Newark Civic Trust

MAGAZINE

Caring about the town's environment

Issue 63

CONTENTS

Newark Civic Trust Magazine

Editor Gillie Wilkinson

Print Willsons Printers

Content is kindly provided by various contributors

Front and back cover photos from the article by Rupert Vinnicombe

Sponsorship

Willsons Printers Tel: 01636 702334

Diamalt chimney - the last monument to the malting era

A few words from The Chairman

The cover of Newark Civic Trust Newsletter 54 back in January 2007 bore the banner 'Development on Hawton's Green and Pleasant Land'? Little or nothing has been heard officially since then, until on 7th July 2010 Green Issues raised the topic again, when they outlined the latest proposals, much less extensive and ambitious in line with the current economic climate. Whatever views you hold, it is gratifying to note that many of the suggestions and comments have been heeded, and where practicable incorporated into the latest offering.

Chairman of Newark Civic Trust
Mr George Wilkinson

We are promised that further consultative exhibitions will be held in the Town Hall and else where starting in September 2010. Keep your eyes and ears open. Negotiations are afoot to secure an illustrated session at our October library meeting delivered by Green Issues and a small group of interested parties, to outline and discuss proposals and no doubt respond to robust questions. I hope to include this in the list of events, in Magazine 63 but if confirmation is too late for inclusion details will be on a separate enclosure to the publication.

With the recent announcement of the 'unexpected' downturn in the economy and house prices in particular one could wonder whether there will be developers with sufficient courage to undertake the task. We can presume that as the development is to be realised over a protracted period a delayed start can be anticipated.

This is my last opportunity to write this column, as I shall stand down as Chairman of Newark Civic Trust at the September AGM, although I shall continue my membership, and for the time being my wife Gill and I will continue to edit the magazine. The size of the committee has dwindled to a very small number, so small in fact that no longer are we able to perform all of previous tasks. We need two or three new members to ensure that the committee can continue many of the earlier commitments and maybe instigate new ones. **Two hours a month is not asking too much, is it?**

May I take this opportunity to welcome Mike Hawes to our committee. He has boldly donned the mantle of Chairman of the Planning Committee, which has enabled us to resume our involvement in planning matters. Many thanks to Bill Davidson who previously held the position. A hard act to follow!

George Wilkinson

Peter Brannan 1926-1994

Mr Peter Brannan

"When I look at a Chardin still-life I feel I never dare to paint again"

Peter Brannan is important to Newark because he worked for thirty years teaching art and had contact with many Newark people during this period who still remember him today. Also important is the collection of paintings Brannan did of Newark about sixty years ago. These are invaluable and fascinating records of continuity and change as well as being appreciated for their artistic qualities.

Brannan was born in Cleethorpes, Lincolnshire, the son of an artist. He also had a brother who taught art at Leicester and Brannan himself studied at Leicester College of Art. His first exhibition was held in London in 1960.

His work depicts sensitive evocations of country life and the artist's personal reactions to landscape and places. Favourite subjects which he used for inspiration are seascapes, architectural subjects and the occasional portrait.

The Lincolnshire landscape, especially beaches and dunes, were a rich source of inspiration. A Day on the Beach demonstrates Brannan's style and illustrates his fascination for seaside scenes, crowded with people involved in many different activities. Cleethorpes beach, with its kiosks, beach huts, children playing or small groups bathing and picnicking in the sand dunes, is very typical. The use of a restricted palette of mostly browns and grey tones reflect so well the cool British weather of the North East coast.

Detail from painting: A Day on the Beach by Peter Brannan, courtesy of Mr T Trickett

A View of a Town by Peter Brannan, courtesy of Newark Town Council

Another source of inspiration to Brannan was his attraction to buildings and architecture and Newark provided him with so much choice. During his thirty years in Newark, he left a wonderful legacy of interesting paintings of important buildings such as the old Corn Exchange, Castlegate, Slaughterhouse Lane, Gilstrap Library from Boar Lane, the Palace Theatre and a Snow Scene of Newark. Most of these paintings are now in private hands.

One intriguing painting, A View of a Town, a large oil on board, is redolent of Brannan's distinctive style. Sombre in tone, Brannan uses a restrictive range of colours which are muted, or subdued, never using blue.

