

FARNSFIELD LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

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<http://farnsfieldlhs.co.uk>

Farnsfield's Windmills



The Good Intent windmill on Mansfield Road was built about 1820 for Mr William Holliday, a local landowner. This photograph, dated around 1915, also shows the mill cottages. This replaced an earlier mill, here shown on a map of 1774. The inn at the White Post was called the Stag Inn at this time.



In 1860 a violent storm blew off the top and sails, causing severe damage to the store rooms below. Only a few months earlier the owner, Robert Smithurst, had replaced the sails at a cost of £50. The damage was estimated to require several hundred pounds worth of work to repair. Within a year, Robert's son Thomas, who had been the miller, moved his family down to West Ham where he got a job as Clerk to a Corn Merchant.



The old mill on Station Lane, photographed here in the late 1950s, was known as Whitehead's mill. Local resident, Arthur Musson, recalled the mill during an interview for the Farnsfield Millenium oral history project in 1999.

"Whiteheads of Edingley had a mill up here..... There wasn't any sails on it. It was just run by a motor. And of course, they also had a mill at Edingley, which they used to flood the beck from Farnsfield, used to run through Edingley and where the mill was at Edingley, they used to dam it up and make a pond. And on mill day, release

it, and it turned the wheel and ground the flour. They also made bread as well and they used to come round the village to get the orders. Then deliver them by horse and dray at the weekend"

Look out for the two old millstones set into the garden wall of a house on Station Lane near where the old mill used to be.

FLHS – Recent Events

It has been a busy few months for FLHS with some excellent talks at our meetings and a number of opportunities to promote the Society and the history of our village. At the May meeting we meandered down the River Trent with Keith Small, looking at its landscape and history. In June Claire Hardstaff and colleagues gave a fascinating talk about the long history of the Southwell Ploughing Match. Established in 1855 as the Upton Farming and Gardening Society, its aim was to 'Educate and Inspire'. As the show was in Farnsfield this year, we were invited to add some of our own display boards to the Show history tent - an offer we could not refuse!

The summer social was held on a lovely warm July evening in James and Dain Pinder's garden with the usual excellent buffet and fiendish quiz. After a break in August, our September meeting was 'Gardens of Delight'. Jason Mordan, Chair of the Nottinghamshire Gardens Trust, gave us a tantalising introduction to the range and variety of designed parks, gardens and landscapes in Nottinghamshire, from old allotments to magnificent deer parks.



Local man Samuel Hunt, arrested in 1876 for violently assaulting the local blacksmith Henry Fisher, was back in the lock-up for the Scarecrow Festival weekend on 20th and 21st September - and still looking suitably drunk and dishevelled! The mostly fine weather encouraged lots of people to follow the scarecrow trail through the village and well over 200 of them visited the lock-up to find out more about its history and the stories of Samuel Hunt and Mr and Mrs Wilson.

Thank you very much to all who helped out with the stands at the lock-up and ploughing match.



The Southwell Ploughing Match on 27th September gave us an opportunity to promote our heritage trails and introduce some of the less familiar 19th

century rural occupations. Here are a few....



The Parish **Mole Catcher** was employed to trap and kill moles for local farmers. The Moody family passed on the skills from father to son and then grandson from 1820s until 1880.

Thomas Tongue was **Buyer of Sparrows** for the parish from 1850s until 1870s. A ½d reward was paid for each sparrow corpse in an attempt to reduce the population of the birds considered 'avian vermin' by local farmers because they would feast on the crop seeds.



In 1851 there were 15 households making a living from **Besom Making**. Local heathland provided the broom or heather which was tied onto a wooden handle to make a sweeping brush. However, it was not without its

challenges. Many local besom makers found themselves having to gather the heather on land owned by the local wealthy land-owners. If caught, which many were, they would be heavily fined by the local magistrate. If they were unable to pay, they could face up to 14 days hard labour in the Southwell House of Correction.

Wartime Memories: Jeanne Williams (nee Oxley)

By Gill Sarre

Those who visited our FLHS exhibition at the village celebrations on 10th May marking the 80th anniversary of VE Day, may remember seeing Jeanne Williams among the photographs and stories on display. Jeanne was a resident of Farnsfield for over 50 years and our next door neighbour for many years. In 1941 Jeanne joined the WAAF and trained as a Desk (Special Duties) Fighter Plotter. Her son Richard has kindly shared information about his Mother's wartime work and also some of her own recollections of that time.

