EDITORIAL NOTE

"There must be thousands of local historians passionately interested in one place - a parish, a village or a small town - but nearly every one of them is working in isolation, rarely meeting a kindred spirit."

W. G. Hoskins, Local History in England 1959

This is the first issue of the Leicestershire Historian, the journal of the Leicestershire Local History Council which was founded last year to stimulate and co-ordinate interest in local history in this county. A note on the work of the Council appears in this issue.
Our President refers in the above quotation to the isolation felt by all students of local history, Leicestershire's included. It is partly to overcome this it was decided to start this magazine as a logical extension of the Council's activities. It is hoped that the Leicestershire Historian will keep members in touch with each other, keep them informed of events and lectures of interest and in its articles and notes reflect the considerable amount of work in local history now being undertaken by many people in this county. It will, with your help, be produced twice a year, in Spring and Autumn, and we hope to include in future numbers, articles of general interest on Leicestershire history, antiquities and archaeology, reviews of new books and a notes and queries section.

We shall be pleased to receive any contributions especially articles, notes and correspondence, for the fox on our cover is a voracious reader! These should be addressed to either of the editors c/o Leicestershire Record Office, 57 New Walk, Leicester.

We have been fortunate in our contributors to this first issue and hope that the journal will be enjoyed not only by Council members but by all those interested in learning more about Leicestershire's past.

A. G. Veysey

R. A. J. Potts
When it was suggested that a local history section should be formed under the aegis of the Rural Community Council it seemed that yet another society catering for those interested in archaeology and history might be necessary. This county, so full of history, already has many organisations for those who are interested. However, it became apparent at an Open Meeting held in July 1966 that a great number of people were very much interested in an amateur approach to local history. As a result, a Working Party was convened by the Secretary of the Rural Community Council, Mr. Anthony Stuart, composed of representatives of various interested organisations and other enthusiasts. The Lord Lieutenant of the County, Colonel R. A. St. G. Martin, was elected Chairman, a constitution was drawn up with the help of the parent body, the National Council for Social Service, and a great many preliminary problems were discussed and solved. Opinions were unanimous on the aims and functions of the new organisation. First, it is to be a co-ordinator and link between those individuals and groups already involved in local history, and, secondly, it is to offer to those amateur enthusiasts, who are interested in their own localities, an opportunity to get together, to exchange ideas, to learn more, and, in fact, to have local history brought to their own doorsteps.

We are honoured to have as our President Professor W. G. Hoskins, Hatton Professor of English History at the University of Leicester, and he it was who gave an inspiring talk to a large gathering on "Fieldwork for Local Historians in Leicestershire" at the Inaugural Meeting held at the Guildhall in October, 1966.

At this meeting the Leicestershire Local History Council was formally established and the Officers and Executive Committee elected.
Almost at once both functions of the Council came into play. Notice of an Exhibition of Relics of the Past held at Peckleton were circulated to members, and several were able to visit it; this was followed by a public lecture, illustrated by his own superb slides, by Mr. Hugh Collinson, entitled "People and Places" - a Study of History through Local Monuments". This attracted a large audience and membership increased and continues to do so, without any special publicity drive, and now stands at about 125 members.

The next event really took local history out into the county and consisted of an exhibition in May this year of local bygones in the Village Hall at Kimcote followed in the evening by an "Any (Local History) Questions" session, at which a distinguished panel answered questions and identified objects of interest.

This is a bare outline of how the Leicestershire Local History Council came into being. What is so illuminating and exciting is the kind of response that has been forthcoming. Membership is drawn from just the people we hoped to reach - those many enthusiastic and often quire amateur people who are genuinely fascinated by the very local history of the place they live in, or in some aspect of its past. Some of these have not belonged to any historical organisations before, but have been quietly working on their own local research. On the other hand, we have many professional historians among our members, and these have given unstintingly of their time and trouble in helping the Council in every way.

A tremendous surge of enthusiasm seems to have built up, our Executive Committee and Planning Sub-Committee are bursting with ideas and plans for the future (only very slightly damped by lack of funds!) A debt of gratitude is owed to those who have helped in the formation of the Council and for all the hard work and encouragement received from the Rural Community Council and its staff.
And what is it all about - this passionate love of Local History? Possibly the reason lies in men's desire to become part of their environment, to belong, to have roots. If the roots cannot be, as in previous generations, the real roots formed of family domicile in the same place over many years, then the study of past life gives the feeling of belonging in a very real way. It is a wonderfully satisfying feeling to know a great deal about the details of life in one's own locality from earliest times, and in so doing to realise that what is happening today is the local history of tomorrow.