His agent, Mr Robin Wheeldon of Lincoln commented that Brannan's unusual style was in part due to his use of artificial light which gave his still life pictures two shadows.

When Brannan retired in 1981 his style became more colourful, in particular when working on still-life paintings as can be seen in his oil painting of a jug on a shelf. This jug of pretty flowers was used for the poster of a recent exhibition in Spring 2010 in the Spotlight Gallery, Newark Town Hall, of Brannan's range of work over his lifetime.

Brannan preferred to paint ordinary things –

"one can continually rearrange them"

He was concerned with good drawing, tone and subtle colour. Most of his work was done in his studio, from memory.

A member of the Royal Society of British artists, Brannan has had his works exhibited at the Royal Academy and the English Art Club. Some of his paintings can be seen at the Usher Gallery, Lincoln, and the Art Gallery in the Town Hall has a selection of his works on permanent display.

Detail from Still Life by Peter Brannan, courtesy of Mr T. Wheeler.

Patty Temple,
Curator Newark Town Council Town Hall Museum

Out and About

The aconites and snowdrops of Spring are now just a memory, so if you haven't yet blown off the fluff from your stoutest walking shoes do it now - get out and about to enjoy what Newark and its immediate neighbourhood has to offer.

It would be difficult to miss the newly erected Staythorpe power station with its four stainless steel chimneys, each part of an exhaust heat recovery system. Visable, glinting in the sunshine, from as far afield as Rainworth Hill it is hard to accept the assurance given by Eon in their earlier publicity, 'They will sit unobtrusively in the landscape'. A subtle change to the text in the latest almost identical leaflet says 'sitting impressively in the landscape'. Whether or not you consider that they enhance the panorama is a matter of personal choice. Are they any less obtrusive than the old chimneys and cooling towers of yesteryear? Do they lend intrigue to the vista from afar? What do you think?

Even though the power station straddles the parish boundaries of Averham and Staythorpe it is almost impossible to see from the road that runs through these villages. It does, however permit an uninterrupted view of the distribution unit, should such a facility have an attraction for you.

There are, however, compensations for those on foot!

Easiest of all is a stroll along the towpath upstream (southwards) from Farndon. The car park at Farndon Ferry is ideal. After a short walk a panoramic view of the power station on the very same spot that the old works used to occupy. From this spot looking immediately to the right hand end it is possible to see the top of the weir as the overspill water from the river cascades to follow its route through Averham, Kelham and Muskham to Crankley point, where it will reunite with the mainstream. Also from this viewpoint careful scanning will reveal the sculpture pictured below.

Power in Trust

A much more worthwhile excursion requires a short drive to Averham, carefully following signs for the Robin Hood Theatre, there to park in the overspill car park. The footpath is directly ahead of you and quite obvious. Over the bridge turn left along the side of the Pingley Beck. On reaching the river turn right and follow the edge of the wilderness, mostly crack willow since you ask, between which, in Spring, a carpet of millions of celandines provide an impressive spectacle. It is worth the small exertion just to witness the spectacle of these countless buttercup yellow flowers. Sturdier souls with sturdy soles will soldier towards the 40 arches of the Midland Railway viaduct. The footpath takes a route through the arch nearest the river. Once through, just a few yards reveals Averham Weir, stretching 250 metres or so, every ripple catching the afternoon sun as it tumbles over the stones – a real showstopper! Even when the sun does not shine the sight is still breathtaking.

On the right of the path the power station is revealed in all its glory. Close to, it is huge! Follow the wharf top, actually the water intake for the old cooling towers, which is still intact and witness yet another surprise – a 6 metre high sculpture called 'Power in Trust', the motto of the former Central Electricity Generating Board, who commissioned the piece back in 1961 and executed by

Norman H Sillman (for an excellent biography see Wikipedia), who lived in Collingham at the time. Now well into his 90th year he resides in Suffolk. The Newark Advertiser described it thus. "Power in Trust was designed to reflect the new technological advance: a power generating turbine cradled in a 'hand' of boiler tubes, surging power out into the countryside". The path from which the sculpture can be viewed is temporarily closed, but the station is due for completion Summer 2010. Presumably the picnic spot close by beneath the trees will be reinstated.

