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NEWS REVIEW

Lincoln Record Society

THE COUNCIL AND OFFICERS WOULD LIKE TO

welcome you to the seventeenth edition of the News Review!

The beautiful volumes produced by the Lincoln Record Society have long taken a central place in my own research and that of my students in Canterbury and now in Lincoln. When I joined the Society in 1998, I was a doctoral student entering the final year of study at King's College, London, working on a thesis on women in thirteenth-century Lincolnshire. I first became aware of the wealth of medieval records that Lincolnshire had to offer, while researching my earlier MA dissertation on 'Widows, property and the courts in early thirteenth-century Lincolnshire'. Most of my time in the summer of 1996 was spent in the Local History Room at the Institute of Historical Research in London, gathering references to litigious widows in a splendid volume, *The Earliest Lincolnshire Assize Rolls, A.D. 1202-1209*, edited by Doris Mary Stenton, Lincoln Record Society 22 (1926), which is still one of my favourite editions of medieval legal records. Here, I encountered tantalizing glimpses of the lives of women like Agnes, the widow of Alan the falconer, who successfully recovered a third of seven acres of land in Wrangle as her dower, or widow's share of her dead husband's property, from a man named Gilbert in 1206 (Assize Roll 480, entry no. 1504). During the legal proceedings, it came to light that Agnes's husband had given the land in question to the canons of Lincoln cathedral before his death, and the canons were able to produce Alan's charter, recording his gift. Fortunately for Agnes, the royal justices and the Lincoln canons were sympathetic to her plight, and they recognized her legal right to the property, awarding her possession for life.

Lady Stenton's detailed introduction to *The Earliest Lincolnshire Assize Rolls* also did much to aid my own understanding of the operation of royal justice in the localities, and of the different types of civil and criminal litigation that feature in the medieval records. Entries from the same volume formed the basis for part of my chapter on criminal women in my doctoral thesis and in my book, *Women in Thirteenth-Century Lincolnshire* (Woodbridge, 2007; paperback 2015) that emerged from it. There were some sobering cases, like that involving Juliana of Creeton, who accused the Lincolnshire knight, Sir Adam de Merle, of beating and robbery in 1202. Adam's absence overseas in royal service for King John prevented him from answering this charge. Adam and his pledges found themselves in hot water, since, as it was recorded in the roll: 'It is not lawful for anyone' accused of breaking the king's peace 'to go out of the land before he has been before the judges skilled in the law' (Assize Roll 479, no. 764).

What is also intriguing about Juliana's case is the fact that Juliana had decided to pursue Adam in the courts for beating and robbery at all, since these two offences fell outside the permitted scope for personal prosecution by a woman in the early thirteenth century. When another woman, Hawise daughter of Thurstan tried to sue to two men, Walter of Croxby and William the miller, for the death of her father and for wounding her in Manley wapentake, her case was dismissed by the royal justices on the grounds that 'A woman has no appeal [i.e., right to bring a personal prosecution] against anyone save for the death of her husband or ... rape' (Assize Roll 479, no 690). It is curious that, in Juliana of Creeton's case, the royal justices focused, instead, on Adam's failure to follow proper procedure.

The cases within *The Earliest Lincolnshire Assize Rolls* offer some fascinating insights into life in Lincolnshire during the reign of King John. Its editor, Lady Doris Stenton, was the teacher of another leading medieval scholar, Professor Michael Clanchy, who sadly passed away in January 2021. Michael was an exceptionally talented academic, whose →

books *From Memory to Written Record* (3rd edition, 2013), *England and its Rulers, 1066-1307* (4th edition, 2014), and *Abelard: A Medieval Life* (1999) still grace university reading lists today. He examined my doctoral thesis and was a friend to me, as he was to so many others. After my viva in 1999, I visited his house for afternoon tea, and he gave me a full set of the Lincoln Record Society's *Registrum Antiquissimum*. I still draw on the contents of these volumes in my research on the lives of medieval women, most recently in a chapter on 'The Chivalric Woman', published in November 2020, where I examined the will of Lady Agnes de Condet (c. before 1222-3), which was printed in appendix II of the first volume of the *Registrum Antiquissimum*, with a wonderfully detailed analysis of her family background and connections. I last heard from Michael in the autumn of 2020, when he wrote to tell me about a lecture on Lincoln Cathedral's Angel Choir that he thought I might enjoy. He will be very much missed.

