JERRY & LOGIC's DIALOGUE ON THE State of the Poll.

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The Leicestershire Historian, which is published annually, is the magazine of the Leicester Local History Council and is distributed free to members. The Council exists to bring local history to the doorstep of all interested people in Leicester and Leicestershire, to provide for them opportunities of meeting together, to act as a co-ordinating body between the various Societies in the County and to promote the advancement of local history studies.

A series of local history meetings is arranged throughout the year and the programme is varied to include talks, film meetings, outdoor excursions and an annual Members’ Evening held near Christmas. The Council also encourages and supports local history exhibitions; a leaflet giving advice on the promotion of such an exhibition is available from the Secretary.

The different categories of membership and the subscriptions are set out below. If you wish to become a member, please contact the Secretary, who will also be pleased to supply further information about membership and the Annual Programme.

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A personal tribute to Tony Stuart from Betty Dickson:

I was involved with Tony Stuart through the Rural Community Council when he first came to Leicestershire. One day he suggested that we should try to form a Local History Society and asked if I would 'give a couple of years to it'. That was over fifteen years ago and we have been colleagues and friends ever since. Despite the many activities in which he was involved he was always ready to listen to and support the various local history ideas we had — never interfering but always at hand. A warm and lovable person whom I sadly miss.

Letter to the Editor:

Mrs E M Dickson writes, referring to the last issue:-

Mr J D Bennett's splendidly nostalgic article on the Cafés of Leicester gave me great pleasure, shared I am sure by many readers. I remember one other. 'Meet me at Miller's for coffee or tea' was our cry in the 1920's, which meant up some steep stairs above the 'Mid Ed' and Tarratt's. A very pleasant Café with delicious small square iced cakes. They also had a branch in Granby Street. This was before Kunzle appeared on the scene.

Moreton's, which remained Bills' long after the change of ownership, was the place for our greatest treat. Here, among the basket chairs, small bamboo tables and the odd potted palm, we consumed ices made from real strawberries and real cream. As members of a family of excellent cooks we never had bought cakes for tea, the only exception being Bills' delicious Victoria sandwich and Bath or Chelsea buns.

My uncle Gerald, born in 1880, lived at Pares Bank next door, where his father was Manager. He was often given a penny by Mr Heygate when he came into the Bank. Gerald would rush to Bills' to buy ha'penny buns but he was not allowed to be served unless wearing socks and boots. What a pleasant almost village picture this evokes! In those days shopping was a friendly business where most of the customers were well known.
EDITORIAL

All members of the Leicestershire Local History Council will mourn the death of its founder, Tony Stuart. Having launched the Council in 1966, he steered it as Secretary for the first ten years and then remained equally involved as Chairman. He leaves a great debt of gratitude for the original ideas he contributed to the running of the Council and his energy in following them through. He will particularly be remembered for his unfailing good humour and his tact in chairing both committees and open meetings, when he made members and speaker alike feel welcome and at home.

It is sad to have to drop Mr J E Brownlow of Melton Mowbray from the list of Vice Presidents. For over a generation the name of Jack Brownlow has been synonymous with local history in Melton. His interest extended outside his area too: he not only had a hand in founding the Leicestershire Local History Council but also took his turn as its active Chairman. Of the three articles he contributed to The Leicestershire Historian the first, 'Melton Mowbray, Queen of the Shires', which appeared in our very first issue, contained the kernel of his life's study, the flowering of his home town as the fashionable centre of the fox-hunting fraternity. Fortunately he was able to complete his major book of the same title and see it through the press before he died last November.

Following his article in the Historian for 1978/9 Mr Sydney Coleman has responded to our request for an account of his first jobs in Leicester in the days when errand boys were conspicuous on the streets because they ran at the double. By contrast we include another entry from the Leicestershire Historian reminiscences competition, a vignette of country life in the same period, on the home farm of Lindley Hall. The relevance to Leicestershire historians of the eighteenth century autobiography of Simon Mason was brought to our notice by the way it is listed in An annotated Bibliography of British Autobiographies Published or Written Before 1951 by W Matthews.

As promised we include another Leicester Ballad. This, an early effort from the pen of Lord Macaulay, concerns the Election of 1826. Our cover picture of the Hustings comes from the same campaign and is taken from copies in the Leicester City Reference Library.

Alan Roberts is a research student of Adelaide University but his work on Appleby and the adjoining parish of Austrey has brought him from Australia to Leicester University.
AN APPLEBY ADULTERER BEFORE THE ARCHDEACON

Alan Roberts

On the 29th of October 1597 John Petcher of Appleby was brought before the Leicester Archdeacon's court upon a 'common fame' of having committed adultery with Sara Winter. The instigator of the suit was Sara's aggrieved husband, John's fellow parishioner Robert Winter. Subsequently we learn that John purged himself, 'as well by his own oath as by the oaths of four of his honest neighbours', and was acquitted of the charge and 'restored again to his good name' (1). This ritual return to respectability must have seemed commonplace to sixteenth century Leicestershire villagers, but the proceedings are of particular interest to local historians; for the two or three dozen pages of court depositions provide numerous details about the behaviour and social attitudes of ordinary men and women. The vast records of archdeaconry courts are a comparatively untapped source of fascinating historical evidence. Their revelations of innocent merrymaking, gossip, intrigue and common roguery remind us that our ancestors shared many of our human strengths and failings. Indeed archdeaconry records can provide an 'alternative' view of provincial life, a corrective to history based only on taxation and farming records.

Apart from church and probate business, archdeaconry courts dealt almost exclusively with moral offences. Their twin preoccupation with illicit sex and defamation earned them the popular name of 'bawdy courts'. The broad scope of their jurisdiction and the diversity of their clientele ensured that every town and village in Leicestershire had its quota of offenders. Indeed in some cases whole communities appear to have been called forth to give evidence. The investigative drag-net was widened even further by the courts' accommodationg attitude towards hearsay evidence, a factor which encouraged litigants to heap scorn upon their accusers and bring unfavourable witnesses into disrepute.

Robert Winter's allegations against John Petcher must be set within the context of the village social system to which they both belonged. They lived in Appleby, an open field parish of some three to four hundred inhabitants in the far western corner of the county. To supplement the court depositions parish register entries and probate documents provide some clues as to their social and economic standing (2). Petcher, who was worth £10.11.6 at his decease in 1621, was a sheep-farmer whose own wife had died about a year before his presentment (3). Robert and
Sara Winter probably occupied a smallholding as tenants of Edward Griffin, lord of the manor of Great Appleby. Edward Taylor, the principal witness against Petcher, was a more 'shifty' inhabitant, perhaps a cottager or vagrant, whose connexions appear to have been with the labouring poor. The court also questioned witnesses from outside the parish, including Hugh Draiton, an Atherstone alehouse-keeper, and three Swepstone farmers, who were all in Atherstone on the day that Edward Taylor claimed to have 'taken' John and Sara in adultery.

Petcher was brought before the court by presentment based upon 'common knowledge'. The evidence against him is largely circumstantial, some of it little more than common gossip. He is reported to have been seen in the company of Sara Winter on several occasions and to have frequented Robert Winter's house in his absence. Also a certain Galfridus Meassen, from the adjacent village of Measham, is alleged to have told Richard Aldret of Appleby that he saw John and Sara 'together between two rye lands in Measham field', although he does not say what they were doing there (4). However, the principal 'articles' of the indictment are more concerned with Petcher's luring of Sara 'by diabolical persuasion and enticements of the flesh' to local towns and fairs, referring specifically to the nearby market towns of Ashby-de-la-Zouch, Atherstone and Leicester (5). This mention of fairs is especially interesting because scandalous activities can frequently be traced to such occasions. Fairs provided opportunities for illicit liaisons denied to couples within the narrow, watchful world of their own parish. The alehouse too was a favourite focus of licentious activity, as Keith Wrightson and others have shewn (6). G R Quaife, from his survey of Somerset Consistory Court records, suggests that wayward wives and their lovers often met secretly in alehouses or inns. Perhaps Sara, like some of the wives in Quaife's survey, had met Petcher while on circuit to markets and fairs (7).

Possibly Sara had a particular weakness for fairs and Robert may have heard of her philandering; for there are reports of his having 'put away his wife', which may explain why she was staying with Nicholas Taylor and his family for several days before Atherstone fair. It is fairly certain that about this time Robert hatched a scheme to 'intrap' her. He is said to have offered a reward to Edward Taylor 'to watch Sara and Petcher to take them in adultery together' and he may have arranged beforehand for Edward's kinsfolk to take her to Atherstone (8). One suspects that Robert also had a hand in a rather devious scheme whereby Nicholas Taylor attempted to persuade Sara to start a suit against her husband on
the grounds that he had refused to cohabit with her — a ploy to entice Petcher to lay out money for a court action. There are also rumours that Robert supplied Edward Taylor's household generously with fuel, bread and cash payments not out of charity but to secure him as witness against Petcher (9).

A large part of the court proceedings deal with events which took place at Atherstone on the afternoon of the annual fair held on the 8th of September. There can be no doubting that the main business of the day centred around the alehouses with which the town was particularly well provided. Hugh Draiton's alehouse, which was probably near the market square (shewn on a map dated 1716) and was evidently a popular meeting place for local villagers (10). The atmosphere of the occasion is well captured in the witnesses' depositions. Arriving on the scene the key witness, Edward Taylor, was barely able to conceal his delight upon discovering that John and Sara were together in Draiton's alehouse. However, Edward's enthusiasm for his task undoubtedly exceeded his discretion; for we are told that, not long after his arrival, he 'did openly before witnesses slander John Petcher ... and called him whoremaster', a serious accusation which, even if true, was not in fact substantiated (11).

The events which followed can be pieced together from the witnesses' statements. By mid afternoon the fair was at its height and a merry throng had gathered in the alehouse. The downstairs rooms were 'greatly frequented with quests going in and out continually'. Several groups of people sat eating and drinking in the hall, which adjoined the parlour where John and Sara sat with Nicholas Taylor and his wife. There is some doubt about the length of time the couple were left alone together after Nicholas and his wife withdrew. However, although the parlour door was closed it was not locked; so there was little chance of their being undisturbed. Much is made of the suggestion that 'most men coming into a victualling house on a fair day, especially if they lack a place to sit in, do usually look into a parlour where guests use to be'. If the couple were committing adultery, it was argued, surely the landlord, his wife, his servants or his guests would have known (12). The court was evidently sceptical about Edward Taylor's claim to have taken the couple in adultery and his supposed refusal of sixpence from Petcher to keep silent about the matter, since no one came forward to verify the charges. Also there is a suggestion that Taylor spent most of the afternoon drinking with Hugh Draiton in a nearby alehouse (13). It is hardly surprising that the allegations were regarded as expedients for Taylor to 'release or
The centre of the town of Atherstone, shewing the market square between the church and the Watling Street from a map of c 1716 (Ref P7) in the Warwickshire County Record Office
excuse himself, and not for any truth that is in the matter' (14).

The sworn depositions of the three Swepstone farmers, Richard Dudley, William Chilwell and Thomas Burrows, seem to confirm this judgement. According to their account, they were sitting in the hall when Nicholas Taylor's wife entered 'meaning to see whether the said Petcher and Sara were naughty together'. However, she 'could not, nor did see them in any such sort and was reproved of the said Dudley for her peeping in' (15). Dudley's admonition suggests that, despite the seriousness of the offence, the Swepstone farmers had a healthy aversion to spying upon their neighbours. All three swore that they had been in the alehouse, or in the street outside, all afternoon and had not set eyes upon Edward Taylor or his wife in that vicinity. Furthermore they avowed that their beasts were so crowded against the alehouse that no one could possibly have approached the parlour window from outside.