After two years spent in Inverness, Jeanne was promoted to Corporal and posted to Orkney in 1943 to work in the operations room of the communications hub for Scapa Flow defences. Jeanne recalled *"I was among the first airwomen posted to RAF Kirkwall and we went to a newly built camp running alongside the RAF Camp but separated by a bog and masses of barbed wire!! Needless to say, we were welcomed with open arms by the airmen who had made up our beds for us – most of them apple-pied!!!"*

We were issued with 'Penguin Suits' i.e. black oilskins and sou'westers (one size only – MENS!!) to give us protection against the weather. The Ops Room was very busy and we worked extremely hard, but again we 'played' hard. I loved the Isles and enjoyed my 18 months there immensely"



Peter and I travelled to Orkney for a week this summer and dropped into the Kirkwall Wireless Museum, which has a wartime section showing how Scapa Flow and the home fleet were protected during WW2. Imagine our surprise when we came face to face with a smiling photograph of Jeanne posing outside the museum when she and Richard visited Orkney in June 2000!



At Orkney Wireless Museum, June 2000



At the Communications Hub off Inganess Road, Kirkwall. Known as 'the black building', it was demolished in November 2009.

This was where Jeanne was based during 1943 - 44

Wartime Memories: RAF Air-Sea Rescue

Edited from an account by Frank Clarke

Frank Clarke was a medic and during World War II, he was part of the RAF Air-Sea-Rescue squad out in the Mediterranean Sea. Below, he recounts one incident that he felt illustrated the work of A.S.R.

The boat was moored by the harbour in Gibraltar, when the message came that a life was in danger. Within seconds three 500HP Napier marine engines roared into action. We heeled out of the harbour, stem awash, bows cutting a wave that a destroyer captain might have envied. Steady on course, we headed for the pick-up point. The official maximum of a high speed rescue launch is 45 knots. On a call-out the skipper often pushed the throttle through the gate. At 50 knots, on a choppy sea, a 60ft launch is not the most comfortable place to be!

The Med is a BIG sea. We reached the designated point and began a square search. Every member of the crew was on look-out. After 3 to 4 hours, we were all bruised and soaked to the skin. Suddenly

a shout from the boat "Skipper, a yellow dinky off the starboard bow" We got the patient into my little sick bay. I stripped off all his gear, rubbed him dry and swilled pints of hot tea and rum down him. He had no major wounds but was far gone with shock and exhaustion.

The skipper called me to the bridge. He asked "How is he?" I said "He's badly shocked but he hasn't said a word yet." Then the skipper said "Keep a close eye on him till we make port. He's a German Fighter pilot"

Some hours later we made port at Philippeville, Algeria. Waiting for us was a military ambulance and military police van. My patient looked out and for the first time, in reasonable English, he spoke to me. He said "As a friend would you please shake my hand?" I said yes, I would. My last view of my friend was as he was escorted by the military police into an ambulance. When you are a lifeboatman there are no boundaries, no frontiers.

The motto of the Air-Sea-Rescue Service is "The Sea Shall Not Have Them" During the War A.S.R. saved over 13,000 lives.

Frank and Doreen Clarke came to live in Farnsfield in 1968. Frank was later ordained and became assistant priest at St Michael's church. Doreen was a founder member of FLHS.

Wartime Memories: Harlow Wood Orthopaedic Hospital, Nottinghamshire. Early Evening on D Day

By Kathleen Shaw, Farnsfield

Stretcher after stretcher of war blackened faced survivors were wheeled along the covered ways to be dispersed to the 5 military wards. Each with 40 beds. One of these men in the 4 bed extra care section lived only to see one more dawn. The Irish Night Sister showed me, a student nurse, how to lay him out. We placed a bunch of woodland flowers in his hands.

After a number of weeks for broken bones to heal, the other 'Boys in Blue' as they became known, were sent to Lound Hall, or, for the officers, Norwood Park.

I sometimes wonder what happened to my patients after they left us at Harlow Wood.

