spring to mind – Peter Gordon, Joe Rajczonek, Simon Tebbutt keen to update the history of this parish church of St Matthew. And there were others, in Aberystwyth, Aberdeen, the South Coast, and abroad.

Just as the parent bird is inexorably programmed to respond to the open breaks of chicks in the nest, and willy-nilly must immediately set out to find food to fill them, so Victor was programmed, as it were, to respond to anyone who sought information. Former students at the College say that he appeared to them to be severe, formidable, a strict disciplinarian, even a martinet, even frightening. But they all agree that if they showed any real desire to learn more of a subject, Victor responded marvellously. He would take them round the library and return them to their desk with an armful of books and the promise of future advice on

where to go next. Most of all, they returned infected with his marvellous enthusiasm for the subject, convinced that what they had chosen was the most exciting and rewarding of all possible research projects. One student described how she had asked him a question which launched him into a hour and a half of information and explanation. 'If only,' she said, 'if only I had had a tape recorder going, there would have been my thesis!'

The facts and figures of history he mastered with quite exceptional thoroughness and accuracy. One who sat next to him at kindergarten reports that even at the age of six or seven he had an amazing memory for dates: those who know him will not be a bit surprised to hear that most of them were the dates of kings and queens. He enjoyed discovering and collecting and cataloguing facts and figures: he had the sort of mind needed for the work. I once asked him why he bothered to buy an Amstrad when he had already a computer inside his skull. But it was not this which provided the motive power which drove him on to more and more research. What delighted his mind and heart was the consistent – he would say, universal – evidence that the human spirit in high and low, poor and rich, is irrepressible. The individual human spirit is at the end of the day a match for even the most powerful military, political or economic or cultural movements and forces. For him, custom could never stale the infinite variety of human character, which was the true subject of his study.

And nowhere – so he believed and so he argued – was human character so varied and colourful, so comical and romantical, so *gall*ant and for that matter so gal*lant,* so resilient, so tough and so tender as he had found it to be through the ages in the people of the town and county of his adoption.

Much of what he knew about the town and county came from books and other documents, but at least as much came from personal experience, what he saw with his eyes and heard with his ears as, with his friend and colleague Bruce Bailey, he set off on his bicycle to examine and record the churches of the county. His knowledge of

PLATE 1: EYES TWINKLING BEHIND THOSE THICK SPECTACLES
Victor Hatley sharing amusement with HRH The Princess Royal and Mr James Anscomb at the opening of the new Record Office in May 1991
(By courtesy of Northamptonshire County Council)

our heritage of precious and ancient church buildings – and, in the county and Rutland and a bit of Warwickshire is an area holding the biggest and most notable concentration

of them in all Europe – was compendious. More, he had a seeing eye; he got the real measure of each of them. Mobylettes succeeded cycles, and were in turn replaced by mopeds. Cycles in guard vans had already made possible a week's holiday to take in all the Rutland churches and to permit expeditions inside Suffolk and Norfolk. Mopeds further extended their range and permitted forays even into Herefordshire.

These were heady days. The great man, Pevsner, had conceived the revolutionary idea of creating a library of county volumes describing the notable buildings of all of England. It was an astonishing and totally unprecedented project. It made it possible for the first time to compare buildings in Carlisle and Cornwall, in Northamptonshire and Kent, to get a nationwide view, to be able to make sensible comparisons.

All sorts of people were recruited to help with the Northamptonshire volume – Victor and Bruce and Lord Spencer and the great Joan Wake and Gyles Isham all played a part. This was real frontier stuff. It was fitting that Victor should have been involved. He was a natural pioneer.

He was by choice and by grace a true gentleman. Each one of us can recall, and bear witness to, courteous words and acts particular to us individually, and specific to our condition on the actual day. There was much more to those courtesies than a general bonhomie, a general wishing you well. They sprang from a thoughtful and concentrated attention to the person in question and to the detail of the situation. Jim Anscomb loves to tell how, when he would come over from Woodford Halse to have a session on railway history with him, Victor would give him lunch, with railway cutlery to eat it with. Nor would he let him go home without asking to hear again of Jim's early years working for the Great Northern Railway.

Victor was a fluent and stimulating conversationalist, and a accomplished and witty raconteur. He was a natural comic. Like all great comics he was able accurately to observe, to record mentally eccentric people and occurrences, and then to use the material creatively. When he told the tale, he would not infrequently superimpose imaginative variations onto the theme of the original reality. The result was hilarious.

He had what was always in danger of becoming a bad habit – he loved to tease. He would, as we used to say, 'lead us on'. His sharp, subtle quick wit could have made such teasing quite outrageous, and indeed, hurtful. Fortunately, his sensitivity to others intervened to make it harmless. That rapier point was always safely buttoned by good manners.

All of his life was informed, illuminated, directed, and powered by his deep faith in God and His Christ. He had a reverence and respect for, and a deep gratitude to the Church of England, particularly to the texts of the Authorised Version of the Bible and of the Book of Common Prayer, which for more than three centuries were the theological and liturgical textbooks of the English people, shaping and sustaining their character. They served Victor well. He was no mean theologian. For him to walk with God was as natural as for him to breathe, but he respected the difficulties of those as yet unable to accept the Gospel. He understood how difficult it is for some in an unbelieving age. Nevertheless he held that even those who cannot accept God's Revelation and the laws of Christ are still bound by the absolute moral standards of Natural Law. That is the law which was not written by men and is incapable of revision by men. It is the law which springs from and reflects the very nature of all that is, all that has come into being.

He was a member of the Prayer Book Society. It is true that he loved the cadences and sonorities of Cranmer's English, and felt uneasy with modern language services. The point was not that he was stuck in the past unable to move with the times. The point was that he felt that in the present day English has been so eroded and corrupted that it is rapidly becoming incapable of use with precision and certainty.

He had a great deal of sympathy with ordinary people who get confused, as, for example those who imagine that 'normal' and 'average' are the same. So they might

read in a Mori Poll that 42% believed that stealing is OK, 10% said that it was not, and 34% didn't know. It is therefore normal behaviour to steal because most people do it. With such he was ready to be infinitely patient. In contrast, those who ought to know better and deliberately misuse language to conceal wrongdoing angered him. I remember on a journey to a Diocesan Synod – Victor was a founder member of Wootton Deanery Synod and took seriously his responsibilities in the government of the Church – we were talking about the shocking piracy of one of the most beautiful adjectives in the English language. I remember the occasion most vividly – Victor told me that sometimes he got into trouble with his friends when he told them that spades should be called spades, that it was utterly wrong to talk about alternative lifestyles and the like when the real name for it was fornication, adultery and sodomy. He was a robust, outspoken, forthright man. He particularly detested the New Age movement, partly because of its silly superstitious overlaying fundamental atheism, but more because of the deliberate chaotic confusion of its language.

'What is truth?' asked Pilate in a tone which clearly said that he despaired of an answer. In asking the question Pilate spoke for the whole Roman Empire of his day. The people of the Empire failed to grasp even so much as the notion of a reality of law which is absolute, given and not of man's making. The Empire rotted away and collapsed. Victor feared that the same may happen to our own Western civilisation, seeing in the erosion of language a danger potentially more dangerous than even a nuclear conflagration. It is time, he said, for all sensible people to accept again the discipline of sound language which alone permits clear thinking.

A good man, a brilliant scholar, a manly man, a man of principle and passion, a dear and generous friend.

Dear God! How I miss him!

But then I see him, eyes twinkling behind those thick spectacles, that little peremptory movement of head and shoulder and I hear him remind us that there is work to do. Somebody must set to and complete the definitive history of Northampton, somebody must complete the work on Bishop Magee's Visitations, the final explanation of why the Main Line failed to go through Northampton must be written.

Today, we meet for our Service
of Thanksgiving.
Tomorrow, it must be shoulders
to the wheel.

Amen.

NORTHAMPTON'S FIRST STEAM ENGINE:[1] AN EARLY CASE OF ENVIRONMENTAL POLLUTION

DAVID BATES

In 1742 Edward Cave, entrepreneur and publisher of the *Gentleman's Magazine,* acquired and rebuilt Marvel's Mill in Northampton and the business he established there[2] has come to be recognised as the first water-powered cotton-spinning factory in the country, indeed in the world.[3] Its subsequent history was one of undistinguished failure, and the explosive development of the cotton industry, vanguard of the Industrial Revolution, continued elsewhere, but one of the first great achievements of that revolution can certainly be credited to this former corn mill on the River Nene.

After the repeal of Arkwright's patent and the increasing application of rotative steam power to cotton-spinning, further attempts to revive the business[4] were no more successful, but they mark a phase when the Industrial Revolution made its first real impact on the town. Arkwright's patent was cancelled in 1785[5] and, in the same year, Francis Hayes insured the premises and contents as 'a paper mill and cotton manufactory under one roof'.[6] In 1791 Hayes dissolved his partnership with Joseph Mico Gibson[7] who continued the business alone and later in partnership with John Forbes. Thus in 1797 Gibson and Forbes ordered from the firm of Boulton and Watt a 12hp double-action 'sun-and-planet' steam engine at a cost of £621.[8]

The Boulton and Watt archives record this, the first and only of their steam engines to be erected in Northamptonshire, and from Gibson and Forbes's correspondence, much of the history of the construction and commissioning of the engine can be deduced. The papers tell of the regular traffic of men, materials and parts between Boulton and Watt's recently built Soho foundry and Northampton, the heavy goods travelling by canal from Aston Junction to James Booth's wharf at Weedon. As a small market town in the late 18th century, Northampton was ill-prepared to receive the latest miracle of technology and even the simplest basic materials such as cast iron plate were unobtainable in the town. The construction of the engine was not without problems, and for some time it failed to live up to the expectations of its new owners, occasioning the politest of complaints to Boulton and Watt.[9]

The installation was largely the responsibility of Luke Punshon, a Boulton and Watt man who, in a letter[10] from Northampton to his employers dated 8 June 1798, raised the following unusual query:

> By the desire of Messrs Gibson & Forbes I inform you that the place where the injection-water is taken out of the River is within 4 yds of the Necessary, they wish to know if the Urine &c will hurt the water, the above place or mouth of the Tunil is on the upper side of the Necessary but the water has little or no

1. With grateful thanks to the late Victor Hatley for his kindness and enthusiastic encouragement, and for introducing me to the Boulton and Watt archives.
2. *Northampton Mercury (NM),* 5 Dec 1743.
3. A. P. Wadsworth & J. de Lacy Mann, *The Cotton Trade and Industrial Lancashire, 1600-1780,* chapter 21; J. H. Thornton, *Journal of the Northamptonshire Natural History Society and Field Club,* **33,** 241-259 (1959).
4. *NM,* 11 Apr 1785.
5. R. S. Fitton, *The Arkwrights,* p. 138.
6. Sun Insurance Records, Guildhall Library, 506980 (Ms 11,936/331).
7. *NM,* 11 Feb 1792.
8. Boulton & Watt Collection (B&W), Birmingham Reference Library, portfolio 160.
9. See also J. Tann, *The Selected Papers of Boulton and Watt,* volume 1, section F.
10. B&W, box 6/G.

> Courrant, if you think necessary they will run a kind of peer sloping across the river beginning between the necessary & the Tunil and ending 7 or 8 yds up the river, which will be very near the Floodgates where there is a constant leek of freshwater coming over.

Unfortunately none of Boulton and Watt's replies survives, but from a subsequent letter[11] of Gibson and Forbes it may reasonably be concluded that the matter was suitably resolved and the inhabitants of Northampton were spared the unseemly prospect of their first steam engine disgorging raw sewage!

The dawning of the age of steam seems to have provoked little documented interest in the town and the arrival of the engine passed unremarked in the pages of the *Northampton Mercury*. The Boulton and Watt Engine Book records that it was sold in 1812 to the Grand Union Canal Company and re-erected at Husbands Bosworth in Leicestershire to pump canal water. With its departure ended the final attempt to establish cotton-spinning in the town.[12]

11. *ibid.*

12. It is hoped a full account of the history of the Northampton cotton mill will appear in a later number.

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THE NORTHAMPTONSHIRE FREEHOLD LAND SOCIETY AND THE ORIGINS OF MODERN FAR COTTON

JOHN LOVELL

During the 1840s a number of organisations came into being with the object of extending the vote to working men through the ownership of land. One of the better known was the Chartist Land Company, set up in 1845 by Feargus O'Connor, which, by 1848, was collapsing partly through legal and partly through financial problems. One successor to these movements was Freehold Land Societies. These had their origin in Birmingham when, seeing working men watching the polling one Friday in August 1847, James Taylor wrote a short letter to the *Birmingham Journal* setting out the concept of a society which would 'buy land at wholesale prices and retail it at wholesale price ... the primary object was to confer Forty Shilling Freehold upon members to qualify them to be inserted ... as county electors'.[1] This letter was supported by a long editorial in the *Birmingham Journal* and after about 18 months the movement claimed 10,000 to 11,000 members in towns such as Wolverhampton, Coventry, Stourbridge and Sheffield, with 'about 5,000' in London.

