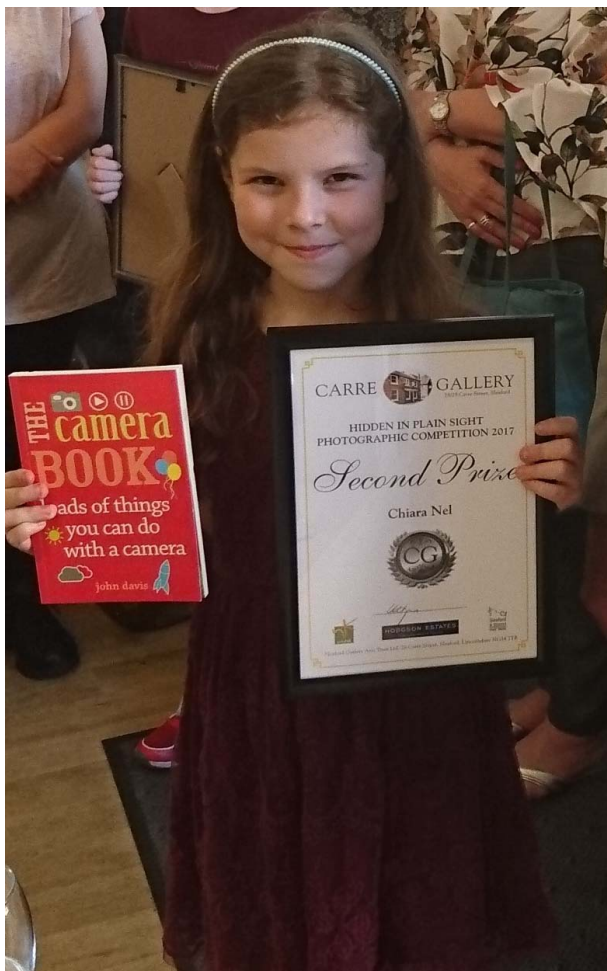




**Sleaford  
& District  
CIVIC TRUST**

## SUMMER 2017

**Chairman's Letter: *Civis Sleafordus Sum*  
Hidden in Plain Sight Photo Competition  
Sleaford Museum Trust AGM Report  
Book Review: 'Samuel of Sleaford'  
Sleaford Islamic Centre  
'Homage' a poem to Tennyson**



*Chiara Nel, winner of 2nd prize for under 13's in Hidden in Plain Sight Photo Competition for her photo 'Sheep in the Town.'*

## FLIGHT MASTER

*Now here; now there;  
So quick; then slow:  
"Dragonfly!"  
That's all I know.*

*In my ignorance  
I admire  
This hottest day's  
Impressive flier.*

*Close by; then far;  
High, then low.  
Propelled as if  
Shot from bow.*

*Now going. Gone!  
But mind retains  
Cling-film wings,  
Bronze-thread veins:*

*Perfect form  
Reached long ago.  
Did Caveman see  
The same air-show?*

*Malcolm Doughty*

## *CIVIS SLEAFORDUS SUM*

I am honoured to be elected as Chairman of the Sleaford & District Civic Trust but I am very conscious that I am not, nor could ever be, a Sleafordian – always assuming that the definition of that worthy word is a person who was probably born in or close by the town and has a deep, innate and intimate link to and understanding of it. Neither can I offer much personal knowledge or experience of Sleaford, having spent the considerable majority of my life at sea or abroad and only coming to live here permanently in 2010. And to make matters even worse, my knowledge of architecture is really only of the naval variety, which favours talk of displacement and the rake of a ship's bow rather than load bearing walls and Corinthian columns. However, I may have a couple of saving graces that can mitigate my otherwise inadequate CV of "*How to be a Civic Trust Chairman*".

First, stealing a line or two from Cicero I can say *civis Sleafordus sum* with a reasonable amount of confidence. Second I should not underestimate the influence on me of my time in the Royal Navy spent in London and particularly in the Royal Naval College at Greenwich.

I was fortunate to do both my junior and senior Naval Staff courses in Sir Christopher Wren's superb buildings and the icing on the cake was a couple of years spent as a member of the directing staff running the senior course. I had close to 4 years living amongst wonderful architecture that was steeped in history and every day spent there was a joy. However, leaving aside such obvious delights as taking breakfast, lunch and dinner every day in the mesmerising Painted Hall, there are a couple of episodes that influenced me in particular and have helped shape me to become the person I am today.

