

New Mills Local History Society

NEWSLETTER

Issue 54, Spring 2015



Meetings 2015

Meetings are held in the main hall of New Mills Town Hall, starting at 7:45pm. You may obtain easy access from the entrance on Aldersgate.

Friday Jan. 9	Two Queens and a Countess	David Templeman
Friday Feb. 13	An Introduction to the Temperance Movement and its Medals	Peter Crummett
Friday March 13	Manufacturing the Cloth of the World	Roger Holden
Friday April 10	The Ecton Copper Mine: Solving the problems of mining at great depth	Dr. John Barnatt
Friday May 1	AGM followed by:- Pictures of New Mills past and Present; a Fun Quiz	Roger Bryant

Please note that AGM and quiz are on the first Friday of the month. Please come on your own or in teams of four and five, with paper and pens. Bring your own drinks and glasses.

Committee 2014-2015

Acting Chairperson	Gaynor Andrew (743117)
Hon. Secretary	John Humphreys (743581)
Hon. Treasurer	Maureen Hall (742837)
Hon. Archivist	Roger Bryant (744227)
Hon. Editor	Ron Weston (744838)
Website manager	Barry Dent (745837)
Ordinary members	Derek Brumhead, Nicki Burgess, John Crummett, Peter Done, Pat Evans

*www.newmillshistory.org.uk
www.picturenewmills.org.uk*

From the Editor

Dear Friends,

2014 has been a bumper year for the Society's new publications, with three from Roger Bryant, two from Derek Brumhead, together with single contributions from Rosemary Taylor, Margaret De Motte and Ron Weston.

Derek Brumhead has arranged an attractive programme, as usual, and has invited back some of your favourite speakers. The AGM on 1st May will be followed by a "Fun Quiz", organised by Roger Bryant, which will, no doubt, end our programme of indoor meetings on a high note.

It only remains for me, on behalf of the Committee, to wish you all a happy, healthy and prosperous New Year.

Ron Weston.

Front cover: Just four of the photographs recently added to www.picturenewmills.org.uk.

Methodism in New Mills

Alan Rose (12th September 2014)

Alan Rose, an expert on the history of Methodism in our region, began by emphasising the complexity of his subject due to its unique organisation. Methodism began in the early eighteenth century as an evangelical revivalist movement within the Church of England led by the brothers John and Charles Wesley. John Wesley was particularly active in our area and preached in New Mills on several occasions. A less well-known figure, but one whose work was of equal importance locally, is John Bennet of Chinley, who was converted to Methodism in 1742 and became a preacher, serving a network of local congregations.

Such networks, known as “rounds”, began as informal arrangements whereby itinerant preachers ministered to groups of people in barns or private houses. There were no set services nor any training or instruction given to the preachers. Open air preaching was also practised by the early Methodists and this was particularly frowned upon by an increasingly hostile Church of England. This eventually led to the Methodists setting up a separate church, a step that the Wesleys had not anticipated.

With the formal establishment of the Methodist church, the informal “rounds” became fixed Circuits. Quarterly meetings of representatives from the different circuits in a region became a central feature of Methodist organisation. The handling of funds contributed by the various congregations was one of the functions of the quarterly meetings.

John Wesley clearly enjoyed his visits to New Mills, describing the congregation there in his journals as (in 1772), “A lively, earnest people”; in 1774, “An earnest, artless, loving people.” He mentioned the fact that there was no place of public worship in the town - one of the reasons why Methodism became so popular in New Mills. John Wesley last visited New Mills in 1788, having reached the age of eighty-five!

