the
Leicestershire Historian
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The Leicestershire Historian, which is published annually, is the magazine of the Leicestershire 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 opportunities for them to meet from time to time, to act as a coordinating body between the various county history societies, to encourage and support local history exhibitions and generally to promote the advancement of local history studies.

In particular the Council aims to provide a service to all the local history societies and groups throughout the county by keeping in touch with them and offering advice. This year an Information Pack has been sent to all groups who are affiliated to the Council.

The former monthly meetings have been discontinued and replaced by two One-day Conferences, held in the Spring and Autumn, to which members (both individuals and groups) are invited to meet and compare notes about their activities. An up-dated list of groups, many of them affiliated as members of the Council, is published in the magazine. There are two summer outings and the A G M is held in May, kindly hosted by one of the affiliated groups.

The different categories of membership and the subscriptions are set out below. If you or your group wish to become a member, please contact the Membership Secretary, who will be pleased to supply further information about membership and future activities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Subscription</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GROUP, Organization</td>
<td>£5.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>DOUBLE, Husband and Wife</td>
<td>£5.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>INDIVIDUAL, Person under 65</td>
<td>£4.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>DOUBLE, Senior Citizens</td>
<td>£4.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>SINGLE, Senior Citizen, Student</td>
<td>£3.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
THE LEICESTERSHIRE HISTORIAN

Vol 3 No 6 1988

CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Editorial</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nineteenth Century ‘Public’ Libraries in Melton Mowbray</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judith Flint</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Strange and Painful Story of Samuel Chambers</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J A G Knight</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Landownership in Nineteenth Century Wanlip and Sileby</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jane Allsopp</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providence and Pollie: the Diary of William Hugh Warburton, 1899</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E Anne Cooper</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reports</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J A Legget, Steph Mastoris</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leicestershire and Rutland Local History Societies</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book Reviews</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs H E Broughton, J Goodacre, Mrs G K Long</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
EDITORIAL

Setting up a local museum is a topic often discussed at our meetings for local history groups throughout the county. It is worth remembering that there are early precedents for this, collections of furniture and arms displayed together with glass cases stuffed with a variety of antiquities and curiosities. Our cover picture, copied from a photograph in the collections of the Leicestershire Libraries and Information Service, shews that the Bede House Museum in Melton Mowbray used to house not only a typical Victorian miscellany but also shelves of library books. Our conference in Melton in October 1987 was hosted by Judith Flint, who is Local Studies Librarian at the Public Library there and who also made a study of the earlier libraries in the town as part of her professional training. She has written for us an article based on her research, which shews a surprising range of organizations involved in providing books for the public in the town. Another article based on research, in this case part of a degree course in historical geography, is Jane Allsopp’s comparison of Wanlip and Sileby.

In a year when the settlement of Australia is being commemorated, Jeffrey Knight’s new article on the mining area of the county is also a reminder of the grim conditions that awaited convicts deported to Tasmania and which one Leicestershire miner had to experience only because of a wrongful conviction.

Mrs Cooper has a family treasure in her grandfather’s diary. She has undertaken the task of selecting for us the parts of it that build up most vividly a picture of a young couple setting up house and starting their family in Leicester at the beginning of this century.

Erratum:

In our last issue, page 4, paragraph 1, line 9 should read ‘the so-called’ ‘pork pie’ Baptist Chapel in Belvoir Street (now part of the Wellington Street Adult Education Centre)’.
Today we take for granted the freedom of access to information — educational and recreational reading for all citizens. This right is only a fairly recent development with the widespread establishment of free public libraries in the early part of the twentieth century. In the nineteenth century you could only read if you could afford either to pay for books, which were very expensive until the late 1870s, or to belong to a subscription or circulating library. This article covers the proliferation of different lending libraries that were available to the townspeople of Melton Mowbray during the nineteenth century. It also describes how the powerful establishment of Melton worked in such a way that the only people who actually had access to literature and education were not those who might have benefited, the poorer and working class. The establishment saw to it that only those that could afford to pay would have the privilege of reading.

In 1844 Melton must have been a very boring place to live in; the Leicester Journal reported:

> Melton cannot at present boast a public Institution (except the schools) of any kind; there is neither a public library or reading room nor any place of amusement or instruction to be found.¹

A year later there were two institutions in the town that provided, for a fee, books, magazines and public reading rooms. The first to be established was the Melton Mechanics’ Institute.

In Melton genuine attempts to educate artisans and mechanics were made by John Brereton, who was the headmaster at the Melton Free School, King Street from 1818 to 1845.² In 1825 Mr Brereton ran the first evening classes for adults at the school.³ The classes were initially successful and he continued to give occasional public lectures until 1841 on such subjects as hydrostatics, electricity and pneumatics. Although Mr Brereton had not established a Mechanics’ Institute, he had paved the way for such an Institute to be established by giving attention to the artisans who needed or wanted further education and by encouraging them to think of ‘self improvement’. In February 1845 the Melton Recorder reported:

> Several meetings have taken place on the subject of establishing an
institution for the diffusion of useful knowledge in Melton . . . There was a large attendance of young men to arrange the . . . constitution of such a society . . . We are not surprised at the influential and wealthier inhabitants feeling anxious that the management should be put into calm and responsible hands . . . Honorary members . . . are to pay 10/- annually and the general public 1/6d.4

The middle classes generally feared that Mechanics’ Institutes would become ‘hotbeds’ of dissention leading to revolution. To stop this happening they very quickly involved themselves in the management of the institutes to ensure that no seditious materials were bought for the library and that only scientific lectures were given and not the political meetings that they feared would take place. The Melton Mechanics’ Institute was immediately opposed by the influential classes of Melton society and the fears generated by an artisan-run Institute manifested themselves in a counter-proposal for another library and reading rooms to be opened, but this time organized by the Melton middle classes. In April 1845 the organizers of the Mechanics’ Institute ran an advertisement in the Melton Recorder advising Melton people that the Institute was about to be established. Directly underneath this advertisement a much lengthier advertisement was taken out by the more influential members of Melton society advising the public that they were also going to establish a library and in the process also blackening the good names of the organizers of the Mechanics’ Institute.5 Predictably the middle classes won the ‘battle’ and on the 21st of April 1845 an advertisement was published in the Melton Recorder shewing how the members of the Mechanics’ Institute committee had compromised. The original subscription for artisans was to be 1/6d, which might have been possible for many artisans to pay. The new subscription was to be 6/-, which would have been a serious stumbling block for many working men to pay all at once. The type of library that the Mechanics’ Institute was now going to provide was not for artisans at all, but a library for the middle classes.

Despite all the opposition in the press the Mechanics’ Institute opened on May the 6th 1845. The Leicester Chronicle was aware of how much anger the formation of the Institute had raised:

MELTON MOWBRAY MECHANICS’ INSTITUTE

The above Institute was opened on Tuesday week and (not withstanding the jealousies of parties, who fearful as to the consequences of enlightenment of the millions doing their best to crush it) already consists of 112 members and a library of 100 volumes besides a good muster of the leading periodicals of the day.6
This rather unfortunate start of the Mechanics’ Institute probably ensured its early success. By 1848 the library had increased to 500 volumes and was a thriving institution with ‘upwards of 100 members’. By 1849 the Institute library had grown to such an extent that it needed a librarian and Mr Alfred Skinner was appointed. The post would have probably been more of a curator/caretaker post rather than that of a modern librarian. The original artisan nature of the Institute had completely disappeared by 1850. By this time the Institute was more akin to a literary association than a Mechanics’ Institute to judge by the donations and books bought for the library. By 1854 the Melton Mechanics’ Institute had become fully ‘tamed’ and provided no serious threat to the Melton middle classes, as it was invited to combine with three other libraries in the town to provide a large ‘public library’ to be housed in the Corn Exchange.

The lack of public meeting rooms in Melton was finally remedied in 1854 when several Melton gentry met to form the Melton Mowbray Corn Exchange and Public Rooms Company. The company built and furnished the Corn Exchange, which opened in 1855 and included a library and news room. There were already three libraries in the town, the Mechanics’ Institute, the Literary Institute, housed in the Bede House, and the Athenaeum in the Market Place. It was agreed by the shareholders of the Corn Exchange and the committees of the other libraries that they should combine and be housed in the Corn Exchange. Pooling resources, staff, books and accommodation was on the surface a sensible idea. The main problem with this arrangement was that these libraries served different kinds of people, the libraries were of differing standards and each of the management committees wanted the lion’s share of running the amalgamated library. Inevitably the amalgamation broke down through internal squabbling and lack of funds. The Mechanics’s Institute had been the most prosperous of the libraries and the amalgamation nearly ruined it.

