

Letters to the editor

► *Nocton Potato Railway*

The piece on the Nocton potato railway in the April 'Poachings' brought back fond memories of my days as a boy when I used to make fairly regular visits to Nocton. Two of my uncles, Albert who lived in the Lodge a few hundred yards from the main estate buildings and Jim who lived near to the school in Nocton village and worked for Smiths Crisps Nocton Estate and my cousins and I would scrounge rides on the potato railway, taking pot shots or catapult shots, almost always unsuccessful, at rabbits, as it trundled its way through the fields. On hot summer days we hopped aboard the train as it passed The Lodge and went down the long, straight tree-decked avenue that was once a stately entrance to Nocton Hall, until it met the bridleway that led from Dunston to Nocton (it's still there today). There we jumped off and walked the few hundred yards to Nocton village to the shop where, with our precious pocket money, we bought whatever was on offer during those wartime and immediate post-war years.

I have been unable to find any trace of the railway today but I have retraced that long avenue from The Lodge and turned left into the village with happy memories of when we used to do it those many years ago. To recall it today it seems almost like an Enid Blyton story but with one difference - I was there.

Philip Ingall, Farndon, Newark.

► *Memories of a May Queen*

I very much enjoyed Maureen Sutton's article on St Hugh's May processions, especially as in 1936 I was the May Queen!

In those days the May procession and crowning of the statue took place in the church.

The Corpus Christi procession went up Lindum Hill and in my time also came down there, after going to the convent grounds.

There was also another procession in the church, some time in November I think.

Times were hard for families in the 1930s and I remember my mother making my Juliet cap out of criss-crossed ribbon on which she sewed some pearls from an old necklace.

Miss Garvey and Miss Mann (later Mrs Curley) were the stalwarts behind the organisation. They brought my bouquet of lilies of the valley which has been my favourite flower ever since.

In later years I was a Girl Guide and then one of the Children of Mary in the procession.

Although I now live in Cambridgeshire I have many reminders of my native county in this village. St Hugh of Lincoln Catholic Church is part of Buckden Towers. When Hugh was Bishop of Lincoln one of his homes was at Bucken Palace, as it was then known.

Our house even has 'Lindum' as part of its name so I think Lincoln will always be a part of me.

Mrs Sheila Evans, Buckden, Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire.

► *Greetings from South Australia*

I am writing to let you know how much my husband and I enjoyed reading the March issue of 'Lincolnshire Life'. It was sent to us by relatives who live in Stamford. We had not seen or heard of the magazine before we received this one.

I spent my youth in Longthorpe and moved to Peterborough when I married. My brother went to school at Oakham.

We emigrated to South Australia in 1969 and live on a farm twenty-seven miles from the small town of Tumby Bay. Our nearest large town, Port Lincoln, is an hour's drive away.

Phillippa Wells, Tumby Bay, South Australia.

► *Happy days at Sleaford*

Your article about Sleaford in the June edition of 'Lincolnshire Life' brought back many happy memories for my husband and me.

We moved to the town when my husband came to work there more than thirty years ago. Our first experience was not a good one - a car stopped suddenly just before the level crossing and we went into the back of them. I vowed I would never go back there but we ended up making our home there for many happy years.

However, the Sleaford of those days was very different from the Sleaford

depicted in your article. For those of us moving up from the south it was a journey back in time. On Thursday afternoons, early closing day, Northgate was so quiet I think a dog could have fallen asleep in the middle of the road without any fear of being run over.

The animal market still took place on Mondays and I remember seeing all the old farmers in the pubs. This market was complemented by a household auction which was very valuable to us as a young couple just starting out in life. I seem to remember one close to the animal auction and one in a large hall in Church Lane. Pieces of furniture I bought there for less than £5 are still going strong and have now been passed to our children who are starting out in life themselves.

We were impressed that even though the town was small it had so many facilities. I remember the library in the old fire station and the wonderful open-air swimming pool where both my children learned to swim. I'm not sure if this pool was very popular with Sleaford people as it never seemed to be that busy, even on the hottest days. We were, however, very grateful when the pool was improved and converted into an indoor facility as it meant we were able to swim there all year round. Until that time, we had to drive all the way to Grantham for our winter swimming.

I used to love the individually owned shops. I remember Barrands opposite the Market Place where I think it was a Mr Haycock who sold a huge variety of lovely dress fabrics and ladies' fashions. My friends and I also bought a lot of useful things for our young families at the Monday and Friday markets.

Despite my nostalgic memories, I am glad to see that Sleaford has improved so much. We have now moved away but I still remember our Sleaford days with much affection.

Mrs J Bain, Tring, Herts.

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