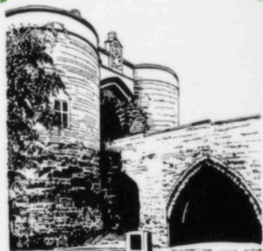


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**Nottingham
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This Society exists to develop a worthwhile environment in Nottingham. To achieve this it encourages good architecture in all its forms, planning, and the preservation of the desirable 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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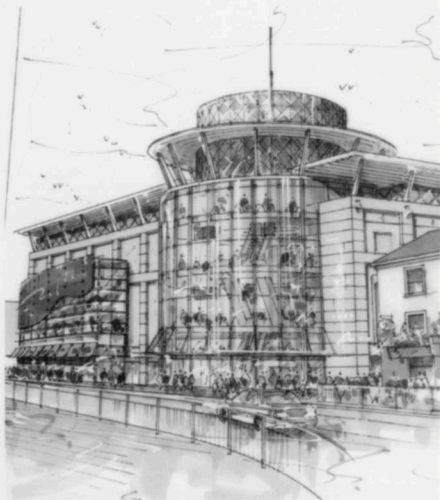
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September 2000

NEWSLETTER

Nottingham
Civic Society

113



The Cornerhouse

Elevation to South Sherwood Street/Forman Street

Architect: Benoy (Newark)

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The Nottingham Local Plan is about to be revised. There will be public consultations. When the chance comes to make a contribution or an observation, take it. Let us make the next Local Plan have clear, statutory guidelines.

NEWS FROM THE ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

The quality of new buildings and their impact on the appearance and the life of our city continue to be a major concern for the Environment Committee. Among recent and new development proposals, which have been discussed by the Committee, are:

ABC/Chapel Bar Site: This planning application has now been approved in a revised version. However, the Committee feels that it still has an adverse effect on views to and from the Market Square / Derby Road.

Derby Road itself has had new schemes agreed, included the redevelopment of the Hooley's Garage site. We need to remain vigilant to ensure the continued existence of the traditional Derby Road approach to the city centre.

Broadmarsh Development: This site has been acquired by a new owner (*Westfield*, Australian) who is, we are told, literally going back to the drawing board. We hope that suggestions made by the Committee will be heard and will bear fruit in the form of a more user-friendly and skyline-friendly development on this large and important site.

Lace Market (Halifax Place / Pilcher Gate / Weekday Cross): We are concerned by the proposed demolition of a number of buildings at the boundary of the Lace Market, and the impact of possibly very large new buildings dominating the Lace Market townscape.

In addition to the city's historic skyline, some of Nottingham's historic buildings have also featured prominently in the Committee's recent discussions:

Great Northern Warehouse, off London Road: We were pleased to learn that at the recent Public Enquiry into the future of this building the Government Inspector decreed that the building should be repaired and restored by the owner, rather than be demolished.

Sneinton Area: As well as the future of the Victoria Baths complex, the Society has also been involved with issues relating to Green's Mill and the future well-being of the (now unoccupied) St. Stephen's Vicarage.

The Park Estate: The Committee, on behalf of the Society, has objected to the development involving Broxtowe House and its impact on views of the Park. We were pleased to hear that the design as proposed, had been turned down

by the Council. We understand that the developer will probably appeal against the decision or submit a revised design.

Another development, which would impact adversely on views of the Park, is that proposed for the site on Castle Boulevard currently occupied by a tyre firm and various sheds, but immediately in front of a scheduled Ancient Monument, the caves known as *Lenton Hermitage*. Included within these cliff dwellings was the chapel of St. Mary de la Roche, which was the property of Lenton Priory. The site was sacked by the Roundheads in 1651, but five caves survived. From the late 1840s they were in use for some time as "refreshment rooms" for the Newcastle Bowling Green located above, at the western end of what was soon to be Lenton Road. One cave was in use as an office until 1962 but more recently, collectively, they have been obscured by a rash of garages etc. Whilst we have no objection to residential development here, we feel that the proposed design is too tall, between three and seven storeys, for this sensitive site. A new design should be submitted which is far more sympathetic to the Boulevard, the views of the Park, and the low cliff in which these scheduled *Lenton Hermitage* caves survive.

Parliament Street: We are concerned about the condition and future of the older buildings, including the former *Briddock's* newsagent shop, which is said in part to date from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. It was part of Nottingham's *Backside* before an aspiring parliamentary candidate allegedly renamed it - Parliament Street!

Colwick Hall: We have for some time expressed our concern regarding the present condition and possible future of this listed Grade II* building, important architecturally and historically in its connections with the Byron and Musters families. Very comprehensive surveys of the building have been undertaken on behalf of Monk Estates and the City Council. The Council is prepared to issue an enforcement order for restorations to be carried out by the leaseholders. We are particularly keen that these should be done as soon as possible and support the City in its desire to find a suitable re-use for the Hall which retains its character.

Clifton Hall: This Grade I listed building has recently been vacated by Nottingham Trent University and we are concerned about its present vulnerability. It is situated next to a public footpath to Clifton Grove, and the neighbouring church of St. Mary's Clifton has already been the victim of break-ins and vandalism. The Hall is due to go on the market in the autumn and its future use will need to be monitored.

As well as issues regarding Nottingham's historic buildings and new developments, the Committee is also concerned with other aspects of city life such as traffic, transport and other public amenities.

City Centre Lighting is an issue, which I brought to the Committee's attention, having had cause to be in the City mid-evening in March. The Old Market Square had a very poorly lit, bleak and somewhat threatening aspect. This was 'reflected' even more intensely at the so-called Collin Street 'bus station'. (This is not the Broad Marsh bus station - though that is bleak enough!). These concerns regarding lighting have been passed to City officers who reported back that lighting will be a major issue in the forth coming City Centre Review.

Relations with Nottingham City Council: The Committee has regular meetings with Jane Todd, the Council's Director of Development, and other officers, to discuss matters of mutual interest.

We now receive Agenda papers and Minutes for the Council's Planning and Development Control Committees and Ken Brand and I attend these meetings as observers whenever possible.

We still need you to alert us to matters of interest or concern regarding our city, so please contact me on (0115) 950 2444 {Tel and Fax}

Hilary Silvester
Secretary, Environment Committee

REMINDER

KEITH TRAIN MEMORIAL LECTURE
Tuesday, 10th October

The Civic Trust in the Next Millennium

Michael Gwilliam
(Director of the Civic Trust)

Djanogly Innovation Centre for Europe
Nottingham Trent University

Reception with buffet 6.30pm

Talk to commence 7.30pm

PEVSNER, MODERNISM, AND THE COUNCIL HOUSE

I have often wondered why Pevsner was so dismissive of Nottingham's Council House. 'Not much can be said in defence of this kind of neo-Baroque display', he wrote, adding as a rather obscure subtext, 'at a date when the Stockholm Town Hall was complete and a style congenial to the C20 established'. He went on to dismiss the Ionic columniation as 'no more inspiring or truthful than the interiors'. Considering the importance of the building in Nottingham, and the statement it trumpeted in the 1920s as to the future intentions of the City fathers this. Is to say the least, curious.

The Council House was opened by the Prince of Wales in 1929, and built to plans by T.C. Howitt, with a dome reminiscent of St. Paul's Cathedral - Pevsner writes that 'Wren has much to answer for'. It is easily Nottingham's most impressive building, and the most easily recognised by residents and visitors, alike. It is far more impressive than the 'Castle', built to an Italian Renaissance-style plan by the Dukes of Newcastle, and internally remodelled by T.C. Hine in the 1870s. Yet the Castle receives 72 lines in Pevsner's book, to a grudging 10 lines on the Council House.

Timothy Mowl's new book *Stylistic Cold Wars: Betjeman versus Pevsner* (John Murray, 2000) perhaps offers at least something of an answer to why Pevsner so disliked the Council House. It was built in 1927-9, at a time when Pevsner, still living in Germany, was much influenced by the Modernist viewpoint of the Bauhaus, in other words functional architecture to meet functional need. The most admired building among 1920s Modernists was the Stockholm Concert Hall, completed in 1922, and written about extensively in the *Architectural Review* c.1929-30, a period of its history Pevsner would read on his move to England. The assumption, given his championing of Modernism, is that Pevsner thought Howitt's building old-fashioned and provincial. By contrast, Betjeman, after toying briefly with Modernism, came increasingly to realise that buildings had as necessary a role as events in ordinary, provincial lives. This of course is precisely the case with the Council House, and reveals just how out of touch some of Pevsner's entries could be, simply because 'Herr-Professor-Doktor', to use Betjeman's preferred term of address, could never bring himself to accept such a viewpoint.