The Mechanics’ Institute took its library away from the Corn Exchange and tried to re-establish itself, this time in less expensive accommodation, in a room above a hairdressers’s in the Market Place. The hairdresser, Mr William Aris, was appointed librarian to the Institute, although presumably he was more of a caretaker, unlocking the room if anyone wanted to use the library. The Institute had a brief revival in 1861 when it affiliated with the Young Mens’ Christian Association which had been established in Melton in 1860. However, the added impetus of the Y M C A could not make the Institute a thriving organization; it had become outmoded and irrelevant to the young artisans who had established it. The competition from the Corn Exchange library, which had recovered from the disastrous
amalgamation, was taking custom away from the Institute library and in 1864 the management committee decided to combine with the Corn Exchange library and rename the joint library the Literary Institute. The Melton Mechanics’ Institute had never had an opportunity to realise its full potential. There was clearly a need for technical education in the town, especially in the agricultural sciences, but opposition from the insecure Melton middle classes ensured that it never would succeed.

The combined libraries of the Mechanics’ Institute and the Corn Exchange were able to provide the townspeople of Melton with a library of a thousand books and reading room facilities. Unfortunately only 130 people took advantage of the ‘new’ library and reading rooms. The library was housed in the Corn Exchange in a room 21’ by 14’ 6” including space for a reading room. The reconstituted Literary Institute had no political aims and existed to provide a library and occasional literary meetings. The reading room was probably the most successful part of the Institute, as by 1870 the library had not increased its stock of a thousand volumes. The subscription to the Institute was 1/6d a quarter, which would have been a manageable sum for most of the ‘respectable’ lower classes. In the late 1870s the Institute membership was still about 130 but sadly it could not attract a larger membership and eventually its income was not sufficient to keep the stock of the library alive. By the early 1880s the management had realised that the library was inadequate and they reduced the hours of opening from daily to four hours a week. The reduction of opening hours and declining stock in content and condition ensured the Institute’s demise. By 1902 the fortunes of the library had declined beyond redemption. The stock consisted of 850 books, mostly the tattered remnants of the Mechanics’ Institute library. The membership had declined to between 30 and 36 and the income was £15 in 1902, while the expenditure was £36.17.½d. Such an uneconomic proposition could not exist for long and the committee had to abandon the library and reading room.

An early attempt to established a public subscription library fell foul of the ‘Melton malaise’ — that of apathy. In February 1835 the Melton Mowbray Public Subscription Newsroom as opened. Six months later it had closed through lack of support. A mock obituary was written for it and appeared in the Leicester Journal:

MELTON MOWBRAY: DEATH
Lately at Melton Mowbray, the Public Subscription Newsroom, aged six months, for want of better support.12

The books belonging to this library were sold at a public sale in January 1836.
A second attempt to establish a subscription library was more successful and grew out of the opposition to the establishment of the Mechanics’ Institute. The Literary Institution was founded in 1845 by Mr William Latham and Mr Woodcock, both solicitors in the town and leaders of the opposition party to the Mechanics’ Institute. The original aim of the Literary Institution was to provide a library for all classes of people in Melton, not just the artisans as the Mechanics’ Institute was aiming to do. The Institution would, however, be managed by the more influential and stable members of Melton society. It was an educational society with a newsroom and circulating library. However, Mr Woodcock and Mr Latham had difficulty in gaining financial support for the library, which was housed in a room in Leicester Street:

The rent of the room and the expense of the librarian brought the institution to the verge of bankruptcy.¹³

Seeking cheaper accommodation, Mr Latham, who was also clerk to the trustees of the Hudson and Storer charities, found an unused room in the Bede House, which he suggested to the trustees could be used for the library. The Bede House was built in 1638 as an almshouse founded by Robert Hudson, a wealthy merchant. He was born in Melton in 1564 and moved to London, where he made his fortune. The inmates of the Bede House each had their own room and on the first floor of the building provision was made for a central room which acted as a common room and prayer room. By 1846 this room had ‘become a receptacle for lumber’. The old common room was the room that Latham and Woodcock used for the Literary Institution, at an annual rent of £1.4.0. This was paid to the inmates as a disturbance allowance, as people using the library would have to go through the building to gain access.

Before Mr Latham could move the Literary Institution from Leicester Street to the Bede House some essential decorating had to be undertaken:

The room was very much out of repair and to raise funds for papering and painting it was agreed that it should be opened as a museum. The admission fee to the museum was set at 6d per visit and the income helped to offset the maintenance costs of the library and museum. The objects for the museum were donated by Mr Woodcock and other influential people of the town and by August 1847 the Museum and Literary Institution were opened with:

... a librarian in attendance for an hour three days a week to exchange books.

With very little rent to pay the Institution recovered financially and the
management was able to spend money on books. Between 1847 and 1855 'a considerable addition was made to the stock of books.’ In 1855 the Institution joined the ill-fated amalgamation with the Corn Exhcange library and the Mechanics’ Institute library and when the Institution withdrew from the amalgamation in 1858 it was decided to abandon the Literary Institution and to re-form the society into a proprietary library, called the Melton Museum Permanent Library.

Proprietary libraries were much more exclusive organizations than general subscription libraries. The library management usually consisted of a few friends who become shareholders of the library, the books belonging to the members and the library being for the benefit of shareholders only. The shareholders of the newly formed Melton Museum Permanent library each paid shares of 10/- as well as 1/6d a year towards the rental of the room. Members of the Melton Athenaeum, which was recorded as being housed in the Market Place, were invited to become members of the Permanent Library and the two organizations merged, bringing the collection up to 850 titles and the shareholders to 22.

Initially the library was well used, with the highest issues of books in 1877, 212 volumes; but by 1891 the usage had declined to the issue of one volume in that year. The limited nature of the membership had inevitable consequences for the library. By the 1880s the shareholders were either getting too old to be interested in the library or they were already dead. Although the shares of deceased shareholders could pass to their families or executors, very few people took up membership in this way. The last issues from the library took place in 1907, with twelve volumes being read in that year.

The library gathered dust in the Bede House and, although the museum attracted several important donations, especially the Bickly coin collection in 1936, the lack of finance to develop the museum ensured its eventual decline. In November 1946 the trustees of the Bede House had to close the museum room as they could not find anyone suitable to look after it and it was never re-opened. The Permanent Library had been an exclusive library for the middle class ‘establishment’ of Melton. It had provided literature for the gentlemen and ladies of the town who could not aspire to owning their own private libraries. From its establishment in 1858 to the 1880s it was fairly well used and only started to decline with the death of the shareholders. The competition of cheap publishing in the 1870s, coupled with the growth of commercial circulating libraries in the town must also have contributed towards its decline.
STATIONERY.

Account Books,
Letter Books,
Memorandum Books
Order Books.
Receipt Books,
Penholders,
Pencils,
Rulers,
Inkstands.
Blotting Paper,
Blotting Books,
Blotting Pads,
Quill Pens.

General,
Commercial,
Legal,
Fancy.

NOTE PAPERS—all kinds.
ENVELOPES—all sizes & shapes.
FOOLSCAP—plain or ruled
(ANY PATTERN).

Warner's Stationery Stores,
THE LIBRARY, MELTON MOWBRAY.

BOOKS,

"And Books, we know, are a substantial world, both pure and good."

BOOKS OF ALL KINDS may be had at

WARNER'S LIBRARY,
AT
FULL DISCOUNT PRICES.

Books to inform. Books to amuse
Books to give one’s Friends.
Illustrated Books in Dainty Bindings.
Cheap Editions by Standard Authors.
Books for to-day. Books for all time.