E. M. Dickson

MELTON MOWBRAY, QUEEN OF THE SHIRES

There are, or rather were, two Melton Mowbrays in Leicestershire; one, the ancient little market town, famed the world over for its pork pies and its Stilton cheeses, and the other "Meltonia", the metropolis of fox hunting and the capital of that mysterious country known as the Shires. When Melton first became possessed of a market is not known but traditionally its origin has been attributed to a charter granted by Edward the Confessor to Leofric the powerful Lord of Mercia and the husband of Lady Godiva. However that may be, what is certain is that a thriving market was in existence in 1077, when the Lord of Melton, Geoffrey De Wirce, granted a tithe of the market to the Monastery of St. Nicholas in Angiers. In Domesday Book the market is recorded as having a yearly revenue of 20s. Through the centuries Melton continued as a market town; in 1794 Nichols described the market as being the most considerable in this part of England. The town at this time was little more than a large village, its population of about 1700 inhabitants all living within a few hundred yards of its imposing Gothic church.

It was in the closing years of the eighteenth century that Melton first began to attract attention as a hunting centre. Since 1753 when Mr. Hugo Meynell first went to Quorndon Hall which he later purchased from Earl Ferrers - and proceeded to build his stables and kennels there, Quorn had been the headquarters of the Hunt.
The discovery of Melton Mowbray as a centre for hunting is generally attributed to Mr. W. H. Lambton the father of the first Earl of Durham. William Henry Lambton found that, whilst the pace during the day in the field suited him, the 'going' set by the boisterous and ebullient Quornites at night was altogether too fast and not at all to his liking. He therefore looked elsewhere for more peaceful surroundings, and found them in the quiet, unfrequented town of Melton. He is said to have been the first man to take a house there for hunting and the last for many a winter to find it peaceful. The rate book of 1787 gives W. H. Lambton, Esq. as the occupier of a house in Sherrard Street later known as "The House" and afterwards as "The Elms", now demolished. Whether or not he was actually the first to settle there, he was certainly one of the precursors of the winter migrants who were to throng Melton in ever increasing numbers during the next hundred years.

His example was soon followed by others as it began to be appreciated that the gentle undulating pastures of this part of Leicestershire, situated as they were within easy reach of three hunts, offered better facilities for sport than either Quorn or Loughborough. There was also the added attraction, that should they so desire, and their pockets were deep enough to allow, they could hunt six days a week and only pay one subscription, for neither the Duke of Rutland's nor the Earl of Lonsdale's Hunts accepted one. The opening of the Leicester to Melton Navigation in December 1794 undoubtedly played a considerable part in contributing to the town's popularity as a winter sports centre, for the coming of the canal brought the price of coal down from 1s. 1d. per cwt. to 8d. and sometimes as low as 6d. a cwt. Cheap coal meant a good fire, a hot bath and a well cooked dinner for a cold, tired and hungry huntsman to come home to.
Melton was ill equipped to cope with this influx of visitors. Nimrod, when he first visited the town in 1802, stated "there was only one inn, and that a very bad one, not one bank, and but few houses with which a well-breeched Meltonian would be satisfied". To remedy the acute shortage of suitable accommodation new residences were built and many old premises rebuilt and enlarged. At the commencement of the 1819 season, the Leicester Journal reported "that additional buildings have been erected since the previous season with considerable dispatch, and that the townspeople vie with each other in attention to the desires and wishes of their visitors and that it would require still greater exertions to provide for the innumerable celebrated sportsmen expected during the ensuing season". Soon between 500 and 600 hunters were being stabled in the town each winter, in great stable yards, many of which can still be seen at the back of the hotels and in converted builders yards and garages.

Thus Melton changed from being an obscure little market town, to become the most fashionable winter sporting and social centre of Georgian and Regency England. The Society which gathered here brought with them many of the customs which had been practised in the older social centres at Bath and Tunbridge Wells. The Church bells were set ringing to announce and welcome the arrival of eminent sporting visitors, and the town band serenaded them in the evening at their residence. "The Earl and Countess of Wilton arrived at Egerton Lodge, on which occasion the bells rang out a merry peal." Every winter the local papers were constantly making similar announcements. One wag wrote

"I found it was for me that the good natured people
Rang so hard I thought they would pull down the steeple.
For with bells they contrive as much as they can,
To tell the arrival of any such man.
If a broker; a statesman, a gamester or peer,
A naturalised Jew or a Bishop come here,
With horns and with trumpets, with fiddles and drums,
They strive to divert him as soon as he comes."
After ringing a welcome the ringers waited on the gentlemen, for most were glad to pay for the honour. Tradition has it that, when in 1814 the Prince Regent came to the Old Club, he refused to make any payment, and the incensed ringers pelted him with snowballs.