In the autumn of 1848 Joseph Gurney, a tailor with premises in Gold Street, began a Northampton society at his house, with Frederick Parker as the first secretary. Gurney was to become Victorian Northampton's leading Radical. He had been a member of the Northampton Reform and Political Union, an Owenite Socialist and a member of the Chartist Committee.[2] An undated handbill, probably of November 1848, announced the formation of the Northampton Town and County Freehold Land Association, which set out as one of the objectives 'every Mechanic or Working man by small weekly contributions' to obtain, by paying 1s. 6d. a week, a piece of freehold land worth at least 45s. per annum, in five years or less. The handbill went on to detail the manner in which plots would be allocated by ballot.

The Society's first estate was in Kingsthorpe Road, on the west side and extending from the Roman Catholic Cathedral grounds to what is now St Paul's Road, with plots allocated both on Kingsthorpe Road and on the east side of Semilong. The second estate was also on Kingsthorpe Road, on the east side, from the north side of St George's Avenue to the north side of Freehold Street. A public soiree to celebrate the first two estates, followed by a procession from New Hall, Newland, to Kingsthorpe Road, took place on the afternoon of Monday 13 January 1851.[3]

The next development was the acquisition of an estate in Far Cotton, which at that time was almost entirely rural (*see Fig 1*). By 1852 the railway from Blisworth to Peterborough had been built immediately to the south of the canal, removing the lock house, but nothing else had changed. All of the land (except for some areas of marsh) belonged to the Bouverie Estate with the exception of Broad Close and Great Orchard Close and whilst Edward Bouverie II had sold some land to the London & Birmingham Railway, no other land deals were in prospect. The two closes, however, were owned by the Dunkley family. They had been enclosed long before Edward Bouverie I obtained his Parliamentary Inclosure Act of 1765, and had been a wedding gift to Elizabeth Marriott from her father on her marriage to John Dunkley in August 1800. Elizabeth

1. *The Freehold Land Times and Building News*, 1 October 1854; John Alfred Landford, *Modern Birmingham and its Institutions*, 1873.
2. Obituary in *Northampton Mercury* 15 December 1893.
3. *Northampton Mercury* 18 January 1851, and Handbill in Local Room, Northampton Central Library.

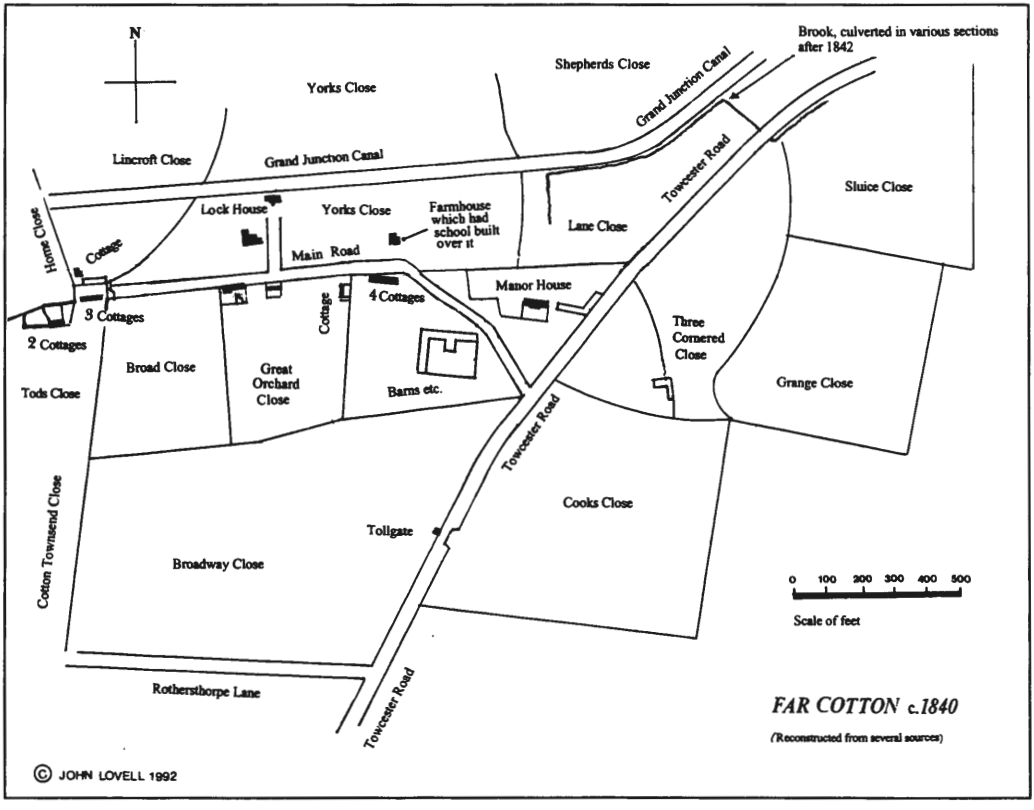


FIG 1: FAR COTTON *circa* 1840

died in February 1830, and the closes passed to her husband and six surviving children.

The area of original Far Cotton is on low lying ground just to the south of the flood plain of the River Nene. To the south the land rises to some 350 feet along the ridgeway about a mile southwards. To the west and east lay flood meadows, with the normal river level being only three feet below the ground level in much of Far Cotton. To the north lay the railway and canal, with Cotton End sandwiched between them and the River Nene, completely built up and itself hemmed in to both east and west by flood lands.

The two closes were, therefore, the only possible sites for development when put up for auction in March 1852. The auctioneer's description refers to 'those two closes . . . containing about eight acres more or less, with two cottages or tenements standing thereon. The property contains a bed of gravel about six feet thick of the very best quality. The contiguity of this estate to the L&NWR station and the Grand Junction Canal, as well as its adaption to gardens or building purposes renders it altogether a desirable property for investment.' The Freehold Land Society were the successful bidders at £1,620. The high water table and the bed of gravel were to be the cause of many health problems, and eventually, following a survey by the Borough Council in 1964, to the complete demolition of the houses by the early 1970s.

The architect Alexander Milne was

PLATE 1: No. 10 ALMA STREET, FAR COTTON

engaged to set out the estate and produced a plan with a grid of five streets with roads made and provision for stormwater drainage to the centre of each plot. The standard plot was of 29 feet frontage and 70 feet in depth, with those on the south side of High Street being of 30 feet frontage. The price of the standard plot was £19 13s. 6d., with variations for those considered better placed, or having a variation in area. As with the two earlier estates, a lithographed plan of the allocation of plots was produced, a reconstruction (*Fig 2*) having been compiled from a collection of material found in the Northampton Borough Council archives.

The Freehold Land Society failed quite significantly to achieve its declared aim of working men owning their own properties in this estate. The archives contain 175 files relating to these properties, and these were examined with the objective of obtaining a sample from the five streets. Sixty-four properties were selected, 23 of which contained original Indentures. With only a few exceptions these are dated in September and October 1853. All contain the same principal features: 'Between Edward Latchmore, rope merchant; Gray Hester, grocer; George Moore, shoe manufacturer and Henry Harday, shoe manufacturer, all of the first part; John Macquire auctioneer, of Northampton, of the second part, to the various purchasers. A covenant requires that 'all buildings and erections to be made on the plot of land and hereditaments hereby released shall range in the lines laid down and according to the rules plans and building and other regulations prepared and laid down by the parties of the first part or their surveyor or by the Directors of the Northampton Town and County Benefit Building Society'.

Although the expressed objective was to enable working men to obtain plots and

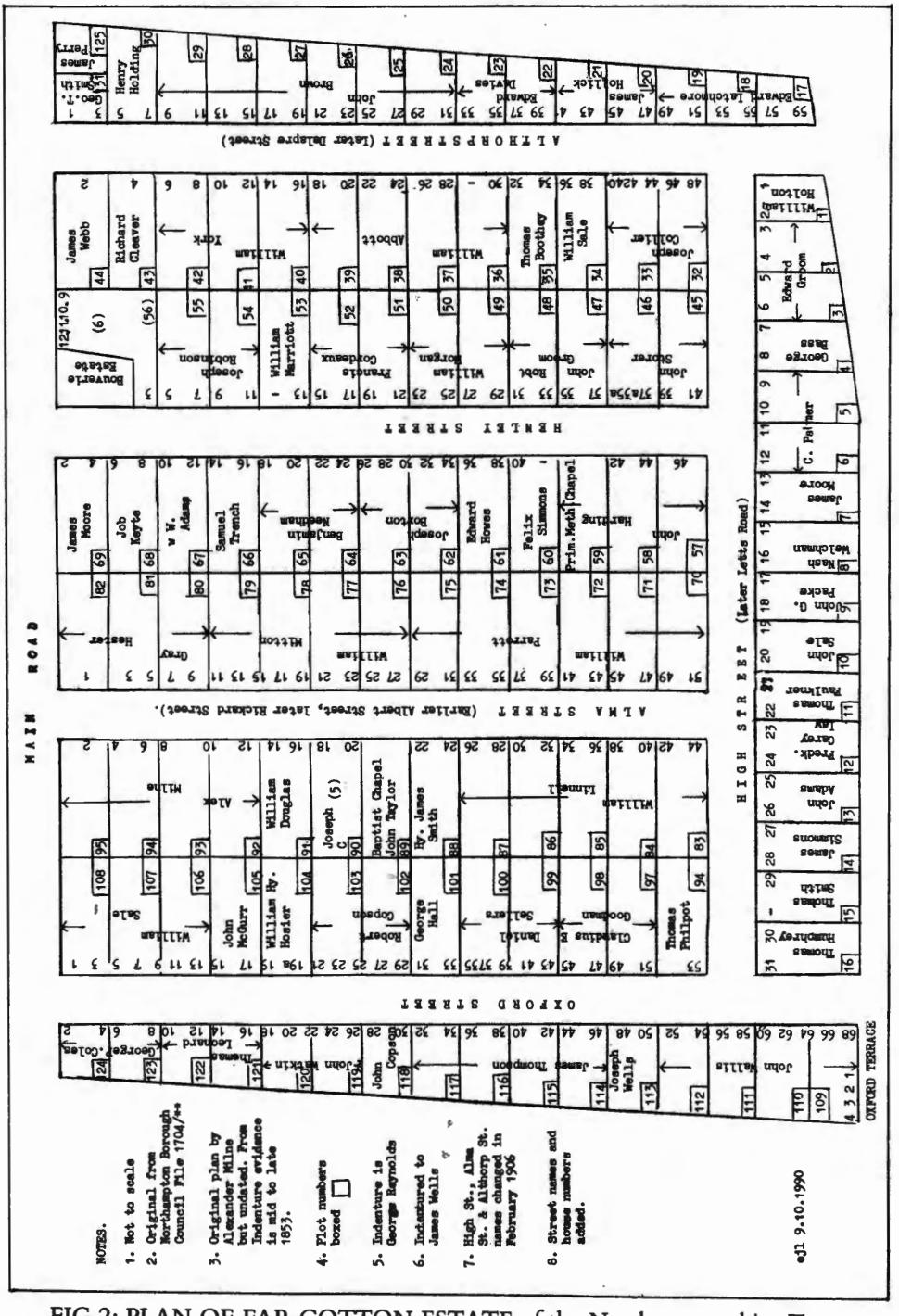


FIG 2: PLAN OF FAR COTTON ESTATE of the Northamptonshire Town and County Freehold Land Society

build their own houses, the allotments reveal a much different picture. A breakdown of the allocations gives:

1 plot	36 allottees
2 plots	18 allottees
3 plots	4 allottees
4 plots	6 allottees
5 plots	1 allottee
6 plots	2 allottees

and two of the trustees, Edward Latchmore and Gray Hester each had three plots, whilst the architect, Alexander Milne, had four. Of the 67 allottees, the poll book for the 1852 election for Northampton Borough alone contains 27 of the names. That the allottees were small business men or craftsmen of some standing is not surprising. At the time of the plot allocations an agricultural worker was paid between 9s. and 12s. a week, with no payment for time lost for any reason. Railway pointsmen and porters were paid between 16s. and 18s. a week, with possible progression to 23s. on promotion. Railway staff were quite likely to be moved about the system, and few would consider other than rented accommodation. For other working men the prospect of finding 1s. 6d. every week for nearly four years must have been something that could not be contemplated. Raising a mortgage of £100 to £120 to build a house, paying 5% interest on the capital sum would be within the ability of a corn factor, farmer or commercial traveller, who might, in fact, have some capital available, but would not be something most working men would contemplate. The commercial approach to the Far Cotton estate therefore did little to increase the number of enfranchised men in the county.