The four generating plants of the new power station will between them produce 650MW, enough to power about 2million homes, an output more than four times greater than the old ones, but producing 40% less CO2. It is predicted that there will be 80 permanent jobs and that £10M will be injected into the local economy. If accurate, that has to be good news.

About turn to retrace your footsteps, noticing as you do so the plaque on the railway bridge informing all that the bridge was rebuilt by Andrew Handyside of Derby in 1903. He was more noted for his ornate cast iron bridges. Once back through the arch there is a broadside view of the south face Averham Church.

Once back at your car, you are only a few yards from the church dedicated to St Michael and All Angels, grade I listed. There is some late Saxon herringbone stonework, remnants of the replacement for the earlier Saxon wooden church. For those who

Ornamentation on Averham Church

are interested in heraldry, there are numerous examples, mainly of the Sutton dynasty. Enjoy it now if you have spare energy, or save it for later.

Total distance 2Km

Some former Newark Civic Trust Award winners

"The Hollies" Victoria St –– multi-faceted restoration of a Georgian House

Awarded 28.11.02 to the owners Carl & Michelle Osbourne.

Grange Hotel, London Road – replacement railings and lights in Edwardian style. The design was taken from that shown in an old postcard of the hotel taken in 1900.

Awarded 30.01.03 to the owners Mr & Mrs Tom Carr.

Victorian stone window restored at the historic home of William Bradley – Newark's wrought iron `king`.

Awarded 27.02.03 to the owners Mr & Mrs Chris Hobby.

Carphone Warehouse, 29 Stodman S treet

Awarded 24.2.05 for the retention of the Edwardian shop front which had formerly been Hamblings gentlemens outfitters.

62 Castlegate Newark – Extensive restructuring of an 18th century building that had been empty for 40 years

Awarded to the owner Mr Chris Healy.

Church Walk – re-establishing period wrought iron railings & boundary wall

Awarded 29.1.09 to the owner Victoria & Angus Keiller of FR Europe.

23 Castlegate, Newark-on-Trent

A brief history....

The premises now known as Ann et Vin have, at different times, played both a distinguished and a colourful role in the town's history.

Built in the elegant Georgian style of the late 18th century by John Sadler Sheppard, a bricklayer and plaster merchant of Baldertongate, No. 23's first hundred years and more passed off quietly in the hands of a roll-call of Newark's commercial, professional and leisured elite: Mr Skellington, proprietor of the Wagon and Horses, Mr Matterson, Physician and Surgeon, Mrs White, widowed and retired in 1916. The building's location on Castlegate, on the curve of the Roman Fosseway and later one arm of the Great North Road as it divided its way around the Market Place before re-assembling on Bargate, helped define its character and prominence.

Four famous coaching inns - the George and Dragon, Royal Oak, the Ram and the Swan and Salmon - to be found on the east and west sides, alongside various saddleries and harness-makers demonstrated a general orientation of activity towards the agricultural sector. Indeed, with minor modifications, the following excerpt from the Guardian Journal of 1969 could well have applied to the Castlegate of the 19th century, which it described as 'Newark's Historic Front Door':-

"Here is to be found a sample of the town's prosperous life - cosy, friendly inns, busy general stores, newsagents' shops, a bank, an estate agent's office, accountants' offices, a pet shop, antiqueshop, a transport café and car salerooms (!) a baker's shop and a bakery."

However, changing times, opportunities and needs, transformed the thoroughfare after the Great War and led to No. 23 becoming firmly linked in the townspeople's minds with one name and with one trade - Brooks Motors. Established in 1923 by Mrs Elizabeth Ashton (earlier widow of the engineer and pioneer motorist Charles Brooks of Worksop) from the break-up of a previous larger enterprise, Brook's prospered through Mrs Ashton's acumen and drive, the commitment of the family, a dedicated work-force and a focus on the district's large and prosperous farming community. In Eric Ashton's own words, "Tractor sales were good, combine harvesters and irrigation equipment were later added to the long list of agricultural machinery sold and serviced.

The tractor service department enjoyed a high reputation and, at harvest time, its 24 hour service was a legend."

Brooks Motors in its heyday.

