

THE HISTORY OF NORTH AND SOUTH MUSKHAM

The following notes are an attempt to make into a history of these villages, the information which has been accumulated by a University Class held in North Muskham during the winter of 1947-1948. It is a work of collaboration between the tutor, M.W. Barley, B.A., F.S.A., and the members of the class, whose names are given at the end. We know that much more could be learned, if we had time to look for it, but it seems worthwhile to put into handy form what we know so far. No information has come our way about Little Carlton, and not much about South Muskham; someone else must try to do justice to these places.

The first information we have about Muskham comes from a study of the name itself. Although it has sometimes been written Muscombe, and Muschamp, it is Muschamp in Domesday Book (1086) and it is certainly an old English, or Anglo-Saxon, name, meaning the ham or farm of a man named Musca. We must think of this man as settling some 1,500 years ago on the sandy land by the Trent, at a time when all over England his fellow immigrants from the continent were settling down, clearing forest and farming land which had never been tackled before. It seems likely that Musca's original settlement was South Muskham, because in Domesday Book, South Muskham is described simply as Muskham, whereas North Muskham alone is distinguished by that prefix. We may think of some of Musca's descendants, when there was no longer room for them, moving north and making another settlement on a low ridge of gravel, which soon became known as North Muskham. There were two further off-shoots, though at what date we do not know. Carlton means the farm of the free men or peasants; the English word "churl" has been turned to "Karla" by the Danes who later settled in numbers in the area.

"Bathley" is an English word meaning a "clearing by the springs". There is only one other name of any great age in the parish and that is the Ness, Mr. P. Jackson's farm. This name is first mentioned about 800 years ago. "Ness" is a Danish word for a promontory, and one can only think that it refers to the land lying between the Trent and the Beck. Whoever decided to settle here must have chosen the site because it stands clear of floods, as was demonstrated in 1947.

Our next source of information is Domesday Book itself, and the entries relating to Muskham are printed here in full.

V The Archbishop of York's Land

(Under Southwell Manor and berewicks)

In Nordmuscham there are 1 1/2 carucates assessed to the geld.

M. In Muskham (South Muskham) and Carletun (Little Carlton) there are 4 carucates and 5 bovines to the geld. There is land for 9 ploughs. Archbishop Thomas has there 2 ploughs in demesne and 20 sochmen and 7 villeins and 16 bordars having 6 ploughs. There is a mill rendering 2 shillings and 66 acres of meadow and 80 acres of underwood. In King Edward's time it was worth 16s. now it is worth 10s.

VII The Land of St. Peter of Burg

M. In Nord Muskham, St. Peter of Burg had 10 bovines to geld. There is land for 4 ploughs. In demesne there is now 1 plough and there are 2 sochmen on 2 1/2 bovates and 5 villeins and 3 borders having 1 1/2 ploughs and 2 mills rendering

20s. and 1 waste, and half a fishery and 30 acres of meadow. In King Edward's time it was worth 60s; now 40s.

XII Land of Geoffrey Alselin

M. In Nordmuscham Ulvric had 3 bovines to geld. There is land for 4 ploughs. There is in demesne 1 plough and there are 4 villeins and 7 borders having 1 1/2 ploughs, There is 1 mill rendering 10s. and 12 acres of meadow. In King Edward's time it was worth 40s.; now 30s.

In the same place there are 2 1/2 carucates to geld. There is land for 4 ploughs. In demesne there are 3 ploughs and there are 16 sochmen and 5 villeins and 2 bordars with 6 ploughs. There are 2 mills rendering 20s. and 40 acres of meadow and 40 acres of woodland. Formerly worth 100s; now worth 4 pounds, held it for a manor.

S. In the same place there are 4 bovines to geld. Land for 1 plough. Socland. It is waste. There are 12 acres of meadow.

XXX Land of the Thegns

M. In Nordmuscham Siward had 3 bovines to geld. Land for 3 ploughs. There the same Siward had 2 borders and 1 mill rendering 10s. and 12 acres of meadow. In King Edward's time it was worth 40s; now 16s.

M. In Muskham Sortebrand had 6 bovates to geld. Land for 11/2 ploughs. Seric holds it now of the King and has there 1 sochman and 2 bordars with 2 ploughing oxen and 12 acres of meadow. Woodland for pannage 1 league long by 1 wide. In King Edward's time it was worth 16s.; now 5s.

These paragraphs are packed with information. First, we can say that the two parishes had a population of at least 400 people (we get this figure by multiplying by five the number of tenants mentioned); this is a large figure for these times, when the whole population of England was only a million or two. Next we notice that some of the tenants are described as sokeman; they were descended from the Danes who had settled in north-east England in large numbers some two centuries before. They were more free than the villeins - though not necessarily better off; they could leave their land if they wished, and that the villeins could not do.

The land is described in units called carucates and bovates: a carucate was the amount of land one plough could cultivate in one year and was about 80 to 120 acres; it was divided into 8 bovates, as the team consisted then of 8 oxen. Domesday Book gives first the assessment of each village for the land tax, or geld, and then states whether the place was over or under-assessed; after that comes the list of the actual tenants and their ploughs. The demesne was land reserved by the lord for his own use; the rest was let to tenants in return for labour services and money payments of which unfortunately we know nothing. The mills mentioned are water mills, but we cannot tell where they were.

When we turn to land owners we see that the Archbishop of York already possessed land in North and South Muskham; although Domesday does not say so, we know that some of the land was already being used to maintain a canon of the collegiate church of Southwell, where there was already a prebendary of North Muskham. The abbey of Peterborough had been given land in North Muskham in 1066, along with an estate at Collingham. The manor belonging to Geoffrey Alselin was connected with Laxton, which was Geoffrey's headquarters, and where he built a castle. The two small

manors of the thanes Siward and Sortebrand (both of them Danish by descent) we lose sight of. It is interesting that the dispersal of land among several lords of manors remained a feature of North Muskham throughout its history - unlike so many other villages which became concentrated in the hands of one feudal land owner.

We have not been able to trace clearly the descent of these various manors through the middle ages, though this could perhaps be done with further research. One problem is to distinguish between North and South Muskham in cases where the records fail to do so.

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THE LANDOWNERS IN THE MIDDLE AGES (1100 - 1550)

The estate which at the time of Domesday Book belonged to Peterborough was in 1242 held under the Abbey by Baldwin of Paunton. This was a Lincolnshire family, and certainly did not live in Muskham. We may imagine the Pauntons having a steward here to manage the estate and sell its products, or else to let all the land and collect the rents. In about 1300 this estate passed by marriage to the Haryngton family - another Lincolnshire family. The estate had land in Bathley and Holme, as well as North Muskham; on one occasion in the fifteenth century when it was sold it was described as including six houses, 200 acres of arable, 12 acres of meadow and 14 acres of pasture. The Haryngtons died out, and the estate changed hands several times in the fifteenth century, and it seems that it was gradually broken up, because we cannot trace it distinctly beyond that time.

