



NEWS REVIEW

Lincoln Record Society



THE COUNCIL AND OFFICERS

Welcome you to the 11th issue of the News Review!

For many of us Lincoln, the city and the county (not to mention the ancient diocese), is the centre of our universe. In many ways Lincoln has achieved greater prominence in recent times, and the Society through its officers and members continues to contribute to this. Many of you, I'm sure, will have visited Lincoln Castle to see Domesday Book unprecedently displayed in public outside London together with Magna Carta (1215) and the Charter of the Forest (1217), and the *Battles and Dynasties* conference at The Collection, where visitors marvelled at treasures as diverse as the *History of William Marshal*, the Van Dyck triptych of Charles I and the Hillyard miniature of Queen Elizabeth. I was fortunate enough to be involved in both in providing records advice, and Dr Nicholas Bennett, our General Editor, was the leading light in selecting exhibits and compiling the superb catalogue. In this issue of the *News Review* Lord Patrick Cormack, Chairman of the Historic Lincoln Trust, brings you more detail in his review of *Battles and Dynasties*, and other past and future exhibitions supported by the Historic Lincoln Trust.

In September the Society hosted an international research conference, brilliantly facilitated by Bishop Grosseteste University, Lincoln, to celebrate the legacy, political, legal and environmental, of the Charter of the Forest. Over three days, speakers of world renown presented cutting-edge research on the text of the Charter, its background and implementation, the archaeological impact and its modern legacy in terms of framing international legislation. Delegates also enjoyed a behind-the-scenes viewing of the Charter with Professor Nicholas Vincent, dinner at the Lincoln Hotel where Professor David Carpenter entertained us with a lecture, and a special tour to Clipstone and Laxton. This followed up our successful conference of 2015 to commemorate the eight hundredth anniversary of the sealing of Magna Carta. Look out for more details soon of our 2019 major conference, provisionally looking at The Wars of the Roses in Lincolnshire. In the more immediate term, preparations are in full swing for our 2018 Spring conference. To be held at Bishop Grosseteste University

on Saturday 28 April, this will examine the aftermath of war in Lincolnshire across eight centuries, although the primary focus will be on the twentieth century. Registration information is included with this edition of the *News Review* but details can be found on the website and all are welcome for what promises to be a stimulating day.

The coming year also promises to be full of exciting LRS publications as we publish three new volumes, one in each series: Nicholas Bennett's third volume of *Lincolnshire Parish Clergy*, focussing on the deaneries of Calcewath and Candleshoe; Dr Jill Redford's edition of the Alvingham Cartulary in the Kathleen Major Series of Medieval Records; and Dr Richard Olney's look at rural life in North Lincolnshire in his examination of the Dixons of Holton-le-Moor in the eighteenth century in our Occasional Series.



From a secretarial point of view, this year also promises new developments. The officers and Council have now signed off on a new Risk Register, which assesses the challenges the Society faces in fulfilling its charitable objectives and puts measures in place to mitigate that risk (for example, an Investments Policy and Reserves Policy). That will be monitored and reviewed annually. We are now faced with new legislation relating to Data Protection, and the officers will bring forward a policy to ensure the personal detail we collect is handled correctly. The Society is also being consulted on the future of heritage in the county, particularly the future of archive services. The 2018 Annual General meeting will be held at Bishop Grosseteste University, Lincoln, from 2pm on Saturday 28th October.

Moving on to this issue of the *News Review*, you will find a bumper edition. There are reports of the Lincolnshire element of The National Archives' Reformation on the Record conference from November, organised by our very own Communications Officer, Dr Marianne Wilson, an article by Aron Sterk on the Spalding Gentlemen's Society and the botanist, naturalist and philosopher Emmanuel Mendes da Costa, updates from Claire Kennan on her research into medieval Louth guilds and an insight into Peter Worsley's research on the Darwin farms. Plenty to get your teeth into!