Mowl's book has a great deal more of interest to those of us interested in the conflict between Modernism and heritage/conservation as it developed in the twentieth century. And, for your late holiday reading this summer, pack Andrew O'Hagen's novel *Our Fathers* (Faber & Faber, 1999), which is a

splendid account of the fictional Hugh Bawm, pictured as the power behind Modernism in post-war Glasgow, with a fanatic's desire to raise tower blocks in place of slums. Unlike Pevsner, who lived happily in Hampstead, Bawm went to live on the eighteenth-floor of one of his own creations. Fiction here seems not to have paralleled fact!

John Beckett

NOTTINGHAM CASTLE by T.C.Hine.

(From a paper read at Nottingham to the Lincoln Diocesan Architectural Society, July 21st 1864.)

We have few statues in the city and not one of a person on horseback, unless you count the bits that are left of William Cavendish, first Duke of Newcastle, on the Castle Museum above the main exit. So it was interesting to come across this amusing little anecdote about it.

The architect of the renaissance palace finished in 1679 was a man called Marsh from Lincolnshire, a very obscure person according to Hine. He reluctantly accepts Marsh in the absence of other evidence, although 'he was evidently of the school of Inigo Jones, as the eastern facade demonstrates.'

'But,' said Hine, 'we have a more particular account of the sculptor of the figure of the founder [Cavendish] of which the mutilated remains are now seen....Deering says his name was Wilson, an ingenious artist, of whom it is remarkable that after this performance of his, he was for a time spoiled as a statuary, because a Leicestershire widow, the Lady Putsey, who was possessed of a very large jointure, falling in love with him, got him knighted and married him.

Hine was of the opinion that it was not correct that it was carved out of a single block of stone, as one of the legs was proved to be of wood when carried off by the rioters of 1831. 'A similar fate befell the foot of the rider for, curious enough, the present Duke informed me a few years ago that, on coming out of a shop in London, he saw part of a statue lying on the floor, and on inquiring what it was, the proprietor told him that it was only the foot of a Duke of Newcastle, which came from Nottingham!'

Terry Fry

Terry's book for the Society **NOTTINGHAM'S PLAQUES AND STATUES** has been well received. Have you got your copy yet?

ON THE RIGHT LINES?

On Monday 12 June children from Forest Fields Primary School lent a hand to the contractors undertaking the construction of Line One of the Nottingham Express Transit, the *NET*, by helping to dig the first hole at the junction of Gregory Boulevard and Noel Street. This symbolic act, the involvement of future passengers, started the three year construction period which at a cost of some £180 million will have the tram system installed and running during 2003. Starting at the hole, work will move in both directions along the intended route. The headquarters of the operation is at the north western edge of The Forest.

The Newsletter has carried details about tram systems from time to time, most recently in No. 108, January 1999. Incredible as it may seem the idea of a tram system for solving some of Nottingham's traffic congestion problems was first seriously considered in 1988. The Newsletter for April 1991, No 85 had a drawing of "The Nottingham Super Tram on Wilkinson Street" on the cover, and inside a description of the construction of the Grenoble tramway. [TAG: Tramway de l'Agglomération Grenobloise]. Now almost ten years later we are on our way!

The new *Incentro* tram destined for Nottingham's streets makes the drawing of 1991 appear dated and is an improvement on the *Eurotram*, running in Strasbourg, illustrated in Newsletter No 108. The *Incentro* will be assembled by *Adtranz* in Derby. It is claimed to be lighter, faster - up to 80km/hr - and more reliable, with the ability to take smoothly the 1-in-12 gradients of Mount Hooton and Victoria Street. It has the capability to ease round the sharp bends on some sections of the line on the street running section. The passenger capacity is over 200.

Line One, from the Nottingham Midland Station to Hucknall is 14km long, but only 4km of the track are on the City's roads, the rest is alongside the existing railway lines. There will be five Park and Ride sites along the route providing parking for a total of 3,000 cars. There will be 18 stops between the termini and at peak times the majority of the anticipated 30,000 passengers a day will not have to wait longer than six minutes for one of the 15 trams in the fleet.

The Arrow Consortium has been selected to design, construct and operate the Nottingham tram system. As noted in an earlier Newsletter, the members of the consortium are: Adtranz, railway systems engineers; Carillion, civil engineering contractors; Transdev, French tramway operators; and

Nottingham City Transport. The tram system's costs are funded through a Private Finance Initiative (PFI), which was finalised at an agreed level of £179 million, to be paid back over 27 years. The City Council will contribute around £28 million to the scheme and the County Council £6 million. If the tram proves more successful than expected, both councils will receive a share of the operating profits.

Several points came be made in reply to the question most often asked: "Why does the route of Line One run beside the Robin Hood Line (RHL) from Hucknall to Hyson Green?"

A heavy rail system like the RHL does not have enough passenger capacity or flexibility to sufficiently reduce congestion on a route through one of the most densely populated parts of Greater Nottingham. Heavy rail is signal controlled and each train needs a lot of clear track. Trams, which form a light rail system, are controlled by the drivers and so more vehicles can use the same stretch of track at the same time. Trams can speed up or slow down much more quickly, so that although stopping up to 18/19 times on a single journey, the journey time is not longer.

Construction work will not just be a matter of laying the track, after first moving utility services from under the intended route of Line One, but tram stops, Park and Ride sites, a new viaduct near Broad Marsh and the Wilkinson Street depot and control centre have all got to be built or set out. The power supply for the system, 750 volts DC, entails the erection of six electricity sub stations and numerous lamp post like poles carrying the overhead cables. Where ever possible in the City centre cables will be supported by fixtures on buildings.

The low platforms at the tram stops will line up with the low floors of the trams to provide easy access for the users of wheelchairs and pushchairs. The stops will be provided with shelters, ticket machines and information displays.

In complete contrast on Friday 18 September 1878, the day after the first Nottingham Tramway system was inaugurated, albeit powered by horses, the *Nottingham Daily Express* was rather laid back in its reporting.

"The commencement, in this town, of a new system of street locomotion is an event which the Directors of the Nottingham and District Tramways Company yesterday showed their unwillingness to engage in as a mere matter of course and as nothing beyond an ordinary business enterprise. They did

what is so conformable to English notions and customs in matters institutional and inaugurative. They gave, first, an official trip with their new means of conveyance, and then a luncheon at the end of the journey.* The route was from the Public Offices, in St. Peter's Square, via Carrington Street and Arkwright Street to the *Town Arms* at Trent Bridge. "The line run over yesterday... proved how smoothly well-adapted means to ends-in this case wheels and rails-will work: always, of course, with a sufficient oil of capital, of which, it has been publicly asserted with every confidence, there has not been, and there is not likely to be for the completion of the whole of the Company's scheme any lack." On the same day another service commenced from St. Peter's Square, which turned into Station Street at the end of Carrington Street on its way to its terminus on London Road, thus passing both the Midland and Great Northern railway stations en route.

At the celebratory luncheon noted, the Chairman pointed out, without going into reasons that the three months delay in commencing operations was due to the contractor. He promised no further interruptions of work would take place and that the next section would be open for working traffic the following April (1879). This was the second line, which started from the Market Place and had initially single line working up Market Street, then via a narrow Milton Street and on up Mansfield Road to Carrington. A spur wet along the length of Forest Road. As promised it opened on 5 April 1879.

The third route, was the Basford branch, which was launched in some style on Monday 11 August 1879. As its route served an area close to that of the modern *NET* Line One, this opening ceremony is worth a glance.

