

Member's Newsletter



This month's photo of the week is a lovely view of St Peter's church on a glorious July day last year!

- Photo by Alexander Howes -

Photo of the
month

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heritage
transport day

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Northampton heritage transport day



Attention to all historic and classic vehicle lovers! It is not long until the Abington Park museum's annual Transport Day, which will take place on the 14th June.

We have been promised that there will be something for everyone. No matter whether you are interested in classic cars, motorcycles or commercial vans and iconic buses, the free event will have them all!

If you have a classic vehicle that you would love to display, please do bring it along so everyone else can enjoy it too!

FREE bus rides on Northampton Transport Heritage Buses will take place from 10 am to 4 pm – they will be servicing three routes around Eastern Northampton and will take approximately 15 to 30 minutes each, depending on traffic and parked cars! The buses will leave at the lay-by at the top end of Park Avenue South, and drop off is just before the pedestrian crossing at the main entrance to the Museum. For those with prams/buggies, etc, volunteers will move them from the start point to the unloading point for you! So, no excuse not to have a ride.

For those interested – buses scheduled are Northampton Corporation 1946 Crossley VV 9146; United Counties 1971 Bristol VR CBD778K and Stagecoach 1990 Leyland Olympian H654VVV – visiting buses scheduled are No. 111 – RBD 111M United Counties Bedford YRT with Willowbrook B53F body and London Routemaster RML CUV 271C - RML 2271

Report by Neil Farmer

St James bus depot - update

In our last newsletter, we introduced and explained the situation regarding the iconic St James bus depot. We explained that it was scheduled for demolition to make way for a new housing development.

Since the last newsletter, we can confirm that approval for the partial demolition of the old St James Bus and Tram Depot has been granted and is scheduled to take place later this year.

Northampton Transport Heritage were kindly granted access in April 2025 to take final photos, they also managed to remove an old mirror that



Both pictures were kindly donated by Northampton Transport Society.

was presented to a member of staff, plus some wooden panelling. The whole building is now in a very poor state, and the main block where the three large sliding doors are at the front – that whole section is unsafe and will be the first part to go. It is hoped that discussions about the remainder will take place later this year and that NTH will be included in this, especially as there are parts of the remaining building of interest. For example, some round internal windows and tram track remain from the original building.

Report by Neil Farmer

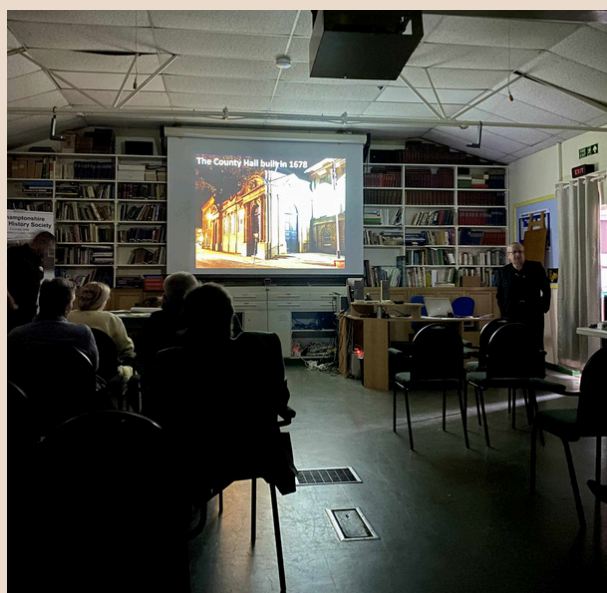


Talk report - Haunted Northamptonshire

by Adrian Perkins and Lewis Dellar

This month, members of Northampton Together were treated to a slightly different talk from two very interesting and engaging speakers. Rather than learning about the town's internationally significant history, vibrant culture, or fascinating historic buildings, this month's talk focused on Northamptonshire's surprisingly active supernatural side.

Whilst many of you may be sceptical about the existence of ghosts, there was no denying that Adrian Perkins (the ghost detective), alongside his colleague, Lewis Dellar (Parapsychologist), delivered a thought-provoking and fascinating talk.