Paul Dryburgh, Honorary Secretary



THE HISTORIC LINCOLN TRUST EXHIBITIONS

Past, present and future

Last year's *Battles and Dynasties Exhibition* which, as Chairman of the Historic Lincoln Trust, I helped put together, was a fairly spectacular success. 85,000 people visited the David Ross Magna Carta Vault in the Castle to see Domesday Book, on show for the first time ever in a provincial location. At the Collection, where the rest of the Exhibition was housed, there was enormous enthusiasm. Never before had the Matthew Paris Chronicles, the Life of William Marshal and all the other documents pertaining to the Battle of Lincoln been displayed together and I doubt very much whether they will ever come together again. Of course, whilst the Battle of Lincoln was the inspiration for the exhibition, we ranged much wider than that. Among the most popular items were Henry IV's Great Bible, the St Albans Chronicle with its wonderful depiction of the Battle of Agincourt, Holbein's drawings of Anne Boleyn and Bishop Fisher of Rochester and, of course, Van Dyck's triple portrait of Charles I, which is currently one of the stars of the show at the great Royal Academy Exhibition which seeks to bring together the gems of Charles I's great collection.

There were other treasures too which excited much comment – the Book of Hours which was found in Richard III's tent after the Battle of Bosworth, Mary Tudor's Book of Hours and the Death Warrant of Mary Queen of Scots. The visitors' book was full of appreciative comments including some which said that it was the best exhibition the writer had ever seen.

The exhibition came about not only because I was very anxious that we should commemorate the Battle of Lincoln but because I was equally anxious that the wonderful exhibition which we staged in 2015 – Lincolnshire's Great Exhibition – should not be seen as a single "one-off" event.

It is because of this, and because I believe passionately that great national collections should be shared more widely outside larger cities that I am currently, with the Trust, working on possible future exhibitions. I can already announce that in 2019 we will have another very special exhibition. This time we shall be commemorating the 200th anniversary of the birth of both Victoria and Albert by bringing, from the V&A, a special exhibition they are mounting to mark that particularly important dual anniversary. But we will not merely be bringing what people will have had a chance to see earlier in the year in London. No, from October 2019 until the beginning of 2020 we will also be displaying some great treasures from the V&A that were acquired in the first phase after the Museum's founding. Among these will be the famous Gloucester candlestick. Dating from the early 12th century, this is arguably the most important piece of church plate to survive from the early Middle Ages. And there will be other great treasures too, including at least one of Constable's greatest works. Looking beyond, 2020 is not only the 400th anniversary of the Mayflower – and we will be marking that around Lincolnshire and, I hope, with a special exhibition. It is also the 800th anniversary of the canonisation of Hugh of Lincoln *and* of Thomas of Canterbury who, fifty years before endured the most spectacular martyrdom in his cathedral. I have brought together a group from Lincoln and from Canterbury to discuss ways in which we may co-operate during that special year. We are already planning to bring the Becket Exhibition from Canterbury to Lincoln and add a number of exhibits relating to St Hugh.

All that we have achieved in 2015 and 2017, and all that we hope to achieve in the future would be impossible without generous donors and sponsors and a small dedicated team of experts. I am especially grateful to them all and in particular to Dr Alan Borg, former director of the V&A,



who has been honorary curator for both our exhibitions and will continue in that role in the future; and to Dr Nicholas Bennett, Honorary General Editor of the LRS, who edited the book of the *Lincolnshire's Great Exhibition*, and wrote and edited the catalogue of *Battles and Dynasties*. He is already working hard on the V&A exhibition and is part of the team from Lincoln and Canterbury.

Some of you may ask: what about 2018? Well, we have a special exhibition this year too. From October 27th until January 6th next year we will be displaying much of the

collection of modern British art amassed by David Ross. He has been the greatest patron and benefactor in Lincoln's recent history. He provided most of the funding for the Magna Carta Vault in the Castle grounds, he has pledged £1 ½ m towards the Lincoln Cathedral Connected scheme and he has been the major sponsor of both our exhibitions to date, and of much else besides. His collection is reckoned to be one of the very finest of its kind in the world.

Lord Patrick Cormack

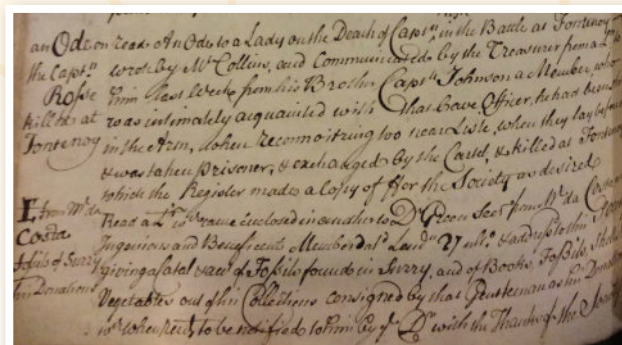


THE CORRESPONDENCE OF THE JEWISH NATURALIST EMANUEL MENDES DA COSTA AND THE SPALDING GENTLEMEN'S SOCIETY (1746-1757).