The *Nottingham Daily Express* was a Liberal paper and whilst describing the events of the day also used this occasion to take a dig at the investors involved. "It has been stated that this plan of tramways is an idea of speculators; and it seems that this is so, and for the very simple though remarkable reason that whilst town tramways have proved, we believe, so unexceptionally successful, towns without them hesitate to risk the providing of them. Capitalists, who may be almost regarded, from their experience, as experts in such matters, have not been slow to avail themselves of the opportunities thus locally neglected, and so have carried off the profits of them. No better proof of this could be afforded than the present case, which, once being made known, produced a very great redundancy of applications for shares. However the great mass of the inhabitants are not concerned in these matters. They want cheap, pleasant and expeditious conveyance to all the principal parts of the town which can be conveniently reached, and they have now the public pledge of the Tramways Company that they will get it."

This Basford Branch went from the bottom of Market Street, through Chapel Bar, up Derby Road and along Alfreton Road, passing the end of the Forest Road spur. It turned into Bentinck Road and then on to Radford Road where its terminus was at the railway bridge at Basford, near Basford gas works, a distance of two and a half miles. The account of the proceedings in the *Nottingham Journal* 12 August 1879, hints that the new tramway would help to bind together the suburbs of the newly enlarged Borough. For this opening run two new tramcars, each drawn by four chestnuts ridden by postillions started from Long Row.* The mayor, Sir James Oldknow, had a place of honour in the first car. In some sections of the route there were double lines, in others single lines with loops for tramcars to pass each other. The account of the opening journey in the *Nottingham Journal* 12 August 1879 carried an assurance for its readers. "This system (of the layout of the rails) will not interfere with the regular vehicular traffic, and the great cause of complaint against the introduction of tramways in other parts of the borough is obviated." Great interest "was manifested in the first trip on the line by the inhabitants of Radford, Hyson Green, New Basford, and Old Basford, some hearty cheers being given as the cars passed along."

Before the guests visited the stables close to the Basford terminus, the Mayor was presented with a bouquet of flowers on behalf of the young ladies of Basford, in commemoration of his first official visit to "this recently added suburb of the town (added in 1877!)" The Mayor expressed himself extremely gratified by this evidence of good feeling from the inhabitants of Basford, which was quite unexpected and spontaneous."

The inevitable luncheon to mark the day was provided at the *Flying Horse Hotel*. As well as the usual exchange of pleasantries the Mayor, acting on information given, pointed out a little fault in the setting out of the rails. "The plate that had been laid at the bottom of the rail and the stone put upon it, by projecting considerably above the rail would cause considerable trouble to the vehicular traffic, but when that was remedied he thought they would have the best system of tramways of any town in the country."

Ken Brand

I would like to thank Stephan Richeux, Nottingham City Press Officer, NET, for supplying me with information.

*For normal working "It is intended, we believe to run the trams with a pair of horses up to the Catholic Cathedral, and from thence to the top of the hill with an extra pair." Initially there were 106 horses stabled at Basford, 65 at Carrington and 60 at Arkwright Street.

COFFEE COME HOME

On 22 April 1873 the Improvement Committee recommendation that Bridlesmith Gate be widened from the *Dog and Bear* to the Poultry was approved by a full meeting of the Nottingham Town Council. This move forced the occupiers of the properties involved, on the western side of the street, to undertake rebuilding. For a new public house, the licensee of the *Dog and Bear*, Thomas Smith, went to the architect John Collyer whose office was nearby on Thurland Street. Collyer's plans were approved by the Council on 2 April 1875. The building was erected 1875-6. It has a façade of Hollington stone with a number of distinctive decorative features, including a dog, a bear and their champions; the proprietor's initials TS and the date 1876. There are apparently 18 gargoyles and, more easily counted, three wrought iron balconies

There had been a *Dog and Bear* inn on Bridlesmith Gate since before 1733, in that year the landlord was George Dakeyne. Its successor became a well-known town/city centre pub, no doubt a regular for many, but it carried in more recent years the tag of "rough and tough." Bouncers were employed as early as June 1980. In the late 1980s after violent attacks on police officers inside and drunken brawling outside its licence was withdrawn. In 1990 after many months of closure the *Dog and Bear* reopened. Jeans, throbbing music and disco lights were out and ties, traditional wood panelling and etched windows were in!

The gentrified public house failed to find favour with a new crowd. In April 1992 Bass announced it was transferring the drinks licence and relocating to the refurbished County Court building around the corner on St. Peter's Gate. The *Dog and Bear* shut forever in the same month. Thus it was put on the market without a licence but offering 2,926 square feet of accommodation on a prime site. It was sold in July 1994, being acquired for redevelopment by Gilbert Commercial Properties/Countryside Commercial plc. The conversion of the building into two shops, was carried out by Crampin and Pring (now Crampin, Pring, McArtney). Their work was rewarded with the Lord Mayor's Award for Small Scale Works in 1995. The two tenants were *Wax Lyrical* and *Whittard's of Chelsea*. Now *Wax Lyrical* has gone and according to a banner strung across the building, *Starbucks*, a coffee shop, is moving in.

This arrival of a coffee shop, together with *Whittard's* next door selling coffee and tea in one of Nottingham's most notorious public houses is somewhat ironic. Around the time the *Dog and Bear* opened for business, the

Temperance Movement was starting to fight back against the widespread drunkenness then prevalent in the town.

In 1876 there were four coffee houses and two temperance hotels in Nottingham. A little later the Nottingham Café Company Ltd was established and made some limited progress. On Saturday 4 October 1879 the Company opened two coffee taverns in, what was after the 1877 Borough Extension, the larger Nottingham. One was the *Willoughby Arms*, in Willoughby Street, New Lenton, and the other, called the *Livingstone*, was on St Ann's Well Road. Presumably they were called "taverns" to give them a more rugged appeal! At the opening of the former it was noted that the Company started with an establishment on Long Row and now there were stalls at the Midland and Great Northern railway stations and a Tram Coffee Tavern in St. Peter's Square.

What did these coffee taverns offer? Those at the openings of 4 October 1879 were informed "The establishments are fitted up with every convenience and contain comfortable rooms where visitors may read the papers and obtain healthful and improving recreation." The Company "wished especially to see young men in these places; and if the young men brought with them their "young women" so much the better. They did not wish to keep out the sweethearts."

Apparently the Nottingham Café Company operated against fluctuating financing. At the end of their first nine months of trading the Company declared a dividend of 5%. Subsequently through unspecified mistakes a heavy loss was made, but with corrective measures in place by late 1879 "the Company generally was doing thoroughly well, though they wanted more capital to enable them to extend the business."

Although the *Dog and Bear* itself was not targeted in the late 1870s, perhaps it had not had enough time to create a reputation, the *Talbot* and the *Malt Cross* were. The *Talbot* (now *Yates*), a "gin palace", was called "the flaunting *Talbot*, one of the greatest curses, (of the town) let it be known."

So much then for brief glimpse of the local "efforts to stem the tide of intemperance." The Temperance Movement was struggling to counter a habit on which the nation was spending £140 million a year (1878-9). This was an amount "twice as much as the whole cost of governing the country and of maintaining the army, navy and civil service."

Then, as now, complaints were made against the Government of the day, particularly against Mr Cross, Disraeli's Home Secretary 1874-80. He had altered the legislation so that a licence could no longer be taken away except for special cases assigned. This move left the local magistrates fuming, for "if the old law existed such places as the *Talbot*, the *Malt Cross*, and other establishments of that kind could not exist in our town for a minute."

Thus there is a certain irony that the former *Dog and Bear*, one of those "other establishments", will soon serve and sell coffee and other non-alcoholic drinks.

Ken Brand

Reference quoted: *Nottingham Journal*, Monday October 6 1879.

In 1976 a football supporter of unknown allegiance tossed a brick through one of the windows of the *Dog and Bear*. Replacing it cost £80.

Presumably the *Livingstone Coffee Tavern* in St. Ann's Well Road was inspirationally named after the explorer and missionary David Livingstone 1813-73.

NOTTINGHAM 2000: PEOPLE & PLACES

An exhibition with the above title was held in the Victoria Centre between June 26th and July 1st. The idea for the exhibition came from the Nottingham Society of Artists who invited the Civic Society to provide supporting photographs of Nottingham's buildings and street scenes. This material was supplied by the Society's Photographic Group, with Philip Sellars acting as the Society's co-ordinator. The exhibition was both a celebration of the new millennium and the start of *The Year of the Artist*. Both societies acknowledged the support of the Victoria Centre Management and of Jessop & Son.