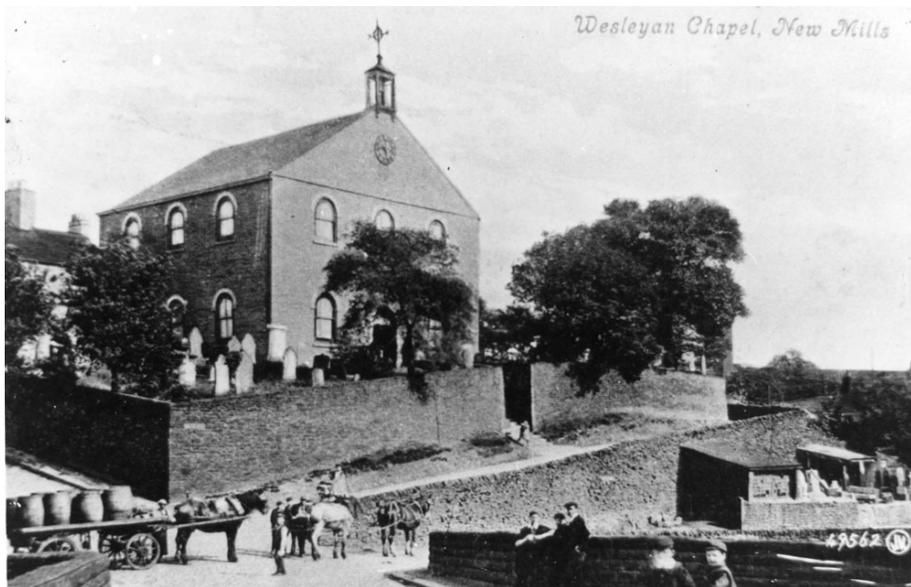
Opinions amongst the Methodists were changing. New Mills, it was decided, needed a chapel. Despite John Wesley's opposition, Methodist chapels were being built up and down the country. Our first chapel was built in 1760 in High Street (it was subsequently replaced by the present chapel) thanks largely to the munificence of Mr. Beard, a mill-owner, who contributed over £1,000. The High Street chapel remained the only place of worship in the town until rapid population growth led to the building of the St. George's Road chapel in 1810, together with its substantial graveyard.

After the death of John Wesley in 1791, quarrels broke out amongst the Methodists, which led to the splintering of the church into three principal

groups: Independent, Wesleyans and Primitive Methodists. All three branches were represented in New Mills in the nineteenth century. Official figures showed that Methodism in New Mills continued to grow until 1914, after which a steady decline set in. In 1932, the three churches came together again in the United Methodists.

Alan Rose's talk provided a great deal of information on the development of the Methodist movement in and around New Mills. For decades, until the building of St. George's Anglican church in the 1820s, it was the only outlet for Christian worship in the town. The strong association of New Mills with John Wesley over so many years and his favourable opinion of its inhabitants is something of which we can all feel proud.

Ron Weston



Wesleyan Chapel, St George's Road, circa 1900.

The New Mills Festival Lecture (22nd September 2014) The Electricity Supply of New Mills Derek Brumhead

This novel topic was Derek's latest inspiration; but would it inspire his audience; would they turn up in their hundreds to the Festival Lecture as they usually did? Of course it would; of course they did.

Derek explained how our electricity supply reached us from the power stations via the National Grid and how it was necessary to step down the voltage at a number of locations until the supply reaches the primary sub-station at Gow Hole. From there, the electricity is sent chiefly by overhead wires to forty-eight sub-stations located throughout urban and rural New Mills, from which every property receives its domestic voltage through buried cables, or in rural areas overhead wires.

It was on these small sub-stations that Derek next focused his attention. They are housed in a bewildering variety of buildings ranging from elaborate structures of architectural merit to unobtrusive boxes mounted on electricity poles. Derek has very assiduously photographed many of these. Members of the audience were astonished to recognise and discover the true purpose of the small, often graffiti-covered, shed-like building they passed on their street every day.



Laying cables at junction of Torr Vale Road and Wirksmoor Road at the end of Jodrell Street in 1930.

Derek then gave us an outline history of how New Mills came to be served with electricity. With the establishment of the Central Electricity Board in 1926, which regulated and standardised the preexisting services, the extension of supplies to rural area and small towns became possible. New Mills began to receive the service in the early 1930s and was linked to a power station at Stockport. The firm of W.T. Henley was contracted to install the domestic electricity supply to New Mills using buried cables in the built-up areas. This work, beginning in 1929, was accomplished in a relatively short time, though, understandably, connections to some of the rural locations took longer. Much of the unskilled work provided much-needed, though temporary, relief to the unemployed of the district. Many changes have taken place over the years. Modern equipment is now very much smaller than formerly and does not require the large buildings once considered necessary.

Derek's talk was enthusiastically received and has since inspired several of us to look out for those neglected and obscure features of our urban and rural landscape, the electricity sub-stations.

Ron Weston.



The 1930 substation today on Marsh Lane.