Thanks to Peter Stimson who provided Frank Clarke & Kathleen Shaw's written memories

Farnsfield Millennium Embroidery

By Lesley Healy



The Farnsfield Millennium embroidery was created to celebrate the village, past and present, and the many organisations that thrived within it.



Some of the ladies who presented the embroidery to Dr Jim Healy and Dr John Porter, to hang in the Farnsfield surgery for the 2000 Millennium celebrations. The ladies used to meet in their homes on Wednesdays and their names were Polly Chapel, Enid Cresswell, Margaret Coulson, Jenny Holmes, Mary Beet, Pat Morley, Mary Rigg, Barbara Sheriston, Todge Redman and Margaret Reid.

Our Day Out – Newark, 24th September

By Jackie Campbell

Following the success of our Derby trip earlier this year, 13 of us visited historic Newark-on-Trent on the bus. It's evident that the town seems to be improving. Castle Gate had an abundance of window boxes. Next time we visit we'll go to the Castle which is currently undergoing further restoration and already there is a newly discovered Medieval cesspit!

The Prince Rupert on Stodman Street, an old timber framed building, was the scene of King Charles I

arguing with his nephew, Rupert, during the Civil War. Swords were drawn and Rupert moved into the Governor's House, now a tea room selling daily fresh baked bread. In Newark it is important to look upwards because there are a lot of plaques giving valuable information.

Gladstone, MP for Newark, made a speech from a balcony at The Clinton Arms early in his career. The White Hart Inn, adjacent to the Tudor building, now Nottinghamshire Building Society, dates from the early 14th century. It needs restoration but is well worth seeing. Walking through the Bull Yard from the market place we came into Kirk Gate which is where King Charles I's wife Henrietta Maria stayed. The building is adjacent to the Violin School.

The highlight of our walking tour was a visit to the Assembly Room, Museum and Newark's narrowest house. Entry here is from the inside of the Buttermarket and it's free! The steps were rather challenging for some, but they got there in the end. We saw military uniforms, Georgian Costumes and the Newark Mayoral stool from where new monarchs were proclaimed. Very well polished! Works by local artists such as William Nicholson were exhibited. Annabelle and I saw, by chance, exhibits by Lincolnshire artist Peter Brannan who taught at our old girls' high school, Lilly and Stone, for 30 years. How he coped with us I'll never know! As you see can below, (left to right) Annabelle, Lynn, Ann and I were able to don Georgian hats, the best being Ann, who, in my opinion, was an incredible Mrs Bennett from *Pride and Prejudice*! That was certainly a highlight!



Lunch was had at The Green Olive on the Market Place. Everyone enjoyed it! We look forward to more very local historical visits and I think all of us can say, Newark really should be revisited!

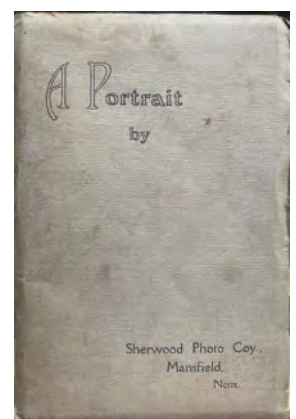
Mystery Photographs – Can anyone help?

Over the years many photographs have been donated to the FLHS archives. Occasionally these pose a question – who are they? The two below are examples. The first one, found in a house on Alexander Road, is a portrait taken by Sherwood Photo Company, Mansfield. The second one is from a different origin but also appears to be a posed studio photo. The Sherwood Photo Company was particularly notable for the many early 1900s postcards they produced of Mansfield and the local area, including some of Farnsfield.

If anyone knows who these people are or has any information that might help, then please do get in touch through our website :

<https://farnsfieldlhs.co.uk/contact-us>

or any member of the committee



The Old Vicarage

By Gill Sarre

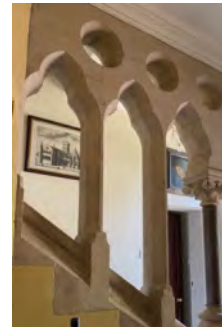


In June, Gary Cormack kindly invited FLHS members to visit The Old Vicarage. This proved so popular we had to tour the house and grounds in three groups, with Gary patiently showing us around and answering questions throughout.