The case against Petcher thus turns into a character assassination of the principal witness. Edward Taylor is scornfully caricatured as 'a man that hath not land, lease, stock or possessions . . . to maintain his wife and children', who had 'for very poverty, idleness or some other cause given over his occupation of a blacksmith wherein he was trained and brought up' and had taken to maintaining himself 'by bad, shifty and unhonest practices'. He had himself already confessed before witnesses to adultery and was commonly known to be a cozenor or defrauder of men. There follows a long catalogue of his alleged crimes. We are told that he robbed a woman upon the highway, threatening his victim that if she informed upon him he would say that she gave him money for sexual favours; and that he had stolen candlesticks from a house in Ashby and barley sheaves from Appleby field. He was also accused of extorting money from the young men of Appleby with a document purporting to give authority to take soldiers. On one occasion, we are told, he tried to steal a horse from George Smaller's stable at Snareside, 'and was riding away with him, and had ridden so away if the said Smaller had not met him and scared him' (16). It is amazing that he had so far escaped imprisonment or hanging for these offences. Indeed it appears that he had at one time been committed to Leicester gaol; but he had persuaded the keeper to allow him 'to go awhile into the town' and, despite a solemn promise to return, had absconded. His wife Helen, who was 'commonly accounted to be light fingered and of no credit or reputation at all', had spent time in Ashby gaol for stealing a pair of shoes (17). Obviously Taylor's criminal activities were exaggerated to blacken his name and destroy his credibility as a witness. However,
these accusations do lend support to the notion that there was a great reservoir of ‘tolerated criminality’ in Elizabethan times. Local ne’er-do-wells were to some extent shielded by their neighbours. In fact one Somerset magistrate complained in 1596 that as much as four fifths of crimes committed went unreported (18).

The case against Petcher is perhaps typical of its kind. It is first mentioned in the Liber Actorum or Instance Court Act Book for October 1597. Witnesses were still being questioned in the following March and April, after which the case appears to have been concluded. Ten years later, however, following an archdiaconal visitation, Petcher’s name was included in a list of those suspected of fornication who had been overlooked by negligent churchwardens (19). Clearly the effectiveness of the courts in suppressing immorality must be questioned. The courts of quarter session and assizes could mete out punishments that included imprisonment, branding, amputation and hanging for crimes against the state; but the archdeaconry court had to rely upon social sanctions. Convicted adulterers and fornicators were usually made to perform ‘penance in sheets’ which, according to William Harrison in 1587, needed replacing with ‘some sharper law’, since it was ‘counted as no punishment at all to speak of, or but smally regarded of the offenders’ (20). It is hardly surprising that villagers treated the church courts with contempt (21). Petcher’s acquittal owes much to sworn depositions against the witness brought forward by his opponent and, perhaps, to the evidence of Winter’s own complicity in the affair.

The investigation throws a spotlight on the petty intrigues of village life; but there is much that is left unexplained. The witnesses’ depositions reflect ambivalent attitudes towards sexual misbehaviour, attitudes ranging from vehement denunciation on the one hand to apparent indifference on the other. The court proceedings penetrate only the surface layers of this tightly-knit world at irregular intervals; yet they provide a strong impression of tolerated lawlessness and surreptitious behaviour in seemingly ‘quiet’ villages. We do not learn whether Sara and John continued to keep company together, nor whether Sara returned to live peacefully with her aggrieved husband, nor whether Edward Taylor was dragged before the assizes for his roguish ways. However, we may imagine that the villagers had their own methods of settling disputes and reconciling parties at enmity outside the courts. We are left with the impression that Leicestershire villagers lived socially more eventful, emotionally more unsettled and sexually more active lives than we might at first suppose from economic records alone.
References:

1. Leicestershire Record Office (LRO), Archdeaconry Court Proceedings, 1D41/4/673a, Winter v Petcher, 1597 (referred to below as /673a &c)
2. My present research includes a complete ‘family reconstitution’ based on the parish register from 1572 to 1730.
3. LRO, will and inventory of John Petcher, 1621; burial of Johne, wife of John Petcher, 14th July 1596, Appleby parish register, LRO 15D55/1
4. /673c
5. /673e
8. /673a
9. /721c
10. A mid sixteenth century court roll lists a Hugh Drayton among Atherstone’s customary tenants paying 1s 3d for a burgage plot and a Christopher Drayton as paying rent for a barn in the market place and five acres of land; B Bartlett, History and Antiquities of the Parish of Manceter, 1791, pp 150-3. There were 32 alehouses in the town in 1720; Victoria County History of Warwickshire, IV, p 126.
11. /673a, /673d
12. /673a
13. /673c
14. /673a
15. /721c
16. /673a
17. /673a. Similar cases are recorded by J S Cockburn, A History of English Assizes, 1558-1714, Cambridge, 1972, p 107
THE DISTRESSES OF AN EIGHTEENTH CENTURY APOTHECARY:
Simon Mason in Market Harborough

The next thing offer'd, was an Advertisement for a Man who understood the Business of an Apothecary, and was capable of visiting Patients, who for further information was to apply to Mr. Smith, Chymist at Smithfield-Bars; this Mr. Smith, when I liv'd in Hatton Garden, was Journeyman to Mr. Pead, a Chymist, the very next Door to me; when I went to Mr. Smith, to enquire after this Place, he was exceeding glad to see me, and did not think I wanted it for myself; but when I told him that the many cruel and unfortunate Events of my Life had reduc'd me, and that it was for myself I apply'd, and beg'd his Friendship in securing the Place for me; this he readily promis'd me, and accordingly did, which brought me to Market-Harborough in Leicestershire, February the 18th, 1747-8.

I was directed by Mr Smith to one Mr B-r-n a Surgeon and Apothecary of that Town, whom I sent for to the Swan; He told me he was going to succeed an Apothecary at Leicester, and wanted a Person qualified to take care of his Shop and Business at Harborough, and I was recommended by Mr. Smith as such; I answer'd, I had been known some Years to Mr Smith when I was in a preferable Situation; he said he hop'd I should meet with things to my Satisfaction, and he was much better pleased that Mr. Smith had sent him a Person of some Years, than a young Man, as I shou'd be more capable, and more satisfactory to his Friends: He ask'd me if I went to the Meeting, I told him, no; he said he was sorry for that, as most of his Patients belonging to that Shop did; he had no other objection, than he fear'd that unless I went to the Meeting, we should lose some of the Business, I reply'd rather than we should lose the Business, I would go to the Meeting till I had establish'd myself amongst them, and the next Day we came to an Agreement, and he was to give me half a Guinea a Week, with board, washing, and lodging &c, which Agreement we both sign'd

In the evening came Mr. Johnson the dissenting Minister, a very good sort of a Gentleman, who was neither ignorant, nor reserv'd enough to please some of the rigid ones; I told Mr. Johnson at the same time I was inform'd by Mr. B-r-n that unless I went to the Meeting we should lose most of our Business, that I was really bred up to the Church of England, which worship I have always adher'd to; and I think I ought not to deceive you; either by telling you I am a Dissenter, or by my going to the Meeting; he said I did very right to speak so candidly, and he should have the better opinion of
me; he believed some Persons would have lik'd me better, was I of the same way of thinking with them, but for his part, it wou'd make no Differ­ence, and honestly said, he would not have me upon any view of Interest go to the Meeting, tho' my not doing it, would be an hindrance to our Busi­ness; I told him as I was a perfect Stranger and came to serve Mr. B-n, I thought it at present most adviseable to establish myself in the good Es­teem of those I was to be employ'd by, and with his leave I shou'd come and behave decently amongst them, and if I lik'd their way of serving God better than the Church of England, I should continue, otherwise he'd ex­cuse me if I return'd to the Church; he said every Man ought to follow the dictates of his own Conscience; accordingly I attended their Meeting, and sometimes when out of Town, I went to Church, and thought I did right to make some set of People my Friends, who shew'd me respect and civility.

I had not acted in the capacity of a Journeyman more than two months, before my new Master (discovering my general reception and approbation) offer'd me Partnership, and we drew up an agreement for that Purpose, by which agreement his Attorney well knows I cou'd have taken great Advan­tage of, had I been unjustly inclin'd: Soon after this engagement, by the advice of his Friends, he offer'd me the Shop and Business, and to let me the House at the same Rent, and for the same time he had to come; we agreed and he sold me the Shop, Medicines, Druggs, and Utensils, and let me the House, and once more I was Master for myself. It seems he had been treating with an Apothecary of the same Town before I was sent for, and they cou'd not agree; finding I had got the Shop and Business, and was likely to have more, it occasion'd the foul Play as I shall relate as it falls in Turn.

I agreed with this same Apothecary for the Shop and some Household-Goods; to the amount of one hundred Pounds, to be paid at four equal distinct payments, the first to be paid the Harborough Fair following, (this being made in May 1748,) and the other three payments were all to be paid in about a Year and half; for which purpose, Articles were made, which we executed, and his Attorney had made them with this Proviso, that upon five days default after the time fix't for payment of the first, or any other payments, the contract was to be void, and he should have it in his Power, to re'enter, seize, carry away, and dispose of the Effects, 'till he was paid the remaining part of what was due. This was a pretty hard engagement, yet from the Business I had, and the Prospect of more, I was under no apprehensions of not making good my payments, and this good Prospect induc'd me once more to send for my Wife and Children.
they came, we liv'd very comfortably for about six Weeks, when she be­
gan to behave in such an insolent, noisy, tyrannical manner, as no one

can conceive, which did me a great Prejudice, but proved lucky for Mr.
C--s to renew his application in behalf of his Son, for he well knew that
unless some advantages could be gain'd by these imprudences, I should
soon make good my Purchase, and get into more Business than was con­
sistent with their Interests; then this worthy conscientious Brother of
mine, renew'd the Attack, and offer'd much more Money for the Shop than
I had agreed for, and to pay it all down, in case he cou'd disengage him­
self from the agreement made with me; this was a strong Temptation to a
Man who wanted the Money to pay for the Shop he had bought: Added to
these, our domestick Contentions, which he thought would be a great
check to the Business I had; and it was, in all probability, these consid­
erations, with the Money paid down, whichoccasion'd Mr. B--n to listen to
the new Proposals of Mr C--s; and then, ways and means were consulted,
how to dispossess me, and to get the Goods again; all this I knew nothing
of, but I was taking the utmost pains to make good my first payment, by a
strict assiduity in Business. When an unlucky Circumstance happening,
did me hurt with some of my Patients, and gave them an handle to side
with Mr. B--n to use me as he did.

One Sunday Mr. Bigland of Peterborough, came to the three Crowns at
Harborough, and ask'd Mr. Sellers if I did not live there; he told him yes;
Mr Bigland then desir'd he'd send for me; Mr. Sollers answer'd he'd send
for me, if he pleased, but he was sure I would not come to a publick-House
of a Sunday; why so, reply'd Mr. Bigland, why don't you know he's a

Dissenter, and they won't come out of a Sunday; I saw him go by since
you have been here, from the Meeting; which made the Gentleman in a
Passion, and order'd directly I might be sent for, and said I was no
Dissenter, and would come if they told me his Name; I was sent for, and
went to wait on Mr. Bigland, who made such a Discovery that I was from
that very time look'd upon as a false Brother.