Emanuel Mendes da Costa (1717-1791) was a member of a wealthy and cultured Portuguese Jewish family who had taken refuge in London from the persecution of the Inquisition in the late seventeenth century. Like many eighteenth century gentlemen his interest turned to the new sciences, in particular to natural history and the study of fossils. He early became acquainted with a group that included Henry Baker and Peter Collinson, both members of the Royal Society and the Society of Antiquaries in London, and it was through this group that da Costa himself would be elected to both societies. Also associated with this group were Maurice Johnson and the renowned antiquarian William Stukely who had jointly founded the Spalding Gentlemen's Society in 1710. SGS is the only survivor of a number of Midland gentlemen's societies that regularly met to discuss the latest developments in the arts and sciences. Maurice Johnson, on the advice of Isaac Newton, was constantly on the look-out for corresponding members for the SGS who could keep the Society informed of the latest news, and da Costa who was gaining a reputation as *the* expert on fossils and who was also deemed an authority on Hebrew antiquities seemed a very likely candidate. On Johnson's recommendation, da Costa wrote to Spalding in November 1746 proposing himself as a corresponding member and by December had "with extreme pleasure" received a favourable reply from the gentlemen of Spalding. He immediately packed up a box of fossils as a gift to the Society and a couple of books for the Society's library (a condition of joining); and with them sent his first scientific 'paper' to be read at the Society's meeting; a description of the fossils he had been collecting in and around his home in Mitcham, Surrey and the neighbouring counties. This was to be his only direct communication with the Society as such, but he maintained a correspondence with the Society's secretary Dr John Green for a few more years, including a long letter on Dutch flora and various coins and medals (that, along with Green's correspondence, is still preserved in the Society's archive). Da Costa regularly exchanged

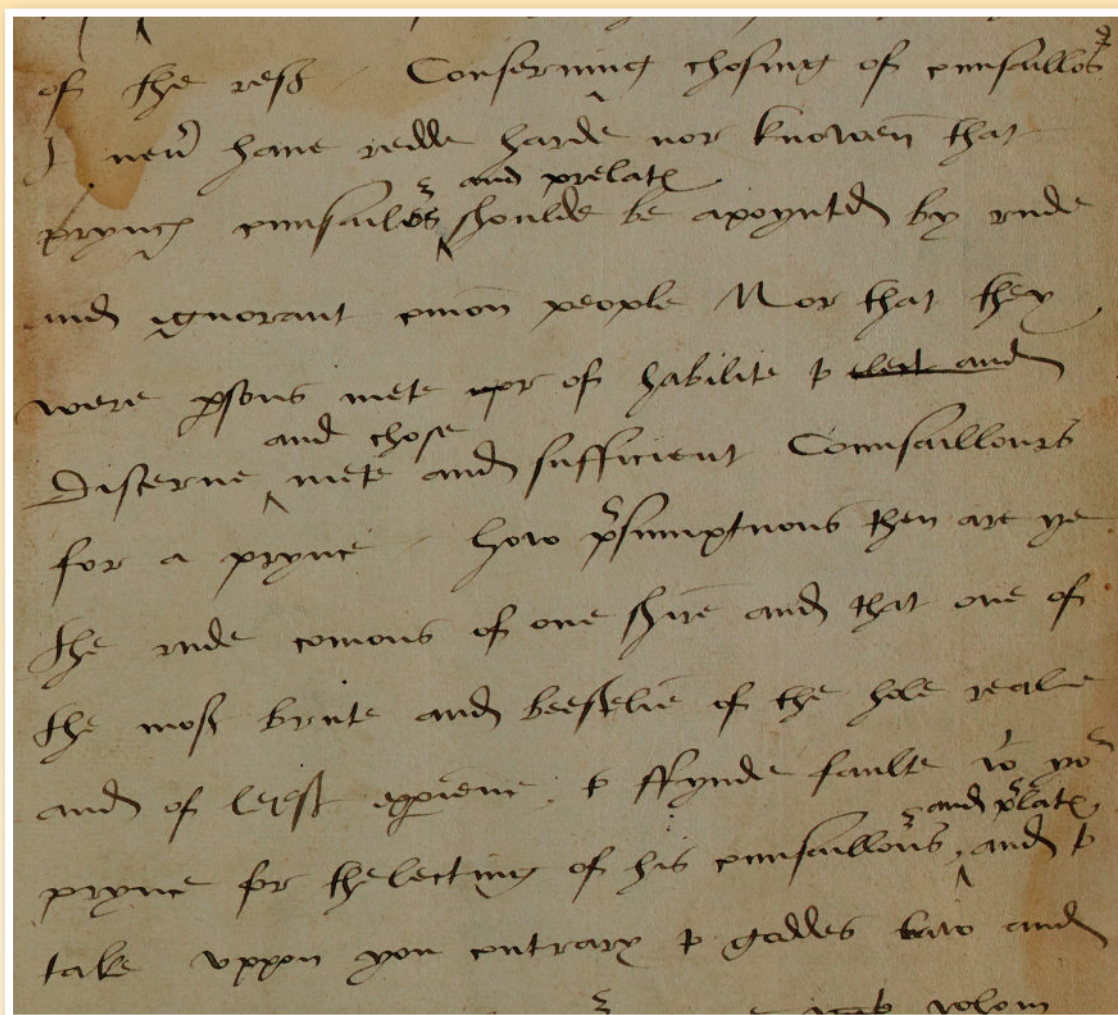
specimens and observations with Green; da Costa often suggesting that some of his offerings to Green (which included some Portuguese chickpeas from his father's garden at Mitcham) might be shared with the Society, while Green's botanical notes and specimens were often passed on to the Royal Society. But it was soon obvious that Spalding and the Fens were not a great source of fossils, and after Johnson's death in 1755 the Society went into something of a decline. However da Costa did contact Green finally in 1757 to forward him the Society's promised subscription copy of his *History of Fossils*. Perhaps the gentlemen of Spalding would have had little real interest in rocks and fossils even if the area had been a good area for geological finds, but it seems da Costa was somewhat disappointed with his Lincoln informants: in a later outline of a "Lithographic View of the Several Counties in England", written sometime after 1766, his description of Lincoln is terse; "Lincolnshire: I find not anything very remarkable." Nevertheless, the correspondence is a remarkable glimpse into contemporary interest in antiquity and the sciences in Georgian Lincolnshire.