**Recalling Oldknow's Legacy:
Mellor Mill and the Peak Forest Canal.
Bob Humphrey-Taylor (10 October 2014)**

Samuel Oldknow came to this district in 1787 and remained for over 40 years until his death at the age of 72. During this time he changed the face of Marple beyond all recognition, being the chief architect and driving force in the development and industrialisation of the area. Along with his mill at Mellor he was responsible for the building of roads, bridges, coal mines and housing for his workers. He was also instrumental in the construction of the Peak Forest Canal. His family originated in Nottingham, where his grandfather had established a successful drapery business. Oldknow's father, also called Samuel, moved to Anderton in Lancashire to study as a textile manufacturer and became settled there. By 1781, when he was 25, Oldknow had entered into partnership with his uncle Thomas expanding into the manufacture of cotton goods. Oldknow quickly became a leading manufacturer of the finest quality cotton calico and muslin, goods which had previously only been produced by textile workers in India and imported into the country. In 1784, after obtaining a loan of £3,000 from Richard Arkwright, Oldknow joined the great cotton boom in Stockport and purchased a house, warehouse and land on Upper Hillgate. The house, built around 1740, still remains today and is now used as offices. Oldknow quickly turned his Stockport enterprise into a huge success with 100 weavers working for him in the first year. Within two years he had become the foremost muslin manufacturer in Britain.

In 1787 Oldknow began to acquire a number of adjoining estates in Marple and Mellor, including the Bottoms Hall Estate and the water rights of the River Goyt. The mill which he built measured c.400 feet long and 42 feet wide with six stories and at the time was one of the largest water-powered mills in the country. The construction which commenced in 1790, was a massive undertaking. In addition to the imposing and handsome brick structure, the River Goyt had to be diverted, a series of three millponds constructed and a complicated system of tunnels, channels and wheel pits built. The mill ponds still remain and are today known as the "Roman Lakes", a name they were given in Victorian times when they became a huge tourist attraction. The mill was destroyed by fire in 1892 and the ruins later demolished. Although several photographs and prints of the mill do exist, the best way to appreciate the scale of Oldknow's work at Mellor is to view the superb model constructed by Tom Oldham for the Oldknow Bi-Centenary celebrations in 1990 and now displayed in the Heritage section of the Marple Library.



Mellor Mill

Whilst his attention was focused on the mill and his estates at Mellor, Oldknow soon became involved in other local developments. This was the age of canal building and he realised the benefits that a link with Manchester and the surrounding areas would provide. He was one of the principal promoters of the Peak Forest Canal and became chairman of the committee which financed and directed its construction. A prime reason for building the canal was the transportation of limestone from the Derbyshire quarries. Oldknow further turned this to his benefit by constructing lime kilns alongside the canal basin at Marple.

Oldknow was a regular worshipper at the Church of All Saints' Parish. In 1803 the old Chapel, by then over two hundred years old, was in a ruinous and dangerous condition. Oldknow took the major responsibility in finding the money to fund the new Georgian Chapel. The building was completed in 1826, Oldknow donated the land upon which the vicarage was built.

By the time of his death in 1828, Oldknow was deeply in debt to the Arkwrights and the whole of his estates became their property in settlement. Despite this situation, he retained the respect and support of his friends and the local community to the end. The attendance at his funeral is said to have numbered over 3,000 people.

In 2009 the University of Manchester Archaeological Unit (UMAU) and Mellor Archaeological Trust (MAT) carried out an archaeological evaluation as part of the Mellor Heritage Project (MHP); a three-year Heritage Lottery funded community archaeology project. Excavations at the south end of the mill in the car park near the millpond uncovered mill walls, steps down to a cellar with two blocks for mounting machinery. Subsequently, walls at the north end of the mill were uncovered. In 2011, a grant from the Association for Industrial Archaeology enabled 120 tons of debris including over 100 vehicle tyres, to be cleared from the Wellington wheel pit under the centre of the mill which is now open for public view, an opportunity which should not be missed. Bob explained how a large digger was brought in for this which was supplemented by his own mini-digger which could get down into the deep wheel pit. Volunteers continued to clear the cobbled area in front of the mill, a stable for visitor's horses under the central projection and the 100-metre tunnel for the drive shaft from the Waterloo wheel.

There is more than the mill. Nearer the river, there is the Waterloo wheel pit, the sites of workshops, stables, and gasworks and a tunnel under Lakes Road to Oldknow's mansion and garden. The heritage also includes Bottoms Hall, with Oldknow's model farm and the apprentice house, and the transformation of the south millpond into the Roman Lakes Leisure Park.