For much of my time I was accommodated in Queen Mary's building and as a permanent member of staff, privileged to have sole access to a bath. My bathroom was small but with a massive Victorian bath with large brass hot and cold taps to match – I don't know why but the *Brides in the Bath Murders* sprung to mind when I first saw it. The first attempt at bathing was memorable. There was only cold water coming out of both taps at first and so I hopped in and waited for the water level to rise and the temperature to increase. I soon became aware that I was not alone in the water. Countless crustacea were swimming happily around me and as soon as the fiendishly hot water kicked in, the shrimp-like creatures stopped swimming and turned

pink. A decent mayonnaise and a spot of tomato ketchup and I could have been wallowing in my very own prawn cocktail. A day to learn the lesson that beautiful, historic buildings are often best viewed from the outside than lived in.

Also, in Queen Mary's building was the Chapel of St Peter and St Paul, an 18<sup>th</sup> century neo-classical delight. Its serenity and beautifully soft and muted colours provided an ideal environment for quiet reflection and prayer at the beginning of the day. I could not think of a better way to start the working day: breakfast in the Painted Hall, followed by prayers in the Chapel and a gentle walk through history to a seminar room in a grand and impressive building.

I shared an office with a like-minded fellow naval officer in Queen Anne's Building, close to the Water Gate and with a superb (and frequently distracting) view of the Thames. The view encouraged us to explore the architecture and history of the Greenwich, Deptford and Woolwich areas and we could do this once a week during the College's sports afternoon. We came to enjoy these weekly expeditions so much so that we were even tempted to skip our Painted Hall lunch experiences to have more time to explore further and further afield. I learned two valuable lessons during that time. The first is that when you look around an area and try and soak in the overall image of the buildings and the architecture, it is a mistake to just look at the ground floors. Regardless of the building, the ground floors of house or shops have often been so changed to suit the changing fashions in living, trade and retail that the original character of a building can only been seen on the first or higher storeys. It is when you look up that you can see much more clearly the architect's vision and the builder's skill. And the second value in looking up was demonstrated when exploring amongst the tower blocks in Deptford. On a memorable occasion we were 'bombed' by a high rise resident with a newly-filled disposable nappy. Thank goodness the commendable bomb aiming skills of the 12<sup>th</sup> floor resident were only thwarted by a chance, upward glance seconds before impact. I would add that this incident occurred in spite of the BWC Convention that had been ratified fourteen years beforehand – nowadays it might even qualify as a war crime. Nevertheless, despite the odd inconvenience, the explorations gave us considerable pleasure and relief from the academic stress of the work place. Life in the historic Greenwich building would have provided a useful education for any budding future member of a civic trust.

I also had about five years of sometimes quite intensive operational and political stress working in Defence departments in Whitehall. Quite often days were very long and strenuous but I found that the perfect stress-buster was to give up all thoughts of fighting through crowds to get onto the Tube and instead to walk back to my digs through as many areas of open space as I could. On a summer's evening, you could feel the burdens start to fall away even as soon as you entered St James' Park and by the time you exited at the far end one felt almost entirely rejuvenated.

So, although I have still much to learn about Sleaford, I have picked up a few hints about what can make people's everyday lives less stressful and hopefully happier and also more successful. It is not a surprise that my time in the Town Council revolved around trying to improve the recreational, cultural and heritage aspects and, by so doing, work towards improving the quality of everyone's life. I can see a natural progression from Council to Civic Trust in this respect albeit without the spending power of the Annual Precept!

For those of you who have not given up on me or skipped my musings about a sailor's sojourn in London you may be relieved to note that the next few words are about the Civic Trust. It is worth reminding ourselves what the *raison d'être* of the Trust is. The revised Constitution dated January 1993 encourages us to promote locally high standards of planning and architecture and to secure the preservation, protection, development and improvement of features of historic or public interest. My layman's interpretation of these worthy ideals can be best described as acting as a sort of public conscience or sounding board for the various local authorities as they deal with the planning, buildings, facilities and amenities as they affect Sleaford and its environs. And one must not forget the other objective listed in the Constitution, which is to stimulate public interest and promote public participation in the work of the Civic Trust.