A Master of Ceremonies was chosen to arrange and preside over the social events during the season, as Beau Nash did at Bath. Of these dignitaries few particulars have been handed down, and only some of their names have survived. Lord Plymouth appears to have been the first to hold this office; he was a great benefactor to the town, popular with all classes. Nimrod described him "as good to the poor, just in his dealings, and useful to his country". He was succeeded by Golden Ball Hughes, a wealthy and eccentric bachelor. Ball, for that was his name originally, inherited a fortune of £40,000 a year from his uncle Admiral Hughes, whose name he added to his own. His tenure of office was made remarkable by the lavishness of the entertainment he provided. "Ball Hughes is the life and soul of the festive season at Melton, a very large party of the Hunt is entertained this week at his residence." Mr. Ball Hughes is keeping up the spirit of the Melton Hunt in the best style by sumptuous banquets given every day." Like so many of his ilk, Hughes was an inveterate gambler; one night, he and four friends lost £100,000 at Crockfords. Their recklessness and stupidity with money was boundless.

"The Bucks had dined.
Up starts his lordship and to the window flies,
And lo, "a race a race" in rapture cries.
"Where?" quoth Sir John,
Why, see two drops of rain
Start from the summit of the crystal pane.
A thousand pounds, which one with nimblest force
Performs its current down the slippery course."

Small wonder that Hughes like so many others had to seek refuge from his creditors by going to live on the Continent, where he died in comparative poverty.
Naturally the sporting fraternity which came here were not content merely to follow the old customs and convention of other places, they introduced new fashions and practises, some of which are in vogue today. One of the first residences to rise to fame was the Melton Club, soon to become known throughout the length and breadth of fashionable Britain as the Old Club. During the early years of the 19th century, the men of the Melton Hunt had adopted the slovenly habit of dining in their soiled red coats and dirty boots which they had worn all day in the field, as a matter of course rather than of necessity. Under the influence of Beau Brummell, a frequent visitor to Melton, this was all changed. The members of the Old Club, it is claimed, were the first to adopt an evening hunt dress and very elegant it was. Harriet Wilson, the notorious demi-mondaine, who visited the Club said "the evening hunt dress was red lined with white, the buttons and whole style of it are very becoming, these gentlemen never looked half as handsome anywhere in the world as when, glowing with health, they took their seats at dinner, in the dress and costume of the Melton Hunt".

Putting up horses for auction after dinner was a very popular custom at the Old Club. Parties were often formed for the purpose, and after a couple of bottles of claret each, we are assured that bidding became quite brisk. It was quite a sight next morning to watch the different horses change stables to the great bewilderment of the grooms.

When Lord Alvanley left Melton, his house, now the Midland Bank, became "the New Club". Here according to Lord William Pitt Lennox, he saw Menu Cards first introduced. "It was here (the New Club) that I first saw a plan, which since has been very commonly adopted (would it were universal), a bill of fare at breakfast. Instead of having the tea, coffee and all the gourmet accessories introduced at once, and thereby depriving them of that heat so essentially necessary, a list is made out of certain matutinal delicacies which were ready in the kitchen to be sent up at a moment's notice. Small tables were arranged coffee room fashion, so as to enable any one who came early or late, to sit down at once and enjoy a good hot breakfast in comfort."
Of Lord Rokeby's Club in Burton End, with its associations with the notorious Marquess of Waterford and with the Eglington Tournament, much could and has been written. The same is true of the many hunting boxes to which Princes and Potentates, Statesmen and Financiers, Wits and Dandies came in ever increasing numbers - but that is another story. Here an attempt has been made to show the transformation that took place in one of our country towns in the early years of last century.

J. E. Brownlow

SOME NOTES ON ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORY IN KIBWORTH

An evening course in Field Archaeology, the chance discovery of a flint arrowhead and the finding of fragments of Romano-British pottery on the building site near my new home, combined to encourage my interest in the local history of the Kibworth area, into which I moved three years ago.

My interest in history and archaeology, like that of many people, had been confined to books, television, or the occasional lecture. Suddenly I was able to find and handle fragments of pottery used by Kibworth inhabitants nearly 2000 years ago.

A close watch on the building site and the ready co-operation of the building workers soon showed that pottery was being thrown up in the spoil from foundation and sewer trenches over quite a wide area. It was possible to collect a handful of fragments, of rims and basis of coarse grey ware, every evening. Eventually it was found that the pottery was lying buried in the remains of Romano-British ditches, which were being cut by the builders trenches at a depth of about 30 inches.
Always bearing in mind Professor Hoskins' advice to the would-be amateur excavator, but also realizing that within a few weeks the site would be covered by some proud house owners with brand new lawn and flower beds, it was decided to excavate the remains of two of the ditches. A considerable amount of pottery fragments and animal bones were found. Sections and plans of the ditches were drawn and these, together with typewritten reports, were handed to the Leicester Museum.

