



Lambley Historical Society

www.lambleyheritage.co.uk

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Lambley Historical Society Review 2012 – a year of celebration!

What a successful year this has been for our Nation! A wonderful Olympics, which demonstrated to the world that we can deliver on our promise to hold a fantastic show and win the odd medal along the way! The Queen's Diamond Jubilee Celebration in Lambley was a great day for the village. Householders decorated their homes with bunting. The celebration on the school field was visited by hundreds of people, enjoying the stalls, games for the children – including some older children! Food and refreshments were provided by the Lambley Restaurant and music by the local band, The Food Doctors. The Lambley Historical Society was well represented at the event. We had a picture show of past Royal Celebrations from our photograph archive. This exhibition was well visited. Local people recognised their family and friends in the photographs which added to their enjoyment of the show. It was particularly pleasing to see young people taking an interest in the photographs. Their delight at looking at past Lambley Royal Celebrations was a pleasure to see. Let us hope that it will inspire them to take a more active interest in their heritage.

Review of talks and visits 2012

As always we had a diverse range of topics and speakers this year. Chris Weir gave us a whistle stop tour of Nottinghamshire at the AGM. John Ward spoke to us about the work of the Women's Land Army. Ian Morgan gave a very polished presentation on The Fossdyke – how does he remember all the facts, without the use of prompts or notes? Amazing! Following our regular theme of 'Talk and Walk,' David Amos spoke to us about DH Lawrence's Eastwood. This was followed by a visit to his place of birth, which is now a fascinating museum. We also completed The Lawrence Walk in Eastwood with David pointing out places featured in his novels and houses that Lawrence and his family had lived in during his time in Eastwood.

We had a very enjoyable trip to Grimsthorpe Castle. Members were taken on a guided bus trip around the estate. A visit to the interior of the castle was most informative and enjoyable with beautiful furnishings. Members also took a great interest in the tea room!

Val Henstock gave us an enjoyable and interesting guided walk of Bottesford. The highlight of the evening was the visit to the church to see the remarkable collection of tombs of the Lords of Belvoir: eight Earls, including six Knights of the Garter. One tomb is the only one in the country to record the death of two heirs to an earldom by



Bottesford visit



witchcraft. The witches were executed or died in 1618.

Our autumn and winter talks commenced with Jean Townsend's 'Inside Knowledge' on the Coronation of our present Queen – what the public did not get to know about! Ted White gave us a presentation on his extensive research into 17th century village life with a focus on our near neighbour Gedling. Finally a fun night with Peter Hammond – can you name this object? Peter brought along an assortment of old tools and homeware for us to guess their usage. I have to say I failed miserably!

Continued overleaf



Grimsthorpe excursion



Continued from page 1

We have another fascinating programme of talks and visits – see page 3.

The committee is looking to progress with the cataloguing of our extensive picture library and adding more photographs with captions on the website. We visited the Burton Joyce Historical Society to discuss with them their picture archiving procedures. From this very informative and useful meeting we have a better understanding of how to progress with the cataloguing of our pictures. The committee members who attended the meeting were impressed with The Burton Joyce Historical Society facilities and displays of photographs and historical memorabilia, well worth a visit.

We have also been in touch with the Picture of the Past website for Nottingham and Derby. We aim to use best practices when we carry out our archiving. If members would like to get involved with this project, then they would be most welcome. Please speak to a committee member.

Thank you:

As ever on behalf of the membership I would like to recognise and thank my friends on the committee for all their hard work in 2012:

Kay, with the support of her fellow committee members, ensured all our talks and visits have run smoothly this year. Our programme for 2013 is in place which I am sure will be as stimulating and enjoyable as 2012.

Jackie continues to keep us on the financial 'straight and narrow'. She collects membership and visitors fees and ensures that our costs are kept in check. She also maintains the Society's accounts to a high standard.

Margaret, as every member knows, ensures that we don't die of thirst at our meetings and keeps us (me) topped up with biscuits! Along with Kay she represented the Society on the Lambley Jubilee Celebration Planning Committee. They ensured that the Society was very well represented on the day.

