

Hello Friends! Wonderful news was received by the Committee this month, that we have found safe, secure & dry storage for our collection for the foreseeable future. This has been a worrying time for us, as we knew that our current storage, kindly provided by the Foyer, would be unavailable after December. We would like to express our grateful thanks to Donella at the Foyer for all her help this year. We need committee members again, if you have enjoyed our events over the last 12 months, please consider coming on board. We also need contributions for future issues of the newsletter, e.g. museum reviews if you have visited somewhere, articles, puzzles, pictures, postcards or information about local events or places of interest. For the time being, we will be producing the newsletters less frequently. Our virtual museum is online at [www.sleafordmuseum.org.uk](http://www.sleafordmuseum.org.uk) and is constantly being updated and improved by our Webmaster. **Sue Titmuss, Secretary, 01526 833964, 07949 116564, [sootit@btinternet.com](mailto:sootit@btinternet.com) welcomes all enquiries.**

### Upcoming Events

We would like to remind you that our next meeting on 6<sup>th</sup> November will be a talk on the Dambusters Raid, its planning and execution, by Jim Shortland, a local aviation history expert. There will be refreshments and a raffle as usual, and Jim has kindly donated a framed print of one of his pictures as a prize. As usual, this will take place from 7.30 pm in St Denys Church Rooms. All welcome, non-members £2 on the door.

This will be our last event for 2008, but the Committee are busy planning next year's programme and would welcome suggestions, via our Secretary, Sue Titmuss at [sootit@btinternet.com](mailto:sootit@btinternet.com) or by post to 35 Whitehouse Road Ruskington, Lincs NG34 9TP

### Museum Review

#### High House Museum, Tumby Moorside

My attention was drawn by a small box advertisement in the local press, which gave details of High House museum, which I must confess I had never heard of, but felt, might well deserve a visit, particularly as August Bank Holiday Monday, was apparently to be the last opening date of their display for 2008.

Situated in the hamlet of Tumby Moorside, and sign-posted from the Total Garage in Coningsby, the museum reflects the first fifty years of the Twentieth Century, and though not immediately impressive from the outside, being situated in the grounds of a local bed and breakfast business, the museum, for such a small concern, is exceptional to say the least. Displays are set up in a series of old Nissen huts which are cleverly linked, and begin with items associated with the Suffragette movement. Further scenarios are all cleverly contrived with an excellent collection of ephemera, depicting life in a First World War trench, complete with rat! The sound of gunfire, explosions and sympathetic lighting add to the atmosphere, and displays of a Second World War shop, life in the home and bomb site, with sirens sounding and search light overhead do not disappoint.

This small museum has managed to reproduce a slice of our history to an exceedingly professional standard, and provides an enjoyable taste of "past times". Well worth a visit !

**Thanks to Lee and Beth Slaven for this article**

**Lee and Green – the American Connection by Jonathan Smith**

The firm of Lee and Green was founded at Sleaford by George Raynard Lee and Arthur Green in 1881. The mineral water bottling enterprise expanded to Spalding in 1886, Bourne in 1891 and Skegness in 1899. In addition to the bottling of superior aerated waters, the firm also specialised in the production of ginger beer, which gained Champion status.

Ginger beer of the 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century was said to have tasted similar to the best champagne, with sparkling effervescence. No wonder this favourite drink of England had crossed the Atlantic by 1790. Ginger beer is fizzy due to the carbon dioxide it contains (a natural by-product of fermentation) and the alcohol content when produced in the traditional process can be as high at 11 per cent, although it is possible to ferment ginger beer so it produces little alcohol. We have no details of the alcoholic content of Lee and Green's ginger beer.

It was the demand for English brewed Ginger Beer in America, particularly around New York which saw the firm develop factories in Syracuse and Buffalo in America early in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

On March 7 1900 Arthur Green sailed on the Oceanic for New York to open a new factory just outside the city, at Syracuse. The firm secured the services of Nelson Anderson as manager of the branch which was at 113 Raynor Avenue. The opening of a further factory at 344-346 Oak Street, Buffalo, New York State, followed in 1904. O L La Due was the treasurer.

The American stoneware ginger beer bottles carried a very similar transfer to the English-made bottles used by Lee & Green's Lincolnshire factories, but described it as English-brewed (rather than Champion-brewed) ginger beer, and, in addition to the factories at Sleaford, Spalding, Bourne and Skegness carried either the names Syracuse or Buffalo, and in some cases both American factories. Most of the stoneware bottles used by the American branches were made in America, but some were made in this country by Price of Bristol.

The prospectus published in January 1902, when shares were issued in Lee & Green Ltd, makes no note of the American branches – just the four centres in Lincolnshire.

It seems likely that George Lee and Arthur Green continued the American business as a separate enterprise. The American business was later purchased by The Diamond A Ginger Beer Company, which was taken over in 1908 to the Salt City Bottling Company.



In 1910, the company moved its bottling works to 113-1/2 Raynor Avenue, which was Lee and Green's building, and the following year built a new building next door at 115 West Raynor.

Lee and Green's Buffalo factory moved to 52-54 St. Paul in 1910, with further expansion in 1916 with a move to 932 Ellicot Road in Buffalo. The business moved one more time in 1920, to 268-270 Plymouth Avenue. This was the company's last year of operation due to Prohibition.

Around a dozen variants of ginger beer bottles used by Lee and Green at Syracuse and Buffalo have been identified by leading American ginger beer bottle researcher Donald Yates.

Sadly, both in Lincolnshire and America, Lee and Green missed the peak of ginger beer's popularity. This peak happened in America in 1920 (when it was abruptly terminated by Prohibition) and in England fifteen years later, in 1935.