Pottery found included a large part of a coarse grey ware bowl, fragments of patterned Samian ware, dated 140 - 160 A.D. & 110 - 130 A.D. by the Museum, and many interesting coarse ware rim and base fragments. Soon afterwards one of the builders produced a bronze coin of the Emperor Valens, found on the surface at one of the house sites.

We now had reasonable evidence of life in Kibworth over a period of 300 years in Roman times. Local history here did not start in 1066 after all, as our local historians, like those of many other parishes would have us believe. The trouble is that they, like many others, only interested themselves in the minute examination of documentary evidence but had not taken the trouble to examine the evidence around them on the ground.

One of our most famous archaeologists has said that landscape is a document on which information has been written over and over again. It is simply a question of whether we can separate and understand what is written.

The first step in the process of separating the information to be found on the ground in Kibworth was to purchase two sets of serial photographs. One set, the R.A.F. cover of January 1947, provided an excellent record of the fast disappearing open field pattern of ridge and furrow as the low angle of the winter sunlight threw everything into high relief. Fortunately we were able to compare and match exactly this ridge and furrow pattern with that on a copy of the pre-enclosure map of Kibworth Harcourt, even identifying individual strips and headlands on the ground photograph and map.
The other set of photographs were taken in July 1964 from a higher altitude for Ordnance Survey use. These showed some fields under corn crops and in some cases various crop marks.

A reference in Nichols' *History of Leicestershire*, 1792, to a "considerable barrow" on the high ground just north of Kibworth Harcourt prompted a search on the ground. No trace of this mound could be found but on examination of the 1964 aerial photograph a dark ring was seen on the print, in the corner of a cornfield, at the spot mentioned by Nichols. Another search revealed a slight rise in the field at this point. The barrow seen by Nichols in the 18th century is now no more but his diligence in reporting it and the evidence of the aerial photograph combined to enable a trial excavation to be made across the calculated position of the ditch of the mound. The ditch and mound base were found, and, lying on the inside edge of the ditch, about two feet below present ground level, were the fragments of part of a large 13th century jar, with a vertical thumb-pressed decorative strip. Other finds included pottery fragments of various dates, a sharpened bone tool of unknown use and several fragments of what appeared to be millstone, cut with grooves.

Documentary evidence again came to our assistance when it was found that a pre-enclosure map of the area named the site as Mill Furlong. We now think that Nichols' "considerable barrow" was more likely to have been the mound of Saer de Harcourt's first windmill mentioned in records of 1265. Perhaps the fragments of pottery we have now assembled are from the grain jar used to carry Saer's wheat from the manor house to the mill.
This is what we feel local history studies should try to achieve, a link through documentary and visual evidence with the people who lived in our village through the ages. For example, close study of the Enclosure Award with its details of the allocation of parcels of land to various people when the open fields were enclosed, has enabled us to form a more accurate picture of life in Kibworth in the late 18th century. This document together with its map, records the end of an era which spanned hundred of years of village co-operation in the farming of land by the open field system. After 1780 life can never have been the same in Kibworth and in this document we have the names of people who took a prominent part in the drama. We can go to the church yard and read their epitaphs, and by consulting the extant map can trace the houses in which some of them lived.

It has been noticed that although the Enclosure Award mentions that a certain large pool in Kibworth Beauchamp known as the Wier was to be for the use of the people of the village for all time, it now no longer exists and the land it was on has been enclosed. It will also be found that the old market place of Kibworth Harcourt is much larger on the map of 1789 than it is now, encroachment of public land having taken place on all sides. Cottages whose doors then opened directly onto the square now have frontgardens. Two large trees once on the edge of the market place today stand several yards inside a field alongside it and parts of the old market cross adorn a nearby garden.

What of the future? A great deal remains to be done in the Kibworth area. Within the past few months another scatter of Romano-British pottery has been found; a considerable length of the Town Ditch of Kibworth Harcourt has been identified; the site of the Sweeton Westerby water mill has been located and work is being done using the Enclosure Award and Glebe Terriers to draw an enclosure map for Smeeton, since one is not known to exist. Other work to be done includes the recording by card index of all details of local history interest.
The pleasure to be had from a close study of local history is immense; of foremost importance is the forging of the link between ourselves and those who have lived in our parish before us. They have left their marks. If they are not to be found locally on the ground they may be found in documents in the County Records Office, or the Museum Archives Department. The work we have to do is to use all the available sources to form the best picture of the lives and times of them all.

B. Aggas

LOCAL FIELD NAMES

Not so long ago country dwellers would refer to the surrounding fields by their names as if they were old friends, as, indeed, they were, for the countryman lived in close association with the land. Many farmers still accord this recognition to their fields, but, generally speaking, field names are no longer in such common use and they are not always handed down. Moreover, fields can lose their identities, as happens when, denuded of their trees and hedges, they are merged into one vast expanse.