Roger continues to maintain and develop our website. He has produced this newsletter. All his work is to a professional standard.

Finally thank you, to you the membership, for your support in 2012. We look forward to seeing you all in 2013.

John Smith, Chairman

Footnote from Newsletter Editor - 'Thanks also to you our Chairman John for your expert guidance and leadership over the last year.'

Spencer Hall (1812-1885)

'The Sherwood Forester, writer and mesmerist!'

I guess we've all had that feeling? You know, when every so often you come across someone in history who you really wished you had met. Well that happened to me when I came across the name Spencer Hall the other day.

It's just over a hundred years since he was born in Sutton-in-Ashfield on 16th December 1812. His birth is entered in a Quaker register of births that also records that his father was Samuel Hall, a cordwainer (shoemaker) and his mother was Eleanor, a shepherdess and dairymaid. Not much is known about his early life but in 1829 he was apprenticed as a typesetter in Nottingham and soon after serving his 'time' he set-up as a printer and bookseller. So far, not too notable but, suddenly, Spencer, driven by a mixture of ambition and curiosity, and with oodles of literary talent, established The Sherwood Magazine. It was full of the glories of

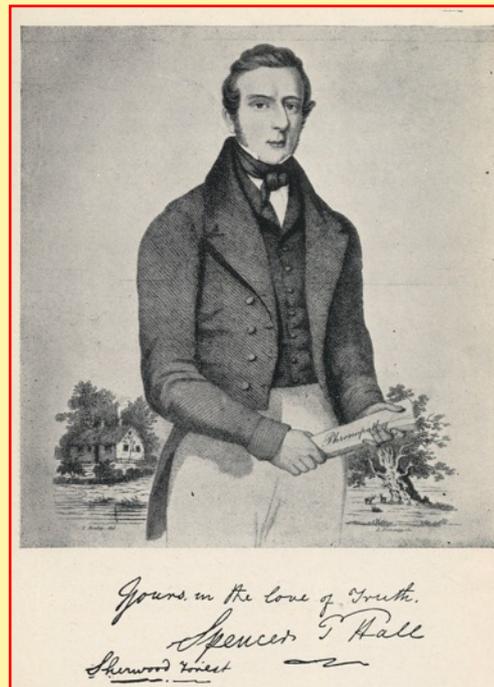
Sherwood Forest, folklore and contemporary writing and he himself poured out articles as 'The Sherwood Forester'. Spencer Hall was soon a literary figure, and not just locally. He became co-editor of the *Iris* newspaper in Sheffield and his interest in all-things literary led to correspondence with the likes of Charles Dickens and William Wordsworth.

And then, and I would love to nip back in time and ask him how, Spencer Hall got into mesmerism! Well, not just mesmerism, he took up phrenology (feeling skulls to assess mental and physical illnesses), the application of phrenomagnetism, homeopathy and hydrotherapy. Perhaps it all started when he was in Sheffield and joined the Sheffield Phrenologists Society. Somehow he acquired medical degrees, though they were from Tübingen University in Germany (and weren't recognised in England); and he began to practice as a homeopathic doctor with a particular line in mesmerism and phrenology. This was headline-grabbing stuff and his treatments soon caught the eye of some quite famous figures, notably Harriet Martineau. She was a distinguished author and ardent social reformer but she suffered from poor health throughout her life. However she experienced a dramatic improvement in her health after a series of mesmeric treatments by Hall. You would think Spencer Hall's reputation and livelihood were assured but something, somehow, went wrong. Again I wish I could go back and ask him about the later period of his life. It is known he married twice. First to Sarah Blundestone, who sadly died after nine months, and then to Mary Grimley with whom he had several children. Yet inexplicably in later life he moved to Blackpool but fell upon hard times, indeed he apparently died in poverty. Did he hope to try his electro-magnetic treatments and mesmerism in Blackpool for a time, offering his work to the many summer seaside visitors? Perhaps he did but without much success. I wish I knew. Perhaps he himself suffered from bad health.