Advertisement for Warner’s Library, from
The Melton Mowbray Year Book, 1900
During the eighteenth century the range of people able to read was increasing, together with the quantity and range of reading material. By the 1740s periodical literature and the novel had developed as popular reading matter. The commercial response to this new class of reader was for booksellers to hire books, either for an annual subscription or for a fee per loan. In the provinces circulating libraries proliferated, especially in spa and seaside towns, where libraries catered for the leisure reading of holiday makers. In Melton, which during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries had a great influx of winter visitors for the hunting season, circulating libraries were soon established to cater for the visitors. Documentary evidence on the circulating libraries in Melton is very sparse and only a brief outline of the firms concerned has been found.

The first known reference to a circulating library in Melton is in the *Leicester Journal* for 1825, where an advertisement carries a reference to John Day’s library at Cornhill (now the top of High Street/Nottingham Street). John Day was very much involved in promoting social and cultural events in Melton. He, together with William Latham, promoted an art gallery in the National School in Melton. Day was a printer, binder, stationer and bookseller and in 1845 he undertook the printing of the short lived *Melton Recorder*. His firm is recorded as being a bookseller, but not a library, in 1855 but there is no further mention of the firm after that.

John Warner is first noted as having a bookseller, printing and stationery business at 2, South Parade in 1887. It is quite possible that he also had his Circulating Library at this time, as in 1904 he advertised his library as being ‘long established’. The Warner family were staunch Methodists and they had a strict policy of only buying good literature for the circulating library. In the heyday of the hunting season Warner’s supplied the hunting fraternity with magazines, newspapers and books. The library continued to supply cheap and wholesome reading but was sold in 1953 to Boots the Chemists, who later closed it down.

Education of the clergy, especially in remote parishes, had been a topic of concern since the early eighteenth century. A successful attempt to establish libraries for the clergy was initiated by Dr Thomas Bray, who, personally and in association with the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge, had by 1730 funded fifty-six lending libraries for the clergy. The education of the clergy was also a concern of the local Melton clergy and in 1838 the vicars of several parishes met to form the Melton Clerical Society. The members of the Society realised that to be effective they needed a good theological library and the Society appointed
three of their members to be trustees of the library and to purchase books to be housed in the vestry of St Mary’s Church in Melton. By December 1839 the Society had managed to acquire a large enough library to appoint the Vicar of Melton as librarian and to set up a ledger issue system. By the mid 1840s the Society opened membership of the library to county gentlemen; among the subscribers for 1840 are found Mr M E Hartopp of Harby and R Hartopp of Little Dalby Hall.

The library was rapidly growing and the accommodation in the vestry was becoming unsuitable and damp. The library was moved in 1856 to the Literary Institution’s room in the Bede House, where it stayed until 1887. The members of the Clerical Society were also able to have access to the Permanent Library in the Bede House and paid the inmates a pound a year rent for the use of the room. In 1887 the library again outgrew its permises and was moved to Warner’s Circulating Library premises. In 1891 the Colles Hall was opened in memory of the late Dr Colles, Vicar of Melton. The Hall contained public meeting rooms and accommodation for the Clerical Society library, housed in new bookcases purchased by the Society. Interest in the Society and its library waned and the last extant minute book of the Society ends in April 1906. The Society folded sometime during the First World War and after the war its place was taken by the Society for Sacred Study. How much the general public would have benefited from the theological collection is not certain. However, some county gentlemen did use the collection, especially during the earlier years, when there was no alternative library provision.

The different kinds of libraries available to the public in Melton Mowbray during the nineteenth century are not unusual. Newark, for example, had twenty five ‘public’ libraries and news rooms during the period from 1698 to 1960. The main movement behind the nineteenth century libraries in Melton ws, as might have been expected in a small country market town, provision of literature for the established middle class. The libraries in Melton were dominated by the educated middle classes and they dictated how these libraries should be organized. Without the driving force of the establishment in Melton none of the libraries listed in this article would have been started and they certainly would not have survived as they did without middle class patronage and support.
References:

2. *Ibid*, p 62
5. *Melton Recorder*, 7 April 1845
6. *Leicester Chronicle*, 17 May 1845
7. Post Office, *Directory of Leicestershire*, c 1848
10 Evidence to Carnegie upon application for a grant to build the public library; Scottish Record Office, Carnegie Collection MSS, 3/224 MM.1903
12. *Leicester Journal*, 21 August 1835
13. Trustees of the Hudson and Storer Charities, ‘A short history of the library and museum’, MS, 1884; the source also of the four quotations and most of the information in the four following paragraphs
15. T Kelly, *Early Public Libraries*, p 118
16. *Leicester Journal*, 4 November 1825
17. J Brownlow, *op cit*, p 75
19. *Melton Times*, 19 August 1904
20. T Kelly, *op cit*, p 110
21. Minutes of Melton Clerical Society, 13 November 1838
THE STRANGE AND PAINFUL STORY OF SAMUEL CHAMBERS
J A G Knight

The first ten years, 1830 to 1840, of the reborn Leicestershire coalfield passed by with little unrest, if any, between miner and mine-owner. The 1840s, however, saw a significant change in the state of industrial relations in the industry. The miners began to organize formally for more effective representation of their interests. In 1842 widespread unrest in the coalfield was caused by the coal-owners intent on reducing the miners’ wages whilst increasing the number of hundred weights to the ton of coal produced. This resulted in the Borough and County magistrates ordering the Leicestershire Troop of the Yeoman Cavalry into the Whitwick and Peggs Green area. Further unrest in the coalfield broke out in 1844, partly due to the unresolved factors of the 1842 strike but also due to the influence of the National Miners Association of Great Britain, the N M A, whose agents were at work within the coalfield.

The spectre of men organizing themselves into a trade union was too much for the local coal-owners. No one typified their reaction more than Benjamin Walker a colliery-owner at Lount, who reduced the wages of all his employees who dared to join the N M A. This action caused one miner, Samuel Chambers, to give notice. The subsequent vindictiveness of his employer caused him to suffer what was later called ‘a strange and painful story’.

Samuel Chambers was a native of Awsworth in Nottinghamshire. Before taking up employment in 1843 at Benjamin Walker’s Smoile colliery in Worthington parish in Leicestershire, he had held only two positions. He had worked at Mr Wakefield’s colliery at Awsworth for fourteen years and at Barber and Walker’s colliery at Watnall for the remainder of his working life. He was a married man with five children, well liked in his community and involved with church life, including taking a hand in the Sunday School.
Whilst he was employed at Barber and Walker's colliery, Mark Richards, a kinsman of Benjamin Walker, asked Samuel if he would be interested in taking up the position of engineman at Smoile colliery at a salary of one guinea a week, house rent and coal found. All went well in this new position until Samuel gave, as required, three months notice to leave on the 25th of March 1844. This was due to Walker reducing his wages to eighteen shillings, as a consequence of his joining the N M A. Walker immediately retaliated and gave Samuel one month’s notice to leave. At the end of this month Walker refused to pay Samuel all he owed him and Samuel, not wishing to leave whilst out of pocket, remained at Lount in order to try to get what was due to him. On the 7th of May he moved his wife and family with all their possessions from Lount, returning her to Awsworth. He himself went back to Lount, still hoping that Walker would pay him the money due. By the 22nd, with eleven shillings still owing, Samuel decided to cut his losses and returned to his wife and family. He readily regained his old position in the employ of Barber and Walker.

Twelve days later Samuel was arrested in his new home at Awsworth, brought before the magistrates at Ashby-de-la-Zouch and committed for trial. At the Leicestershire Midsummer Quarter Sessions he was brought to trial ‘for maliciously causing water to be conveyed into a mine with intent to delay the working thereof’. The prosecutor was Benjamin Walker and other coal-owners of Leicestershire. Mr Macaulay, who conducted the prosecution, said that Chambers was the superintendent of the engine used for clearing the water out of the mine. He had neglected his duty so as to allow the water to accumulate in the air ways of the pit and thus prevented it from being worked, besides running the risk of causing an explosion. Evidence to prove this statement was given by Benjamin Walker, his brother and two colliers. Samuel, not defended by counsel, made a brief statement in defence. The jury found him guilty and sentenced him to seven years transportation. Before passing sentence the Deputy Chairman observed that Samuel had been guilty of a most serious offence, since he had endangered the lives of fellow workmen by his wilful neglect and that the court was marking its sense of his crime by passing the sentence of transportation.