As the University of Lincoln's new(ish) Professor of Medieval Studies and now a councillor of the Lincoln Record Society, I am very much looking forward to participating fully in the life of the Society. The Society and University's new co-organized research seminars, which are open to all members, launched earlier this year on Zoom, with a brilliant talk by the Society's very own Dr Marianne Wilson on 'Peacock Feathers and Paternosters: The Post-Mortem Commemorative Identity of Sir Thomas Burgh (c. 1430-1496)'. The Society and University are also very much looking forward to Dr Alison McHardy's co-hosted lecture on Wednesday 21 April 2021 at 6pm on Zoom, when she will speak about 'The voice of the people? Petitions from Lincolnshire' during the University's annual Medieval Week, organized by my colleague Dr Renee Ward. Two of our LRS Officers, Dr Marianne Wilson and Dr Paul Dryburgh, will also be involved in Medieval Week, delivering a free online workshop 'Power, Piety and Plague: the Northern Church in the 14th Century' jointly hosted by the LRS and the AHRC funded research project: 'The Northern Way': the Archbishops of York and the North of England, 1304 – 1405. We hope that you will all be able to join us online for these virtual events.

This edition of the News Review features an exciting contribution from one of our newest members, Holly Shipton, on her research about the manor of Old Ross, which won the Lincoln Record Society award for the best Medieval Studies MA dissertation. We also have an interesting article from Ken Redmore introducing the second entry in our Data Series, hosted on the LRS website, which outlines his observances concerning the day book of a Lincolnshire threshing contractor prior to the First World War. And finally, another really fascinating early twentieth-century piece from Dr Nicholas Bennett which explores the possibilities of lock-down research starting with a postcard of Kirton in Holland. We hope you enjoy the latest edition of the News Review.