Sadly Spencer Hall died on 26th April 1885 with little acclaim. He is buried in Layton Cemetery in Blackpool. Yet a lifelong friend, Charles Plumbe, ensured that a fine gravestone was erected to Hall which commemorates his rich life and work. It seems that there were people who both loved and revered this pioneer of alternative medicine.

Note: most of the research for this article was by my colleague at Nottinghamshire Archives, Bev Lockyer to whom I acknowledge grateful thanks. I would also like to thank Nicholas Clark who made it possible to find Spencer Hall's gravestone in Layton Cemetery.

Chris Weir, President



Looking ahead to 2013

Jan 28th AGM followed by Val Henstock – Byron in Venice

This talk will focus on the last years of the poet's life. It was a time of great creativity, anguish and the discovery of his true love – and all ended with his sudden death as a freedom-fighter for Greece.

Feb 18th Janice Moulds – The life of Isaac Newton

Janice Moulds has been a volunteer for the National Trust for 17 years as a costumed guide, room steward and tour leader at Woolsthorpe. The talk covers the life of Sir Isaac Newton (not the technicalities of his scientific achievements) and is followed by an illustrated tour of Woolsthorpe Manor.

Mar 18th Dr Mathew Roberts – Rethinking Luddism in Nottinghamshire

Dr. Matthew Roberts is a Senior Lecturer in Modern British History at Sheffield Hallam University. This talk revisits the Luddism of the Nottinghamshire framework knitters in the surrounding villages. By unearthing of new evidence, this talk will show that the Luddites were not semi-professional criminals but had grown from kinship, neighbourhood and trade connections. Machine breaking was part of well-established pattern of survival crime and protest which brought the knitters into conflict not only with their employers but also the local squirearchy.

Apr 15th Ian Morgan – Bolsover Castle through the Ages

Historian and writer Ian Morgan will describe how, from its humble Norman beginnings this magnificent castle has developed into a beautiful shadow of its former glory. The present 17th century castle stands as a monument to the Cavendish family who lavished money and love on their 'Pleasure Palace', leaving as their legacy a romantic ruin and stunning paintings within the 'Little Castle'

May 22nd Val Henstock

- Evening guided walk around The Park, Nottingham

Val is a Blue Badge guide and on this walk we shall step into another world and time as we explore the private precincts of the Park as it changed from medieval hunting ground of royalty to the must-have address of Nottingham's Victorian entrepreneurs.

June 16th Ian Morgan – visit & guided tour of Bolsover castle

Following his talk in April, Ian will guide us round this beautiful 17th century castle. From the stunning riding school to the Little Castle you will be surprised at the money lavished on what was in effect a holiday home. See how different generations had their own ideas on how the castle should be used and see if you can work out the puzzle that lies hidden in the artwork and symbols that William Cavendish, its creator, left behind

July 7th Visit & guided tour of Fulbeck Manor

Fulbeck Manor dates from 1580 and benefits from a lovely south facing garden. Of interest are the 85 Fane family portraits covering 400 years. The stories of the sitters as well as the artist hopefully create a very interesting tour which is provided by the owner Julian Fane.

Sept 16th John Whitfield

- New light on Edward & Mrs Simpson

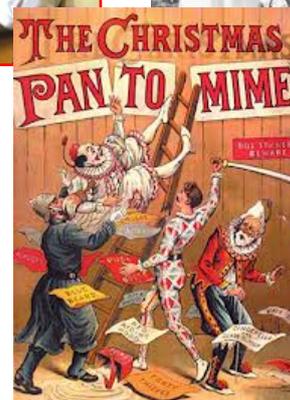
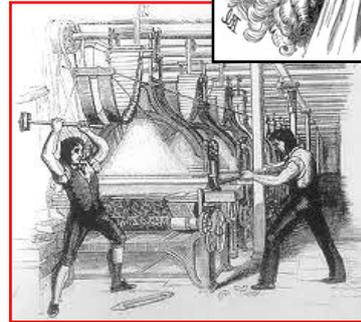
John, a semi-retired teacher will talk to us about the early lives of both Edward, Prince of Wales and Wallace Simpson. This leads up to the critical year of 1936 when King Edward VIII abdicated.

