Visit of the NEW ENGLAND Historic Genealogical Society

A sunny day in August provided the perfect setting for a visit from NEHGS to the Pilgrim Roots region. NEHGS is the nation’s leading comprehensive resource for family history research and the largest Society of its kind in the world. On the tour was the society’s President and CEO, Brenton Simons, who particularly enjoyed an exclusive visit to Scrooby Manor. Historian Sue Allan guided the group across the trail, visiting Scrooby, Babworth and Austerfield, and it was at St Helena’s Church in Austerfield that Brenton presented Sue with a gift and membership to NEHGS in recognition of her extensive research into Pilgrim ancestry.

In August, Bassetlaw District Council successfully obtained all necessary consents from three different local authorities and the relevant Church departments to erect new trail boards across the Pilgrims Trail. Although the style of each interpretation board is generally agreed together with the headline content of what each board will tell at the eight sites, the final detail will be decided, subject to Heritage Lottery decision, in consultation with partners at each site. After all, each site has a unique story to tell at its own location and we want to work with site owners to make sure their sense of pride is evident in the interpretation panels.

MAYFLOWER 400 - Tours Developed

A number of itineraries have been created to meet the demand of tour operators. These have been very well received in the US market with an August tour to the Roots area selling out in days. There are a variety of tours ranging from ten day trips to all Pilgrim partner destinations across England, to more niche, special interest two and three day itineraries, even 4 hour trips, created to encourage passengers on cruise ships to visit the Pilgrim sites.

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In July, Bassettlaw District Council offered a warm welcome to Dr David Weidner, Executive Director of the Pilgrim Monument in Provincetown, Massachusetts and Curator of Provincetown Museum. Dr Weidner’s primary reason for visiting was to explore educational opportunities between New England and North Nottinghamshire.

During the visit, Dr Weidner visited Gringley on the Hill primary school and Stanton-le-Steeple’s school. He was also taken on a tour of the Pilgrim Churches in Austerfield, Scrooby and Babworth. Children from Gringley were able to ask questions about the Pilgrim Monument, which is a hugely popular New England attraction that helps tell the story of the Pilgrims’ arrival in America. Dr Weidner told the children about the Pilgrim’s early relationship with the local Native Americans, the Wampanoag, and the signing of the ‘Mayflower Compact’ – an agreement that helped the Pilgrims’ survive, and incorporating principles which later inspired the American Constitution. BBC Radio Nottingham came along to record this very special visit.

Every year, we commemorate our region’s connections to the Pilgrim story with light-themed events called ‘Illuminate’. Illuminate now takes place across the region, and this year events are planned for the following dates:

**Illuminate** 2017
- Austerfield & Bawtry Pilgrims Festival parade - Retford
- Gainsborough
- Scrooby
- Boston
- Sunday 18th November
- Sunday 22nd November
- Thursday 22 November
- Thursday 29 November

*Illuminate* is closely linked to American Thanksgiving – a story about the Pilgrims’ survival in their first year in America thanks largely to the help they received from the Native Americans. It’s also inspired by a quote from Roots Pilgrim William Bradford, who became the Governor of Plymouth Colony. Bradford wrote: ‘As one small candle may light a thousand, so the light here kindled hath shone unto many’.

We’ve been developing Illuminate since 2015, counting down to the 400th anniversary of the Mayflower’s voyage. Join one of the events in your area to take part in the fun and find out more. Further details will be confirmed in our next newsletter, including how you can get involved. For updates, check out at www.PilgrimRoots.org

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**NEW Publications**

Nottinghamshire Author, Columnist and Photojournalist; Sally Outram, is working on two forthcoming publications.

‘Mayflower Pilgrim Walks’ is a collection of circular walks, suitable for all abilities, which follow the path of the Mayflower Pilgrim Trail. The routes will explore historic sites which are associated with the Pilgrims, visit tranquil, quintessentially English villages, rivers and canals, see the abundance of wildlife, flora and fauna, and encourage visitors, and locals to experience our beautiful Nottinghamshire countryside. The walks will include places to stay, eat, drink, bus routes, taxis, car parks, museums, shops, building of historical and architectural interest, support and celebrate local tradesman, businesses, and the local economy. It will showcase Pilgrim Country at its best. Many of the Pilgrims originated from the villages in and around the district, which offers a wealth of heritage and history, the walks embrace the very essence of the journey the founding fathers of the new world took. Well known Walking TV Presenter, Julia Bradbury, is showing her support to Sally’s project, via TOG partnership (The Outdoor Guide) which is a fantastic opportunity to promote the area, walks and other projects involved in Mayflower 400.

‘Mayflower Pilgrim Cookbook’ This book will showcase the recipes of Sally’s Grandmother, former housekeeper, cook to Babworth Hall and WI member, Violet Myers. Found in her memoirs and diaries, some of the dishes are ‘forgotten’ recipes and have a significant connection to the local area and the New World. The main ingredient of each recipe is apple, and these will be linked to a new apple variety, called the Pilgrim 400, a direct descendant from the Bramley Apple at Southwell. The book will feature extracts from Violet’s diaries, accompanying recipes to dishes cooked, photography/illustrations and useful snippets of household tips and information. TV Gardener and BBC Radio Presenter John Stirland will be writing the foreword.

The aim is to focus the sales strategy in the local area, in specialist book shops and cook shops across the UK, Tourist Information shops across the UK, and into the US.

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**Did you know?**

Governor William Bradford organized the first Thanksgiving feast in the year 1621, in Massachusetts. The first Thanksgiving feast was held in the presence of around ninety Wampanoag Indians and the Wampanoag chief, Massasoit, was also invited.

The Pilgrims had a corporate sponsor for their voyage to America – the London Virginia Company. But a dispute with their representative took place on the docks of Southampton prior to their departure, causing the contract to be voided. With the Pilgrims’ funds dwindling, they were forced to sell some of their butter to pay dock fees.

The first Thanksgiving celebration lasted three days. The drink that the Pilgrims brought with them on the Mayflower was beer.

Although there was no livestock on board the Mayflower, there probably was the usual cat or two to keep the rat population in check. It is recorded that at least two passengers brought pet dogs, a mastiff and a spaniel used to hunt during the first winter months and many historians believe there were more, but these two were the only ones mentioned in journals.

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**Contact details**

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Dr David Weidner outside Scrooby Church