

DERBYSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY



NEWSLETTER

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DERBYSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

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Cover picture: *Radbourne Hall in winter: 19th January 2016.*

[M. Craven]

FROM THE SOCIETY'S COUNCIL

Two members of long-standing, who joined the Society within months of each other in 1963-1964, have died recently: Gladwyn Turbutt in September, at the age of 97 – the last life member of the Society, president from 2003-2008 and author of the magisterial four volume *History of Derbyshire* – and Ray Marjoram, Vice President and Librarian from 1970 to 2017 in October at the age of 93. Obituaries for both members are in the forthcoming issue of the *Journal* (Vol. 145). A personal appreciation of Ray Marjoram by Anne Allcock, his successor as Librarian, appears in this Newsletter as does an appreciation of Gladwyn Turbutt from our Editor.

As reported previously, the Society is working in partnership with Derby Museums to facilitate the publication of the excavations undertaken by Martin and Birthe Biddle at Repton in the 1970s-1990s. Archaeological Research Services Ltd were appointed in September to undertake Phase 1 of the project, which is to review the archaeological archive and provide an overview and plan for future work. This will be completed by the end of the year. Dr Francis Morris of ARS who has worked previously with Professor Biddle on the publication of his excavations at St Albans and Winchester, is undertaking much of the initial work and his expertise is making a significant contribution to understanding and identifying the archive now held at Derby Museums.

Twenty-five groups came together at the History Fair, organised by the Society at Strutts in June, which provided an excellent opportunity for local historical societies to show their work to the public and, equally importantly, to meet each other. A programme of sixteen talks by attendees ran throughout the day and we also managed to provide space for the Derbyshire Historic Buildings Trust's petition to save Wingfield Manor. The DAS library was open and there was a very successful Grand Book Sale.

The Council continues to review the Society's existing rules with a view to becoming a Charitable Incorporated Organisation in line with approved governance for charities.

George Henshaw who has been involved in planning and heritage consultancy in Derbyshire and beyond for a number of years is now the Society's representative on the Derby [City] Conservation and Heritage Advisory Committee. George is a member of the DAS, Derby Civic Society and Belper Historical Society and is a trustee of the Guardians of Strutts (Strutts Community Centre) and The Matthew Smith Almshouse Charity, both of which seek to preserve listed buildings. George can be contacted about matters to do with Derby City on george.henshaw@wakebridge.co.uk

We hope that members have enjoyed the first part of the – once again – very varied winter programme and look forward to seeing you in person or online for its continuation in the New Year. Subscriptions are now due for 2026 and we welcome your continuing support.

With all good wishes to members and their families for Christmas and the New Year.

Rosemary Annable
chair@derbyshireas.org.uk



Ray Marjoram and Rosemary Annable, in their younger days, at Little Chester in 1968.

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GLADWYN TURBUTT (1927-2025): A personal appreciation

I first encountered Gladwyn when Mick Stanley and I were researching the first edition of *The Derbyshire Country House* in 1979. His innate charm, helpfulness and indeed enthusiasm for others' projects was without bounds and very welcome to a pair of tyros like us. We had known of him from having consulted his privately printed *History of Ogston*, for which, needless to say, I for one, had to join the Derbyshire Record Society in order to obtain a copy at a price within reach of a junior Museum curator and, of course, Gladwyn, being President, essentially suggested himself thereafter as a potential source of assistance. We also, incidentally, received much hospitality, help, potential illustrations and encouragement from the late Bobby Innes-Smith, then of *Derbyshire Life*, who also died this year aged 96.

Subsequently, writing without a collaborator, in preparing *A Derbyshire Armory* for the Record Society, I had the opportunity of enjoying his ever-enthusiastic assistance once more and was able to return the favour many times during his subsequent years of preparation for his magisterial four volume *History of Derbyshire*. He would call at the Museum in Derby, to look at objects, pick my brains (he was ever an optimist) find illustrations and get photographs copied, this frequently being followed by an enjoyable modest lunch.

I returned to Gladwyn, dragging with me Joseph Pickford's biographer and Architectural Section chairman Edward Saunders (1932-2011) when Edward wanted to talk about his subject's involvement with Ogston Hall. Later, when summoned to deliver a lecture about the Enlightenment background to the emergence of the Derby China Works for the Derby International Porcelain Society in London, I had the pleasure of being invited by him to lunch at his delightful flat in Ladbroke Grove. As ever, Gladwyn was the epitome of good company and of the dying art of courtesy. Indeed, it on that occasion emerged that he had suggested me to the DIPS to give the talk in the first place! Having by then long since lost any enjoyment from being in the capital, Gladwyn's modest oasis of high taste and good company made up for it in spades.



Gladwyn always had a deep interest in religion, and expressed it with a slim but very timely volume on the history of the holdings of the Order of St. John in Derbyshire, and following it with his *Superstition and Religion in early Derbyshire* of 19 years ago. Since then, he delighted us with his collection of musings and essays in his *My Commonplace Book* which arrived as an unexpected Christmas present to us in 2020.

Needless to say, we would bump into one another socially, not to mention at his High Shrievalty gathering, but we were all again brought together for his lavish 80th birthday celebrations held in the ballroom at the much-missed Hassop Hall Hotel in 2007, at the end of which, when Carole and I were taking our leave, we congratulated him on his bounty, wished him well and told him that we looked forward to seeing him on his 90th birthday, to reach which, he reckoned might be down to good fortune. However, in 2017 he duly did hit 90 and, indeed, we all re-assembled at Hassop and enjoyed an occasion even more touching, memorable and delightful than its predecessor.

Despite publicly refusing a funeral or memorial service, a modest but moving service of thanksgiving was held in his memory at Holy Trinity Brackenfield on 28th October and from which the accompanying photograph is taken.

Ironically, Gladwyn died within weeks of art historian David Wakefield, son of the man to whom Gladwyn sold Ogston Hall in 1973 and who, with his wife Caroline, completed its restoration, including furnishing and the gardens. His funeral took place in the same church on 15th of the preceding month.

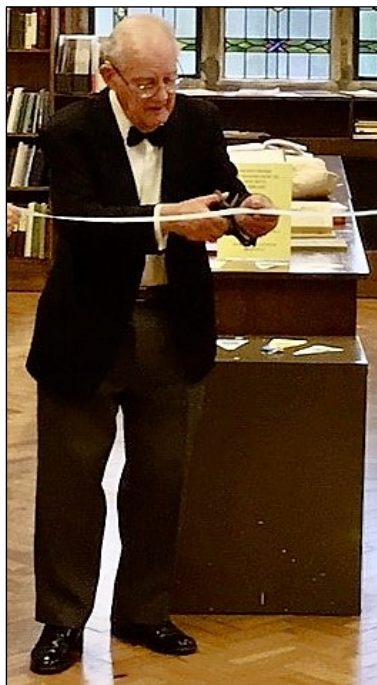
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RAY MARJORAM: a personal appreciation by Anne Allcock

Whilst there be a full appreciation of Ray Marjoram's life in the upcoming *Journal*, I am very pleased to write this short tribute to him on behalf of the library in this most appropriate of places. Without Ray the library would not have existed. In 1969 he was appointed Honorary Assistant Librarian, became Convenor of the new Library Sub-Committee and was then appointed as Hon. Librarian in 1970, a post he held until 2017. He oversaw the resurrection of the Society's rather neglected collections from being in a 'terrible condition' in the late 1960s to a viable working library and an asset to the Society. Ray and his dedicated team sorted, cleaned and repaired the books and then with his skills in computing from his work at Rolls-Royce, he developed a proper database and catalogue for the books and journals. Computing was in its early stages then, so this was well ahead of the game. Ray then set about developing and expanding the collection. Ray was also responsible for books for sale, raising a fair amount of money for the library over the years.

I got to know Ray in about 2017, when it was announced at a meeting that he was looking for a new librarian. I hadn't been in the Society for all that long and a chance remark on a DAS summer



trip about what was involved in running it took me into his domain! A few months later, I was taken down to a distant corner of the basement of Derby City Library where there were boxes and boxes of journals, all meticulously labelled and shelves of books in strict alphabetical order of author – nothing out of place! Ray was kindness itself, as he took me carefully through his systems and made sure that I knew them properly. His memory was prodigious. Ray knew every journal and book and also many of the authors, often with a little quip about them. His scrupulous regard for accuracy in everything, made my transition much easier; when I took over, I felt very well-prepared!

I always thought then of Ray as the Emeritus Hon. Librarian. When the library had to move to Belper in 2018 he was very supportive and he was delighted to be kept 'in the loop' over the years with what was happening, as the library turned the page to its next chapter. At the official opening in 2019 he cut the ribbon with great aplomb!

Cutting the ribbon. [Richard Finch]

I found Ray easy to talk to and willing to answer thoughtfully any questions I might have had. With such a meticulous eye for detail, nothing escaped him. He took an interest in everything and we had many a wide-ranging conversation, usually with much laughter! Undemeath Ray's somewhat serious exterior there was a real sense of humour.