Over time, numbers 25 and 27 Castlegate were added to accommodate car sales and spare parts respectively, whilst competitors in the annual Monte Carlo Rally refuelled at Brooks' familiar petrol pumps on their way south from Glasgow. A third generation of Ashtons - Nicholas, Tony and David - entered service with the firm in the 1960s, but competition and corporate pressures were now growing relentlessly so that, with great regret, the family sold out to the Cowie Company in 1969.

In the generation since, the premises have passed at regular intervals through the hands of various practitioners of the motor trade, most colourfully when an enterprising enthusiast dedicated himself to renovating - or constructing afresh? - the legendary Bugattis. A brief diversion was provided in the late 1990s, when The Potting Shed offered an eclectic mix of antiques, artefacts and curiosities to appeal to connoisseurs and novices alike.

Writing in a 1996 guide to the town the author commented, "Castlegate is the boulevard of Old Newark: where the Fosseway travellers pause to eat and rest; where fine Georgian houses and shops brush shoulders with 16th century cottages; where access is gained to the great Bishop Alexander's castle ruin; where Duesbury's ornate Corn Exchange towers majestically over its dignified neighbouring buildings." It is now hoped that Ann et Vin will make its own, distinctive contribution to this distinguished tradition.

These words and images are to be found on a handsome heritage board located inside the gates leading off Castlegate to the now Wine Shop and Wine Bar that have risen from the remains of the former workshop and yard that were once the heartbeat of Brook's business. Evidence remains of earlier days in the hydraulic lift, occasional winch and - from Potting Shed times - rows of nails hammered into the beams to hang some of the eclectic mix referred to above.

Indeed, last year's acquisition of the adjoining premises, a former maltings in Boar Lane more recently associated with Newark's burgeoning trade in bicycles, allowed the site to be revived in the manner of a traditional shop that enabled it to earn one of our much sought-after Trust Awards earlier this year.

Let us hope that we shall be celebrating a similar success on the part of the Ram Hotel opposite in the not too distant future.

Text by Peter Duncan

The former maltings 16 Boar Lane

photo by George Wilkinson

Sir William Nicholson

Lyn and Stephen Rickard of Winchilsea Avenue are long standing members of Newark Civic Trust since their move to the Newark in 1983. On an early walk into town they were astonished to read the blue plaque on number 39 London Road that was the Nicholson family home. Sir William Nicholson had painted a portrait of Lyn's Grandmother, the actress Dame Marie Tempest in 1903 that now hangs in the National Portrait Gallery in London.

William Newzam Prior Nicholson (1872-1949) was born in Newark the son of William Nicholson who was the proprietor of Nicholson's Trent Iron Works. In 1880 his father was elected as Conservative Member of Parliament for Newark and a year later he was sent to the Magnus Grammar School as a boarder despite living less than half a mile away. In 1926, Nicholson recalled that "My life at school was such hell that it is still my pet nightmare" (perhaps a familiar memory to a few other Old Magnusians). The nightmare was relieved by the intervention of the drawing master, William Cubley who encouraged Nicholson and gave him private lessons in his own home at the age of twelve.

In 1887 at the age of fifteen, he produced one of his most famous works that remains in Newark: the delightful trompe l'oeil drawing of a £5 banknote as a thank you for a Christmas gift. This work can be viewed in the Town Hall gallery along with a number of Nicholson's other works.

With Cubley's help to overcome parental opposition to a career in art (his father had hoped he would follow him into the family business) Nicholson left the Magnus at sixteen to attend Hubert Von Herkomer's School of Art in Bushey, Hertfordshire. In 1888, the disruptive Nicholson was dismissed from Herkomer's School "for a piece of Whistlerian impudence" and his next move was to Paris, then the centre of the art world where he enrolled at the Académie Julian.

In France, the true artistic development of the poster had begun in the 1880s with the work of Jules Chéret and was completed in the nineties by Toulouse Lautrec. In his images of "La Vie Parisienne", Lautrec exploited the powerful two-dimensional impact of simple clear outlines and flat areas of colour reminiscent of the popular Japanese woodcuts of the time. The influence of Lautrec, together with the older indigenous chap-book tradition, coupled with a source closer to home helped Nicholson to define his own truly distinctive style. Tim Warner

noted in one of his excellent series of articles for the Newark Advertiser that Nicholson came across and was influenced by a collection of old wood blocks in Ridge's Printers and Bookshop in the building that is now Porter's Provisions.