The other manor, that of Geoffrey Alselin of Domesday Book, descended with the Laxton estates of which it formed part. It was let by Geoffrey's descendants to a family which took its name from this village; we hear of Thomas of Muschamp in 1242. The Alselin estate was divided, and then Muskham estate became associated with the manor of Shelford. We hear in 1341 that the owners of the North Muskham estate had to do homage and swear fealty to Sir Adam of Everingham. They had also to pay shield money (an alternative to actual military service), which had originally been done by the Muskham family in the castle at Laxton which is now only a great mound of earth; they had to attend the court which their overlord held every three weeks at Shelford. The Muskham family, by about 1300, were no longer living in the village, but at Shenley, Bucks., and had let the manor in separate parts, and in 1341 the three parts were bought by three brothers, Henry, William and Robert Edwinstowe. As soon as they had bought the manor they gave it to the monastery of Newstead; no doubt they bought it for this purpose. Newstead Priory in return for this gift undertook to maintain two chaplains in Edwinstowe church, to celebrate divine service every day there and to pray for the souls of the brothers, their parents, relatives and friends. This is a good example of the way in which the monasteries became great landowners, and also of the founding of a chantry in a parish church. At the Reformation, when the monasteries were closed, the manor was granted by Edward VI to Leonard Brown and Anthony Trappes. What happened to it after this date is not clear; Brown and Trappes probably sold it piecemeal. Thoroton, in his History of Nottinghamshire published in 1677, gives a list of landowners in 1612, but they cannot be linked clearly with the medieval owners; land changed hands frequently in the Tudor period; old estates were broken up and new men built up their holdings.

The record of such families as the Pauntons, the Haryngtons, the Muskhams, tells us little about the village; it seems certain that they were not resident landlords. Of the

actual occupiers and cultivators we know nothing, except a tradition that the Scrimshire family, which lasted till about 1700, had lived in the Muskham for about 400 years.

It remains to describe more clearly the part played by the monasteries as landowners. Many men in these villages, as everywhere in England, gave or sold land to the church. We hear, for instance, of a grant by Hugh of Muskham of some land on the boundaries of Kelham, Winkburn and Middlethorpe (i.e. somewhere near Muskham Wood) to Rufford Abbey in 1150 or so. The charter speaks of Hugh's park there - close to the modern Averham Park and Park Leys Farm. A later Robert of Muskham gave to Stanley Park, the monastery in Derbyshire, an estate which consisted of half the mill of Bathley Carr, and fishing rights there, and three selions or strips of arable extending from the mill to the King's Highway; along with the land went the serfs who worked it. The monks made a grange, or separate estate, in a place called Goosewong, which we cannot now identify. The monks also got permission to enclose this estate: we will return to this interesting point later. Later, Dale Abbey, probably because the estate was too far away for them to manage, sold it to a rector of Cromwell, Robert de Lysurs, who gave it to Thurgarton Priory, but Dale Abbey kept the tithes, the fishing and various other minor rights. The monasteries of Rufford and Thurgarton got various other small gifts. Shelford had an interest, in the shape of half the tithes of the church; the other half belonged to Southwell. Shelford was founded by Ralph Alselin, and this division of the church, and of the right to appoint the parson, suggests very strongly that the first church was built jointly by the prebendary of Southwell and the tenant of Alselin's manor.

We must refer briefly to the medieval landowners of South Muskham. The Muskham family had land there which, when that family died out, passed to William de Ros of Ingmanthorp, and from his descendants to the Scrope family. Here, as at North Muskham, there is no reason to believe that the landowner was resident. In the 17th century the manor, which comprised most of South Muskham and Carlton, passed to Ralph Marshall, and from the Marshalls to Sir William Willoughby. He, having no children, gave it to his namesake of Wollaton, and thus it became part of the Middleton estate.

Another estate was held in 1242 by Hugh Fitz Ralph and William of Bathley, under the earl of Lincoln, and was reckoned at a third of a knight's fee for taxation purposes. There was also an estate of the Archbishop of York, mentioned in Domesday, and held in 1242 by the same Hugh Fitz Ralph.

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THE CHURCHES

The history of the fabric of the churches is fairly clear. We do not know when they were first built, but it is safe to say that both parishes got, in the century following the Norman Conquest, small churches consisting of chancels and naves without aisles, at the expense of the Norman landowners. Nothing remains of these except perhaps parts of the nave walls above the arcading. No out all the parishioners contributed something, but eh main expense probably fell on the respective prebendaries of North and South Muskham at Southwell, who collected the tithes. They were also responsible for conducting the services, but the clash with their duties as canons of Southwell meant that the villages were neglected, and so the Archbishop of York, in line with their general policy, persuaded the canons of Southwell to make official arrangements for vicars, or substitutes. At South Muskham this was done in 1295

and the vicar was entitled to one toft or piece of ground, the offerings of the church, and all the tithes except those of hay, corn, wool, lambs and duck, which went to the prebendary. The same arrangement was made at North Muskham, but at what date we do not know. The link with Southwell was very close. No doubt the parishes contributed to the building of the minster, if only indirectly - we know that in 1290 the prebendaries were both in arrears with their payments towards the building of the new Chapter House. Each prebendary had, at this early time, a mansion house in his village which he ordinarily let, along with his lands; but we know that the Archbishops of York occasionally spent a night or two here, on their journeys about the diocese, and presumably stayed in one of the prebendal houses.

We know little of these prebends or their vicars as individuals, though the wills of one vicar and one chaplain of North Muskham are preserved at Southwell. In 1476 Richard Goldthorpe, vicar, willed that he was to be buried in the parish church; he left his best numeral as principal mortuary gift to the church (the usual custom), 2lbs of wax to be burned round his body on the day of burial, and 6/8 to the church. In 1485 Thomas Gyles, chaplain, made a similar will; in particular he left 3/4 (perhaps £6 or £7) for the renovation of the canopy over the altar, and 2/- to the altar of Our Lady (in one of the aisles). The canopy was presumably of wood, and as in most churches has now gone. Gyles was a chantry priest appointed to say additional services - perhaps in the Lady Chapel.