The library as it is now would never have happened without Ray's love and dedication to the books. He has left a lasting legacy for the Society.

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PETER WARD

We have also been informed of the death of Peter Ward of Darley Dale, who had been a DAS member for 25 years.

The Society's condolences go to his family and also to those of Ray and Gladwyn.

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ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCH GROUP

Lecture on & and visit to Castleton 17th January/13th August 2025

In January Colin Merrony of the University of Sheffield's Archaeology Department talked to Society members about recent archaeological discoveries in Castleton and the upper Hope Valley. Since 2007, there has been co-operation between the Department, Castleton and Hope Historical Societies. As a follow-up to this talk, in August Colin showed members of our group around Castleton, where there were current excavations as well as the continuing investigations. We met at Castleton Visitor Centre where for 20 years Castleton Historical Society has maintained a small museum of historical artifacts; unfortunately this display is soon (Dec. 2025) to close. The weather was good, too – advantageous when looking at excavations!



Members of the group at the excavation; they are looking at Dr. Merrony (off camera!)

[John Morrissey]

Domesday Book in 1086 had mentioned the apparently small settlement of *Pechesers*: its location remains uncertain. In Castleton's west end, near Buxton Road, human bones had been found in gardens by the side of Peaks Hole Water, a small brook emerging from under the cleft known colourfully as the Devil's Arse. Colin showed us an active excavation carried out by student volunteers near the brook and they were indeed uncovering, in and around a slight mound, an apparent cemetery that contained inhumations predating the Normans by 200 years

or more – a time when Hope church served the area. He suspected that more burials lay beneath the adjacent small car park.

Peveril Castle can be seen high on the ridge above. We walked to the Market Place and Colin explained that Castleton was a Norman planned town alongside the castle. The outline of some of the town ditches can still be made out. Within the town, the church of St Edmund was built.

A medieval leper hospital (the Hospital of Saint Mary in the Peak) was reputedly founded by the wife of one of the William Peverels before 1153 but its site was not known although the persistence of the Historical Society has led to its probable identification. A field name suggested that it lay to the east of the town alongside the road to Hope. The ruin of a short-lived cotton mill lay nearby. The outline of this suggested more than one phase of building; it was suspected that the earlier phase was medieval. The mill was ruinous but it is being restored as a dwelling and a sympathetic owner allowed investigation during the work. Study and excavation (ongoing at the time of our visit) of the mill leat, showed that it had been diverted and an early, possible medieval, phase. The mill had presumably then been a corn mill that would have contributed to the support of the hospital. We were able to see these excavations.

It had been thought that the site of the hospital had been in a field across the brook and alongside the road in a place where travellers could perhaps make contributions to the hospital's upkeep. Excavations on a slightly raised area had at first revealed nothing. It was then realised that this area had been used as a dump for stone as improvements had been made to the road when it became a turnpike. It is suspected that all remains of the hospital had been removed at that time but, just as the excavation was coming to an end, a surviving piece of medieval wall had been found: evidence of the site of the hospital, Colin was sure.

To the east of the hospital site towards the boundary with Hope, a medieval field system is visible. Interestingly, there had been found evidence that the direction of the furrows in at least part of the field had later been turned through 90°: an unusual finding.

John Morrissey

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Little Chester Archaeological Excavation visit
18th August 2025

The section was invited to view the progress of the latest phase of the archaeological excavations at Little Chester (*Derventio*), known as a Roman site. It was a fine day, dry but a little on the cool side, as we viewed the work which was progressing at a vigorous pace.

Initially we were greeted by Laura of York Archaeology (formerly Trent & Peak Archaeological Trust) who had previously been involved in the 2016 community dig on site. She gave us a comprehensive overview of the site's features, location of the 'Roman Fort', and plans of the site's ditches, embankments and walling, in relation to the Roman roads and the River Derwent.

We then moved to the Darley playing fields area nearby, where the line of the Roman road, located in 2016, could be made out in the then current dry conditions. Close by was the site of

the current excavation in progress, where a trench the size of a tennis court was under investigation. The project had initially anticipated that under the turf they would encounter a small layer of industrial modern waste deposited prior to the football pitches being established, yet in reality they came upon a more substantial layer and went down through a couple of feet of waste before revealing a whole series of gouges into the clay layer where some Roman assemblages were coming to light. The suggestion was that these gouges in the clay layer were produced in modern times as an attempt to improve drainage of the football pitches.

Hard work as its own reward: excavating on Darley playing fields.

[Janette Jackson]



The team have recovered some Roman artifacts and are currently excavating into this lower clay deposit to determine if the gravel it contains is of Roman origin, or produced by flooding events from the river.

Janette Jackson

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***Visit to Laxton, Nottinghamshire
Wednesday 20th August 2025***

In August a group of us met Stuart Rose at Laxton, the only remaining working medieval, 'open field' farming village in Europe. In the small visitor centre in one of the outbuildings of *The Dovecote* inn. This visit was intended to be a morning visit, but soon expanded to become a very enlightening and informative day!

We soon learned that Stuart was born in the village and had lived there all his life, as had his father, so he was very well able to give us an insight into the way the system has been operated over the years by the Gaits and Commons, (which were specific rights to graze a set number of animals) of all the tenant farmers, also elucidating the annual inspection of the fields by the jury of the court leet, which has the power to fine farmers who have transgressed.

Stuart was able to show us a film, made thanks to a grant from the Tourism Team of Newark and Sherwood District Council, of the manner in which the system has worked over the years and continues to work today. This was of particular interest as it included archive footage

including Stuart's father actually in the process of holding the ancient court leet. This always took place in the pub – of course!



Stuart (centre) at one of the village farms, expatiating on the delights of Laxton.

[Janette Jackson]

Around the walls of the visitor centre were photographs of the village over time and a wonderful map of the Laxton Estate, part of a copy of a map by Mark Pierce of the estate as it was in 1635, the original map being deposited in the Bodleian Library in Oxford. There are also booklets available written by Professor John Beckett of Nottingham University, a Trustee of the visitor centre. Laxton was historically part of the estates of the Duke of Kingston, passed to the Earls Manvers and is owned by the Thoresby Estate.

After this informative morning, we all retired to the pub for lunch. Afterwards, Stuart took us on a very interesting guided tour around the farms, also fitting in a visit to the castle, an 11th or 12th century medieval castle covering 26 acres of ancient earthworks, concluding (for some of us) in the church. He then went on with some of the group with more stamina, to his relic packed farmhouse.

It was indeed a wonderful day, and our sincere thanks Stuart. I did try and persuade him to come along and give us a talk to a wider audience, but he preferred to stay on his own ground!

Janette Jackson

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ARCHITECTURE SECTION

Radbourne Hall visit Wednesday, 16 July

In July members had the opportunity to join one of the occasional visits organised by Historic Houses to see Radbourne Hall, which is not normally open to the public and to be shown round by Lady Chichester, the daughter and heiress (and last surviving member) of the Chandos-Pole family, for whom the house was originally built, and her husband, Sir James Chichester, Bt.

A Grade I listed Palladian house, begun in 1739, the original building somewhat usually came in under estimate and the architect, William Smith 1705-1747 (the son of Francis Smith of Warwick) duly returned the £500 he had been overpaid for its construction by German Chandos-Pole. The house underwent alterations to its plan and room use in the first years of the 19th century and was extended and modernised in 1865-1870. In the 20th century it was reduced in size by the removal of some of those additions, mainly the service wing, by Lady Chichester's parents, Major and Mrs J. W. Chandos-Pole, as part of an extensive restoration in 1958-1960 by the architect Frank Scarlett, with interior decoration by John Fowler of Colefax & Fowler, credited with establishing 'the bedrock of contemporary country house style' in his work on numerous houses in the post war period.

By 2014, when Lady Chichester inherited the house on the death of her mother Jill at the age of 102, work was urgently needed to the ceiling of the central hall which was sagging alarmingly due to the failure of a 1950s roof level steel beam; the roof itself required attention, as did the plumbing and wiring. Overall, the house needed to be 'gently adjusted' to 21st century ways of living, expectations of comfort, convenience and the opportunity was also taken to remove some less acceptable 1950s building materials, including asbestos and modern gypsum plaster which was replaced with lime plaster. The main objective was to carry out the work in sympathy with the existing character of the house, retaining and re-using as much material and as many features as possible including importantly, John Fowler's original decoration and soft furnishings, which Lady Chichester's mother had gone to great lengths to protect and conserve, and which are now a rare example of an almost complete Fowler scheme.



Radbourne Hall, the saloon looking west with two Wright overdoor panels visible.

[Peregrine Bryant Assocs.]

The project, under the direction of architect Peregrine Bryant, took three years to complete, with the house fully scaffolded and a temporary roof, during which the entire contents had to be removed, including the family's collection of works by Joseph Wright (some of which had last been moved and sent for display at Derby Museum during the 1950s restoration), the only

exception being the four ‘candle lit’ overdoor paintings commissioned in 1770-1771 (and said to be based on local people) built into the panelling in the saloon, which were securely covered.