Therefore when Professor W. H. Hoskins of the Department of English Local History at the University of Leicester suggested that local Women's Institutes should record the field names in their parishes, the Leicestershire and Rutland Federation of Women's Institutes were quick to accept the idea. They sought the reactions of the individual Institutes, and the response was immediate and enthusiastic. Seventy-eight W.I.'s sent representatives to a briefing session at the County Rooms in Leicester. Later others joined, and now more than 100 Institutes are engaged in the Survey, covering 124 parishes.
Briefly, the aim is first to record the names remembered today; secondly, to record any older names (they may be the same names) by referring to maps and documents in the County Record Office and elsewhere. With so many people taking part, some conformity was necessary in the presentation of the results of the Survey, and a general plan was outlined.

The project was made possible by the help of Leicestershire County Council, which agreed to provide photo-copies of the necessary maps. The condition was made that these maps, with the corresponding lists of collected field names, would be deposited in the County Record Office when the Survey was completed. In this way they would form a permanent record.

The field names are intriguing in themselves. At this stage it is possible to quote only a few examples at random, because the Survey has but recently begun. Hallaton has fields called big Foxholes, First Foxholes, Catholes, Rat's Leas, Smock Hedges, Bunch Bit and Honeypots. The last name crops up elsewhere - in Ridlington, Rutland, for example. Arnesby has Branthill and Little Branthill, alternatively called Brantles and Little Brantles. Hoby has Brants - Far Brants, Top Brants, Bush Brants and Flat Brants also Shoby Nook, Cheese Cake Hill and Upper Wong.

Many names are descriptive, e.g., Starvelands in Thurnby. The land by a brook invited suitable names - the Slidings, the Anglings (with Anglings Farm) and Mouldy Banks in Gaddesby; Miry Close, Rushy Close and Brook Close in Thurnby; Mirey Spinney, Ford Meadow, Bog Meadow and Brook Furlong in Bushby.

There are field names ending in "sic", said to indicate a field which gave access to other fields, and which was therefore harvested first, e.g. Broadsic in Thurnby and Willowsic in Houghton on the Hill. Pingle, indicating small enclosure and found in Bushby and elsewhere, goes back to the 13th or 14th century.
Wong (Avey's Wong at Burrough and Upper Wong at Hoby, etc.) is of Scandinavian origin, and refers to a strip of land. Names may contain indications that the income from the field was used for a charitable purpose - e.g. Charity Farm and Mountsorrel Close in Bushby, were owned by a Mountsorrel charity.

An Arnesby W.I. member has had the satisfaction of discovering in 17th century Glebe Terriers some names which are still remembered today, for example, Shallow Thistles, Crooked Tree and Wiggins Hose. Whether the names are applied to approximately the same piece of ground cannot be traced, because no maps accompany the Glebe Terriers. The persistence of the names, however, shows that village memories are long. A Branston member has a good start in that her husband's family has farmed in that district since 1830.

The Women's Institutes gladly acknowledge the help and encouragement they have received from Dr. L. A. Parker, County Archivist, and the staff of the County Record Office. They consider that they have embarked on a worth-while and interesting record of local history. At present the organisers are watching progress. Later they will probably welcome offers of co-operation, to fill gaps in their coverage of the County.

E. Ruddock
LEICESTERSHIRE MONUMENTAL INSCRIPTIONS

I am not here concerned with the powerful who lie in the county churches, smug in effigy and confident of heaven, but with those in the churchyards, often dilapidated and out of the way. Here, where generations of villagers have been laid to rest, the headstones are a mine of information for the curious, and invaluable to the genealogist.

These stones give details which are not to be found in the Registers: ages, relationships, successive wives, husbands and children, and often the parish of origin. At Quorn were buried "Elizabeth Stanyarn, grandmother of Sarah Sculthorpe, wife of James, 10 April 1725, 93 years" and "John Swain, late Woodhouse, brother to Mrs. Charlesworth this parish, 20 May 1799, 58 years." In the same place, "John Chapman, interred with forefathers of several generations successively at this spot, 1809". At Ravenstone there is a slate to John Hextall, 1784, "and Mary his mother, wife of Edward and second wife of Joseph Salisbury of Snibston, and Ann his grandmother wife of Thomas". Here also is John Redfern of Ashby de la Zouch, 1867, and his son James, "who was buried at Gotham, Notts., where five generations are buried in the church and churchyard, all Yeomen". William Moore, buried at Shepshed, 1728, was a son of Samuel and Rachael of Whitwick. "He married Ann wife of Robert Bramley by whom he had two sons and one daughter, viz: Thomas, Ann and Samuel." There is other interesting information to be found. William Lester died at Shepshed, 1783, "whose wife and six children soon after his death removed to Yardley Hastings, Northants". John Smalley, buried at Shepshed, 1805, "settled at Ibstock, and was arrested by the Hand of Death in the space of three years". At Thurlaston are buried Thomas and Walter Taylor, who both died in 1897, and who were "two deaf and dumb brothers united and loving in life".
A stone at Groby, 1890, actually gives the address of the widow: Jane Johnson who lived at Newton House, College Street, Leicester. At Tugby, William Ogden "who bore the loss of sight..." died in 1789. Richard Cartwright of Evington "commenced his pilgrimzge through this troublesome worl the 14 June A.D. 1694 and ceased therefrom in the hopes of a Happy Immortality, 7 Dec. 1773."