In 1175 or so at North Muskham it was decided to enlarge the church by building a north aisle; one must imagine the aisle being built up outside, and then holes knocked through and the present north arcade being built. Not long after (between 1200 and 1250) the western tower was built, of Coddington limestone, up to the top of the very slight buttresses. The upper stage, which is probably of Tuxford stone, was not added until a century later. Nothing more was done until about 1450 when the present south aisle was built, and the porch; at the same time the nave was made lighter by raising the walls and putting in clerestory windows. In 1492 John Barton, a successful wool merchant who had settled at Holme, provided in his will for the rebuilding of the north aisle of the church, and this was presumably done within the next few years. It was built of Ancaster stone, and Barton as typical of his age in seeing that he got all the credit due; his initials and arms are carved on the buttresses outside, and the windows were filled with painted glass which showed his name in the form of initials, and all of barrels or tuns with a bar across the end. The windows also contain his merchant's mark as a member of the staple of Calais - the appropriate commercial gild for men of his trade. The chancel was rebuilt, no doubt on a larger scale, at the same time, because the windows and mouldings are identical with the work commissioned by Barton's executors, but the stone is different, and the cost of the chancel must have been borne by the prebendary, or whoever at the time had the lease of the prebendal estate.

Barton had also rebuilt Holme church, where he was buried. One other building we must mention, and this is the chapel which was built at Bathley for the convenience of the people there who were so far from their parish church. We do not know when it was first built, or when pulled down, but Mr. Prosser's house is built of the material, and it stood in the field south of Mr. Blore's farm, a few yards from Cogley Lane.

The history of the fabric of South Muskham church is similar to that of North Muskham. It was first built in the 12th century judging by the herring-bone masonry in the north wall of the chancel. The two lower stages of the tower were built in the 13th century. In the 14th century the nave was rebuilt, and the top belfry stage of the tower, with its handsome windows, was added in the 15th century. The two

churches develop on parallel lines, with further building or alteration taking place at the same periods; no doubt there was rivalry between the two villages in which each sought to out-build the other.

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THE REFORMATION

During the reigns of Henry VIII and his three children Edward VI, Mary and Elizabeth, great changes took place, which affected the church and its services, and also meant that much land in the villages changed hands. In the church, services were said in English and lessons read from an English Bible. The churchwardens were slow to provide the necessary books, and as late as 1588 the vicar and the wardens were in trouble in the church courts for not having a Bible, though 23/- had been raised for that purpose. The rood and the loft on which it stood were pulled down; we can see now only parts of the screen below and the steps up to the loft. The chantries were abolished, and with them masses to the dead; there were no more chaplains in the church. In 1553 the parish churches were deprived of most of their vestments, vessels and bells, in order to enforce a simpler form of worship; we still have the inventory of goods which North Muskham possessed until then. It includes two silver chalices, a cross, candlesticks, censers, a handbell and basin, all of brass, and various vestments. The list does not give the impression of great wealth. The parishioners admitted that they had already sold various superfluous vestments, to pay for the repair of the church which they said was in a very bad state. These included a cover for the wooden Easter Sepulchre, some painted cloths (no doubt with pictures on them) and the Lenten veil. The list includes one or two things from Bathley Chapel - the only mention in the records of this Chapel which we have discovered. It is a pity that the church no longer has the flanders chest, which would be a wooden chest, probably finely carved.

All the land belonging to the monasteries and to the chantries was taken by the king, and most of it sold immediately. Thus a tremendous amount of property changed hands in the Tudor period; many fortunes were made and many new landowners appear on the scene. Most of the property of the Abbey of Shelford, including some in North Muskham, was bought by the Stanhope family. A large number of small properties were bought by William Philipot, a draper of Newark. He was a friend of Thomas Magnus, and like Magnus left much of his land to charity. The almshouses in Newark which he founded was endowed with estates which included several houses, cottages and land in Muskham and Bathley, and which had certainly once been monastic property, though we have not been able to trace to which monasteries it had belonged. Incidentally, Philipot, who had owned the grange in Bathley, left 66s. 8d. to North Muskham and Bathley to be used for ditching, setting and fencing in the grounds between them and Norwell Carr, and between them and Deanhall, "for safeguarding of the cornfields". He left Bathley Grange to his wife, with reversion to Vincent Skinner, but it was in the next century the property of John Lilly of Bathley, and was given by him to the corporation of Newark in 1623, as endowment for a jersey (or spinning) school, and thus became eventually an endowment of Newark High School.

Although much had changed in the religious life of the community in the Tudor period, one thing was still unaltered; the church court at Southwell, which supervised the church and its services, regulated the moral conduct of the people, and saw that their last wills were duly carried out. The records of this court in Queen Elizabeth's reign show how it worked; although it was not unjust, its conduct must have been very

irksome. No one, however trivial his offence, could have his case settled with less than three attendances at Southwell. In 1581 T. Turvin of South Muskham appeared before the court charged by the prebendary with failing to pay tithes, and in 1584 the vicar charged H. Golle with not paying the small tithes. In 1585 the vicar of North Muskham brought a charge of slander against two of his parishioners. All these cases were settled by agreement. In 1589 Kathleen Wilson said that Isabel Crag called her a witch; the defendant appeared and confessed; she was ordered to make a confession in the street where the slander took place, on a Sunday, in the presence of at least six persons. She must also pay the costs of 5s. 3d., and produce a certificate that she had made the confession. In the same year two cases of adultery were brought to the court and those guilty were given the usual punishment - to admit their guilt in North Muskham church, and in the market place at Newark and Southwell. They pleaded that a public penance would cause more trouble, and the penance was commuted to a money fine of £1 which the court ordered should be used to pay for paving the road outside Southwell churchyard! T. Townroe of North Muskham was accused of failing to carry out the terms of a bequest under which 8d. had been left for the poor of the village. He said that it was not for the poor, but for the township in general, and he was dismissed.

The church authorities were trying everywhere at this time to improve the condition of the church and the services etc. Hence we find the churchwardens of North Muskham charged with failing to fence the churchyard. They admitted the decay of the fence and promised to repair it. The vicar had in his possession 23/- which had been raised twelve months or more before to purchase a large Bible, which the church did not yet possess, but he had failed to buy it. He was ordered to hand the money over to the churchwardens, who presumably bought the book. He was also accused of celebrating divine service without wearing a surplice. This was a more serious matter because Puritans everywhere were objecting to the use of the surplice, and his neglect laid him open to suspicion of having Puritan leanings. However he pleaded that he did not do it wilfully, and was let off with a warning.