The house is a wonderful example of Nottingham architect Thomas Chambers Hine's gothic style. It was built in 1870 for the Reverend Henry Robert Wilkins and was partly funded by a grant from the Ecclesiastical Commissioners.

Henry, his wife Sarah and their two daughters lived at the Vicarage for four years, until Henry's death in December 1874. They had a governess, a cook, a parlour maid and a kitchen maid. It was clear to see that the house was built with distinct living areas for the family and the servants. A main staircase from the hallway led to the family's south-facing bedrooms. The north-facing servants' quarters were reached by a back staircase. The governess would have occupied the best of these rooms.

Hine had built a solid reputation during the 1830s and 40s in his first business partnership with builder William Patterson. Combining his architectural training with the skills of an experienced builder enabled him to develop technically advanced ideas and add modern conveniences to his designs. The Vicarage had two indoor water closets provided for the family, with two for the servants outside. There is also a large underfloor water tank accessed under a drain cover in the pantry floor. This is an early example of rainwater harvesting; the soft rain water would have been used for laundry.

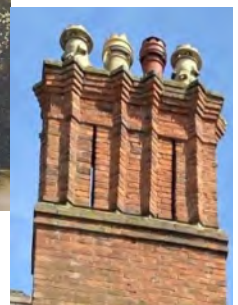


The main entrance to the house leads into a very impressive hallway and the front staircase

with its decorative stone arches. This is one of a number of features that suggest the ecclesiastical connection. The house is built of red and blue brick with ashlar (cut stone) dressings around windows and doorways and a slate roof. There are decorative chimney stacks, tumble brickwork on the lower buttress, 'dog tooth' dentil eaves, blue brick course and inserts in the arch above the windows.



The south side has large bay windows (photo 1915)



An unusual metal 'porthole' window & decorative brickwork



The bear features in a stained glass door panel inside the house too.

This downward facing stone bear sits at the top of this drainpipe. Is it a gargoyle from another church?



Thanks so much to Gary Cormack for his patience and generosity in inviting us to visit his lovely home.

Thomas Stacy (1749 – 1831) Clockmaker of Farnsfield and Southwell

Recently we were contacted by a gentleman who is the proud owner of a Thomas Stacy of Farnsfield clock. This is a most exciting find as few Stacy clocks have come to light over recent years.

Thomas was born in Farnsfield in 1749, son of John and Mary Stacy. His father was a yeoman from a long-established Farnsfield family. At the age of 13, Thomas was sent to be apprenticed to John Boot, clockmaker of Sutton-in-Ashfield. This was for seven years costing his family £10. In 1774 he married Margaret Gamble and they settled in Farnsfield where Thomas continued his clockmaking trade from a workshop, which is reputed to have been in outbuildings at the rear of Holly House (Le Petit Vert) on Main Street. All the known Thomas Stacy examples are longcase clocks and of a fairly simple design. In common with most other village clock makers, he would have bought the completed clock movements, probably from Birmingham, where there were six small factories prior to 1800. His particular skill was in the making and engraving the dials, and in this he showed outstanding craftsmanship in brass and silver design.

In archived correspondence concerning Southwell Minster clocks, there is a receipt for 'one year's salary and repair of clock and chimes' paid to Thomas Stacy, dated 11th October 1781. It is the only example that specifies 'salary', amongst a number of similar receipts for repairs, maintenance and replacement of the Minster clocks. So, for at least a year, he would have been assured of a steady income.

Thomas, Margaret and their seven children moved to Southwell in the mid 1790s. He continued to make clocks, which were then engraved 'Southwell', until he retired in 1820. He died in 1831 aged 82.

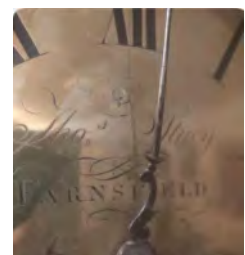
Three Stacy clocks have been sold via auction houses in the last five years, one made in Farnsfield and two in Southwell. The details can still be viewed online.

A Thomas Stacy Farnsfield clock was purchased for the Newark Museum in 1965. This was an oak longcase clock standing 6 feet 9 inches tall, dated 1795 and exquisitely engraved in silver. It was loaned to Kelham Hall for a period from 1974 and

underwent restoration in 1987. The clock was then on show at the old Appletongate Museum. The clock is no longer in the possession of the museum and they have no record of what happened to it.