The Nottingham Society of Artists was founded in 1880 when two groups of artists decided to join forces. One group was essentially based around artistically talented businessmen who in the winter months invited fellow painters into their homes for painting sessions and discussions. The other group, more a meeting of professional painters, gathered at the Wellington Hotel, Station Street, run by Sam Bestow. The first president of the new society was Samuel Bourne, cotton doubler (Britannia Mills, Netherfield) an internationally respected photographer, but also an accomplished artist. The Nottingham Society of Artists first home was at the Nottingham Social Guild, 86 Parliament Street, where they met fortnightly.

Before long the Society moved to a variety of rooms and venues around central Nottingham. It was not until the early 1930s that the Society was in a realistic position to build its own headquarters. The design of the new building was undertaken by one of the members, the architect Harry Percy Gill. The plot of land on which the building would be erected became available, when after street widening, Park Street became the upper part of Friar Lane. Some 179 square yards were leased to the Society for 99 years at £52 a year.

H. Gill & Son at 11 Park Row, Nottingham submitted plans for 'Saleshop, Offices and Studio' on behalf of the Nottingham Society of Artists on 8th September 1933. (Plan 16353). There appears to have been some disagreement over these plans. A letter to the Society from the General Works/Highways within the City Engineer's Department, dated 9th September stated they "do not disapprove of the plans." However a letter sent of behalf of the City's Estates Committee, which met on 19th September and dated 23rd, said that the Estates Committee had disapproved of the design "on account of the character of the front elevation." The architect was spared the humiliation of having to re-apply for planning permission. He seems to have just altered one or two features and sent it directly to the Estates Committee. A letter of 23 October 1933 informed Gill that the "Revised elevation was approved by the Estates Committee on Tuesday last."

Work on what was to be called St. Luke's House, 71 Friar Lane, proceeded and the official opening took place on 7th November 1934. The figure of St. Luke, the patron saint of artists, which graces the front of the building, was sculpted by another member, Joseph Else, FRBS., FRSA. Else was the Principal of the Nottingham School of Art and his sculptured figure was placed in position during 1934.

The story of the first hundred years of the Nottingham Society of Artists is related in *For the very Joy of Art* by Marjorie Macmillan published by the Society in 1980.

Ken Brand

CHRISTMAS PARTY
Tuesday, 12th December
Details enclosed with this Newsletter

**THE CORNERHOUSE, SOUTH SHERWOOD STREET /
FORMAN STREET / BURTON STREET
(WILSON BOWDEN DEVELOPMENTS LTD)**

When it opens later this year, *The Cornerhouse* will bring 14 new cinema screens and over 100,000 sq. ft of restaurants and leisure space to the heart of Nottingham. With its neighbours, the *Royal Concert Hall* and the *Theatre Royal*, the development promises to create a new cultural destination at the northern fringe of the city centre, balancing the successful regeneration of the canal to the south.

Accommodating this much floorspace on to a highly visible island site proved quite a challenge. The final design owes as much to the response to the immediate physical environment, as it does to the desire to produce a building of sufficient local and national identity to attract both the tenants and customers alike.

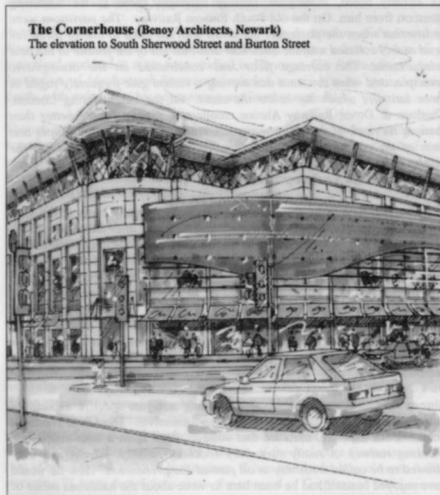
From the very outset it was obvious that the 14 screens required would have to be stacked one over the other with the largest auditoria buried deep in the centre of the building to reduce their impact on the surrounding streets. Faced with such a large volume of blank boxes, there was a strong desire that the building should not turn its back on the street but should offer something by way of creating activity above the ground floor. This was achieved in a variety of ways. Opposite the Concert Hall, perhaps the most visible elevation, restaurants were wrapped in front of the auditoria with the façade conceived as a glass wall overlaid with a wave of prepatinated copper. Copper was deliberately chosen for its colour and ability to create dynamic reflections in the glazed foyer of the Concert Hall. Around the corner on Forman Street, the building faces a row of almost domestic scale Victorian pubs and houses. Here the mass of the building steps back from the street in a series of terraces, each one opening up new views across the city roovescape down to the Market Square and Council House.

On the remaining two façades, the auditoria form an impressive vertical statement and here the architects wrapped the escape corridors along the entire length of the elevations. This buffer zone allowed window openings to articulate the façade and create a scale appropriate to the street. Precast stone is the predominant material, and is in good company alongside the Guildhall and Newton buildings. The stone climbs only two thirds of the elevation, above which the individual auditoria are expressed as a series of lightweight silver roofs.

For many, however, the first glimpse of the building will be the entrance foyer on the western corner of Forman Street. Here the height of the building is given full expression as a series of escalators rise behind a wall of glass, carrying the moviegoers and crowds along this vertical pavement.

Steve Godfrey,
Benoy Architects,
Northgate, Newark

This material arrived just too late for inclusion in the April Newsletter-Editor



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

On the quirks of railway stations Ahrons was merciless. He observed that the Great Eastern station at Cromer: *'stands somewhat outside the town, and is perched upon the top of a hill, to which only a psalmist or a member of an Alpine club could do justice.'* On the other hand, Harcourt Street Station in Dublin *'was something after the manner of an egg, which was all shell and no yolk. It was very magnificent until you got to the inside.'*

As already noted, inadequate railway carriages came in for withering attention from him. On the old South Eastern Railway: *'The partitions were so low that when the passenger sat down with his back to one of them, his head nearly collided with the back hair and best hat of the female in the next compartment. The carriage floor was constructed on the atmospheric principle, and when the train was moving a violent gale frequently raged in those latitudes which lay below the seats.'* Of the neighbouring London, Chatham & Dover Railway Ahrons recollected: *'Trains looked better than those of its rival, in that there was much more uniformity in the shapes and sizes of the carriages. This, of course, applied only to the outsides: the insides defied coherent description, which cannot be attempted in language temperate enough for these pages.'*

The idiosyncrasies of locomotives were exposed in equally lively terms. One Great Eastern express type *'usually seemed to travel after the manner of a stout lady in a hobble skirt,'* while some rather feeble little engines on the Great Northern Railway of Ireland *'were somewhat in the nature of steam perambulators.'* A hapless class of London & North Western express engines was stigmatized as *'Probably the most effete passenger engines of the type that have ever been constructed for a main line... Physically their chief characteristics were a very small boiler, about the size of a tea-urn, and a very long chimney, which, when the load exceed three coaches or thereabouts, emitted a violent shower of cinders and sparks over the surrounding country.'*

Ahrons' censure was capable of embracing not just specific aspects of railway working, but the very companies themselves. The Great North of Scotland, for example, attracted this volley: *'Once upon a time this was a shocking railway. A really very, very shocking railway. Why it was ever allowed to be called a railway at all passed comprehension.'* How he would have enjoyed himself had he been here to write about the ludicrous antics of the recently privatized train operators.

The Engineer accorded Ahrons a lengthy obituary in its issue of 9 April 1926, outlining the major features of his varied career and stressing his merits as a writer. It was reported that, although he had formerly been a fairly regular attendee of meetings of the Institutions of Mechanical and Locomotive Engineers, and of the Newcomen Society, Ahrons' health had latterly declined, and his visits to London had consequently become rare. While his series on the British steam locomotive was still appearing in *The Engineer* in 1925, many enquiries had been received about the possibility of their republication as a book. The obituary writer hoped that Ahrons' untimely death would not prevent the completion of this scheme; happily, as we have seen, the great work did indeed emerge in the following year.

In its obituary of Ahrons, *The Journal of the Institution of Locomotive Engineers* added the detail that he had been a former editor of that very periodical, and had at some time studied in Hanover. *The Proceedings of the Institution of Mechanical Engineers* included a very similar notice of his death, with a sketch of his engineering and literary careers.

