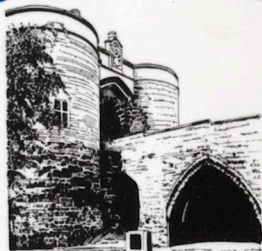


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This Society exists to develop a worthwhile environment in Nottingham. To achieve this it encourages good architecture in all its forms, planning, and the preservation of the desirable aspects of the heritage of the city. The Society likewise will discourage, criticise and even fight bad planning, destruction of amenities and vulgarity in design.

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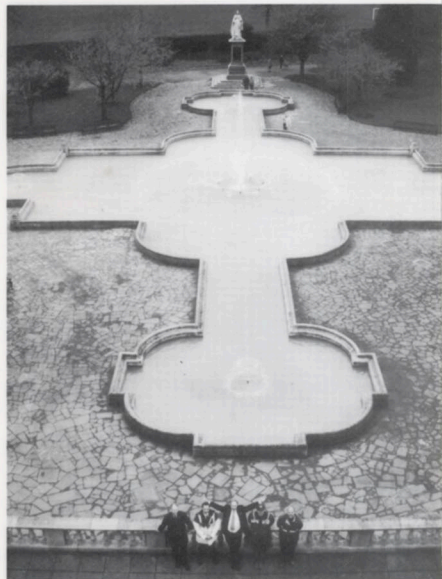
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**January 2000**

**Nottingham  
Civic Society**

**111**

**NEWSLETTER**



**Unveiling the Refurbished Ornamental Pond**

Memorial Gardens, Victoria Embankment, 8 November 1999

(Mark of the Month December 1999)

(Photograph Courtesy of Leisure and Community Services)

**80p**

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**The Memorial Gardens on the Victoria Embankment will host the Royal British Legion's National Millennium Ceremony, *Reflection and Hope*, which is to be televised world-wide on the afternoon of December 31.**

## New Civic Society Publications

The new A4 edition, with coloured illustrations, of Andrew Hamilton's book *"Nottingham's Royal Castle and Ducal Palace."* Price £2,50  
A second edition, with extra material and extended bibliography by Dr. Trevor Foulds, of *"NOTTINGHAM CASTLE A Place Full Royal"* Special price to members £10.95

## A Millennium Message from the Chairman

Before I attempt anything profound, I want to thank you to you the members for making everything possible. Secondly, I say thank you to all our past members; some of whom I am confident are with us in spirit and are urging us to continue with our work in promoting a better and more beautiful Nottingham for everyone to enjoy in the future.

Change is inevitable and substantial changes are planned. We will soon be able to see the results of two major changes, which we were unable to influence; the Ice Arena and the Multiplex cinema on the *Evening Post* site. Another massive change, the new vastly increased Broadmarsh Centre looms. Here, it is not too late, no planning consent has yet been issued. The NET, Nottingham Express Transit, the tram, is likely to go ahead.

The East Midlands Development Agency's *Economic Strategy for the East Midlands 2000-2010* and the Regional Planning Guidance have just been published with a major change of policy for the Region; the development and massive growth at East Midlands Airport. Will this regionally significant development siphon away urgently needed investment and jobs from Nottingham and finally clog the M1?

The Nottingham and Derbyshire Green belt is being threatened - naive and blunt instrument though it is - we need a clear positive policy of parks, green wedges with defined urban areas to replace it before it is abandoned, and, that will take years to agree.

At least the Green belt has slowed down peripheral growth and increased investment and housing' development on brown field sites in the City; but, if the planned releases materialize, the City will reduce in population again as 40,000 new homes are built all around it. The Leader of the Council, Councillor Graham Chapman, is aware of the problem and on record as being very worried about the loss of investment in the City because of possible Green belt releases and the airport expansion.

What will actually happen is uncertain because there are moves at government level to change these outdated planning policies, although they have not been reflected in the current policies being published in the East Midlands.

Economic growth is still seen as a panacea for all our ills with the caveat it must be sustainable!

Of course people may vote with their feet and realize unlimited use of the motor car does not create a lifestyle which is tenable and the city have, and are planning, further policies to persuade commuters to use their cars less frequently.

As I said in 1964, change is unlikely until congestion is so bad and the costs so high that we are forced into new solutions and different attitudes. Our motor cars are very cosy and increasingly come with air conditioning to stop us from choking in traffic jams. Turn up the loud speakers, ring work to say you'll be late, and everything is fine - but are we getting fed up with it? At least some people are, and they are moving into the city out of choice, but good schools are needed if families are to move back.

The loft apartment and the duplex are the current vogue and the Lace Market is now buzzing with developers but it is a tiny fraction of the real problem. We need to redevelop, restore, and rehabilitate our inner city housing and the suburbs to make life better for everyone and to this end we are still campaigning for our Garden City with its parks and linking green wedges, cycle ways and footpaths. Long term creative planning is needed and we must persuade Councillors to think long term about our future. Please use every opportunity you get to make everyone more aware of our aims and objectives. I very seldom get a negative response and it often leads to a new member.

Having had the good fortune to visit Edinburgh, Bath and Paris recently, I am even more convinced that we need to plan our cities. If developers and house builders are unable to adopt new solutions using the knowledge and experience of historical models like Edinburgh New Town, then new development Consortia will have to take over like Nottingham Regeneration Ltd, Nottingham's Urban Task Force.

Richard Rogers in his Urban Renaissance report analyses what is wrong and has put forward some ideas to solve the problem. Hopefully, Government will adopt many of his recommendations, but NOT until next year's White Paper on the urban areas and the countryside.

In the meantime, we have to continue the battle to persuade the East Midlands Development Agency and the Government Office East Midlands to change outdated policies to accord with the Urban Task Force recommendations and the probable future Government policies for the urban areas and the countryside.

In the City of Nottingham, our historic centre is under threat. We are losing too many good buildings too quickly and the architecture, which replaces them, is often banal and is nearly always out of scale with its surroundings. We still have a big fight on our hands to conserve our heritage and persuade Councillors to maintain the human scale of our historic city and its skyline.

This time they cannot blame the architects it is firmly on their shoulders and a very heavy burden it is as development pressure grows as the economy revives.

With the help of an active membership, we can change attitudes. Your Committee is working very hard. Our Heritage Walks and the Gatehouse shop are thriving and the photographic section is going digital. Please continue to help and very, very many thanks to everyone for the tremendous effort in 1999.

Let the message for 2000 AD be **2000 campaigning members can move mountains.**

Robert Cullen, Chairman.



