



Grantham
Civic Society

www.granthamcivicsociety.co.uk

masthead artwork by Georgina Green

Newsletter

January 2022

Grantham Civic Society aims to:

Preserve the town's remaining fine or historically interesting buildings

Monitor the upkeep of green spaces

Keep a watching brief on new developments



Diary dates (booking details on page 4)

Please put the following dates in your diaries for further events.

Thursday 17 February

"New housing developments in Grantham"

Talk by Phil Jordan SKDC Principal Planner
Grantham Museum 2.30pm

Thursday 24 March

AGM with talk by a senior manager of contractors Galiford Try
About the new southern relief road being constructed at present.
Grantham Museum 2.00pm.

Monday 25 April

Quiz and buffet evening at Belton Park Golf Club 6.30 for 7.00pm
Details to follow

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From the Chairman

The pandemic year we will not forget finally came to an end. Organising our events was difficult but zoom meetings were a help. Our membership continued to climb and has reached 200 with over 1,700 followers on Facebook. Interest in Grantham's history and fine buildings remains as keen as ever.

Recent events have included the Christmas lunch in December, held at the Angel and Royal hotel, enjoyed by over 60 members.

The annual breakfast meeting on 13 January was well attended at Belton Park Golf Club when we were able to explain and hand out the attached 2022 programme.

We follow the planning applications to South Kesteven District Council closely and, on Thursday 17 February, we meet at Grantham Museum at 2.30pm to hear from SKDC principal Planner Phil Jordan on the progress of the various housing schemes in and around the town. I am especially looking forward to this and hope you can join us.

Finally just a reminder that 2022 subscriptions are now due and can be paid via the website, for those who have not yet done so, or by cheque to Ruth if you do not have computer access.

Courtney Finn



Grantham House

From Grantham Civic Trust Newsletter March 1979

Grantham House (formerly Hall Place) stands to the east of St Wulfram's Church, separated from it only by the narrow width of Castlegate. It has an interesting history. Although its south front has an eighteenth century appearance, it disguises a medieval building embodying a hall between two-storey ends. In the later years of the fifteenth century, the house belonged to Thomas Hall – a merchant of the staple of Calais and probably the richest of Grantham's inhabitants at that time. He built a chapel (now the Vestry of the parish church) as a chantry dedicated to St Katherine, and in July 1503, he was host to Princess Margaret on her way north to marry the King of Scotland, the Princess spending two nights in the house. His son Francis was the "Master Hall" who gave a night's lodging to Cardinal Wolsey on his last journey north.

His nephew, Arthur Hall, was the most celebrated (or notorious) member of the family. As M.P. for Grantham, he became embroiled with the Speaker and was committed to the Tower. Other troubles followed and towards the end of his life, he was lodged in the Fleet prison. He died in 1605, and his house was sold. In Charles I's reign it belonged to Edward Skipworth. Isaac Newton thought of ending his days there but died before becoming its owner. In 1734, it was sold by Richard Secker to Sir Richard Cust and it became the home of his widow Anne, the heiress of Belton.

Inside the house there is a late fourteenth century doorway which opened to the screened passage at the west end of the medieval hall. Two early Tudor windows were discovered in the north wall in 1913. The west end of the house seems to have been lengthened by Arthur Hall, the date 1574 is on the chimney at its north end. There is Elizabethan panelling in a room in this wing. Various alterations were made by the Custs to eighteenth century taste: sash windows, ceilings etc, and there is a lead cistern in the courtyard with Anne Cust's initials and the date 1737.

In 1921, the property was bought by Mr James Hutchinson, and three years later it passed to his sister Mrs Sedgwick, who had been the tenant since 1885. In 1944, her two daughters, the Misses Winifred and Marion Sedgwick presented the house, with 20 acres of grounds, to the National Trust, including Sedgewick Meadows in 1949. It is a precious greenbelt which can never be built on, close to the town centre.

Postscript

Major General Wyldbore-Smith and his wife Molly took over the house in 1968 and for a time they ran a restaurant serving dinners on four days a week from Thursday until Sunday, but the chef's menu ideas were far above the Grantham market and the chef went off to Glamis Castle working for the Earl of Strathmore. Brian Wyldbore-Smith retired from the Army in May 1968 and began work raising money for the Conservative Party.

He became a Director of the Board of Finance at Central Office under Margaret Thatcher from 1970 to 1992. He had a successful career but was at the Grand Hotel in Brighton in October 1984 when the IRA blew up part of the hotel. Brian Wyldbore-Smith narrowly escaped with his life. The bomb being in the next room to his.

His daughter Penny Herdman and her husband James took over Grantham House after her father died and lived there from 2008 until moving to Sleaford in 2018.

The gardens at Grantham House were created by Molly Wyldbore-Smith – a notable plantswoman who brought two container loads of trees from her previous garden which have become the mature trees you can enjoy today. Plaques in the garden celebrate Molly and Brian's lives and their wonderful garden.

Grantham House is now used by its close neighbour St Wulfram's Church, a fitting conclusion to its history to date.

Courtney Finn

Plague and Pestilence in C17th Lincolnshire



On 4 November John Manterfield delivered a fascinating talk to a full house at Grantham Museum about the outbreaks of plague that affected Grantham and other Lincolnshire towns some 400 years ago. Our town was badly affected in 1604 when about a fifth of the population of c 1500 people perished. Further outbreaks occurred in 1617 and again in 1625 and 1637. Examples were given of families where three or four members succumbed to the Pestilence.