Progress in building was not as quick as the Trustees might have hoped, nor is there much evidence of interest by supervisory or clerical staff on the railway which had been hoped for. The fifth annual meeting of the Northampton Town and County Benefit Building and Freehold Land Society, early in 1854, was told that 'more than 30 houses have been erected, or are in the course of erection'. The deeds show, however, that plots changed hands, sometimes several times, before any building work took place. By the time of the 1861 Census 146 houses out of the final total of 241 had been built, with five empty and four under construction. A precise year for the completion of the estate is not readily determinable, but it would appear to be in the early 1870s, by which time there were at least seven shops and four public houses.

The houses were a mixture of types and sizes. Analysis of the 1884 25 inch Ordnance Survey map, and several later air photographs of the estate suggest that 65 were of the 'two up, two down' pattern. About a further 50 were of the same layout, but with a small single storey back extension, and 120 were of the 'bye-law' type with three rooms downstairs and three bedrooms upstairs. The exceptions were a double fronted house with four bedrooms (10 Alma, later Rickard Street) (*Plate 1*) and at least two with a third floor room in the raised roofline of a six-roomed 'bye law' house.

House dimensions inevitably varied between different builders. Some of the three bedroomed houses had only an eight feet length to the third room and kitchen, instead of the more usual 10 feet. With the four roomed houses, these were in some instances reduced in frontage to about 11 feet, to give five on two plots, as in the case of 11 to 19 Alma Street (*Plate 2*), or seven to three plots as 1 to 13 Oxford Street. Outbuildings and privies were specified in a drawing on the original plan, but the locations varied. Some were immediately adjoining the rear of the house, but in the majority of cases were at the bottom of the gardens.

Rear access to houses was generally through the house, and night soil would have to be removed this way. A number of houses were provided with a rear foot access, or 'jitty' as it was locally known. Rather more had a side passage way, in most cases shared between four or five houses. The houses often gave the impression of being long terracing, but more detailed examination of photographs shows changes in brick types and laying patterns. Some cases show a vertical line of mortar between pairs of houses by different builders, but in other the

PLATE 2: ALMA STREET, LOOKING SOUTH, Terrace of five set back (nos 11-19)
(*Northampton Borough Council Substandard Housing Survey 1964*)

continuity is effected by 'toothing', a method whereby alternate half-bricks are left projecting to be picked up by the next piece of brickwork adjoining.

Interestingly the Northampton Town and County Building Society had only a small involvement in the financing of the house building activities. Only five out of 29 mortgage indentures examined were with the Society, the remainder being with a wide range of people, as diverse as the Rev. Amos Westerby, vicar of Farthingstone, and Ann Scriven, a spinster of Ilfracombe. Interest was at five per cent per annum from 1853 until the turn of the century, sometimes being a little less where a Friendly Society was involved. The mortgages were quite regularly sold on, mortgagees paying only the interest and nothing towards a reduction in the capital sum.

Because of the geography of the estate, and the fact that it was built before the era of Public Health, sanitary problems arose quite early. Privies, built to the required design, soon began to leak into the underlying gravel. From this bed the drinking water was drawn, some of the wells being within a few feet of a privy. Since it was outside the Borough, in the parish of Hardingstone, it was not within the control of the Borough Improvement Commissioners and the Hardingstone Local Board did not start work until February 1872. The early Minutes reveal much lack of understanding and tardiness on public health matters. The Local Government Board's Medical Officer, Dr Buchanan, reported scathingly on conditions in 1871, observing 'the place drained into a foul ditch . . . the houses are commonly well ventilated, but have plenty of fever in them, owing, beyond doubt to the badness of the water and their filthy surroundings'. Whilst he wrongly attributes the building of the houses to the Freehold Land Society, nevertheless, as the covenants on the original Indentures make clear, the privy design and general building plans were theirs.

From the beginning of the estate until the

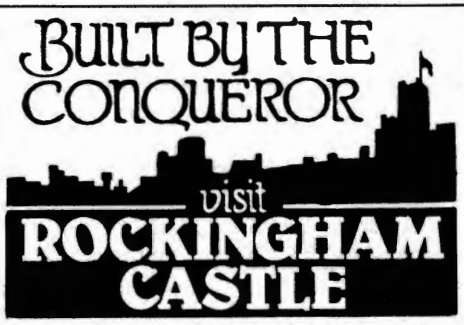
outbreak of war in 1914, it is quite clear, both from the deeds in the Borough archives and the 1910 Inland Revenue Survey that the houses were owned by landlords as investment property, with only the occasional owner occupier. James Thompson of Stamford, a railway guard, bought five cottages (four rooms, plus downstairs small annex), 18 to 26 Oxford Street in December 1863 for £435. Two were occupied by William Mills and Samuel Elliott, the other three being unoccupied. The documents do not show how he financed the purchase, but the cottages were left to his sister Elizabeth Webster on his death in 1885.

Information on actual rentals before the 1910 Survey is scarce, but one valuation for 28 and 30 Oxford Street for a proposed borrowing of £600 in December 1863 reports: 'In the occupation of Henry Garnett contains 1 sitting room, kitchen and scullery. 3 bedrooms and garden. Gross rent £9 2s. 0d.' The rates amounted to 'about 2s. 0d. per quarter which is paid by the owner. The property is in good tenentable repair and appears to be let to respectable tenants'.

Census returns for 1861 and 1871 suggest a considerable turnover of population, with more stability in 1881 and more again in 1891. The number of railway employees from 1871 onwards was about 32% of all the employed males, being 132 in 1871 and 194 in 1891, with locomotive staff predominating. Other occupations were foundry work and boot and shoe, with an increasing number of men, and almost all the women, finding work in the town itself. The story told in Far Cotton that 'it was built by the railway' has no foundation in fact. No houses were built by the railway in either the 1853 estate or the later developments, and the pattern of railway occupations shows clearly that railwaymen lived near to their place of work. One could not go very far in pre 1914 (or for that matter pre 1939) Far Cotton without meeting a railwayman, but a large part of the population increase was related to the natural expansion of the town southwards. Far Cotton was incorporated into the Borough in 1900.

Sources used

Census returns 1861, 1871, 1881, 1891. Northampton Borough Council Archives. Inland Revenue Rating Survey 1910 PRO IR58/-. The 1840 map was compiled from: Ordnance Survey 25 inch, 1884. The Northampton and Peterborough Track Plan, British Rail Property Board. Northampton Borough Archives 1704/-. Airflow Streamlines plc works plans. Road Closure Notice; *Northampton Mercury* 11 November 1854, p. 2. Local knowledge and oral tradition. The field names were obtained from the Bouverie Estate Map, 1767. (Described by the County Record Office as the Hardingstone Inclosure Map (ref. 2665).



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FROM SOLDIER TO SHOEMAKER: JOSEPH LANGHORN IN NORTHAMPTON

R. L. GREENALL

One of the pleasures of teaching in adult education is that, as well as their own experiences, people often bring original source material into the class. One such occasion was a few years ago when I was teaching a course at the University Centre on Late Victorian and Edwardian Northampton, using materials from the newspapers and archives. One of the group, Mrs Wanda Davies, a teacher at the High School, brought in a typescript of Joseph Langhorn's autobiography, which had come into the possession of her aunt, Miss Winifred Crask. This first hand account of the life of a poor boy from Kendal, orphaned when he was 13, was appreciated by the class, whose members recognised its whiff of authenticity. The extract printed below is the part which tells of his life in the army and then in Northampton from 1879 to 1910.

It is written in the form of a long letter to his niece, Frewtrilla Yates, from his home in Harper, Utah, in November 1940, when Langhorn was in his 86th year. He had become a Mormon in Northampton and, when his working life was ended by rheumatism, emigrated to the drier climate of Utah, where he lived to a ripe old age. In tone it is a nice mix of Victorian straight-forwardness and folksy American humour.

Joseph Langhorn was born 23 March 1855 in Kendal, Westmorland, the youngest of five children, two of whom died in infancy. When he was about a year old the family was left fatherless. He recalls his mother (the daughter of a schoolmaster) with love and veneration: she was hard-working, affectionate, and deeply religious. His life-long faithfulness to her admonitions never to drink intoxicants, smoke, lie or use profane language is a testimony to the strength of her influence. Despite her poverty his mother made great efforts to see her children decently educated. Joseph went first to Dame School, then the National School and then, as a bright ten year old, to the Blue Coat School. According to Langhorn, this had a reputation 'all over the North of England' under its pious and eccentric master, James Whitaker. The school being closely associated with the parish church Joseph became a member of the choir, which he greatly enjoyed.

When his mother died in 1868 he recalls 'the bottom dropped out of everything for me'. At 13 he was left to fend for himself. One sister, married to a man Joseph could not stand, lived a hundred miles away; the other was in domestic service. Hearing of the construction of the Settle to Carlisle railway, he decided to seek work on it. The journey to Settle involved a walk of 36 miles or so with very little food, sleeping in barns. His first job on the railway was to carry blunt picks from the navvies at the work-face to the blacksmith for sharpening. He found carrying half a dozen picks at a time to and fro heavy work. No allowance was made for his youth: at the end of the day the ganger sacked him for being too slow. However, for over a year he managed to find other work on that railway, in the course of which he calculated he walked its length four times over.

After that he moved to Barrow-in-Furness, an industrial 'new town' in the process of being created from nothing following the discovery of high grade iron-ore in the district. Here again he found labouring work hard to keep because of his physical immaturity. Eventually a trade depression put paid to a succession of jobs in that town. After having no food for several days, in sheer desperation he decided to seek out his mother's half-brother, whom he thought lived at Lindale, seven miles away. His uncle, who had never seen him before, made him welcome and found him a job as a 'bogier' to two Irish miners, loading iron-ore into trucks and pushing it away from the rock face. For 15 months he earned good money and filled-out physically. Then, once more, he was laid off and returned to Barrow. He found work for six months digging a sewer, then, early in 1874, he was laid off yet again. The extract below takes up the story at this point. He was then 19. Such autobiographical fragments have obvious limitations as sources, but no one can read Langhorn's without being aware of how harsh life was for the poor a hundred years ago. However, Langhorn's personality shows through his account – tough but not insensitive, rather solitary by his own admission, somewhat puritanical, but above all cheerful and uncomplaining. He leaves us a readable account of himself and his life experience.

Readers will notice several jokey references to his 'foxbites', which, he pretends to Frewtrilla, were the secret of his survival. Earlier in the account he had explained that in Kendal in his day there were two kinds of boys

– those who were regarded as 'lassie lads' (cissies) and those who weren't. To test your claim that you weren't, 'some good-sized boy would take hold of one of your hands, and spit on the back of the wrist, and then with his thumb he would rub the wet place until the skin was worn through, and you could see the blood come'. Though one 'foxbite' was considered enough to establish credentials, Joseph told Frewtrilla he had submitted to the ordeal twice. It was a matter of honour among foxbites not to flinch when teachers beat them (as they frequently did). Kendal foxbites considered themselves tough. Yes, sir!

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

After about a month of loafing and with no prospect of any work, in the month of March 1874 I enlisted into the 8th Kings Royal Irish Hussars, one of the crack cavalry Regiments of the British Army. And a new chapter of the life of J.L. began.

The regiment was stationed at Longford just about in the centre of Ireland. It took about a week to get there, because I was bandied about from one military authority to another and had to be examined by every one of them. There was no end to the red tape to those days. And that reminds me that some day when I'm in the mood, I'm going to see if you know how and why the term 'Red Tape' came into use, so look out, you'd better look the matter up.

I found army life in those days was hard and rough but of course was used to that, but many who joined, especially the white collar boys, found it almost unendurable. But I won't burden you with a recital of my experiences as a soldier, although it is about the most vivid of my memories.

Just now is the time I think to tell you that my mother's council [*sic*] never to drink intoxicating liquors, never to smoke, never to lie or use profane language, had been faithfully observed always, also James Whitaker's influence was strong, and you very likely suppose that this fact would help me in my army career, you are quite wrong, it didn't, it was a decided handicap. In those days most people, and particularly army people held the opinion a man who never drank, smoked, or cursed freely and frequently, must be a sissy, and not at all likely to make a good soldier, you see they'd never heard that I'd had two fox bites. Of all the more than 600 men in the Corps there was only one other than myself who was a nondrinker and also a nonsmoker, Ted Gubbins of G troop. I belonged to F Troop (more later of Ted) but within a year he was discharged on account of ill health, and his case was considered to be a proof that a nondrinker was no soldier. There were however quite a number of non smokers. You see the cigarette had not arrived then.

