



Lincoln Record Society

**The Aftermath of War in Lincolnshire:
Conference Abstracts
Bishop Grosseteste University, Robert Hardy Building
Saturday 28 April 2018**

The Aftermath of the Civil War of 1215-17: The Siege of Newark Castle, July 1218

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The defeat of the French and rebel English forces at the Battle of Lincoln in May 1217, followed by the peace settlement and the French withdrawal that autumn, left several English castles in the hands of alien soldier/administrators from Poitou and Flanders, who had been put in place by King John before his death at Newark in 1216. William Marshal, the aged and respected regent for the new young king, Henry III, wanted to return the castles of Newark and Sleaford, which belonged to the Bishop of Lincoln, to the bishop, Hugh of Wells, who had lent them to the crown for the duration of the civil war. Robert de Gaugy, a Flemish soldier who had been given charge of Newark Castle by King John a few weeks before his own death there, was reluctant to give it up, despite many orders to do so in late 1217 and early 1218. Eventually Marshal summoned a substantial force, about whose composition we have unprecedented detail, to besiege the castle, and it did so in July 1218. The sparse details we have of the siege itself and its outcome are of considerable interest, and it marked the beginning of the post-war process of recovering the custody of castles which was only finally completed in 1224.

Memorialising RAF Bomber Command: The Journey From Isolation to Inclusion

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The aerial bombing of occupied Europe never fitted comfortably with the victor narrative of a 'just war'. Those who had served in RAF Bomber Command were therefore omitted from much of the formal memorial work that occurred in the post-war decades. In consequence, veterans and their families tended to look to each other to create their own traditions of remembrance.

In some respects, the Bomber Command Memorial in Green Park, unveiled by the Queen in 2012, marked the acceptance of the Command into the official narrative.

However, the Memorial does not address the ongoing unease that many, both in the UK and abroad, continue to feel in connection with the role of the Allied bombing.

This paper discusses this often-unacknowledged source of dissonance in the memorialisation of Bomber Command, focusing on attempts to create an exhibition and an archive as part of the recently-opened International Bomber Command Centre in Lincoln, in which all three authors have been centrally involved.

‘The Toll of War’: Post-World War II Nuclear Anxieties and Cultures in Lincolnshire, 1980-85

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Over the last twenty years, there has been an academic shift in nuclear scholarship, diverting away from traditional military, political or scientific approaches, instead favouring the disciplines of social, cultural and psychoanalytical history. Notable examples of this movement away from ‘top-down’ history of the nuclear age include historians such as Paul Boyer, Spencer Weart, and Allen Winkler. These historians have attempted to trace the nuclear age in terms of cultural, social and conscious changes due to the existence of the nuclear bomb, subsequently forming the study of Nuclear Culture. However, Britain is frequently neglected in academic studies of the Cold War, habitually seen as an ‘extension of America’ or as a ‘backseat’ player behind the US and the Soviet Union. Britain has played a substantial role in the Cold War since its outbreak until its thaw in the late 1980s. Furthermore, few historians have attempted to understand the British nuclear experience regionally or locally, instead using a national or international approach.

This paper attempts to demonstrate that different local nuclear cultures existed in Britain, utilizing Lincoln as a case study. These communities developed their own unique nuclear cultures, experiences, and anxieties which both informed the national British nuclear experience and were influenced by it. This paper intends to explore the city of Lincoln’s unique nuclear fears, experiences and cultures which developed during the Cold War, using the local press to trace Lincolnshire’s relationship with nuclear weapons.

Furthermore, this paper will demonstrate how Lincoln’s experience with World War Two influenced these narratives. How can we better understand the history of World War Two, the Cold War and nuclear weapons through local historical analysis? How is nuclear anxiety represented and understood in unique ways within Lincoln’s local press? What methodological problems do we face when using local histories and the local press to understand broader national narratives? How has Lincoln’s Cold War experience shaped its local modern perceptions of nuclear weapons?

‘Continuity or Change? Twentieth-Century Agricultural Practice in Lincolnshire and the Impact of the Second World War’

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This paper explores the emergence of modern agriculture in twentieth-century Lincolnshire as represented by the shift from threshing drums to combine harvesters and from real horse power to motor horse power. It explores the emergence of modern agriculture in the county, demonstrating that change did not uniformly take place across Lincolnshire just before, or immediately after the Second World War. It offers a new perspective on a well-covered historical topic - that of the human experience of modernisation as told by the people who bore witness to a monumental shift in methods of agricultural production.