Though receiving appreciative tributes in the professional press, Ahrons had apparently made insufficient mark as a Nottingham resident for any of the city's daily papers to consider his death worthy of mention, there was merely a brief family announcement in the 'Deaths' column of one of them. Ahrons' will showed that he left personal effects amounting to £1,206.8s.6d

Ernest Leopold Ahrons lies buried quite close to one of the paths leading up to the chapel at Wilford Hill Cemetery. Standing over a plot now rather neglected and evidently unvisited, a white stone cross bears the following inscription on its base: *'IN VERY LOVING MEMORY OF MY HUSBAND ERNEST LEOPOLD AHRONS, MARCH 30TH 1926.'* *'AND THE GREATEST OF THESE IS LOVE'*. Mrs Mabel Anne Ahrons, who died just over nine years later, is commemorated by their children in a further inscription.

Although 22 Cranmer Street was pulled down during the St Anns redevelopment, 16 Corporation Oaks, as previously noted, stands nearby in rather grander surroundings. An appropriate building exists, therefore, on which a plaque to commemorate E.L. Ahrons could be sited. As suggested at the outset of this note, I think he merits one. His last home is a tall semi-detached villa in this happily spared stretch of the Inclosure Commissioners' ring of recreational walks in Nottingham. When one thinks how close to it the sweeping St Anns demolitions came, the survival of Corporation Oaks seems

almost miraculous. The contrast today between it and its near neighbour Robin Hood Chase is a poignant one.

Nottingham is fortunate to possess the memorials of three such notable figures of the Railway Age as F.S. Williams, S.W. Johnson, and E.L. Ahrons. They should not be forgotten by the city in which they lived.

STEPHEN BEST

Part (i) of *His Own Line Of Country*, a biography of Ernest Leopold Ahrons, (pronounced Aarons) appeared in January's *Newsletter* (No.111) and Part (ii) in the April *Newsletter* (No.112).

MARK OF THE MONTH APRIL- JULY 2000

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

APRIL	Refurbishment of Plumtre Hospital
Client	I.H. Moore / R.N.I.B.
Architects	The Henry Mein Partnership
MAY	Creation of Broadway Business Centre
Client	Abidos Ltd
Architect	Dykes Naylor Architects
Design	James Projects Ltd
JUNE	Refurbishment of Canning Chambers
Client	Antonio De Rosa
Architects	Taylor Son & Mundy Ltd
JULY	Tow Path Improvements, London Road to Trent Street
Client	Nottingham City Council
Design	Landscape Architects (Design & Property Department)
Contractor	P.M. Harris Ltd

BROADWAY BUSINESS CENTRE

Mark of the Month May 2000

The Lace Market is currently Nottingham's regeneration showpiece, and another contribution to the area's revitalisation, the *Broadway Business Centre* opened on Friday 19 May.

The centre is Sharespace Management Ltd's latest addition to its portfolio of business centres and brings the number of tenant companies up to the 100 mark. This fourth business centre is the flagship of the 20-year-old company, with higher standards of finish, furnishing, equipping and service than ever before.

The *Broadway Business Centre* is in the former *Leespoint House*, a listed building at the corner of Broadway and Stoney Street, built around 1853 to finish and sell lace. Andrew James, the director responsible for the conversion, has retained and reinforced echoes of the building's original use in his design. The cast iron columns are a major feature of the interior, the high ceilings impart an airy lightness, and the cast iron frame of a lace machine is featured in the entrance hall.

The building was occupied by Jacoby and Company, lace merchants in the 1870s and 20 of its lace pattern books were uncovered during the building's conversion and are now on show in the *Museum of Nottingham Lace*, on High Pavement. Students of the Fine Art Department at Nottingham Trent University have used the building and its lace associations as a basis for original works of art, which grace the business centre's interior.

The 10,500 sq. ft development has 32 furnished offices on four floors, with the rooftop level offering private terraces for each office. Dykes Naylor Architects handled the design in association with Andrew James. Polo Interiors was the principal fitting out contractor. David Smith was the construction site manager. The project is managed by Andrew James, of James Projects Ltd. His company, Sharespace Management Ltd., has a 25-year lease of the completed building. Total project cost was approximately £900,000.

A bar/restaurant occupies the ground floor, with its entrance on Broadway.

Based on material supplied by Andrew James

MARK OF THE MONTH April 2000

There is very good news of the former Plumtre Hospital almshouse in Plumtre Square. Following a decade of disuse and increasing dilapidation, this attractive building has been acquired I. H. Moore and restored by the Henry Mein Partnership. It is now provides offices for the Royal National Institute for the Blind. Such a use is most appropriate for a site which has for more than six centuries been given over to charitable purposes.

The Plumtre Hospital is not only the oldest surviving almshouse building in Nottingham, but was also the earliest almshouse foundation active in the city. Granted a licence by Richard II in 1392, it originally provided accommodation for two chaplains and thirteen poor widows. Substantially rebuilt by Huntingdon Plumtre in 1650, and illustrated in Deering's 'Nottinghamia Vetus et Nova', the old structure stood until the 1820s, though latterly in a very poor state.

The present building, designed by Edward Staveley, surveyor to the Corporation, was opened in 1823, and described shortly afterwards as 'quite an ornament to that part of the town.' Today this modest and appealing building plays an essential part in lightening what is a dreary and traffic-ridden stretch of Nottingham townscape. The slightly projecting entrance front has a doorway with a four-centred arch, and an inscription plaque over it. A small pediment encloses the Plumtre arms within a garter. The Plumtre Hospital is lit by square-headed perpendicular windows with minimal tracery and emphatic hood-moulds, and the ensemble is completed by picturesque chimney stacks and pots. A very tactful extension was added in the same style in 1927. An additional block of almshouse flats, now unoccupied, was erected in 1959 about 100 yards away, fronting Canal Street between Pemberton Street and Cliff Road.

The continued survival of the Plumtre Hospital building is of particular importance on more than one count. Edward Staveley was surveyor to the Corporation from 1795 until 1837, and the first man to receive a regular salary for this job. Born in Leicestershire, he belonged to a widely-known family of masons and surveyors. There are few local examples of his work: his General Baptist Chapel of 1815 exists, but in a very knocked-about state, as the Co-op Arts Theatre in George Street. Perhaps Staveley is better remembered for the excellent maps of Nottingham he produced in 1830 and 1831 with his assistant, and successor as surveyor, Henry Moses Wood.

Nottingham can ill afford to lose any interesting building from the 1820s, but the loss of yet another almshouse would have been lamentable. In 1956 the early 18th century Collin Almshouses in Friar Lane were disgracefully demolished, although of national importance. The buildings that took their place are depressingly humdrum. In Carrington Street, a later block of Collin Almshouses had become empty before the war, but the derelict building survived for many years. Its site lies engulfed by the Broad Marsh Centre. Others lost in post-war years, to be supplanted by large new commercial blocks or widened roads, include the Labray, Gellestrop, and Hanley Almshouses, close to each other in Derby Road, Wollaton Street, and Hanley Street. Away from the City Centre, the Bilby Almshouses in Cooper Street were demolished in the course of St. Ann's redevelopment, and the location of the street obliterated. A long, tree-planted grassy mound marks the site of the Burton Almshouses in London Road, as though recording the burial place of the building. With the exception of the Friar Lane block, one does not claim that any of these represented especially notable architecture, but they were all interesting and harmonious elements of the Nottingham street scene, and we are the poorer without them.

Congratulations are offered to all concerned in the revitalisation of Staveley's Plumtre Hospital.

Stephen Best

[A fuller account of the building and its predecessor can be found in 'Six Hundred Years of the Plumtre Hospital', by Stephen Best, in Sneinton Magazine nos. 65-66, Winter 1997/98 and Spring 1998.]

BOOK REVIEW

Images of England Series, Arnold compiled by M.W. Spick
Tempus Publishing Limited £9.99 Available in local bookshops

Although normally books relating to areas outside of the City of Nottingham are not reviewed in the Newsletter, M.W. "Bill" Spick is an old friend and former member of the Civic Society.

Few, if any, are better qualified than Bill to produce a popular image of Arnold. Years ago I heard of his massive wide ranging collection of

photographs, drawings and maps of old and new Arnold gathered together since he arrived in the area in 1951. Some ten years later his introduction to the history of Arnold, *Ernhale*, was published privately.