The churchwardens were in trouble on another count at the same time. Queen Elizabeth in 1588 had ordered a special thanksgiving to celebrate the victory over the Spanish Armada and at the Communion which was celebrated there was not enough wine. This reminds us that in those days Communion was only held about four times a year and everyone was expected to attend; on this occasion there would obviously be a specially large congregation. The churchwardens pleaded that they had not had sufficient warning. The court issued an instruction to the Vicar that in future, all who intended to receive sacrament were to give notice to the churchwardens because this sort of thing bred "a neglect in some to repair as they ought to the Lord's table".

At this time (1589), Sir Ralph Barton of Holme was lessee of the prebendal manor, and this made him responsible for the repair of Holme Church, and incidentally of Caunton because of his estates there; he was summoned to appear before the court because the chancels of both churches were in decay, but as far as the records show he failed to put in an appearance.

At the same time there was an attempt to enforce general attendance at church. Richard Sampson and Richard England were fined the usual 12d., which went to the poor of Muskham, for being absent from church one Sunday; T. Gest and Wande had not communicated at Easter, but Wande refused to attend the court. There were two alehouses in the village at that time, kept by T. Crag and T. Brown, and one Sunday the churchwardens making their search, as they were supposed to do, found seven people of the village, including two women, drinking there in time of divine service.

Those who appeared were fined 6d. for the poor, but not all of them recognised the court. Thus did the church courts try to maintain the discipline over the lives of the people which they had always held, but in the 17th century the effort gradually came to nothing and the courts disappeared during the 18th century.

RIVER TRENT

We must mention at this point the tradition that, some time not long before 1600, the river Trent changed its course and instead of flowing between Holme and Winthorpe, moved into its present channel between North Muskham and Holme. There are several difficulties in the way of accepting this story. In the first place, the cross stump at the north end of the village, which traditionally marks the point at which travellers strike off from the road to the ferry, is a mediaeval monument; it was several centuries old in the 16th century, and there must have been some body of water to be crossed between the two villages. Another problem is as follows: in 1536 there was a rebellion in Lincolnshire (against the suppression of the monasteries); it was feared that the rebels might move into Nottinghamshire. Newark castle was garrisoned and canon installed, and the authorities inspected the fords near Newark to see whether the rebels could cross elsewhere and avoid Newark. It was reported that at North Muskham "the landing is 680 yards long, and there are two fords in it, each 80 yards broad". Another report says that "the fords are sufficient for 40 horses abreast at the one and 25 at the other, and if no rain came in these days it will not be up to the knee". Clearly there was some body of water flowing between Muskham and Cromwell. It must be borne in mind that until the 18th century the river was not controlled or improved in the interests of navigation. There were no locks and in consequence the summer level would be very low and considerable silting would take place. In winter floods the river would make emergency cut-offs and by-passes at will. The river Trent must be thought of as using several courses at one time, and the proportion of water in each might be much changed in a flood. The fact that Domesday Book mentions six water mills in the two villages shows that there was a stream running close to the villages - presumably along the present bed of the river. But the land between Holme and Langford seems a more likely course for the bulk of the water than the fairly narrow channel between Holme and Muskham. Part of North Muskham parish is on the other side of the river now, which shows that when the parish boundaries were laid out (before the Norman Conquest) one course ran on the other side of the Stodfold Pasture. Also the boundary of Thurgarton wapentake, of which Muskham was part, ran between Holme and Langford; this is the strongest argument in favour of a change, at some time, in the course of the main water of the Trent. Perhaps the river originally continued its meandering course past Collingham and on the line of Besthorpe Fleet to the present channel near Girton. In that case the bridge at Cromwell Lock which is thought to be Roman would have crossed only one arm of the river.

CIVIL WAR PERIOD

We know tantalisingly little about the village at this time and the effect of the political and religious problems of the time. We have one example of the difficulties provoked by Charles I's attempt to raise money without Parliament. In 1637 the village constable John Bradley, a voluntary officer elected by the parish, had to collect the village instalment of ship money, and Dorothy Caldwell, who was assessed at 50/- refused to pay. He asked Squire Randall to help him to take goods of hers for that amount. Randall at first agreed, but was dissuaded by John Conde, a Newark lawyer.

Hence Bradley alone took the distress, but Conde persuaded the rest of the inhabitants not to pay. The constable reported this to the Sheriff, and Conde met him in Newark one market day and threatened him. Bradley petitioned the government to deal with Conde, but we do not know the result.

This sort of difficulty was not unusual. When war broke out and the Royalists seized control of Newark, it is obvious that even if anyone in Muskham sympathised with Parliament they would not dare to show it. Muskham, like all villages, had to contribute money to whichever side commanded the area, and we know that a Captain Whichecote who was responsible for raising money in the area, undertook to collect £98.17.0d. from North Muskham. This was a large sum compared with the assessment of other villages, and suggests that the village was large and wealthy, or very loyal - presumably the former! No doubt the village also contributed men and provisions for the Newark garrison, though we have unfortunately no records of this. When the Parliamentarians and the Scots were surrounding Newark, controlling Muskham Bridge and manning fortifications there, no doubt the villagers had also to contribute to the other side.

When Charles was executed and the Commonwealth established, the Presbyterian form of worship would be observed in the parish churches, and those clergy who would not accept this lost their living. That happened to the Rector of Cromwell, Henry Truman, but since we hear nothing of the Muskham we may assume that the vicars of the time decided to conform. At this time George Fox began the preaching of Nottinghamshire which led to the formation of the Quaker sect. He and his followers were bitterly persecuted, but we must believe that his preaching had effect in Bathley, for in 1689 Edward Lilley, William Cropper and probably others there were Quakers, and were no doubt attending the monthly meetings which were held in Friend's houses in Besthorpe, Collingham, Sutton and elsewhere in the Trent Valley. Edward Lilley was no doubt descended from the John Lilley who in 1623 had left houses and land in Bathley, North Muskham and Holme to the Newark corporation for the maintenance of poor children who were pupils at the Jersey (or Spinning) School there. His wife Frances was a Roman Catholic in 1624, so the family must have changed from one extreme of belief to the other. The family was obviously fairly wealthy and important; in 1624 John Lilley was constable of Thurgarton wapentake - an important job which involved supervising all the village constables in his area and acting as the Sheriff's agent in that area, at a time when all local government was in the hands of the justices of the peace and the Sheriff. The wapentake of Thurgarton was similar in size to the Southwell Rural District, and included Muskham.