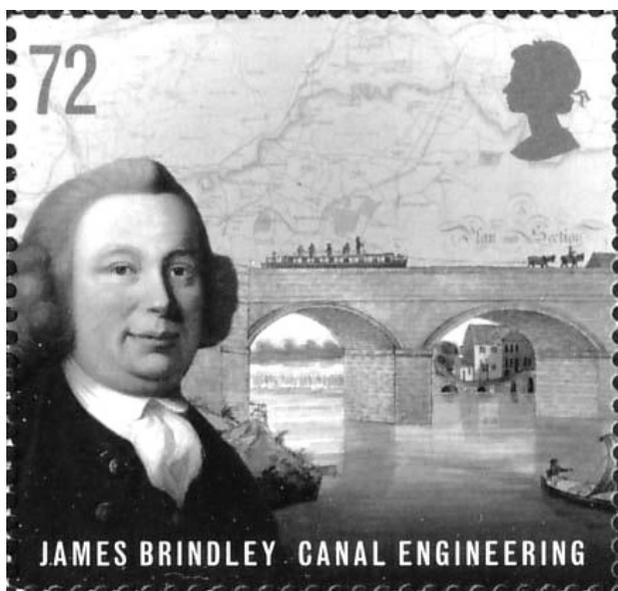
In September 2012, HLF granted £45,000 towards the development stage of the project "Revealing Oldknow's Legacy: Mellor Mill and the Peak Forest Canal in Marple". The main bid for £1.3m, submitted in May 2013, was rejected and it was advised that the Trust joined in with the Canal and River Trust, whose application for "Enriching Marple's Waterway Heritage" (the Peak Forest Canal promoted by Oldknow) was also rejected. In September 2013 an award of £1.5 million was agreed for "Revealing Oldknow's Legacy: Mellor Mill and the Peak Forest Canal in Marple.", (hence the title of this talk) and last July (2014) permission to start was received.

Without doubt, this is the most important industrial archaeological project in the North West. Bob is the Director and there is no-one else who could have given us such a fascinating, authoritative and informative account. Bob gives very many talks on the subject, and his fee always goes to the Trust. His talk was supported by perhaps one of the best presentation of illustrations our society has seen.

Derek Brumhead

James Brindley, Millwright and Canal Engineer John Doughty (14th November 2014)

It probably needs a background in engineering to fully appreciate the true genius of James Brindley, but John Doughty, an authority on this famous, eighteenth century engineer, did his best to convince his audience that Brindley fully deserves his place amongst the highest ranks of engineers of the Industrial Revolution.



James Brindley (1716 -1772), spent his childhood on the family farm at Tunstead, near Wormhill, the village where a monument to Brindley occupies pride of place on the green. Later, the family farmed an inherited farm at Leek, which gave them sufficient income to apprentice the young James to the firm of Abraham Bennett, a millwright, near Macclesfield. His apprenticeship successfully concluded, Brindley worked full-time for Bennett and was responsible for installing water powered machinery in several mills in the area. One of the mills associated with Brindley at Leek is now the Brindley museum. Other notable achievements included the establishment of the flint mill at Cheddleton - one of several flint mills associated with the early career of Brindley.

Brindley's experience of controlling water led him into what was to become a much more important branch of civil engineering: the drainage of coal pits. This, of course, was before the steam age, when steam engines were employed to pump water from the mines. His drainage scheme for a mine near the river Irwell was so ingenious that it made his name. Thus, when the Duke of Bridgewater needed a solution to the problem of draining his coal workings at Worsley, Brindley was the obvious man for the task. Brindley more than succeeded, for the channels he constructed to carry the flood water also served as a canal, the Bridgewater Canal, linking the mines to the Mersey-Irwell Navigation. This enabled coal to be moved efficiently and cheaply to Manchester.

Brindley is chiefly remembered and celebrated for his pioneering work on the Bridgewater Canal, and rightly so. But it is also well to remember the major part played by Brindley in the interconnection of the four principal river systems of England by canals: the Mersey, Trent, Severn and Thames.

By the time of his death at the early age of fifty-five, James Brindley had been honoured and celebrated in his lifetime. Illustrious members of the Lunar Society, the leading figures in science and industry, men such as Wedgwood, Priestley and Erasmus Darwin, were unanimous in their praise and fully recognised the scale and significance of his contribution to the industrialisation of this country.