Aron Sterk



SGS Minute Book 4; Nov.1746: Extract from the minutes of Spalding Gentlemen's Society recording the receipt of a letter, donations and paper on fossils from da Costa, "an Ingenious and Beneficent Member"





By permission of The National Archives
Henry VIII's letter to the commons of Lincolnshire, October 1536 TNA E 36/118, p.92)



REFORMATION ON THE RECORD

The Lincolnshire Perspective

2017 marked the 500th anniversary of the beginning of the Protestant Reformation in Europe, with the promulgation of Martin Luther's 95 theses. On the 3rd and 4th November 2017, The National Archives hosted 'Reformation on the Record', a two-day academic conference which brought together research relating to the Reformation which used The National Archives' records and also the records of other archives. This was organised by the Lincoln Record Society's Communications Officer, and so naturally, the impact of the Reformation in Lincolnshire was well-represented. Three members of the LRS presented papers at the conference and they have each shared a brief synopsis of their papers below.

Brute and Beastly Shire: The Lincolnshire Rising of 1536 – Nicholas Bennett

On 10 October 1536, representatives of the commons of Lincolnshire assembled in the chapter house of Lincoln Cathedral to hear the king's reply to the grievances which had prompted them to rise in rebellion. The royal letter

was read by Thomas Moigne, the Recorder of Lincoln. As he did so, he saw in the written text some words so highly derogatory that he attempted to omit them. But a local parson, Thomas Retford, was evidently looking over Moigne's shoulder, for he cried out that the letter was being false read. What were these words? And what were the grievances that had sparked this uprising, creating such a tense and combustible situation?

The market town of Louth, on the morning of Sunday 1 October 1536, was buzzing with rumours. No fewer than three sets of royal officials were at work in the neighbourhood. The commissioners responsible for the dissolution of smaller religious houses had reached the abbey of Louth Park and the nearby nunnery of Legbourne. A commission headed by Dr John Rayne, the Bishop's Chancellor, was carrying out a visitation of the diocesan clergy, examining their educational qualifications and their ability to preach the new reformed doctrines. Meanwhile another set of commissioners was engaged in the collection of a subsidy.