The records of the Quarter Sessions held by the justices of the peace give us a few incidents - mostly unsavoury ones - in the everyday life of North Muskham. For instance in 1681 the justices ordered the wife of Thomas Parker to be cucked - presumably for being a common scold - and we must suppose that, tied into a cucking-stool, she was dipped in the river. The justices were also responsible for seeing that each parish carried out efficiently its responsibility for the relief of the poor, the maintenance of roads and bridges, etc. In 1624 George Northall of Trowell was indicted for not making gates between Norwell and Muskham, and in 1687 the whole parish was charged with not repairing the road between Newbridge and Deanhall. The most puzzling case is that in which Holme was indicted for not repairing the Trundle Bridge below the parishes of North Muskham, Bathley and Holme. We have not been able to identify the Trundle Bridge. The story of the rebuilding of Muskham Bridge after the Civil War has been told by C. Brown, the historian of Newark.

THE 18TH CENTURY

We now come to a period when, if we were fortunate, we should have a great deal of information about the everyday life of the village. Unhappily the parish records, which usually are so valuable, have not survived. The registers for the period before 1704 have been lost more than a hundred years ago (and incidentally we have not been able to examine those which survive); other parish records, such as old churchwardens' and overseers' accounts seem to have been destroyed in more recent times. The only surviving document is the Parish Award, dated 1774, which is in the custody of the Parish Council. This we will speak of later.

We know that, as in every village, the overseers of the poor, who were voluntary officers chosen every year by the parish to see to the relief of the poor, were in the 17th and 18th centuries finding their work grow more important and more difficult, but we have no detailed record of it. Occasionally the justices of the peace had to come into the picture, and then the county records help us. Thus in 1612 the inhabitants of Bathley were ordered to build, on the waste, a cottage for a poor man and his wife. In 1642 the churchwardens and overseers were ordered to place in some convenient house a poor woman of Holme who "hath lately had house and goods burnt and is now destitute of habitation".

One of the greatest hardships to the poor was the Law of Settlement which from 1662 onwards laid down that those in need of relief must be maintained only by the parish in which they had lived for more than a year. This led overseers to try to get rid of those who might be chargeable to the poor rate, often in the most inhuman fashion. Thus in 1764, George Banks, the overseer of Cromwell, was indicted at quarter sessions for unlawfully and cruelly removing and passing to North Muskham one Mary, wife of Daniel Booth, a soldier; she was poor and deserving relief of Cromwell, and also was sick and unable to travel. The overseer was reprimanded.

The needs of the times led many private individuals to help their villages in this problem. Thus in 1663 John Kemp left cottages and land in North Muskham for the use of the poor. Presumably the charity was administered then by the churchwardens and overseers. There is a tradition that the building south of the present Post Office was originally cottages maintained for the poor under the terms of this charity.

Similarly individuals were often led to make bequests for the education of poor children - not so much from a belief in education itself as because, if they were given some form of education, they would be more likely to be able to earn a living when they grew up and not become unemployed and a burden on the parish. Thus Mary Woolhouse in 1727 and Mary Disney in 1745 left money for the education of poor children in North Muskham. They left money to pay a master to educate 14 poor children to read, write and sew. We suppose that only the girls were taught to sew. Both boys and girls were to be taught decent behaviour and also their prayers and the Catechism.

We are told that in 1671 the population of North Muskham, Bathley and Holme was 230; in 1807 when the first national census was taken North Muskham and Bathley together were 361, so we may guess that in the 18th century the population of North Muskham was growing from about 150 to about 250. We know little about the principal landowners. In the early 17th century one of the chief landowning families was that of the Bartons of Holme, whose property passed by marriage to the family of Belasyse. Lord Belasyse, who was governor of Newark during the siege, was made Viscount Fauconberg by Charles I. This family had property in Lincolnshire and

Yorkshire and did not reside at Holme; it was Roman Catholic in the early 18th century, The property in Muskham, Bathley and Holme was sold soon after 1774 - perhaps to the Dukes of Newcastle. The Pocklington family, which had made money in banking in Newark, built a large and pretentious mansion north of the village in 1793, between the North Road and the River Trent; a print of it exists in the Newark Museum. It only stood for about 40 years and today all that remains of Pocklington's work are one of the Lodge cottages on the North Road and, probably, the ground floor of Lodge Farm, which was altered in the 19th century. The house is architecturally a great loss, as one can see from the brickwork of the lodge that the house must have been very handsome.

We have not been able to trace many details of the history of the remaining houses of the village. As far as the Grange is concerned, it has had many owners. The kitchen quarters are very old, perhaps 16th century, but the house was considerably enlarged first at the beginning of the 18th century, by a Mr. Phillips, from whom it came, in about 1760, to Gustavus Broughton, a retired headmaster of Magnus Grammar School. After his death it was purchased by a Mr. Cooper and from his executors, who after adding considerably to it, sold it to John Battle, and he, in 1789, to William Dickinson Rastall, its most distinguished owner. Dickinson wrote histories of Southwell and Newark. The additions of Joseph Pocklington were presumably the building of the ante-room, library and drawing-room in the then fashionable style of the Adam brothers. There is a print of the house in Throsby's edition of Thoroton's History of Nottinghamshire, which shows that since then the windows have been altered, but the internal arrangements make it a very interesting example of its period.

We have not been able to discover why or when the farmhouse known as the Hall, or the Old Hall, was so named; its history is undistinguished. It was probably enlarged, from a small house, in about 1790; its proportions show that at the end of the 18th century, farmers were wealthy and bricks were cheap. The same is true of Mr. Harry Clipsham's or Mr. C. F. Ansell's which are about the same age and have the same lofty proportions.

The oldest surviving cottage in the village is the timber-framed building in Crab Lane, which is perhaps 17th century in date. By the 18th century, brick had become the cheapest material for even the most humble houses, and the low cottages with dormer windows such as Mr. Whitney's (until it was transformed early in 1948) and those near the Post Office probably date from the first half of the 18th century. At Bathley, Mr. Blore's farmhouse was first built in the 17th century, and later had its timber frame covered with a brick skin.

We were for a time puzzled by the fact that there was apparently no parsonage house until 1863, when Clipsham of Norwell built the Vicarage which now belongs to Mr. W. A. Muddell. Mr. Henry Whitney has, however, looked up the deeds of his house opposite the Church and finds that it is described there as the old Vicarage House. We may therefore assume that it was built in the early 18th century as the Vicarage. There is a tradition that when the village had no resident parson, the vicarage was let and one room was used as a robing room by whoever came to conduct the services.