I am grateful to Donald Yates for supplying trade directory details relating to Lee and Green's branches at Syracuse and Buffalo. These American Lee & Green bottles are part of my collection currently on display at Bourne Heritage Centre, Baldock's Mill, Bourne - open Saturdays, Sundays and Bank Holidays 2-4pm).

**Thanks to Jonathan Smith for this article**

### The Writings of David Smith

David W. Smith was born in Sleaford in 1858, son of Thomas Smith, the Miller at Hemp Mill on the corner of West Banks and Westgate. During David's youth, the mill had ceased to beat hemp but had now become a corn and barley grinding mill. In his writings, he states that he lived in Sleaford for sixteen years at the Hemp Mill. It seems he may have left Sleaford for a period of time – possibly to further his education – and his writings appear to have mainly been produced in the 1930's when he lived possibly in London. Some of David's writings appeared in Morton's Lincolnshire Almanac, published annually, whilst others were printed in the Sleaford Gazette, also produced by W.K.Morton & Son who had printing works in both Sleaford and Horncastle. Indeed today there is still a Morton's, Printers, in Horncastle. Jeanne Furnival has researched and produced a book about him (with assistance from Simon Pawley and Michael Turland), and has kindly given me permission to reproduce parts of it.

Starting with some historical background to the mill, it was located near Smiths Bridge at the junction of West Banks and Rauceby Banks.

An extract from Sleaford Mills in the Bristol Estates Deeds:

Hemp Mill 14<sup>th</sup> February 1738

Parties – The Earl of Bristol and Thomas Hill and John Foster lease for 21 years

Property: Water Mill or engine for beating hemp and flax. Wheels, cogs, gear and other utensils.

Location: Place called Castle Lane which is that piece of ground or bank leading from the said mill to the town of New Sleaford: also bleaching ground, or parcel of meadow or pasture land, several closes; plus newly erected cottage and another cottage used as a bleaching house.

Consideration: Yearly £55.0s.0d.

By 1783, we find that Thomas Hill and John Foster still appear as lessees of the property, according to Hare's survey of 1783 of Lord Bristol's land.

Extract from The Court of Sleaford – Wills Section

John Foster – Roper	1761
Thomas Hill – Flaxdresser	1791
John Foster – Flaxdresser	1802
Leeson Smith – Flaxdresser	1821
Thomas Smith – Flaxdresser	1821

Extract from Sleaford Parish Registers

Sarah daughter of John Foster – Roper, Baptised 24<sup>th</sup> October 1750  
Samuel, son of Benjamin Muggleston, flaxdresser, Baptised 24<sup>th</sup> July 1752  
Mary, daughter of Benjamin Muggleston, hempdresser, Baptised 28<sup>th</sup> June 1754  
Jane, daughter of William Smith – Hempdresser, Baptised 14<sup>th</sup> December 1762  
Watson (sic) daughter of William and Sarah Harrison – Roper, Baptised 14<sup>th</sup> May 1769

David Smith tells us in an article published in the Sleaford Gazette dated 24<sup>th</sup> July 1936 that during his father's tenancy of the mill over three generations, it was a flour mill, though we know from the Bristol Estates Deeds that it had been a hemp mill previously. (Simon Pawley gives an excellent description of the making of rope from hemp at the mill in his book Sleaford & The Sleas) The mill was demolished in Queen Victoria's reign and David Smith describes it in the article:

"The mill was a three storey building and was tiled, the cottage was of two storeys and thatched. When you went in at the heavy black door of the mill, you descended a few steps on the right and found yourself in the mill proper, that is, the place where the grinding and refining were done. A strong structure, a kind of platform on the right, carried the two pairs of millstones, one for the wheat, the other for barley. My father called the former, the French stones, the latter, the Grey stones.

On this platform too, was the handle for starting and stopping the mill, the handle of course, communicating with the great water wheel in the wood lean-to at the corner of West Banks. You could always tell when the mill was working by hearing the splashing water falling on the bucket boards of the big wheel and so turning it round. A most pleasant sound, this water, on a hot day as you turned the corner from Westgate to the Banks. People said it was nearly as good as a shower bath. Some lingered for a minute by the padlocked door to enjoy a cooling.

Opposite the great strong platform, was the dressing-machine, which refined the ground meal, separating it into its constituent parts. Fine flour, bran or sharps. On this side also was the bunting machine to take out the bunts, or blacks, from the corn before being ground and dressed. Between the platform and these machines was an open space where sacks were placed to receive the meal as it came down the spout from the millstone, or the flour bran and sharps from the dressing machine.

Here in this open space, my father was generally to be seen superintending the various processes. I feel sure he liked his trade judging by the way he would stand by the sack letting the descending meal or flour slip through his fingers on the way to the sack below. This is how I often found him when I went to call him to dinner. I would then say "Shall I stop the mill, Father?" "Yes, my boy" he would say and I ran up the steps to the platform like a two-year-old, turned the handle and the giant water wheel was silent in a moment. I liked stopping the mill, it gave one a sense of power."

**Grateful thanks to Jeanne Furnival for permission to reproduce this extract from her book**

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Subscriptions are now due for 2008-9. They are not being increased this year, and we believe still give good value in free entry to talks etc. and regular newsletters. £12 individual, £18 couple/household/, £24 corporate. With only six months left of our year to end May 2009, these would be halved for new members. Please send membership/donation cheques to Mrs S.Titmuss, Applebeck, 35 Whitehouse Road, Ruskington, Lincs NG34 9TP