Time to explore the County Hall after reports of unexplained happenings.

It was this experience which stoked Adrian's interest in the supernatural and encouraged him to begin investigating other people's experiences. This led Adrian to develop a theory, which he compellingly presented to us. He explained that what he encountered all those years ago wasn't a ghost but a spirit. To Adrian, ghosts are mere recordings of past events that degrade slowly over time. Spirits, on the other hand, are often the remains of ancestors and loved ones interacting with the physical world to support those they left behind.

Adrian and Lewis are best known for their investigations, which feature in Adrian's many books. These books recount some of the hundreds of cases that he has personally investigated or had recounted to him. He takes great pride in the fact



One of Adrian's personal stories included a antique mouse which would move around the house when unobserved.

As one would expect, Adrian's first supernatural encounter took place on a cold and dark night. While living in his old childhood home, in the historic village of Weedon Bec (famous for its large Napoleonic ordinance depot), Adrian reported that a dark figure entered his room. Whilst the terrified young Adrian hid under the sheets, he felt the figure sit down on his bed, and there it stayed for several long minutes until it eventually faded away. It took Adrian 40 years to recount the encounter to his mother, who was unsurprised that he, too, had seen this entity. Apparently, it had been a familiar sight to other family members throughout the years.



A selection of Adrian's books which promise to take readers on a tour of the county's unexplored hauntings.

that they are all relatively local and have never been explored or recounted before.

We were lucky enough to hear Adrian recount a few of them in person. Of particular note was his experience in the county hall. Upon initial exploration, nothing appeared to be out of the ordinary, but as the investigation took them to the surviving historic cells, things became less explainable. Through various methods, Adrian and Lewis recorded numerous unexplainable sounds from disembodied footsteps to voices with no source. Additionally, Lewis even found himself chasing what he believed to be a person into a room with no exit. Yet, upon entering the room, he found it empty. Adrian believes that these sights and sounds are the echoes of the once-condemned who resided in the hall's subterranean cells.

Lewis then follows this up with the science. Whilst his scientific and sceptical approach hasn't won him much love from the believing community, he

has been instrumental in helping identify other possible causes of Northamptonshire's reported hauntings. Lewis explains that faulty electrics, magnetic fields, and the human brain itself are amongst the most common explanations for paranormal experiences. For example, electricity can cause your hair to stand on end whilst your mind constantly attempts to make sense of the randomness around you by recognising patterns that don't exist. After all, we have all seen faces in our toast or animals in the clouds.

This talk certainly left us wondering and thinking, even the sceptics amongst us. This was evident by the number of questions Adrian received at the end.

Whilst different and out of the ordinary for the Civic Society, Adrian's and Lewis' talk was an interesting glimpse into a world which fascinates many but is understood by few. We hope that those who made it enjoyed the talk as much as us. We hope to welcome more of you to our next talk.

Report by Alexander Howes.

This month in Northampton's history! - June

It was in June 1268 that Prince Edward, future king Edward I, arrived at the church of the Holy Sepulchre to take up the cross and join the Ninth Crusade. He set off from the town alongside 120 knights, his brother, and many others for the Holy Land.

Today's townspeople will find it difficult to believe that once upon a time, Northampton was at the centre of events which shaped the world! Due to the presence of a great royal castle and a Knights Templar headquarters (believed to be the church of the Holy Sepulchre), Northampton and Northamptonshire were the focal point for England's participation in Christendom's many crusades.



Imagine this space being used as a headquarters for one of the most powerful organisations in European history!



Built by Simon de Senlis I or II, the Church of the Holy Sepulchre was one of the first (possible the first) round churches in England.

In February 1187, King Henry II began to organise the preaching of a new crusade in the Northamptonshire village of Geddington, whilst his son, Richard I, would begin preparing for the Third Crusade in Pipewell Abbey (near Corby).

These are just a few of the locations in Northamptonshire connected with England's contributions to the Crusades. If you have never visited the church of the Holy Sepulchre, now is a great time! Upon stepping in, try and imagine it crammed full of England's most powerful nobles and knights preparing for a crusade to the Holy Land!