During six years in the Town Council I was struck by the considerable goodwill shown by individuals and organisations in Sleaford and there are several examples when cooperation on projects has reaped considerable rewards. Those that immediately come to mind are the Town Council working with Sleaford in Bloom to help beautify the town, with the Sleaford Museum Trust to help preserve and display local history and with the River Slea clean up Team to help keep our local waterway free of too much litter – there are others. The Town Council may happen to have been the common factor in these examples

but everything does not have to be centred around the Town Hall. I wonder whether there is the opportunity for much more collaboration and coming together of voluntary groups, associations and trusts in the town to work to benefit of the town and its residents. It is probable that the Civic Trust may have an important part to play here. A part that might centre on planning, coordination and provision of expert or specialised advice and guidance – certainly when it comes to our objective of “securing the preservation, protection, development and improvement of features of historic or public interest”. Of course members of the Civic Trust have not been idle in promoting these ideals – far from it. We continue to be associated with the refurbishment of the picturesque Sleaford market town signs that are sited on the various approach roads to the town and we are delighted that Kesteven and Sleaford High School has agreed to re-paint two of these signs that have become drab and faded over the years. We hope that engaging in this manner with the talented youth we have in the town will encourage a more general youthful interest in the Trust and its work. In a similar vein it was heartening to see how engaged many of the local youthful photographers have been in entering the very successful Hidden in Plain Sight competition promoted through the Carre Gallery with Civic Trust support.

The Civic Trust has been prominent in planning and developing the Sleaford Heritage Trail. Starting with a selected group of historic sites and buildings, visitors following the trail will in the future be able to find small plaques or plates with embedded QR codes. When a smart phone is placed over the code, the user will be able to have access to an audio visual presentation from an actor in period dress who will describe and provide details of the building or site in question. This is an exciting venture that can only enhance the currently under-whelming tourist appeal of the town.

Many readers will be aware that the Civic Trust has ownership of The Cut, the strip of land along East Banks from Carre Street to the River Lea. The area has not been laid out in any formal manner but has been allowed to develop naturally until a more permanent and appropriate use can be made of the land. The current thought is that in the future the area could provide an excellent site for suitable covered storage facilities to support recreational and maintenance boat usage on the river. In the meanwhile the Civic Trust is grateful to the Town Council and possibly to other voluntary organisations for

managing the considerable plant growth we have experienced this year. The only thing left to say about The Cut is “watch this space”.

We still have a close interest in working towards a suitable memorial to Les Gostick, a true Sleaford character who played a vital role in, what has been described as: saving the River Slea. A site for the memorial has been identified in Monument Gardens.

There may well be other projects the Civic Trust can embark on especially those that involve elements of refurbishment and we hope that they can receive widespread support.

Finally, it is worth mentioning Sleaford Castle. A year or two back a prominent member of one of our local councils stated that Sleaford lacked an obvious tourist site such as a castle. With all due respect, how wrong that statement was. In 2015 I went around Castlefield with members of NKDC staff, STC's Services Supervisor and a delightful lady from English Heritage. As we inspected the area I could tell that the lady was not looking at a field with tell tale bumps of a former buildings foundations but she was 'seeing' the castle itself in all of its 12<sup>th</sup> Century glory. In June this year, Year 7 students from Carre's Grammar School visited the site as part of a history project with Historic England and then came up with a range of fascinating proposals to enhance the site and bring it to the public's attention. I can see a great opportunity for a collection of like-minded people and groups to once and for all put Sleaford Castle back on the map. I envisage the Civic Trust having a major role to play.

The Civic Trust is in rude health but I believe that it would help us meet all our objectives to provide a better place for people to work, rest and play in (and no I am not trying to sell a rather sweet caramel chocolate bar) if we could work towards the following:

First we should continue to work towards bringing younger people into the fold. One does not have to be old to appreciate heritage, history and beauty. There are positive signs, working with the schools and it is good to see the school outreach work being conducted through the Sleaford Museum, we just need to build on this approach – perhaps we can capture some young imaginations on projects such as Sleaford Castle or those involved with the river?

Second, I believe we must embrace social media if our work is to appeal to a wider audience. Although I know that many of us will not be overly familiar with all the forms of modern media I think we shall have to take the plunge and establish ourselves in the ether so that we can get our message out widely and quickly and, as importantly, receive the views, ideas and support of others.

Third and perhaps final point for the time being, is that there will almost certainly be benefits in collaboration, consolidation and working together. There are many voluntary and charitable groups and associations working in Sleaford. Most, if not all, of us have specific interest and/or specialist knowledge and skills to offer but I suggest we all have a common aim or theme which is in some way to make life better for everyone in Sleaford in all ways possible.

I started off this ramble by trying to justify my position with a brief account of some of my previous personal experiences. I am sure that we all want to work towards making our environment pleasing to look at, pleasant and safe to live in and at the same time remain conscious of our rich history and heritage. This is something that the Civic Trust has a key part to play in whether we are a Sleafordian or not.