There were four things necessary to the making of a good cavalry soldier in those days, first, he must ride well, second, he must be a good drill, that is he must know every word of command, and be prompt, and sure in executing the command, third he must be at least a fair shot with a carbine (a very short rifle) and fourth and most important of all he must be a good swordsman, because the sword was considered the cavalryman's most effective weapon.

In all four I was considered good, but more especially in the use of the sword. Just as some men can never be made into a good swordsman, so also, other men will take to it as a duck does to water and I was lucky enough to belong to the last class.

Once a year in the month of October, each troop (there were eight) staged a competition to ascertain the best swordsman in the troop (both in mounted combats, and also on foot) and those eight soldiers then competed to ascertain the best swordsman in the Regiment. The winners in the Troop competitions won a prize of about £5, and wore a pair of silver crossed swords on his right arm. The winner in the other competition won £20 and wore gold swords, with a small crown above them.

The first competition I was in was about seven months after joining, and I won the troop prize from a fellow who had won three or four times in succession.

That a gulpin (recruit) should do this, was regarded as remarkable, but was undoubtedly a mere fluke, he couldn't do it again. No Sir.

There was a sequel to this victory, but I cannot write all about that. Ask me if you are

interested, and I'll tell you. This rigmarole is really getting too long. I was beaten in the later competition.

Next October, I won the Troop swords, and also the Regimental swords. This for so young a soldier was so remarkable that the Colonel decided to send me to the main Army Gymnasium at Aldershot to be especially trained as a swordsman, and also a gymnast, as so qualify for instructorship. I joined a class there composed of picked men from 20 regiments, and for six months underwent the prescribed course of training. Out of the 20, only three earned first class certificates and of course the man with the foxbites got one of them.

The Col. complimented me on my success, and on the excellent report of the Gymnasium authorities of my conduct, and also of my skill, not only as a swordsman but also as a Gymnast. But I feel sure the old boy was thinking that if I could do so well without smoke and drink, what might I not have accomplished if I'd been a real soldier. But anyway I was appointed fencing and gymnastic instructor and made a full Corporal to boot, almost at once, so there must have been some virtue in the foxbites after all. I held that position until I left the Regiment on the 10th of October 1878. I ought to say that as I was now a paid swordsman, I was barred from further competitions.

From the day I joined until the day before Good Friday 1877 I never had an hour's leave from the Reg. But as at that time, the Reg. was stationed at Aldershot about 36 miles from London, I was seized with a consuming desire to see London. I might never be so near it again, also I knew there were relatives living there at some place in London called Jonson's Place. I thought I might look them up. I'd heard mother talk many a time of her sister Elizabeth who had been in famous London 'Lo this many years'. I might however never find them, but that wouldn't matter much. I'd see London anyway. So I got leave of absence from the Thursday until the following Monday night midnight so I took train to London and arrived at Waterloo station about 4 p.m. I asked the first policeman I met to direct me to Jonson's place. 'Which of 'em?' said he 'What is there more than one?' I asked. 'I know about half a dozen,' said he, this was stupefying. But anyway I thought I'd try one Jonson's place and if it was the wrong one, I wouldn't bother further. So he put me on a bus, and instructed the conductor as to where he was to drop me, it was an old horse bus, which stopped to pick up, or to drop passengers just anywhere, and slow. It really was so slow it couldn't even catch a cold. But at last I was dropped, and instructed as to where I'd find the place.

And, behold you, there was Honywill's grocery store staring me in the face. My usual luck. Foxbites again Frewtrilla, foxbites again. After waiting until he was disengaged, I asked my uncle (as he turned out to be) if I could see Mrs Honywill. He shook his head, and said she was too ill to see anyone. Would I leave a message for her? I could, and I did, 'Tell her that her nephew called to see her, and that he is truly sorry that she is so ill, and hope she may soon be better, 'Oh,' said he, 'What is your name?' When I'd given it, he asked me to wait, and he went into a room at the back of the store. In a little while he came out, and led me into the room. I had something like a shock when I saw her, she was propped up with pillows in a large chair by the fire. Her face was so like my own mother's that it might have been her, she was exactly like my own mother as she lay dying, and I nearly broke down.

She asked me a few questions, and as I remember it she thought my name was George. She felt sure that Margaret had told her in a letter that I was George. However she accepted me as Joseph. After a little while seeing that she was too weak for further conversation, I said I must go now, and seek a place to stay, and I'd call again tomorrow if it would be convenient.

'You are going to stay here,' she said, and the way she said it, made it clear that that was that.

That evening I was introduced to three of my cousins, Hannah, Marian, and Suzie the youngest, next day (Good Friday) the only son came home, John, just about four years younger than myself, I think, I got along with him famously, as indeed I did with all of them, only you must remember that Aunt Elizabeth's very serious condition made it necessary to talk in a subdued way. I did not see your Aunt Jeanie until Sunday, she was at that time occupying a

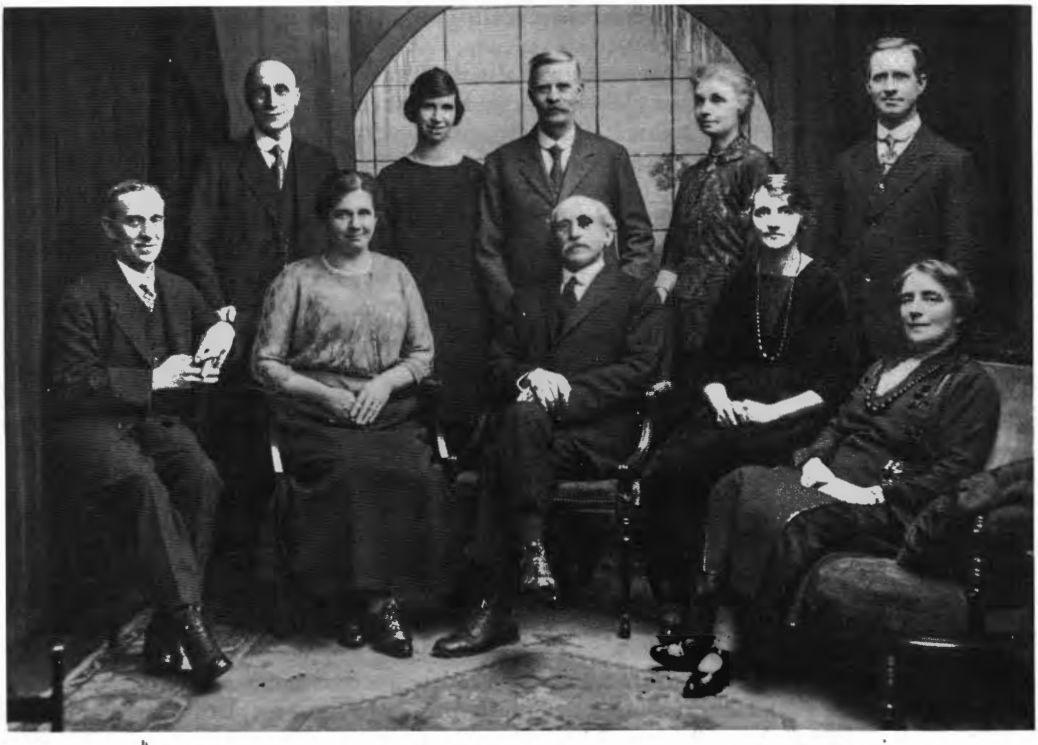

PLATE 1: JOSEPH LANGHORN (*Seated Centre*) WITH FRIENDS
on a visit to Northampton in 1924. Second from left, back row, is Miss Winifred Crask. Her father, William, is on her left and her mother Harriet is seated second from the left
(*Photo: Miss Winifred Crask*)

position at Norwich on the East coast, you must get her to tell you all about that. She got home at three o'clock in the afternoon and (excuse my blushes) she kissed me. The first time I'd ever been kissed since my mother did it to me.

Just to cover my confusion let me talk about another matter, the matter of pronouncing the name of that ancient Cathedral city Norwich. Let me hear you pronounce it. No. No. Not Nore witch say Norrige. Once more there, that is better, now remember that.

Well they took me to see all the sights possible in the limited time, and on Monday afternoon I took leave of them.

I never saw Aunt Elizabeth alive again.

I had one day's leave to be present at the funeral, August I think it was and I was invited to spend Christmas with them. Another surprise to me for I'd never been invited anywhere, by anyone in my life before.

Of course I went, had a week's leave that time, and enjoyed my first real Christmas, I knew that much about it, but my clearest recollection is that Aunt Jeanie undertook to teach me how to dance, I was very stupid, and very clumsy pupil, the lesson ended when I got one foot on the top of one of hers.

Frewtrilla, at that time I weighed nearly 180 pounds and every ounce of it went onto that unlucky foot. I've never tried to dance with a woman since.

When I went back I decided that I didn't want to go on soldiering, I'd quit the army, and get a home of my own, and live as my London relatives did, but how to get away? That was the

question. You see I enlisted for 12 years, and I'd only done about a third of that stretch.

I ought to tell you here, that after enlisting, I wrote to my oldest sister telling her where I was, and what I was doing, and would she send me Sarah's[1] address, I'd never written to any body before, you may guess why.

Before long I heard from her, she was glad to know I was alive, but sorry to hear I was a soldier, she gave me Sarah's address. Sarah was now married, and had two little girls.

So I wrote to Sarah. She too let me know how glad she was to know that I was alive, but was more worried even than Hannah about my soldiering, she had done all she could to find me, but without success. Wouldn't I as soon as possible come on furlough to see her? I didn't go for about four years, because you see I was doing better in the Army than I'd ever done in my life and I knew she'd want me to purchase my discharge from the Army and that to me meant pick and shovel, and tramping for ever and ever. No Sir, not me.

While on Furlough, I went to see Uncle Robert and the folk at Lindale. I found that all the older boys were married, and Eliza was also married, so now Hannah, the eldest at home, was now promoted to Eliza's place, but of course with less than half of Eliza's work. They were all, even Eliza, delighted to see me and were mightily impressed with my gorgeous uniform with Corporal's chevrons, the badge for good conduct, and my golden cross swords and crown, which I still wore as fencing master. The good conduct badge certified to all the world that I had kept out of jail for two whole years, and that the British Empire was paying me two cents per day above my other pay in appreciation of that fact. I think they were the only ones who seemed to think I'd bettered myself by joining the Army.

But when I went back to the Regiment, I found the authorities had withdrawn the privilege of purchasing discharges, because we were expecting to go to war with Russia almost any day, indeed ships were all ready to take an expeditionary force to Constantinople and our Regiment were being put into war uniforms, and every day were being practiced in the best way to embark horses and Joe.

It wasn't until the following October 10th that at last I got my discharge, they didn't call out the band to play me out of Barracks, but in handing me the discharge the Col. expressed his regret at losing so good a soldier. Think of that my dear. I'd made good in spite of my failing to drink and smoke.

Out of the army, I went briskly to work to get that job I knew was waiting for me. I gave London the first chance to benefit itself by accepting my services. London didn't seem to be at all interested in my excellent Army character, and my remarkable record as a swordsman. London didn't seem to want me, London had managed to get along without me up to that time, and proposed to go on doing without me.

Naturally I was shocked to find eight millions of people so utterly blind to their own interests. What was London coming to? Still it was London's funeral, it wasn't mine, so I left London flat on its back and went North again, where a really smart young man would be appreciated at his true worth. But I found the North just as apathetic as London.

At last it dawned on me that there was another serious depression raging, and there was only one thing left me to do, and that was to go back to the pick and shovel again if I could get back. Well I did get back. My new brother-in-law employed me for a few weeks, and then another piece of luck came my way, an old friend of brother-in-law was engaged down at Northampton as time keeper on a new Railway, at that time being constructed from Northampton to Rugby, who in a letter to brother-in-law, stated that there was an opening on the work for a checker in a brickyard there.

Of course I took train to Northampton arriving there on Christmas Eve and I got the job. It was better than pick and shovel, but not much. A little better pay though. My job was to keep tally on the bricks made every day, the number burnt on each Kiln, and the number of burnt

1. Sarah was his younger sister. His elder sister was Hannah.

PLATE 2: MANFIELD'S 'AMERICAN' FACTORY
Wellingborough Road, Northampton (*Northamptonshire Libraries*)

bricks loaded into each car, with the number of the car, this occupied half of my time, and so to fill up I helped to load clay into cars for the brickmakers. I did this for ten months, during which time I managed to pay back the money I owed Sarah.

And then at the end of October the brickyard was closed down, not because the railroad was finished but because they wanted no more bricks. So once more that was that.

And so once more I prepared to take to the road and go to find work. The awful come down made me so ashamed that I ceased to write to London any more, and the correspondence was never resumed.

And then another piece of luck came my way. You remember a little way back, I spoke of a soldier of G. Troop, who neither drank nor smoked, and was discharged on account of ill health. Whose name was Ted Gubbins, don't you?