In 1893, William Nicholson secretly married Mabel Pryde who had been a fellow student at Herkomer's School. Mabel's elder brother James persuaded Nicholson to join him in partnership to produce posters for an increasingly lucrative advertising market. Using the pseudonym J. and W. Beggarstaff their first poster was commissioned by the actor Edward Gordon Craig for a touring production of Hamlet.

Though the Beggarstaff's pioneering work did much to revolutionise graphic design in England in the nineties the combination of flat masses of colour with powerful lines resulted in work perhaps too advanced for contemporary taste. Sadly the commercial possibilities of their work were never fully realised though impressive examples of posters for Rowntree's Cocoa and for a Drury Lane production of Cinderella were created. Now with a young family to support, Nicholson decided to try the woodcut medium and found immediate success with a print of the Prince of Wales' Derby winner, Persimmon.

Nicholson's work came to the notice of the publisher William Heinemann Ltd and many commissions followed including their distinctive trademark of a woodcut print of a windmill. Heinemann initially declined to publish Nicholson's affectionately risqué Jubilee portrait of Queen Victoria described at the time as "an animated tea cosy" but later relented and included the print in the first series of his "Twelve Portraits" in 1899.

"An Alphabet" was commissioned in 1898 and Marguerite Steen in her biography of Nicholson noted "William, who on this occasion at least showed some of the paternal shrewdness, suggested an 'Alphabet' at a fiver a letter. Having commissioned "A", it was bound to go to "Z", which would secure the rent for 28 weeks at any rate!". This wonderful series was quickly followed by an "Almanac of Twelve Sports" with verses by Rudyard Kipling and by "London Types".

From An Almanac of Twelve Sports 1897

After 1900, needing to find a surer means of making a living Nicholson turned his attention to portrait painting with great success. From 1906 he began painting landscapes, particularly of the Sussex Downland where he later lived. Nicholson's paintings were often small and the subjects modest – a broken china mug, a humble pewter bowl and even Gertrude Jekyll's gardening boots (to accompany a portrait of Miss Jekyll painted in 1920).

For those fortunate enough to visit the 2004 major exhibition of Nicholson's work at the Royal Academy of Art were able to view his extraordinary 1918 painting of "The Canadian Headquarters Staff". Never before seen outside Canada, this is one of his few large canvasses measuring almost 8 feet by 9 feet. Also on display and in complete

Portrait of Gertrude Jekyll 1920

contrast was Nicholson's delightful children's story "The Pirate Twins".

William Nicholson in effect had two careers as a graphic artist and portraitist and he painted still lifes of marvellous complexity and landscapes for his own satisfaction to the end of his life. He chose not to be drawn into the cross-currents of British art exhibiting almost exclusively at a succession of small private galleries and declined to join the Royal Academy. Regardless of this, he became a Trustee of the Tate in 1934 and received a Knighthood in 1936.

He was overcome by ill health during the Second World War years and all but stopped painting in the decade before his death in 1949. William Nicholson's importance in English art is steadily increasing and this was clearly demonstrated in the huge interest shown in the Royal Academy exhibition in 2004.

Rupert Vinnicombe
Secretary – Newark Civic Trust

Thomas Earp

Co-founder of Newark Magnus Grammar School

Thomas Magnus, with typical Tudor confidence, founded the free school he gave to Newark on the ideas relevant to his time. He did not have the doubts that became common later when education was given importance, not so much as a blessing for the individual, but a way of moulding society into a work force, or a means of class distinction.

By the time Thomas Earp was born in 1830 the Industrial Revolution required labourers who had received some education and funds were made available nationally for school building, although most children left school before they were eleven years old. Ability to read was the main object of elementary education, but some taxpayers feared this might give them access to seditious pamphlets or publications against Christianity. Many argued that further or secondary education could be dangerous for the poor, teaching them to despise laborious occupations. Even such subjects as writing and arithmetic were questioned.