Harborough Fair being come, I saw Mr. B--n and told him the first payment
would be due in a few Days, but if he wanted any Money, I could then help
him to some, and if he would give me an order, I would pay Mr. Talbot ten
Pounds for rent, and the little more that was wanting, I would pay within
the time, to make up the first payment. He said, no; he should be at
Harborough again in about a Week, and he with some of his Friends would
meet me, and settle: Mr. Marston, who was one in company, promis'd to
give us the Night fix'd upon, a fat Pig for supper, which was agreed to,
and we all consented to meet at the time appointed at that very House; little distrusting what was contriving for my destruction. The time fix'd being come, I went to meet according to promise, but neither my Gentleman, nor any of his Friends were there, no Pig, nor any sign of a Supper; I ask'd the Landlord after Mr. B--n and he had heard nothing of him, nor the fat Pig. I return'd, imagining some Business might have prevented his coming, never mistrusting what was in agitation.

About a Week after the time appointed, (being five Days) and five Days only over and above the twelve, which he staid away on purpose to take the advantage of this default, when the default was plainly of his own making, and absolutely contrary to my inclination, and express'd appointment; he then came and brought two Bailiffs with him, whom he put into Possession; I was at the same Time gone to Farndon, (about one Mile from Harborough,) and upon my return home, met a Messenger, who told me what was done, and to prevent his arresting me, I went to little Bowden, (it being out of that County,) fearing that since he had so treacherously acted by me, he would stick at nothing to complete his cruelty. I sent to Mr. Marston, to tell Mr. B--n, I desir'd to speak with him before any thing was done, which he refus'd, and never came to me. The next Day Mr. Marston went with me to his Attorney, to talk with him about this Affair, and at last, we concluded to meet on Sunday to see if this Matter could be compromis'd. The Attorney promis'd the Goods should remain unremov'd upon the Premisses, till the result of this Meeting: My Friend Mr. Marston, and I, took our leaves of this good Gentleman, relying upon his Fidelity, and I return'd to little Bowden; but on Saturday Night in violation of that promise, about eleven, a Person came to tell me Mr. B--n with his Assistants was pulling down, and carrying away, both the Shop and Household-goods, and had, at Midnight pull'd my Children out of Bed and laid them upon the Floor without a Rag to cover them, and had taken every individual thing and had left none of them a Bed to lie on.

Can it be thought in a Christian Country, any thing so base, so cruel and barbarous, would be transacted after so many pretensions of Friendship by one who pitied me, on the Account he had receiv'd of my former Sufferings from cruelty and oppression? Was he not convinc'd of my Diligence and Integrity? Had he discover'd any thing to have rais'd a Suspicion of my Fidelity, he would have been more excusable? But the Re-commenda­tion he had from Mr. Smith, and the Character he receiv'd in answer to a Letter, he sent unknown to me, to Dr. Mead, which he shew'd to many Persons in Harborough; and declar'd at the same Time he would have

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given an hundred Pounds for the same Character, from so great a Man; I say, had I in any Degree forfeited these Testimonials, then he might have had a greater Plea for his Cruelties; but such continued Misfortunes as these, sometimes incline me to think that all events are determin’d by an irresistible Fate.

To return; we were stript and nothing left but bare Walls, yet I thought proper to keep Possession, as a Gentleman to whom I apply’d, advis’d; and told me he’d make him glad to bring every thing back again, and make me Satisfaction for such illegal Practice, for he did not only take those things I had bought of him, but many more my Family had brought, and others I had bought; besides many valuable Medicines I had made, and added to Stock. But I being thus reduc’d in a strange Place, was oblig’d (without redress) to submit to these barbarities.

After several delusive attempts, by sending false messuages for me, first to one Place, and my Wife to another, in order to take Possession and lock us into the Street; he by the Advice of some ruling Puritans, apply’d to a Justice in regard to my settlement, tho’ I was absolutely a Parishioner by hiring upwards of ten Pounds per Year; however, a Warrant was granted, and without time or notice I was hurried before a Justice, about fifteen Miles distant, escorted by a Guard, as if I had been taken up for a Highway-man, and when I came before his Worship, I gave him such an Account, and produc’d my Contract for rent, and shew’d him my Credentials from Dr. Mead, and Dr. Schomberg, that I receiv’d better usage then they desir’d; and they could that time meet with no great hopes of obtaining their End. But soon a second Application was made by a worthy Gentleman, who in regard to his Memory I shall say was the good Mr. David Kidney: He with some more leading Saints, got me again before his Worship; and twice more in obedience to Warrants, I was had before a Justice, in the midst of Winter, about fifteen Miles; who at last could do nothing to serve his good Friends. They afterwards told me, I should oblige the Parish by giving them a Certificate; which I accordingly did, and left the dispute betwixt B--n and myself, to arbitration: Mr. Harper allow’d me a year’s Rent and seven Pounds, and for peace sake, I quitted the Premises, and gave him Possession, to take in the Person who had supplanted me; but had it been in my Power, to have brought this Affair before a Judge and Jury, my Antagonist and false Friend must have paid smart for his deceit and cruelty.

After this, I took a little House, but had neither House-hold nor Shop-Goods to put into it; I being desir’d by some Friends, who had employ’d me to
continue amongst them, and altho' the Person had got the Shop by such un-
fair proceedings, I retain'd some Business and got some few Shop-Goods,
and wrote to Mr. Sawtell, an Apothecary in London, who directly sent me a
Quantity of all Sorts of useful Druggs and Medicines, for which I shall
ever own my Gratitude. By this supply I got more Business, but my Prac-
tice was chiefly amongst Incurables, or at least what had been so with
others; and begging Pardon of my judicious Brethren of Harborough, I say,
I have cur'd Patients after every one of them have fail'd; and I defie them
all to produce one Instance of their curing any one after me, and was I to
declare what success I have had since I have been in this Country about
five Years, it will look like boasting; but I desire if they can find out
among a number of three or four hundred People, that have been under my
care, that more than thirty have died, or gone away uncur'd; or if any one
of them have cur'd one after me, where I had a fair chance.

Among my difficult Patients, I beg leave (in regard to a Gentleman from
London, that did me a Favour) to mention Mr. Freeman of Lutterworth, who
had been a long time afflicted with a nervous disorder, and had apply'd to
several, both in London, and in the Country, and at a great expence to no
purpose; whom afterwards I soon cur'd. This same Gentleman had a Rela-
tion in London, whose care Mr. Freeman (some little time before) had been
under, and seeing him so well recover'd, he ask'd him who had cur'd him;
he reply'd, it was me, and said how hardly I had been used, and how
greatly I was reduc'd, yet he believed, could I meet with a Friend to assist
me with some Medicines, I should still come into Business.

This same Apothecary came in a Day or two, with Mr. Freeman, to
Harborough, and call'd upon me, and ask'd me if I wanted any thing in his
way, and he would readily supply me: I told him I had occasion enough,
but my present Circumstances were such, that I could not desire him to
give me credit, as I fear'd much, whether I should ever be able to pay him;
he answer'd, he knew my Circumstances before he came, and found I had
been ill used, and deserving of encouragement, which he came to give me;
and said Mr. Freeman had spoke very handsomely of me and sent him to
me, and he desired I would give him an account of what I wanted, and he
shou'd send me the Goods the week following; tho' he told me, a certain
Apothecary (who had been instrumental in getting me out of the other Shop)
had said all he could to disswade him from sending me any thing; which he
look'd upon as malice, and should not regard him; he accordingly, the next
Week, sent me as many Goods as I wanted, and exceeding good; this was
in March 1749.
The good Apothecaries of Harborough, whose Friendship and judgment I equally esteem, and are equally surprising; seeing I had got a supply of Medicines, and was likely to get into Business; knowing I had a Bond in Mr. Hall's Hands, a Druggist in London, (due for Medicines when I was last demolish'd at Cambridge) for fourteen Pounds, took the pains to write Mr. Hall word, that I was settled at Harborough in good Business, and lately had a supply of Medicines &c. from London, and now was his time to be paid: Upon this information, Mr. Hall taking it ill, I had Medicines of any one else; (tho' he at the same time would not trust me for any) directly arrested me, and sent me to Leicester-Goal, which answer'd my kind brethren's desire; this being two or three Days before the new Fair, that it might the more effectually be spread about the Country: In Leicester-Goal I was confin'd about two Months, till Mr. Hall was fully satisfy'd about the malicious Representations, and nature of the whole Affair, when he order'd me out of Custody.

The Friendship I met with from Strangers while I was in Goal, I ought never to forget; and what introduc'd me so much to their Compassion, was, there happen'd at that time a very malignant Fever in the Prison, that was very fatal in many other Prisons in this Kingdom at the very same Time: The next Day after my admission, I went to see the Persons that were afflicted with this Illness, and told Mr. Lambert, the Goal-Keeper, if he would give me leave, I would soon recover those that were ill, and prevent it spreading: Mr. Lambert readily agreeing to it, I quickly clear'd the Goal of an Illness, which had made such a noise in the Town and Country, and made People fearful of coming near it: nay, this illness happening at the Assizes, the Judge was afraid to try the Felons, till I had certified to his Lordship, that the Goal was intirely free'd from the Illness.

My Practice being so successful in Goal, it brought me some Patients out of the Town, and raised me the Compassion and Benevolence of several Gentlemen; for which I am in duty bound to be thankful to Mr. Recorder Wright, Mr. Wynstanly, Mr. Franks, Mr. Pine, Mr. Walter Crompon, with the Benevolence of Mr. Alderman Lee, and I should be ungenerous to forget the genteel behaviour of Mr. Lambert; and to all I own myself under great Obligations.

By my Harborough Friends, my Landlord was sent for whilst I was in Goal, in order to compleat my Destruction, to seize for his Rent, when only one quarter was due, for which he seiz'd, and was paid; another Quarter would about a fortnight more become due, for which he staid, and seiz'd also;
and as soon as I came out, I paid that too: These were comfortable additions to my confinement and loss of Business; every contrivance was put in execution to destroy me; and when I return'd to starving without ever a Bed to lie on, for I solemnly declare it, that we all lay upon a Matt, without a Bed for near two Years, how many cold winter Days and Nights, have we sat without Fire and Candle, and often not able to get more than a penny Loaf among four of us, for a whole Day's support, with a draught of Water.

In this Miserable Condition, have I spent many days and nights, in a merciless Place, almost drove to despair, and these Circumstances aggravated with noise, insolence, and contention; how often have I wish'd somebody would send me to Goal! there I thought I should have the Goal-allowance in Peace, and if my poor Children had been sent to the Parish, they would have fared much better.

Notwithstanding all these Hardships, as I had fix'd a good reputation in Practice, I was in hopes of seeing better times; and in order to stem this torrent of Persecution, by the advice of a Gentleman, I hir'd a House of one Smith, a Baker, for which I covenanted for ten Pounds a Year, and gave him earnest for the same House before Witness, which we spent as such; and as my Circumstances were low, he let me up paying the first half year's-Rent down, when taking possession. This contract being known, set my Adversaries again to work, and Smith presently was threatened in case he let me have his House, one Apothecary would turn him off, and such an Inn he should not serve with Bread &c. that the poor Baker at all events, must not let me have the House, but he was oblig'd to let it to another Person, whom he put in possession; and these Persons who had insisted upon his not letting me have the House, promised to indemnify him in case I should demand my contract. I being disappointed of the House, and wore out with cruelty and oppression, and almost starv'd, I made application to teach the Free-School then vacant; but by some righteous good Gentlemen, that also was deny'd me, and oblig'd me to leave Harborough; and upon the death of Mr. Ireland, I, by the better sort of People was invited to come to Wilbarston; with great assurances of Friendship and Business; and to this Town of Wilbarston, I came November, 1751; but thought it most advisable to leave my Wife at Harborough, almost a Year, at a great expence, in order so to establish myself, as not to suffer by any imprudence she might commit: One Day I was relating the disappointments I met with from Smith (which oblig'd me to leave Harborough just as the small-pox broke out, and I was likely
to come into good Business) to Mr. Dexter, whom I by chance met with at Mr. Parker's; he was of opinion, that if I could prove my contract, and if according to that contract, I made a tender of five Pounds upon the Day fixt, and demanded Possession, Smith would be glad to give it to me, or make me some satisfaction; which I approv'd, and was determin'd it should be done, and accordingly a tender was made, and possession demanded, when Smith refus'd, calling me poor beggarly Dog, and set me at a defiance. &c.