They were not always so hopeful. Many appear to have gone to meet their Maker with a heavy conscience. Ralph Smith of Mowsley, 1714 - "remember not the sins of mine youth". He was only thirty one.

There is a touch of irritation, I think, in the accounts of sudden deaths, of which there are many. Thomas Pick of Beeby who was "deprived of live" in 1779, and Henry Hind of Swithland "suddenly taken into Futurity", 1801. Matthew Hardy of Wanlip had, alas, "no time to bid his friends adieu", while at Syston, Robert Sherwin, "accidentally left his life" in 1790. There are also the lingering illnesses which do not shock as much as sadden. William Adcick of Syston "after labouring long under the afflicctive Hand of Providence met the awful stroke of Dissolution" in 1790. Or again, William Hewitt of Shepshed "had the evening of his life embittered with a lingering consumprion".

One finds other causes of death carefully noted. At Shepshed Mary Ann Hill "was burnt to death in a fit on Sunday evening", 1872, and at Twyford Alice Gregory died in 1844, "under the affliction of a broken thigh". At Desford in 1743 Richard Ford "became dull and lately dead", poor fellow!
There were many drownings. At Burton Overy there is a slate which, in a round script ornamented with flowers and rambling the whole width, recounts the following:

"Here lyeth the bodys of two aged 24 and 22. Thomas Dyer, Schoolmaster of this place, for pious parts and virtue too we hope his souls at rest and William Simkins too. These flowers of youth were nipped away by accident and we may say death met them in the deep and caused us to weep and here they lie like two that are asleep. Water is powerful. By them it shows venture not where you not knows. Two brothers like within they lie together. All you that pass by take care in time prepare to die. On June the twentieth this accident was done in one thousand seven hundred and twenty one."

One finds in the Parish Registers a number of coach accidents, usually of people being flung off their top, but I have come across only one stone, at Kibworth Beauchamp, which notes such an incident: "Mr. Michael Ingo of Nottingham, killed by the upsetting of the Express Coach passing thro' this village to London at about midnight, 21 April 1834." One can imagine the sudden clamour, the running feet, the lanterns hastily lit.

The inscriptions often cast a sudden light on character. There are, of course, the long lamentations, the catalogues of virtues, necessary and dull, which leave no impression. At Swithland however, Robert Gilbert who died in 1690, is summed up completely:

"When living one of vertrues hopefull branches was he His conversation honist defining in pious sobriety."
The inscription for Frederick Ordish, architect, at Queniborough, 1885, has the ring of severe authority -

"Be silent, for he who never rested - rests."

One often finds the burial place of members of a family who died away from the parish, although at Thurlaston I came across Catherine Smith, "buried here", and George her brother, "buried elsewhere". Sometimes trades and professions are given, even on the earlier stones. Thomas Bennett, bonesetter, 1714, and William Peak, butcher, 1776, both at Queniborough - Henry Branston, 1708, farmer at Swithland - William Tilley, schoolmaster, 1759, at Thurcaston - William Warren, carpenter, 1746, and Christopher Berry, florist, 1783, at Syston - George Townsend, 1765, millwright, at Aylestone - William Chandler, 1737, citizen and joyner of London, at Gilmorton.

There are servants lamented by their masters, and there is pride in the accounts of long service - as much as 69 years. I have come across an African servant buried at Wanlip: Morjan Rasselas from "the confines of Abyssinia", his stone erected by "one whom he loved". There is a servant from "the lands of the Archipelago" buried at Shepshed in 1739.

I have seen very few accounts of military service. William Bonser of Desford "served throughout the Peninsular Warr", and John Ryder of Twyford sustained four wounds at Waterloo. A later John Ryder served in the Punjab Wars, and there is a Lieutenant Clarke Buzzard at Church Langton who died in 1773.
At St. Mary in Arden there is Henry Dawkins, Farrier Major in the King's Dragoons, "who served 41 years, and having retired he resided in Market Harborough for three and a half years", and died in 1818. James Vann of Great Glen died at Varna, 1854, and his brother Henry, Sgt. R.E. died in Mauritius. At Thurmaston there is William Lane, drummer in the 39th Foot, "who met an unfortunate death in this village", 1822. This poor William, an innocent bystander, was accidentally shot by John Bishop Allen. Allen was apparently the butt of all the hooligans in Thurmaston. Driven berserk by their torments, he was found guilty but insane. Lane's Epitaph says he was an "inoffensive man". Inoffensive is hardly a term I would apply to a soldier, but I found it again in the burial entry at St. Margaret's of Captain Robert Hall, "a quiet, inoffensive man who was barbarously knocked on the head by an election mobb and generally regretted". Some appear to have suffered greatly from the uproar in their villages. The rather patient inscription for William Tyers of Thurcaston, 1781, says he was a "peaceable neighbour", and that of William Godhard of Keyham, "he loved peace and quietness". One wonders if he got any.