Buildings awaiting demolition for the widening of Sheep Lane to form Market Street, Spring 1865. Jonathan Page's shop (see Newsletter 110 page 22) is in the approximate present location of Costa Coffee, 48 Long Row West (see page 20 this Newsletter).

## THEATRE STREET?

On 27 February 1854, following the recommendations of the Town Improvement Committee, the Council resolved to promote an Improvement Bill. Later in the year, on 14 August, the Improvement Bill Committee reported such a Bill was desirable in order to secure powers similar to those contained in the Public Health Acts, "without being subject to the orders and Control of any Central Board in London" for forming new streets and other reasons. Among several proposals was "a new street to replace Sheep Lane." The ridiculously narrow Sheep Lane was the only direct route northwards out of the Market Place. At barely 15 feet wide it was the cause of numerous accidents. Much earlier, in 1815, a deputation of eminent townsmen had presented a memorial to the Council "to cause Sheep-lane to be stopt as a public way, except as an occupation road for those that dwell or have property within it, in consequence of the great number of accidents."

A very confused account of the Chamber Committee's report to Council on 19 November 1855 included mention of a negated amendment to the motion to receive their report, which proposed that no part of the expenses incurred relative to "the proposed miscalled Town Improvement Bill" be paid out of the Borough Fund or out of the balance of the Street Improvement Account." From this comes the assumption that the 1854 Bill was not promoted.

On 30 June 1857 another committee was appointed to prepare an Improvement Bill and on 7 September put its recommendations to the Council. Included on the list were seven items relating to streets. Number five was "widening Sheep Lane to 50feet, with a trumpet mouth at the north end."

Nothing happened to Sheep Lane and it appears to have ceased to interest Councillors until their meeting of 6 July 1863. A memorial was placed before them from the residents of Park Row requesting a widening of that street's junction with Derby Road and Chapel bar. In turning down this appeal the Council resolved "that an opening from Parliament Street to the Market Place (to replace Sheep Lane) is more important and must be given precedence."

The Council, at last, was moving. On 21 September the Council authorised the Improvement Committee to buy property in or near Sheep Lane that had been offered to them. On the 16 November the Improvement Committee reported a figure of £21,000 had been agreed for the purchase of these properties. On 31 December the Council was informed that loan sanction had been received to borrow £40,000 for the widening of Lister Gate and Sheep

Lane. Compulsory purchase orders for the remaining properties that were needed for the street widening were agreed in Council on 25 October 1864 and 23 January 1865.

March 25 1866 was suggested as the starting date for work on the widening of Sheep Lane, but the Council, meeting on 2 March 1865, preferred the work to start as soon as possible. No doubt the major influencing factor here was the intended commencement of work on the 27 March, on excavating the foundations of the Lambert Brothers' new theatre located on Parliament Street facing the end of Sheep Lane. This theatre, the Theatre Royal, designed by the London theatre architect C.J. Phipps was built in six months at a cost of £15,000. The grand opening of the theatre on 25 September was quite an event in the town.

Although the purchase of the last remaining properties dragged on through the spring of 1865 work on the street widening was well advanced when the theatre opened. A contemporary account noted "the façade (of the Theatre Royal) presents a very picturesque and classic boundary to the vista of the new street that is to take the place of the now nearly obsolete Sheep Lane."

Exceptionally fine weather and the recent opening of the splendid new theatre substantially increased the size of the crowd gathered for the traditional opening of Goose Fair 1865 by the Mayor, William Page. At noon the civic party left the Exchange and slowly made its way towards the far side of the Market Place. In spite of a large police presence, on several occasions the party was halted by the densely packed crowd. Eventually it stopped on reaching the site of the Old Malt Cross. The Mayor then declared the fair open, "all present uncovering at the words 'God save the Queen.'"

The Mayor had a second duty to perform, the opening of the Cheese Fair on Burton Street, close to the Mechanics' Institute. So the civic procession moved on up the newly widened Sheep Lane and at the mid-point stopped and formed a ring. The Mayor then addressed the assembly. "The Improvement Committee of the Town Council have held a meeting and decided upon calling this new street Theatre Street. It is now my duty to follow out their act by proclaiming the name of this street to be Theatre Street." He continued, noting "that the access to the whole of the north side of the town has hitherto depended in a great measure on a street only 15 feet wide, which used to be called Sheep Lane, and, twenty five or thirty years hence, people will wonder how ever it was possible for the large population of the north of the town to get through so narrow a street."

The Mayor then rambled on at some length endeavouring to justify the name Theatre Street, citing a number of painfully obvious examples. Among the dozen or so offered he cleverly observed that Castle Road leads to the Castle, Canal Street leads to the canal [!] and Derby Road is the road to Derby.

Finally, before the party moved on to Burton Street, the Town Crier (Mr Brooksbank) made the formal announcement. "The Mayor has proclaimed this street open, and that its name now and for evermore shall be called 'Theatre Street.'"

'Evermore' turned out to be quite short that year. At Christmas 1865 the Theatre Royal put on a traditional pantomime at a cost of £2,000. It was an exceptionally well supported spectacle – for one of its great scenes 100 'respectable' children were needed. In some ways this was small fare when compared to the pantomime that took place in the Council Chamber on 18 December 1865. At this Council meeting the members were made aware in quite forceful terms, in a memorial signed by 100 ratepayers, that not only did they object to the name Theatre Street but also that the choice of name had never been put before the full Council!

A resume of the witty and not so witty repartee that flew across the Council Chamber before agreement was reached on the name *Market Street* will appear in the next Newsletter. At the height of the onslaught it was even suggested that *Theatre Street* had been the name which the now ex-Mayor had desired!

Ken Brand

## PEDALS

### New Publication

#### The Pedal Pushers' Guide to Nottingham (3<sup>rd</sup> Edition) Price £4.95

This is the only handbook of *practical* advice on Cycling in Nottingham. It is available from Local Bookshops, Cycle Dealers or post-free from: Lawrence Geary, PEDALS, 96 Pierrepont Road, West Bridgford, Nottingham NG2 5DW Tel. (0115) 982 2720

This handbook is primarily aimed at the great number of folk who are on the point of becoming regular cyclists, whether to get to work or for recreation. However it will be of interest those who have bikes but feel safe only on the quieter roads, and those other people who have yet to succumb completely to the bike's greatest attractions of economy, enjoyment, convenience and speed in urban traffic.

## SOUTHERN RELIEF ROUTE

Have you been inconvenienced by the Southern Relief Route? Have you ever heard of the S.R.R.?

I was introduced to this scheme by my regular week end trips to the Midland Station to meet and return my relative for the London train. As so often happens, the short stay car park is full at these times, so one would by-pass this area, and turn left into Queen's Road for parking. However this is now forbidden. So what do we do?