Louise Wilkinson

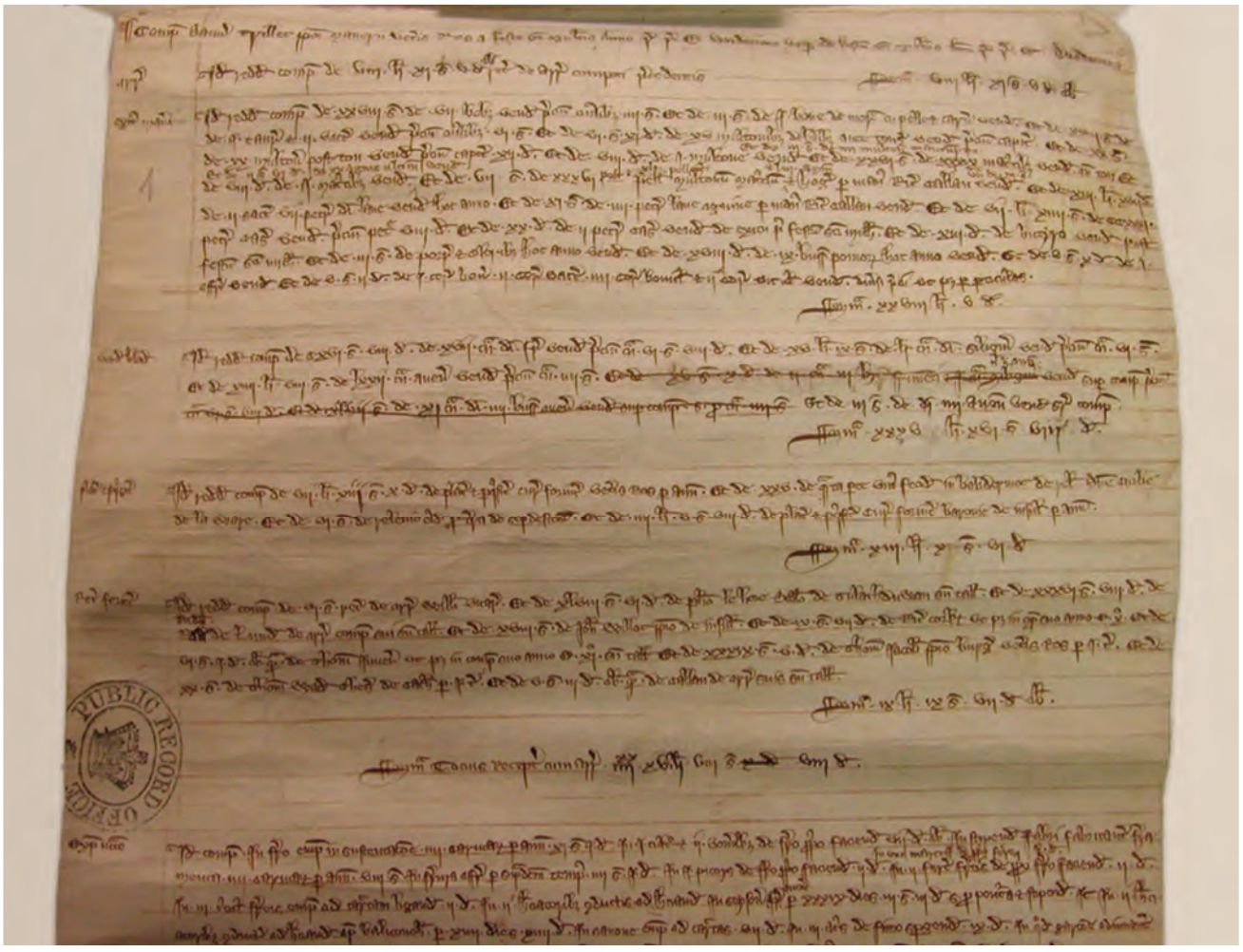
EXPANSION AND INVESTMENT ON OLD ROSS (COUNTY WEXFORD, IRELAND)

Having recently completed my MA in Medieval Studies at the University of Lincoln and, to my surprise, winning the Lincoln Record Society award for best MA Medieval dissertation, I was asked to write a short piece about my research for this publication. This research proved to be a substantial undertaking during the pandemic, so I want to thank my supervisor Dr Mark Gardiner for all of his help, and Dr Paul Dryburgh for getting photos of the documents to me.

When Roger Bigod, 5th earl of Norfolk and earl Marshal (1306), fell out of favour with Edward I during the late thirteenth century, his brother and heir surrendered his earldom and Marshalsea to the king. Among the records surrendered were a number of the manorial accounts of Roger Bigod's Irish estates, namely the accounts of his largest and most lucrative Irish manor, Old Ross in County Wexford in southeastern Ireland. The accounts represent the most detailed and informative manorial accounts from Anglo-Norman Ireland in this period, as the relocation of these accounts to London after 1301 meant that they were not lost when the Public Record Office of Ireland in Dublin was destroyed in 1922. Despite the wealth of data afforded by the accounts, the Irish manors of Roger Bigod were, until recently, overlooked and granted a lesser significance than other manors, such as those he held in East Anglia and Wales, if they were mentioned at all. My MA dissertation sought to re-evaluate them.

Though Bigod's absence from Ireland was traditionally seen as evidence of his indifference to his estates there, further study revealed an established hierarchy of trusted Englishmen employed to carry out the tasks of the absent lord. This framework of officials not only highlighted Bigod's need to control the manor, as it was a source of considerable income, but also allowed for strong tenurial relationships with significant and worthy men, strengthening the hierarchical nature of English influence on the manor.