Garry Titmus

(Old sea salt *et civis sleafordus sum*)

## CONTRIBUTIONS WELCOME

To write for this newsletter please send articles, letters,  
comments, images to the editor:

Dr Richard Shaw, 7 Liverpool Cottages, Westgate,  
Sleaford, Lincs. NG34 7PW  
email: [siddha17@gmail.com](mailto:siddha17@gmail.com)





'Wyvern Railings' by Lucy Hubbert, 3rd in the under 18's.

### **SLEAFORD, HIDDEN IN PLAIN SIGHT**

The theme of this exhibition was straightforward: take a photograph that highlights a part of Sleaford - a building, a structure or an aspect of everyday life - that goes unnoticed by the casual observer. Ideally the photograph was to have been taken from within the centre of Sleaford but consideration was given to extraordinary pictures taken outside of this area so long as it was within the Sleaford district.

Over 150 entries were received. These entries were narrowed down by a panel of three judges to the finalists whose photographs were professionally mounted and formed the two-week exhibition in the Carre Gallery.

The exhibition was sponsored by members of Sleaford & District Civic Trust, the Sleaford Gallery Arts Trust and Hodgson Estates, and was supported by artsNK. The judges were Lucy Lumb, representing artsNK, Martin Cameron, a professional photographer and director of the Sleaford Gallery Arts Trust, and Russ Mathieson, representative of the Civic Trust who proposed and jointly sponsored this competition. The prizes were presented by Garry Titmus, Chairman of Sleaford & District Civic Trust, who first gave an opening speech. This was at a private viewing and presentation evening in the Carre Gallery on the 15th June 2017.

Photos of the entries and the prizegiving in the Newsletter are by Richard Hodgson.

## RESULTS

### Under 13's

- 1st 'The Bass Maltings' by Alice Taylor  
2nd 'Sheep in the Town' by Chiara Nel  
3rd 'Memorial Plaque' by Joshua Lenton

### Under 18's

- 1st 'Resting Bike' by Aimee Scadding  
2nd 'Another Curious Surprise' by Karina Budd  
3rd 'Wyvern Railings' by Lucy Hubbert

### Over 18's

- 1st 'Night Fish' by Colin Brammer  
2nd 'Princess' by Barry Mayes  
3rd 'Graffitied Wall at the Boston Road Rec' by Sue Shaw



'Princess' by Barry Mayes.

## **SLEAFORD MUSEUM AGM REPORT**

Jan Spooner, Design Co-ordinator and Vice Chairman, reported at the Sleaford Museum Trust AGM on Tuesday, 23 May, 2017, that it has been a very successful second year of opening. New design additions have improved the visual exterior and the display facilities for exhibitions. It has been a year of Awards for the achievements of the museum and its contribution to the town has been recognised by other organisations in Sleaford with mutual liaisons. Articles in *Your Local Lincs* over the year have ensured that 22,850 homes and businesses are aware of historical stories of the town's past. Thanks were given to the local press and other magazines for continuing to profile the museum. The museum is particularly proud to be 'On the Map' of the 'Arts and Heritage Trail' of attractions in Sleaford.

Jacqui Cleaver, Curator, reported that major exhibitions during the past year have included: Power to Sleaford, Inns and Pubs, and Rauceby Hospital, with smaller displays featuring the diaries of a local Victorian school boy, the 1937 Sleaford Rail Crash, and vintage construction toys. Separate window only displays have been presented on the Queen's 90th Birthday, Victorian and Edwardian costumes, and Traditions of Christmas. 'Object of the Month' gives a chance to show some of the more unusual items from the collection. The museum stand at the Heckington Show and Made in Sleaford event generated much interest. A continued programme of research into further local history topics ensures the museum will always offer visitors something 'new' to see. Our recent partnership with NKDC Navigation House has given us space to display retired exhibitions. This initiative is proving very beneficial, increasing visitor numbers and promoting a heritage trail in the town. A valued collection of Victorian and Edwardian costumes and accessories was acquired by donation from the National Trust. With increasing social media promotion and schools outreach activities the museum has proved to be a successful cultural and educational asset for the town.

Heather Jenvey, Archivist, reported that the main issue this year has been storage. The town council needed to renovate the tractor shed

where the artifacts are stored when not on display, so we had to move out. This year has seen us start to lend out displays for both short and long terms, such as the exhibit in Navigation House. Storage issues have restricted what new items we can accept. In 2015, 119 new items or groups of items were accepted. 2016 saw 53 donations which added 345 artefacts to the museum. Later this year we hope to start restoring and conserving the larger artefacts.