I made my comments to the City Council, and they kindly sent me a copy of the plans for the three-phase development of this route. Well, I know a lot of people have been inconvenienced by phase II of this plan, as it involves the big junction of Queen's Drive/Wilford Road/Waterway Street, and the back up of traffic around this junction has been horrific.

What really astounded me, was the proposal for phase III of this plan. I am no expert at reading plans, but it appears to me, that the traffic approaching Nottingham will be guided from London Road, around into Queen's Road, then by a circuitous route into the City. Traffic will be able to leave along London Road, but not be able to enter along London Road. Also mentioned is a phase IIIa but no details are given on the plan.

I have been told that the taxi proprietors have complained about the extra travelling distance around the station, and as a consequence, have raised their fares.

I have written to the *Evening Post* and been interviewed on Radio Nottingham but nothing came of this. I still think that such a plan ought to have been on public display and been open for comments. Like most Council plans, it appears to have been all decided and passed without the public knowing about it, but we are then left with the consequences.

The City Council wants visitors to come to the city, but then bars their entry along one of the main routes into the City.

Is it too late for any amendments?

R. Creates

## HIS OWN LINE OF COUNTRY (i) A Third Railway Memorial in Nottingham

EARLIER NEWSLETTERS TOLD HOW two distinguished men associated with railways are commemorated by gravestones in Nottingham Church Cemetery. The Rev. Frederick Smeeton Williams and Samuel Waite Johnson are much better known in the wider world of railway history than in Nottingham itself, though their monumental inscriptions make no reference to their particular distinction. In Wilford Hill Cemetery stands a memorial to a third man who achieved prominence in the same sphere: like the others, this tells us nothing whatever about his professional achievements. His former home still exists in Nottingham, and with theirs would be a suitable location for a commemorative plaque, although few people in the city will recognize his name.

While Williams was a writer about railways, and S.W. Johnson a locomotive engineer, the man we now consider combined these activities. It is, however, for his writing that he is better remembered. Ernest Leopold Ahrons\* was born in Bradford on 12 February 1866, of Danish stock on his father's side, and attended Bradford Grammar School and Yorkshire College, Leeds (forerunner of Leeds University.). At college he achieved considerable academic success, being awarded one of three advanced scholarships in mathematics and physics, and gaining first prize in engineering construction and mechanism and machinery.

In 1885 Ahrons became an engineering pupil at the Great Western Railway locomotive works in Swindon, an establishment without superior in Victorian England. For three years he was under William Dean, the formidable and distinguished locomotive engineer of the GWR. At the conclusion of his pupilage Ahrons remained at Swindon, working in the drawing office and as an inspector of materials, until in 1890 he left to gain wider experience as chief draughtsman to the engineering firm of Fleming, McFarlane of Middleton. This post was followed by a brief period with the famous firm of Beyer Peacock in Manchester.

Two years later Ahrons' career took him overseas, when he entered the service of the Egyptian Government as managing engineer of the workshops of the Ecole Khediviale d'Arts et Metiers, at Boulac - now Bulaq - in Cairo. Following the suppression of Arabi Pasha's rebellion in 1882, the United Kingdom had established de facto rule of Egypt, and Britons held most of the

\* Pronounced Aarons

top administrative posts there. Ahrons was one of several notable British engineers to occupy such a position. Another, Frederick Trevithick, chief mechanical engineer of the Egyptian State Railways during Ahrons' stay in Egypt, and grandson of the Cornish railway pioneer Richard Trevithick, had also come from the Great Western. He and Ahrons were to be professionally associated in Egypt. E.L. Ahrons remained in Cairo for about six years, until in 1898 his state of health necessitated his resignation and subsequent return to England. During this latter year Ahrons became a member of the Institution of Mechanical Engineers.

Back in the north of England, he went to the Manchester mechanical engineers Henry Simon Ltd., as engineer-in-charge of their general department. Between 1902 and 1917 Ahrons held several other appointments, while also undertaking some consultancy work; in March 1911 he was a Foundation Member of the Institution of Locomotive Engineers. During the Great War he served as Trade Officer at the Department of Overseas Trade (Development and Intelligence). Retiring from this job in 1919, he concentrated thereafter chiefly on writing, which had been an important aspect of his professional life for some years, proving successful enough for him to depend upon it from now on as his principal source of income.

E.L. Ahrons had long been a contributor to technical journals, publishing articles in such periodicals as *The Railway Magazine*, *The Engineer*, and *The Locomotive Magazine*. It is thought that his first published item was a note on London & North Western engines in *The English Mechanic* in 1881, over the non-de-plate 'Meteor', which he used for some years to conceal his identity in print. He was, it is worth noting, only fifteen at the time of his debut in the railway press. For *The Locomotive Magazine* in 1903 Ahrons wrote a set of articles on the Egyptian State Railways and their locomotives. During 1908 and 1909 the same journal featured a series by him on British locomotive design, and in 1914 the Locomotive Publishing Co. published his technical book, *The Development of British Locomotive Design*, part of which consisted of a revision of the latter series of articles. He wrote several other textbooks on specialized aspects of railway engineering, such as valves and valve gears, and the lubrication, construction, and repair of locomotives. Ahrons also helped in the preparation of a history of Robert Stephenson & Co., the celebrated engineers and locomotive builders.

E.L. Ahrons became a resident of Nottingham in about 1911. Described in the directories as a 'consulting mechanical engineer', he came to live at 22 Cranmer Street, off Woodborough Road. Sometime during the first half of the Great War he moved the two hundred yards or so to 16 Corporation Oaks,

where he remained for a decade or more, dying at this latter address on 30 March 1926. His final directory entry listed him simply as 'consulting engineer.'

The publication of Ahrons' book in 1914 foreshadowed the two works, for which he is still famous, for they too, were originally published as notable series of periodical articles. The later of these was the first to appear in book form, and immediately attained the status of a major reference work. The original articles were published in *The Engineer* during 1925 to mark the Railway Centenary that is, the anniversary of the opening in 1825 of the Stockton & Darlington Railway. This series was called *The British Railway Steam Locomotive from 1825 to 1924*. Ahrons had also contributed to *The Engineer* a run of articles entitled *Short Histories of Famous Firms*, in which he chronicled the origins of companies that built railway engines in the nineteenth century.