The list of electors entitled to vote in the 1722 county election (the only contested election in the 18th century) tells us the name of the property owners at that time who lived in the village. They were eight:- John Chappell, Humphrey Frogett, William Cosk, John Lilley, Thomas Wass, John Scrimshire, John Ward and Thomas Wright; Thomas Laban, parson, was qualified by virtue of his property in Lincolnshire. At

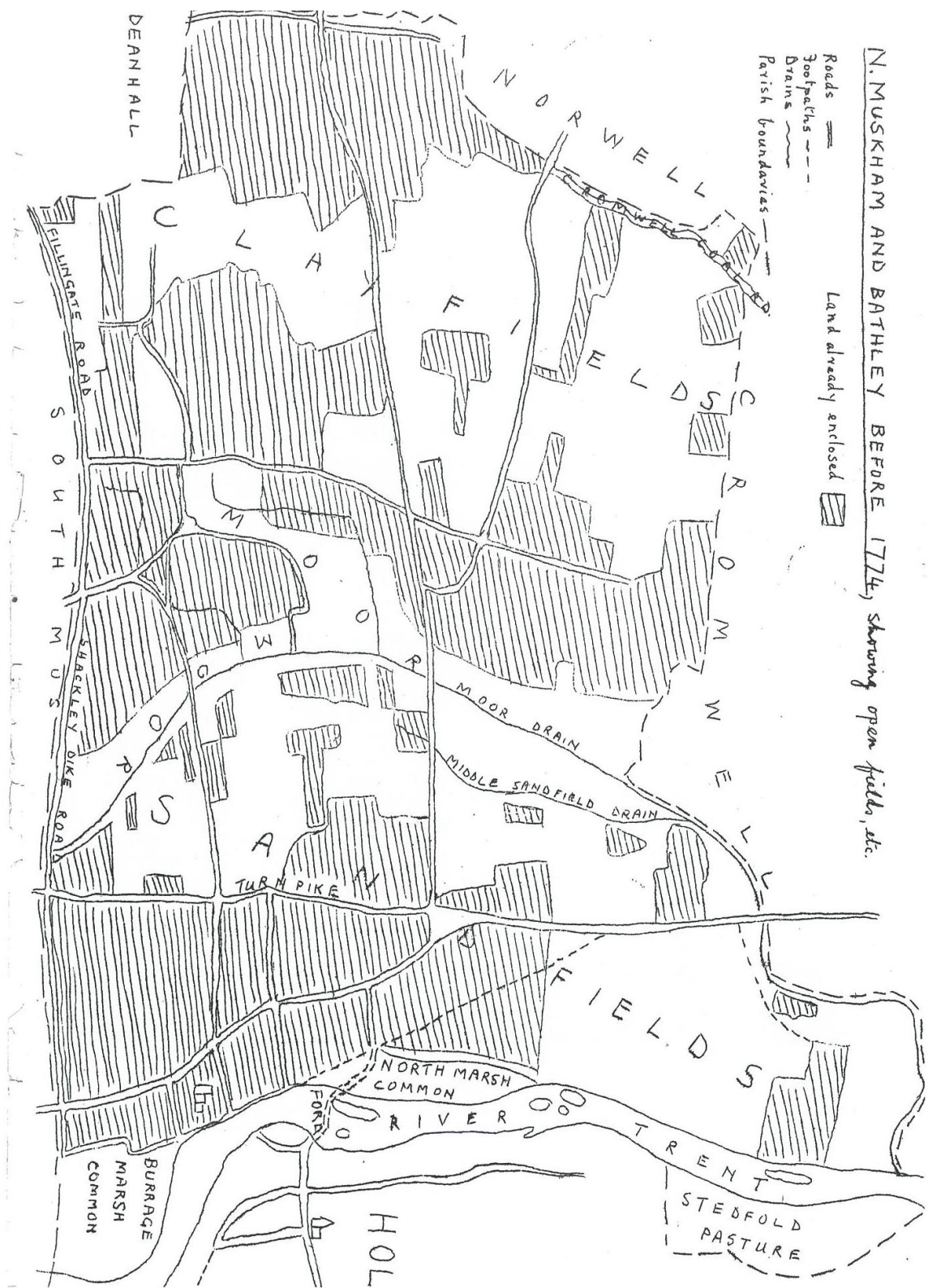
Bathley there were only William Lilley and John Scrimshire, and at South Muskham Alex Stuart, John Clay, Henry Cawthorne, William Beedham, and the parson Gervase Burton. All those men possessed freeholds worth 40/- per annum.

ENCLOSURE OF THE OPEN FIELDS

In 1771 the landowners secured a private Act of Parliament for enclosing the open fields, commons and waste lands of the townships of North Muskham, Holme, and Bathley. South Muskham had already been enclosed, at what date we do not know, as it was done without Act of Parliament, and there is no enclosure award. This is very unusual, and rather surprising; we can only conclude that the few freeholders mentioned above, or their ancestors were so few in numbers and wealth that the principal landowner, Lord Middleton, was able either to get them to agree to a private enclosure, or to enclose the open fields entirely on his own initiative. We know that a number of places round Newark, such as Averham, Thorpe by Farndon, Winthorpe and Langford were also enclosed by 1700, and South Muskham must be added to this group in which the profits to be got from pasture were attractive enough to lead to enclosure and the abandonment of arable or mixed farming. North Muskham is much more in line with the rest of the county and indeed of England; the enclosure movement was in full swing in the 1770's. Even so, there was opposition to the proposal from 9 out of the 100 cottage proprietors, and from 8 others who between them possessed 335 out of the 3000 acres which would be affected.

The Act appointed commissioners to carry out the work: they were John Cleaver of Gunthorpe, William Handley of Newark, George Hodgkinson of Southwell, Thomas Ponton of Barnby in the Willows, and Thomas Oldknow of Nottingham. All of them acted in the same capacity in other parishes - Ponton for instance at Cromwell, Handley at Balderton and Farndon, Hodgkinson at Caunton and Carlton on Trent, Oldknow in many other places. They must have been men with farming and valuing experience. They appointed William Fillingham of Fledborough as surveyor, to measure up all roads and properties, and to lay out the new allotments. Their work is recorded in the Award, and we are very grateful to Mr. J.V. Edge, the chairman of the Parish Council for allowing us, with the consent of the Council, to have the Award for some time in order to study it closely.