This gave Smith some uneasiness, notwithstanding some had promised to indemnify him, which brought him over, with his neighbour S. N--t, in order to compromise this affair, and we shou'd have done it much better for us both, had his Friend agreed to it, as Mr. Green proposed, that Smith shou'd give me five Guineas, and pay my Attorney, and give each other an acquittance; which I would have agreed to, but Smith's Friend took him away; I was bid to do my worst; and I by advice brought my Action, and Smith, thinking as I was poor, I must drop it, oblig'd me to proceed in order for Tryal, which I did by the kind assistance of some Friends, who desire not to be mention'd; and before the Tryal, which was last march was twelve-months, my material Evidence was making a visit, and could not be met with, to avoid being subpoena'd; which put off our Tryal for that Assizes: This contrivance to evade coming to Tryal, did not fully answer their designs; but in order to take an advantage of not trying the Cause, put out of my power to try, by sending my Evidence out of the way; yet they were so good to move in order to get me sent to Goal, and had done it too, had not I immediately sent up Affidavits to prove their sending my Evidence out of the way; very righteous indeed! After all this treatment, I was obliged to wait till the summer Assizes following, when care was taken, to subpoena this Evidence in time; but before the Assizes, they thought proper to apply for Terms, and I, well remem'ring how greatly I had suffer'd before, by a false witness; it gave me a mean opinion of trusting to such uncertain events: And in obedience to some Gentlemen who wish'd me well, I left it to reference, and my Referee, after I had given him a power to act, told me he should insist upon my paying a small demand to his Relation, and that I should give him a discharge for mine, and was in a great Passion; from such a Friend, I could have but small hopes.

But the two Arbitrators not agreeing, they fix'd upon a third, who absolutely advised me to hire the House; and when Smith first began to play loose, he blam'd him, complaining all along of the illegality of their Pro-
ceedings, and what Damages I ought to have; and was it left to him, I
shou’d have too. But good Lord! how soon we frail Creatures, may alter
our Opinions; for after it was solely left to him, I had twelve Pounds
allow’d me, instead of an hundred, and I was to pay my Attorney out of
that; and instead of having great satisfaction made me, I, and my Friends
with one expence or other, are better than thirty Pounds out of Pocket;
and I don’t doubt but it cost him above twice the Sum; and those Persons
who prompted him on to distress me, got their ends by driving me from
Harborough, yet they were at no part of the expence, for Smith was at the
whole.

A certain Neighbour, a man of excellent parts, and great sagacity, who
calls himself Apothecary, Surgeon, Rum and Brandy-Merchant; I don’t
know whether he sells Cyder, fine Ale, or London Porter, I know he has
them all, who has been at the Bottom of all the foul play I have receiv’d
in the Country, was the other Day in company with a good sensible
Tradesman in Harborough, which Tradesman, was speaking to this Haberdasher of small-Wares, in a kind manner about me, who made Answer; yes, Mason is an ingenious Man, but he is poor; he has nothing but his Lancet
to trust to, he has no Medicines; no Medicines! reply’d my Friend; for
God’s sake, what does he cure People with? for this I know, he has more
success than all the Apothecaries in the Country.

My fate, sure of all Men, is most hard; some have been encouraged for
understanding their Business; but those few Abilities, which some have
been pleas’d to allow me, have raised a Jealousy among others of the
physical Tribe, who have taken all pains to do me hurt: But now I hope
it appears, that I am neither Rogue, Fool, Drunkard, nor extravagant; but
am very capable of being useful in my Profession, and could I wipe off
that hateful odium of Poverty, I shou’d have as few faults as others.
Notes:

In 1754 Simon Mason published his autobiography under the following title:

A Narrative of the Life and Distresses of Simon Mason, Apothecary. Setting forth the injurious Treatment he hath met with; with many other Transactions, in a Series of Events, both serious and diverting: Being an Answer to an Enquiry lately made; (viz.) Why a Man of approv'd Knowledge in his Profession, with upwards of thirty Years Practice should be in adverse Circumstances? &c.

Birmingham: Printed for the Author by T. Warren Junr. near the New-Chappel.

The above passages are copied from pages 92-107 and 114-15.

He was born in 1701 at Great Gransden in Huntingdonshire, the eldest of a large family of country gentry of declining fortune, and was apprenticed to a London apothecary. At each stage in his career, whether in London or in the provinces, a promising start was soon followed by disaster. He was at pains not to blame all this on his wife, ‘this poor unhappy temper'd Woman’; but the fact was that by marrying imprudently before properly completing his term he ruined his prospects in London. Added to this he was cheated out of the promised dowry and was consistently ill-treated by his wife’s family.

Among the places where he practiced it was perhaps Cambridge that, for a time, rewarded him with the most notable success. As he wrote later, ‘..if I wanted any Medicines the Apothecaries at Cambridge wou’d let me have them at prime Cost, and us’d me (not) as I have lately been by those very eminent Men of the Profession at Market-Harborough.’ His Cambridge clients included senior academics. Indeed on his arrival there in 1740 he had a personal recommendation from his influential London acquaintance Dr Richard Mead, ‘the chief physician of the day’, to the Master of Trinity College, the great classical scholar Richard Bentley. He was employed generously by Bentley, but his luck changed when the latter died in 1742.

One of the letters of recommendation from Dr Mead, signed also by another London physician, Dr Meyer Löw Schomberg, read as follows:-

I have known Mr. Simon Mason, Apothecary, many Years, and have always found him to be an honest, industrious Man, and well qualified for his Business.

February the 7th. 1746,7.

R. Mead
M. Schomberg
Many of the names mentioned in connexion with his three and a half year stay in Market Harborough can be traced. The treacherous Mr B-r-n has not been identified, but the apothecaries Mr C-s and his son were probably Thomas Clowes, apothecary, and his son William, who was established on his own as a surgeon and apothecary sometime before 1755. Mr David Kidney was a Harborough mercer or haberdasher of hats. Daniel Lambert was born in 1770 and became the keeper of Leicester gaol when he was only twenty one. Presumably his father, who preceded him in the post, or else another relative, was the obliging Mr Lambert in charge of Simon Mason in 1749.

Sources consulted:

D T-D Clarke, Daniel Lambert, 3rd ed 1973
J C Davies, Georgian Harborough, 1969
We are grateful to Mr Davies for his help in identifying Harborough men mentioned by Simon Mason.
J E Stocks, Market Harborough Parish Records 1531 to 1837, 1926
Dictionary of National Biography,
entries for Richard Bentley, Daniel Lambert, Richard Mead and Meyer Löw Schomberg

LINDLEY HALL FARM 1908-1915
Mrs H Tugby

I am going back sixty two years to when I was four years old. I can’t remember much before that. And this is what I remember most. We, that’s father, mother and I, living on a big farm called Lindley Hall Farm, Fenny Drayton, near Nuneaton, with my grandad and grandma. And one morning my father was breaking in a young horse and was putting it along side with another horse in chains. And the young horse jumped forward and ripped the guides in the middle of dad’s hand with a hook on the chains. And seeing my mother place the middle of his hand and bandage it up and sending him to the doctor’s at Nuneaton. I can see him this very day, in his grey trousers, black jacket and bowler hat, with his hand in a large silk muffler, because I watched him as far as I could see him. He had to go across four fields to Higham on the Hill station.
And then I was lost one day in a thunder storm. Nobody had seen me. And as there was a very large pond, they all thought I’d fallen in. But I sat in the dog kennel with the dog in front of me. That was the sheep dog, grandad’s dog. We had a little one called Spot. He was my playmate. And another time I disappeared I was in the ferret cage and the little dog gave me away by sitting outside and barking. I’d shut the door on him.

Every Friday till I started school I went to market at Nuneaton taking farm butter and eggs with grandad and grandma in the pony float. Wet or fine I’d go.

I am getting near school age now and when I started I was the only girl on the estate to go to school. I’d go with five lads down six fields to Fenny Drayton school, two of the keepers sons and two of the gardeners sons – their dads worked at Lindley Hall, two fields away – and my cousin, who had come to live with my grandma. He had lost his mother. And I became a tomboy: what they could do I could too, such as catching sparrows under a riddle in the snow. Going sticking for grandma and my mother with an old horse and some chains to drag the sticks, that was our Saturday job. The old horse was named Poppet.

So as I was getting a little older now grandad bought my cousin and me a Shetland pony to ride. And to keep it company we had Mr Perkins donkey from Fenny Drayton. That’s when a lot of the fun began. The lads, all five of them, rode the donkey in turns to the pond at the shallow end to try to make him drink. But it was them that got the water. He’d kick up his back legs, up and over his head they went. My mother had the job of drying the lads’ jackets before they could go home.

By this time I had a baby sister. She didn’t fit in with me; I’d been the only one for six years. And two years later a baby brother.

I could still go on and on and on. And up to the age of eleven these were my happiest days. That was up to the time grandma sold up. We had lost grandad two years before. And I still have a longing to go back and see the place (I might some day) and see all the spring flowers in the Nutting as we called it. I’m told they still bloom.
A NEW SONG.

Tune—"Derry Down."

So you doubt whom to choose of our Candidates three:
Come hither, good Weavers, and listen to me;
And tho' not an AEsop, yet if I am able,
I will tell you my mind in the guise of a fable.

There liv'd a young Lady,—it matters not where;
Both wealthy and witty, both modest and fair:
Two Suitors address'd her, and woo'd her all day,
And never were happy when she was away.

But her Guardians were Tyrants, half Knaves and half Fools;
As cunning as foxes,—as stubborn as mules;
And they long had determin'd, for reasons well known,
That she never should wed but a Tool of their own.

They search'd and they travelled; they begg'd and they bought,
And they found with much trouble the Slave whom they sought,
When he first came to ask for his Mistress' grace,
He sat down on the sofa, and yawn'd in her face.

He said that her Guardians were very good men,
And he then pick'd his teeth, and fell yawning again:
"I'm too poorly", quoth he, "to come hither to woo;
"But I'll send you a friend and I hope that will do."

"Do but hear." said a Guardian,—"He's fit for a Queen;
"So noble a gentleman never was seen:" But the Lady look'd angry, and tossing her head,
To the impudent Flatt'rer disdainfully said—
"La! Sir,—if the man is so sick and so stupid,
"He is fitter by far for a Doctor than Cupid:"
"Get physic and flannel, and have him to bed;
"If he's too ill to woo, he is too ill to wed.

'Derry Down, &c.

'If even the lover who flatters and vows,
"Oft turns out a surly and negligent spouse,
"Can I venture my person and wealth in the care
"Of one who, in courtship, behaves like a Bear?"