In spite of a petition to save Samuel from transportation being raised by the villagers of Awsworth and a separate testimonial being given by the vicar of Awsworth, in addition to the opinion of the Solicitor General that the conviction was not legal in any way, Samuel was transported to Van Diemen's Land. The general feeling, as reported in the Leicester newspapers, was that Samuel had got what he deserved.
Samuel, with six other convicts from the Leicester Midsummer Sessions, was transported in the convict ship *William Jardine*, setting sail on the 10th of August 1844. After a three month voyage the ship arrived at Van Diemen’s Land on the 20th of November. In that year thirteen ships had taken 3,279 convicts there, 59 of these being sentenced at the County or Borough Assizes at Leicester. The convict population of Van Diemen’s Land at the time was approximately thirty thousand, only 4,816 being female.

The five years up to 1844 had been very troublesome for Sir J Easterley Wilmot, the Governor and Comptroller General of Van Diemen’s Land, and things had risen to something of a climax towards the end of 1844, the time of Samuel’s arrival. Two major problems faced Wilmot, the near state of mutiny on Norfolk Island and the overabundance of labour in the colony. Wilmot had large bodies of pass-holders, men who were in a second stage of probation. Due to a depression in the agricultural trade they were not hired and therefore had no work. Wilmot’s solution to this problem was to increase the length of time spent in the first stage of probation for those transported for seven or ten years.

The system for all convicts on Van Diemen’s Land was for them to work initially in a convict work gang until they had proven themselves trustworthy enough to be awarded a pass, which allowed them to work without the constant supervision of the Colony’s prison warders. Samuel had arrived when the length of time one could expect to be in a work gang was being extended for prisoners with a seven or ten year sentence, which was the category he fell into. The Comptroller General’s returns for all male convicts record their progress from work gang to pass-holder. The returns of June 1844 shews that of the convicts who had arrived on the *William Jardine* eighteen months previously, three had died on the voyage, 85 were still in work gangs, 166 had graduated to pass-holders, two had been sentenced to a second period of transportation, ten had died since arriving in the Colony, none had absconded and one had been granted a free pardon. The average time spent in a work gang for those who had graduated to pass-holders by June 1846 was fourteen months. The Comptroller’s records also shew that it was extremely difficult for a convict to become a pass-holder without committing an offence. 103 of the 267 convicts from *William Jardine* committed 212 offences, 203 of a disciplinary nature and nine moral offences. In the year 1845 two in every three convicts were brought before the magistrates and 510 men received an average of forty lashes each.
Although the *Leicester Chronicle* reported grave doubts over Samuel’s conviction on July 13th 1844, little concern was voiced publicly for his fate until it picked up the story again in January 1845, when it published a front page lead story concerning the conviction. Several facts had come to light concerning the manner of the conviction and doubt was placed upon certain evidence given at the trial by Benjamin Walker, in particular the statement that it was Walker who had first given notice to Chambers. In addition investigation as to why Samuel went undefended at the trial had revealed that at a meeting between Samuel’s wife Mary and Benjamin Walker, the Sunday before the trial, Walker had told her that to employ counsel for Samuel would be throwing money away and that if it were left to him no harm would become him. Several new witnesses had come forward with evidence concerning the behaviour and attitude of the Walker family with respect to Samuel’s intention to leave Walker’s employ. A petition in favour of Samuel had been signed by 134 of the men and women of Lount and its vicinity, including those whose lives were said to have been put at risk by his actions. Statements had been made by several of the miners who had gone down the pit at the time of the offence that the water had risen on many occasions with no danger to any miner.

A further report appeared in the *Chronicle* on February 8th, when the editor was at pains to explain the paper’s original support of the conviction. It was now clear that the trial had been an *ex parte* affair at which the prosecutor and witnesses said what they had pleased with no one present to contradict them. The prisoner had advanced at his trial what had now come to light, that he had no coal slack to work the engine on the morning of the offence. The *Chronicle* also took the opportunity of defending itself from another newspaper, *Payne’s Advertiser*, which had used the January story from the *Chronicle* and intimated that the tone of the original report of the *Chronicle* in July had found its way to the Secretary of State and had fully satisfied him as to Chambers’ guilt.

Benjamin Walker had now been put into a compromising position he had to respond to. He did this by getting his solicitor, William Dewes of Ashby, to write a letter to the *Chronicle*. Dewes set out again the evidence as to Samuel’s guilt, asserting that recent reports had contained gross misstatements as to the role of Benjamin Walker. A reply a week later from an anonymous writer, almost certainly W H Reeve, refuted all the major items of evidence set out by Dewes. Walker’s response was again a letter from Dewes to the *Chronicle*, denying several of the accusations made against him.
Attempts to right the wrongful conviction of Samuel Chambers were also taking place out of the public view. On the 4th of March, W H Reeve had written to the Chairman of the Midsummer Sessions, Mr Charles Packe, asking if he could intercede to get the conviction reversed. Packe replied that any attempt to reverse or mitigate the sentence would fall on stony ground, that the Secretary of State was entirely satisfied that the verdict was correct and the sentence just and that he would not advise her Majesty to exercise mercy upon a mere technical error in law. Only the conviction of the witnesses for perjury would be grounds for quashing Chambers’ conviction. Reeve, who had been involved with the preliminaries of the prosecution, was deeply concerned that an innocent person had been convicted and left no stone unturned. He wrote to Kenneth Macaulay, the prosecuting counsel, for his help in shewing that the conviction was illegal. In these letters he set out much new evidence as to Samuel’s innocence.

The *Chronicle* continued to use its best endeavours on behalf of Samuel and on the 3rd of May it again took up his cause, commenting on the odium which the Ashby Bench, which had committed him to trial, had recently incurred. This had been so notorious that it had reached the attention of Parliament. A week later the *Chronicle* presented new evidence in the form of a testimonial from William Cutler, who had been a chief prosecution witness at the trial. Cutler now declared that he had ascertained the level of the water in the mine before Samuel let him down and that he and his brother never saw any danger nor did they believe there was any. He would freely go down the pit in the same circumstances that had occurred that morning and it was common for the water to rise in the pit when there was no slack for the engine. The *Chronicle* was using this new evidence and much more to solicit further support for the petition, which had already been signed by almost every person in Lount and Awsworth and was ready to be forwarded to the Home Secretary.

The petition was transmitted to London by Wynn Ellis M P. Official acknowledgement of its receipt by the Home Office was recorded in the Register of Petitions on the first of July 1845. Eventually it was sent by the Home Secretary to Lord Chief Justice Tindal for report. He concluded his report in early November. On the 13th of that month the Secretary of State, having undertaken further enquiry, from which it appeared that Chambers’ conviction was bad, recommended a Free Pardon, together with a free passage home. This was prepared and immediately despatched to Van Diemen’s Land and a letter sent to notify Wynn Ellis.

The 22nd of November issue of the *Chronicle* had great pleasure in
informing its readers of the Home Secretary's decision. It reported on how
the news had been broken to Mary Chambers, Samuel's wife, and thanked
Charles Packe and Wynn Ellis for the trouble they had taken in the case.
That Samuel returned to England is known; for he is to be found in
Awsworth with his wife on the 1851 Census. Perhaps he had many stories
to tell of his voyage to Van Diemen's Land. Where he eventually went to
or where he died is not yet known, only that neither he nor his wife are
recorded on the 1861 Census for Awsworth. The Comptroller's report of
June 1846 shews that knowledge of Samuel's Free Pardon had reached
the Colony by this date but when and how Samuel returned to England
has not been determined; only that his painful story had come to an end.

Sources:

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March 1, May 3, 17, June 14, November 22, 1845
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LANDOWNERSHIP IN NINETEENTH CENTURY WANLIP AND SILEBY

Jane Allsopp

The village of Wanlip, situated four miles north of Leicester in the lower Soar valley, is today a tiny, compact, attractive settlement. Sileby, six miles north of Wanlip, appears by contrast to be a large, heavily industrialised, sprawling community. Indeed it has been described as ‘one of the unloveliest villages one could find anywhere; a Midland industrial village, red-brick, dreary.’¹ The contrasting natures of these two villages can be more fully understood through their past patterns of landownership and this article examines the influence of landownership on Wanlip, an ‘estate village’, and Sileby, a ‘freeholder village’, between 1830 and 1860.