Ahrons planned to reissue his steam locomotive articles as a book after adding a chapter on latest developments, but death overtook him before this project could become a reality. On the eventual publication of the volume, its editor observed that it formed 'the most comprehensive history of the subject, which has ever been written.' In the opinion of his editor, Loughnan Pendred of *The Engineer*, Ahrons had brought to his task the skills of an historian and the expertise of an engineer. So wide-ranging had his researches been that large quantities of pre-1825 detail had had to be left out. In spite of this, wrote Pendred 'I should like to say here in memory of an old friend that never, in the course of the whole transaction, did we have a difficult word together. He knew, I hope, that I regretted omissions as much as he did, but he invariably cheerfully acquiesced, and always indicated what could be left out with least injury to the history. Never... was there an author who was more ready to see the Editor's point of view.'

In a highly complimentary review of what it called 'Mr Ahrons' last and greatest work,' *The Railway Magazine* for October 1927 considered that the book had authoritatively settled a number of points hitherto in dispute. The review deemed it excellent value for thirty shillings - a lot of money in 1927 - and cordially recommended it to readers of the magazine.

(To be continued)

Stephen Best

## THE HISTORY OF THE MEMORIAL NURSES HOME

A brief summary by a former resident Sarah Greaves R.G.N.

As a former student nurse undertaking State Registration Training at Nottingham School of Nursing back in October 1982, I was lucky enough and in retrospect, privileged enough to have lived at the Memorial Nurses Home within the grounds of the General Hospital. I had been allocated room No. 12 on the third floor. My bedroom window directly overlooked Nottingham Castle, much to the envy of the other nurses whose view out of their bedroom windows on the other side of the building mainly included the unsightly boiler house and the rather ugly aspect of the Trent Wing Extension.

The Memorial Home commanded wonderful views across the city. The south façade of the building, itself a spectacular sight with its strong architectural characteristics dominated the landscape when seen from the castle grounds. When on a visit to Nottingham Castle last year, the sight of my old bedroom window brought back many memories for me. It was then that I decided to research the historical background of, what was for me, such a special piece of architecture. Three volumes of information were compiled with all the relevant literature including copies of the original architects' plans dating back to 1921. This article is a summary of all that information I collated.

Tracing back through the minutes of the Hospital Board meetings from 1919 onwards gave very detailed accounts of how the concept of such a building was initiated, outlining the various tenders and contractors and finalising the arrangements for the opening ceremony in 1923. The architect was the respected Robert Evans junior F.R.I.B.A. of Evans Clark and Woollatt, then at Eldon Chambers, Wheeler Gate. He had the assistance of Dr. D.J. Mackintosh C.B. of Western Infirmary, Glasgow who was a well-known authority on hospital planning and management. The nurses' home was to be adopted as a war memorial for the County and City of Nottingham and to be paid for by public subscription.

The contract for laying the foundations was awarded to Mr. James Wright of Wilford Crescent Works. An excellent site had been found on land adjoining Lenton Road but it would mean demolishing the Castle Houses. These premises were being used to treat phthisical patients at the time (those who had contracted consumption - better known these days as tuberculosis). Once



these patients had been transferred to other locations, work could begin. Considerable difficulties were met during the excavation of the foundations owing to the old buildings on this site being at different levels and to several old wells and caves in the rock possibly associated with the Outer Bailey wall of the original castle.

It was decided by the *Extension Committee*, chaired by Mr. W.G. Player, to accept the tender of Mr. Fred Evans & Sons of Highbury Vale, Bulwell for the actual construction of the nurses' home. This commenced in 1921 and the handsome building was completed in 1923 at a cost of £75,000. It was formally opened by H.R.H. the Prince of Wales K.G. (later to become the Duke of Windsor) on Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> August on his visit to the City of Nottingham. This schedule had been planned with such military precision that his visit to the hospital had been allocated only 20 minutes and looking through the Hospital Board accounts revealed the expenditure of the royal visit had amounted to £313 9s 2d!

The nurse home was designed on Renaissance lines using Portland stone and Staffordshire brindle bricks. The retaining walls to the terraces are of Weldon stone from Lord Winchelsea's quarries. Later, conservationists would comment that "the composition of the memorial building is clearly intended to recall the architectural vocabulary of Nottingham Castle to the south through the use of details such as corner pilasters. It is a good example of the way in which a building in different materials and on a different scale can blend in harmoniously with a prominent neighbouring structure through the sensitive use of common details and classical proportions".

The new building which had four stories and a flat roof was about 250 feet long, 40 feet wide and 50 feet high. The 130 bedrooms were distributed on the various floors either side of a main corridor approx. six feet wide. There was a central concrete stairway and one either end of the building too. The bedrooms were of uniform size being eight feet nine inches by thirteen feet. The necessary bathrooms and lavatory accommodation were provided on each floor. The building was entered on the North side on the first floor via an entrance porch above which bore a bronze memorial plaque with the following inscription:

**"This building was erected by public subscription as a Nottingham and Notts Memorial of the noble men and women of the City and County who gave their lives during the Great War 1914-1918"**

Directly opposite the entrance was a large sitting room 54 feet long by 27 feet wide screened off from the main corridor by glazed mahogany and walnut sliding screens which could have been moved away to form a large recreation room when required. Unfortunately these screens are no longer in existence due to restrictions imposed by modern fire legislation when refurbishment work was being considered. Lecture rooms and laundry facilities occupied much of the ground floor.

The south facing façade revealed a symmetrical design having a central stone portico with four ionic columns. Above this was a heavy entablature carrying an inscription commemorating the Great War. The original flagstaff is no longer a feature.

The third floor of the portico remains open forming a balcony with simple railings on three sides. My bedroom window opened out onto a stone parapet approximately two feet wide running the entire length of the building. It was an ideal place to air those rather odorous duty shoes after a busy day on the wards! Some other residents used to sunbathe on here or crawl along the ledge and back in through an open sash window if they had accidentally locked themselves out of their bedroom. Had they slipped it was at least a 40 feet drop onto the terrace below!

A further storey was added in the form of a Mansard roof in 1927. This provided further accommodation for another 40 nurses at a cost of £10,000. The lower section of the attic windows were set into a battered wall of Westmoreland slate, closely resembling the roof arrangement of the Jubilee Wing which was added in 1929. Six chimney stacks are visible on the roof. Part of my bedroom wall incorporated one of these. Unfortunately the splendid *Adams* fireplaces situated in the various sitting rooms have not survived. A prominent lift tower was situated at the east end of the building.

This remarkable building became home for generations of nurses whilst working at the General Hospital, each one no doubt with her own private memories. I was one of the last groups of student nurses to live at the Memorial Home since plans were underway to close the General Hospital as more beds were commissioned at the Queens Medical Centre, University



Hospital. After the last residents moved out in 1984/85 the building became Memorial House, the headquarters of the Nottingham Community Unit (which later became the Nottingham Community NHS Trust). Minor internal work had been carried out to create larger office space for administrative staff by removal of some partition walls. My bedroom was now the "Vaccination and Immunization Records Office".