Hopeful, or perhaps desperate, youngsters who emigrated only to die far from home of colonial fever, accident and hardship, are included on their parents' stones. At Lubenham: James Eldridge died Bombay, 1783, aged 28, and George Ashton was drowned in Minnesota, aged 24, while his brother John died in Melbourne. At Thurlaston: Ralph Gimson died of fever in Australia, aged 24. At Mountsorrel Frederick Burton was drowned in New South Wales, aged 25. Beyond the formality of the epitaphs, the "beloved" wives and husbands, lie all sorts of stories. While browsing through the Archdeaconry of Leicester Instance Books I found that one "beloved" wife had submitted a divorce petition against her husband.
There was perhaps often good cause for grief as in this account of a frustrated life found at St. George's Leicester: Samuel Kirk, 1793 - 1833. "He was gifted with a strong mind and talents as an artist which would have done honour to his country, but the race is not to the swift, nor yet favour to men of skill. Experiencing these truths he wrote the following lines which are engraved by his express desire:

"Ye great, ye gay, ye rich,  
Ye prudent and ye prosperous,  
Come not near this grave,  
Ye mean, ye sad, ye poor,  
You child of folly, you of adversity,  
Here rests one of your own family  
Whose grave mocks now  
the world's proud scorn and says  
that all her weapons are mere chaff'"

The sculpture on some of the early slates is quite lovely and imaginative. In Church Langton there is one of 1775 of Adam and Eve under the Tree of Knowledge, and at Rothley, 1781, the Day of Judgment, which is most dramatic - the earth and heavens split, the church crumbling. There are angels, some holding crowns or trumpets, some peering through the clouds. One attractive slate at Gumley, which is laid and almost covered with matted grass, has two hands pointing, lace cuffs at the wrist: to the right - "here lyeth Richard Kerby, 1695, and to the left - here lyeth Elizabeth his mother, 1705"

The verses are usually rather pedestrian, and it is a relief to come across something like this:

"She is come to her grave in a full age like the shooks of corn come in their season."
Or on a slate at Bruntingthorpe, 1736, to a mother and daughter:–

"Mary hath the better part. Ann asked for the water."

The high rate of infant mortality is well known, but a collection of inscriptions reveals that the rate was also very high between the ages of 14 and 21 years. The difference in age between so many husbands and wives is also striking, the wives being sometimes as much as twenty years older. There are still, in spite of neglect and depredation, a number of seventeenth-century slates to be found. Thurcaston has one of 1641, now brought into the church from outside. Rearsby, Great Glen, Swithland, Horninghold, Rothley, Quorn, Muston, Tilton and Gaddesby all have at least one dated between 1660 and 1699.

Not only people are buried in these tumbled churchyards but the whole span of Fate, hope and despair, endeavour and the dragging years. On these old stones leaning against the wind you have them all – the pious and the pagan, the pompous and the meek, and the don't care rascals.

Just for a moment, the seeing and the compassionate can bring back to life these other generations.

Patricia Moll.
The brief notes below describe some of the books and pamphlets published during the past year on Leicestershire places and people and include some more general works containing interesting Leicestershire material.

Clair CROSS

The Puritan Earl: the life of Henry Hastings, third Earl of Huntingdon 1536-1595

Macmillan, 1966

This is a scholarly account of the domestic life of the Hastings family, their part in Leicester and Leicestershire affairs and the role of the third Earl in national politics as Queen Elizabeth's viceroy of the North, for the Hastings had traditional Yorkshire and West Country connections as well as their Leicestershire properties. Henry Hastings always had a paternal concern for his own locality, assisting Leicester to obtain a charter of incorporation from the Church, helping education with his assistance to Grammar Schools at Ashby de la Zouch and Leicester, giving generous endowments to Emmanuel College, Cambridge, and a library to St. Martins Church, Leicester. As a devout Puritan, he supported the Puritan element within the Church, and with the influence of his protege, Anthony Gilby, changed the religious climate of the County - helping to prepare the local climate whose support for the Commonwealth forces was in the next century to transform his great castle at Ashby de la Zouch into the uninhabitable ruin we know today.
Some of the printed sources used in the writing of this book, the Records of the Borough of Leicester, the printed volumes of Historical Manuscripts Commission Reports on the Manuscripts of Reginald Rawdon Hastings are easily obtainable from Leicestershire Libraries.