The 1838 Tithe Commutation Award for Wanlip shews that Sir George Palmer Bart owned 911 acres of the total 952 acres of the parish. His brother, the Rev Charles Palmer, owned 25 acres of glebe and the remaining 15 acres consisted of public roads. In Sileby tithe apportionment had occurred at the time of enclosure and the Enclosure Award of 1760 shews that the 2,156 acres of parish lands were divided among sixty landowners. The largest single landowner, William Pochin, owned 414 acres and the smallest just one rood. The contrast is confirmed by comments from contemporaries. White’s Directory of 1846 notes that the parish of Wanlip was ‘nearly all the property of Sir George Palmer’ and Wilson’s Gazetteer of 1870 comments of Sileby that ‘property is much sub-divided.’²

The division of landownership had profound effects on village life, as can be seen from the 1851 Census Returns. Wanlip’s social structure was characterized by rigid divisions. At the peak of the social hierarchy stood the Palmer family, who had been landlords of the parish since the fifteenth century. Wanlip was only part of the family estate, which included property in Birstall, Thurcaston and London. Sir George Palmer resided in the village at Wanlip Hall, described in White’s Directory as ‘a neat mansion of brick, stuccoed, built in 1756 by Henry Palmer, Esq., and having a small but well wooded park.’ The Rev Charles Palmer resided at Wanlip rectory.
Palmers would undoubtedly have held great influence in community affairs, reflecting D R Mills's comment on such landowners; 'the resident squire stood on a pinnacle above all other forms of social being . . . provided he owned most of the land in the Lordship, he was able to shape its destiny.' A second group can be identified as Sir George Palmer's three tenant farmers. These men, who occupied farms of 309, 210 and 163 acres respectively, would have enjoyed a relatively high social standing within the community.

Those engaged in trades and crafts were very few, one carpenter, one dress-maker and a fruit-seller. This can be attributed partly to lack of demand from a village which contained only 137 inhabitants, but more importantly probably reflects some form of control by the village landlord. The trading class, typically composed of small independent businessmen, by its very nature was a threat to the estate system. A tradesman might take on extra labour which during slack times would fall onto the parish poor rates levied on property-owners.

The largest area of employment in Wanlip was that of estate workers and servants, who together formed 82 per cent of those with occupations listed in the parish, 31 servants, 14 agricultural labourers, two gardeners, two grooms and a gamekeeper. Additional labourers would most probably have commuted daily from surrounding villages. The control of Wanlip by one landowner meant a population geared to the agricultural estate. The small village avoided escalating poor rates and consisted essentially of tenant farmers and estate servants.

Sileby, with 1,660 inhabitants, had a greatly contrasting social structure. The Census Returns record few landed proprietors, indicating that the village was not essentially agricultural. A large number of the inhabitants were engaged in many different trades and crafts, including carpenters, wheelwrights, shoemakers, blacksmiths and innkeepers. The real power and strength of the village would have been in the hands of this property-owning group. The comparative social and economic freedom of Sileby was an ideal climate for fostering new ventures and in the Census there is evidence of twelve dual occupations, ranging from farmer and innkeeper to hosier and coal-merchant.

Sixty per cent of Sileby's workforce was employed in the hosiery industry. Framework knitting had developed in the more pastoral areas of the East Midlands from the late seventeenth century onwards and was attracted to freehold villages such as Sileby because of the availability of labour and
small businessmen willing to invest in the industry. By 1851 hosiery manufacture in Sileby was organized along the lines of a domestic industry and knitting was carried out in workers’ homes or small attached workshops. Five ‘bag-hosiers’ or middlemen contracted work to knitters from the putting-out centres of Loughborough and Leicester. Felkin’s report of 1844 records give hundred frames active in the village. As each frame generally supported three people, the dependence of the village on the industry can be appreciated.

The Census indicates that child employment in the industry was common, with children of eight or nine years employed as framework knitters, winders (winding wool) and seamers (seaming stockings). Work was also carried on until late in life; one framework knitter in the Census was aged seventy-three. Indeed the domestic nature of the industry enabled it to absorb extra labour and provide employment for the extended family. 95 out of a total of 376 Sileby households had resident relatives. David Levine notes that stockingers had much stronger ties with kin than people in other types of employment, as knitters were more likely to share employment with related families. In Sileby four Preston households, living adjacentally along the Banks, were all engaged in framework knitting. Furthermore forty two households had resident lodgers, engaged in a variety of occupations, often outside the industry, including labourers, dress-makers and a Methodist minister. Levine sees the preference of knitters for living in large domestic units as ‘the result of a conscious effort to protect themselves from their unpredictable economic circumstances.’ Many sources indicate that conditions for framework knitters in the mid nineteenth century were poor and a Report issued in 1845 commented that the industry was in a state of ‘utter stagnation’.

In 1851 Sileby was a large, freehold manufacturing village, characterised by small, independent business and tradesmen. A feature of the village was the large numbers engaged as knitters in the hosiery industry. Outside this industry, the Census records a group of unskilled workers, such as general labourers, charwomen and errand boys. It is noteworthy that there was no comparable group in Wanlip.

For Wanlip the monopoly of landownership meant the operation of an agriculturally based estate system which was to remain until well into this century. Even today the village retains its small stable population. Sileby’s diversity of ownership created a favourable climate for the development of rural domestic industry. Hosiery manufacture provided an industrial base for the later development of the boot and shoe industry and brick and tile
works, making the present day Sileby a populous manufacturing village. We can see, therefore, how past landownership patterns are of importance in understanding our present day village structures. As W G Hoskins comments, 'one cannot understand the English landscape and enjoy it to the full . . . without going back into the history that lies behind it.'

References:

2. W White, Directory of Leicestershire and Rutland, 1846, p 364
3. Wilson, Gazetteer of England and Wales, Vol II, 1870
My grandfather, William Hugh Warburton, began his diary in the same hard-backed exercise book that had once contained his own father’s entries, recording the early years of married life. Those particular pages had been roughly cut from the book, leaving only tantalising fragments of great-grandfather’s writing. However, the diary of his son Hugh remains intact, giving us an inside glimpse of middle-class domestic and social life in 1899, in the city of Leicester.

Born in Leicester in 1873, my grandfather was the eldest son of Howgate Greaves Warburton and his wife Fanny (née Dove Harris). The family business was situated in Yeoman Street, later at Yeoman Buildings in Rutland Street and eventually at 15, Chancery Street. Warburton, Allen and Co were yarn marchants in Leicester for over eighty years. By 1899 Hugh was a partner in the firm, which was then also involved in India rubber for the bicycle trade as well as woollen and cotton yarns for hosiery. Hugh was a keen cyclist himself and a member of the SBC (Stoneygate Bicycle Club?) and would often use his bike to make business calls. Mary Rebecca Dickinson, ‘Pollie’, the daughter of a respected mayor of Lincoln, married Hugh in 1898. They made their first home at 4, Clarendon Park Road. Tragically Hugh died at the age of forty three years, a victim of the Spanish ‘flu epidemic of 1917.

The diary, written up each Sunday, is of some eight thousand words. In reducing it to about one third of the length I have kept Pollie and Hugh’s domestic life as the main theme, including the birth of their first child, the saga of their little servant girl and Hugh’s relationship with his more well-to-do friends, the Rawsons. Also kept are references to the bicycle club, the snooker club and new structural developments in the city. The fact that the abbreviated version is still so readable is due to the quality of the original material. Even the most inconsequential incidents seem amusing and the individuality of the participants is conveyed directly in the most economical language. It is for these reasons, as well as the subject matter, that I can recommend the diary to readers outside the family circle.
January 15th 1899
Starting now is prophetic of the way this diary writing is likely to be carried on. This book was to have been begun by me on the first day of this year. Extraordinary as it may seem to one who has never read the records of the amateur historian of his own family, I am quite certain that the perusal of the following pages will one day be very diverting to both my wife and myself — to say nothing of any children we may have.

We were married eight months ago (May 11/98). The interval has passed very uneventfully with the exception of the receipt of a certain advice-note. Goods due to arrive about the end of next month — according to Dr Pratt. October 19/98 saw the finish of my first year as a partner in the firm of Warburton, Allen and Co. It was a good year compared with the preceding one. My share of the profits amounted to £350 odd. After deducting my drawings for the year the firm was found to owe me £180. Considering that I had so little to start furnishing as to leave me practically nothing in hand, and that we have had a good deal to do in this way during the last eight months, our first year must be written down as a decidedly successful one. It has also been a peaceful and happy one. Thanks are due to Providence and Pollie.