The topography and location of Old Ross in southeastern Ireland facilitated an increasing rate of cultivation and expansion over the thirteenth century. Old Ross benefited from nutrient-rich soils and the generally undulating landscape of the hinterlands of the southeast. The vast degree of investment in the land and commitment to technological advancement demonstrated by the



The Manorial Account of 1283-4: Image by Margaret Murphy: TNA PROSC6/1238/45.

manorial accounts conveys the importance of Old Ross as an agricultural and commercial entity. There is ample evidence of land improvements being made on Old Ross in the 1280s, with sanding being the most frequently used fertilisation technique. There were clearly deliberate steps being taken by Bigod's tenants to improve the quality of soil, which in turn would have contributed greatly to the rapid growth in production between 1282 and 1288.

A growing inventory of livestock contributed to the income of the manor via the direct sale of animal produce, but primarily the stock expanded in order to facilitate new agrarian techniques brought over from England, techniques designed to maximise yields. The largest flock held were sheep, which grew from 1,500 in 1282 to 2,100 in 1288. Old Ross specialised in wool production, with the sale of meat and milk being a by-product of this system. Similar can be said for the majority of livestock on Old Ross, with most being held for the purpose of grain production; even the sheep were used to manure the fields. The increasing number of sheep and cattle meant new land was needed for these developments. Investment in buildings and enclosures for storage is evidence of the fact that the scale of agricultural practices was increasing rapidly.

During the years 1282-1288, acreage under wheat increased by 386.7%, whereas the acreage under oats saw an increase of 46.5%. The acreage under rye saw an inconsistent growth, only 3.6% overall between 1282 and 1288. The grain and stock accounts provide a detailed account of how the grain was disposed of, with, at the height of their sales, up to 50% of oats and 70% of wheat being sold. In 1287-88, though, the sale of oats dropped to only 15%, while the price of wheat per crannock (an ancient measure) dropped significantly to only 3*s*, from 8*s* in 1286. Old Ross saw a swift decline from here and by the beginning of the fourteenth century was barely in use. This decline, seen also throughout most of the southeast of Ireland, seems to reflect the decline in agricultural economy seen in England during the same period, though further research would be required to outline this relationship further.

The manor in medieval Ireland was the system of agriculture from which the entire economic system of Anglo-Norman Ireland functioned, and the vast degree of investment and expansion are indicative of its significance as a commercial resource for its English lord. The accounts of Old Ross only provide a snapshot of the agrarian economy of the southeast, but can be contextualised and understood within the shifting economy of the British Isles.