Work to conserve John Fowler’s 1950s interior decoration was undertaken by a school friend of Lady Chichester, Fiona (Marchioness of Lansdowne) who had worked with Imogen Taylor, a designer of the original scheme with John Fowler and which was facilitated by the survival of Taylor’s drawings for the curtains and the maker’s measuring books. Most curtains were saved and restored where needed and all the rugs mended and cleaned. A similar approach of minimum intervention was followed with all of the wood panelling, exposed floors and staircases which were cleaned and revived with an oil and beeswax mix.

The one major change to the existing house was the addition of a new stone staircase and perron on the north front to give access from the saloon on the *piano nobile* level to the park. Here a 20mm gap (now known as the ‘Radbourne gap’) between the existing house and the structurally independent, new construction proved the deciding factor in obtaining listed building consent for the change. Built of Stanton Moor rusticated ashlar steps, to match the existing elevation, the new addition also provides a place to sit outdoors, where members enjoyed refreshments and the view after the visit.



Radbourne Hall, the new stone perron, not quite touching the north front of the house: 2024.

[M. Craven]

In 2021 the work was recognised by numerous awards including the Institute of Conservation Historic Houses, recognising the work of private owners, the Georgian Group and the Derbyshire Historic Buildings Trust.

Rosemary Annable

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NB Our cover picture is of Radbourne Hall (it was invariably spelt Radburne under Lady Chichester’s parents) in winter (January 2016). Your editor was engaged in his professional capacity that year to prepare the Heritage Statement and Impact Assessment for the house, as part of the application for listed building consent for the alterations proposed by Peregrine

Bryant. In the process, he discovered a plan of the house in Arthur Young's *The Farmer's Tour* of 1771 (probably copied from the original of William Smith) clearly showing a north entrance and attached staircase; also, a water colour of the house's north front also showing one. However, careful archaeological investigation established that it had never in fact been proceeded with, hence the ingenious artifice around which consent was eventually granted. Ed.

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INDUSTRIAL ARCHAEOLOGY SECTION

Visit to Abbeydale Industrial Hamlet *Sunday, 17th August 2025*

Abbeydale is only divided from what was, until 1936, part of Derbyshire, by virtue of its position on the NW bank of the Sheaf. It is a fascinating industrial site, found south of the centre of Sheffield. Here the making of scythes was carried out almost entirely in the hamlet, from the production of crucible steel, to the packing and shipment of the product across the globe via Liverpool and Hull, which makes the site unique. The site lies beside the river Sheaf, important, as this was a water powered site. In its heyday in the 1850s four water wheels powered grinding wheels and enormous tilt hammers



*Part of the site,
2021.*

[Sheffield Museums Trust]

There are records showing that a forge was operating on the site from the 13th century, when the land was owned by Beauchief Abbey (immediately to the south of the Sheaf). However, it really came into its own when production of crucible steel began in the 18th century and a reservoir was created, which ensured a more constant supply of water. Potters were employed to make the crucibles from locally sourced fireclay. Kaolin and ashes were added to the iron pigs in the clay crucibles and heated in furnaces at very high temperatures, after which a master and his team of drawers transferred the glowing metal into ingots. These were then sent to the local rolling mill in Totley (then still in Derbyshire) by boat. On return, the steel was sandwiched with iron and hammered to the right consistency under giant tilt hammers driven

by the power of the water. Again, it was a team operation and the men employed much skill in knowing when to reintroduce the nascent scythe into the forge again. After manufacture, women blackened the blades with Prussian Blue and Shellack to preserve the surface from rusting. Blades were then packed in straw ribbons for despatch. When Tyzack Sons and Turner took over the works, they introduced a different method of production, which made the scythes lighter, by riveting two pieces of steel together rather than forming a sandwich with the iron. Information boards throughout the site remind visitors of the dangers these people faced in their daily lives and the meagre wages for which they worked.

The site is listed as an ancient monument and individual buildings are listed at Grade II and Grade II*. Apart from the water wheels, forge, furnaces and grinding hull, there are the manager's house to view and a worker's cottage, for some key workers lived on site. Production ceased in 1933 after which the site was purchased by the philanthropic Alderman John George Graves, who donated it to the City of Sheffield with the hope it would become an industrial museum. It eventually opened to the public in 1970 and a recent National Lottery Grant has seen enhancement of its facilities and interpretation. Guides give informative tours on aspects of the site free of charge every day.

Jane Heginbotham

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Calke Abbey: Garden Heating Technology
Thursday 12 June 2025

After a search for the learning centre in the stable yard at Calke Abbey we were greeted by Fiona Fyfe, a landscape archaeologist whose research into the utilisation of industrial heating technology in country house gardens has won academic awards.



A 'Robin Hood' boiler manufactured by the Beeston Boiler Company, installed underground to provide greenhouse heating in the gardens at Calke Abbey.

[I. H. Mitchell]

The gardens at Calke Abbey provide evidence of several generations of heating systems, burning coal to heat greenhouses where exotic plants and fruits could be grown. The earliest examples were 'smoke flues' embedded in the brick wall around a walled garden against which a greenhouse was constructed. A more sophisticated solution was the 'cockle stove' developed by William Strutt FRS and Charles Sylvester for heating the Derbyshire General Infirmary and

his family's cotton mills, and published in Sylvester's *The Philosophy of Domestic Economy* (London, 1819). This incorporated a heat exchanger between the combustion gases and fresh air that could be circulated in the greenhouse without risk of poisoning the plants. Later systems worked on the principle of a modern central heating boiler by circulating steam or hot water.

After an introductory talk, we were taken on a tour of the gardens at Calke led by Fiona and National Trust volunteers. Much of evidence of the former heating systems is contained in underground passages along the outside of the garden walls, which have only recently been opened to view.

Ian Mitchell

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John Smedley Factory Tour and Archives
Wednesday 9 July 2025

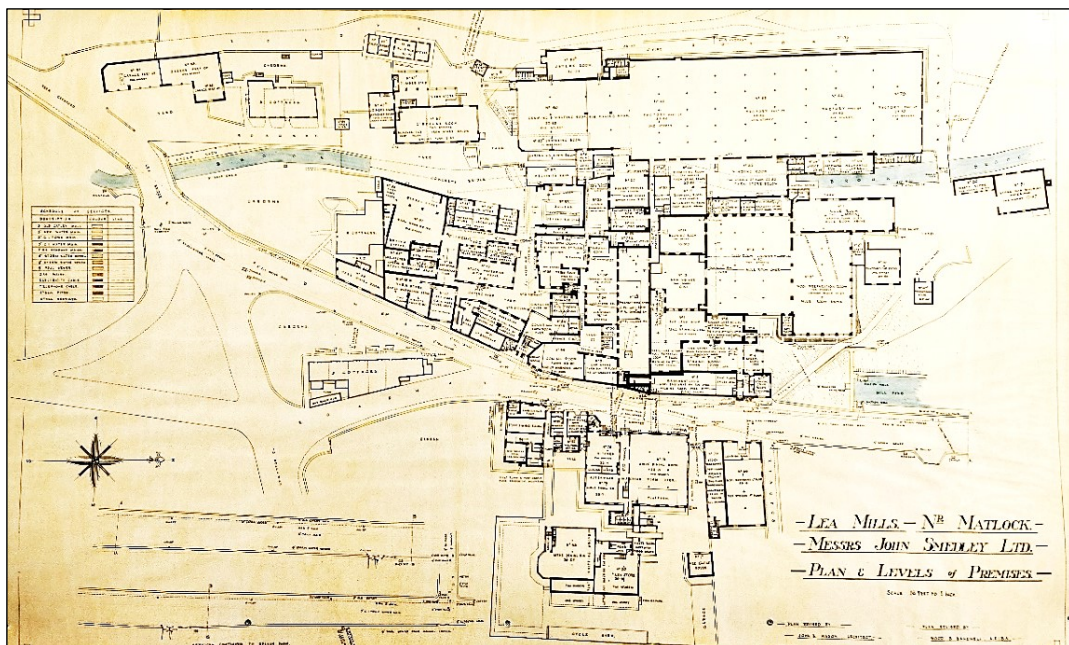
A cotton mill was first established at Lea Bridge in the Derwent Valley by the local landowner Peter Nightingale in 1784. The site was rented from the Nightingale Estate by the Smedley family in 1818 to spin wool and cotton yarn and to manufacture knitted woollen underwear, and was greatly expanded throughout the 19th century. In recent times, the firm has continued to prosper in family ownership by focusing on luxury outerwear, collaborating with fashion designers and winning royal warrants. Just under 300 staff are employed at Lea Mills and a satellite factory at Armthorpe near Doncaster and the company exports to over 26 countries worldwide, with its own retail stores in London and Tokyo.



Members of the section visiting the factory floor.
[I. H. Mitchell]

Our section visit on 9th July was in two parts: a factory tour in the morning and a visit to the company's archive in the afternoon. Our guide was company archivist Jane Middleton-Smith. She was initially recruited to review their records but, as the significance of the collection became apparent, a charitable trust was set up to guarantee the preservation of this important heritage.