In general the procedure of enclosure was simple. The commissioners laid out all public roads (mainly on the lines of existing roads) and private carriageways, drains, ditches, fences, banks, etc. They then allowed to the church the land to be granted in lieu of tithes which were thus no longer to be paid in kind. This allotment was, as usual, one seventh of the land; it was granted to Lord Fanconberg, as lessee of the prebendary estate, and to the vicar, William Harding, who between them were entitled to the great and the small tithes. The picture is complicated by the fact that the prebendal estate, which belonged at the time to the Rev. Lynford Caryl, D.D., was regarded as the only manor, though the corporation of Newark claimed a manor and the Award says that if they established this claim in a court of law they were to have one quarter of the land allotted to Dr. Caryl as lord of the manor, which allotment was one sixteenth of the land left after the allotment for tithes. After these provisions had been made, the remaining private owners' were given the equivalent in fields of what they had held of open arable and common. When all this was done, there would be for everyone the business of paying the costs - the cost of getting the Act of Parliament, of the commissioners' expenses and the surveyor's salary, of fencing the tithe allotments for their owners, and for each man of fencing his new fields. Unfortunately we have no records, but this figure in other places was often considerable, varying from 15/- to £3 an acre.



Our chief interest in studying the Award, after extracting these details of the process, has been to get out of it a picture of North Muskham and Bathley as they were before

enclosure, and the result is shown on the attached map. The first thing to note is that the arable land of the two townships of North Muskham and Bathley lay in the two great fields, the Clay Field and the Sand Field. This arrangement must date back a thousand years before 1772 to the founding of North Muskham. The settlement lay close to the river, but upon the hills away from the river the land was heavier and more profitable, and therefore worth the trouble of clearing the forest which naturally grew there. Perhaps the township of Bathley grew up as some people decided to live nearer to the land they cultivated there. This two field system was very common over all the midlands, but at some later date, as both townships increased in size, each field was further divided into North, Middle and South, and worked independently on a three course rotation, which was more advanced. One must imagine these fields as divided up, before 1771, into many narrow strips, laid in blocks called furlongs or flats. The common meadow lay between the two townships along both sides of the Moor Drain and was known as the Moors. The only common pasture was by the Trent - Stedfold Pasture on the other side, and on this side North Marsh Common and Burrage Marsh Common.

The further interest of this reconstruction lies in the fact that almost half the land of the townships had been enclosed, not by any general action agreed among proprietors, but by private initiative of individuals. We have already seen that some of this inclosure may have been done long before by the monasteries when they owned granges in the neighbourhood, so that they could concentrate on sheep-farming, or some other independent method of farming. This was not in the general interest, as whose land remained open lost rights of common on enclosed pasture, and on enclosed arable after harvest, etc. We can only conclude that the manorial court, which in many places tried to check this sort of thing, had decayed in North Muskham and had not enough authority to enforce the general will. This conclusion is in line with what has already been said; clearly when it was uncertain whether the corporation of Newark had a manor or not, there can have been no active manor court. The village had always been split into several manors, and the absence of any one general authority would lead to each man following the dictates of his own interests. While the land in the immediate neighbourhood of the two villages had been nibbled out of the common fields, the land on the extreme west of the parish may never have been included in the common fields.

Some of the names mentioned in the Award are worth comment, though we have not been able to locate them all on the map. Fillingate is a very old name, and is mentioned before 1300 in the records of Rufford Abbey. Normer Lane is so abbreviated to North Moor. Conygate is an old English word for a rabbit warren. Northing comes from a Danish word for pasture; Wong, as in Green Wong, and Hopping Hill Wong, is Danish for common meadow; Inham Close gives us a Danish word for intake, a piece of land taken in or enclosed. The occurrence in the Award of Bathley Church Road first led us to search for the site of the chapel. We thus see that the Parish Award crystallises the history of these townships for about a thousand years.

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19TH CENTURY

As we come to more recent times, our information is more plentiful, but at the same time more difficult to sort out into a coherent story. We feel that a great deal more could be collected if the memory of older people could be tapped and their recollections put on paper.

We know that the townships in this century began to grow more rapidly, as the following census figures show.

	1817	1831	1851	1861	1871	1881	1891	1901	1911	1921	1931
N.M.	336	484	663	614	552	542	472	559	526	496	509
Bathley	179	197	214	234	222	169	161	171	141	125	140
S.M.	284	261	303	277	279	245	221	196	194	193	225

They show that the population reached a peak between 1850 and 1870; the decline thereafter is to be explained by the evil days on which English agriculture fell; men left England for the colonies, or left the land for the towns as conditions became more difficult. In more recent times Newark has had an influence and brought to the village many men who find their living other than on the land.

The directories show that a century or more ago, there was a much greater diversity of occupations in the village. Even as late as 1864 North Muskham had five grocers, three shoemakers, four tailors and four carpenters and wheelwrights.

After the enclosure of the open fields there was an opportunity for farmers with energy, money and ideas to apply all these and agricultural methods were improving rapidly. An expert who made a survey of agriculture in the county in 1797 wrote that the introduction of turnips as a field crop made a tremendous difference to the sandy fields of North Muskham, which hitherto had grown little but sorrel. At this time of increasing returns and high prices farmhouses and buildings were rebuilt; they are still doing service, in many cases, today. The other period of prosperity for farmers was from 1850 to 1870 and that too is reflected in the building that was done then - for instance at Burridge Farm.

From 1726 onwards responsibility for maintenance of the section of the North Road through the parish had been taken out of the hands of the overseers of the highways, who could not keep it in good enough condition for the increasing traffic, and handed over to a body of commissioners who managed the stretch from Grantham to West Drayton. These turnpike commissioners placed toll bars at Foston, Balderton, Muskham and Markham, where they collected tolls to pay for the maintenance of the road. Their control lasted till 1875, by which time the railways had taken a good deal of passenger traffic off the roads, and the turnpikes were no longer profitable. The North Muskham toll bar was at the north end of the village, where Mrs Clipsham now lives. It was in the first half of the 19th century that road traffic was at its height (until the coming of the motor car), and we may imagine the less rapid coaches with names like the Union, the Rockingham, the Nelson, the Highflier and the Wellington, dashing along the road at intervals of day and night, making for Newark and a change of horses and a meal. By 1825 the time from York to London had been reduced to 24 hours. There were occasional accidents - in 1815 the Accommodation going from Nottingham to Newark, and very heavily laden, overturned at Averham; one person

was killed. There was also the occasional risk of hold-ups and robbery. Unhappily we can find no evidence to support the tradition that Dick Turpin ever stabled his horse at North Muskham or Holme.

By 1850 the railway had arrived; the line from Nottingham to Lincoln was already open, and in that year the Great Northern Line was being built, and there was the now romantic sight of the steam locomotive for children to stare at.