'Derry Down, &c

Our case, my good Lads, and the case of this Lass,
Are as like as an Alderman is to an Ass;
Then a fig for the Blues, and without further parley,—
Let us stand by old Leicester, and keep out Sir Charley.

'Derry Down, &c.


Notes:

By means of the campaign leading up to the contested Parliamentary election of 1826 the old Borough Corporation of Leicester hoped to maintain the status quo. The extremes of folly and corrupt intrigue which helped secure a Tory victory, however, were ultimately the cause of its dissolution and replacement in 1836. The ostensible issue was Catholic Emancipation, openly supported by the Radical candidate William Evans, a Derbyshire cotton-manufacturer. The first Tory candidate, Robert Otway Cave of Stanford Hall, was as yet uncommitted. William Burbidge, the unscrupulous Clerk to the Corporation, had already prepared the way by swelling the electorate of freemen with eight hundred outsiders, elected as Honorary Freemen for their anti-Catholic support. He now had to find a suitable 'True Blue' candidate and to involve Cave in a compromise agreement over election expenses. Eventually the inarticulate Sir Charles Abney Hastings of Willersley Hall was persuaded to stand.
During the campaign a veritable snowstorm of squibs, lampoons, broadsides and cartoons flew off the presses of Leicester printers, characterized by grossness and exaggeration rather than any literary or intellectual merit. An example is the broadside Jerry and Logic's Dialogue on the State of the Poll. It is headed by the woodcut which gives us our cover picture and which is explained by Logic as follows:

. . . before you is a faithful delineation of the HUSTINGS, with the celebrated BILLY (not the rat-killer) in full character. He has just finished a speech replete with cant and hypocrisy, in which he endeavoured to wind his auditors, as he does Cotton-balls, into a belief that there are ASSES enough in this town to place him at the head of the Poll. This living piece of Machinery is worked to this pitch, by his supporters right and left, who are the reputed Authors of a well-known work entitled "The Bank of Faith," in three VOLS., to which BILLY has been a subscriber for more than one half the impression. — The POPE and his Recording Angel are seen hovering over the heads of the Trio, in mutual sympathy for the fate of their Representative, while the dark Satellite is bearing up his Holiness, who shrinks at the sight of the Poll-book. Justice, in the centre, proclaims the victory aloud, while Britannia, ever watchful over the brave and generous, sends her darling seraphs to crown with laurel wreaths the brows of HASTINGS and OTWAY, as the approved choice of the people. — This, Jerry, is a true picture of what will happen, and then COTTON-BALLS will discover that he has unwound to the melancholy tune of "a Thousand per day," for the amusement and benefit of the good people of Leicester.

He follows this with a pre-election soliloquy for Evans — 'To stand, or not to stand? That is the question!' — and a post-election epitaph to him.

Evans's clerk for the election, however, was the young Thomas Babington Macaulay. His printed contribution to the campaign shews some of the skill he was to employ as the great historian, Lord Macaulay. His Fragment of an Ancient Romance treats the contest as one of mediaeval chivalry, with the Purple Knight (Evans) victorious over the Blue Knight (Hastings), the champion of the Blue Magician (the Corporation) and his familiar imp, the foul fiend called Bourbedji. This piece was attributed to Macaulay by Robert Read and reprinted by him in 1881.
Another broadside was the ballad *A New Song*, which is given here in full, with its heading in facsimile, from copies in the Leicester City Reference Library. Although Read reprinted five verses from it as anonymous, there are two reasons for ascribing it to Macaulay. Firstly it is the only other squib of any literary pretension and secondly another copy survives in Macaulay’s ballad scrapbook at Trinity College, Cambridge (MS 0.15.67). This is marked, possibly in his own hand, with ‘Election Squib’ and ‘1826’ at the head and at the bottom with his initials ‘T B M’ and the following identifications:

1. The borough of Leicester
2. Mr. Evans & Mr. O. Cave
3. Sir Charles Hastings
4. The Corporation

The ballad tune cited has been popular from at least the late seventeenth century and is given here as it appeared in 1728 in the second edition of *The Beggar's Opera* by John Gay. The full refrain would be ‘Derry down down, hey derry down, derry down down’.

*Sources consulted:*

Three volumes of Election Squibs and 1826 Poll Book containing squibs at Leicester City Reference Library
Election Broadsheets at Leicestershire Record Office (Misc 15)
We are grateful to Mr Roy Palmer for bringing Macaulay’s copy of *A New Song* to our attention and for his kind help.


A Temple Patterson, *Radical Leicester: A history of Leicester, 1780-1850*, pp 146-57


R Read, *Modern Leicester: Jottings of Personal Experience and Research*, 1881, pp 221-48


*Victoria History of the County of Leicester*, Vol IV, pp 143-6
SEVENTY YEARS HARD LABOURS
Sidney E Coleman

I was born on March 15th 1900, and I remember that the first job I had was ‘part-time’ — at the age of nine. I used to walk from Highfields to the Humberstone Road Coal Wharf on a Saturday morning, collect a half hundredweight of coal on a barrow, deliver it back to Highfields, and then run back with the empty barrow for another half hundredweight. For this effort the rewards were one halfpenny. This sum, however, would buy a big ice-cream cornet or two ounces of sweets.

When I was eleven, I progressed into the millinery trade, and worked from a shop at the corner of Glebe Street and Conduit Street for a Miss Ladkin, who ran a first-class business. My hours were straight from school until seven or eight in the evening, every night except Thursday, and all day Saturday. The pay was good — one shilling and sixpence per week and, very occasionally, a small tip, or perhaps a sweet, or a cake from regular customers. There were also the ‘travelling expenses’ (tram fares). I used to run to the clients, and back to the shop to save them, because if you got on a crowded tram and it was raining, being only a boy, you had to go up to the ‘top deck’ anyway and, because the trams were open-topped, you still got wet — and had to pay for it! My duties for Miss Ladkin were simple. She gave me a large round hat-box, with a leather strap, and the address of the customer. I then took off with it, knocked at the Tradesman’s Entrance of the (usually) elegant house in Stoneygate, and waited for the lady of the house to try on the creation. If the hat was acceptable, then I would be asked to tell Miss Ladkin ‘to submit her Account’. If, however, the lady required further decorations in the way of more flowers or fruit, then the hat would go back into the big, round box, together with written instructions, and I would run back down the London Road, making sure not to bang the box too much. Two or three evenings later I would return the completed order and return to the shop with the empty hat-box; and another satisfied customer on my employer’s list.

Making an early start at the shop on a Saturday morning, I cleaned the two, big plate-glass windows, scrubbed the floor on my hands and knees and then, to finish off, polished all the brasswork — doorknobs, rails and brass nameplate. One of the ‘Young Ladies’ of the shop did the dusting on the premises; for I was never expected or allowed to handle the hats.

At the age of twelve-and-a-bit I inherited my elder brother’s job. At the age of fourteen he had to work “full-time”; so his ‘part-time’ spot was
handed down to me, as was his uniform — ‘bum-freezer’ jacket and brass buttons and a pill-box cap for outdoor visits. For four shillings per week I became a Page-boy for Doctor McAlester Hulings, The Spa, Humberstone Road. This Scottish gentleman ran a very successful practice, and his sister acted as his Dispenser. He had two house servants and a coachman, and if you were to go and look at The Spa (where Broadbents, the Builder’s Merchants and Roofers carry on their business) you will see what the old-fashioned term ‘of Good Address’ really meant. My duties here were to open the front door to Private Patients, show them into a very nice waiting room, let those patients out of the same front door when they came from the Doctor’s consulting room, and then show the next one in to the Doctor; knock on his door, open it, set one foot into his room, announce the patient, allow him or her into the room, and then retire. When the last patient had gone in the evening, usually about 7 or 8 o’clock, I collected the wicker basket of medicine bottles, beautifully wrapped in white paper, addressed in copperplate handwriting and sealed with red sealing wax, and went off on my ‘rounds’. The job lasted until I was ‘sacked’. The Scots brogue the Doctor spoke sometimes fell awkwardly upon my youthful ears and one day the Doctor called me into his Consulting Room, gave me a sheaf of papers, which included accounts rendered, bills to be paid and bills that had been paid, with cheques attached, and said: ‘Coleman, please to put these on the file!’ What in fact I did was to put them on the fire! Still, by this time the uniform was getting tight, and as I was about to leave School, I believe that my days there were numbered.

So, then, ever onwards and upwards! Or in this instance, onwards in hours, but downwards in pay, because my full-time job after leaving school was at two shillings and sixpence a week but with a cooked breakfast. An early start, working for a Butcher, I had to ‘walk’ cattle, sheep or pigs from Welford Road Cattle Market, up Waterloo Street, across London Road, and up Conduit Street to the slaughter-house yard at the back of the Butchers.

At this time, 1913-1914, the working people of Leicester in the shoe or hosiery or building trades could be ‘stopped’ at a minute’s notice, and there were many empty houses in the Highfields Area. Some that were lived in had only the basic table and two chairs — no floor coverings, not even the ubiquitous linoleum. Mothers would pawn their children’s ‘Sunday-Best’ clothes — even their husband’s only suit — on a Monday morning, redeeming them from the corner pawnshops on Saturday, when
their husbands came home with his weekly wage. I have seen building workers with collecting boxes asking for halfpennies when they were on long term 'lay-offs' – not a very inspiring sight, but even worse for those poor souls who had no work to go to, and little in the way of financial relief. Going ‘on the Parish’ was an embarrassing and awful experience, feared by honest folk who lost their self-respect in seeking the charity of others who had the power to distribute but very little. The relief given to the needy was often in the form of boots and clothing for the children, and food vouchers for the parents – seldom actual hard cash. Then of course, August 4th 1914 came, and I worked for the butcher until, at the beginning of 1917, I enlisted in the Royal Flying Corps – as Boy Coleman, S E – at one shilling and sixpence a week. In 1920, like hundreds of thousands of Ex-Servicemen, I found difficulty in getting work; so up to the Labour Exchange in the Market Place for a ‘dole’ of twenty nine shillings a week and if you were offered a job that you refused, because of its unpleasantness, or because you just plain could not do it, then you lost your 29 Bob!

My father had retired from the Leicester City Police Force at the end of 1917 and he and my mother ran The Craven Arms in Humberstone Gate, then the Melton Hotel, Melton Road, and then the Fish and Quart in Church Gate, so I always had a standby or second job that kept the wolf from the door.

In the 1920’s I was very keen and involved in the local boxing circles – as a trainer and physiotherapist; so eventually I opened up a large clientele of injured sportsmen and had a successful practice in Belgrave until I retired at the age of 78 – after Seventy Years of Hard Labours -- but every minute fun!
STANDING CONFERENCE FOR LOCAL HISTORY

On the nineteenth of September 1980 I represented the Leicestershire Local History Council at what is probably the last Annual Meeting of the Standing Conference for Local History. The result of resolutions passed there should be the implementation during the next year of the Blake Report and the formation of a new national body dedicated to furthering all aspects of local history. In this event it seems that membership of the new body will be open not only to County Committees, large national bodies and local groups but also to individuals.

After the usual business of the meeting we had a most interesting talk by Mr R P Sturges from Loughborough University. Funded by the British Library he has undertaken a survey of local publications produced during one year in two areas, the County of Shropshire and the City of Leicester. He shewed samples from the latter that were new to me. I was able to draw the attention of the meeting to our Conference on September the thirteenth and to mention that we hope to feature local publications in the Historian.

We then had reports from sub-committees which have been formed to look into the various aspects of the new organization. One subject that produced much discussion was the need for training more people to teach local history and the provision of some kind of qualification at the end of such training.