Our group of 21 was split into two for the factory tour, led by Jane and another long-serving member of staff. We followed a convoluted route around a maze of buildings that surround the original 1784 cotton mill, following the production process from intake of highest quality merino wool and cotton yarn to packaging of finished garments. The knitting process is now highly automated with computer programmed Japanese machines, but there are still numerous steps of skilled manual processes to make up the finished garments. The attention to quality was evident throughout, for the company survives on its reputation as the manufacturer of ‘the world’s finest knitwear.’



A 1941 plan of the John Smedley factory complex.

[I. H. Mitchell]

The afternoon visit to the archive was also fascinating. It is in many ways more like a museum store, as the most significant element is a collection of 11,000 knitted garments, representing 150 years of the company’s products. There is, however, a long-term aspiration to establish a museum of knitted fashion, but in the meantime, the garments provide a source of inspiration for modern fashion designers, both within the company and students. The archive also contains large amounts of business records and publicity material and a miscellaneous selection of various bits and pieces of factory equipment. We finished the visit with a look into the company board room, surrounded by paintings of members of the Smedley family who have led the company through the years.

This was a really excellent visit – it was so heartening to see a textile business within the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site that has adapted to changing times and continues to thrive, whilst recognising the important of its heritage.

Ian Mitchell

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Monster Cakes and the Christmas Pudding King: Mark Dawson
Friday 14 November 2025

Our member Mark Dawson is an historian of food and the customs surrounding it. In this presentation he gave a fascinating insight into the story of two 19th century Derbyshire food industry entrepreneurs.

John Poole was a baker in Chesterfield, with a house and shop on the Market Place in the centre of the town. In the 1850s, he made headlines by baking monster Christmas cakes. In 1854, he baked a one-ton cake, which was sold by the slice at a shilling a pound. This was expensive for



the day, but the attraction to buy was the chance that your slice would include a ticket for a prize, which might be a silver teapot or a watch. Newspaper reports record that this attracted purchasers from far and wide, with prize winners in Leeds, Bradford and Sheffield. In later years, the cakes got even larger; in 1856 one weighed in at 3 tons 5 cwt, and was 5 ft 6 in high and 7 ft 6 in in diameter. A less salubrious story associated with Poole was that the yard behind his house contained 5 more houses. There were two privies in the yard, one (locked) for Poole and his family, and the other for the other 42 inhabitants and once, when this was being cleaned out, the body of an infant child came to light.

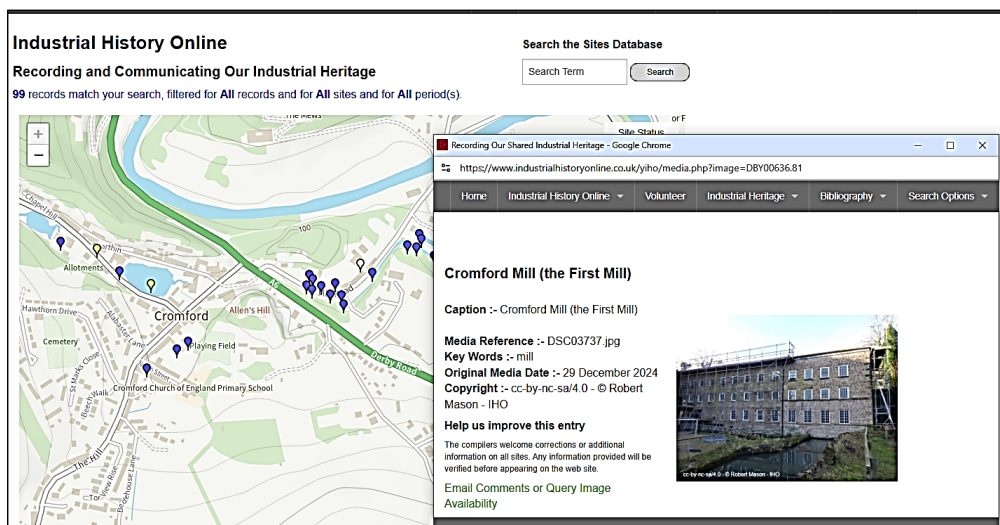
Matthew Walker started his career as a grocer's apprentice in Derby in the 1880s and, by 1904, he had established a company based in Exeter Street that mainly manufactured jam but was also providing plum puddings for the 'Robin' Christmas Dinner Society, members of which each year served a 'substantial meal of Old English Fare for the poorest and most destitute children of the town.' By 1926 Matthew was a wealthy man, living in a substantial house in Darley Dale and selling 125,000 plum puddings a year, which were proudly claimed to only use fruits from the British Empire. He died in 1944 but his son John Walker continued to run the company until selling out in 1967. The name Matthew Walker was retained by the new owners but production moved to Heanor, where 50 staff were employed in 1978. Jam making was dropped in order to focus on the Christmas puddings, amounting to eight million a year in 1991 and 26 million in 2019, by which time staff numbers had grown to 200. Ownership has changed several times since, but the Matthew Walker name continues and the firm now claims to have 97% of the UK market, selling under their own name and as supermarket own brands.

Ian Mitchell

INDUSTRIAL HISTORY ONLINE

Industrial History Online (IHO) is a free, publicly accessible, volunteer-maintained website that was originally developed by members of the Yorkshire Archaeological & Historical Society (YAHS) to communicate information about industrial heritage sites through text, maps and images. It now aims to cover the whole UK mainland and holds over 30,000 site records.

The Society is joining this initiative to preserve and enhance the information that we previously published in our series of IA Gazetteers that are becoming out of date and are out of print. There are already many entries for Derbyshire on the website that YAHS members have created from published sources, but these do need checking and updating to ensure they are accurate and up to date, and we are hoping that Society members will take on this task.



The screenshot displays the Industrial History Online (IHO) website interface. At the top, there is a search bar labeled "Search the Sites Database" with a "Search Term" input field and a "Search" button. Below the search bar, the text "Recording and Communicating Our Industrial Heritage" is visible, followed by a message: "99 records match your search, filtered for All records and for All sites and for All period(s)." The main content area is split into two panels. The left panel shows a map of Cromford, Derbyshire, with various landmarks labeled, including "Cromford", "Allen's Hill", "Cromford Church of England Primary School", and "Cromford Mill (the First Mill)". The right panel displays the record for "Cromford Mill (the First Mill)". The record includes a caption: "Caption :- Cromford Mill (the First Mill)", a media reference: "Media Reference :- DSC03737.jpg", key words: "Key Words :- mill", original media date: "Original Media Date :- 29 December 2024", copyright: "Copyright :- cc-by-nc-sa/4.0 - © Robert Mason - IHO", and a section titled "Help us improve this entry" with a request for corrections or additional information. There is also a link for "Email Comments or Query Image" and a section for "Availability". A photograph of the mill is shown on the right side of the record.

Example of an IHO record - <https://www.industrialhistoryonline.co.uk/>

To start the process, John Suter, who is the administrator of the website, will give us an online demonstration via Zoom of how it works and examples of the information contained. After this session on 16 January we will be looking for volunteers to review and enhance Derbyshire information on the website. This is an excellent opportunity to undertake some 'armchair archaeology' to share your knowledge and preserve it for future generations.

Ian Mitchell

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RAILWAY 200 IN DERBYSHIRE

This year has seen events up and down the country commemorating 200 years of the Modern Railway. The anniversary being celebrated is the opening of the Stockton and Darlington Railway in 1825 but the significance of this date is a contentious matter amongst early railway

historians. Railways have existed for more than 200 years prior to 1825 and evolution from early horse drawn railways with wooden rails serving the mining industry, to the beginnings of a national network with iron rails, steam locomotives and passenger trains, as well as freight, took place over 50 years from 1780 to 1830. The Stockton and Darlington sticks in the popular imagination as it had good publicity – it had a spectacular opening day in 1825 with hundreds of passengers, hauled by a steam locomotive driven by George Stephenson from Shildon to Stockton and, in 1875, the North Eastern Railway (which absorbed the line in 1863) organised a 50th anniversary event, aimed at establishing its primacy over the other competing railway companies of the Victorian era. That established the pattern, with the 100th anniversary in 1925 being run by the NER's successor, the LNER and the 150th in 1975, sponsored by the nationalised undertaking, celebrated on a large scale.

One of the biggest events this year was the 'The Greatest Gathering', a three-day opening of Litchurch Lane works in Derby on 1st to 3rd August, with an exhibition of railway rolling stock through the ages. The works, established by the Midland Railway in 1876, has been building railway carriages ever since, now as part of the Alstom multi-national railway engineering company. Railway workshop open days were once a regular feature of life in Derby but the last public opening on this site was in the 1970s and this was much bigger than any previous event. There were over 140 railway vehicles on show, including steam, diesel and electric locomotives and a variety of multiple unit passenger trains. Lots of railway related organisations exhibited, covering a wide range from historical to the present day, and enthusiast to professional interests.