The rumours spread: that burials and christenings would be taxed; that the king would seize the treasures of the parish churches; that 'unlearned' clergy would lose their benefices; that churches within five miles of one another were to be closed. Contemporary wills and churchwardens' accounts demonstrate the central place of church buildings and their furnishings in popular piety. The people of Louth had adorned their church with costly plate and vestments, they had developed a musical foundation of remarkable sophistication to enhance the liturgy and, most famously, they had spent largely of their resources to build the magnificent spire which still dominates the town today.

The course of the Lincolnshire Rising has been told many times, from the spontaneous action of the Louth commons to protect the treasures of their church, their subsequent defiance of the bishop's registrar when he arrived to hold his visitation, the spread of the rebellion to other towns and villages, the murder of the diocesan chancellor. The impetus for the rising came from the commons; the gentry were coerced into unwilling leadership. The mutual suspicion and distrust of these groups reached a climax at the assembly in the Chapter House. When Moigne read out the offending passage of the king's letter, describing the rebels as the rude commons of one shire and that one of the most brute and beastly of the whole realm, there was uproar in the Cathedral. A plot by some of the more intemperate among the commons to ambush the gentry and kill them was foiled by the timely use of a side door.

On the following day the gentry capitulated and worked to persuade the commons to go home. Little by little the host melted away. The man given the task of pacifying Lincolnshire was Charles Brandon, Duke of Suffolk. The ringleaders of the rising were rounded up and confined in Lincoln Castle where they were closely interrogated. In March 1537 the offenders were punished. Hangings were carried out in Lincoln, Horncastle and Louth. Of the 32 condemned, 20 were priests or monks. Bishop Longland's register records the passing of some of these parish clergy, as they were replaced by new incumbents, providing eloquent testimony to the central role of religion in the Lincolnshire Rising of 1536.



Plaque commemorating the Lincolnshire Rising outside St James' church, Louth

Reforming Local Parochial Practice: Louth, its Parish Guilds and the Lincolnshire Rising – Claire Kennan

As part of the Reformation on the Record conference in November 2017, I gave a paper which examined the

role of Louth's parish guilds and their members in the Lincolnshire Rising using records available at The National Archives. This rising occurred only two years after the royal supremacy was written into law, and only months after Henry VIII's first reforms of religious worship. By 1536, parish guilds were well-established central parts of everyday life; they had been thriving in towns across the country, upholding the traditional Catholic way of life and supporting the parish and its activities. In Louth, they had also been instrumental in the completion of the new parish church spire in 1515.

1536 saw the dissolution of the smaller monasteries with a net income of £200 or less, which included Louth Park Abbey. It was not this event, however, which triggered the uprising in town. The catalyst for the uprising was the perceived threat to the parish church following rumours that the king's commissioners were to remove silver and liturgical items. The involvement of parish guilds in the uprising is undeniably clear. Thomas Foster and Robert Johnson both played leading roles in events, their families had strong guild connections often holding the office of guild alderman. The town's vicar, Thomas Kendall, whose rousing sermon is attributed with stirring the townspeople to action, also had close connections with the guilds. Kendall's father had been a member of the Holy Trinity Guild and that the guild actually lent the young Thomas Kendall money in 1514–15 to assist his education in Oxford. Whilst there is extensive work on the causes and failings of the rising, the significant links between parish guilds and events of October 1536 have previously been overlooked. It is clear that in towns, such as Louth, parish guilds were a vital component of everyday life, and when this way of life came under threat they took action.

The Reformation in a Lincolnshire parish: the importance of land tenure – Rob Wheeler

In contrast to the other papers, I examined the effects of the Reformation fifty years on, looking at a single parish. Harmston in 1580 appears to have been a place where the leading inhabitants selected their own minister and paid him by means of a subscription. At least that is the only interpretation I can place on a couple of wills that refer to the business. Richard Houldsworth appears to have ministered at Harmston from 1572 until 1583, when he was suspended from Boothby in 1585, probably because he refused to subscribe to Archbishop Whitgift's Articles. He was then appointed one of the household chaplains to the 3rd Earl of Huntingdon. He shows every sign of being a puritan, and quite a well-connected one.

This is of course not the sort of thing that was supposed to happen. It came about partly because the canonically appointed vicar, George Scarrowe or Skyrrowe, having changed his views at Queen May's accession, felt unable to change back again on her death. At least, he vanishes from the record after August 1558. There was a related problem in that vicar was remunerated by a pension of £7 6s 8d charged on the rectory. This was insufficient to support a married clergyman even before the inflation of

the sixteenth century had severely diminished its value.