Oct 21st Pete Castle – Nottinghamshire Folk Tales

Pete Castle is a storyteller and folk singer and the author of Nottinghamshire Folk Tales recently published by The History Press. He will talk about the book, tell some of the stories and sing a song or two. He'll also consider the differences between folklore and history and how they overlap – sometimes they supplement each other, sometimes they contradict!

Nov 18th David Darby – It's Behind You

David Darby, amateur actor and retired teacher, takes a light hearted look at Pantomime since its earliest times up till today. It is a nostalgic trot down memory lane for those of us of a certain age!



If You Are A Computer Geek You Don't Need To Read Any More.

When our Chairman heard I had been devoting a lot of time and energy in the last twelve months to trying to trace my family history on my newly acquired computer, he asked me if I would write an article in the hopes it would encourage other clueless people to do the same. Being a polite chairman, he didn't put it quite like that, but I knew what he meant. I said I would think about it and now I've thought.

A BEGINNER'S ROUGH GUIDE TO TRACING YOUR FAMILY HISTORY.

I had been toying with the idea of making a record of my parents' families since the day I realised I was the only one left of my generation and if I didn't do something about it, my children and my nieces and nephews would be left with no knowledge of their past.

I started seriously about a year ago. Having a computer triggered action, though I scarcely knew how to use it. First I did the obvious thing, writing down all I could remember. Friends, who had already done the same sort of thing, gave me advice on what to do next. One recommendation set me firmly on the right track. Nottingham Central Library's Local Studies Library run beginner's courses "**Tracing Your Past**". Three-hour sessions for three consecutive weeks. In a small group with two knowledgeable and enthusiastic teachers, I learned the basics of Civil Registration, Census Records, Parish Registers and in the final session, how to search "on line" the National Archives.

The Local Studies Library itself has a wealth of information and also subscribes to "**findmypast.co.uk**", one of the major commercial websites. By booking a session on one of their computers, access to seemingly endless information is free and expert help is usually to hand. It is also worth knowing that the Nottinghamshire County Libraries, (not to be outdone), subscribe to "**ancestry.co.uk**", a similar website. They too have computers to be used free of charge. If you yourself subscribe to either website, you have access day and night on your own computer.

When you get into this ancestor chasing seriously, there are golden rules. Write everything you find down as systematically as you can: card index or loose leaf file. This stops wasting time doing things twice. Write in pencil. Try to verify facts from at least two sources. Changes frequently have to be made. One final piece of advice. You can't do everything at once. You have only two parents but four grandparents and so on. Decide on your initial focus.

I am now hooked but far from expert. The more I probe, the more I find to fascinate and be baffled by. At times I feel "cross-eyed". That's the cue to take a break from it all. Leave it for an hour, or until tomorrow. There's always next week.

The more sources discovered, and there are a lot, the more doors open. I have found that like-minded friends will share their invaluable know-how. The experts in the Local Studies Library are dedicated and see themselves as being there to help serious researchers and beginners alike.

If I can do it.

Margaret Holland.

Peter Hammond - keeping us guessing!



Bottesford Church

Treasurer's Report 2012

This year has been another enjoyable one, with the Society continuing to offer a varied and well balanced series of talks of historical interest delivered by specialists in their chosen subjects.

We also benefited from a programme of visits to local places of interest which we attempted to tie in with a talk where possible (for instance, following a talk about DH Lawrence, the Society visited Eastwood to follow the DH Lawrence Trail and visit his birthplace Museum)

The annual membership fee of £10 remains unchanged and we continue to attract new members, despite the fact that we now ask for a donation towards refreshments at the end of the meeting! I must stress that membership of the Lambley Historical Society is excellent value for money at less than £1 per meeting. We are also pleased to welcome visitors to our meetings at a cost of £3 per visit.

Financially the Society remains solvent with a healthy bank balance, although a little reduced from last year, as one might expect in these economic times and we look forward to another interesting and enjoyable year.

Jackie Mansfield, Treasurer