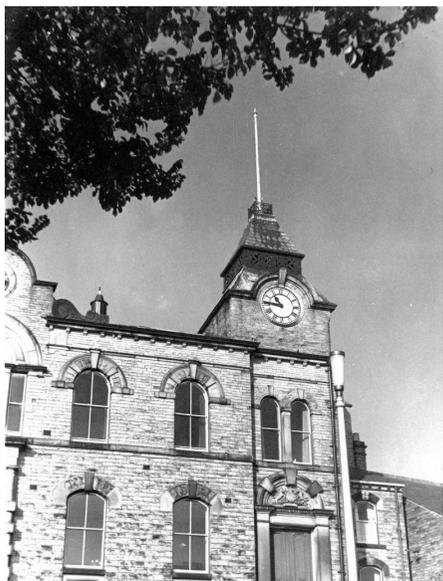
John Doughty's talk stimulated a great deal of interest in our audience, as was evident in the questions that were asked.

Ron Weston.

The 75th Anniversary of the Bells of the New Mills Town Hall Clock. Paul Miller (12th December 2014)

We have got used to seeing the Caretaker at the Town Hall, Paul Miller, at our meetings, making sure that everything is to our liking, but it was a new experience to find Paul standing at the front of the hall addressing the assembled throng.

Winding and maintaining the Town Hall clock is one of the duties of the Caretaker and quite a considerable one, which requires a clear understanding of the clock's mechanism and its somewhat quirky requirements.



New Mills Town Hall, which was opened by the Duke of Devonshire in 1871, had a tower, clock and chimes presented in 1875 by Mrs. Mackie, a wealthy local resident and generous benefactor of the town. In 1939, the bells needed replacement and, thanks to the munificence of one of the members of New Mills town council, G.A. Broome-Coope, who met the cost in its entirety in memory of his mother, the work was rapidly and successfully carried out before the onset of the Second World War. Ironically, wartime regulations prevented the operation of the new chimes and illumination of the clock

face during the hours of dusk. The manufacturers of the clock, William Potts of Leeds, supplied and installed the four replacement bells and put in a new clock face, though, as Paul explained, the casting of the bells was sub-contracted to another firm, Copes of Nottingham.

With the aid of photos, Paul then explained the mechanism of the clock and its chimes and revealed the constant attention that the clock required.

Currently, the chimes are again in need of repair and stand silent. Paul is temporarily relieved of the chore of climbing into the tower to wind the chimes (but the clock still needs winding!), and it became clear during his light-hearted talk that he has acquired a genuine affection for the town's venerable time-piece, a feeling shared by many in the audience.

Ron Weston.

The Chartist movement in New Mills.

Excerpts from the *Derby Mercury*.

Wed. May 1, 1839

CHARTISTS' ARMS AT NEW MILLS

We are credibly informed that arms are now openly exhibited for sale, in a public situation in New Mills. The weapon is one of formidable and deadly construction, in the shape of a pike, intended to act against the police or military, should the deluded possessors of them ever attempt to make use of them. The place where these weapons are exhibited and sold is a beer shop, which has long been the resort of characters of a seditious and restless description.

Wed. Aug. 24, 1842

CHAPEL- EN-LE-FRITH

On Wednesday, the 10th instant, a body of men and women, computed at six and seven thousand, made their appearance in New Mills, Derbyshire, and turned out all the hands from the mills; from there they proceeded to Mr. Walsh's print-works, at Furnis, and ordered all hands out. Mr. Walsh entreated them to let him work one day more, to complete an order, but they refused, drew the fire from under the boilers, let off the steam, and forced him to stop his works; from there they proceeded to Messrs. Wright and Hodgson's cotton mills, at Bugsworth, and turned all the hands out ; from there to Bugsworth Basin, where they turned out all the lime-burners and stone-getters at Christ quarry, belonging to the Peak Forest Canal Company; from there they proceeded to the paper-works at Whitehall, near Chapel-en-le-Frith, belonging to Messrs. Ingam, Barnes, and Hughes. Mr. Ingam wished to know their object. One of the turn-outs explained that they would have the same rate of wages as they received in 1840, and that they would have it before they went to work again. By this time night had approached, and they returned by the same route to New Mills. Early on Thursday morning they re-assembled, and proceeded to Bridgham-green Mills, belonging to Mr. Riley, and turned the hands out ; from there to Chapel-en-le-Frith, where, also, they stopped all kinds of works, and also stopped the carts on the road; from there they went to Mr. Kirk's iron-works, and compelled all his men to leave work; from there they proceeded to Blackhole limestone quarries, and stopped all the men at work belonging to the Peak Forest Canal Company ; and from there to Doveholes limekilns, which they stopped also.