Finally our attention was drawn to a proposed series of programmes on local history by the BBC, for which the Standing Conference has been consulted.

Once more I am grateful for the opportunity to represent our Council at this most interesting meeting.

E M D
LEICESTERSHIRE LOCAL HISTORY COUNCIL ONE DAY CONFERENCE
‘Local History in Print’

The theme of the conference held on Saturday the thirteenth of September 1980 was publication. A dozen groups were either represented or had helped in preparing for the day. In his introductory talk Dr J Goodacre outlined the development of local history in the county and its publication from the start up to Nichols’ work and the Archaeological and Historical Society’s Transactions, complemented by The Leicestershire Historian. An important new role is played by local groups in bringing out their own publications of all types. From the pieces sent in by various groups ahead of the day he illustrated this with examples ranging from the guide book and the town trail to research documents, extracts from records and, a strong point among local groups, reminiscences.

Mr P Boulton, the Secretary to the Leicester University Press, gave a helpful and witty talk on ‘The Tasks of a Publisher’, which he divided into editing, production and marketing. Any author profits from someone else reading his manuscript; but the important stage the publisher undertakes is copy-editing, standardizing the text to the rules of the house concerning spelling, punctuation &c. The recent bewildering advances in production techniques mean that once material is ready it can be printed far quicker; but the publisher is now involved in more of the typography and layout so that it takes him twice as long to bring it to the starting point. A publisher’s problems, however, begin when production is completed, as he has to pay the printer straight away. He admitted that half a publisher’s promotion costs are wasted, but, because there is no way of tracing for whom a book shop orders a copy, ‘the trouble is we don’t know which half’. Finally he pointed out that some work is better undertaken by local groups themselves rather than a publisher, especially ‘slender items’. Even the Press’s own English Local History Department Occasional Papers, their slimmest productions, are no longer cheap.

Mr Anderson talked about ‘Producing a Newsletter’. A newsletter can help keep members in touch with each other and with other societies and, when copies are sent to the Libraries and the County Record Office, provides a permanent record of a group’s activities. He outlined the editorial tasks in bringing together the material of different kinds to be included and, with the help of actual examples, demonstrated the stages of production from typing to stapling in a card cover.
In the afternoon a discussion on 'Material for Publication' was chaired by the Director of the Museum with a panel consisting of Mrs H Broughton from the County Record Office and Mr A Stevenson from the County Libraries. This revealed a healthy variety of approaches among the groups represented. One was just starting to emerge from a village amenity society while another could speak from considerable experience of regular meetings, a newsletter and several exhibitions and publications. In Rutland one group has published a list of documentary sources while another treats as urgent the publishing of old photographs and anecdotes. Questions ranged from how to seek help from Libraries and the Record Office to what to do if documents and museum objects are presented to a group.

The editor of The Leicestershire Historian undertook to continue to try to cover all local publications. This will depend on authors and groups cooperating by bringing them to his notice. If groups send in their periodicals too, it should be possible to include a note of all historical articles. For a start the next issue would include a list of local groups for reference. This will in turn bring their activities to the notice of a wider readership. Some are under the impression that their productions are of no interest outside their membership and immediate area. Even if this were so, they should remember that every publication is a 'letter to posterity'. It is well to include a note about the group and a list of previous publications; but nothing should be published without full title-page information, such as date and name and address of author or group publishing.

J G
LEICESTERSHIRE AND RUTLAND LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETIES

a. Periodicals
b. Occasional publications
c. Affiliated to Leicestershire Local History Council

b Anstey Historical Society
   Mrs A Penny, 15 Bencroft Close, Anstey

b Barkby Local History Committee
   Mrs Pick, Manor Farm, Barkby Thorpe

c Highcliffe County Junior School
   Greengate Lane, Birstall

b Castle Donnington Local History Society
   Mr B M Townsend, 7 Burrough Street, Castle Donnington

tabc Frisby-on-the-Wreake Historical Society
   Mr R N F Pinfold, 2 Hall Orchard Lane, Frisby-on-the-Wreake

Newsletter

Great Bowden Society
   Mr C C Tye, 30 Langton Road, Great Bowden

Groby Village Society
   Mrs J Thornton, 7 Chapel Hill, Groby

tabc Hinckley Local History Group
   Mr D F Allison, 97 Leicester Road, Hinckley

   THE HINCKLEY HISTORIAN: Magazine of the Hinckley Local History Group
   Mr H A Beavin, John Cleveland College, Hinckley

tabc Houghton-on-the-Hill

   HOUGHTON NEWS
   Mr J Hum, 27 Ingarsby Lane, Houghton-on-the-Hill

c Old Humberstone Historic Society
   Mrs H Forryan, 13 Lobbs Wood Close, Humberstone

tabc Husbands Bosworth Historical Society
   Mrs A Burton, 6 Highcroft, Husbands Bosworth

   BYGONE BOSWORTH

tabc Kegworth Village Association
   Mrs B Moore, April Cottage, New Street, Kegworth

   COGWORDS: the Bulletin of the Kegworth Village Association
   Mr A Seaman, 94 Long Whatton Road, Kegworth

Friends of Knaptoft
   Mr D McQuone, 14 Shanklin Avenue, Leicester

tabc Leicester Literary and Philosophical Society
   Mrs C Cameron, 48 Desford Road, Kirby Muxloe
TRANSACTIONS OF THE LEICESTER LITERARY AND
PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIETY
Dr T D Ford, Department of Geography, University
of Leicester

Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society
The Guildhall, Leicester

TRANSACTIONS OF THE LEICESTERSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL
AND HISTORICAL SOCIETY
Mr D T Williams, Department of History, University of
Leicester

Leicestershire Industrial History Society
Dr M Palmer, 54 Chapel Street, Measham

LEICESTERSHIRE INDUSTRIAL HISTORY SOCIETY BULLETIN

Leicestershire Local History Council
133 Loughborough Road, Leicester

THE LEICESTERSHIRE HISTORIAN
Dr J Goodacre, Ashby parva

Leicestershire Libraries

Loughborough and District Archaeological Society
Mr J P Brownlow, 31 Cowdray Close, Loughborough

THE BULLETIN OF THE LOUGHBOROUGH AND DISTRICT
ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY
Mr W S Moffat, 44 Colgrove Road, Loughborough

Loughborough High School
Lyddington Society
Mr B Matthews, Colley Hill, Lyddington, Rutland
Marketharborough Archaeological and Historical Society
Mr J C Davies, 9 Hillcrest Avenue, Marketharborough

Melton Mowbray and District Historical Society
Mr C Bowes, 7 Palmerston Road, Melton Mowbray

Friends of Melton Mowbray Museum
Mr N H L Archer, 74 Dapcote Drive, Melton Mowbray

Newton Harcourt Society
Mr J Goddard, The Manor House, Newton Harcourt

Oadby and District Archaeological and Historical Society
Mrs A Strange, 20 Briar Walk, Oadby

Oadby Local History Group
Mrs P Buttery, Oadby Library

Old Union Canals Society
Mr R Wild, 1 The Green, Lubbenham, Marketharborough
UNION: Journal of the Old Union Canals Society
Mr D Goodwin, Harborough Road, Desborough, Northamptonshire
c Preston Historical Society
  Mr G P Chamberlin, The Old Orchard, Preston, Rutland
Rearsby Local History Society
  Mrs H Jordan, 30 Mill Road, Rearsby
Rothley and Mountsorrel Society
  Mr R G Offley, 41 Town Green Street, Rothley
Rutland Field Research Group for Archaeology and History
  Mr L G Emmerson, 5 Newton Road, Uppingham, Rutland
b Rutland Local History Society
  Mr A R Traylen, Rutland County Museum, Catmos Street, Oakham, Rutland
abc Rutland Record Society
  Mr B Matthews, Colley Hill, Lyddington, Rutland
RUTLAND RECORD: Journal of the Rutland Record Society
  Mr B Waites, 6 Chater Road, Oakham, Rutland
b Hind Leys Local History Group
  Mr G A Coleby, Hind Leys College, Forest Street, Shepshed
Sileby Historical Association
  Mr O Freer, 1 Albert Avenue, Sileby
South Croxton Local History Society
  Mr R King, 7 School Lane, South Croxton
Thrussington Local History Society
  Mr P Musson, 23 Church Lane, Thrussington
a Vaughan Archaeological and Historical Society
  Miss D C Valentine, 29 Walton Street, Leicester
THE TRANSACTIONS OF THE VAUGHAN ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL SOCIETY
  Mr B Elliott, 17 Half Moon Crescent, Oadby
a East Midlands Branch of the Wesley Historical Society
  Rev S Y Richardson, 15 Coniston Crescent, Loughborough
HERITAGE: Journal of the East Midlands Branch of the Wesley Historical Society
Greater Wigston Historical Society
  Mr O D Lucas, White Gate Farm House, Newton Lane, Wigston magna
Herricks and Beaumanor Society
  Mr D A Cumming, 18 Victoria Road, Woodhouse Eaves
MELTON MOWBRAY QUEEN OF THE SHIRES
Jack Brownlow  Sycamore Press  Wymondham  1980  £15.00

This book is divided into two parts, the first a brief history and description of Melton Mowbray in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and the second a detailed account of the hunting-boxes, lodges, clubs and inns and of the social life and notable visitors in the town, until the impact of the Second World War and changing social tastes finally demolished its former glories.

Melton Mowbray was a plain small market town which developed slowly in a similar fashion to many others in the nineteenth century, except for its unique position as the winter capital of the most fashionable pastime, fox-hunting. The story runs that Mr W H Lambton, tiring of the boisterous nightlife of Quorndon, some time in the 1780's acquired a house in Melton — 'The House', later called 'The Elms' — where his nights were quiet and where it was equally convenient to hunt with the Belvoir, the Cottesmore and the Quorn.

This example was quickly followed by other huntsmen. Houses, lodgings and stabling were advertised and increasingly organised and by 1815 the social world was attracted to Melton not only for hunting but also for a wide range of other country sports, including cock-fighting, steeple-chasing and spider-racing on specially heated tables. Hunting had its own mystique, attracting the sporting writer and journalist and the sporting painter, like the local John Ferneley or the excellent rider and amateur painter Sir Francis Grant.

To recapture the impact of the hunt on Melton the author uses all his local knowledge to take the reader on a tour of the splendid of the hunting lodges and their owners and occupants — Egerton Lodge, once the favourite home of Lord Wilton, where royalty was liberally entertained, Craven Lodge, frequently the royal family's hunting base in the 1920's and Wyndham Lodge, now the nucleus of the hospital, as well as those like The Elms, The Limes or The Old Club House, which have either been demolished or have had their former glories converted to other uses.
The text is enlivened by many illustrations, many of them contemporary, and they form a most valuable part of the book. It is unfortunate that no list of them is included with the contents and that they are not specifically referred to in the otherwise excellent index.

Sadly the author died before he could see how much his tribute to Melton was appreciated. Few people still alive have the personal knowledge to write such a lively record of a way of life which now seems very distant.

G K L

THE STORY OF LOUGHBOROUGH, 1888-1914
W A Deakin Echo Press Loughborough 1979 £5.50

Joseph Deakin started *The Loughborough Echo* as a free advertising sheet in 1891. In 1909 it became a newspaper selling at a halfpenny. He and his son, W Arthur Deakin, have contributed not only to the life of the town through their paper, but also to its history by publishing three books from the Echo Press, the former’s *Loughborough in the XIX Century* in 1927, the latter’s *19th Century Loughborough* in 1974 and the present volume, the entire proceeds of which are being devoted to the upkeep of the parish church. This is more than a lavishly produced scrapbook of cuttings and photographs from the files of the *Echo*, threaded together by the author’s comments under headings of civic importance ranging from the incorporation of 1888 to the First World War: for the author has absorbed the collected memories of his father, himself and the whole *Echo*, so that, although it would be hard for a historian to unravel who is being quoted, it makes a very readable account from the point of view of a proudly independent newspaper.