The river too, was very busy after about 1770. It had been improved through Newark, and the traffic increased as the Trent was linked with a canal system covering the whole of England. Early directories show that there was a service of fly-boats daily between the Trent towns of Nottingham, Newark and Gainsborough, as well as heavier barges carrying coal, corn, lime, and other heavy goods. In those days the two inns on the river - The Newcastle Arms and the Reindeer (now Mr. Key's house) must have been very busy, and their stables full of barge-horses. What is now the house occupied by the Misses Wood was then Thompson's coal yard, to which coal came down the Trent. That traffic too declined slowly after the coming of the railways. The map shows that in the interest of navigation, the river has been narrowed in the past two centuries, islands removed; the ford is no longer fordable even in summer.

North Muskham was luckier than many villages in having the school endowed by Mary Woolhouse and Mary Disney in 1727 and 1745. We are told that in the early 19th century the school was run on the lines approved by the National Society. This meant that the religious education given was according to the Church of England; it may also have meant that monitors, or older children, helped to teach the younger. The children were given a holiday at rod-peeling time; willow-growing for baskets was still important in Trent-side villages. For the first fifty years of the 19th century the scholiast was John Atkins; in 1858 his jubilee was celebrated, and the children went in procession round the village, singing a song composed by him for the occasion. In 1871 came compulsory education, and as a result the School Board in 1881 put up a new building on the old site. It is now a County School, but the County Council rents the land on which it stands from the trustees of the Woolhouse charity,

We do not know when the Sunday Schools were started in the village, but it was probably a century or more ago. In 1872 there were 80 children attending the Wesleyan Methodist Sunday School in Chapel Yard. This chapel was probably built at about the same time as Bathley Wesleyan Methodist Chapel, which is dated 1844. It is interesting that the anniversary services of Bathley chapel are still held in Mr. W. Peatman's barn at Elkley Farm; one wonders whether this is a relic of the days when there was no chapel at Bathley, and services may have been held in the barn.

Many customs and institutions which once played a part in the life of the village have now disappeared. Among them was the annual performance of the Plough Play. Here, as in many villages of the north-east Midlands, a number of the plough boys prepared, for the first Monday after Twelfth Night, a play which they performed in all the houses which would invite them in. The characters and the words spoken varied little from one village to another; the characters usually included Beelzebub, a Fool, a Woman, a Doctor, etc., older persons like Mr. W. Key remember some of the words spoken, and we hope to get them placed on record. In North Muskham the characters varied according to the ideas of those taking part; for instance the casts included a tradesman, who might be a butcher, baker, carpenter or blacksmith. The woman's part was of course taken by a man; the doctor wore a top hat and other attributes of respectability; the sergeant a soldier's or bandsman's uniform; the fool had his face

blackened; Beelzebub was stuffed with straw to increase his size and carried a club which was usually a stuffed stocking. Last came a plough man in his working clothes. Another ancient custom was "mumping"; on St. Thomas' day the aged widows went from door to door mumping, which meant inviting gifts of money.

Another village custom was the Village Feast, held on the first Sunday after the 12th September; it seems to have died out more than 20 years ago. We have not been able to explain the choice of date, nor the origin of the feast, which is probably very ancient. Some households saved a Christmas pudding for the feast. It lasted for a week; at the Reindeer and the Newcastle Arms, eating and drinking went on as long as money lasted. In 1872 Mr. T. Knight, butcher, recorded in his diary that he killed two fat bullocks for the feast; plenty of food was available at the inns - free if you were on good terms with the landlord. There were amusements such as climbing the greasy pole, shooting at clay pipes; dancing went on in the various club rooms.

The Foresters and the Oddfellows among many friendly societies, played a big part in village life until recent times. The club room at the Reindeer still has "Evening Star Lodge" over the door. The Foresters had their annual dinner at the Lord Nelson on Whit Monday, after a procession through the village with a brass band. With the coming of National Health Insurance the state has taken the place once occupied by voluntary bodies.

More modern sounding, but even so things of the past, were the very flourishing Boys' Club and Mens' Institute carried on in Chapel Yard for 10 or 20 years up to 1920. Unhappily they collapsed; the social life of the village was not able to compete with the increasing attractions of Newark and the improved communications.

We end with a glimpse of working life, wages and prices which we have obtained through Mr. J. V. Edge, who most kindly lent us, and allowed us to copy, the farm accounts for Bathley Hill Farm kept in 1853 and 1854. From them we learn much about farming conditions a century ago; we have room only to quote extracts. Wages for farm workers then were 15/- for a six day week; mowing was paid at 2/6d per acre, turnip hoeing 4/6d. or 5/-, reaping wheat 9/-. mowing barley 8/- and reaping beans 12/- per acre. Mr. Edge was hiring a steam threshing machine in 1853. Wheat ranged from 58/- to 75/- a quarter, barley and oats were 31/-, beans from 39/- to 64/-; wheat was 75/- a ton and straw 26/-. A new roller cost £4, a cart saddle £1.15.0d., a plough £5.2.0d., a stone trough £1. A cart could be got for £6, a waggon for £8.10.0d. against £100 or £140 for a rubber-tyres trailer today! Mr. Edge bought a Scotch heifer for £15 (more than the average price then), two mares for £37, and pigs for £1.17.6d each. Many readers will be thirsty when they learn that an 18 gallon barrel of ale cost £1.1.0d.!

There the story must end - not because there is nothing more to say, but because the remaining information we have collected consists mainly of scraps which cannot be fitted into the picture we have tried to draw. Much more could be written, and much more knowledge collected; we hope that someone will continue this work. The notes we have accumulated will be deposited with the Parish Council, if they will accept them. No doubt we have made mistakes, and we are very conscious of the gaps we have left, and the problems we have failed to solve. For instance we have been very intrigued to learn from Mr. Edge's accounts that in July 1852 he paid out over £50 for a regiment of 36 men watching, and for police attendance; we have not been able to find any explanation for this. Was there a riot among Irish harvest workers? Or an epidemic of rick-burning among discontented workers? We do not know.

It remains only to record the names of those who were members of the Local History Class, and who have all contributed something to this effort. They are:

Mr. W. Bourne
Mrs. D. Charles
Mr. T.E. Charles
Mr. Herbert Clipsham
Mr. C. Copp
Miss Corbridge
Mr. W.H. Elliott
Mrs. D. Granger
Mr. S. Granger

Mr. & Mrs. P.J. Jackson
Mrs. Winter Knight
Mr. W. Lowndes
Mr. & Mrs. W.A. Muddell
Mr. S.M. Thurman
Mr. J.C. Turner
Mr. & Mrs. W.S. Staniforth
Mr. D. Storer



The *Capturing Memories Project* is indebted to Gail Sheehy (2019) for typing the Maurice Barley Research for the benefit of future generations.