*The Greatest Gathering:
former S & D R
Locomotion No. 1 built by
George and Robert
Stephenson 1825, the first
steam locomotive to use
coupling rods.*

[I. H. Mitchell]

The oldest locomotive on display was George Stephenson's Locomotion No.1, which hauled the inaugural train on the Stockton & Darlington Railway, 200 years ago, although a recent locomotive archaeology study has revealed that very little of the original remains, as a result of changes made during its working life and subsequent restoration: neither the boiler, wheels, chimney nor even the iconic parallel link motion are, strictly speaking, original.

Several Derby-built locomotives and carriages were on display, including the Midland Railway compound 4-4-0 No.1000, built at the Locomotive Works in 1902 and rebuilt into its present form by R. M. Deeley in 1907 and superheated in 1914. As BR. No. 41000 it was withdrawn for preservation in 1951 and restored to its 1914 condition in 1959. Other Railway 200 events in Derbyshire included open days at the Midland Railway Study Centre, based in the Museum of Making in Derby, an exhibition in Chesterfield and various preserved railway events.



*The Greatest Gathering:
former MR 4-4-0
compound No. 1000.*

[I. H. Mitchell]

2025 also marks the 200th anniversary of the Act of Parliament for the construction of the Cromford and High Peak Railway. Like the Stockton and Darlington, it was a railway emblematic of the transition from early to modern railways, designed to link two canals and using a combination of horses and stationary winding engines. This anniversary was celebrated with a steaming of the remaining stationary engine at Middleton Top. This has been preserved and run on compressed air for many years, but for a weekend in May, a Fowler ploughing engine was connected up to run the engine under steam for the first time since the line closed in the 1960s.

*Middleton Top
winding engine
being supplied with
steam from a Fowler
steam plough.*

[I. H. Mitchell]



LOCAL HISTORY GROUP

Visit to New Mills Saturday 23rd August 2025

Having found the library, situated on one of the many steep streets in this historic mill town, we settled for a short talk led by Roger Bryant, a founder member of the New Mills Local History Society. Geologically, we heard that the deep sandstone gorge, above which the town sits, was cut by a second glaciation, after an earlier, much deeper, gorge had been filled with moranic debris, causing the intermediate river Sett to carve a new path.

In more recent times, from 1066 to the 13th century, the wider area was the Royal Forest of the Peak; land within could be enclosed (assarted) on payment of a 'fine' (fee) followed by an annual rent of 4^d (1.75p) an acre, payable to the Crown. Beard was just one of four adjacent parishes, each with its own water powered corn mill; by 1391, however, a new corn mill was built – the eponymous New Mill, the settlement which grew up around it in due course adopting that name. By the late 1700s, many more mills, mostly textile related, were built in the gorge, giving us New Mills as it is today.

Mike Daniels then led our guided walk: downhill via the town's former Co-operative Society's central stores and some of the earlier 30-odd town pubs – catering for the millworkers, the miners and the townsfolk – to Packhorse Bridge over the River Sett at the head of the Torrs and Salem Mill, the first of many historic mills *en route*, some surviving with new lives as businesses or dwellings, but many now lost, fires having been a common cause of losses. At Hyde Bank Mill, a remaining chimney from a secondary power source, often needed when river levels were low, carries a plaque bearing the owner's name – Marian Thornlee.



*New Mills, part of
the Millennium
Walkway, 2024.*

[Visit New Mills]

Steps led us down to the well-wooded river bank, which we followed downstream, under the still-used railway viaduct and on below high rockfaces, past some former quarries, past sites of lost mills and mill housing, to the confluence of the Sett with the Goyt, with its weir, which

once powered the massive Torr Mill, now gone, although a hydro-electric Archimedes' screw still uses the power of the water. On we went again, under Union Bridge, built in 1884 to link the town with all parts south. We continued, past the sites of more mills on a sharp bend in the Goyt with a view of Torr Vale Mills on the opposite bank, now repurposed as a mixed use and hospitality establishment, but thought to occupy the site of the eponymous fourteenth century 'new mill'.

The walk finished at the entrance to the Millennium Walkway. It was the final piece in the Goyt Way long distance footpath, an aerial path 160 yards long, effectively a bridge, set partly on piers in the Goyt and partly cantilevered out from a vast Victorian retaining wall built to carry the railway high above (which it still does) – a marvel in its own right.

Then we undertook the considerable climb up back into town, up slopes and steps and finished with a stroll up Market Street back to the library. A most interesting day but, I am sure, one that only scratched the surface!

Susan Peberdy

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The Servants of Calke Abbey: Karen Kreft
10th October 2025

Karen Kreft explained that she was a room steward for the National Trust at Calke Abbey and felt that the family had been researched to the hilt but the 'downstairs' staff had been ignored, so she started to undertake research. She tackled the census returns for any one described as working at Calke. The Research team at Calke, advised her to go to the Records Office at Matlock to consult the House records, as the family had never thrown anything away including the records of the running of the House and estate.

The staff were organised and the hierarchy worked from the Butler (paid £50 per annum) to an Under Butler, Footmen 1,2 or 3, a Page, a Hall boy and, amongst outside staff, a Coachman, Postilion, Groom and Stable boy. From the Housekeeper (paid less than the Butler @ £47 p. a.) who had a lot more staff, not to mention the organising of the accounts to do, was directly employed by the Mistress. At Calke, the Housekeeper oversaw the head housemaid and 2 to 3 housemaids, a cook, a stillroom maid, kitchen and Scullery maids, head and three other laundry maids. Also, the nurse, nursemaid, ladies' maid, and a governess. Then, outside, there was the Head gardener (£60 per annum) who was always highly valued at Calke – actually being paid more than the Butler. These wages were recorded as those paid in the 1860s. People found their jobs from all over the country via staff agencies, to which prospective staff supplied particulars and references and to which houses such as Calke applied to obtain staff. Alternatively, they could advertise in newspapers.

Karen went on to follow some of the actual people who were employed in the roles. In the records were applications from prospective servants with their experience and hoped for wages and character references. The applicants only paid the agencies when they actually were employed so could afford to send their details to all the agencies in the area that they wished to move to. For instance, William Sutton started work at Calke in 1826 as a footman, rose to become butler in 1829 and, against all the normal rules, married Mary Dean, head housemaid,

in 1837 and, by 1851 they were installed in the family's summer residence, Warslow Hall, as butler and housekeeper. In 1865, Harriett Phillips arrived at Calke as housekeeper and stayed for 15 years. There was a sad story from 1913 of Gertrude Hopkins, who started work at Calke as a scullery maid at 14 years old and only 9 months later while singeing feathers from poultry had a fatal accident and was burnt to death. We also heard how much it cost to outfit a footman with the Livery: two footmen, a coachman and groom, all fitted out, came to the equivalent to £15,000 at today's prices, for they were the peacocks of the domestic staff and were even paid more if they were tall; indeed, every letter of application for a footman included his height.



Calke Abbey: staff group, 1900s; the Butler and housekeeper are seated, centre. [M. Stanley]

The footman was in training to progress to being appointed butler and his main task was to wait at table and to clean the silver, glass and fine china. Cleaning the silver every day came at a cost to their hands; they were so sore and cracked they had to wear white gloves to cover them. Alfred Winfield came to Calke in 1917 as a 19 year old to work as footman and stayed in service all his life becoming butler. This is known from when he visited Calke when it first opened and gave an oral history describing his life and work conditions.

The housemaids who did the bulk of the dirty, hard, physical work in the house from 5 am in the morning until after the family had retired to bed, were supposedly never seen. One maid, Rebecca Spring managed to marry James Horspool in 1827 in London but by 1850 he had died and Rebecca was a widow and applied to be upper housemaid at Calke, but lied about her age. In the 1851 census, she claimed to be 42 when she was in fact 55; this, because housemaids were normally young unmarried girls. Nevertheless, Rebecca remained in service at Calke for 15 years becoming head housemaid but was only ever paid the same wage: just £15 per annum. However, when she left the family paid her a gratuity or pension of half a year's wages for two years. The family did this quite regularly, looking after their long-serving servants as they retired.

*Visit to Derby Cathedral
Wednesday 3rd September 2025*

The visit organised by the Local History Section took place on a wet and blustery day but the welcome inside the cathedral was warm. Our guide was Derek Limer, a member of the Society himself, but on this occasion acting in his role as a volunteer at the cathedral. His association with the building and Derby was obvious from the very detailed account that he gave us of the process of evolution of the building from a Royal foundation by Edmund of Wessex, evidenced in a document from 943. Little was known of the form the original building took but in 2014 during the installation of a new heating system, the panelling around the interior walls was removed and some foundation walls from the Saxon period were uncovered, thus proving that the medieval church was built on the site of the original foundation. King Henry I granted the church to the Dean and Chapter of Lincoln Cathedral and administration passed to a group of canons. It was the canons who commissioned a new tower to be built (the present one) in 1510-1532. At the reformation in 1549 the Collegiate status of the church (joint with that of St. Alkmund) was ended but in 1555 the land and buildings were given to the mayor and burgesses of Derby and the building became the pre-eminent parish church of the Borough.