J G

A MILL ON THE SOAR
S Ellis The Author Whitewings Southmeads Road Oadby £3.00

This is a book for the industrial archaeologist, the genealogist and, above all, the local historian; for into the story of the fine old Mill on the Soar is woven the very stuff of Leicester’s history. One must wish that more family firms, on which the prosperity of Leicester was founded, would write up their histories in a similar way.

Friars Mill, as it came to be called because of its proximity to the remains of the Blackfriars Priory, must have been one of the earliest factories in
the county. Mr Shirley Ellis tells the story of its growth and development in an easy and readable manner. The history is well researched and there are many interesting illustrations. The Donisthorpes, the name by which the present company is still known, are an ancient family, tracing their lineage back to the twelfth century. They took over the Mill in the middle of the nineteenth century. They were later joined by the Ellis family, who had also been involved in the wool, worsted and spinning business in Leicester for several generations. Family trees of both these families are given, admirably simplified and clearly indicating the various members mentioned in the text.

The Ellis family firm has been very successful in adjusting to the changing pattern of industry. While installing the most up-to-date computer-based machinery, instead of pulling everything down to start afresh, the Ellises, father and son, have, fortunately for us, preserved the fabric of the old Mill buildings with care and love, to remain an attractive complex alongside the old Soar.

THE TRUE HISTORY OF THE ELEPHANT MAN
M Howell and P Ford Penguin Books 1980 £1.25

The life of the Elephant Man has in the past year been celebrated with considerable popular acclaim both on stage and screen. This book (not to be confused with the book of the film) sets out to tell the true story. Joseph Carey Merrick was born in 1862 in Wharf Street, Leicester. He worked first in a cigar factory and then as a hawker until his increasing deformities deprived him of employment and he was admitted to the Leicester Workhouse. Signing out after four years there, he entrusted himself to the showmen who during the next two years exhibited him as 'The Greatest Freak of Nature' both in England and in Northern Europe. In 1886 he was taken into the care of the London Hospital where, befriended by the surgeon Frederick Treves, he remained until his death in 1890.

The established facts of Merrick's early life are few. This book relies heavily on imaginative reconstruction presented in journalistic style, so that it is sometimes hard to distinguish fact from fiction. However, several sections which are of marginal relevance to the main theme are of interest to Leicester historians. Merrick's belief that his deformities originated in the womb when his mother was knocked down in the street.
by the elephant in a procession of animals provides a peg on which the authors hang an entertaining description of the Humberstone Gate fairs in the 1860s. There are also interesting details of local entertainers and their establishments, like Merrick’s first promoter Sam Torr and his Gaiety Palace of Varieties in Wharf Street, which was run ‘along high class lines’, seeking to cater for the ‘better class society of the hosiery metropolis’.

S L B

OUR CENTURY: A SCRAPBOOK OF LEICESTER
BBC Radio Leicester with Leicester Education Committee Resources Centre nd (1980) £2.00

Ten dozen photographs, duly acknowledged and strung together with journalistic captions by decades, make up this professionally produced compilation. Not surprisingly nearly every one of the five dozen up to and including the Second World War are from the Leicestershire Museums collections. But for the fussy and slightly destructive layout, this alone makes it good value for the local historian.

J G

BYGONE WIGSTON 1979 £1.20
BYGONE WIGSTON Volume II 1980 £1.80
D Lucas Anderson, Blaby
AROUND OLD BURBAGE
J D McNaughton The author 1980 £1.50

Although published by the author, Around old Burbage is uniform with Mr Anderson’s volumes, including his own Bygone Market Harborough reviewed in the Historian for 1978, and all are printed by Abbots of Lutterworth. The compilers of such volumes are performing a very valuable service to local historians in searching out and in preserving unique images by multiplying them. The captions are on the whole helpful and the printing and standard of reproduction admirable.

Beyond this, however, rather than adding miscellaneous historical facts (Mr McNaughton takes the prize for the most uninformative paragraph in his ‘Brief History of Burbage’; it reads ‘J.S.Crossland was the second largest landowner in the parish.’) the compilers should concentrate on aiding our
appreciation of the pictures in their context. Locating a view within the village is of first importance. Here a sketch map is essential and an aerial view only a partial substitute.

In addition full credit should be given to three kinds of people. Firstly there is no mention of the photographers. Were they local, professional, making commercial postcards or engaged for some family occasion or portrait? Secondly present owners are only mentioned by name in an inadequate summary acknowledgement. Have they kept the originals as family snap-shots or as collections of postcards and where are they now? A detailed and complete list of acknowledgements need occupy very little space and should increase the value of these publications not only to historians concerned about their authenticity but also within the local community. Lastly compilers should give credit to their own research activity in tracking down and borrowing the pictures. We learn nothing about them, except that Mr Lucas is assembling a private museum in Wigston.

J G

A HISTORY OF BARKBY VILLAGE 1974 (reprinted 1980) 60p
BARKBY VILLAGE HALL 1929-1979 60p
Barkby Local History Committee

This village committee is to be congratulated on the standard of presentation of its work. The village history was reviewed in the Historian when it first came out. The second booklet is similar in style and of much wider interest than the title might suggest. Village halls and the events connected with them have proved to be one of the most cohesive elements in modern village life. Many will recognize the fund-raising events, the financial crises overcome by special efforts and the voluntary labour that have kept this hall a lively centre of village activities. The account is generously illustrated with photographs and facsimiles of accounts and bill heads. Purchased together these booklets cost one pound.

The historical contributions to the Barkby Village May Festival of Rural Life and History Souvenir Programme, 1980 (now reduced from 75p to 25p) includes some directly comparable pairs of photographs of 'Barkby then and now'. Another production, priced at 40p but with no attribution or date, is a neat church guide The History of the Church of St.Mary, Barkby Leicestershire.

J G
This formidable one woman effort has sold out and a revised edition is being planned. It is a large typescript booklet full of photographs old and new, facsimiles of village records, gleanings from published histories and personal reminiscences. It is also a real 'parish pump' history in that the author connects the medicinal waters resorted to in the late eighteenth century with the presence of the mediaeval leper hospital — all good ammunition for her present campaign to preserve the village Stockwell spring.

J G

Mr Badcock's original booklet, published in 1951 under the title Fleckney, was fifty pages of continuous text with half a dozen illustrations. This new edition, revised and enlarged by Hilda Sheridan, is divided up under a variety of headings and has nearly three dozen photographs and a pair of maps. The village is fortunate in having a parish council prepared to publish such a worthy and handsome production, which is far more than the usual guide book. The writer speaks with authority on many subjects, often evidently from personal experience or from original documentary research. He is well aware of the diverse influences that have formed his village and quotes one inhabitant who wrote in 1912, 'The village of Fleckney is almost a paradox inasmuch as it is a town so far as the means and methods of work are concerned, but in all other matters it is a country village.' The danger of relying almost entirely on the one industry, hosiery, was seen in the strike by the whole village in support of the women of one factory. Three months of lost wages and hardship gained nothing. It would be interesting to see a detailed study of this incident quoting contemporary accounts and the memories which the author says still survive in the village.

J G
A HISTORY OF HOBY
J Farrer  Leicestershire Libraries and Information Service  1980  60p

This booklet highlights selected aspects of the history of one of the attractive villages of the Wreake Valley from early times to the present day. It is clearly printed but not very attractively set out or illustrated. A plan of the village would have been a useful addition to the text.

LETTERS FROM BOSWORTH HALL 1782-1806
compiled from the papers of Francis Fortescue Turvile Esq
H M Bird  (Husbands Bosworth Historical Society)  60p

These extracts from letters written by two chaplains at Bosworth Hall, Thomas Potts and Edward Peach, give an interesting glimpse of the role of the family chaplain in a Roman Catholic household and of life in a midland village at the turn of the century.

Like so many other Catholics, Francis Fortescue Turvile sought relief from the financial penalties of discriminatory legislation by living abroad. The earliest letters, from Thomas Potts, were addressed to him in France. They have a familiar ring — complaints of high taxes, bad weather, dear food and the perpetual concern with local gossip.

The family returned in 1789. The second group of letters were written by Edward Peach, who served as chaplain, tutor and friend to the younger boys whenever the family was away. They are much concerned with domestic and local detail — the story of young William’s teeth, the price of pigs, the quantity of potatoes needed to be planted, the riotous party at a neighbour’s house and the story of a mare and dead foal.

By the turn of the century the worst discriminations against Catholics had been removed and the boys of the family in turn went off to newly established Roman Catholic schools.

The letters form part of the Constable-Maxwell Manuscripts deposited in the Leicestershire Record Office. This duplicated typescript of extracts well illustrates the value of contemporary letters and diaries in clothing the bones of legislative and social history for local historians lucky enough to find such material relating to their own community.

GKL
It is difficult to imagine how Oadby might have looked one hundred years ago. Few buildings of such age still stand and modern shop frontages, wide roads and new housing developments have swallowed up much of the old village. This publication is, therefore, a most welcome arrival. The focal point of the book is the section of photographs of key buildings and streets, taken during the century, accompanied by an informative, yet concise, text. The remainder of the book consists of articles on education in 1880, and life in Oadby through the century, notes on local personalities and important buildings, reminiscences and news items. Despite multiple authorship the work is produced in a consistently readable style. The articles complement each other well in content and period, although modern Oadby is dispatched sketchily and there is little mention of the Racecourse and the Manor House. The plan of Oadby in 1880 is interesting; a similar one of Oadby in 1980 would have been a useful inclusion. The format and presentation is commendable and the book sets a high standard for the Group’s future publications to reach.

H E B

Though the mediaeval hamlet has now completely disappeared, archeological evidence, scattered documentary references and tradition all confirm its former existence. Shelthorpe seems to have shared the fate of other mediaeval settlements which were already declining in the fourteenth century, even before the years of pestilence and long before the Tudor sheep 'drove out men'. Nichols referred to just one modern house, Needless Inn. Now the area is covered by a cemetery and modern housing and the site of the settlement, once nineteenth century claypits, has been transformed into a modern lake. Well illustrated and documented, clearly printed and neatly set out, this booklet, written by the Head Master of Shelthorpe School and Warden of the Community Centre based there, is a worthwhile contribution to our printed stock of local resources.

G K L
When the members of a local history group publish their work they can offer outsiders only a share in the enjoyment of their activity. Nevertheless the social value of the meetings of this Shepshed group and the realization of the worth of their memories comes over clearly in these duplicated sheets, illustrated with advertisements and photographs.

The second contains accounts of home life with comments on subjects such as work, routines, food, special occasions and the under-used front parlour. There is nothing very remarkable about the plans and descriptions of the furnishing of individual houses: what is valuable is the trouble that individual members of the group have taken in recalling these details.

In the first the discussion revolved round the street scene, using *Kelly’s Directory* for 1904 and a map as pegs to hang memories on. The last consists of one diagrammatic street plan used for the same purpose — houses with balloon messages like ‘Dr Thompson called ‘Yakker’ More of a vet & dentist’.