Fortunate towns like Newark that already had a free Grammar School faced difficulties because the church based education provided was too narrow for new requirements. Enlightened headmasters and governors realised the need for change, but funding obtained from endowments was falling because of the decline in agriculture. As the population and industry grew, so did the need for such subjects as geography, history, science, mathematics, modern languages, drawing, and book-keeping, while

still retaining Latin. How to accommodate them in the dated buildings they had, find qualified teachers or the money to pay them and boys willing and able to absorb such a curriculum was a problem facing the school and its Governors.

The suggestion that fees could be charged, if only for certain subjects, was not favoured by many. Education faced a local and a national upheaval, but a solution had to be found.

Cometh the hour, cometh the man. When Thomas Earp came to Newark to start work at Harvey's Wine and Spirit Merchants and maltsters in 1845, the railway system was opening up trade right across the country. In the very next year, the first Newark line from Nottingham to Lincoln brought great opportunities for the brewing trade and also to the sixteen year old Thomas Earp. He became a partner in Harvey's, then of Richardson Earp and Slater and finally established Gilstrap and Earp.

At his adoption as Liberal candidate in 1873 the Newark Herald commented on his outstanding speaking ability, noting "the relationship between Mr Earp and the working classes from whom he is removed by only one generation." The time when Employers and Labourers were fixed not only for a lifetime but for generations into the sphere in which they had been born was coming to an end.

In 1870 a national system of schools was established so that every child had the opportunity of education and in 1891 education became compulsory. Great reforms were taking place when Thomas Earp entered Parliament in 1874 and he was well aware that coming generations needed to be educated to meet the changes. Town dwelling working class people were given the vote in 1887 and farm labourers were enfranchised in 1884. If employers and workers remained ignorant of each other's contribution to society, dissension would threaten the prosperity promised by better transport and increased trade.

Despite the efforts made by Thomas Magnus to safeguard his bequest to the school, at various times in its history money had been taken for the use of the Parish Church and the town. In addition, efforts by the Government to give a modern education to the whole population did not conform to the old ideas of a traditional schooling providing a ruling class through the universities, and schools like Magnus had been founded for just that purpose. At a time when more money was needed to extend the curriculum and the buildings, less was available and a growing town needed sanitation and lighting, therefore the endowment funds were occasionally misappropriated. Thomas Earp was aware of this and also that despite the efforts of various headmasters to maintain standards at the school some boys were not receiving the best preparation for their future. Valuable potential for them and for the town was lost because the emphasis was still on the learned professions and those with more practical abilities were regarded as a lesser breed.

Some additions to the building were made in 1818, partly funded by the headmaster Mr Wittenoom who intended to use some of the accommodation for boarders. The fees they paid would go not to the school but to Mr Wittenoom. In 1820, there were ninety two boarders, those under twelve paying £34 a year and those over that age £40. They paid an extra 5guineas a year to be taught subjects in which they were really interested. The Foundation or free scholars received only a classical education. This was of little use to boys who would earn their living mainly by manual labour, yet they were the very ones who could not afford the fees for extra subjects.

A science laboratory was helped into existence by the County Council in 1818 and in 1834 the Magnus Trustees built the English School, partly to conform to the new Government demands for the modernisation of education. For some reason, although free, the English School was not popular with the Newark tradesmen who preferred to send their sons to another school in the town called "The Classical and Commercial Academy" situated in Castlegate and charging fees of twenty four to twenty eight guineas a year for boarders, with day boys paying four guineas a year. It appears to have been very successful, at times having over a hundred pupils.

Meanwhile the Magnus, under the headmastership of Mr Wittenoom was suffering from falling numbers. After he left in 1829, Joseph Cooke was there until 1854 and was followed by Henry Plater who stated his belief as a schoolmaster that "scholastic work (as I interpret it) is in its measure spiritual work combined with sound mental training, and I believe, and have always taught, that all education, worthy of the name, must be based on, and in accord with, the doctrines and teaching of the Holy Catholic Church." There was some anxiety in the town that Mr Plater had Roman Catholic leanings and would influence the school in this way. He certainly was a High Churchman when such an attitude was unpopular, but because of his great sense of duty Magnus began again to prosper as a school. In 1877 he offered a re-organisation scheme which gained some approval from Thomas Earp who was chairman of the committee formed to modernise the school, working with the Endowed Schools Commission and the people of Newark, together with the Trustees of the Endowment. However Mr Plater

was firmly in favour of a First Grade School, something akin to Rugby, catering for boarders from outside the area, while Mr Earp wanted the school to modernise the curriculum and provide businessmen who would add to the prosperity of the town. In order to achieve his aims, Councillor Earp brought in fellow Liberals who gradually displaced Councillors and Trustees who supported Mr Plater's ideals.