Report by Alex Howes

Around the county with Alex and Benji - Ashby St Ledgers

This month, Benji and I will be visiting the tiny parish of Ashby St Ledgers. I will be taking you on a very condensed tour of the village's colourful history, which is dotted with conspiracy, plots, and religious politics. However, the best way to experience the village's rich history is by exploring it yourself.

Today, the village is home to a modest collection of thatched cottages, a historic manor, and a charming medieval church. In other words, Ashby St Ledgers appears to be your typical Northamptonshire village. One would certainly not expect it to be at the centre of Britain's most infamous terrorist plot! But more on that later.



A row of beautiful thatched cottages along the main street. It is likely that these were originally build for estate workers.

St Leger) was a 7th-century Burgundian bishop who was martyred after being imprisoned, blinded, and murdered by a jealous courtier. One might notice that the village draws its name from the Catholic martyr.

Upon entering the church, I was greeted by very well-preserved medieval wall paintings. This is a great representation of what the average medieval church may have once looked like. Due, in part, to the poor literacy rates, churches would have been highly decorated with large and bright biblical scenes and matters of local importance. The whitewashing of church walls, which we now expect to see, only became common during the 17th century.

Standing next to the church is the Catesby family's 15th and 16th-century manor. The estate belonged to the family from the late 14th century until it was confiscated in 1611 after the family was implicated in the infamous gunpowder plot.

The Catesbys were no strangers to scandal. Before the estate's final confiscation, it was temporarily confiscated in 1485 after the execution of William Catesby on Bosworth Field due to his allegiance to King Richard III. The family, however, did not learn their lesson as the next 200 years saw them embroiled in numerous controversies and scandals. These ranged from concealing Catholic priests and holding illegal masses, to participating in the Essex rebellion of 1601 which aimed to overthrow Elizabeth 1st. The Catesbys are, however, best remembered for their central role in the Gunpowder Plot. Robert Catesby is believed to have been the lead conspirator and used his home as a meeting place. Despite their meticulous



A beautiful 16th century gatehouse which is believed to be the very building in which the final touched to the gunpowder plot were made!

Limited archaeology has uncovered deposits of 2nd and 3rd-century Italian pottery, indicating the existence of a modest Roman settlement. Whilst this is the earliest evidence of occupation, the existence of the village is first recorded in the 1086 Domesday Book. The book records a relatively large settlement of 24 households. However, John Bridges, who visited in the 18th century, recorded that the population had only doubled to 50 households.

Unfortunately, beyond the church, little of the medieval village remains. The extensive ridge and furrow fields have long been ploughed over, and even the original village layout has been changed multiple times.

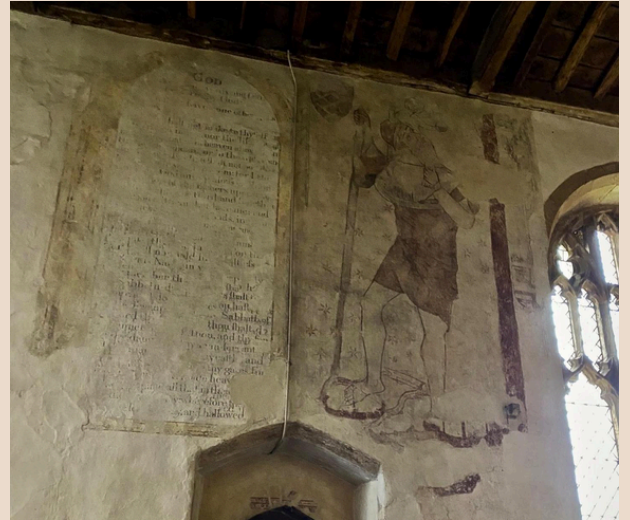
One of the few remnants of the medieval village is the Grade I Listed 14th-century Church of Leodegarius. This church's dedication is highly unusual, as Leodegarius (or



Entering the medeival church.

planning, we all know how the plot ended. Upon the plot's failure, to nobody's in the royal court's surprise, Catesby's involvement was quickly uncovered. Eventually, he would be tracked down to Holbeche House, where he was killed in a shoot-out with royalist soldiers.