He was a native of Northampton, and one day having business there, I met him head on, in the street. He had quite recovered, and was now working at his trade, he was a shoemaker. Imagine our surprise, me to find him well again, and to him to find I'd been fool enough to leave the army, and there and then became a friendship that has endured until now although he passed away nearly seven years ago. May he rest in peace.

The night before I was to start tramping, he came up to see me, and was full of a scheme he'd thought out, which would take me to live in Northampton (I was then living three miles out of town). The scheme was to this effect. I was to go to live with his mother, and he undertook to pay her, and teach me shoemaking, all in a month. This to me seemed a mad scheme, but tramping in winter is unpleasant to say the least so, as I had nothing to lose, I fell in with the proposal.

That was the winter of 1879-1880. At the end of a month, I was able to make the cheaper sort of shoes sufficiently well to be paid for them, I remember the first week I earned fourteen shillings ($3.50) and though I steadily got quicker, and did better work, I never became quick enough to earn high wages, so at the end of a year, I got a job inside a shoe factory, to work one of the simpler machines used in shoe manufacture. I stayed with that firm for seventeen years, and became foreman of the machine department.

It was just about the time I went into the factory, that I became acquainted with Aunt Polly,[2] and through her with your Grandparents, and the Mormon Elders.

We were married on the 24th December 1882, in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, Northampton, an ancient Church, built in the year 1100 by the Knights Templar. Our married life was very happy, and her memory is very dear to me. Her death in 1924 was a great blow to me.

The reason for my leaving Manfield and Sons, after 17 years of service, was the same reason that has resulted in many another case.

The old factory was built before the days of heavy machinery, and the old structure had only one floor (ground floor) that was sufficiently solid to withstand the vibration of the heavy machines, and for that reason all the work had to be brought to that floor, and after being machined taken back again to be advanced another stage, then brought back again for further machining, some kinds of shoes were brought and returned three, and even four times, and still more and heavier machinery was constantly being required, and the floor space couldn't be enlarged and so a new factory had to be built on totally different lines.[3] In the new factory, the machines, instead of forming a separate department, were distributed to the place each machine was most wanted, and each of the machines were under the control of the foreman of that particular department.

And so Uncle Joe wasn't required any more. The boss in taking leave of me, said he regretted exceedingly having to let me go. I had been a faithful and efficient servant, and if in the new arrangements they could have found a place for me at my present salary, they would gladly have kept me. They did not feel that it would be fair to offer me a less responsible position at lower wages and so on. Well I soon got another job, indeed there was quite a little competition among some of the manufacturers to get me.

I was with my next employer for nine years, up to about the year 1906, and then I began to be troubled with rheumatism in shoulders and arms. I thought at first that I should soon throw it off, but instead of that it steadily worsened. Naturally the amount of work I could do became less. There was at that time quite an agitation among the trade unionists, for each man to lessen the amount of work per day, so that more men would have to be employed. I did not agree with that. My idea was to reduce the hours of labour. But the boss, seeing the reduction in my output, was convinced that I was deliberately holding out on him, and so he promptly, and unceremoniously fired me.

But Uncle, couldn't you have told him what was the matter?

I could and then been fired as no longer fit to work.

I soon got another job for my reputation as a competent workman was widely known. But unfortunately my good reputation didn't cure rheumatism and so from that time on I was employed for a few months, and then fired when they found my output below expectations, until at last Aunt Polly and I determined to pull up stakes and see what the dry climates of Utah could do for me, and so the 23rd of July 1910 found us both on the good ship *Cedric* bound for the New World, and whatever that might have in store for us.

We arrived at Brigham on the 5th August 1910.

My life in Northampton, was, on the whole very happy, and I made a reputation for other

2. Polly was Polly Ward, of Northampton.
3. This was Manfield's new 'American' factory, Wellingborough Road, opposite Christ Church.

things beside being a machine expert, for instance I took an active part in temperance work. Became a member of the Order of Rechabites and am still a member, probably the oldest member in the Northampton Tent. Also I became known as an elocutionist and was in great request as an entertainer at social and other gatherings. Was for twelve years a member of the Abington Church Choir, bleating tenor. Was a frequent letter writer to the press, generally in controversy with the advocates of drink. I took a deep interest in politics, being an ardent Gladstonian Liberal and became notorious as a writer of political songs, song singing was much practiced [by] both political parties at that time.

I remember that during the election campaign of 1906 the Northampton Liberals published a book of 100 songs, of which just over half were by your uncle. The Liberals had an excellent male voice Choir, and under efficient leadership would go to the meetings and sing a few songs while the meeting was gathering and again between speakers, and the crowd would always join in. The songs were always set to well known tunes so there was no trouble on that score, and most of the audience had a song book.

We won that election.

In the 1910 Campaign a new song book was published which had between 80 and 90 songs by your uncle, and we swept the Tories out neck and crop that time. That was just before we left England.

Please don't get it into your head that those songs were (any of them) highly polished poems, they were anything but that, most of them were pure dogrel [*sic*] the only virtue I claim for them was that there were no false rhymes, and the meter was always exact. They were for the most part humorous or sarcastic, but none of them left a sting.

In Northampton I began to make personal friends, just a few, about six, I want you to notice that I make a distinction between a friend and an acquaintance, because I had crowds of the latter, but after the lapse of thirty years, I regularly correspond with the surviving friends. And we shall be friends for ever.

Well I am nearing the end of this rigmarole, and am glad of it.

Of the thirty years of my residence in Utah, more than 26 have been in Harper Ward, than which there is not a more friendly ward in this state. I don't want to live anywhere else.

I spent about four months the first year in Utah in Salt Lake City and frankly I didn't like the place, nor do I yet, it is not to be compared with Harper. No Sir.

The first six months here was discouraging. My health got no better, and altitude troubled me greatly, then I was laid up with rheumatic fever for about three weeks. We were then staying with Eli. Frank Gibson, Aunt Gertie's brother, having no work at that time, nursed me through and I have no words to express my gratitude to him for all he did for me. Since that fever I have seldom felt a twinge of my old enemy. Altitude troubles also disappeared, and my general health has been excellent, for which I sincerely thank God and Utah.

I do not remember any event worthy of being recorded here except the much lamented death of Aunt Polly, and after a lapse of nearly eight years, the coming of Aunt Jeanie. While Aunt Polly lived we made acquaintances, but outside of the family no friends, she was much like me that way. We had lived in Harper eighteen months, before either of us spoke to any of the neighbours, and then it was one of the neighbours spoke to us, Sister Gibbs. And until Aunt Jeanie came I had been in only three other houses in the ward and then only on business. Aunt Jeanie is a really good mixer, and her support has enabled me to mix better than I ever did before.

Have I any friends in Harper? Why everyone in Harper is my friend.

And so being more than half way through my 86th year, and looking back over the long road I have travelled I see many a folly, many a fault to regret, but life has been good to me, better than I have deserved. For the future I look forward to meeting many whom I have loved and lost awhile.

Written November 2nd, 1940.

A LIBERAL GLOBETROTTER

TONY IRESON

Though for a generation Frank Hutchen, the managing editor, was the moving spirit of the Kettering papers, the ultimate power lay in the hands of Sir Richard Winfrey who lived at Castor House, near Peterborough, and visited Kettering every few weeks. He was managing director, a large shareholder, and controlled half a dozen other newspaper companies in East Anglia. Sir Richard was cast in the same enterprising mould as Northcliffe and Beaverbrook, but did not seek their sort of eminence and power. Where other press barons put newspaper empire-building first, he had a great belief in the destiny of the Liberal party, and felt called to give much of his time and energy to his work as a Member of Parliament, and as a member of the 1914-18 wartime Government. It is a tribute to him to say that for many years his management of the newspapers was a most efficiently conducted sideline.

He was born in 1858, son of a Liberal and Nonconformist farmer who grew potatoes for the London market, was apprenticed to a Stamford chemist, qualified, and went to an Oxford Street firm. In London he joined a political debating society, and to gain experience attended late night sittings of the House of Commons. Inspired to help the Liberal cause, he said goodbye to pharmacy and volunteered as honorary election agent at Spalding, where in 1887 he piloted Halley Stewart to victory over a redoubtable Tory—Rear Admiral Sir George Tryon of Bulwick. The Winfrey diary notes: 'He was a fine man to look at, no doubt a commanding figure on the quarter-deck. But on a rural constituency platform he was a fish out of water. Bombarded with questions, he visibly lost his temper when the audience disapproved of his answers. At the poll declaration, losing by 747 votes, he took his beating very badly and showed considerable signs of ill-temper.'

The Admiral went down with his flagship, HMS *Victoria,* some years later. He was a victim among 358 officers and men of a disastrous collision during exercises in the Mediterranean, which was his fault. Perhaps if Richard Winfrey had not ensured his defeat at Spalding Sir George might have left the Navy for Parliament, and *Victoria's* tragic collision with HMS *Camperdown* would never have happened . . .

From agent to candidate was the next step, and in 1906 he was elected the first Liberal Member for South-West Norfolk in a Parliament which saw the Liberals and their supporters with a landslide majority of 356. Lord Carrington, president of the Board of Agriculture, gave him a flying start by choosing him as his Parliamentary private secretary so that he had official standing and his own office. He did not agonise over his maiden speech. After hunting all day with the Fitzwilliam he took an evening train to London, and on the spur of the moment spoke about the mishandling of Crown lands.

The Parliamentary connection with agriculture followed from his notable work for rural families dependant on farming. He had a flair for settling people on the land who were keen to work it, and started the 'peasant or pheasant' crusade for placing families on smallholdings carved out of big estates and leased to associations. This work earned his knighthood in the 1914 New Year Honours. Serving in local government as well as Parliament, he was elected mayor of Peterborough against his will, and with the outbreak of war was faced with onerous local as well as national responsibilities.

One night rioters stoned and looted shops in Peterborough market square owned by inoffensive citizens with German names. Police and Army could not act until the mayor read the Riot Act. Summoned by the police from his home in tree-lined Alderman's Drive, Sir Richard cycled to the

PLATE 1:
'A VERY FINE MAN TO LOOK AT'
Admiral Sir George Tryon in 1891
(*Northamptonshire Libraries*)

trouble spot and stood on a box to read the Act. He was showered with stones before police and soldiers advanced on the hooligans. 'I was lucky not to get a broken head,' was his comment.

Through the war he served as chairman of Peterborough Red Cross, which raised vast amounts of cash, sent over half a million articles to hospitals and troops, gave food and shelter to a quarter of a million soldiers on leave, cared for Belgian refugees, sent nearly 6,000 articles to the French destitute and hundreds of parcels to prisoners of war. But local work and running the newspapers was a minor activity. His main contribution was as a member of the Government 1916 to 1918, when he served as Parliamentary secretary to the Minister of Agriculture, living at the National Liberal Club to be close to Whitehall and moving his family down to Hampstead.

Extracts from his 1914 diary show the cost of the war in stark clarity: 'We were voting vast sums for the war, and for loans to Belgium, Servia and our British Dominions. Later came Russia, France and Italy. We had to help finance all the Allies at one time or another. In March the Prime Minister asked for another vote of £250,000,000, the largest credit ever asked for by any minister in this or any other country. He estimated that this would last a hundred days. When that time arrived we had spent as much as it cost to fight the Napoleonic wars for 10 years. In 1915 the daily expenditure became £2,660,000, and we started borrowing from America.' Reflection that £1 in 1914 was equal to £150 now shows the true magnitude of these sums.

He experienced the Zeppelin raids: 'These, and the black list – the confidential daily tally of ships sunk by German submarines – were nerveracking. Many of the ships were bringing food, and had the extent of the sinkings become known we should have had grave risk of a panic in the country. In 1915 141 ships were sunk, in 1916 338 ships, in 1917 44 ships in January, and the next months were worse until June when the total was 101 for the month. Then there was a merciful decline.'

In France and Belgium he visited areas devastated by the fighting and wrote an epic description: 'In France 21,000 factories had been destroyed, 1,659 townships wiped out, 630,000 houses completely or partially destroyed, 5,000 bridges and 5,000 miles of railway were gone, nine million acres of cultivated land were churned up by shells, and the output of the mines was halved. There was similar but smaller destruction in Belgium and Italy. The British reparations claim was for eight million tons of lost shipping, damage by air raids, pensions to 1,476,000 officers and men, and allowances to 1,140,000 widows and wives and children of disabled men.'