January 22nd
Not much to relate for the week. Today has been fine but very windy, and has been spent like most of our Sundays since we were married. We spend the afternoons reading and go to Church in the evening. After supper, reading again, but Pollie soon gets drowsy just now and although it is not yet ten, has already gone to bed.

Business continues good. Have appointed a Scotch agent for Kirby Clips in consideration of a good order and have sold a fair number of Dunlops this week.

Our little servant is happy in the expectation of her having her sister in Leicester. The latter is to take a situation as nurse to Mrs Whitmore.

January 29th
A wet day after a fine frosty week. Not a sharp enough frost for skating quite, although Maud and Ernest took their skates and rode over to Croft to see if there was a chance. I had ridden to Enderby and was accompanying Jess and Trott to Narborough with the donkey chair when they overtook us. Feared they would be disappointed of the skating, although it was a fine riding afternoon.

The new bridge over the canal is complete (some months) and it is now possible to ride straight through the Newark and so on to the Narborough Road without going down Castle Street. The M S and L Railway or rather
the Great Central is to be in full working order in this district by March. The foundations of what is to be one of the finest Y M C A Club Houses in the country are laid and the new and very fine Hotel which is being built further down the London Road begins to look near completion. The new Railway is responsible for great alteration and altogether Leicester is growing and improving very fast.

February 5th
Doctor Pratt has called during the week to see how Pollie is getting on. All is well. The event is expected now to happen between the 20th and the end of the month. The nurse has also been to have tea with Pollie and arrange about a few things to be got.
On Monday Winn gave the members of the Café Billiard Club a splendid supper, which was followed by a smoking concert.
One unfortunate occurrence took place during the week. One of my customers returned £30 of pedal blocks which will be hard to dispose of.
On Friday the SBC had a Supper and Lantern Show at the Clarendon. Nine years and one week before a similar show was given by the Club in the same room. This information was given by Arthur Goodcliffe, the founder of the Club, who came over specially from Norwich to add to the Photo Slides of the more recent runs, pictures of the Club’s earliest excursions. After leaving the Clarendon, I, Arthur Taylor and Will Ledgley adjourned to Holland’s house for Solo. At this game and Vingt-et-un I was lucky enough to win 16/-. 

February 8th (Wednesday) 12.50 p.m
Dr Pratt has just called over the banisters to tell me that I have a daughter. Pollie is reported all right but I cannot see her yet. The last few hours are the worst I have ever gone through. What about my poor Darling Wife!

February 12th
Doctors are cunning and kind. What a lot seems to have happened since last Sunday! Here is one little girl four days old and my dear Pollie well through this dangerous time without the last dread week of looking forward.
Nurse is a capital housekeeper as well as nurse, and our little servant is letting us see that she can cook and keep everything ship-shape. She seems in fact a regular treasure and I smiled when Mrs Rawson, whom I met in the Market Place yesterday, told me that we should now want a nursemaid, or at any rate an older servant. Not much my good woman! Besides, I should try in any case to do otherwise after the manner in which your kind suggestion was made! Mrs R had the sauce to recommend me to a
careful calculation of my probable expenses and income before marriage, and now we find we can live comfortably and make both ends overlap even, she is determined I shall see what she thinks of our little household, suggesting ridicule on our peaceful home because I married before she considered I could afford it. She gave me credit, she would say, for trying a little more to reflect the splendour of my Enderby friends. Which is the happier household? Does my little house with its few inhabitants contain more love and peace or less? Heaven overlook the boast, and keep love and peace alive here as the most proper companions of my two Darlings.

February 19th
My dear wife is rapidly getting strong. Today she is partly dressed and lying on top of the bed. Now the worry and danger are over she is looking so well, I am feeling better and everyone in the house is happy. Our little maid perhaps excepted, as her sister has had a return of anaemic symptoms to such an extent that she is obliged to give up service with Mrs Whitmore and go home.
This week our over inquisitive neighbours have received a severe shock. We have had lattice-work erected along the yard wall which will make it almost impossible for them to ascertain with accuracy what we are going to have for dinner.

February 26th
All four of us have been for a walk. Pollie for the first time for eighteen days. Nurse carried Baby and the proud Father helped the proud but rather weak Mother. It is a glorious day, calm and with bright warm sun.
I think I have sold my Rover to Harrison for £7.10.0 and have ordered a Clyde for £9 without tyres. Must try to get the Clipper Co to give me a pair of tyres.

March 5th
I have done a little business in the bicycle trade during the week. Sold Arthur Hunt a new Rover by which I am the gainer by £1.
Our little servant is not doing so well: she is always breaking things and seems to be getting dirty and slovenly. Pollie will do her best to bring her up to scratch again shortly, but it is only fair to add that Nurse is certainly not to blame for the unaccountable change in the girl. Nurse has all the time been more than satisfactory, having done much more for all than she could possibly have been expected to do.
Father came to see us this afternoon and discussed with us the price of Perambulators with the kind intimation that we are to select one for Baby’s use.
I forgot to mention that our new church of St James was begun on February 20th on the site of the one we now attend, which is simply a wooden affair.
I said last week that Clippers would give me a pair of tyres — they have done so. Thus my new machine will only cost me 30/-.
Have been suffering from sharp pains under my right shoulder during the week. Think it is a chill affecting the liver. Our good Nurse has about put me right with a dose of medicine and one or two vigorous rubbings with Homocca.

March 12th
Nurse left us on Wednesday with very evident unwillingness. Pollie has managed grandly so far; although the first night we had without her will linger in my wretched memory as a terrible experience.
Will Fox lent me his aluminium Humber on Saturday and I, Hunt and Chamberlain ran over to Narborough in the afternoon. We played snooker and I won 4/- . Hunt came back to tea with us. This morning I rode to Kibworth on this machine. My own is promised for tomorrow or Tuesday. Rubber prices went up this week and we booked 33000 lots at old rates on advice of rise to take place.

March 19th
The Pram and the machine came on Friday and both are giving their respective owners the greatest satisfaction so far. For my part I must confess to being very surprised at the perfect way the Clyde is running. I expected to find a great difference in favour of the Rovers I have ridden for three years.
Browning, Hunt and I rode to Narborough on Saturday. Of course, someone must start bustling on the way and I was very pleased to find it was an easy matter to run away from both.
Browning is trying 8" cranks with 88 gear and mighty ungainly he looks. The long crank bicycle is a fallacy that is certain to be found out very soon. Even if there were any advantage the ungainly appearance of the rider would counterbalance it.

March 26th
At last W A and Co have started in earnest removing to Yeoman Buildings, Rutland Street, and before Easter is well over we hope to be settled there.
Yesterday was quarter-day and I took care that Mr Skinny Dixon got his cheque in the morning. If it had not arrived he would probably have come sniffing round Yeoman Street to see if the brokers were in.
Pollie is anxious just now about a tailor-made dress which she went to have tried on the other day. There is a great deal of doubt whether it will be done in time for Easter, and as she is going to Lincoln then, she is anxious to take it with her.

April 2nd Easter Day
On Thursday, when Pollie and Baby were to have gone to Lincoln, a letter arrived, just in time to stop their starting, to say that Annie was laid up at Prospect House expecting a miscarriage, and that therefore the visit must be postponed. This letter gave rise to a diversity of more or less evil imaginings at this end. The disappointment came so late as to leave no time to make other arrangements for the holiday.
Friday last, being Good Friday, the day fixed upon for the opening run of the S B C was of course miserably wet; disappointments never come separately. I went down to Clyde Co’s depot to see if I could discover what the fellows meant to do, but being so wretched a morning I had not troubled to get up very early and when I got into the town I found half a dozen of the members had gone on to Ashby de la Zouche by train. There was not another train till night so I borrowed Fox’s own new machine and rode on in the slush and rain. Took me 1 ¾ hours of terrible grind, and of course I was wet to the skin on arrival. Landlord lent me a change and I was not sorry I went. We had good fun and snooker and pool, a jolly good dinner and a fair amount of cards. We all came back by train and four of us finished the evening at Hollingsworth’s.
Yesterday afternoon, five S B C fellows, of which Pollie kindly allowed me once more to be one, journeyed to Narborough and played snooker at George’s. Holland gave us a sight of his mean nature by refusing for a long time to pay for his share of tea, which amounted to 6d, (we only had bread and butter in the billiard room) because he had not ordered it; this is in spite of the fact that he partook of a cup!
Perhaps I ought to record the important fact that Pollie blossomed out today in the new tailor-made dress, which becomes her exceedingly.