Levi FOX

A county grammar school: a history of Ashby de la Zouch Grammar School through four centuries 1567 to 1967

Oxford University Press, 1967 35/-

In August, 1967 the Boys' Grammar School at Ashby de la Zouch celebrated the 500th anniversary of its foundation and this scholarly and beautifully produced history is a fitting tribute to the school's long scholarly tradition.

Founded and originally endowed by Henry Hastings, third Earl of Huntingdon, a devout Protestant, the school has always enjoyed strong local support. In its early years it produced such notable old boys as Bishop Joseph Hall and William Lilly, the astrologer.

The changing nature of the school is fully described - from its eminence in the 17th Century, fallow years in next century, and continual re-organisation in the 19th Century, including the period when the English School and the Classical School, both meeting specific needs, shared the same building, until with help from the County Council it has grown into the efficient grammar school of today.

A selection of school accounts is given, and the original statutes and orders for the right government of the school, and selections from reports of the Charity Commissioners, and His Majesty's Inspectors. The dramatic tradition of the school is an old one, and title papers from plays from the Reverend Shaw's 17th century headmastership reproduced from the originals in the Folger Shakespeare Library are of great interest.
This is an interesting account of an old school, and a considerable contribution to our knowledge of the social life and past inhabitants of Ashby de la Zouch and North West Leicestershire.

NEWMAN, Bernard

The Bosworth story - H. Jenkins 1967 12/6d.

An old scholar, a former civil servant, and a well known popular lecturer and writer of travel books and thrillers, has written this lively, well illustrated, and very readable account of one of the County's oldest grammar schools - the Dixie Grammar School, which has counted amongst its 'old boys' Robert Burton, author of the 'Anatomy of melancholy', Thomas Hooker, an eminent Puritan divine, and a most notable usher - Samuel Johnson. He describes the foundation - by Sir Wolston Dixie, the personalities of great headmasters such as Anthony Blackwall in the 18th Century and the school as he knew it in the early years of the present century when he cycled from Ibstock to absorb its sound teaching and strong classical tradition.

PACKE Ruth M., Rothley, Mrs. R. M. Packe, Pax, The Ridings, Rothley, Leicester.
Reprinted 1966 4/-d.

This is a delightful pamphlet describing Rothley and its history, full of interesting social details and illustrations, which gives a vivid picture of village life in Leicester within the past ninety years. Originally written as part of a Women's Institute project on village history, this is an excellent example of the lively work which can be done by the amateur historian.
More general books, all containing information on aspects of Leicestershire history.

B. BAXTER

Stone blocks and iron rails - David and Charles 1966

45/-
(Industrial archaeology of the British Isles series, editor E. R. R. Green)

This is an account of the tracks, 'railways' built often by private owners of mines or minerals, to carry goods to a waterside or to a main road, often to a canal. It describes their building, development and operation. There are many references to local lines in the Ashby de la Zouch area, Charnwood Forest and at Belvoir Castle, and an illustration of the Skew Bridge, Ashby de la Zouch, which carried the Ticknall Branch over the Melbourne Road. The book includes a gazetteer of all known lines, arranged on a County basis.

Charles HADFIELD

The canals of the East Midlands - David and Charles 1966

50/-

The rise and fall of the East Midland Canals, including the Grand Union Canal and its London waters, is given with some detail in this book, which with the further volume on the West Midlands and the earlier ones on Southern England and South Wales and the Border, gives a full picture of the rise and decline of our man-made waterways. An account is given of all the Leicestershire canals with interesting information on their finance, building and operation, maps and illustrations, which include the Ashby de la Zouch canal, the derelict Charnwood Forest line of the Leicester navigation, the Oakham Canal, the Leicester navigation, and its link with the Old Union Canal.
MARGARY, I. D.

Roman Roads in Britain rev. ed. J. Baker
1967 £3. 10. Od.

The work, now conveniently available in a one volume edition incorporating new material in the text is a useful and clear guide to the Roman road structure of Britain, including the roads north of Hadrian's Wall. The East Midlands section gives an account of the Roman road network crossing the country. Very well illustrated, with many maps and references, and with some interesting comparisons between the Roman mileage and their modern English equivalents.

G. K. Long

LOCAL HISTORY DIARY

The Leicestershire historian had no excuse for boredom or idleness this winter! We enclose a list giving a selection from the programmes of local history societies in the County (the selectivity and brevity of the items are regretted, but our space is severely limited), Further particulars can be obtained from the secretaries of the societies, or from Mr. A. Stuart, the secretary of the Local History Council. The list itself comes as a separate insert for ease of reference.
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