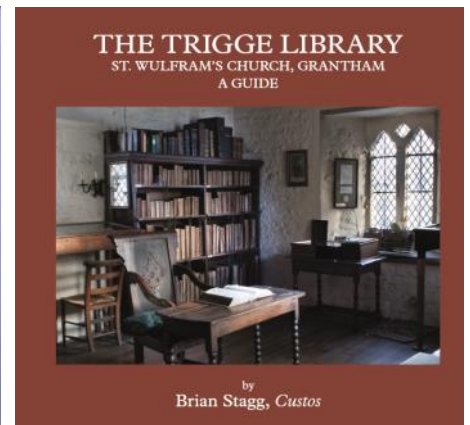
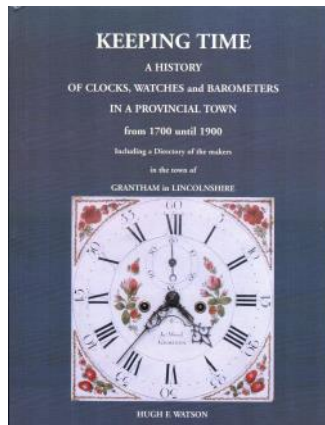
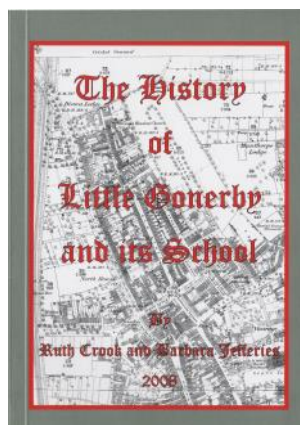
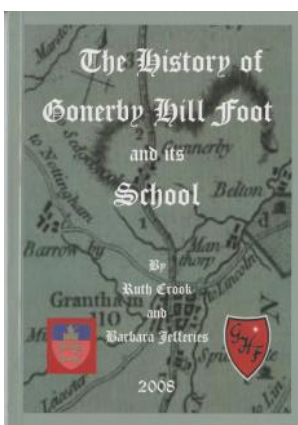
Of particular interest were the plague orders determined by the Privy Council in London and circulated to local magistrates to enforce. A copy dated 1636, for the Parts of Holland, has survived in the archives of the Spalding Gentlemen's Society. Under these orders, provision was made to ensure supplies of food and drink were maintained to infected families who were to be kept shut up in their own homes or removed to a pesthouse. Grantham's pesthouse was off Manthorpe Road and is first referred to in a lease of 1586. The Civic Society recently succeeded in getting this historic building listed. Keepers, probably widows, were employed to nurse those infected. Evidence from probate accounts show that the keepers were paid well for their dangerous work and local apothecaries were reimbursed for supplying strong drink to some households.

When the great plague of London was at its height in 1665, the Corporation of Grantham took action to appoint a watch to keep infected travellers out of town. The Alderman was to be notified of strangers and, if anyone died, local searchers were employed to inspect the bodies to ascertain the causes of death. Fortunately, the plague did not affect Grantham in 1665 although towns such as Newark and Cambridge were less fortunate. This epidemic was, of course, the reason Isaac Newton returned to Woolthorpe and had a very productive spell in Lincolnshire.

The talk concluded by drawing parallels with the recent Covid outbreaks and the measures taken to safeguard public health.

Book Shop

The History of Gonerby Hill Foot and its school by Ruth Crook and Barbara Jefferies (2008, 100pp) is now back in stock in the Civic Society bookshop at the special price of £4 (plus £2 UK p & p). Please message me if you would like a copy. We also have a few copies of ***The History of Little Gonerby and its school*** (2008, 164 pp) at £5 per copy. For a bigger read, the late Hugh Watson's ***Keeping Time***, (2008, 328pp), which covers the history of clock and watchmaking and retail in Grantham from 1700 to 1900, is available for just £19 (plus £3 UK p & p). We are also stocking, on behalf of the Friends of St Wulfram's Church, Brian Stagg's new book on ***The Trigge Library***. However there are over 25 items available in the shop so please visit www.granthamcivicsociety.co.uk to see the full range. If you order books on line it will come up with the correct additional amount for postage and packing. Also we continue to offer used books on our facebook site. **John Manterfield**



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Grantham Civic Society

www.granthamcivicsociety.co.uk

Membership

Membership forms can be obtained from Ruth Crook or downloaded from the website. Membership currently costs **£12 per annum** (£22 for two people at the same address)

In store for the coming months.....

Winter Talk

Thursday 17 February 2.30pm Grantham Museum
"New housing developments in Grantham"
A talk by Phil Jordan, Principal Planner at SKDC **Free entry**

AGM

Thursday 24 March 2.00pm Grantham Museum
To include a talk by a senior manager of contractors Galiford Try about the new southern relief road being constructed at present. **Free entry**

Quiz and buffet evening at Belton Park Golf Club

Monday 25 April 6.30 for 7.00pm
Details TBC Names and numbers attending, including any dietary requirements, to Graham Cook by Friday 15 April please

PLEASE MAKE ALL PAYMENTS FOR THE EVENTS ABOVE IN ADVANCE OF THE EVENT AND ON THE WEBSITE IF POSSIBLE RATHER THAN BY CHEQUE.

FOR DETAILS OF OTHER EVENTS PLANNED FOR THE YEAR PLEASE SEE THE FULL PROGRAMME FOR 2022 WHICH IS ALSO ON THE WEBSITE.

Recent events ~ Christmas Tree Festival at St Wulfram's Church and Christmas Meal at the Angel and Royal



Festive postbox topper on Castlegate

Many congratulations to the two enterprising ladies who made this charming addition to the postbox on Castlegate, opposite the Conservative Club carpark, to cheer us all up in the run-up to Christmas. It was a great pity that somebody saw fit to steal it at one point!

However, they must have had pangs of guilt and subsequently returned it to the ladies so hopefully it will make regular re-appearances at future festivities.

Graham Cook