The Stacy clock formerly in Newark Museum dated 1795. These photographs were taken at Appletongate Museum.



This is the Thomas Stacy Farnsfield clock owned by the gentleman who contacted us. It is a 30-hour clock, striking on the hour. These were driven by a single weight and were less expensive to manufacture than 8-day clocks, although still costing the equivalent of two years of a labourer's wage in the 18th century!

References:

Harold H. Mather, Clock and Watchmakers of Nottinghamshire (Pub. 1979 Friends of Nottingham Museum)

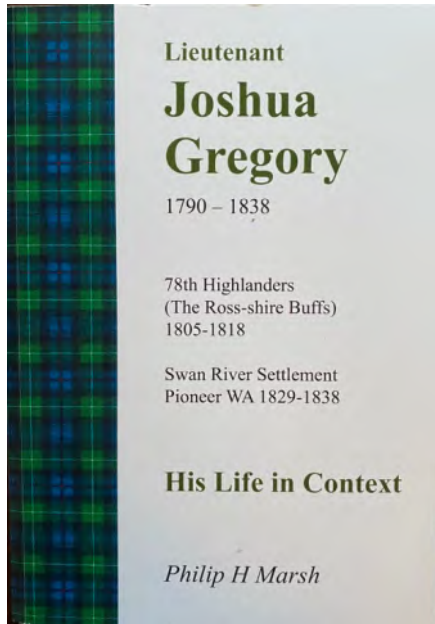
Nottinghamshire Archives

New Publication

Lieutenant Joshua Gregory – His Life in Context

By Philip H Marsh

The story traces Joshua Gregory's life from his birth in London in 1790 to parents who were both from Nottingham to his death in Western Australia in 1838.



He joins a Highland Regiment as an Ensign in 1805 at the age of 15 and is involved in three little-known campaigns of the Napoleonic Wars during which he is wounded and captured – events which probably cause the health issues that trouble him for the rest of his life.

He marries the charming and talented Frances Churchman and together they share a life of excitement, joy, fear and at times tragedy.

In 1815 they settle in Farnsfield Nottinghamshire where their family increases, but after enduring the years of worldwide economic downturn which followed the end of hostilities, it is when they are living in Southwell in 1829, they are finally persuaded to consider the possible benefits of life in the newly founded Swan River Settlement in Western Australia.....

Written in the context of events in Britain and Continental Europe following the French Revolution, this book provides a fascinating study of the effects of outside influences on one man and his family during a time of international conflict and uncertainty.

Now available at Farnsfield Library and FLHS meetings the book is keenly priced at £9.00

Farnsfield Local History Society <http://farnsfieldlhs.co.uk>

Meetings held on the 2nd Wednesday of the month in the lower hall at the Village Centre starting at 7.30pm. Visitors are welcome, we ask for a £3 donation on the door. Tea, coffee & biscuits included after the talk.

Committee: James Pinder, Chair, Caroline Jenkins, Treasurer, Gill Sarre, Secretary. Lesley Healy, Vice-Chair, Peter Stimson, Graham Foster, Jackie Campbell, Lynn Thompson

Future meetings:

12th November 2025: **Great Houses of the East Midlands.** Dr James Wright, buildings archaeologist, author, lecturer and broadcaster.

10th December 2025: **FLHS Christmas Lunch**

14th January 2026: **Policing Rural Nottinghamshire throughout History: with a focus on Farnsfield.** Tom Andrews, Lecturer in Policing at the University of Derby. Specialist in the history of policing, especially relating Nottinghamshire.

FLHS Publications

As well as Philip's new book we have four publications available at our meetings and in Farnsfield Library:

- **A History of Farnsfield** by Mary Rigg £5.00
- **Memories of Farnsfield** compiled by John Bradbury & Patrick Stevens from the Farnsfield Millennium Oral History Project £3.00
- **Farnsfield to Rainworth, Journey of a Lifetime, Sir Augustus Charles Gregory** by Philip H. Marsh £7.50
- **The Wesleyan Methodist Chapels & School 1799-2012** by Philip H. Marsh £7.50

Gill Sarre, Secretary FLHS <https://farnsfieldlhs.co.uk/contact-us>