Holly Shipton

A THRESHING CONTRACTOR'S DAYBOOK

Lincoln Record Society Data Series

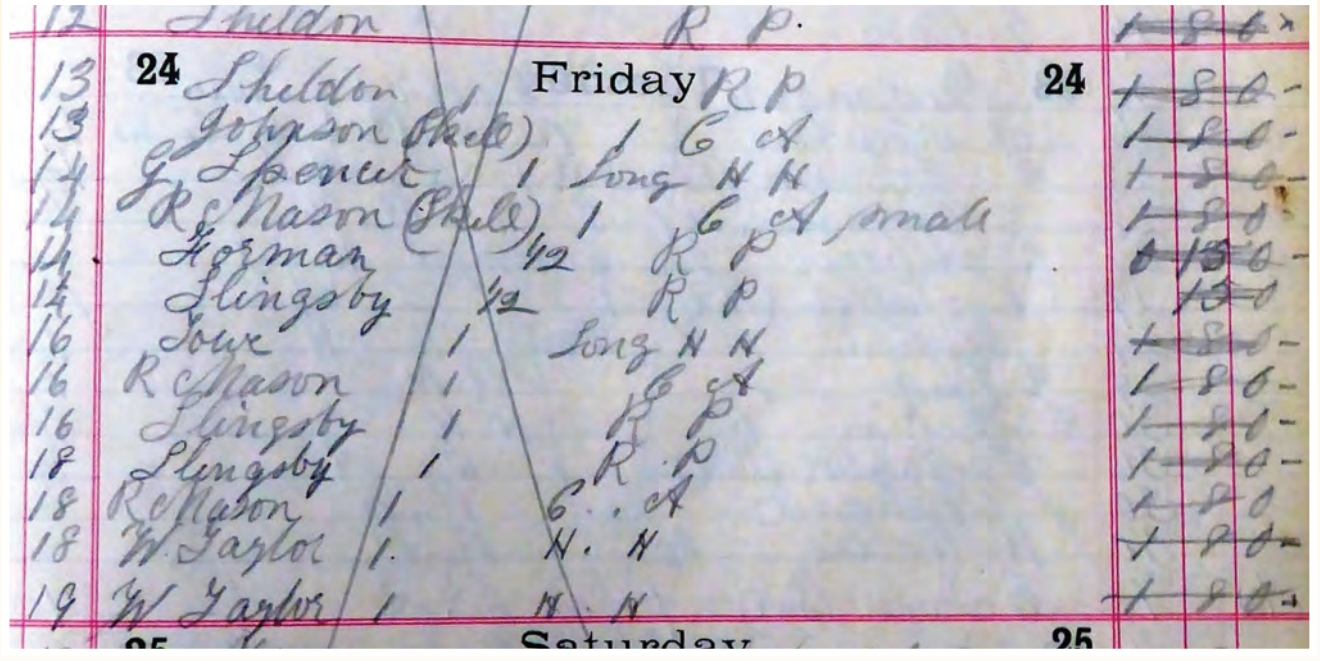
Handwritten notes in pencil entered in an old desk diary are not the easiest source material with which to work, especially when the writing is barely legible and is smattered with idiosyncratic abbreviations and misspellings. Nevertheless, perseverance with the early twentieth-century daybook of a threshing contractor presented in this challenging format has been well rewarded. Examination of the book's entries yields a surprisingly large range of useful information, not only about the practices of a threshing contactor but also about the local farming scene in the period just before the First World War.

The book (Lincolnshire Archives, MISC DON 1802/1) records the threshing contract work of the village blacksmiths at Thorpe on the Hill, William and Henry Reed, from 1909 to 1915. One's first reaction is to question whether the activities of a threshing contractor, a mundane occupation, can be the source of new and significant data. For one thing, it is only a few decades since cereal crops were threshed in this way and the memory of this activity is still fresh for many. Moreover, there are many published reminiscences and well-researched accounts of the early twentieth-century threshing operation. But, common through they are, these records rarely offer the level of detail set out in the Reeds' daybook. It gives us a detailed insight into the everyday activities of a major player in the rural scene of the early twentieth century. And beyond that, there are inconsistences and variations in the record that raise significant questions about the organisation of this rural business and about the practices of Lincolnshire farmers at the time.

The list of farms visited by the Reeds with their three threshing sets is impressive. Their work seldom took them more than six or seven miles from Thorpe, yet they visited more than 120 different farms in the course of a year (many of whom received several visits). This reflects the very fragmented ownership of agricultural land a hundred years ago when many holdings were often only a few acres in extent. It also indicates that each of the small farmers in the Thorpe area grew cereal crops and brought in the local contractor for a session of threshing, even though it might only take an hour or two.

Threshing followed a consistent pattern over the year. Almost as soon as the harvest had been completed, near the beginning of September, all the contractor's threshing sets were fully deployed. By the late autumn, the demand began to fall off, though threshing continued through the winter months and declined to just an occasional day in the summer. Variations in this pattern point in one instance to an abnormally early harvest and in another to wartime conditions affecting the contractor's workload.

The self-moving steam engine was a versatile source of power which transformed several operations on the farm. The Reeds used their traction engines principally for threshing cereal grain and for the associated task of chaff cutting. From time to time they were also used for threshing other crops, such as clover, beans and mustard,



Lincolnshire Archives, MISC DON 1802/1

and occasionally the engines were hired out for timber sawing and other rural work. Despite this range of activity, it is apparent that the machinery stood idle for long periods, especially between May and August. The contractor's men – there were seven regular employees – clearly had to find other occupations in the summer months, which fortunately coincided with the period when additional labour was needed for haymaking and harvesting on the farms.