Sir Richard's work for the Board of Agriculture ended in January 1919 when the Government resigned: 'The last two years of war had taken it out of me. I was a stone lighter, and of course had not attended to my own business.' He was returned unopposed for South-West Norfolk but did not resume Government office. In the 1922 election he defeated a Labour candidate, and among his fellow Liberal MPs were his brothers-in-law Samuel Pattinson for Horncastle and Robert Pattinson for Grantham. He decided not to stand at the 1923 election, but Gainsborough needed a Liberal candidate so he changed his mind and won. The following year he lost, and at 66 decided to call it a day.

This vast amount of Parliamentary, political and local government work was half his career. The other half was building up the chain of newspapers which became today's East Midland Allied Press. As a young man he realised the need to establish papers to support the Liberals in face of a Conservative-owned local press, beginning when he bought the *Spalding Guardian* for £100 in 1887.

Sir Richard's way of relaxing was to go on tours abroad, an experience now open to all, but exceptional then. He travelled the world with surprising freedom, undertaking 22 major journeys between 1893 and 1939 with friends, official parties or his wife and family. His transport was by liner, train, car and on horseback. The trips were all eventful, and accounts he sent to his papers were written with a newsman's eye. He insisted on interviewing reporters before they interviewed him and so accumulated a mass of vivid facts.

In New York he regarded the elevated railway as a piece of iniquity: 'A double track of rails 25ft. above the roadway is supported by substantial pillars 20-30 paces apart, sometimes running down the middle of a street over the tramcars, sometimes close up against houses, the locomotives dropping hot rancid oil and dirt on the people below. The men who built it paid nothing for the privilege and are coining money out of their monopoly.' The train to Washington, averaging 40 mph, had a library, reading room with the daily papers, a barber's shop,

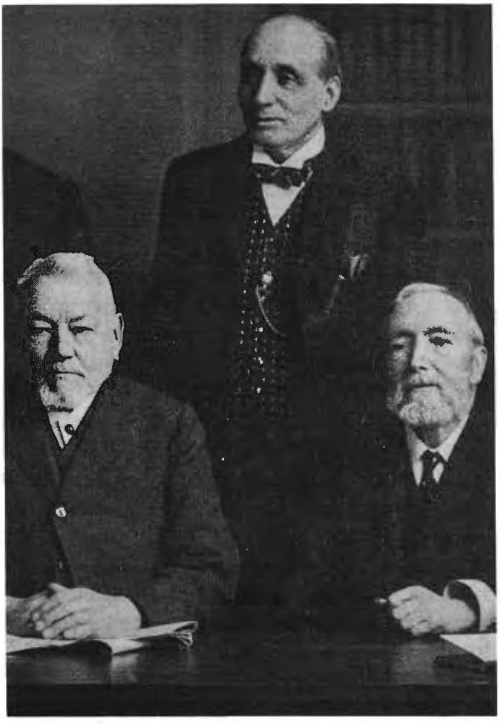

PLATE 2: SIR RICHARD WINFREY (in bow tie) with J. T. Stockburn (left) and Thomas Bird (right) of Kettering in 1920 (*Kettering Evening Telegraph*)

bathrooms, and electric bells everywhere to summon dining and sleeping car attendants.

The wonderland of the Rockies appealed in him to the lover of Nature at her wildest and most picturesque, but 'not for the beauty of these peerless hills did men steer their waggons across the prairie towards the golden glow of the setting sun. For gold and silver they faced the perils of flood and field, savages and wild animals. To describe the wonders of this mountain railway I dare not attempt. One marvels that the engineers could even gain a footing to make the survey'.

Yellowstone Park he explored by stage waggon, the climax 'the eruptive violence of the truly awful region where are grouped the grandest and mightiest geysers known to man – clouds of vapour hang shroud-like, the earth trembles, the air is heavy with

sulphurous fumes, and vegetable life is extinct'.

In Rome in 1895 he was moved by 'the immense bronze doors of St John Lateran which originally belonged to the Senate House, magnificent doors equal in finish to anything that could be produced now, yet made 2,548 years ago. For centuries the great Roman orators passed through them, and for 15 centuries they have been the doors of the first Christian church built in the world, through whose portals successive Popes have passed to their coronation. How eloquent they are in their silent grandeur.'

In Egypt in 1899 he climbed the Great Pyramid – 'no great feat after all. I had three Arabs to assist, and with one holding each hand and pulling in front and the third pushing behind I reached the summit in 15 minutes. The descent was more difficult, and I am feeling very stiff from jumping stone to stone. As long as reason lasts I shall never forget my visit to the Ghizeh Museum. Can I make you realise that I beheld the actual features of the Pharaoh who oppressed Israel, brought to light after 3,000 years? Even the hair of the head is there, and his hands, fingers and nails are as perfect as the day he was embalmed.'

In 1910 he crossed Europe in the Blue Train with four companions, took steamer to Beyrout exploring Greece on the way, then hired Arab steeds for an amazing three-week journey through Lebanon and Syria, climbing thousands of feet into wild mountains. They were attended by a guide, grooms to look after the horses, mules carrying the camping equipment, porters to erect and strike the tents, and a chef. What luxury! 'We rode 300 miles over mountain passes and through almost inaccessible places. For our last dinner in camp when we reached Jerusalem, Joseph our cook excelled himself, and we sat down to a six course meal fit for a king.'

Constantinople was infested by thousands of mongrel dogs living on garbage. The authorities ordered that the streets be cleared, and 20,000 dogs were caught. They were not killed, as it was against the Moslem religion to slay a domestic animal, and were shipped to an island to starve to death. But the dogs won – after all this effort 20,000 still roamed the Constantinople streets.

In 1926 when he visited the Southern States of the USA the mayor of Haynesville, Louisiana, declared a public holiday. Businesses closed and a general assembly was called to greet Sir Richard and his friends. He found that the town existed because 23 men put up cash to drill for oil, and more than 600 wells had made millions of dollars for the syndicate.

In Dallas he met a man whose father bought 1,000 acres for a dollar an acre. Ploughing it, the family had to carry six-shooters to ward off attacks by Indians, and herded in their sheep for fear of wolves, but within 80 years their land had increased in value to 2,500 dollars an acre. The reverse of the medal was the treatment of black people which distressed Sir Richard: 'Their shanties are often only one room, with shocking sanitary accommodation. The governing class have much to answer for.'

He toured Canada in 1927 with 95 newspaper proprietors, editors and managers. They hired a train of sleeping, dining and observation cars which was their home for a month, taking them into the hearts of the cities they visited and saving all packing and unpacking: 'This luxurious train reduces the fatigue of travel to the utmost minimum. When we tire of looking at the scenery we can read, write, or indulge in a hand of bridge, to say nothing of the time spent at meals.'

Travelling to Africa in 1929 he found the ship was carrying a horse 'for whom we have much sympathy for he stands on deck in a box without room to turn round or lie down. I stroke his head every morning. He has a most pathetic look and seems grateful for sympathy. At Port Sudan I am glad to say the poor horse was lifted out in his box where he had stood for nearly three weeks and placed in a railway truck, box and all. I fear he will have to endure a hot journey before reaching the end of his sufferings.'

Between Nairobi and Mombasa his train was stopped by a vast swarm of locusts which made the rails too greasy for the driving

wheels to grip. The driver had to send for a second engine to assist: 'Millions of locusts were marching down the rocky bank on one side, over the line, and up the other side. They covered the bush as far as we could see, were at least a mile wide, and even with two engines and liberal sanding we could only proceed at a snail's pace. The locusts were at the hopper stage. Later they would fly and become a cloud which darkens the sun. I have seen with my own eyes what a plague of locusts really means.'

In 1930 at Pitcairn Island he met a great-grandson of Fletcher Christian who led the mutiny on the *Bounty*. In New Zealand he noted the horrible habits of the kia, a parrot-like bird with a razor beak: 'It is the terror of shepherds. It will alight on a sheep's back and work away until it pecks the kidneys out of the poor animal. One bird will kill several sheep in a day. The Government pays 5s. for every dead kia, and the farmers add another 5s.'

Again in 1931 he walked among the stupendous structures left by the civilisation of the Pharaohs and visited the tomb of Tutankhamen: 'The third coffin was made of solid gold and was as much as eight strong men could lift. This wonderful monument of the finest art represented an enormous mass of pure bullion and shows how great was the wealth buried with the Pharaohs. What riches the Valley of the Kings must have concealed. Of 27 monarchs buried there Tutankhamen is probably the least important. How great must have been the greed of robbers who desecrated other tombs.'

In Greece in 1932 he recalled at Pylos Bay that Admiral Codrington destroyed the Turkish fleet at the Battle of Navarino in 1827 without orders. The Cabinet sent a dispatch censuring him for taking the law into his own hands, but the Duke of Clarence, later William IV, who signed it added his own footnote: 'Well done, Ned!' William had served with Codrington and appreciated his Nelson touch.

A grisly story came Sir Richard's way in Morocoo in 1933: 'The Moor, though soft and tender, is brave and cruel. In 1909 the Sultan exhibited in the public square of Fez an iron cage containing a captured rebel chieftain, and after the exhibition had the man thrown into a cage of lions. The same Sultan decreed that 300 rebels should each have one hand and one foot cut off. The women are as cruel as the men.'

Crossing to the West Indies his ship passed shoals of flying fish. 'Here is an amusing story I have just heard. One poor man was terribly sick, and his wife went down to the cabin to see how he was getting on. She found him bending over a basin in which was a flying fish that had blundered through the port-hole. She gave a piercing shriek, thinking her husband had thrown it up!'

With the rise of Nazism Sir Richard went to Germany in 1933 to observe the Hitler regime. Dr Goebbels, propaganda minister, placed an official at his disposal for a journey taking in Aachen, Berlin, Dresden, Leipzig, Hildesheim and Hanover. 'To understand all that has happened in Germany one must realise the wholesale impoverishment resulting from the fantastic inflation which reached its maximum in 1923 when 5,000,000,000 marks were equal to only one gold mark. This ruined the greater part of the middle classes. Wages had to be paid each morning as by night the amount was not worth half what it had been 12 hours before. On top of that came a run on the banks, six million unemployed, and the whole business world was in chaos.'

His guide expressed regret for the excesses of over-zealous Hitlerites against the Jews, but said that many Jews had come from other countries and made fortunes during the inflation. It was against them that the regime had acted. At Dresden he visited a concentration camp where 2,000 people were guarded, but saw no brutality. He witnessed a review of 30,000 Storm Troopers lasting two hours, 'a striking testimony to the organisation Hitler had built up. We returned to the hotel for luncheon and found it was the Sunday for the one-dish meal. The whole German people each fourth Sunday confine their dinner to one dish and give the money saved to winter relief of the poor.'

The propaganda ministry told him: 'The world war (1914) brought a revolt of worn

out people who had lost their nerve through the hunger blockade. Trade union leaders with no world knowledge signed the Treaty of Versailles, the death warrant of Germany. The people would have been driven to Bolshevism if National Socialism had not taken over. Germany was robbed of her colonies and of territory that had been German from time immemorial. As reparations she was made to deliver immense quantities of machinery, raw materials and finished goods, only made possible by borrowing from other countries. The German people are ready for energetic co-operation in reconstructing world economy to combat unemployment, but insist that the world places full confidence in Germany by refraining from interference in her national affairs.'

Sir Richard met and quoted Miles Bontin, Berlin correspondent of the *Baltimore Sun,* who foreshadowed the appalling future: 'Within six weeks of coming to power the Nazis altered Germany's whole political, financial, legal and cultural structure and did away with the Bill of Rights, leaving every citizen without protection for person or property. In less than two months they destroyed every trace of independence in every department of life. Greatly as every citizen of any free country must condemn and reject measures that have isolated Germany in the civilised world, it is impossible to withhold admiration from the perfection of the machinery by which these measures have been carried out. They are the work of a political organisation such as the world has never seen, and of a military organisation which can be matched only by the armies of a few great powers.'

The last journeys of his life were anything but luxurious. After war came again in 1939 he strove to carry on running his papers as usual, in days of petrol scarcity travelling across the East Midlands by bus and train. It proved too much. On a rainy day in April 1944 he went by train from Peterborough to a directors' meeting in Cambridge, but returned home unwell, and died a fortnight later in his 86th year. Old age had beaten him. He had his critics, but no one could question his courage and resolution.

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BOOK REVIEWS

NORTHAMPTON 1835-1985. Shoe Town, New Town
By Cynthia Brown
(Phillimore, 1991, £20.00)

This study of Northampton in the modern period is an outcome of the celebrations of the 800th anniversary of the borough's first Charter. Northampton is not exceptional in having a new sponsored town history – this has become increasingly common – but the choice of a recent graduate to undertake the work has resulted in a sure-handed account of town developments which is of more than local interest. It is not what might be called a popular account: there is not much on the subjective experiences of ordinary people and little pandering to the current vogue for evoking the past through oral history. But it does give much attention to the changing conditions which affected the quality of life in Northampton. The main emphasis (quite properly in a work of civic history) is the development of local authority services, but these are placed in the context of changes in the broader economic, political and social life of the town. From the perspective of an urban historian, as this reviewer is, the book does not seem narrowly municipal.