By 1994 plans were underway to redevelop the General Hospital site and the staff working at Memorial House were transferred to other premises. The former nurses' home then became a site office for Mowlem Midlands Construction Company during the demolition of Trent Wing and redevelopment of the site. Today the *Memorial Nurses Home* has a new lease of life as *Royal Standard House* having undergone extensive internal refurbishment work to create 30 prestigious apartments for Crosby Homes (East Midlands) designed by the Nottingham architects Maber Associates. Four luxury penthouses now occupy the fourth floor mansard roof level with the other four floors having a combination of nine, one bedroomed apartments; 14, two bedroomed apartments and three, three bedroomed apartments, many having ensuite facilities. The selling agents F.P.D. Savills provided sales specifications in a stylish brochure, which outlined each apartment layout and the list of prices. The first residents moved in early in 1999 and by late summer only two apartments remained unsold.

As the building was listed Grade II there were very tight restrictions on any external alterations. However approval was given to remove the drainpipes, undertake minor alterations to window frames to improve symmetry, and to reduce the height of the lift tower at the east end of the building. All of which have greatly enhanced the appearance of the North façade.

I have been very privileged to have been granted unprecedented access to the refurbishment work taking place and my most nostalgic moment was a final visit with my husband and young son to see my former bedroom which has now been converted into the master bedroom of unit No.23. The lavish internal refurbishment makes the building unrecognizable from its previous institutionalized setting. I hope that the new residents share with me a sense of pride in belonging to a building originally paid for by public subscription as a memorial to those local people who made the ultimate sacrifice.

## SAUSAGE ISLAND

In Sherwood there is an elongated traffic island, measuring 150 metres by 5 metres, between Edwards Lane and Magnus Road. It is known locally as "Sausage Island" because of its shape but nobody knows for sure when it was first given its popular name. It has been much used and abused over the years and members of Sherwood Tenants and Residents Association felt that it could and should be improved. In January 1999 a meeting was held in the Sherwood Bus Depot to discuss the best way of doing this.

The speaker was Tony Newby, the Nottinghamshire Manager for the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers. He told us that he thought the island was a remnant of an old field system or estate boundary, thus had been able to secure a grant of £1500 for general maintenance. We were asked to determine the best way of using this sum. The consensus was that the island be consolidated and improved in its present form, with an information board detailing the history of this feature, which I agreed to research.

From at least the middle of the 19th century up to 1920 maps show a line of trees along the northern side of Edwards Lane. These trees may well be even older if, as I suspect, they once formed part of the estate boundary of Woodthorpe House (the Community Centre) which was built c.1800. The Ordnance Survey map for 1920 clearly shows this line of trees and Edwards Lane, but not Magnus Road nor "Sausage Island".

At this point Nottingham Corporation started to develop the Sherwood Housing Estate to the north of Edwards Lane. The land was purchased in September 1919 and building work on the first houses began in March 1920. In *Nottingham Housing Schemes 1919-21* by T. Cecil Howitt, then the Borough housing architect, there is a map, which shows what we call "Sausage Island" for the first time. On it are the words 'EXISTING TREES' and Magnus Road is shown as extending to Valley Road. So the earliest date for "Sausage Island" is 1920.

In his book Howitt wrote that the Sherwood Housing Estate was 'particularly suitable for development into a small Garden City. The numerous belts of fine old trees considerably help the layout design and picturesque appearance of the Estate.' W.A. Kneller was the architect for the estate.

Howitt also said that 'the Sherwood Estate abounds with many magnificent old trees and small spinneys', and he cites the diamond-shaped green in Danethorpe Vale and the large belt of trees in Edwards Lane as typical examples. The latter, of course, became "Sausage Island."

In 1923 the Housing Committee was satisfied that 'the whole of the Sherwood Estate lying to the east of the important artery - Magnus Road - has been realised. The elevated estate has developed into a miniature garden suburb, and in the opinion of hundreds of visitors to the Nottingham schemes, not only from people interested in housing reform in England, but from numerous visitors from the Continent and Overseas, it ranks as one of the finest post - war schemes that have been carried out in this country.'

I must now return from the 1920s to 1999. On February 12th four local residents met Keith Prowting, Nottingham's Leisure and Community Services arboricultural officer and two members of the BTCV on site to discuss the best ways to improve it. Several elms had died due to Dutch elm disease and trees were dying back due to salt off the roads, as well as earth being compacted by regular users. However, other established trees were resistant to pollution. It was decided to remove one large hollow beech, as it was dangerous and other decaying vegetation. Young trees were to be planted and gaps in the hedgerows filled. Needless to say a lot of litter had to be removed.

March 20th was designated as Spade Day. Several volunteers turned up to assist the BTCV workers to plant birch and oak trees, hawthorn bushes and bluebell bulbs and anemones. Next day several of the plastic tubes supporting the young hawthorn trees had been pulled out by vandals. However, a brief check in early October revealed that 18 remained although only four of the wire guards were left. Rubbish was back with a vengeance. But it is too soon to pass judgment on this scheme. Some of the trees will survive and grow, and in the spring the daffodils and bluebells will be in flower. The new information board at the Mansfield Road end reminds us that the site is an important wild life habitat for flowers such as red campion and wood anemone, and for birds such as finches, tits and robins. The renovation of the site is an on - going program which deserves to succeed, in spite of vandalism.

Terry Fry

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Terry Fry's book **NOTTINGHAM'S PLAQUES AND STATUES** is now available and attractively priced at £2-00 for members attending meetings. This is the title of Terry's forthcoming talk to the Society, on Tuesday January 11<sup>th</sup> 2000, our first meeting of the new millennium.

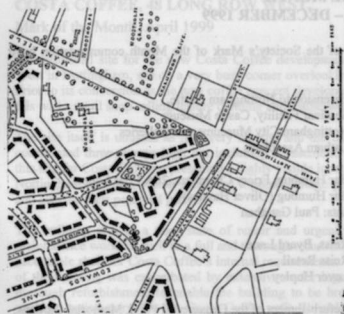
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Left O.S. Map 1920 The hedge and tree 'southern' boundary of Woodthorpe House can be seen.

Right Map taken from T. Cecil Howitt's book "A Review of the Housing Schemes in Nottingham, July 1919-December 1928" Sausage Island can now be picked out.

Note that the road from Valley Road to the end of Perry Road is now named Edwards Lane and not Magnus Road as on the earlier map.