A major disappointment of the study has been the failure to discover exactly where the contractor's customers were located. To track the movement of the threshing sets accurately from farm to farm and village to village could have added a great deal to an understanding of how the contractor organised his work. Unfortunately, the daybook identifies customers by surname only and seldom adds the name of farm or village. The examination of three contemporary sources: the 1911 Census, records related to the Finance Act (1909-1910) and a trade directory for 1913, has helped confirm the identity of some customers and fix the precise location of some farms, but has yielded far less pertinent information than might have been expected.

The identities of the contractor's employees are also frustratingly elusive. Single initial letters, which probably represented Christian names or surnames, are used throughout the book to indicate the men who worked with the threshing sets. Scrutinising the 1911 Census returns for Thorpe, taken in April, reveals only one man described as a 'traction engine driver for a threshing machine'; the remainder of the contractor's men were presumably engaged in other occupations at this slack time of the year, and their link to the Reeds' business is unrecorded.

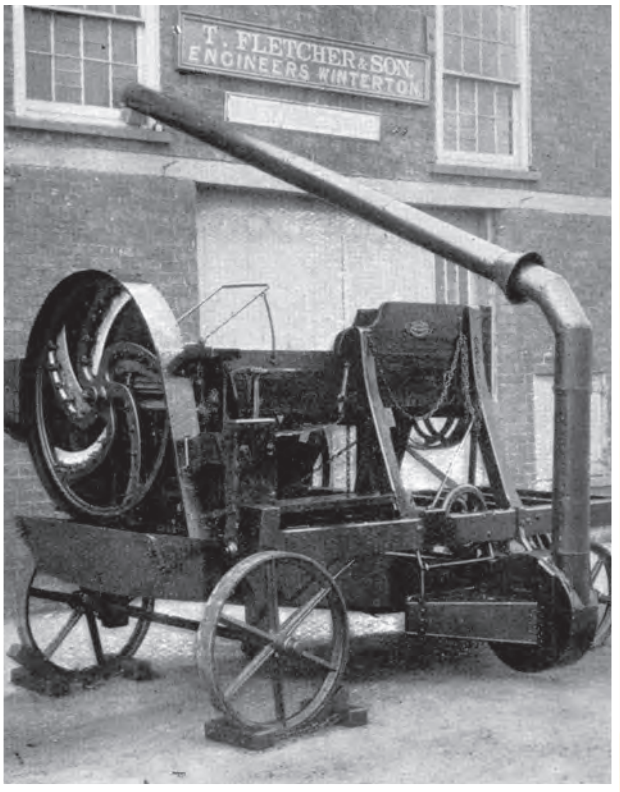
To have had a record of the contractor's business running beyond the first year of Great War and into the 1920s could have provided much useful additional data. For example, an indication of how their work was affected by the 'plough up' campaign and other abnormal conditions introduced in the later years of the war. The Reeds' business closed in about 1920, for uncertain reasons, and to have charted its decline, whether slow or abrupt, through the daybook entries would have been of interest.

The Reed brother's daybook is an untidy document with considerable limitations, but it has undoubted value. I am extremely grateful to the late Ruth Tinley for drawing it to my attention. Extracts from the daybook in spreadsheet format, with accompanying essay, have been uploaded to the LRS website as part of the Data Series. You can access this from the homepage of the LRS website by clicking on the drop down menu for 'Publications' and selecting the entry 'A Lincolnshire Threshing Contractor, 1901-15' or through this link: http://www.lincoln-record-society.org.uk/data-series/a-lincolnshire-threshing-contractor-1909-15/

Ken Redmore

Early twentieth-century threshing scene: Collection of Ken Redmore

Reed brothers with portable engine: Collection of Ken Redmore



Chaff Cutter: Collection of Ken Redmore

Postcard image of the interior of the church of St Peter and St Paul, Kirton in Holland: Collection of Dr Nicholas Bennett

ZEPPELINS OVER KIRTON

Over the past months, many historians will have been hampered in their research by the difficulties of access to their sources. Libraries and archives offices have been closed for long periods and at the best of times access has been limited. We are all indebted to those institutions who have made their records accessible via the internet but sooner or later the researcher will come up against a barrier caused by the impossibility of consulting a key source.