It is worth examining who these leading inhabitants were. One was a younger son of William Thorold of Hough and Marston - whose will marks him out as a puritan. The other three had all purchased ex-monastic land in 1551 from its original purchaser, an officer of the Court of Augmentations. All four men were working farmers (in the modern sense of the word). A large part of the monastic land had been granted on longish leases shortly before the houses in question were surrendered to the Crown. By 1580, most of those leases had fallen in; land values had risen, and the three landowners were in a good position to demand much larger rents or to add the land to their own farms. Indeed, all these leading inhabitants were notable as engrossers. The influence these four leading inhabitants exerted over the rest of the village cannot be measured directly, but it almost certainly exceeded the power wielded by a typical eighteenth-century squire.

By the time that Richard Houldsworth left for Boothby in 1583, Scarowe must have been dead, because the new man, Constantine Harison, was presented to the vicarage (by the Crown as patron) in the normal way. Other things are less normal: his presentation, ordination as deacon and as priest all took place in a period of three months. He too was of the godly party; and his entire career was at Harmston. We only know how he was supported from the Lay subsidy of 1598, where he appears as a £3 taxpayer (E179/179/612 at TNA). Again, this is something that ought not to be happening, and it is most likely to have come about through the distortion of the subsidy that

had occurred in the course of the century by systematic under-declaration, with the result that taxpayer status had become informally attached to the holding of certain farms. That Harison was a farmer is confirmed by his probate inventory. There was no glebe attached to the vicarage, so it would appear that one or more of these four principal inhabitants, at the same time as they were squeezing out existing lease-holders, had made land available so that the new vicar could support himself. It looks as though, on Houldsworth's departure, they found a suitably godly young man, and that his ordination and his presentation were consequences of their choice.

One of the themes of the conference was the range of records available at TNA to support the study of the Reformation. Several papers could be summarized as: 'to learn more about such-and-such, go to this class'. My paper did not fit the pattern. To the enquirer who wants to learn more about the puritan wing of the church, it is of little assistance to list the standard sources that would be drawn upon by anyone looking at the general history of a particular parish in this period. If there is one source I would draw attention to it is the lists of individual taxpayers at E179. These are awkward records to handle; survival is patchy and many are difficult to read. One would not wish to trawl through large numbers of them looking to see how many clerks like Harison appear in them. But if they were scanned and made available online, matters would be altogether different. Perhaps then we might learn how many parishes supported their ministers in the way that Harison was supported.



THE DARWIN FARMS OF LINCOLNSHIRE

A chance decision to visit Beesby village almost 5 years ago led to the May 2017 launch at the Erasmus Darwin House in Lichfield, of a new book *'The Darwin Farms: the Lincolnshire estates of Charles and Erasmus Darwin and their family'*. Several bibliographies of both Charles and of Erasmus Darwin very briefly mention that their family once owned farms in the county; yet surprisingly none of the solely Lincolnshire based histories expound upon this interesting situation. Charles Darwin was said to have had a farm at Beesby near Alford, a fact which on face value appeared anomalous. Even such a distinguished county expert and Louth resident, the late David Robinson, declared that he was unaware of any Darwin family farms in the county.

Initial enquiries in Beesby village about the location of 'Beesby Farm' drew a blank but a return visit led to 'Beesby Grange Farm' being the prime suspect. There its current owner, Liz Siddorn, confirmed the former Darwin link. She kindly allowed various legal documents in her possession to be examined and these showed that this farm

had been purchased in 1846 by Robert Waring Darwin, the father of Charles Darwin, on behalf of his son. Later it emerged that the rationale was to provide a recurrent income for Charles who was 'strapped for cash' at the time. But no further evidence was available which shed light on why this farm was purchased. After all, it was located some 250 km from Charles's home at Down House in Kent or slightly less distant, Shrewsbury, where he father lived.