Bill's enthusiasm and pride in his "parish" bubbles through this book, he probably refers to Nottingham as "Being near Arnold"! In his *Introduction* he notes that after the merger of Arnold with Gedling Urban District in 1974, "the result of the changes has been sad, with the loss of many architectural treasures. The town's heritage of independence has disappeared helped by the demise of the older population."

This pictorial record is divided into five sections:

- Mansfield Road from Daybrook to the Arch;
- The Nottingham and Gedling Road Areas;
- The High Street Area;
- The Front Street Area;
- Top of Town to Dorket Head.

Each section has an interesting selection of people, buildings of all kinds, and events. Often long forgotten, demolished buildings are followed by their more recent replacements.

Local residents should find this homely book fascinating; they may well recognise members of their families or neighbours of long ago. For outsiders the usefulness of the book would have been increased with the inclusion of a map of the town - perhaps as end papers. Collections of photographs of this kind can be of great value to local historians with their different interests.

Like a well advertised preservative it does what it says on the cover and provides a fascinating portrait of Arnold, from the Front Street farm of 1856 to the Sainsbury's Supermarket of 1998.

I would have welcomed more "beef" in the captions but that personal point should not spoil the many hours of pleasure, recalling and reflecting the book will give its readers.

I hope it sells well Bill.

Ken Brand

A useful bonus is a full list, as of April 1999, of *Buildings of Specific Architectural or Historical Interest* in Arnold.

WILLIAM STEPHENSON HOLBROOK A NOTTINGHAM BENEFACTOR

On various buildings around Nottingham there are eight rectangular memorial plaques surviving from fifteen, which were originally erected in the early years of the 20th century. Because the money for them was left to the City Corporation in W. S. Holbrook's will they are known as the Holbrook plaques. He left £1,800 for six monuments of poets still to be seen on the Castle colonnade. Holbrook himself played an interesting if minor role in the 'Arts' world in Nottingham in the late 19th century.

William Stephenson Holbrook was born in Nottingham on May 20th 1826 and baptised on October 22nd 1826 in St. Mary's Church. He was the son of Robert Gregory Holbrook, a commission agent, and his wife Marianne. On April 17th 1855 he married Susanna Williamson of Hundleby near Spilsby, Lincolnshire, a schoolmistress, at Hundleby parish church, which had been re-built the previous year. Hundleby is about 10 miles from Wainfleet, where Holbrook was employed as a schoolmaster at Magdalen College School, a delightful Tudor brick building which now houses a small museum. He was also the Hon. Secretary of the Wainfleet Horticultural Society in the 1860s. He had taken out several mortgages on properties in Wainfleet, Skegness, Boston and nearby villages so he was comfortably off.

Meanwhile, in Nottingham, a Free Library and Free Museums were being arranged. In 1867 the Free Library took over the Artisans' Library at Clumber Chambers, Thurland Street, where a plaque can be seen above the doorway. A Sub-committee of the Free Library managed the Free Museum of Natural History, which opened at 25 Wheeler Gate in 1872. Early that year Henry Cole of the South Kensington Museum visited Nottingham to confer with the Joint Committee representing the Town and the School of Art about the establishment of a temporary Museum in the 'Exchange rooms overlooking the market place'. They were to be fitted up to receive pictures, lace, works of art, pottery, porcelain, etc., many of which would be on loan from South Kensington Museum. It was to be called the *Midland Counties Museum of Science and Art*.

Its first Curator and Secretary was William Holbrook. On his return to Nottingham he and his wife set up home at 12 Fourth Avenue, Sherwood Rise, but later moved to Welbeck House, 18 Bentinck Road. *The Midland Counties Art Exhibition*, as it became known, opened on May 20th 1872, and was the forerunner of the Castle Museum and Art Gallery. Holbrook worked hard in the interim years, but in 1878 he appears to have been 'sidelined' as merely Secretary when George Harry Wallis was appointed the Art Director

He also objected to Holbrook leaving £1000 for twenty historical cartoons, each 3ft. x 2ft., to be painted representing the principal historical events connected with Nottingham. They were to be installed in the Castle Art Museum. Sir Samuel thought this 'manifestly absurd as they would be placed in the cellars of the Museum and the money wasted.' Little was done and in December 1911 the cartoon fund still stood at £967.

Holbrook wished to encourage 'the development of the Art of painting,' so left £2000 which, each year, would produce enough income to award four prizes of £10, £5, £3 and £2 to painters resident within 30 miles of Nottingham Town Hall. Harold Knight was one of those to receive £10, for 'Toilers of the Deep' in July 1903. Holbrook also instructed his trustees to choose one painting each year for the Permanent Collection in the Castle Gallery. They bought Harold Knight's 'The Last Coble' in 1902 for £50 and 'Flamborough Head', a pastel by T.W.Hammond for £15 in 1917.

However, Holbrook's most significant contribution to the city took the form of historical plaques and monuments. In a codicil to his will in January 1899 he left £1800 to pay for the memorials to Lord Byron, Henry Kirke White, Philip James Bailey, William and Mary Howitt, Robert Millhouse and Thomas Miller, which still grace the colonnade to the rear of the Castle Museum. He also left £200 to pay for the plaques, eight of which survive. (For more details see *Nottingham's Plaques and Statues*, a Civic Society publication in the *Get To Know Nottingham* series). Oliver Sheppard, then teaching at the Nottingham School of Art, received £25 in April 1902 for designing the plaques and £300 for executing the bust of Henry Kirke White in bronze on a granite pedestal. Enrico Cantoni of Chelsea moulded the bronze plaques for £4 each.

In his will Holbrook specifically stated that his Trustees should encourage young sculptors rather than pay large sums to those of established reputation. However, with one exception, all the sculptors of the busts were well established, although all were happy to accept £300 for their work. (What is the equivalent today? c. £18,000?) Albert Toft, who modelled the bust of Philip James Bailey, had impressed the City fathers with his bust of Major 'Jonty' White, which was erected in the Castle grounds in 1891. Alfred Drury, who created the bust of Byron, made the fine bronze statues *Morning* and *Evening* in Leeds City Square c. 1898. George Frampton (William and Mary Howitt bas-reliefs) was one of the most individual designers c. 1900 and already an expert at designing bas-reliefs. The one exception was George Gillick, a distinguished student of Nottingham School of Art, who agreed to model both the Robert Millhouse and Thomas Miller memorials for £300 in

of the newly opened Castle Museum, designed by T. C. Hine. Holbrook's salary was advanced to £300 per annum in 1882, but in December 1883 he resigned due to ill health. Since June of that year he had been arranging an exhibition of the works of the Sandby brothers and Richard Bonington. The Castle Museum Committee formally commented that it could not 'part with Mr. Holbrook who has been in their service since the foundation of the Institution without expressing their regret at losing the services of one who has served them faithfully and well, especially in the early history of the Museum'.

Holbrook was to live for another 16 years. Little is known of him in retirement apart from his continuing interest in collecting curios, his investments and his will. In January 1884 he wrote to his solicitor Thomas Thimbleby of Spilsby, 'As I have no near relations I care to benefit by leaving my money to I contemplate investing the bulk of it in annuities for my wife'. Unfortunately she died in 1894. He had invested £1,200 in a life annuity with Manchester Corporation Waterworks and added £800 in 1887. By December 1898 Thimbleby reported his income from Life Annuities alone to be upwards of £1,300, and other assets to be c. £9,000. After his death, on March 24th 1900, his property was valued at £11,228.

When his wife died Holbrook had to think again about the final destination of his assets. Fortunately for us he decided on 'the application of his whole estate for the benefit of Nottingham.' Apart from a few legacies to relatives amounting to £700 and 50 guineas each to his executors Thomas Thimbleby and Sir Samuel Johnson, the Town Clerk of Nottingham, he left all his money and possessions to the city. Various local institutions benefitted by his will. For example, his scientific instruments and appliances went to Nottingham Corporation [sic] University; his water bed, bath chair, Turkish bath and all other invalid appliances to the hospital for Diseases of Women on Castle Gate. The number of these devices suggests that he was in poor health in his later years. His Japanese collection, coins, old silver mourning rings, fans, pistols, guns, swords, engravings and works of Art were left to the Castle Art Museum and were to be known as the Holbrook Bequest.