April 16th
After our little servant returned from her few days holiday Pollie received an insulting letter from her ignorant and foolish mother, which has resulted in the girl getting a month’s notice to leave. The letter could only have been written after the said mother had been well stuffed with the most ridiculous lies in respect of her dear daughter’s work in this enormous household.

April 23rd
Spent two days in Lincoln. Annie Durance who has been in danger of a
miscarriage is now all right or nearly so. Fear she is getting very fond of one of her medicines.
Seriously considered giving Dixon notice to leave. He is the meanest B of a landlord on earth. He would not come and mend a pipe for us though he professes to be a plumber, simply because he thought we should refuse to pay for it. As a matter of fact I believe it really is his work — as it is outside (W C).

April 30th
After all we have secured the services of the little servant girl who is leaving Prospect House, but we shall have to pay her £10.

May 7th
Our little servant has gone home for good.
There is another piece of news to add, a rather ludicrous affair. Mrs Bert Durance was not after all in any danger of a miscarriage. It appears she was not carrying and there will be no harvest after all. She was supposed to be half way there before a suspicion of the truth came. The doctor, after examination, gave a verdict of corpus adiposum. I don’t know what he prescribed for a cure, but I should suggest that she dropped stout.

June 4th
I have come back to my empty house to write a little in my neglected diary. There is no ink to be found.
My two Darlings have been in Lincoln since two weeks last Friday. I have been thinking of them most of today, and longing for Tuesday, when they are coming home. At first time went quickly, because it was Whit week and I went down into Devonshire with Will Ledgley and Will Hunt to visit Lomas. Elaborate arrangements had been made for riding down, but in the end most of the journey was done in the train on account of terrible weather.
My two friends came to stop the night at my house, so that we might all set off together at 4.30 in the morning. They were late in arriving and Arthur Hunt, who was not expected by the others, arrived first. To serve the others out for keeping supper waiting (Boiled Halibut and Oyster Sauce prepared by me and Arthur) a hoax was arranged and beautifully carried out. Arthur went upstairs when the others were heard outside and after he had heard me relate an exaggerated incident in respect of a shadow on the stairs, he made certain discreet shufflings upstairs. The others were easily got into a lovely state of excitement, which got to its highest limit when the three of us, armed with pokers and cycle lamps, found the supposed burglar had locked himself in my bedroom. We all laughed a little, and I a lot, when ‘Mike’ was called back from running across to the
Police Station and Arthur relieved the terrible tension by materialising. We had a grand evening and must have caused astonishment to the neighbours by our bursts of hilarity.

In the morning we got up as proposed but rain fell as we got breakfast and the weather looked so dangerous that we got back to bed, and eventually went by train as far as Gloucester, rode 34 miles against strong wind to Bristol, train to Taunton, stopped there the night, and finished by riding about 40 miles to Whimple instead of 26. This through repeated missing of the road. We thus also missed Bert who had come 16 miles to meet us. But we enjoyed our stay — especially the run down to Sidmouth on the Monday. We started back on Tuesday, but soon had the rain on us again which landed us at Bristol for the night — again stopped us after 17 miles riding next day and obliged us to dine at a wayside inn, trudge 7 miles to the nearest station and loaf about the said station about 2½ hours, playing cards before we could book to Gloucester. All our attempts to do more on the road failed and we had to keep booking again and make the best of it by playing Vingt-et-un on the train. I had luck at cards all the trip, winning in both train journeys and the little flutter in the bedrooms, which invariably preceded turning in for the night. But the trip costs me quite enough, the purser’s bill (Will Ledgley was purser and had to be helped with cash before he was through with the job) coming to nearly £8, and all of us having lots of separate incidentals and fares separately paid.

The next Saturday I rode to Lincoln, stopping with my dear wife till Tuesday. I enjoyed this little outing, notwithstanding that Monday and Tuesday were spent seeing customers. The weather was grand, and I found both Pollie and Topsy very evidently better for the change. Pollie was on exceptionally good form and gay and beautiful. I loved her all the time and more than ever. Topsy had developed a shrieking kind of laugh and was most entertaining. My return journey was grand. I called on Aunt Mary and had a good tea with that very kind lady, which set me off on the remainder of the journey actually singing with glee.

Pollie is to bring back with her our new servant girl.

What a difference one short year has made in me. I could not bear to go back to the old life any longer, and have more impatience than I could have believed my usually self satisfied nature capable of, to see my two Darlings again and live at home.
REPORTS
J A Legget, Steph Mastoris

LEICESTERSHIRE LOCAL HISTORY COUNCIL ONE DAY CONFERENCES AT MELTON MOWBRAY AND HINCKLEY

To start the Council’s new programme of two one-day conferences of general local history annually the first was held on October 10th 1987 in Melton Mowbray Public Library. The event was an opportunity to hear about recent local research, to learn more about local resources for historians and to discover what history groups in the vicinity of Melton Mowbray have been working on.

Judith Flint described the local history holdings of Melton Library and displayed some most interesting material. David Marcombe has led a dedicated band of researchers delving into the history of Burton Lazars and the religious order which ran it and its sister institutions. Bob Payne described another approach to the study of local history. His research group has investigated one street in Melton and built up a picture of how it has changed, with businesses, owners and residents each the focus of study.

In the afternoon representatives from the local groups, including Frisby-on-the-Wreake, Somerby and Rearsby, spoke briefly about their activities. They had also provided small displays which we had a chance to study in the tea and coffee breaks during the day. Our Chairman summed up the events of the day and it was agreed that the formula has been successful in bringing together under the Council’s aegis some of those who had previously been working in isolation. The chance to share experiences and exchange ideas was especially welcomed.

Thirty two people attended the second conference, which was held in Hinckley Library on April 23rd 1988 and had a framework knitting emphasis. The morning opened with an introduction to the local history sources in
Hinckley Library. Philip Lindley shewed us the range of material available for consultation. This includes standard works, items of specific local interest, such as parish magazines and out of print local histories, and the fictional works of Charlotte M Brame. Local author and history teacher Hugh Beavin then gave us an in depth and critical look at social conditions in Hinckley in the 1840s, the worst of times for framework knitters. Drawing on official reports and other local sources the origin of the phrase ‘as poor as a stockinger’ was vividly portrayed. To shake us out of this gloomy period of Hinckley’s history Robert Bracegirdle threw out a challenge. 1989 will celebrate four hundred years since the official (at least by British reckoning) invention of the knitting frame and Leicestershire will lead the festivities. In his role as Curator of Science and Industry with the county museums service Bob Bracegirdle is coordinating a major exhibition on the history of Leicestershire’s most significant industry and hopes this will be just one of many community events. As framework knitting has touched on so many aspects of history, such as economics, social conditions, history of dress, technological developments, industrial architecture and trade union history it is hoped that all involved in local history will share their knowledge for mutual help both with the big exhibition and also with other local commemorative ventures, whether publications, displays or open days.

On the afternoon several groups affiliated to the Council reported on their activities and problems. These included Hinckley, Earl Shilton, Kimcote and Walton, Leicestershire Family History Society and, from across the county boundary, Wolvey. There is clearly a hive of activity in this corner of the county, a very healthy sign and quite a coup for the Council to have members outside its normal patch.

The final session of the day was held in the Framework Knitters Cottages by Atkins of Hinckley Limited. This firm has already demonstrated its commitment to the history of hosiery by preserving this seventeenth century example of domestic scale industry. Mr Ernest Owen, managing director, welcomed our delegates and Mr William Partridge gave us the background story and shared his enthusiasm for earlier products. He had kindly displayed the highlights of his extensive collection of stockings, giving us a chance to examine closely some of the changing styles and production methods of the industry. The whole story of the day knitted together beautifully and we were most grateful to Atkins of Hinckley and to Philip Lindley of Leicestershire Library Service for hosting our meeting, which was definitely a success.
1987 LOCAL HISTORY CONFERENCE FOR THE HARBOROUGH AREA

The third annual one day conference on local history in south east Leicestershire and north Northamptonshire was held in Market Harborough on Saturday November 14th 1987. The event was jointly organized by the Harborough Museum and the Department of Adult Education of Leicester University. Approximately thirty people attended representing most of the local history groups in the area.