A period of lockdown, however, can offer the historian alternative activities. Sorting out that cupboard full of old research files, or putting one's books into better order, can not only provide more satisfactory conditions for work; such a project can also furnish in itself the starting point for a historical investigation. In the present case, a routine task of sorting through a small collection of postcards featuring Lincolnshire churches, assembled over the years by occasional purchases at antique stalls, provided an unexpected glimpse into a visit to Kirton in Holland during the dark days of World War I.

The photograph on the postcard depicts the interior of the church of St Peter and St Paul in Kirton, giving special prominence to the rood screen. The card itself was addressed to Master Douglas Taylor at 64 Cromwell Road, Yeovil, Somerset. The message, dated from Kirton on Tuesday 18 January 1916, reads:

'My dear Douglas

Here's a "return" for your card of Frome. This place is near Boston, close to a corner of the Wash, and owing to the fear of Zeppelin raids the lighting restrictions are awful, and I might add, absurd. I've spent most of this morning on my brother's motor bicycle and so far have not been killed, or arrested for driving without a licence! Good luck for your 2nd term.

Yours affectionately

H. C. T. HOSE'

The many sources available to us, through the volumes of the Lincoln Record Society, other historical publications and by means of the Internet, make it possible to sketch in some of the background to this postcard. Douglas Taylor, born on 8 July 1902, was at this date thirteen years old. The 1911 Census lists the family at Cromwell Road; his father, Frank, was employed as a goods guard by the Great Western Railway. The fact that Douglas was born at Swindon suggests that the railway may have been Frank's long-term employer; indeed, by 1939 we find the adult Douglas himself working as a railway clerk at Box in Wiltshire, close to the celebrated tunnel (TNA, 1939 Register). The final sentence of the message suggests that Douglas was a schoolboy. As he was over what was then the compulsory school-leaving age of 12, he was presumably attending a local secondary school, perhaps the Yeovil County School which since 1906 had been run by Somerset County Council as a technical school for the town and its surrounding district (Kelly's Directory of Somerset, 1914).

We can also speculate that Douglas and his family attended the relatively new church of St Michael and All Angels, consecrated in 1897 to serve the Pen Hill district of Yeovil. The writer of the postcard can be identified as Revd Henry Christian Thorn Hose, a Cambridge graduate who had served as curate of St Michael's since his ordination in 1906 (*Crockford's Clerical Directory*, 1917). At the beginning of the twentieth century, Cromwell Road was one of the few streets in this largely rural area. The Taylor family may have lived here because of its proximity to Pen Hill Station on the GWR through line to Weymouth. St Michael's Church was from the beginning firmly in the Anglo-Catholic tradition of the Church of England and Mr Hose's views were aligned with this. Like many Anglo-Catholic priests of this period, he had trained at Ely Theological College. In 1920 he was one of the 300 priests who attended the first Anglo-Catholic Congress and, after leaving Yeovil in 1924 he served in the high-church parishes of St Augustine, Kilburn, and St Matthew, Westminster, before becoming Vicar of St Mary Magdalene, Munster Square, in 1929.

What, then, was a curate from Somerset doing in Kirton in Holland in January 1916? The answer, suggested in the text of his message, is that he was visiting his brother. Stanley Alban Hose was four years younger than Henry, and he too was a clergyman. As a non-graduate, he had trained at the House of the Sacred Mission at Kelham in Nottinghamshire, where young men of more limited educational attainments could be prepared for ordination. We find Stanley in residence there in 1911, one of forty-five 'divinity students' aged from 18 to 28, alongside twenty-two younger 'schoolboys' aged from 16 to 18. Like Ely, Kelham was a popular destination for young Anglo-Catholic men wishing to train for the priesthood. Stanley was ordained in Lincoln Cathedral by Edward Lee Hicks, Bishop of Lincoln (deacon in 1914 and priest in 1915) and, having served his first curacy in Grimsby, was licensed to a second curacy at Kirton on 15 October 1915. The licence stipulated that he was to live in the parish and clearly there was room in his lodgings for a visitor, as we find his elder brother coming to visit just three months later.