Janice Smith, Operations and Volunteers Co-ordinator, reported that there were 3,500 visitors, about the same as last year, and some came from as far away as China and Canada. There have been private visits by schools. Volunteers helped with window displays. The Queen's 90th Birthday was of great interest as well as the Christmas window and decorating the tree for the Christmas Tree Festival in the Methodist Church, which was themed Twelve Artefacts of Christmas. Janice is standing down from the committee but will still do the odd shift in the museum.

Mark Bamford, Outreach Co-ordinator, reported that during the year we have continued to develop and expand our outreach work concentrating on the schools within the NG34 catchment. Inevitably the priorities dictated by the National Curriculum have directed us towards our primary schools although we have worked with St George's Academy to loan artefacts for their library displays. The small size of the museum means that visits need to be small scale or scheduled for the spring and summer when large groups can divide their activities between the museum and fieldwork in the town. However, we have been successful in promoting the museum through taking artefacts, materials and expertise out to the schools, developing activities with their teachers to meet their curriculum objectives, and working with large and small groups of children. To meet a specific request for a Toy Project, we created a loan box of Victorian and Elizabethan facsimile artefacts which we successfully trialled with two schools and in the museum on a drop-in basis. We have become involved with the Heritage Education Forum (we hosted the last meeting on 18 May), the Layers of History Project, and the Sandford Cascade, and the museum has registered for the prestigious Sandford Award.

**Samuel of Sleaford**  
**The Converted Jew**  
**An Autobiography by Edward Samuel**  
**Introduced by Russ Mathieson**

The book 'Samuel of Sleaford the Converted Jew' was published in 2002 by Gospel Standard Trust Publications of Harpenden, Hertfordshire.

[www.gospelstandard.org.uk/](http://www.gospelstandard.org.uk/)

When or whether it has been previously published is not stated in this edition. Since moving to Sleaford over 40 years ago I have often wondered about the origins of "The Temple" in Eastgate. Recently I joined the Sleaford & District Civic Trust and it was at one of the committee meetings I was told about Edward Samuel's book.

It is the autobiography of Nisan Samuel and tells the story from his birth in a place named Vinooty in 1812 until he was 33 years old. He writes that he was born in Russian Poland, which had been known as the Grand Duchy of Warsaw, formed by Napoleon in 1807 and then absorbed into the Russian Tsarist Empire at the Congress of Vienna after the French Emperor's defeat at Waterloo in 1815. Although the name Vinooty has disappeared from modern maps it is now known as Vainutus situated at the south-west corner of Lithuania, approximately 20km north of its border with the Russian province of Kaliningrad.

Nisan was the fourth of twelve children. His father was a prosperous wholesale woollen draper who traded goods from the Baltic ports of Prussia. These were then smuggled across the border and eventually sold in St Petersburg or Moscow. It was on one of these journeys in Russia that he was caught by the Cossacks on the look out for smuggled goods. The Cossacks were used by the Tsarist rulers as a police force. It cost the family much money, for the confiscation of his goods, his release and the probable payment of fines.

Both of Nisan's grandfathers were religious, his maternal grandfather being a Rabbi of over twenty to thirty thousand Jews. Nisan remembered, as a young child, that he had misbehaved at the dinner table whereupon his grandmother admonished him with the words "you will kick the bucket". A phrase that means 'you will die' but in the context used by his Jewish grandmother she meant that he will become a Christian.

As a young boy Nisan was educated in the Mishna and Talmud together with the reading of the Old Testament. In 1825 Tsar Alexander I died of typhus and was succeeded by his younger brother Nicolas who on his succession introduced a programme of Russian & Christian education for Jews between the ages of 12 and 18. This was in preparation for 25 years of military conscription. Whilst in the army or navy it meant that they had to deny

completely their Jewish religion. It was then when Nisan was sixteen that he and his younger brother were advised by their grandfather to leave their country of birth.

Another law prohibiting the issuing of passports for those aged between 14 and 20 was also introduced. This warranted a plan for them and a friend named Israel to leave in the middle of the night. They proposed to make their way over the border then travel on to the town of Konigsburg in Prussia. Konigsburg is now known Kaliningrad.

With the help of many men, some of whom were armed with guns, the boys were able to make their way to the home of a Gentile on the Russian side of the border. From there they crossed the border, always looking out for Cossack patrols. The local population knew how the patrols worked and at what intervals they would pass. They also knew that they would shoot anybody dead if there was any resistance.