The text is typescript, notes are in handwriting, the pictures are not all very clear. The presentation in general is breathless, not to say chaotic — one page in the second appears upside down. But who could complain, especially at the price? The important thing is the Mr Coleby has coordinated a lively group sufficiently for them to publish the results of their work to share with others.

J G

**RECOLLECTIONS OF COUNTRY STATION LIFE**

H Aland Anderson Blaby 1980 £2.20

Harry Aland started his forty five year railway career at the age of fifteen at Rugby in 1921. He always worked within ten miles of Rugby and after training there his first spell at a country station took him into Leicestershire at Ullesthorpe from 1926. Later he also worked at the Welford and Kilworth station just outside North Kilworth.
This is a well produced and very readable publication, enlivened by two dozen photographs, which are duly acknowledged. It brings out clearly some aspects of the life of a railwayman. Among the staff the old rivalry between the Midland and the London North Western lines was not extinguished by their amalgamation in the London Midland and Scottish. The Station Master at Ullesthorpe was an old fashioned Midland devotee and did not let his new employee forget that he had been trained a North Western man. The work was hard, involving not only the loading of all kinds of goods and livestock but also responsibility for passengers and endless documentation; so that a keen hand soon built up a useful knowledge of the business and running of the whole line.

J G

DOMESDAY BOOK: LEICESTERSHIRE
P Morgan ed Phillimore 1979 £5

The section of this famous survey dealing with eleventh century Leicestershire is here made available in compact form. The original text is that of Abraham Farley's transcription, with a few corrections, set out in parallel with the modern translation on the opposite page. A glossary, notes and an index giving the modern form of the place names, with two outline maps, make this edition quick and easy to use.

The general editor of the series contributes an introduction giving a brief account of the survey and its compilation. Though the value of the Domesday Survey as an authentic record was well known to the early local historians, it was not until 1783 that the complete text transcribed by Abraham Farley was made available in print. This edition is of particular interest to Leicestershire historians in that it was John Nichols who designed the special type and also printed the work, which was published at government expense. A more detailed account of this publication is given in his History and Antiquities of the County of Leicester. I, ii, 1795, p xxxvii.

The neighbouring counties of Derby, Lincoln, Northampton, Nottingham, Rutland, Stafford and Warwick are also available in this series.

G K L
It is gratifying that the work that went into mounting the Museum exhibition under this title in April 1979 has been put to lasting use. Although issued as a research pack for teaching it should be of value to all Leicestershire historians. The envelope contains facsimiles of twenty-six contemporary documents with transcriptions. They cover a wide range, from a printed petition to the King from the inhabitants of Leicestershire to a military pass for one man and his horse. The introductory notes by Miss K M Thompson include a diary of local events, based partly on original research into the parish registers, and a short bibliography. The notes for teachers are by Dr M Palmer.

Although this is an exercise in the use of archives and all but one of the documents are manuscripts in the Leicestershire Record Office, it is worth mentioning that the most lively accounts may be drawn from the flood of contemporary printed literature. Apart from the newspapers there were dozens of pamphlets relating to events in Leicestershire. The most comprehensive collections are in the British Museum and several of the pamphlets were reprinted by Nichols in the fourth appendix to his third volume. It is a pity that the only reference by name to one here misleadingly traces it to the County Record Office. Yet in the City Reference Library there is an excellent collection of over two dozen original pamphlets, dating back to our nineteenth century historians and including a copy of the one cited.

This local 'Jackdaw' is very good value and raises high hopes for future units.

THE LEICESTER NEWSPAPERS, 1850-74: A guide for historians
R L Greenall ed Department of Adult Education, University of Leicester 1980 £1.50

This is the outcome of the work of a group which set out to index under subject headings the local newspaper press in Leicester from 1850 to 1874.

47
Indexing every paper proved too time-consuming and repetitive, so that in the end only the *Leicester Chronicle* was indexed throughout the period, the *Leicester Journal* for 1850, 1856-9, 1861-2: and 1867 and the *South Midlands Free Press* for 1858. Though the headings are well chosen and the abbreviations very clear, the entries within each heading are arranged in chronological rather than alphabetical order and the type is small and set close, which does not make for ease of reference. The illustrations from the *Illustrated London News* are an attractive feature. This guide has the great value of drawing attention to the range of information to be found in the local press and the need for a comprehensive and continuing index of these resources.

G K L

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**A BIBLIOGRAPHY OF LEICESTERSHIRE CHURCHES**

Part 2: Newspaper Sources

G K Brandwood  
Department of Adult Education,  
University of Leicester  
1980  
£1.50

The first part of this bibliography was noted in the *Historian* for 1978/9. This second part deals with references in the Leicestershire press and concentrates mainly on the peak period of church restoration and building from 1830 to 1914. Special series on Leicestershire churches published later have also been searched. The *Leicester Chronicle* and the *Leicester Journal*, papers which give good county coverage, have been fully searched and for Rutland a long run of the *Stamford Mercury*, from 1845 to 1876. Other local newspapers were searched for specific periods. Occasional items of special interest are noted in the text and additions and corrections to Part 1 are included at the end.

This guide is clearly arranged and printed and is easy to use. The notes on the locations of newspapers searched will be of wider interest and the author hopes to publish a definitive list of holdings in the county. One can only hope that some day all local newspapers will be available on microfilm in Leicester.

G K L
THE EARLY CHRISTIAN CHURCH IN LEICESTER AND ITS REGION
R Bailey Vaughan Paper No 25
Department of Adult Education,
University of Leicester 1980 55p

This very interesting paper uses documentary and archaeological evidence to give a picture of the Midlands church in Anglo-Saxon Mercia before the Scandinavian invasion. It is a picture of monks and prelates as scholars and missionaries at home and in Europe. No one who looks at the sculptures at Breedon on the Hill, all that remains of a once flourishing monastic community with an extensive library, or at the powerful solidity of Brixworth church can doubt the artistic and organizational skills of their creators. The new Anglo-Saxon kingdoms, even if still half pagan at heart, must yet have been greatly influenced by the Mediterranean world. The skills of the growing church required a base and even an early missionary bishop such as Wilfred of York was already acquiring lands from Northumbria to Somerset to sustain the church and its communities. Clerics themselves already had a wider role, as they were able to offer practical and diplomatic as well as spiritual advice to the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms.

G K L

THE RELIGIOUS GILDS OF MEDIEVAL LEICESTER 1979 75p
A SHORT HISTORY OF LEICESTER FOREST EAST AND WEST 1980 75p
J Wilshere Leicester Research section of Chamberlain Music and Books

These are two more booklets from our only consistent local history author and publisher. The first is intended as a companion to The Town Gates and Bridges of Mediaeval Leicester, noted in the Historian for 1978/9. It consists of a brief introduction, followed by sections on each of the gilds. It is based on published work, listed at the beginning, and wills of benefactors. Among the illustrations the author has made use of his collection of old post cards.

The second was issued to coincide with an exhibition. It is based largely on Leicester Forest by Levi Fox and Percy Russell, 1948, supplemented by more recent reminiscences and details from the 1871 Census.

J G
AN OUTLINE HISTORY OF THE GENERAL BAPTISTS OF LOUGHBOROUGH,
1760 to 1975
J Brewer (1979)

WYCLIFFE MEMORIAL METHODIST CHURCH: 75 Years of Witness,
1905 - 1980: Personal Recollections
H Webb (1980)

For the eighteenth century the Rev Dr Brewer relies on The History of the
General Baptists by Adam Taylor. From the beginning of the nineteenth,
however, his research among minute books enables him to relate the ex­
pansion and division of their church in Loughborough. The recent merg­
ing of the Wood Gate and King Street churches with the Baxter Gate church
is within the scope of his own experience. The first thirty pages of Henry
Webb’s account, prepared for the anniversary of the Lutterworth Methodist
Church in 1980, are also written from personal recollection. The remain­
ing sixteen are as many letters of reminiscences from former ministers.

These are both examples of the readiness of nonconformists to publish
material about their own churches. They are duplicated typescripts in
card covers and are presumably intended mainly for local circulation.
Nevertheless they each would have benefitted from full details on a title
page. The former, being over four hundred pages, should have included a
list of contents and the latter merely acknowledges ‘the printers’ in the
middle of the text, without naming them. J G

ROTARY IN LEICESTER 1916-1980: A HISTORY OF THE ROTARY CLUB OF
LEICESTER
B Thompson Rotary Club of Leicester 1980 £2

The history of local societies is a field of local history which has not
been well covered and so this publication is a useful addition. It tells
the story of Leicester Rotary briefly in words and pictures. Service and
good fellowship are part of the club’s tradition and many local schemes
and good causes have benefited from both the financial contributions and
the skilled services of Leicester’s Rotarians. A list is given of presidents,
secretaries and treasurers from 1916 to 1979. The illustrations include
portraits of the founder president, G Crawford Johnson, and of a prominent
founder member, W K Bedingfield, who served in each of the three offices
during the early years of the club’s history. Very neat and well produced,
this is a most attractive booklet. G K L
The transcriber and editor of these extracts from the first log book of the Oadby Board School has shewn what interesting sidelights such material can offer the local historian on village life. Board Schools were set up under the 1870 Education Act to help fill the gaps in the voluntary system of primary education. In Leicestershire, with its many industrialized villages and strong nonconformist tradition, they were welcomed by parents who preferred non-sectarian religious instruction to that provided in existing National Schools with their close associations with the established church. The Boards were locally elected bodies, empowered to raise a school rate, which was supplemented by fees from the scholars and by payments from the government. These extracts shew how the threat of withdrawing government support was used by the Inspectors to back up their demands for improving the buildings and teaching methods.

Pupils could start school at three, could become part-timers at eleven and left at thirteen. The children seem little changed. The teachers report that they were noisy or saucy, that boys threw stones and that some came to school dirty and untidy. On the other hand few children to-day die from fevers like scarlet fever or typhoid.

There was increasing pressure on parents to send their children to school. In November 1881 an Inspector was ‘sorry to find so many children about the village’ and not attending school. Holidays were necessarily geared to the rural year, to haymaking and harvest, and it was easy for children to stay away for Plough Monday, Leicester Fair, Wigston Feast and for anything of interest in the village, from a military parade to the passage of a large bell through the village.

Despite the poor conditions, care was taken and it was not thought odd that little children should stay at home in very poor weather. Water was sprinkled on the floor on a very sultry day and on another occasion children were taken into the lane to do their lessons.

Every existing school log book has something to offer the local historian and this typescript publication should encourage more people to seek out and use this interesting and very easy to read source material.
This is a plain, detailed and very factual account of Leicester's schools, primary and secondary, from 1944 to 1974. It begins with an interesting account of the progress made in educational provision in the early part of the century. This left the City in 1944 with a good stock of solid school buildings and an exceptional core of static and experienced teachers on which to base the adaptations and progress needed to meet the spirit of the educational ideals of the post-war period.

The remainder of the book describes the school population, buildings, teachers, organization of secondary education and the methods of allocation to different types of secondary school.

The basis of the work was a thesis for a higher degree and, though the author has done his best to make the material more comprehensible to the general reader, it still remains a book written by a specialist in educational administration for other specialists. The inclusion of maps showing the changes in the distribution of child population and the location of old and new schools and even a few illustrations of schools old and new would have done much to illuminate the text.

A study of this kind of a single area is always of interest and the very great changes in the face of Leicester and the growth of a cosmopolitan population during the period add to the interest of the subject. This will undoubtedly provide a most useful text for students of the history of education in Leicester in the future and may suggest aspects of the subject which may repay a more speculative and personal approach in Years to come.

G K L
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