The Rural Fiction, Idyll and Reality in Bernard Samuel Gilbert’s ‘Bly’: Creating a Pre-First World War ‘World We Have Lost’

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Writers of popular fiction in the decades following the First World War have contributed to the construction of a particular impression of the impact of the conflict. The war represented a major cultural discontinuity, most evidently in the countryside and in rural society. The pre-Great War past became ‘a foreign country’, as LP Hartley’s *The Go-Between* opens. The rural England that existed before 1914 was not the same as that emerging in the war’s aftermath, and nor could it be returned to. Losses from all ranks at the Front, the decline of life centred around ‘The Big House’, a struggling agrarian economy, the lure of opportunities to be found in the larger towns and cities, and the weakening of community structure and identity in the countryside are themes to be found in the novels of the likes of D.H. Lawrence, Henry Williamson and Isabel Colegate, the observations of rural sociologists, and in recent television dramas, such as *Downton Abbey*.

This paper explores the largely forgotten work of the Lincolnshire-born novelist, playwright, poet and commentator, Bernard Samuel Gilbert (1882-1927). During his last phase of writing, before his death at the age of 45, he produced the greater part of an intended dozen volumes entitled his ‘Old England’ series. In this he sought to preserve a fictionalised record of a pre-war and wartime rural world that was passing away, an imaginary district called ‘Bly’.

The Last Days of the Prisoner of War Camp at Sutton Bridge

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Carrying forward the research of the AHRC funded project, 'Life as a German Prisoner of War in Sutton Bridge, south Lincolnshire, during the First World War,' that formed part of the activities of the Everyday Lives in War: First World War Engagement Centre based at the University of Hertfordshire, this paper will explore the aftermath of the existence of a First World War POW camp at Sutton Bridge in south Lincolnshire.

Though there were over 600 prisoner of war camps in Britain by the end of the First World War, most of these have now been forgotten. Thanks to the recent discovery of important primary resources, this paper will uncover the forgotten history of the last days of the POW camp at Sutton Bridge, casting light on the discontent arising from the prisoners' post-armistice incarceration, the route and particulars of their repatriation, and the challenges they faced reintegrating into a home nation reeling from the consequences of war.

Through close scrutiny of a number of surviving letters written by former prisoners to the Englishman in charge of labour in the camp, cross-referenced with government records and a series of cartoons created by one of the inmates detailing events inside the camp, this paper will explore themes such as the difficulties faced by post-war society, the agricultural legacy of prisoners' work and its effects on the infrastructure of south Lincolnshire, and the strength of the relationships formed between individuals on opposing sides of the conflict.

Homes for Heroes in Grantham

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The decade following the end of the Great War saw the Borough Council in Grantham take action to provide new housing through green-field developments outside of the town centre. Homes, however, were not the only focus for Grantham Borough Council.

The town's 320 war dead were commemorated not only by memorials at St Wulfram's church but also through recreational facilities laid out as Wyndham Park and Dysart Park. A lending library and museum were provided initially in temporary premises before the purpose-built Public Library and Museum was opened on St Peter's Hill in 1926 with funding through the Carnegie Trust. Extensive flooding along the Witham in 1922 resulted in radical flood prevention works and new bridges with labour supplied as part of the programme of public works to relieve unemployment. The aftermath of the war was a legacy of improved facilities - a land fit for heroes to live in - but it was not until the 1930s that

substantial progress was made in clearing houses unfit for habitation from town-centre courts and yards.

Remembering the Fallen? The Building of Memorial Halls in Lincolnshire Following the First World War

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Whilst much has been written regarding Britain's war memorials – including Michael Credland's work on Lincolnshire monuments – rather less attention has been paid to other forms of material memorialisation.

This paper examines some of Lincolnshire's memorial halls constructed in the years immediately following the Great War. It considers the number of such halls built in the county during this period, the decision-making processes behind their construction and, particularly, the motives underlying the building of such structures.

To what extent were these halls built for and by local communities or were there other contexts in which they were constructed? How were the halls used as ways of commemorating the lives of local people lost during the conflict? Is there evidence to suggest that the building of such halls marked some form of social and cultural renaissance of village life in otherwise challenging circumstances for largely agricultural-based communities?

The paper will locate the construction of the memorial halls within a wider historiography examining, for instance, the village hall and rural community movement.

Homes Fit for Heroes? Lincoln's First Council Houses

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A phrase that has stuck in the mind has led to a widespread impression that the inter-war council house programme was one of the consequences of the First World War. That Lincoln's first council houses were completed in 1919 reinforces this impression. Yet Lincoln's programme was actually initiated in 1913. The paper will explain the causes of that programme and will explore why a city that had been so reluctant to build sewers in the nineteenth century should have been in the vanguard of council house building in the twentieth.

One of the key actors was the industrialist Col. J. S. Ruston, who later became the moving force behind the Swanpool Garden Suburb. Attempting to explore his reasoning will suggest at least one other inter-war phenomenon that turns out to have pre-war origins. The views of Sir William Tritton are also known and demonstrate the diverse positions taken by Lincoln's major manufacturers.