## MARK OF THE MONTH SEPTEMBER – DECEMBER 1999

Recent recipients of the Society's Mark of the Month commendation have been:

**SEPTEMBER** Extension to Nottingham Castle,  
Seminar Facility, Castle Museum

Client: Nottingham City Museums and Galleries  
Architects: Latham Associates

**OCTOBER** Bar Humbug, Friary Chambers, 26A Friar Lane

Client: Bar Humbug (Oliver Haynes)  
Building Consultants: Paul Gaughan

**NOVEMBER** Reiss, Byard Lane

Client: Reiss Retail  
Architects: Lever Hopley

**DECEMBER** Refurbishment of the Ornamental Pond, Memorial Gardens,  
Victoria Embankment

Client: City of Nottingham Leisure and Community Services  
Design: City of Nottingham Design and Property Services

**Special Award** Nottingham City Transport Ltd  
New Bus Shelters, Raised Kerbs at Bus Stops, Improved  
Bus Facilities for Parents with Push-chairs

## TWENTIETH CENTURY

If I was asked to select my five favourite buildings erected in Nottingham in the twentieth century I would choose, in no particular order:

The Council House; The Playhouse; Boots flagship store (now *Spoils*), High Street; the Elite Cinema (now *Media* ? night club); and the former William Hollins, Viyella, building (now New Castle House), Castle Boulevard.

What would you choose? Tell me sometime.

Ken Brand

## COSTA COFFEE, 48 LONG ROW WEST.

Mark of the Month, April 1999

The proposed site for the new Costa Coffee development at 48 Long Row West in Nottingham, sits on a very busy corner overlooking the main square. Prior to its conversion as the new coffee concept developed by Costa Coffee, this was a retail shop selling leisure clothing and leatherwear.

The site itself is unusual as it is very narrow and the building is very tall, constructed three storeys high but including a basement. The acquisition of this site for Costa Coffee represented a highly visible location in the centre of Nottingham and one, which presented a good vantage point both for Costa and also for their potential patrons.

The building was in a poor state of repair and urgently needed essential maintenance works as well as a full and thorough refurbishment to provide an acceptable shell for Costa Coffee's internal requirements. The poor condition of the building was exacerbated by extensive water ingress and required a thorough refurbishment to enable the building to be brought up to a high standard satisfactory for the Costa Coffee refit. In order to carry out the essential building maintenance, extensive repairs were carried out to the rendering and the windows and cills. The upper floors were also in an extremely poor condition and needed complete refurbishment and are now used as preparation and storage areas.

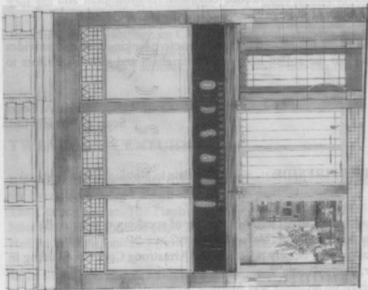
The completed fit out has proved to be an attractive looking unit and provides a great amenity for the coffee lovers of Nottingham and also for visitors to the city.

David A. Scurr  
Scurr & Partners Ltd.

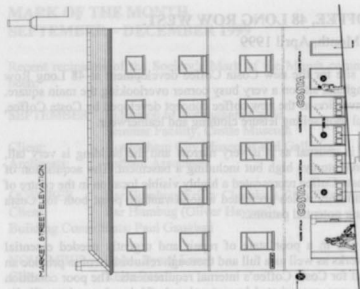
## FIVE FOR THE FIRESIDE

(All relate to Nottingham & District)

1. For what was Thomas Wright acclaimed?
2. Which building-in an off the wall manner of speaking-connected Sir Christopher Wren and the National Gallery?
3. Which building is "closely related to the Armstrong Cork Co. building in Lancaster, Pennsylvania"?
4. Which mixed up architect was Admiral, Kentish Town and Consort?
5. Part of which building has been credited to Sir John Vanburgh?



*Costa Coffee, 48 Long Row West - Mark of the Month April 1999*



*Fresco, 6 Chapel Bar - Mark of the Month May 1999*

## **fresco, 6 Chapel Bar**

Mark of the Month, May 1999

The idea for a new Italian restaurant was first proposed in Spring 1998 when our client, Restaurants GB, asked ourselves, Bell Associates (architects) to attend a briefing meeting. The meeting outlined some initial design parameters, which allowed Bell Associates to then carry out some feasibility studies and research. Bell Associates then began to develop the Fresco concept in conjunction with the site at 6 Chapel Bar, Nottingham.

At the core of the design were the principles that this should be a contemporary space, which used quality materials that would be hard wearing. The architects wanted the colours and textures in the restaurant to be warm mooded and easily visible from the street. The architects kept a high level of control over the detail, which involved designing the rugs and furniture, with furniture designers, in addition to the usual scope of the restaurant design.

The works on site lasted about nine weeks and were project managed by Bell Associates. Structural works involved the removal of part of the first floor at the front of the restaurant and removing the existing kitchen from the ground floor and implementing a new one in the basement. This was done to enable the restaurant to trade off the entire ground floor. Previously it had traded off part of the ground and first floors. The form of the site however is very long and narrow so to overcome the train like seating the architects decided to open up the rear of the space to enable a larger more interesting volume at the end of the restaurant.

The restaurant is entered under a low slung frosted perspex canopy within a large double height volume. Within the first space is the bar itself which is the main focal point easily visible from the Street. The front area is the cafe space where it is possible to have breakfast, light meals and drinks. The materials first seen externally such as slate, textured wall surfaces, satin stainless steel, ceramics, timber and glass are referred to again in the internal materials' palette. Past the bar the space becomes the eating zone utilizing loose furniture and banquette seating with the additional use of fabrics for a more comfortable environment. Throughout the restaurant the moods within the structure are enhanced by modern lighting to create strong contrasts between highlights and shadows.

The finished restaurant is a warm and lively space that offers a friendly environment to its clients.

Katherine Hann, Bell Associates.

The refurbishment of the Ornamental Pond, Victoria Embankment has received the Society's Mark of the Month for December. The pond has been a feature of the gardens since it was set out in 1927 as part of the City's War Memorial, the most significant part of that being the Memorial Arch designed by T. Wallis Gordon the City Engineer and Surveyor. The pond, at the time designated "an ornamental lake" had "a widened centre basin and side wings 180 feet long and 125 feet wide," with three fountains playing in the middle.