One of the broader themes to emerge is the significance which the footwear industry had not only for the economy but also the politics and character of social life in the town because of its artisanal character. Another theme is the tension between the vigorous political life of the town and the development of a broad consensus about what needed to be done to overcome social problems. In dealing with the town's political and religious character, the author avoids stereotypes and has interesting material on the politicisation of municipal activity in the 19th century, and the role of town patriotism in modifying political attitudes in the 20th. Attention is given to Northampton's minority radical and socialist groups in both these respects. The importance of social leadership in the town is another theme that runs through this study, particularly in respect to the support given to educational and social institutions. This is linked to the development of associational life and leisure activity more generally, as Northampton experienced the commercial and cultural changes of the 20th century.

The concern to directly influence the lives of ordinary people for moral as well as social reasons is a theme which enters into the treatment of municipal leadership as the scope of the Council is enlarged from drains and sewers to wider educational and social service provision. Aspects of municipal activity are dealt with that are not commonly found in local history texts – the economics of municipal trading for example, the conditions of service of the officers, changing rateable values and ratepayer groups, and the changing relations between central and local government. But especially full treatments are given to the work of the council in maternal and child welfare and in council housing development. These are both areas for which Northampton seems to have had an exceptional record. Finally, the work of the post war Development Corporation and the impact of the new town and the changing local economy form the subjects of the last chapter, and enable the author to place the town within the broader context of regional and metropolitan development in the modern period.

To an outsider, Northampton seems to have a strong tradition of local history writing and specialist local studies are drawn on extensively for this text. But the author has also worked conscientiously through the town records herself. Indeed, a feature of the book is the way she packs material from these sources into the narrative, combining statistics and factual description with salvoes of quotations from the borough minutes, political commentaries and reports in the local newspaper. This makes for a dense text, but her gritty style and dry sense of humour saves it from being indigestible. Perhaps one might have wished for more tabular

The Wakes of NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

by PETER GORDON

Northamptonshire County Council
Libraries and Information Service

Against a backdrop of national and international affairs, this book, rich in social history, traces the fascinating story of one family through twenty-nine generations – and their contribution to the life of a nation.

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PLATE 1. VIEW OVER NORTHAMPTON MARKET HILL from All Saints, about 1912

presentation of data on the changing social and physical development of the town and somewhat less anecdote, but there can be no doubt that she offers good value in what is also a handsomely produced book, with a judicious selection of maps and illustrations of buildings and personalities.

DAVID A. REEDER
UNIVERSITY OF LEICESTER

THE WAKES OF NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

By Peter Gordon
(Northamptonshire County Council Libraries and Information Service, 1992, £19.50)

The Wakes need no introduction in Northamptonshire. In a county once famed for its landed gentlemen their local roots go back further (much further) than any other family, and they are squires of Courteenhall still. To members of Northamptonshire's Record Society and anyone else interested in local history the name of Wake is even more familiar. Miss Joan Wake, daughter of the 12th baronet, was (with others) responsible for starting the Society, and for half a century was its leading spirit. One of the most enjoyable chapters in this book is devoted to her long and remarkable life, a fascinating mix of activity and scholarship. Her nephew, Sir Hereward Wake, the present baronet, is the Society's president, having succeeded Sir Gyles Isham on the death of the latter in 1976. In a characteristically straightforward introduction Sir Hereward explains how this book originated: 'My grandfather died in 1916 in the year I was born. I was blessed with a wonderful father who died when I was forty-seven. I feared my children might grow up knowing as little about their grandfather as I knew about mine. So I asked Professor Peter Gordon to record their lives.'

He made wise choices, both with his writer and publisher. The author of a two-volume study

of the 5th Earl Spencer – the 'Red Earl' – Peter Gordon is an expert on landed families and their records, and has the ability to distil and narrate information in clear and enthusiastic prose. This is a very big book, almost encyclopaedic in scale, much of it personal and particular to the Wake family. Material from family letters, journals and other records is used to bring out personalities, foibles and experiences of the Wakes as individuals and as landed proprietors, whilst the local and national scene is sketched in to bring perspective to the reader. His publisher has also done Sir Hereward proud. If this is the last (as reputedly it is) in the series of publications of the Northamptonshire Libraries which goes back to the 60s, it is one of their handsomest. The design (once more by Bernard Crossland), paper, print, binding and quality of illustrations are all outstanding.

The acid-test of local (and family) history is, can it be read with profit by non-local (or non-family) readers? It has to be admitted often it cannot. Can the long story of the Wakes be of interest to those not Wakes, or not Northamptonshire local history enthusiasts? Miss Wake saw the danger: when approached by her father to write the family history that forthright lady responded 'There is no such boring thing in the world as ancestor worship to other people, and I was determined not to become that particular kind of bore'. In the hands of Peter Gordon any such pitfalls are avoided. Whilst sticking to his brief (and about half the book is devoted to the three most recent generations of Wakes) his account of their family history enables us to understand the Wakes as representatives of their class, that of armigerous middle-ranking landowners, more substantial (at least since Jacobean times) than the 'parish gentry' (who became largely extinct by the early 18th century) but smaller, and more locally rooted, than the aristocratic 'great landowners of Great Britain'.

For obvious reasons (property being at stake) landed families, some more than others, have a more powerful sense of family destiny than the rest of us. At one extreme this can be a fount of self-regard and vanity, but at another can give a strong sense of cohesion and even zest. What often fuels this is a famous forebear, and the Wakes have one, at once historical and mythic, in Hereward the Wake. Although one medieval Wake in the 13th century tried to establish descent from the great Saxon resister of 'the Norman Yoke', modern Wake interest dates from the time of the Romantic Revival of the early 19th century. It has to be pointed out, however, that the fascination of Romantics with the medieval period was simply one way of turning away from what was happening in contemporary society. As early as 1828 the family began naming sons Herwald, then Herewald, then Hereward. But what established the connection as too good to miss was the publication of Charles Kingsley's novel *Hereward the Wake* in 1866. Although the family seems to have had Norman rather than Saxon origins, there have been those, notably Sir Herewald, 12th baronet, who have maintained the claim to descent from the great English folk hero. As they say in Fleet Street, when the myth is more interesting than fact, print the myth. In starting the book with a chapter on Hereward the Wake and the Wakes and Hereward, Professor Gordon gives his story an intriguing and artistically satisfying start, as well as offering a clue to the way some families maintain (or revive) morale.

To have survived as landowners for so long the Wakes had to suffer and surmount many reversals of fortune. They arrived in Northamptonshire in the sixth decade of the 12th century, and for two centuries were landowners at Blisworth, though their manor house there has long disappeared. As with other families, they faced extinction (as landowners) on such occasions as the arrival of the Tutor Dynasty. Roger Wake, married to Sir William Catesby's daughter, fought for Richard III at Bosworth and forfeited his lands in consequence. Two years later Parliament voted to return them to him. Wake family fortunes dipped again in Tudor times, their residence then being at Piddington. However, they rose with the acquisition of a baronetcy by Baldwin Wake in 1621, before whom there had been 11 generations of Wakes as Northamptonshire landowners. However, Wake wealth was based more on an estate in Somerset (acquired in 1448 and not sold until 1630) than on Northamptonshire land. In the period of the Civil Wars their fortunes declined again, to be re-established by William, 3rd

baronet, through a marriage which, via the Ouseleys and the Joneses, eventually brought them the Courteenhall estate, once the property of Lenton Priory in Nottinghamshire. But although for 300 years the Wakes have been identified with Northamptonshire, the family also possessed estates in Essex, which were not sold until this century (and an interest remains there still).

Half of Peter Gordon's account is devoted to the family over the past century, which has seen the Indian summer and the economic and political decline of the English landed gentry as a class. The life of Sir Herewald Wake, who inherited the family estates in 1865 at the age of 12 and held them for 51 years, commenced in the former phase and witnessed the onset of the latter. In High Victorian England life on £5,000 a year could be very agreeable, and we are given a splendid account of Sir Herewald and his wife, Kitty St Aubyn. The position of the landed gentry was undermined by the Great Agricultural Depression of the last third of the 19th century, by the rise of an increasingly democratic political system, by Liberal taxation on the 'unearned increment' from land, and by the 'blood tax' on the officer class of the First World War.

The Wakes survived by economising and improving their estate management, Sir Herewald showing the way, by selling land, by adjusting to 20th century social and political realities (including making marriages with daughters of families whose wealth came from sources other than land), by luck, and perhaps by finding their own ways of preserving morale. As with other families, Wake sons served in the army and navy with notable distinction: where luck came in, was that none were killed. As a young man Sir Herewald's son, Hereward, later Major General Sir Hereward Wake, 13th baronet, was in the firing line, surviving several extremely bloody encounters with the Boers, which he graphically describes in his letters. Very soon after his marriage he was called on to serve in the Great War as a staff officer. His son, Sir Hereward, the present baronet, soldiered in his father's old regiment in Hitler's war, seeing action at El Alamein (as did his brother Peter Wake), and in the Normandy campaign, winning the MC and being wounded. In 1947, invalided out of the army, he took over the estates from his father (who died in 1963). Here he has raised his family, preserved Courteenhall (in very bad shape after housing a school in the War), suffered (and was compensated for) the M1 slicing through his estate, and must now watch the onset of what might be a second Great Agricultural Depression. However, landed families nowadays are rarely as dependent on income from land as they were in the time of his grandfather.

What impressions are the reader of this engaging chronicle left with? The first is certainly Wake vigour. To survive, landowners had to avoid becoming effete, and on the whole they did this through their love of country life, manly sports, and, in the case of the Wakes, a keen interest and pleasure in natural history. The Wakes made good marriages and avoided losing their children in infancy. If not intellectual (though Joan Wake certainly was) they exhibited alertness and common sense in strong measure. Above all, whilst remaining very much a part of the social world of the landowning classes, they have participated in the vulgar, if more socially relaxed, world of Post-War Britain. Of course, John Major's Britain is not yet classless, and no one is disadvantaged by the possession of a landed estate. But maybe staying attuned is Sir Hereward's unstated reason for commissioning this 'new Wake Bible' for his children and grandchildren. Their world will be different to his: all one generation can offer the next is its experience and its understanding of the past. Whatever use it is put to, one thing seems certain: this splendid book will surely excite the envy of other families of ancient lineage.

R. L. GREENALL

'LIKE DEW BEFORE THE SUN'
LIFE AND LANGUAGE IN NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

By Dorothy Grimes
(Published by the author, 1991)

'Like Dew Before the Sun' is a provocative title. It prompts the question 'What is?' To find the answer you pick up and open Mrs Dorothy Grimes' charming and ultra-informative book on Northamptonshire and you are lost – you cannot resist digging out the modest £8 which she charges for its 354 pages, and back at home you are guaranteed many evenings of pleasure perusing it.

Mrs Grimes set herself the task of researching the vanishing life and language of Northamptonshire, and has collected what seem to be hundreds of memories from all sorts of conditions of people. They are grouped into chapters on people at home and work, country people, wartime experiences, life at church and chapel, games, traditional songs and dances, seasonal customs, stories about places, the foibles of local speech, and a study of John Clare whose sturdy character exemplifies Northamptonshire Man (and Woman). Supporting the text are many fine photographs and drawings.

To read the book is to live in the County as it was in recent history, when chastity before marriage and fidelity after it were expected, when no girl who had fallen from grace would wear white as a bride, and when after childbirth the mother would be kept in bed for 10 days on bread and milk, with her legs tied together in case of haemorrhage.

On washday 30 gallons of water had to be carried into the house in buckets, baths and earthen pancheons from a tap 70 yards away. Mother washed, scrubbed, boiled, rinsed twice, mangled, dried and ironed for a family of seven and four old people. She also washed for an old woman whose clothes when collected were alive with fleas and had to be dumped straight into a bucket of water.

No one in authority cared much about poor families. A widow with half a dozen young children was left without help except from a neighbour, who at night used to put a sack over the garden wall, containing wood, coal, or vegetables. Some families were so poor that they had not enough boots to go round. Sometimes the boys had the boots to go to school, and on other days the girls wore the boots to school while the boys stayed at home.

It was not uncommon for poor children to be kept in bed all the weekend because their clothes had been pawned. Bread with tea poured on it and a little sugar was one 'meal', and ancient meat was washed in vinegar to 'take the small off'. One squire, if he saw a dish being carried to the bakehouse, would lean down from his horse and lift the lid with his riding stock to see if one of his rabbits had been poached.