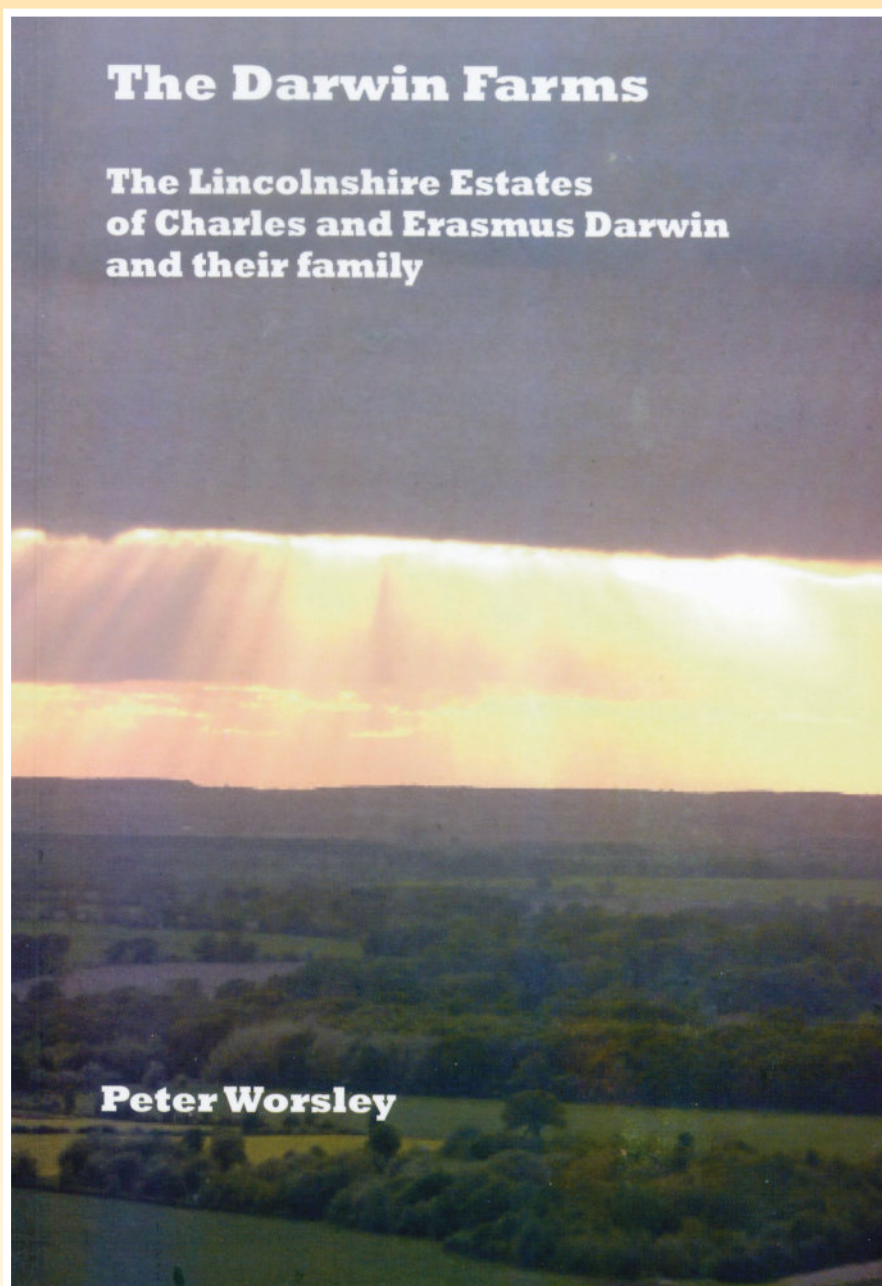
Recourse to a web search revealed that Lincolnshire Archives had received a large number of documents from a Ms Dorothy Higgins of Alford in 1968 - this was named 'The Higgins Deposit'. These papers, correspondence, architectural drawings and maps, related to the business of an estate management agency owned by the Higgins family (primarily her father, uncle and grandfather), which was active from the early 1820s until the early 1930s. Throughout this period, they acted as land agents for four farms owned by members of the Darwin family. The receipt of the Higgins material was recorded by Richard Olney, who was an archivist at the time of the deposit, in

the Lincolnshire Archives Annual Report for 1975. Further searches found that the deposit had been examined by workers from the University of Cambridge based 'Darwin Correspondence Project' as it contained several original hand-written letters by Charles Darwin himself. These letters were published, although it was clear that the amplification notes regarding the county geography were incorrect. Unfortunately, the deposit had remained uncatalogued for four decades and hence effectively embargoed to present day researchers.