As it now appears it is broadly in the form of a right angled cross with four modest "wine glass" fountains at the extremities of the arms, with at the centre a five-metre fountain surrounded by seven smaller fountains. The seven fountains spraying outwards and the central five-metre plume-as high as the nearby statue of Queen Victoria-are all lit by clear white light from dusk to dawn

The refurbished new look pond was officially unveiled by Councillor Leon Unczur, Chair of Leisure and Community Services on Monday 8<sup>th</sup> November in time for this year's Remembrance Day Service.

The task of recreating and enhancing the Ornamental Pond's former splendour was undertaken by a member of the City Council's Building and Maintenance Section. In 1927 the design of the whole layout of the seven acres of the Memorial Gardens was carried out in the City Engineer's Department and a loan of £50,800 was sanctioned for the whole scheme. This time the cost of just restoring the pond was £54,000.

If a visit to the Victoria Embankment and the Memorial Gardens has not been high on your priority list then this should now be put right. It is a place to admire and for quiet contemplation. Can there be a better place locally to reflect back over the events of the twentieth century?

Ken Brand (with information supplied by Amanda Nash, City Council P.R.)

The foundation stone of the Memorial Arch was laid by the Prince of Wales on August 1<sup>st</sup> 1923. Owing to unforeseen circumstances the start of work on the Memorial was delayed by 12 months. The unveiling of the arch took place on Friday 11<sup>th</sup> November 1927. In addition to the memorial Gardens some 30 acres were set out as playing fields. The whole area of almost 37 acres, located in the big bend of the River Trent between Trent Bridge and Wilford Bridge, was considered to be one of the most attractive sites in the whole county. It was purchased by (then) Sir Jesse Boot and presented by him to the city in 1923.

## LENTON PRIORY

(The Civic Society was informed by several sources in Lenton that the City Council intended to sell off the Lenton Priory Church Hall. Although it has remained empty since being purchased by the City Council nine years ago, it must be remembered that it does stand above remains of Lenton Priory. English Heritage considered that these remains were protected under the Council's *Local Plan*, which states that the priory will be "safeguarded from any development, which could be detrimental to any archaeological remains."

Approval has since been given to sell off the hall. Thus as the Council has reneged on its obligations English Heritage has restated its assertion that the priory is of national archaeological significance and is considering scheduling.

This brief note about the importance of Lenton Priory has been compiled from various articles in the *Transactions of the Thoroton Society*.)

Lenton Priory was founded 1103-1114 by William I Peveril keeper of Nottingham Castle and holder of extensive lands in Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire, Northamptonshire and in other English counties. The association of castle and a religious house geographically close to one another was a common one in the immediate post-conquest period: the association is often referred to as 'the twin symbols of Anglo-Norman power'. The religious house and the castle were powerful symbols of lordship. The traveller coming along the London road from the south towards Trent Bridge would see the Castle on the rock and Lenton priory and would have recognised the symbolic relationship. Other local examples are Blyth Priory and Tickhill Castle, and Tutbury Priory and Tutbury Castle.

Lenton Priory was of the Cluniac order. This order was popular with the wealthier Norman aristocracy since minimum requirements for a Cluniac house required massive financial and landed investment on the part of the founder to support the community and the large monastic churches. Much artistic endeavour went into the beautifying of Cluniac monastic churches, internally and externally, to provide a suitable setting for the celebrating of a lavish liturgy. This being so, it is not surprising that only ten Cluniac monasteries were founded in England.

Lenton Priory became the wealthiest monastery in Nottinghamshire with many privileges from the kings of England. One of which, from King Henry

II (1154-89) in 1164, was the right to hold a fair from 11 November for a week. During this time all trading in Nottingham had to cease. When the kings of England stayed at Nottingham Castle and if they brought any government departments with them, the most important government department was lodged at Lenton Priory.

Lenton priory was not dissolved in the 16th century like many other religious houses. Its prior and monks were charged with high treason and they were brutally executed in Cow Lane in Nottingham and the priory was forfeit to the crown.

The priory site and its lands were leased by the crown. The buildings were not immediately demolished although stripped of their lead. Stone was removed for Wollaton Hall but Robert Thoroton (1677) reported 'only one square steeple left of the monastery which not long since fell down...' The priory site may have not been built on and then extensively, until the 18th century, and open spaces still exist on the site.

From the small-scale and piece-meal archaeological excavations which have been published (1935-6, 1943-51, 1954, 1962-4), and from unpublished excavations (1977, 1984), it is evident that although there may be little unstanding masonry of the church and claustral buildings surviving, there are substantial remains of footings, foundations, pier bases and wall cores found frequently less than 18 inches under the present ground level. Indeed, it is probable that the plan of the church and claustral buildings, the precinct wall, in fact the whole *enceinte* of the priory could be substantially recovered. It must be noted that the plans published so far are only conjectural and are not proven. The excavations also demonstrated that the church underwent little modification in the medieval period: it was a church built in the 12th century and then 'frozen in time'. This is important. As there were only ten Cluniac houses in the country a number of which were modified in later centuries, the plan of Lenton priory undoubtedly preserves an early Cluniac plan.

Human remains and burials have been found in various locations on the site.

## NEWS FROM THE ENVIRONMENT SUB-COMMITTEE

It has been a busy six months for the members of the Society's Environment Sub-Committee. In addition to the regular six-weekly Committee meetings and the monthly Planning Applications Sub-Committee, we have had a number of meetings with Jane Todd, the City Council's Director of Development, with members of the City's Planning Officer team and with architects and developers. At the beginning of December, a number of Committee members attended a conference on *Urban Renaissance* where Lord (Richard) Rogers was the key speaker.

The Committee has maintained a high media profile for the Society on planning issues. It continues to be consulted regularly for views on contentious planning matters by those interested in development, planning and conservation ranging from individual householders to officers of English Heritage, City Councillors and even a local M.P.

Among major issues and activities in which the Committee has been involved are the following:

**Nottingham's Historic Skyline:** We are concerned that this will be totally lost if a number of proposed developments are allowed to go ahead.

**Broad Marsh Centre:** We have objected to scale of the proposed new development, and its effect on the High Pavement skyline seen from the southern approach to the City.

**Chapel Bar/ABC Site:** This proposed hotel and leisure centre complex would also adversely affect an historic skyline, this time on the west-east city axis and would obliterate the view towards the spire of St. Barnabas' cathedral and the tower of St. Mary's Church. In fact, the whole of Derby Road up to Canning Circus is being carefully watched. New developments such as those on the Hooley's garage site and adjoining Alton's Cigar Factory at Canning Circus could have an impact on skyline views and the traditional streetscapes generally.

**Nottingham Castle:** We have made clear our views regarding the proposed viewing bridge which, we feel is inappropriate in its setting.