There were several Holbrook Bequests, William appearing to be keen to perpetuate his surname after his death. Every Christmas, for example, 400 people aged over 60 were to be entertained. Holbrook also directed that half of the net income from his trust fund should be used each December to distribute coal, clothes and food to the deserving poor in St. Mary's parish. Consequently 400 children were included in the treats arranged by the Robin Hood Dinner Society each Christmas. Typically, Sir Samuel Johnson thought this was of no real benefit to poor people.

total. In January 1904 G. H. Wallis, then Art Director of the Castle Gallery, wrote that 'four times the casting had been a failure' but this was an accepted risk as Gillick 'is a young sculptor just beginning his career'. Wallis was obliged to support Gillick, having recommended him for the work.

There is no doubt that Holbrook regarded his contribution to the Arts in Nottingham to be important. Indeed, he left a further £300 for the express purpose of erecting a memorial to himself for making that contribution. John Wildgust, a monumental sculptor on Derby Road, said that William Stephenson Holbrook had talked over the whole matter with him and even sketched the proposed monument.

Holbrook wanted it erected near his own and his wife's grave in the General Cemetery, but the Trustees decided the site was not at all suitable as there was a urinal only four paces from the grave. They selected a site on the other side of the cemetery but Sir Samuel Johnson thought no monument costing only £300 would be worth erecting. However, he had to eat his words after seeing the Celtic cross memorial designed by S. Drake, another monumental sculptor on Derby Road, when he declared it to be 'striking and beyond anything else in the General Cemetery for artistic excellent [sic]'. And it cost a mere £72 10s 0d. It is still there today, a monument to one man's desire for immortality. The inscription reads:

In Memory of

WILLIAM STEPHENSON HOLBROOK

of this City

who died on the 24th day of March 1900

aged 74 years

By his will the deceased bequeathed considerable sums of money for the benefit of the Poor, and the advancement of Art in this city.

Have you noticed the plaques, busts and bas-reliefs, which form a Holbrook Bequest? Or have you, like thousands of others, hardly given them a glance? Next time you see any spare a thought for William Stephenson Holbrook who made a small but lasting contribution to Nottingham's history.

Terry Fry

I would like to thank Stephen Best for suggestions on areas of research for this article, and Stuart Burch for information given.

GOING ELECTRIC, ONE HUNDRED YEARS AGO

On 14 June 1897 at a full meeting of the Town Council it was resolved: "...That this Council doth hereby confirm the expediency of acquiring the Undertaking of the Nottingham and District Tramways Company, Limited, and doth hereby decide to purchase the said Undertaking..." The resolution was carried by a majority of more than two-thirds. An agreement was printed, which gave the purchase price as £80,000, this being the amount equal to the 8,000 shares taken at par. At this time trams still had genuine horse power!

This move was certainly popular and probably essential. The editorial in *The Nottingham Daily Express* on the following day assessed the Council's action rather well. "The tramways must always remain a 'necessary monopoly'; their proper and efficient administration is essential to the social progress of any large town; and this can best be secured by placing them directly under the control of the ratepayers... In Nottingham the need for the Corporation managing the service is, perhaps, more pronounced than in most other towns; for numerous extensions and improvements are sorely required, and they are, for the most part, not of a nature to tempt the outlay of private capital; though there is every reason to believe that they could be effected without incurring any loss, if not, indeed, with actual profit, as well as with great advantage to the community at large."

The actual handing over of the tramways took place on 18 October 1897 and at the Council meeting held on the 9 November, a Tramways Committee was added to the existing list of Council Committees. *The Nottingham Daily Express* in its issue for Saturday 16 October carried a feature on the present state and the history of the Tramway Company. Under the heading *NOTTINGHAM TRAMWAYS* came the emphatic sub headings *The Property of the Corporation* and *What We Are Getting for £80,000*. In brief the acquisition comprised 10.25 miles of single track running through 6.5 miles of street, three principal depots and 316 horses, 33 tramcars, 14 omnibuses and all the equipment needed to run a tramway system.

Although the Council had taken over a well managed and maintained organisation, as indicated changes were needed. On 4 April 1898 the Tramways Committee reported on the re-construction of the existing tramlines and the extensions required, and as to the method of traction to be adopted. The Committee proposed that the whole of the permanent way should be reconstructed with heavier rails and that the whole system should be equipped for electric overhead traction.*

On 2 May the Tramways Report was adopted for a second reading and it was resolved that parliamentary powers be sought to allow the work involved to be carried out. A fortnight later the Tramways Committee came back with a detailed list of route improvements, which the Council approved. The Basford single lines were to be doubled and extended to Bulwell Market Place, the Carrington line was to be doubled and extended to Winchester Street, Sherwood. New lines would be made along (1) Sherwood Rise; (2) Lower Parliament Street, the new (King Edward) Street, St. Ann's Well Road and the Wells Road; (3) Grey Friars Gate and Lenton Boulevard to Hartley Road, returning via Canal Street; (4) Wilford Road to Wilford Bridge; (5) Woodborough Road and Mapperley Plains to Porchester Road; (6) Wheeler Gate to the Market Place which would become the tram centre.

On 3 October the Council resolved to promote a Bill, whose provisions included the agreed improvements to the tramway system.

The use of electricity for tramway traction had by now passed the experimental stage. Bristol had a "splendidly equipped line of tramways worked on the overhead trolley system, which has now been in operation for about three years." Leeds, Dover, Sheffield and Hartlepool were among other towns using or about to use the trolley system. An alternative system was the cable system, which had been successfully and profitably introduced in Birmingham. *The Nottingham Daily Express* reporter felt "...and there is no doubt that where there is a heavy traffic and severe gradients to be dealt with the cable system presents advantages second to none, and should have the closest consideration as to its usefulness for a hilly city like Nottingham."

The Tramways Committee appears to have wavered from its original declared intent to opt for the overhead trolley system. Deputation were sent to look at the tramway undertakings in Edinburgh (cable operated), Dover and Bristol (both overhead electric). On 11 April 1899 the Tramway Committee met to discuss the "System of Motive Power". As a result they "Request that with the view of enabling this Committee to decide upon the best system to be adopted for the Motive Power, and of its application for the Trams in this City, the City Engineer and the Electrical Engineer be instructed to inspect the various systems in operation in New York, Boston and if necessary Philadelphia, and report thereon."

Arthur Brown, the City Engineer and Herbert Talbot, the Electrical Engineer set off for the United States and inspected the tramway networks of New York, Brooklyn, Philadelphia, Washington, Niagara Falls City, Buffalo City, Schenectady, Albany and Boston. The two engineers returned to Nottingham

and although their joint report was ready in July, they did not put it before the Council until 11 September.

Prior to the Engineers' presentation on 11 September, the Town Clerk announced the Nottingham Corporation Act 1899 had received the Royal Assent on 7 July. One of the Act's three main sections covered Tramways. The Tramways' spokesman explained. "By this Act the Corporation are empowered to extend the Tramway System of the City and to provide electricity as a means of traction (as already agreed upon by the Town Council***) and to expand thereon the sum of £585,000." It was also reported that staff of the Corporation would carry out the works.

A comprehensive account of the American tramway undertakings examined by the two engineers was followed by points more related to the future development of the Nottingham tramways. Referring to the Underground Conduit System, they pointed out "There are certain conditions in this City which are somewhat different to New York (with 87 miles of Underground Electric Conduit) and Washington (with 54 miles). In times of heavy rainfall Mansfield Road near the *Grosvenor Hotel* is 12 inches deep in water, in St. Ann's Well Road the water spreads from kerb to kerb, and the same in many other streets. The conduit would be filled with water and the traffic stopped for the time being. The water would not be the greatest difficulty. On Mansfield Road, for instance, the conduit would be left half full of mud, which must be cleaned before the traffic could be resumed." In order to provide adequate street drainage in Nottingham enormous sewers would have to be constructed to take away storm waters, at a cost of some £200,000.

The two engineers favoured the Underground Conduit System but realised it was just not suitable for Nottingham. "What is wanted in this City is cheap and rapid transit, and this can be given by the Overhead Trolley System, but cheap transit cannot be given in this City by the Underground Conduit System. If the latter were constructed we are afraid that the popular voice would demand cheap fares, and, if acceded to, the result would be a very great financial loss instead of profit to the City."