It is admitted that this unsatisfactory situation caused some frustration as seemingly a significant new insight into Lincolnshire history was being prevented by a lack of resources. By good fortune this dilemma was recognised by the then senior archivist, Dr Mike Rogers, and over three years the Darwin farms element of the Higgins deposit was progressively made available through the diligent work of archivist James Stevenson. This proved to be a symbiotic process as concurrent research outside the archives was providing a fuller understanding of the context of the deposit papers. Integration of archival data, field work, published work and historic map analysis led to the Darwinian farm network in the county from Tudor times to 1943 being unravelled.

Interestingly, it was discovered that Charles Darwin himself undertook the first research into the Lincolnshire Darwin family when he wrote a biography of his grandfather Erasmus Darwin. This was first published in 1879 and in fuller form in 2003. Although sketchy, Charles Darwin drew attention to the Cleatham township, which lay just north of Kirton in Lindsey. A piece of good luck came with the discovery of a paper by Eleanor Russell examining the land ownership changes at Cleatham area in the festschrift volume dedicated to her husband Rex. She had been shown a legal abstract of sale dated 1801 which outlined 21 separate land purchases as an early Darwin farmer expanded his estate from 1624 to 1710.

The story of the Lincolnshire Darwin Farms would still be untold if the Higgins Deposit had not been catalogued. Obviously, the topic has an intrinsic value to Lincolnshire historians and adds to the county heritage. But it is the link to two of the greatest scientists born in Britain which



escalates its importance. And the key to unlocking this story lies within the archives in Lincoln.

Generally, authors like to think that their work is original but in the crowded field of the global 'Darwin Industry' this is now exceedingly difficult. For example, the recently published new biography of Charles Darwin by the historian A.N. Wilson has brought forth widespread criticism in part since he has challenged the cherished view that Charles Darwin could do no wrong but in doing so presented little new factual material. In contrast, however, 'The Darwin Farms' has been categorised by Professor Sandra Herbert, the leading American Darwin scholar, as a work that 'long after many of the Darwin books have been forgotten, will endure'. The 'Higgins deposit' is a resource of great importance to the international community of Darwin scholars and would repay further study.

Peter Worsley



RESEARCH IN PROGRESS

'Guilds and Society in Late Medieval Louth, Lincolnshire c. 1389-1550'

I am currently in the fourth year of my PhD at Royal Holloway, University of London under the supervision of Professor Nigel Saul. In my thesis I combine a detailed study of parish guilds in Louth, Lincolnshire, with reflections on wider issues including pre-Reformation popular piety, sociability and the part guilds played in the formation of community identities. The period c.1450-1550 saw these associations develop from purely religious, devotional and voluntary outlets for parishioners into elite associations which leading members of the community, often merchants, used to gain access to political office and to exert their influence in the vicinity. In particular, the thesis looks at the town's two major guilds, the Holy Trinity and the Blessed Virgin Mary. For these guilds, a range of evidence survives at both The National Archives and Lincolnshire Archives, including their 1389 guild returns from Richard II's national guild enquiry, documents of the guilds' incorporation, two detailed account books, churchwardens' account books, a number of wills, and the documents of the guilds' dissolution.

The first chapter begins with the current state of guild scholarship and an examination of past historiography, which allows for the parish guilds of Louth to be placed in their historical context. My research builds on general guild historiography, from antiquarian works by Joshua Toulmin Smith and H. F. Westlake, to recent studies by Gervase Rosser and local studies by Virginia Bainbridge (Cambridgeshire), Ken Farnhill (East Anglia), and Caroline Barron (London). I then examine the foundation, economy, and administration of the town of Louth to demonstrate how and why two guilds, in particular, came to be the leading associations there. I also look at the foundation and development of the town's two leading guilds for the period c.1389-1450, which is when parish guild foundation was flourishing across the country. The main body of my work then discusses the membership, activities, income, expenditure and property ownership of the two guilds based on evidence found in their surviving accounts, along with discussions on the guilds' part in the formation of a community identity through their work

in the town and parish. In particular I explore the guilds' involvement in the building of the new spire at St James' church and the enhancement of the church fabric and liturgy. The last two chapters discuss the impact of early religious reforms introduced by Henry VIII, including the involvement of guild members in the Lincolnshire Rising of 1536, and the disruption and continuity afforded by Edward VI's Reformation in the mid-sixteenth century.

My thesis hopes to further contribute to our understanding of the important role these voluntary organisations played in provincial towns and to provide additional evidence that pre-Reformation religious culture was indeed flourishing. While other regions have been extensively researched in terms of guild activity, there is still much research to be done in Lincolnshire and I hope that my thesis on Louth can contribute to this.

Claire Kennan