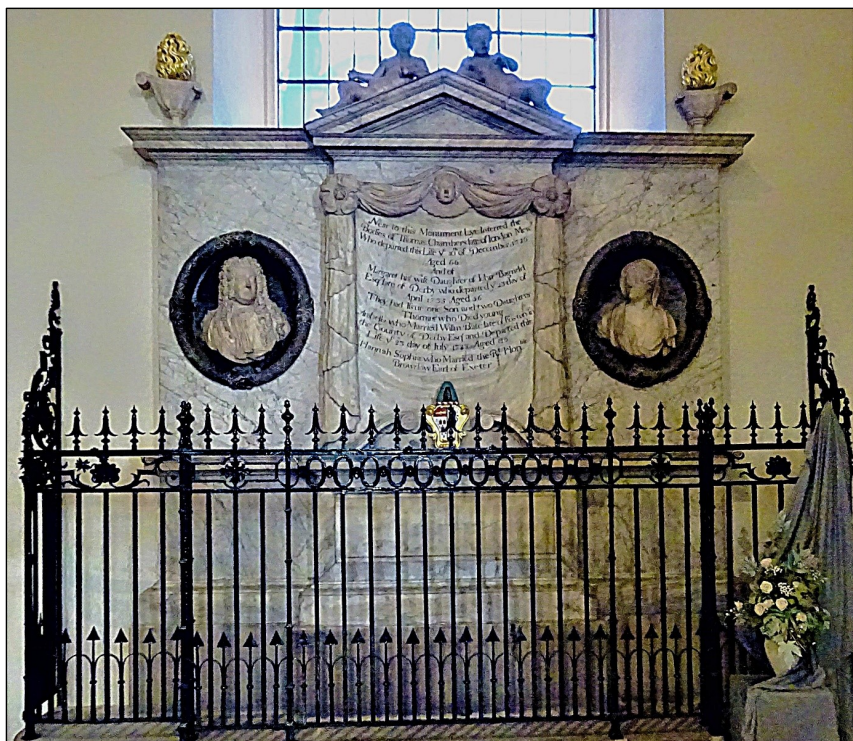
Derby Cathedral, immediately after redecoration, September 2015.

[M. Craven]

The building started to decay with a lack of intervention by the Corporation. However, in 1718 a new vicar, Michael Hutchinson, was appointed and he set in motion plans for renovation. There was indecision about whether to demolish the old church or renovate but in the end, Hutchinson, having raised a subscription from the county gentry, arranged for the church but not the tower to be demolished and the new church erected in its place 1723-1725, designed by architect James Gibbs, ironically a Catholic and a Jacobite! Some of the old monuments were

carefully replaced in the new building, notably that of Bess of Hardwick. The ornate ironwork of Robert Bakewell's screen enhances the light and airy feel of the interior space.

Box pews were removed in Victorian times. The replacements remain in place today, although there are discussions surrounding the efficacy of removing these to produce a more flexible space. Some other Victorian accretions have been removed and renovations undertaken when the building became the cathedral of the Diocese of Derby in 1927. However, it was only in the 1960s that an extension – first planned in the 1930s with Sir Ninian Comper – was built at the east end, designed by Sir Ninian's son Sebastian, forming a retro-choir which enabled facilities for the choir, vestry and a meeting room to be built beneath. Toilets were also provided for the first time.



Monument to Thomas and Margaret Chambers by Roubiliac, 1737, with railing by Robert Bakewell and flambeaux added to commemorate the donation by Mrs. Chambers of 80 lamps to light the Borough. [M. Craven]

Derek guided us to several notable monuments – the tomb of Bess of Hardwick by Robert Smythson, a wooden effigy of Sub-Dean Johnson dated to around 1527, a Medieval alabaster monument to a clergyman, the imposing monument to Thomas Chambers whose coat of arms

is embellished with cakes of copper and whose crest shows a miner in a mine (Thomas having made a huge fortune from copper mining and trading) and a monument with a connection to Charles I, commemorating Sir William Wheler, Bt. and his lady. She was laundress to the King and visited him shortly before his execution. The memorial plaque to Florence Nightingale was put up more recently. Derek pointed out that Florence herself had not wanted her name to appear on her tombstone in Hampshire and wondered what her feelings would have been at this celebration of her achievements. Inclement weather prevented the party studying the outside of the building but we had all learnt much to enable us to enjoy the cathedral to the full.

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A Labour of Love – The Orton and Spooner Story
7th November 2025

Elaine Pritchard gave the Society an illustrated lecture on Orton and Spooner, a company based in Burton upon Trent, which made fairground rides, wagons and show fronts for showmen and circuses around the British Isles and later branched out into cinemas.

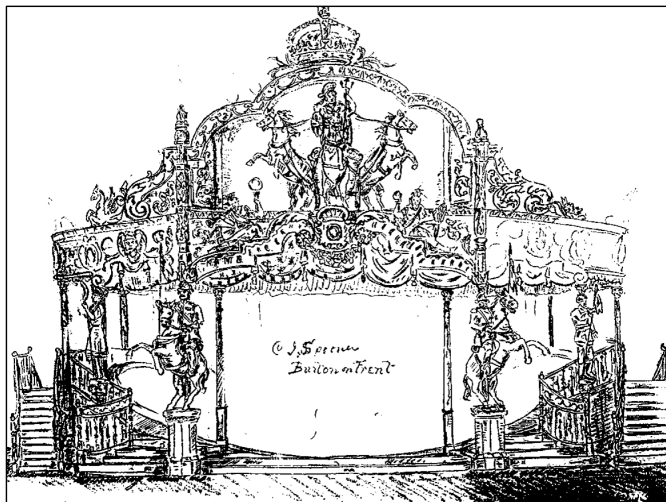
The company was a ‘marriage’ between two craftsmen who had initially worked independently. George Orton was born in Measham in 1844, apprenticed to a wheelwright in Church Gresley and taught to build various types of wagons. He eventually ran the wagon shop in Midway and, during this period he married. He then decided to work on his own and moved to Waterloo Road in Burton and initially took on a variety of jobs to keep the family.

Meanwhile, Charles Spooner was born in Burton in 1871 but had lost both his parents by 1879. The *Swan* hotel, which Charles’s father had been running, was taken over by his uncle. Charles trained as a designer and wood carver and married in 1894. Tragedy, however, struck with Charles’ wife dying and leaving him to look after a small baby. Some of his ornate wood carvings were for George Orton. An example of this work was an elaborately carved ghost show made for Messrs. Parker. The show fronts were made in such a way that they could be assembled and disassembled in around eight hours to be transportable on two lorries. Room was often provided at the front for a stage so that crowds waiting to enter the show could be entertained. In spite of their collaborations, the two were still working as separate entities but creating together.

George recognised early on the popularity of the cinematograph and built many shows which incorporated elaborate fronts on wagons which could accommodate fairground organs imported from France. Charles married George’s eldest daughter and moved his company to the Swan Works, situated besides the *Swan* hotel and took on employees.

Charles was an innovator and engaged in canny publicity. A surge in nationalism at the time of the Boer War led him to build carousels where the horses heads were replaced by caricatures of the leading British generals. He sent notices about this to the press calling himself ‘King of the Roundabout’ and newspaper articles appeared all over the place, including in Canada. On the scenic railways, they replaced steam with an electric motor on each car. This allowed an organ to be put in the centre. They would also, prior to delivery of a new ride, park it in Burton

town centre and invite showmen to come and view it in operation. Costing some £20,000 a time, George would also offer payment terms to showmen.



*Charles Spooner:
design for a
galloper.
[National Fair-
ground and
Circus Archive]*

By 1913, recognising the popularity of moving picture shows, the pair formed the Burton Picturedrome Company. They bought a skating rink in Burton and converted it to cinema, eventually replacing that with a new building in 1931, which had its own car park. They later established more cinemas and Charles's daughter, herself a talented designer, did the interiors.

Between the wars, the company designed vehicles to complement films on circuit e.g. *Showboat* and *All Quiet on the Western Front*. George Orton died in 1924 and in 1925 George Orton Sons and Spooner joined together as a single company. Charles's son Jack did a lot of work on prefabrication and worked on Mulberry harbours in the Second World War. After the war, the company started to make large conveyor systems, although they still did rides, including dodgems. Their final flourish in the realm of fairground rides was to build Rotor rides, designed in Germany. The company continued until it ceased trading in 1977.

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Colliery Stables and the Nottinghamshire Pit Pony ***3rd October, 2025***

Our first lecture of the 25/26 season was delivered by Janine Buckley, Historic Environment Officer for Nottinghamshire County Council. Janine's career has covered traditional archaeology, a spell training in horse psychology and now as a buildings archaeologist. She explained that the project to investigate colliery stables and pit ponies had been born from a realisation that not much previous research had been undertaken on the subject in the county. A heritage lottery funded grant had been secured for a project entitled Major2Miner, a part of which was to undertake research on this subject.