On arrival at the first village in Prussia they stayed in a house of a Prussian who had met them after crossing the border. They tried to sleep, but after the excitement of the previous hours they could not. Instead they spoke of their weeping parents but also of their dreams to make their fortunes in England. On the following day they were taken to an inn in a town where his father knew Russian and Jewish Polish merchants. One of these men told them that they would need a passport to get to Konigsburg and that he would take them to Memel, present day Klaipeda in Lithuania on the Baltic coast, and obtain the documents for them. From Memel the merchant then accompanied them to Nisan's uncle's house in Konigsburg having, on the advice of his father, left Nathan's brother in Memel.

With their passports Nisan and his companion Israel planned to walk to Frankfurt-an-der-Oder and begin what was to become a long journey to England. Along the way he experienced a mixture of mishap and good fortune. The first being betrayal to the authorities by Israel concerning their false passports and their subsequent separation. Nisan also had to endure his own conflicting thoughts regarding his religious beliefs. Whether he was to remain a Jew or become a Christian as prophesised by his grandmother. The journey would take him to Danzig, Leipzig, Frankfurt-am-Maine, and in his own words, 'the length and breadth of Germany', and then on to Copenhagen, Stockholm and eventually to Rotterdam. It was here that he called upon Baron Rothschild whom he had met whilst in Frankfurt-am-Maine. The banker had given Nisan his card and asked him to visit if ever he was in the city. After a stay of about a month Nisan decided to go to England, the banker paying the fare for a first class cabin. The ship was wrecked but he was rescued and eventually arrived safely in England. He says that his decision to leave Holland and his subsequent survival is due to the overruling power of God, who had appointed London as his spiritual birthplace.



After arriving in England his brother, whom he had left in Memel, met him in Bristol. They started a jewellery business and travelled to all parts of the country. Eventually his brother decided to go to America and Nisan would have gone with him but for a message not being delivered before a ship from Liverpool was to sail. Nisan did not see his brother again as he was killed in a house fire in New York about 18 months after he arrived there.

Nisan then went into partnership with a French Jew who broke his arm in an accident. Whilst his partner was recovering Nisan travelled to London on business. On his return the Frenchman had collected all money owing to them and sold all their stock before returning to France, leaving Nisan destitute.

After all his trials and tribulations Nisan thought that no matter how hard he tried to make a success of his life the Lord was not being particularly helpful. But his faith made him feel 'He had something better in store for me'.

In 1836 when Nisan was in London he met a converted Jew who told him that Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah and he showed him passages from a Hebrew Bible to reinforce his belief. Nisan was not convinced. Later he visited a house where Jews would discuss Christianity and there he learnt that to believe in the Messiah would mean everlasting life. He spent much of his time troubled by being deep in thought considering the Christian message and that changing his faith would mean abandoning Jewish customs and beliefs. It would also mean that he would no longer be accepted by his own family. To them he will have died.

In December 1837 Nisan was baptised at the Episcopal Jewish Chapel in London, where he was accepted into the Church of England. It was at this time he changed his first name to Edward. Even after his baptism Edward was in a state of mental despair and appeared to be physically ill. A physician could find no cause of his illness but advised Edward to get some fresh air. After a while and much prayer he regained his normal health but his inner turmoil continued as he wrestled with the Christian beliefs of everlasting life and the forgiveness of sins. It was during this time he was confirmed by the Bishop of London and left the Christian Jews Society.

After starting a job in Bermondsey a minister named David Denham came to see Edward and told him that the Lord would reveal himself to him. And so it was while studying his Bible as usual in his room after work that he experienced what he described as 'complete deliverance'.

Following his conversion Edward spent his time attending prayer meetings in chapels and peoples' houses. The first time he spoke publicly was at the invitation of Mr Denham. It was during this period that Edward's employer told him that he must decide whether to continue in his job or give up preaching. He chose to leave his job but wondered whether he had made the right decision. Whilst on a journey to Gravesend he met a woman who was intent on committing suicide. She had decided that before drowning herself she

would listen to one last sermon. After discovering that a converted Jew would be preaching she attended the meeting and changed her mind after experiencing Edward's ministry. It was this event that helped him decide that he should preach the gospel.

Although Edward was asked to preach in and around London he was concerned about leading an unsettled life having left his secure job. Farnham in Hampshire was one of the places he was invited to preach. He stayed at the home of a Mr Goodchild who instructed him in baptism by immersion. He spent much of his time thinking deeply whether he should be baptised. A friend had tried to persuade him not to be baptised and told him that if he did so their friendship would be ended. Edward was eventually baptised at Hartley Row near Farnham after which he moved to Farnham permanently in about 1845. As a pastor there he helped build and establish the town's first Baptist Church. He did not stay long afterwards. His reasons for leaving are not stated but it appears that he may have left under a cloud.