Stanley Hose was no doubt attracted to Kirton by the prospect of working with its high church Vicar. Edmund Palmer had trained in medicine at Edinburgh University before taking holy orders and serving a curacy at St Saviour's, Leeds. In 1893 he joined the Universities Mission to Central Africa, ministering in Zanzibar. He wrote →

a hymn in Swahili, 'Yesu Bin Mariami', for his African congregation; his subsequent translation of the words into English, 'Jesu, Son of Mary', was included in the first edition of the English Hymnal in 1906 and it is still widely sung today. In 1902 Palmer, having suffered three bad attacks of fever, returned to England and two years later he was presented to the living of Kirton by the Mercers' Company of London (Palmer was himself a Freeman of the Mercers, as his father had been before him).

At Kirton, Palmer retained his interest in Africa and mission work. Once a week he would drive over to Burgh-le-Marsh where he taught basic medicine to the students at St Paul's Missionary College. In March 1916, just two months after the date of our postcard, Palmer offered to return to Zanzibar; as Bishop Hicks noted, '… they are very short of workers, their men having all been interned by the German Government' (*Diaries of Edward Lee Hicks*, LRS 82, 1993). This enthusiasm for missionary work was evidently caught by his young curate, for Stanley Hose himself was to serve in Central Africa in the 1930s.

At Kirton, the church had been restored by Hodgson Fowler in the time of Palmer's predecessor but Palmer himself continued to encourage further improvements. One major alteration was the installation of a new rood screen, designed by Temple Moore and dedicated by Bishop Hicks on 28 October 1914 (*Lincoln Diocesan Calendar* 1915). Constructed of English oak by Messrs Thompson of Peterborough, with wrought iron gates by Coldron of Brant Broughton, the screen consists of six bays surmounted by a rood. The evident pride felt by the parish in this new screen is shown by the issue of the new postcard depicting it, a copy of which was acquired by Henry Hose and sent to young Douglas Taylor.

Of the postcard's message, particular interest today centres on the reference to the threat of Zeppelins. Mr Hose does not appear to have been alone in his rather cavalier attitude to the lighting restrictions. As Martin Middlebrook wrote of nearby Boston, 'There was at that time no full 'black-out' but rather vague and badly-enforced restrictions on the showing of lights.' It was just two weeks later that Zeppelins first flew over Boston and, although no bombs were dropped on the town on that occasion, they returned on 2 September 1916, dropping four high-explosive bombs which caused considerable damage, with one young man killed and several injured (Martin Middlebrook, *Boston at War*, 1974). After this, the blackout regulations were tightened up and four mobile anti-aircraft guns were posted to Boston.

Living now through another era of imposed restrictions, it is fascinating to see how far we can travel, by means of historical research, without ever having to leave home.

Nicholas Bennett

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

The Lincoln Record Society would like to invite its members to two free online events taking place in collaboration with the Medieval Studies Research Group at the University of Lincoln. The first is a lecture from Dr Alison McHardy entitled 'The voice of the people? Petitions from Lincolnshire'. This will take place online on Wednesday 21 April 2021 between 6 and 7.30pm. You can register for the event using this link: https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/the-voice-of-the-people-petitions-from-lincolnshhire-tickets-146809104985.

The second event is an online workshop sponsored by the Medieval Studies Research Group (University of Lincoln), the Lincoln Record Society and The Northern Way which will take place on Thursday 22 April 2021 between 6 and 7.30pm: 'Power, Piety and Plague: The Northern Church in the Fourteenth Century'. You can register for the event using this link: https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/power-piety-and-plague-the-northern-church-in-the-14th-century-tickets-146928167103.