The number of boys in the school had risen to 126, seventy five of whom were boarders. Mr Plater had bought property in Appletongate for a chemistry laboratory and workshops equipped with lathes, proof that he was prepared to modify his attitude to classical education, but the charity Commissioners in 1887 found that good though his Scheme was, the available finance was insufficient. Parents lost confidence in a school in spite of all Mr Plater's efforts, and when he retired in 1893 the Governing body took a look at the school premises, compared them with the new board School that had been built in Lovers Lane, and advertised for a new headmaster.

The whole premises were then spring-cleaned, seating forms replaced with individual desks and separate lockers, lobbies with pegs for the boys to hang their coats and hats. Dormitories for at least thirty boarders had been refurbished.

The new Headmaster, Mr Noakes, by the end of his first year had done much to bring the school into the life of the town. He wished that the school should be mainly for the benefit of Newark and the district. Consequently a first public prize-giving was held in the Town Hall and the roll had risen to seventy eight boys.

In June 1895 the headmaster was requesting a gymnasium, a library and a more adequate playground as well as a playing field reasonably close to the school.

The first Founder's day was held with Holy Communion at 8.00am and another service at 10.00amwith a sermon preached by an Old Magnusian the Rev. F W Greenwood from Liverpool. This was followed by a cricket match at 11.30, lunch at half past one with many long speeches and then tea at five-o-'clock.

Improvements to the Old Magnus premises continued to be made and academic progress was very satisfactory between 1895 and 1902, but the Inspectors of the Board of Education condemned the old school in 1897 and directed that proper buildings should be provided as soon as may be.

Since 1887 the income from the endowment had been insufficient and it had been impossible to save towards a new building, and if they broke into the capital it may prove impossible to maintain it, even with increased fees. Mr Earp, vice-chairman of the Governors, found and bought a site of six acres just off London Road which he presented to the school. His generosity prompted the Governors to launch an appeal in the neighbourhood and among old boys for between £3,000 and £3,500. Gifts came from other sources and Councillor Earp gave a further four acres of land.

Dr Noakes, who had made such an impressive start as Headmaster announced his resignation. This was unfortunate because his popularity had greatly helped the school and now it was felt the impetus of the Appeal would be lost, especially as Dr Noakes publicly regretted that so much money had already been spent on the old building and that a new one might prove an expensive mistake.

Councillor Earp however was determined to see a new school provided. As financial problems increased and progress almost ceased, he gave £2,000 and offered a loan of £3000. This failed to arouse interest and so he gave £5,000 outright.

The response of the public was still insufficient to convince the Board of Education and the County Council that there would be capital to cover all the outlay including equipment and increased expenditure on staff, especially as the Governors were contemplating selling £1,800 of Government Stock from the Endowment, so reducing income. There was serious concern that the new school might become insolvent and have to be closed down. Governors began to lose interest and failed to come to meetings. Councillor Earp felt that some bore lingering grudges because of his attitude to Mr Plater, who though as a headmaster had aroused much criticism, had represented the old order of things in Newark.

Consequently, Councillor Earp on learning that the Board of Education was contemplating providing a new school for only a hundred boys, threatened to withdraw everything he had given and promised. He went to see the President of the Board and obtained the sanction of a school for 150 boys, whereupon Mr Earp paid £290 for the revised architect's fees. In all he is believed to have contributed more than £10,000 to the new building, but much more is owed to him for his commitment to a project he believed to be vital for Newark, and which was accomplished on May 22nd 1909

Margaret Granger

An Appreciation of a major Newark Artist

See page 10

Portrait of Diana Low 1933

Beef-eater - The Tower
from London Types 1898

Hawker – Kensington from London Types

S for Sportsman from An Alphabet