Edward's autobiography does not tell us anything of his life after leaving Farnham. Eventually he settled in Sleaford in 1862 after living in Hitchin, Leicester and Salford. Why he came to Sleaford is not known; perhaps he knew people in the town. In Sleaford he became the pastor of the Providence Chapel which was situated in Hamilton Place behind 41 Boston Road. The building is now a private house.

In 1877 the Sleaford Gazette published an article titled 'Ancient Dissenters at Sleaford' and stated "*..... it is well known how much given Dissenters are to quarrelling, and making what (in their phraseology) are called "splits", however, greatly to the credit of the little Society at "Providence Chapel", they hold on the even tenor of their way without a jar, amid "good and evil report", for the space of about seventy years, until the Jewish pastor fell out with his Gentile churchwardens*". Perhaps there was some prejudice. The 1871 census describes the meeting house as "The Jews Chapel". The reality was a falling out with Samuel and the "Strict Baptists", (essentially Calvinists believing in predestination of souls) and the "General Baptists" who believed in salvation.

In a later article titled 'Opening the Temple' published four years after the 'split' the Sleaford Gazette states that Mr Samuel and a large number of his congregation were locked out of the Providence Chapel and for the following week a bar was placed both inside and outside the entrance doors. Edward was supported by his friends and followers and they urged him to continue his Ministry in an upper room of the Corn Exchange in Sleaford Market Place.

In 1881 a new chapel named 'The Temple' was built in East Street and opened with services attended by supporters travelling by train from Leicester, Grantham and Loughborough and residents from the locality driving '*to Sleaford at an early hour*'. 60 people had luncheon at the Bristol Arms Hotel



and at 4.45pm '350 people received a bounteous supply of the usual comestibles' at the Corn Exchange.

The Temple still stands in what is now known as East Road, owned and occupied by the proprietors of White and Sentance Pianos. The exterior of the building is virtually as it was when it was built, including the foundation stone laid on April 7 1881. Internally nothing remains of the original furniture and fittings. What remained before the arrival of the present owners was removed during the period of exchange of ownership although '*the open stained roof*' as described in the Sleaford Gazette is still visible over the display of pianos.

Edward Samuel practised as a visiting preacher in various parts of the country and was known to be at the Gower Street Chapel in London in 1893. He died 10<sup>th</sup> December 1894 at the age of 84. His wife Mary Louisa died 10<sup>th</sup> January 1907 at the age of 83. They are both buried in the cemetery at Heckington where he was much involved with the Baptist ministry.

Some of the above details do not appear in the book and have been supplemented with the help of Mr Mike Turland of Sleaford and Mr Robert Turner of Newark.

## FOOTNOTE

Whilst preparing the above article I have been able to locate precisely where Vainutas is in relation to the village where my paternal great grandparents lived. Imagine my surprise when I discovered that it is 6 miles to the east of Zemaiciu Naumiestic. 'ZN' (as my family prefers to call it) was also known as Neishtot-Tavrig and Neishtot-Sugint.

In his book Edward Samuel says that his maternal grandfather lived 15 miles away from his own parents' home and that he held the rank of Rabbi over twenty or thirty thousand Jews (in the district). My great grandparents were Jews. My great grandmother Toyba Esther was the daughter of Rabbi Eliyahu Rabinson and the granddaughter of Rabbi Eliyau of Neishtot Sugint. Although my great grandfather, Chiam Nathanson, was not born until 1836 I can only assume that the Samuel and Nathanson families would have been acquainted.

About 15 miles to the west of Vainutas is the town of Silute. It is a town I, with my wife, daughter and son-in-law, visited in February 2012 whilst discovering the land of my forefathers. It is much larger and closer to the Russian border than ZN and having read Edward Samuel's book I wonder whether his grandfather lived there.

Since I was a young lad I always believed my origins were Scottish, but it was not until I was about 35 that I learnt that they were part Jewish. My grandfather changed the family name from Mathieson to Nathanson sometime in the 1930's when my own father was a teenager; but that is another story.