On Friday, the mob having heard that Mr. Walsh's works were resumed, proceeded to the Furnis print-works with all haste, let his reservoir off, and did a great deal of damage. All the collieries have been stopped.

Wed. Sept. 7, 1842

NEW MILLS, HAYFIELD, &c.

Last week, about 260 special constables were sworn in at New Mills, and on Saturday about 150 at Hayfield. The mills and print works of these places begun to work on Tuesday morning: As far as regards the working population of these vicinities, we are happy to say, that very few have taken part in the lawless and savage proceedings of the mobs from other places, and those who may have foolishly joined them, are pretty well known and very closely watched. It will be a great chance if they escape prosecution and punishment.

The Six Points OF THE **PEOPLE'S** **CHARTER.**

1. A vote for every man twenty-one years of age, of sound mind, and not undergoing punishment for crime.
 2. The secret ballot. - To protect the elector in the exercise of his vote.
 3. No property qualification for members of Parliament - thus enabling the constituencies to return the man of their choice, be he rich or poor.
 4. Payment of members, thus enabling an honest tradesman, working man, or other person, to serve a constituency, when taken from his business to attend to the interests of the Country.
 5. Equal Constituencies, securing the same amount of representation for the same number of electors, instead of allowing small constituencies to swamp the votes of large ones.
 6. Annual parliaments, thus presenting the most effectual check to bribery and intimidation, since though a constituency might be bought once in seven years (even with the ballot), no purse could buy a constituency (under a system of universal suffrage) in each ensuing twelve-month; and since members, when elected for a year only, would not be able to defy and betray their constituents as now.
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The Local Historian

The following issues have been placed in New Mills Library.

Volume 44 No 3 July 2014

Peter Austin, 'Coppice management in south-east Hertfordshire 1550 -1910'.

Anthea Jones, 'Records of the Lloyd George survey of land values 1910: comparison and insights from Gloucestershire'.

Phoebe Merrick, 'Horses for the Great War'.

David Hey and Catherine Ferguson, 'Margaret Spufford (1935-2014): an appreciation'.

Alan G Crosby, 'Review article: Local Enterprise - some books published by local history societies or micro-presses'.

Various contributors, 'Review article: editions of primary sources for local and regional history': 'Royal Justice in Surrey 1258-1269': 'Crown revenues from Somerset and Dorset 1605': 'The Forest of Dean Eyre 1634': 'Letters of Robert Paston, 1st Earl of Yarmouth': 'Gloucestershire Feet of Fines 1360 -1508': 'Reading St Laurence churchwardens' accounts 1498-1570'.

Reviews:

The hunting tradition and the landscape 1600-1850: The story of the Welsh country house: printed maps of Lancashire; the first 200 years: Earls Colne's early modern landscapes.

Vol 44 No 4 (October 2014)

John Minnis, 'A Lost Elysium ? The motor car and England in the inter-war years'.

Graham M Clark, 'Black Isle [Rosshire] school logbooks (1875-1919): a statistical approach'.

Rebecca Probert, '“A Banbury Story”: cohabitation and marriage among the Victorian poor in “notorious Neithrop”'.

Frank Hughes, 'Was lunacy and idiocy a rural or an urban condition ? A comparison of two county asylum services 1845-1900'.

Josette Reeves, 'Liverpool's Womens War Service Bureau and its work, 1914-18'.

Mark Curthoys, 'ODNBs tenth anniversary: local history research in a national resource'.

Jonathan Coope and Judith Mills, 'Reflections on a co-production project: the social world of Nottingham's Green Spaces project'.

Reviews:

Victorian Banburyshire - three memoirs: Health and Hygiene in early modern

Norwich: Methodist records for family historians: A Methodist in the family:

Lincolnshire parish clergy c. 1214-1968 - a biographical register: A caring

county ? Social welfare in Hertfordshire from 1600.