Though there was poverty, better-off families lived in style. Grandma might get up early to prepare breakfast so that grandpa could come down to the delightful smells of bacon and new bread, then going off to work in his bowler hat and apron, both status symbols. Some jobs were less than pleasant. A butcher boy had to take buckets of blood to the leather dresser, who encouraged people to collect dog droppings for use in his processes – 'top prices paid for best white'.

There are many informative details on County trades, and dramatic memories from the great battles of both wars. Harpole casualty figures illustrate the comparative cost in lives. In 1914-18 this village of 900 lost 46 men, but only seven in 1939-45.

Information is salted with many excellent stories. A man with a wooden leg was in an earth closet on a dark night, the leg sticking out in front of him. Somebody else arrived to use the closet, fell over the wooden leg, and collapsed on the earthen floor shouting 'Who's left a bloody wheelbarrow in here?' An old lady, faced with some lazy hens, put them in a sack, threw them into some water, and stirred them up with a broom with the comment 'That'll make them old galluses lay'. A Banbury drover used to meet cattle when they arrived by train for market.

He would speak quietly to them in the station yard, and then lead them through the town with a soft 'Cup, cup'. He never carried a stick.

Many of the picturesque Northamptonshire expressions listed along with a 50-page glossary are still in use, like 'He couldn't stop a pig in an entry', or 'She looked like death warmed up', and with this delightful book to perpetuate them the scores of others recorded are unlikely ever to be forgotten.

Mrs. Grimes publishes the book from 27 Winchester Road, Delapre, Northampton NN4 9AZ at £8 + p. & p. £1.15.

TONY IRESON

ELEANOR OF CASTILE, 1290-1990
ESSAYS TO COMMEMORATE THE 700th ANNIVERSARY OF HER DEATH: 28 NOVEMBER 1290

D. Parsons (ed)

(Paul Watkins Medieval Studies, 1991, 95 pp., illus., £16.95 hardback, £9.95 paperback)

Northamptonshire is indeed fortunate to be the home of two of the three surviving Eleanor Crosses, at Hardingstone and Geddington. Originally there were twelve of these, marking the path of the *cortège* of this much loved consort of Edward I, which wound its way from Lincoln to London during the winter of 1290. A legend was subsequently woven around the persona of Queen Eleanor of Castile, encapsulated in the memorial crosses and consolidated by the writings of William Camden in the 16th century. The questions posed by this excellent collection of essays are two-fold. Firstly, how did Eleanor match up to the myth which has come to surround her; and secondly, what place do the crosses, and indeed her surviving gilt-bronze effigy in Westminster Abbey, hold in the history of Medieval English art?

The four major contributors to this volume are eminently well placed to provide answers. John Parsons paints a picture of a devoted wife and mother who loved literature and was a special patron of the Dominicans. But at the same time she was keen to assert the embryonic powers of English Queenship, and in her haste to obtain estates she gained a reputation, with the aristocracy at least, for a disturbing acquisitiveness: Archbishop Peckham, for one, disliked her contacts with Jews, an extension into England of attitudes which had been taken for granted for generations in her native Castile and which must have seemed to Eleanor quite natural. Parsons demonstrates convincingly that during her life the Queen struck different chords with different people, not all of them favourable.

But the book dwells most heavily on the legend of Eleanor which grew up after her death. She chanced to expire at a fairly critical juncture in English history when the Plantagenet monarchy was flexing its muscles for attacks on Wales and Scotland and a claim to the French throne was not far in the future. Since the reign of Louis IX consistent efforts had been made in England to emulate French architecture and practice, and Elizabeth Hallam makes the point that this was nowhere more evident than in funerary ritual which became 'a conscious exercise in image-making', multiplying the opportunities for monarch-veneration by interring bodies separate to viscera, despite the reservations of the Papacy: Eleanor, indeed, achieved the gruesome distinction of having *three* tombs, those of her bowels at Lincoln; her heart at Blackfriars, London; and her body at Westminster Abbey. The essays of Nicola Coldstream and Phillip Lindley spell out clearly how Eleanor's eviscerated corpse was made a focus of this new image-building process. Coldstream explains how the Eleanor crosses were modelled on similar monoliths, the 'montjoies', which marked the funeral route of Louis IX; Lindley discusses the funerary sculpture, on the tombs and crosses, and concludes that each represented a highly idealised reflection of reality.

The motive in all this seems to be plain. On the one hand to glorify the resurgent English monarchy; and on the other to portray Eleanor almost as a saint, creating a heady mix of secular and spiritual authority with which to assault the onlooker. The fact that the work was undertaken at great expense (Charing Cross cost £700, a vast sum in the 13th century) and was executed in a style which was *avant-garde* illuminated still further the sub-text of deep personal affection and power politics with which the whole exercise was underpinned. This was the Queen 'whom living we dearly cherished, and whom dead we cannot cease to love', to quote the words of her grieving husband.

The book effectively demolishes the 'misleading and one-dimensional picture' of Eleanor created by Camden and the other hagiographers. It introduces us to an individual, and a context, much more subtle than many of us would have been aware of. The University of Leicester Department of Adult Education, and in particular David Parsons, is to be congratulated on having drawn together such a stimulating range of speakers for their weekend school at Northampton in 1990; and for having followed that up by arranging for the publication of the papers by Paul Watkins of Stamford, one of the few commercial publishers to specialise in this sort of volume. The book brings great credit on all who have been associated with it.

DAVID MARCOMBE
UNIVERSITY OF NOTTINGHAM

EARLY DAVENTRY: AN ESSAY IN EARLY LANDSCAPE PLANNING

By A. E. Brown

(Department of Adult Education, University of Leicester, 1992, £5.00, plus £1.00 p. and p.)

As the sub-title suggests, this is a detailed academic study rather than an ordinary product of local history research. Every piece of evidence, even the discussion of the descent of the manor, has a clear purpose in the subsequent analysis. Though it originated in the work of an adult education group, its real value derives directly from its author. The detailed argument is essential but, rather in the fashion of an archaeological report, the majority of the text is not inspired reading. The conclusions are. The study of the layout and evolution of the town are interesting but sit within a well understood historical framework. Not so the consideration of the origins of the agricultural village and its field system. This book represents one piece in a developing jigsaw of local studies which will, next century, make possible the complete re-writing of the history and origins of the Medieval landscape at a level of detail, and with implications for origins, undreamt of by Hoskins. Brown's study is centrally placed within this major re-analysis of the origins of the Medieval landscape, which is revealing a 'great replanning' of the late Saxon period as dramatic and complete as anything which occurred in the Inclosures of the 18th and 19th century, which created our modern rural landscape. The summary of the replanning on page 69 is the best attempt I have seen to present what may have been the late Saxon surveyor's task, the summary of the origins of Daventry itself on page 78, with its suggestions about an original block of demesne underlying the settlement, provides food for thought for all those working on the origins of the English village.

Brown has managed to combine the analysis of settlement and fields and the conclusions which flow from this are very important. We need many more such studies to elaborate and confirm the general story and then the next step must be to combine such a study with detailed archaeological investigation – something that cannot be achieved at Daventry because of the scale of development in the 20th century, just as in the archaeological study of the Raunds area the documentary framework was unavailable to complement the exceptionally good archaeological evidence.

After providing a brief archaeological background, Brown sets the late Saxon estate context within which Daventry and its hamlet of Drayton must be seen. He then reconstructs in detail the layout and evolution of this average country market town in the Medieval and Tudor periods, using the good range of Medieval documents and later maps and surveys. He argues for a mid 12th century conversion of an agricultural village into a market town, under the direction of the lord of the manor. The planned layout of the town is explored and explanations put forward showing the conversion of agricultural to burgage tenements and the 13th century expansion of the town by the creation of the Newlands, a story which can be repeated for other towns in the county.

After briefly considering the layout of Medieval Drayton, Brown goes on to analyse in great detail the Medieval field systems of Daventry and Drayton. A similar sequence of reconstruction and analysis is followed as with the settlement study, though here archaeological evidence plays a more significant role. As Hall has discovered in other parishes in the county, at Daventry there is a great regularity of organisation in the field systems. However Brown is able in this study, thanks to good documentation and cogent argument, to link the development of the field system with the development of the settlements. A recorganisation of the field systems in the mid 12th century is related to the creation of the town from the village, while the origins of the regular field system of the earlier 12th century is sought in a replanning of the whole landscape in the 10th century. Though such arguments have been severely criticised in the past, Brown very effectively marshalls the quite substantial body of evidence to link the fiscal assessments of Domesday Book with the actual, physical organisation of both the fields and the settlements.

Most important for the student of the origins of the Medieval landscape is the fact that Brown presents all his evidence, fully referenced, and lays out all his arguments clearly and in full. If one does not agree with any part of the analysis one is at least able to trace how Brown arrived at his conclusions. It may not make for inspired reading and one might have wished, for the sake of the general reader, that there had been a clear distinction between sections of detailed argument and those summarising the story deduced. Many readers may not plough through the whole text, but the serious student will be very grateful that the detail is present.

This is a high quality piece of historical topography by a landscape archaeologist who understands the issues and addresses the questions at the centre of academic debate as to the origins of the Medieval landscape.

GLENN FOARD

SHORTER NOTICES

Our Village. A History of Arthingworth is the work of the Arthingworth Research group, whose co-ordinator is Louisa Deas. They have produced in duplicated form 72 pages of fascinating information, particularly on the modern period. The work began life as a village appraisal under the auspices of the Rural Community Council, which developed into a history as it went along. What it explains so well is the process of the contemporary 'gentrification' of a former estate village, tucked away off the main road between Kelmarsh and Market Harborough. The real gentry have gone, the poor have gone, council houses are privatised, the post office is for sale, the Old School building is now 'Forge Cottages'.

It was always an estate village, in the hand of the Langham Rokebys from 1700 to 1931, and this study is good on the stages through which such villages have passed in the 20th century, with tales of the polo-playing, horse-mad rich in the 1930s to local happenings in World War Two. On sale at £4.00, copies are obtainable from the Harborough Museum, or from Quinn's or Green's bookshops in Market Harborough.

Another parish history, again published in duplicated form, *Wootton. An Ordinary Village* by

Dorothy Rice, has a different emphasis. Organised in the more conventional way of Parish histories, beginning at the beginning and trying to do justice to the different historical periods of the past, it has far less on what happened in the 20th century, particularly in the past two decades or so, than the Arthingworth study. And one rather regrets this missed opportunity to link past and present. Nevertheless, it is a serious attempt to combe the archives for local materials, and is full of fascinating information. What one misses, as so often with village studies, is a wider vision of where the place fits into its locality, and into some typology of rural settlements.

The fascination with collecting and publishing old photographs continues. First, *Around the Welland Valley in Old Photographs*, by Steph Mastoris (Alan Sutton and Leicestershire Museums, Arts and Records Service, 1991, £7.95) which 'looks at the topography, economy, life and tradition of the upper part of the Welland Valley, through the eyes of the many photographers working during the last 100 years'. Centred on Market Harborough, where Steph Mastoris is Keeper of the Harborough Museum, it concentrates on its market area, from Naseby and Husbands Bosworth in the west, to Great Easton and Rockingham in the east, and from Kibworth in the north to Kelmarsh in the south. It is the familiar mix of views and groups in photographs which range from the murky to the bright, laid out two per page with captions. Intelligently organised – 'Views' first, then 'Farming', then 'Life in the Community' and finally 'Community and Celebration', what it makes me recall (once more) is the rapidity of social change in just one life time. The pictures of the 1940s are as 'foreign' and 'historical' as those of the Edwardian era. One surprising omission is a map, which would have been a unifying aid in a book which tries hard to use the word 'district', as in 'Harborough's market district' (a real economic entity), meaningfully. History is about maps as well as chaps.

By contrast, Eric Fowell's *A Pictorial View of Old Rushden, Part I* focuses in on one particular place which, as Mr Fowell says in his introduction, grew from 1,460 people in 1851 to 12,459 by 1901, all because of the growth of the footwear trade. Here we have a world where, as Patrick Norman says in a brief Foreword, 'a charabanc in the street drew stares, and a lone baker's van would negotiate Church Street at a dignified clip-clop, and the pull and push clanked over station bridge'. Here is essential Edwardian and early 20th century Northamptonshire, where small towns were more than half rural, shoemaking dominated, Liberals were cocks of the political walk, Nonconformists were serious, office holders were dignified, and pleasures were simple and the more deeply enjoyed for it. The problem is, by and large, old photographs show a world where everyone seems dressed up in their Sunday best. Nonetheless Eric Fowell has produced a lovely little book of 104 pages of photographs, well captioned. It is available from him at 101 Spencer Road, Rushden, NN10 9AD, price £5.95 (plus 74p for postage).

R. L. GREENALL

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Northamptonshire artist Christopher Fiddes at work on a mural in Brixworth House
(*Photograph: John Robertson*)