THE TEMPLE



THE TEMPLE (Interior)



THE TEMPLE (Foundation Stone)



PROVIDENCE CHAPEL (Viewed from Carre Street)

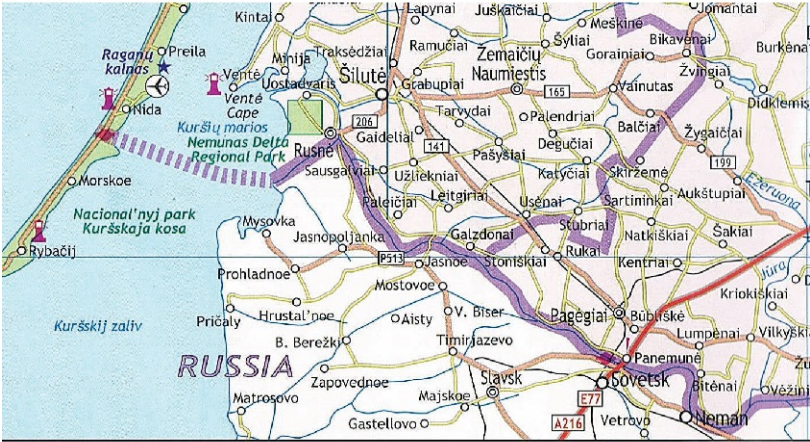




EDWARD SAMUEL'S GRAVE



MARY LOUISA SAMUEL'S GRAVE



SOUTH-WEST LITHUANIA



## THE NEW ISLAMIC PRAYER HALL TAKING SHAPE IN SLEAFORD



Sleaford has a small but thriving Muslim community that through kindness, generosity and warm engagement is making a significant contribution to our daily lives. Whilst serving as Mayor, I saw at first hand the charitable work done by the community and the funds that were raised for local charities as well as good causes abroad.

Initially, to practise their faith, the community had met for prayers in St Denys' Church Hall; with the same venue also being used for Iftar and Eid celebration meals to which members of the non-Muslim community were welcomed with open arms. But this arrangement was only satisfactory as a temporary measure and there is now in place a two stage project to convert two old, rundown buildings in an area just off Station Road. The first stage was completed in September 2015 with the refurbishment of a small building, known as the Sleaford Islamic Centre but which currently is also serving as a Prayer Room. At the opening, the Imam for Sleaford and Muslim communities across the county said: "It is one step, a great step, but we have a long way to go. This place will be a centre for the community and not just Muslims. We want everyone to be able to use this place. The support has been overwhelming and very pleasing."

Now, the whole community has been supportive, gathering funds and drawing together Muslims from different cultures, languages and ethnic backgrounds to work towards converting a large, dilapidated warehouse to the rear of the plot into a larger prayer hall. Based on a standard warehouse frame, the finished building will necessarily be fairly muted but it already boasts two distinctive shaped window or opening frames and the plans show a small dome or cupola on the roof. We look forward to seeing the finished building.

Along with the recent introduction of Muslim burials in an area of the Town Cemetery, the new prayer hall, when finished, will help establish the Muslim community as an integral part of Sleaford life and also further enrich our architectural and cultural heritage. What a perfect antidote to the reports from time to time of the activities of a misguided few on the fringes of one of the world's great faiths.

Garry Titmus

*New Members Please Contact the Treasurer:*

*Mrs Brenda Hitchcock*

*6 Chapman Road*

*Sleaford*

*Lincs. NG34 8BX*

*Tel: 01529 302775*

## HOMAGE

I might choose to stay all day  
Up here in the sun.  
A kindly breeze is piling clouds;  
I watch their shadows run  
Across the barley's rhythmic sea.  
For miles this land is left to me  
But resounds to Tennyson.

Wherever clover clusters thrive,  
Painted ladies fly.  
The elder-flowered, dog-rosed hedge  
With hogweed standing by  
Rivals gardens set below.  
Here unkempt beauty, creeping slow  
As woodbine, echoes 'Tennyson.'

Peace today on this high wold,  
Fanned by pipits' wings,  
Goes rolling down to lakeside sedge  
Where the warbler sings,  
Then stretches back a hundred years  
Through hamlets where his name appears;  
Quiet haunts of Tennyson.

I might descend to find the Brook  
Where my love began;  
Or seek the cool, unchanging church  
Where something of the man  
Who taught my heart to soar remains.  
At times I'd give my earthly gains  
To PERCEIVE like Tennyson.

Malcolm Doughty





*Garry Titmus, Chairman of Sleaford & District Civic Trust, presenting the prize for 3rd in the under 18's to Lucy Hubbert for her photo 'Wyvern Railings' (See the photo on p. 9). The Hidden in Plain Sight Photo Competition prizegiving at the private viewing and presentation evening at the Carre Gallery on 15 June.*