"The Overhead Trolley System is the most widely adopted, the most economical, and its status has most clearly been determined. It is mechanically and electrically correct in principle and the only point, which can be argued against it is the alleged ugliness of the poles and trolley wires."

"The aesthetic objections to its adoption however are not as great as they were, because the general public is becoming slowly accustomed to the

changes which the system affects in the appearance of the streets." They added that Glasgow, Liverpool, Manchester, Leeds, Sheffield and Hull had all gone for the Overhead Trolley System.

A joint meeting of the Tramways Committee and the Electricity Committee held on 2 October referred back to the September 11 meeting and agreed the Overhead Trolley System was the best system for Nottingham. They confirmed that all street works would be conducted by the General Works and Highways Committee under the direction of the Tramways Committee. Electric power would be supplied initially from the power station in Talbot Street, but a new power station would be constructed on a site acquired by the Council near the Old Gaol. Other than the supply of power, everything else need for the efficient running of the tramway system was to be the responsibility of the Tramway Committee.

Alfred Baker the former manager of the former Nottingham and District Tramway Company, who had remained in that post after the take-over, moved to the London County Council's Tramways as chief officer. He was replaced by John Aldworth who came from the Isle of Man Tramways. Thereafter work proceeded smoothly, the Horse System was converted to the Overhead Electric Trolley System. The service from the Market Place to the Winchester Street Terminus, Sherwood, a distance a little over two miles commenced on 1 January 1901. Eleven cars ran daily, with more at the weekend. In the first Committee report covering the first months of working the route the members expressed their satisfaction, no car had left the track and there were no serious accidents. A large car shed for 40 cars together with offices was built at near the Sherwood terminus.

The Market Place duly became the designated "tram centre" to which all sections would eventually converge. To achieve this a line was constructed from the Market Place along Wheeler Gate to the original horse tram terminus for the southern routes in St. Peter's Square.

Thus the Nottingham electric tramway system started. By the end of the 1902-3 financial year almost all of the work on the reconstruction of old lines, the line extensions and the new lines was completed.

Ken Brand

*A tram operating on the overhead system takes its electricity from overhead wires supported by cantilevered arms on poles or on brackets. With the underground system the tram "picks up" its electricity from wire(s) in a conduit (channel) set underground often between rails.

** When first agreed Nottingham had not been granted city status.

MEMBERSHIP DRIVE 2000

Our quest for new memberships initiated a recruitment drive this summer. Members were asked to try and recruit one new member each. I am sorry to say this proved not to be very fruitful. We only received a handful of responses, with some members misreading the request and actually completing a second membership form! However, following our successful River Cruise we received 8 new memberships with several others arriving over the summer.

I would like to take this opportunity of welcoming the following new members to the society:

Mrs. L K Clark; Roger & Angela Cowley; Dr W A Craik; William Davison; Karen Deacon; Mr. & Mrs. C Frake; Miss H G Fry; Mrs. S R Gillespie-Bell; Mrs. E A Jackson, Councillor G Johns; Mr. P F Kelly; Mrs. P M N Lawson; Mr. J H Leadbetter; Mr. S Merdeen; Monk Estates Ltd; Mr. H W Moore; Mr. P M Murphy; John and Susan Newquest; Mrs. J M G Pearson; Mrs. J A Ray; Mr. & Mrs. K Riley; Mr. & Mrs. J Scrimshaw; Mr. G H Stewart; Mr. G B Teather; Mr. K Thorpe; Mr. D G A Wheatcroft & Ms T Norreys.

The membership of the Society now stands at 409.

Lynn Irvine
Membership and Social Secretary

A VOTE OF THANKS!

On Saturday 5th August the Society had a very successful visit to London and for some members a trip on *The London Eye*. I would like to thank Ken Roberts for organising this visit and the rest of the summer programme. For the London visit Ian Wells was a very knowledgeable guide and generous with his personal, local anecdotes. Hilary Silvester added pertinent observations. I must also thank Geoffrey Oldfield who, picking up the reins once held by John Severn, took Society members on a *Rural Ride* on 10th June. This was a day out that was much appreciated.

Ken Brand

AN APPEAL

Is there an inexpensive calligrapher in the Society? After fifteen years of writing out *Mark of the Month* certificates, and moving further away from Nottingham, my daughter is getting rather fed-up with the task. Genuine offers gratefully received, with respect no learners please. Thanks.

Ken Brand

AUTUMN LECTURE PROGRAMME

All meetings at 7.30pm at the Society of Friends Meeting House, Clarendon Street, **except the October meeting.**

- Tuesday, 12th September "Urban Renaissance"
David Rudlin BA MTP
Northern Director of URBED
- Tuesday, 10th October "Civic Trust in the Next Millennium"
6.30pm Buffet/Reception Michael Gwilliam
7.30pm Lecture Director of the Civic Trust

At: Djanogly Innovation Centre for Europe, Nottingham Trent University

- Tuesday, 14th November "Are All Developments Horrid?"
Ken Grundy, Chartered Surveyor

HERITAGE OPEN DAYS

This year the **Heritage Open Days** are **16-17 September**. Once again there is very little on offer in the City of Nottingham, maybe things will improve. Other cities have responded differently. Leeds has 35 buildings open, including 11 churches, Liverpool 28, Bradford 22, Hull 13, Sheffield 7, Derby just 3 churches.

Here is the list for Nottingham (City):

- The Adams Building, Stoney Street, 16th only, tours half hourly 10.00-15.00
Marsh House, 26 The Crescent, Alexandra Park, 17th only 10.00-17.00
Nottingham Magistrates Court, Carrington Street, 16th only 10.00-16.00
Nottingham Subscription Library, Bromley House, 16th only, five tours but **you must pre-book on (0115) 947 3134**
St. Mary the Virgin, High Pavement, 16th only 10.00-14.00
Also: Wollaton Village Dovecote Museum, 17th only 14.00-17.00

It is worth checking out Newark. Their seven attractions include a guided tour of *The Timber Framed Buildings of Newark-on-Trent*, 16th 10.00-16.00 and 17th 11.00-16.00. In each case meet at the Town Hall (open both days).

These details are taken from the booklet covering the Northern Area. To obtain booklets for other areas send six second class stamps together with your request(s) to: The Civic Trust, 17 Carlton House Terrace, London SW1Y 5AW.

MEMBERS' ACHIEVEMENTS

I would like to draw members' attention to notable achievements by two fellow members.

Martine Hamilton Knight, who is a member of the Society's Environment Committee, has just celebrated the tenth anniversary of *Martine Hamilton Knight Photography*. Those of you who visited Martine's exhibition at the Yard Gallery, Wollaton Park, *One City, One Hundred Years* way back in the centenary year 1997, will know what an incredibly skilful architectural photographer she is. Without doubt Martine is one this Country's leading architectural photographers, don't just take my word for it seek out the covers of the *Architects' Journal* and *Architecture Today* over the last seven years and admire! Then look inside these publications and others, and find many more great images commissioned as illustrations for building studies.

Martine contributed a number of photographs for *The Centenary History of Nottingham*, with which I was involved, and I can say from direct experience how much her photographs enhance a publication. If Martine ever produces a calendar, buy it. You will have at least twelve pictures to frame. Martine is the only person who could, and has, made the Police/Fire Station in Nottingham look really attractive.

Phyllis Severn's achievement in securing a Lottery grant of £3,500 to bring lilies back to the ornamental pond in the Memorial Gardens on Victoria Embankment has received well justified recognition in the local press. I was privileged to be present at the formal unveiling of a new information and interpretation panel in the gardens on 6 July, coinciding with *East Midlands In Bloom* campaign.

The centrepiece fountain, one large spray surrounded by seven smaller jets, was inspired by fountains in Nice. This feature, together with the four wine glass or lily fountains on the four arms of the pond and now set off with lilies provides a setting which is truly stunning. If you wish to pay tribute to Phyllis's efforts-and those of the City Council's Design and Property Services-make a point of visiting the Memorial Gardens. As I said in the January Newsletter and I repeat it here because I have now seen the completed project, "Can there be a better place locally to reflect back over the events of the twentieth century?" Thank you Phyllis, for your perseverance and your ultimate success.

Ken Brand

(Phyllis has compiled a photographic record of the entire refurbishment).