**Colwick Hall:** The Hall is of enormous concern as its status and condition, currently held in temporary check by emergency repairs, need to be reviewed urgently and a viable yet sympathetic long-term re-use be found for this important building. The City's Development Department has been listening to us on this issue and we look forward to an ongoing dialogue.

**River Trent Waterfront:** Members of the Committee have been consulted on various schemes to improve the area between Meadow Lane and Colwick

Hall, and eventually to provide a public footpath from Trent Bridge to Colwick Country Park.

**Forest Recreation Ground:** The proposed new swimming and leisure complex at the eastern end of the Forest appears to erode a sizeable amount of public open space and would also involve the closure of local facilities – both aspects of the scheme which committee members feel to be undesirable.

**New Hotels:** There seems to be a plethora of new hotels at the moment, both new build and conversions. These vary widely in character and quality, from the sympathetic conversion of an existing Lace Market building to the inappropriately tall new buildings often clad in coloured glass or other brightly coloured material standing on important landmark sites. Among the designs about which the Committee has had serious reservations are the designs proposed for the London Road Island Site, the former Huntington Street Sorting Office, Nottingham Trent University Car Park site on Goldsmith Street, and, of course Chapel Bar.

**Conservation Areas:** The Committee continues to keep a close eye on planning applications involving both buildings and open space in Conservation Areas. Its views, fortunately, generally tend to be backed up by planners who are keen to retain the character of areas such as Mapperley Park.

**The Arboretum:** The Committee was delighted to hear that the City had obtained a Lottery Grant to restore this park to its original splendour and that the Society's recommendations formed an important part of the restoration plans.

**Memorial Gardens, Victoria Embankment:** The Committee was more than pleased to support the efforts of Society member Phyllis Severn to obtain lottery money towards the repair of the Lily Pond.

As the new Environment Sub-Committee Secretary, a post previously held by Ray Banks, I would like to thank all those who have who have given me support and assistance during the past months. It has been an interesting, stimulating and bracing experience, if at times somewhat frustrating. I would particularly like to thank Ray for being there when needed to offer help and advice and for his continued wisdom, support and good humour on the Plans Sub-Committee from which he has only recently resigned. We all owe Ray a deep debt of gratitude for his work in all areas of the Society's activity, and certainly not least for his long stint as Secretary to the Environment Sub-Committee.

Hilary Silvester

## HERITAGE WALKS 1999

## ANNUAL REPORT

The money raised by this year's Heritage Walks, £2,860, is I think a record amount. We introduced a new walk on Friday afternoons, which took us around the Castle and down into the caves. At first attendance was low but by August the figures were reasonable which helped to increase the "takings" on public walks to £851.

This was a good year for private walks. We started off in May by taking the National Committee of the *Ramblers* on a tour of the City. As they were holding their A.G.M. in Nottingham we had to cater for a group of fifty. Later in the year we took a large party of *Mensa* members around the Lace Market and the City centre.

We had visits from three other Civic Societies during the year. We took Southwell around Mediaeval Nottingham, Chester were taken down into the caves in the morning and then around the Park Estate and the *Adams* building in the afternoon, finally Leicester came expressly to explore the *Adams* building.

Your Society was asked to provide guides for the *Adams & Page* building when Prince Charles came to formally open it as the City College of New College Nottingham. At this point I must thank Ken Brand for all the research work he did about Thomas Adams, the man, and the *Adams & Page* building. We are still asked to provide guides for tours around this building, including the Heritage Open Days.

None of the money raised would have been possible without the guides and I must thank them most sincerely for the steadfast work they have done throughout the year. Fred Hudson did sterling work on Wednesdays, Fridays and Sundays. Graham Godfrey was always there when needed come rain, blow or snow. Molly sold tickets from the Gatehouse shop on Wednesday evenings. Georgina Lyons is our new guide, who is now part of the Sunday caves' team. Then there's Stan Saunders who is, as always a mine of information. I would like to thank husbands and wives for letting their partners spend so much time away from them at week-ends. Thank you all most sincerely.

We will not have the same results next year unless we can get two new guides who will be willing to give up some Sundays. Full training will be given.



I would like to thank the staff at Nottingham Castle for their assistance throughout the year.

I am looking forward to seeing new guides in the new millennium.

Ken Roberts  
Team Leader.

Ken Roberts is now in charge of organising the Society's programme of visits and he suggests you pencil in these dates in your new diaries:

June 10<sup>th</sup> A "Rural Ride" with Geoffrey Oldfield  
July 1<sup>st</sup> A visit to Northampton  
August 5<sup>th</sup> A trip to London with Ian Wells  
September 2<sup>nd</sup> A visit to Chester guided by members of Chester Civic Society.

Full details will be in the next Newsletter.

Your Society is supporting the Nottingham Society of Artists in their exhibition in the Victoria Centre from June 26<sup>th</sup> to July 2<sup>nd</sup> 2000 – the Year of the Artist. Work from the Society's Photographic Group will be featured.

### **BINNS ORGAN CONCERTS Summer 2000**

An early notification for your diaries, that the FREE summer organ recitals will commence on Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> April 2000 at 2.45pm, and then on every LAST Sunday in the month, during the summer.

We, as a Society, sponsor the printing of the recital programme, and Ian Wells writes the notes, giving an outline of each piece performed.

The main concert list with named performers will be out early in the new year.

### **The Data Protection Acts 1984 & 1998**

These Acts cover both information held on Computer OR in writing in manual form.

There must be a set of information about individuals. (*Note that a Person may be a Company, a Firm or Individual. This is a well-known legal definition*)

There must be a structure to the set by which data relating to an individual may be extracted, e.g. by name or by criteria such as age, type of job, membership of organisations etc. (*this will include, automatically databases, spreadsheets and manual filing systems*)

The Executive Committee has charged me with ensuring that the Society is properly and adequately registered under the Acts, and that it has control of the integrity of the data held.

It is an offence to process data without notice to the DATA PROTECTION REGISTRAR/COMMISSIONER. An offence is triable either in the Magistrates Court (maximum fine £5000) or in the Crown Court (maximum fine unlimited)

If any member keeps, or intends to keep, such records, will they please let me know the nature of the information and the purpose for which it is to be used in order that I may make any necessary registration and issue 'CONTRACTS' defining the information and the purpose or purposes for which the information is to be held. This should avoid personal liability being incurred by a Member.

Please write to F.A.Ricks, 30 Cyprus Road Nottingham NG3 5EB

F.A.Ricks  
Nottingham Civic Society's  
Data Protection Registrar