Following the estate's confiscation, it would be purchased, sold, and gifted to multiple families over the next few hundred years. Despite these families making modifications, the gatehouse in which the plot was supposedly finalised still survives and can be seen through the large iron gates.



St Christopher giving the baby Jesus a piggy-back ride! It wasn't rare for biblical figures to be depicted undertaking actions which were relatable to the congregation.



A view from the churchyard into part of the manor's extensive formal gardens.

This has been a brief tour of a sleepy village's less-than-sleepy history. I do hope you feel inspired to pay Ashby St Ledgers a visit yourself. The church, manor, and surrounding countryside are not to be missed! If you are in the area, why not make a day of it and also drive down the road to Braunstone for its characterful village centre and quiet canal walks?

Article by Alex Howes



The charming village pub which has sadly been closed for a couple of years now. Hopefully it will open its doors again one day.



Peeping through the imposing large iron gates up the driveway towards the manor.



Speakers 2025

Humfrey Rooms
10 Castilian Terrace, Northampton NN1 1LD

Please arrive at 7:15 for a prompt 7:30 start so you have time to help yourself to tea and biscuits!

We kindly ask a for a suggested donation of £5 pp to cover the cost of renting the hall

March 17th

A history of St Peter's
church

Jenny Rose and Gareth Lugar-
Mawson

St Peter's, Marefair is a designated Grade I listed building and, being a redundant parish church, has been under the care of the Churches Conservation since 1998. Considered by some to be the finest 12th Century church in Northamptonshire, this will be a talk covering most aspects of its evolution from earliest origins to present day.

In this spooky talk we explore the rich and mysterious ghosts, legends, and folklore of Northampton! Adrian, or as he is better known, the ghost detective, is the author of a series of books investigating Northamptonshire haunted locations. So who better to take us on a tour of Northampton's haunted past?

May 19th

Haunted Northampton
Adrian Perkins

June 16th

Film from 20th century
Northampton
Peter Austin

The Northamptonshire Film Archive Trust is a registered charity dedicated to collecting and preserving cine film and converting the footage into a digital format to screen to audiences around the county. Our visit to Northampton Civic Society will include scenes taken in and around Northampton in the 20th Century.

This month's talk will see us welcome our neighbours from Wellingborough Civic Society, who are offering a fascinating and thought-provoking talk on a major community asset: the Victoria Centre. Through an exploration of its history, we will begin to understand why a multi-cultural community centre is so important for the local community.

July 21st

The Story of the Victorian
Centre
Freud Edeltraud

August 18th

The Archaeology of
Northampton
Andy Chapman

From the Neolithic, he will move on to the Bronze Age and the Iron Age, with Hunsbury Hill providing the only surviving upstanding prehistoric earthwork. The Romans will get a brief mention before he explores the Anglo-Saxon origins of the town in some detail. He will finish with the rise, fall and eventual demolition of Northampton's royal Castle.

Poplars is a grand house built in 1778 by a wealthy widow, in a prime place at the top of a hill in Wellingborough. Mike's talk will take us to explore the people who called the 50-acre estate home. We will understand where they came from, what they did, where they went and what legacy they left behind. Like the Channel 4 series "A House through time", we will experience how the house adapted to social changes during its first 125 years.

September 15th

Poplars Grand House
Mike Williams



Keep your diary free for our next talk on June 16th!

Keep your diary free for our next talk on the evening of June 16th when Pete Austin will be visiting us!



Pete will be representing the Northampton Film Archive Trust. The trust is a registered charity run entirely by volunteers dedicated to the preservation of cine film and equipment.

They will be treating us to an exclusive viewing of a handful of their over 5,000-strong collection of films from around the county. Through these films, we will be taken on a tour of Northampton's last 100 years of history!

We hope to see you there. Please see the events list above or visit our website at the address below for further details. Also, please join our Facebook group for any updates.

Thank you for reading!

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