Various previous publications and archives had been interrogated, although few photographs were available, as photography underground was dangerous, because of the possibility of sparks igniting gases down the pit. Some images she showed us were from collieries in the Durham coal fields. The main archives searched were the Inspire Picture Archive, National Coal Mining Museum, Coal Authority and Beamish People's Collection as well as the National Newspaper Archive and the memories and collections of miners themselves.

In the nineteenth century there was one horse for every 13 people. Horses had a major role in agriculture and haulage and other commercial activities as well as for personal transport. The first use of horses at collieries would have been to sink shafts and operate winding gear by means of horse gins. The use of horses and ponies in the pits however, resulted largely because of legislation banning the employment of all females and boys under the age of 10 working underground, enacted in 1842. Children being small could operate in the narrow low roadways in the pits. Ponies were used to haul the coal wagons from the coal face to the bottom of the



the mine shaft. In 1913 it was estimated that over 70,000 ponies were employed in the mines. By 1950 the numbers had reduced to 15,000. In Nottinghamshire pits like Annesley, the estimated numbers for horses used underground was 80 to 90 in 1877, in 1968 still around 80 but by 1969 only 48. Ponies ceased being used in Nottinghamshire pits in the mid-1970s.

Pit ponies and their young handlers in a Midlands coal mine, 1920s.
[Mining Heritage]

It was not only ponies used in pits, although these predominated because of their smaller size. Larger horses could be used in larger roadways. The ponies were mainly native British breeds. Selected breeding was employed to produce characteristics most useful for the industry. Ponies and handlers received varying amounts of training, although personal accounts from miners at Bestwood colliery indicated it was rather rudimentary. Teenagers, who could not be employed at the coal face until they were 16 would typically become 'gangers' and look after the ponies, harnessing them at the beginning of a shift, settling them in their stalls and tethering them at the end of the shift. There are many records of fines being levied on gangers who did not take their charges back to the stalls or who engaged in cruel treatment and welfare legislation was late in coming. 1887 saw the first Regulations on the use of ponies underground. Up to the mid-1970s, most horse shows in coalfield areas would have two classes in which pit ponies could compete. Horses were brought to the surface and accommodated on farms and smallholdings for the two weeks a year when the mines closed for holidays.

The horses would at first be stabled near the shaft bottom, but as the coal cutting moved further away, new stables would often be built near the face. They had to be well ventilated (some

stalls used slatted sides to facilitate this), have hard standing, be large enough to allow the animal to lie down and have provision for a manger and water. Fodder and water all had to be brought down the shaft and dung sent back up to the top. The horses would be washed and groomed at the end of the shift to remove the coaldust. Sometimes tails and manes were shaved off to facilitate easier grooming. Janine showed us a photograph of a mechanical grooming machine, although these were probably an exception.

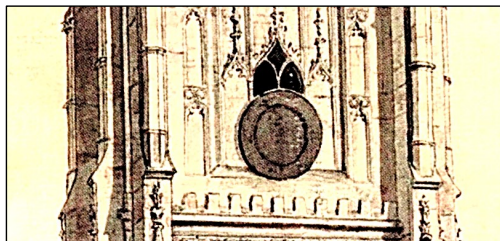
The project has culminated in the publishing of a book entitled as the lecture and Janine kindly donated a box of these for the benefit of members.

Jane Heginbotham

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PETER BURDETT'S VIEW OF ALL SAINTS', 1769

Last month saw the welcome publication of Peter Perez Burdett's drawing of All Saints', Derby and Queen Street in *Derbyshire Miscellany* Vol. 23, pts. 5 & 6 p. 34. The author, Dr. Stephen Leach, opined that the clock dial had been removed and wonders why. This is clearly not so. Examination of the original demonstrates that although, perhaps inexplicably, it is painted *en grisaille*, it clearly shows the time at 11.30.



Peter Burdett: All Saints' Church (1769) detail of clock dial.
[Derby Local Studies Library, LSL57967]

As I chronicled in *John Whitehurst* (2nd rev. edn., Stroud, 2015, 35) the clock was installed by Whitehurst in 1745, the dial was gilded on 10th September 1751, was 'repaired and beautified' subsequent to the painting (and perhaps hence its dowdy appearance) on 5th March 1778 and re-gilded again in 1816, all confirmed by contemporary records and by Cox J. C. & Hope, Sir W. H. St. John, *The Chronicles of the Collegiate Church and Free Chapel of All Saints, Derby* (Derby Bemrose 1881) 118-119. The plaque on the south side of the tower is believed to have been placed to commemorate the rebuilding of the church in 1723-25; it was removed before May 1855 and no trace of it remains. Incidentally, Burdett shows the main gates as plain and undecorated, but other engravings and early photographs show them as Baroque marvels from the hand of Bakewell, and documented as such. One might wonder why!

Dr. Leach's book on Burdett is excellent, but he did not consult recent research on Derby, which occasionally shows up. The building he calls the *Dolphin* (which would have been invisible to Burdett as he drew) is in fact the *Bull's Head*, abutting St. Michael's House, demolished in 1939, the wrought iron sign from which is in the collections at Derby Museum.

MC

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WINTER PROGRAMME FOR JANUARY-APRIL 2026

Unless otherwise indicated our talks are hybrid events that can be attended in person or online via Zoom. Friday evening events are at St Mary's Church Hall, Darley Lane, Derby, DE1 3AX, starting at 7.30pm. Saturday events are in Room 107, Strutts Centre, Derby Road, Belper DE56 1UU at 11.00am unless otherwise indicated. In most cases the speaker will be present, and you will get a better experience by attending in person.

Members who have supplied an e-mail address will receive the link to register to attend via Zoom by e-mail a week before the meeting. Non-members are welcome to attend in person and a limited number of places for non-members to attend via Zoom can be booked via [Eventbrite](#). Most meetings will be recorded and available to watch online afterwards via a link from the [DAS website](#).

Friday 9 January 2026 at 7.30pm at St Mary's, Derby – Society Lecture

Melbourne Church: A Royal Power Statement in Derbyshire

Speaker: Jennifer Alexander

Melbourne's parish church stands out as a fine Romanesque church, built in the 12th century and covered in sculpture. It was intended to be a royal church and presents a statement of power by a king eager to be regarded as a player on the international stage. Its later history was quieter,



and it is one of the few churches of the period that comes down to us largely unaltered, and so we can see, by close study of the building, how king Henry I's master mason demonstrated the king's power in his design of the building.

Jennifer Alexander FSA is Professor of Art History at the University of Warwick

Melbourne church from across the pool, 25th May 2018.

[M. Craven]

Friday 16 January 2026 at 7.30pm Zoom only

Industrial History Online

Speaker: John Suter

[Industrial History Online](#) (cf. article above) is a free, publicly accessible, volunteer-maintained website which now aims to cover the whole of the UK mainland and holds over 30,000 site records. The Society is joining this initiative to preserve and enhance the information that we previously published in our series of IA Gazetteers that are becoming out of date and out of

print. To start the process, John Suter, who is the administrator of the website will give us an online demonstration of how it works and examples of the information contained.

After the meeting we will be looking for volunteers to review and enhance Derbyshire information on the website. This is an excellent opportunity to undertake some ‘armchair archaeology’ to share your knowledge and preserve it for future generations.

Saturday 24 January 2026 at 11.00am at Strutts, Belper – Archaeological Research Group (DAS library open from 10.00am)

Elka Project Ilkeston – a community dig in May 2026

Speaker: Tim Bennett

Tim Bennett is a professional artist, illustrator, and experimental archaeologist – he introduces this topic as follows:

‘The journey of the Elka Project began after a deeply personal moment: my brother and I reconnected at the funeral of one of our siblings. Though we lived in the same town, we rarely saw each other. To keep in touch, we decided to share a hobby and our mutual love of history led us to take up metal detecting. It wasn’t long before I realised that my true interest lay not in the detecting itself, but in the research – exploring potential sites of past human activity through LiDAR imaging and historical map analysis.

‘One day, while studying LiDAR data, I noticed a series of intriguing features hidden within a local woodland. After contacting the DCC Archaeology Department, I was encouraged to turn this discovery into a community archaeology project – and that’s how the Elka Project Ilkeston was born. Since that first woodland discovery, many more sites of archaeological potential have come to light in my local area. My brother and I have worked side by side to build the community group and plan excavations, but tragically, he passed away before we could begin our first dig.

‘Despite my loss, the project continued to grow and evolve. It led me back to university, where I completed an MA in Experimental Archaeology. Today, thanks to support from EMH Homes, we have our own dedicated space for experimental archaeology and educational workshops. By chance, our workshop sits beside a six-acre site containing possible evidence of medieval coal mine plant and the area of a former 15th-century bridge. An excavation of the site with a test trench is scheduled for May 2026.’

Friday 6 February 2026 at 7.30pm at St Mary’s, Derby – Industrial Archaeology Section
Model Communities: Architecture, Politics and Social Improvement in the North Midlands coalfields

Speaker: Mike Pollard

The talk will focus on the founding and development of a number of ‘model’ mining villages across the region between 1890 and 1930 and will explore the aims and motivations of their founders and the ways they sought to improve the new communities. The speaker will explore their relationships with the aristocratic landowners, as well as their political links and the impact they had on the contemporary social reform agenda before 1914 and argue that the impact and legacies of this work was felt right through the inter-war period and beyond.

Mike Pollard recently retired as a headteacher, and is now actively researching the political, social and architectural development of the Midlands and South Yorkshire coalfields.

Friday 20 February 2026 at 7.30pm at St Mary's, Derby – Local History Section

History of Royal Crown Derby

Speaker: Elizabeth Woledge

Dr. Woledge will speak about the history of Royal Crown Derby pottery factory. The talk will be illustrated by some of the most interesting items from the Royal Crown Derby Museum which you can handle as you learn about how they were made. Also hear about the flower painter who changed the way flowers were painted, the troublesome modeller and many other interesting snippets from its 250 years history.

Friday 27 February 2026 at 7.30pm at St Mary's, Derby – Archaeological Research Group
Abbeys and industry: the legacy of medieval Premonstratensian monasteries in the north Midlands.

Speaker: Colin Merryon

The Premonstratensian monastic order was a relatively late arrival into medieval England. One result of this is that it struggled to develop large agricultural estates and focused a lot of its economic effort on industry. The choices made by monasteries in the north Midlands and southern Yorkshire had a significant effect on the development of late medieval iron working



in the area. This talk will consider the archaeological evidence for iron working related to the abbeys of Beauchief (cf. Abbeydale, above) and Dale and how decisions made in the 13th century changed the geography of industry in this area in ways which still affect us today.

Beauchief Abbey, ruins, Anon. c. 1750. [Private collection]

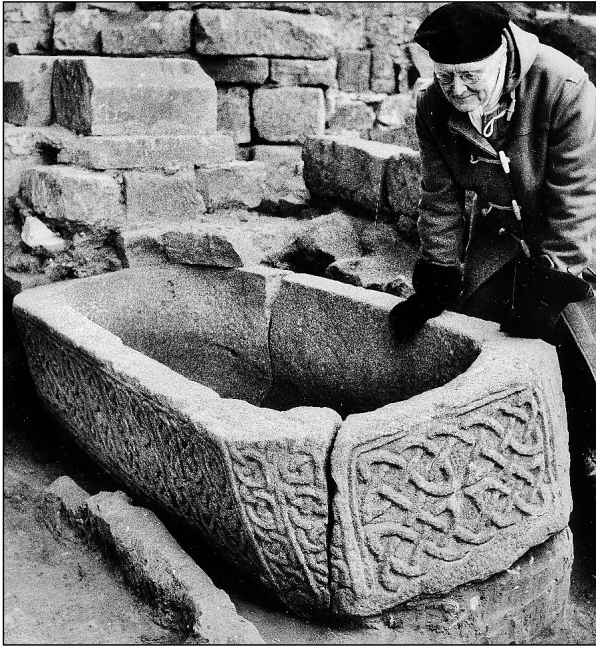
Friday 6 March 2026 at 7.30pm at St Mary's, Derby – Society Lecture

The Anglo-Saxon sculpture of Derbyshire: then and now

Speaker: Jane Hawkes

The Anglo-Saxon sculpture (dating from between the 8th and 11th centuries) which is preserved in Derbyshire has attracted a long history of interest and scholarship, from the early antiquaries to those establishing art history and archaeology in the emerging university departments in the 19th century. This will be considered in the context of the period, before a more contemporary view in the light of today's rich and varied understanding of the appearance and function of the monuments.

Professor Hawkes is a Reader in the History of Art at the University of York. She has taught widely in the areas of Anglo-Saxon studies (art, archaeology, language and literature), English Medieval Literature and the art and architecture of late antiquity and of medieval Europe.



The late Dr. C. A. Raleigh Radford examining the Saxo-Norse interlace stone sar-cophagus then just excavated by his team from the foundations of St. Alkmund, Derby, 1967, and believed to have been carved to receive the remains of Ealdorman Aethulwulf, killed by the Danes in 871. Photo by the late Roy Hughes.

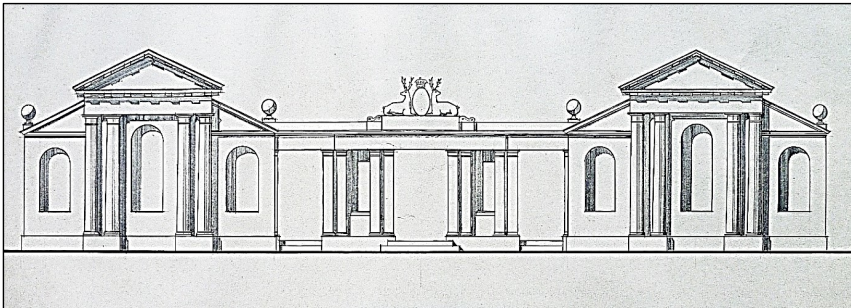
[Derby Museums Trust]

Friday 20 March 2026 at 7.30pm at St Mary's, Derby – Local History Section

Almshouses, past, present & local

Speaker: Robert Mee.

Almshouses have existed since at least the time of the Byzantine empire. In his talk, local historian Robert Mee will look at the origins and growth of almshouses in this country. Then, using examples from Derbyshire from the Early Modern period onwards, he will show that they are still firmly a feature of modern society.



Derby: Devonshire Hospital, Full Street, Joseph Pickford for 5th Duke of Devonshire, 1777, drawing by the late Edward Saunders dated 1985. Demolished 1917.

[M. Craven]

Saturday 28 March 2026 at 11.00am at Strutts, Belper – Society Lecture

(DAS library open from 10.00am)

Silchester: from Iron Age royal centre to Roman city

Speaker: Michael Fulford

Silchester (Calleva Atrebatum) is one of a handful of the major Roman towns of Britain which did not re-emerge as towns in the Middle Ages. It was subjected to extensive excavation in the late 19th and early 20th century to give us a so-called complete plan of the town. The talk will show how modern archaeology has further illuminated its history, including its origins in the late iron age and the changing life and occupations of its inhabitants.

Michael Fulford CBE FBA FSA is professor of archaeology at the University of Reading. A major theme of his research has been Roman Britain, with a particular focus on Iron Age and Roman Silchester which he has been working on for over 50 years.

Friday 17 April 2026 at 7.30pm at St Mary's, Derby – Industrial Archaeology Section

Coal Mining in the Faroe Islands and other international IA adventures

Speaker: Ian Mitchell

It used to be a tradition of the IA Section to finish the programme with a session of 'members slides', to share information on sites of industrial archaeological interest. This talk will be a revival of this tradition, looking at some locations that Ian and Mary have visited abroad in recent years. Some of these have been on specialist tours organised for the Association for Industrial Archaeology, while others were sought out or come across by chance on independent holidays.

Saturday 25 April 2026 at 11.00am at Strutts, Belper – Society Lecture

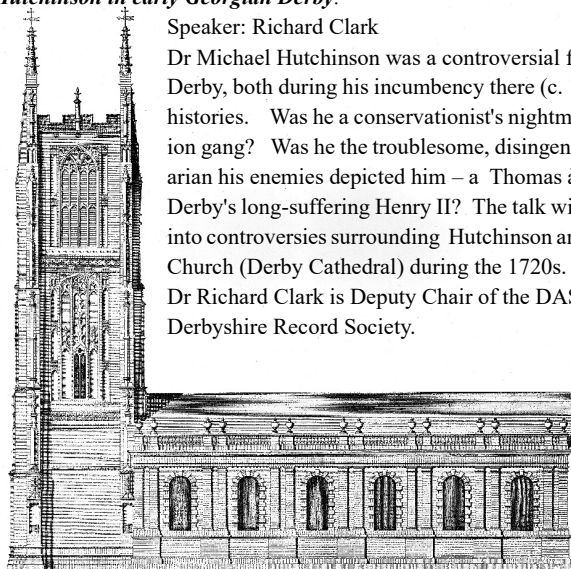
(DAS library open from 10.00am)

'The Indefatigable Labourer ... a complete master of the art of begging': Dr Michael Hutchinson in early Georgian Derby.

Speaker: Richard Clark

Dr Michael Hutchinson was a controversial figure as vicar of All Saints' at Derby, both during his incumbency there (c. 1719-1728) and in later Derby histories. Was he a conservationist's nightmare and master of the demolition gang? Was he the troublesome, disingenuous and ego-centric authoritarian his enemies depicted him – a Thomas à Becket to the Corporation of Derby's long-suffering Henry II? The talk will aim to provide some insight into controversies surrounding Hutchinson and the rebuilding of All Saints' Church (Derby Cathedral) during the 1720s.

Dr Richard Clark is Deputy Chair of the DAS Council and Chair of the Derbyshire Record Society.



James Gibbs' south elevation of All Saints', Derby, from Gibbs' Book of Architecture (1728).

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Rear cover: *Gone fishin' – a winter scene at Stenson Lock, alias Stenson Bubble, 12th December, 2021. The Trent & Merswey Canal, engineered by James Brindley and Hugh Henshall, was begun in summer 1766 and completed eleven years later.* [M. Craven]

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