All of the morning and the first part of the afternoon were given over to reports of the work in progress by individuals and local history groups. The speakers included Geoff Brandwood (nineteenth century church architecture), J C Davies (eighteenth century slate headstones from Market Harborough), Steph Mastoris (the work of the Harborough Museum), Wendy Raybold (the work of the West Haddon Local History Society) and Richard and Heather Bird (social life in Husband Bosworth, 1870,1918). The rest of the afternoon was given over to a survey of enclosure in the area by Ron Greenall. Ron outlined the historiography of the enclosure movement in England and then examined the events in the Harborough area. He concluded by giving examples of the effects of enclosure on both the rural landscape and the village communities.

The 1988 conference will be held on Saturday November 12th and will follow the same format. Offers to contribute short summaries of work in progress by both individuals and groups are welcome. This year’s guest speaker is Dr John Beckett from the University of Nottingham, author of the new Regional History of the East Midlands from AD 1000. He will continue the theme of enclosure by discussing his recent researches on the classic open field village of Laxton in Nottinghamshire. Further details are available from Steph Mastoris, Keeper of the Harborough Museum, Council Offices, Adam and Eve Street, Market Harborough (telephone 32468).

S M
LEICESTERSHIRE AND RUTLAND LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETIES
Additions and corrections to lists published in Vol 3 Nos 4 and 5

c BILLESDON Local History Group
   Mrs Vlaeminke, Sherwood Rise, Leicester Road, Billesdon
   BLABY Heritage Group
   Mrs H Chapman, 25 Cork Lane, Glen Parva, Leicester

abc BRINGHURST, GREAT EASTON and DRAYTON Local History Society
   Mr K Heselton, 24 Barns Drive Close, Great Easton, Market Harborough

c DESFORD and District Local History Group
   Mrs Ginns, The Old White Cottage, Newbold Road, Desford, Leicester

c FLECKNEY, KILBY and SADDINGTON Local History Group
   Mrs K Evans, 73 Priest Meadow, Fleckney, Leicester

c KEGWORTH Village Association
   Mr J Fordham, 141 Forest Road, Loughborough

c KNOSSINGTON Local History Group
   Mrs V Wood, Church View, Knossington, Oakham

ac LEICESTER Literary and Philosophical Society
   Dr T Ford, Department of Geology, University of Leicester
   Transactions

c The HARBOROUGH Museum
   Mr S Mastoris, Council Offices, Adam and Eve Street, Market Harborough
   The Friends of HARBOROUGH Museum
   Mr S Mastoris, Council Offices, Adam and Even Street, Market Harborough

c OLD DALBY Local History Group
   Mr L Anderson, Home Farm, Old Dalby, Melton Mowbray

bc REARSBY Local History Society
   Mr W H Davies, 12 Brook House Close, Rearsby, Leicester

bc Shepshed Local History Group
   Mr S Kettle, 133 Leicester Road, Shepshed, Loughborough

c The WOLDS Historical Organisation
   Mr R Trubshaw, 2 Cross Hill Close, Wymeswold, Loughborough
The head of the English Local History Department in Leicester University has launched the new series of the Departmental Occasional Papers with a stimulating discussion surveying the progress of the study of the subject since the inception of the first series in 1952 with Professor Finberg’s *The Local Historian and his Theme* and speculating on the future framework within which it is likely to progress.

The main problem addressed is one many local historians may initially hardly notice, the way the community being studied is defined, not only at present but also in the past. The enthusiast for a particular village, for example, may rush into collecting and writing up information; but he will soon wonder how his patch fits into a wider pattern of communities of different kinds and how far it reflects questions of national history.

The academic historian has to be clearer about his definitions because the relationship between national and local history, how far local history should be pursued as ‘national history localized’ or just for itself, and the criteria for the definition of the different kinds of area for study through the ages actually concern the justification of local history as a separate academic subject.

In explaining ways of defining communities of different sizes, such as a group of villages, a market town with its area, the geographical pays with unifying characteristics or the region with its regional capital, the author often chooses Leicestershire’s examples to prove his point. Those of us who confine their historical loyalties to the county will be gratified that he finds signs that the county boundary, at least along Watling Street, has been a lasting cultural as well as economic divide. There is a centuries old precedent for the prejudice of the Chairman of the Appleby parish council objecting to proposed boundary changes, ‘We can’t stand the thought of being in Warwickshire.’

The printing and layout of the sixty pages of text and footnotes and the smart card cover shew the fourth series to be a worthy successor to the format orginally chosen by Professor Finberg. It represents much better
value than some of the papers in the previous series and bodes well for the future output from the Department.

J G

LEICESTERSHIRE’S LUNATICS: The Institutional Care of Leicestershire’s Lunatics During The Nineteenth Century
H G Orme and W H Brock Leicestershire Museums, Art Galleries and Records Service 1987 £5.50

Central to this detailed study is the development of the Leicestershire and Rutland County Lunatic Asylum, which was replaced in 1908 by the establishment at Narborough, leaving the Victorian buildings to become eventually the core of the University of Leicester campus. As the titles suggest, it ranges widely in scope, setting the story in the context of local government response to national legislation for provision for the insane. Previously there had been private asylums and one, a charity attached to the Infirmary, developed as part of the new asylum, which opened in 1837. Also covered are staffing and the nature of the inmates, who they were, their sex, age and occupations. It is disturbing to learn that in the early years the paupers’ parts of the premises were open each week for public inspection, although visitors were expected to sign a book in which they could comment on the arrangements for patients.

This is one of the new style Museum A4 publications, with the text printed in clear type and well supported by tables, appendices and illustrations.

J G

THE WELL TRODDEN PATH: Leicestershire Footpath Association
Centenary 1887-1987
Heather Macdermid Leicestershire Footpath Association 1987 £3.50

The Leicestershire Footpath Association, one of the oldest footpath associations in England, celebrated the centenary of its foundation in 1987. Its
aims were, as now, the protection and preservation of rights of way for the enjoyment of walkers.

Based on the Association's own records, members' memories and excerpts from the contemporary local press, this is an excellent account of one hundred years of informed concern for the right of access to the countryside for ordinary people. The early members, the founder A J Gimson, Harry Peach (the founder of Dryad), Sir Robert Martin, Alderman Rippin and their active legal expert, Napier Reeve, were all prominent in local affairs and contributed to the early successes of the Association. The Association fought not only for public rights but also for good behaviour by the public. After Bradgate had been closed to the public in 1895 due to vandalism a five pound reward was offered to anyone giving information which would identify the culprits. The Association was very active, and still is, in preparing maps of footpaths and bridleways and in publishing guides to footpath walks. It has also supported the efforts of local objectors to the closing of footpaths, sometimes by direct action but more often by reasoned negotiation, co-operation and the use of every piece of current legislation.

The more popular activity of the Association's Rambling Section did not begin until the summer of 1920, when the first rambles were led by Rippin, Pick, Peach and others, mainly in the Forest area. In the early days teas were a problem and ramblers were reported never to have been late arrivers at the meeting place. The personal recollections and photographs of members taking part in these rambles add a light-hearted touch to the book. Rambles of course also served a more serious purpose in gathering information on blocked or diverted footpaths and in the definition of established rights of way to meet the requirements of post second world war legislation. There are some excellent studies of action taken over the tracing and preservation of lost paths and agreements over diversions which would form a model for future action whenever required.

Well written and well illustrated, this account should recall many happy memories for lovers of Leicestershire countryside.

G K L
This is a brave attempt to provide brief biographies of persons and families who, throughout the ages, have played a part, however brief, in Rutland life. It includes politicians, the church, the law, teachers, scientists, artists, sportsmen and women, agriculturalists and craftsmen. Wherever possible portraits, illustrations and biographical references have been included with individual entries. The great families, the Villiers Dukes of Buckingham and their successors the Finchs of Burley on the Hill, the Haringtons and their successors the Noels of Exton, played a role in national as well as local affairs. Their buildings, parks and monuments still form part of the Rutland scene. Lesser gentry served the county well in a more modest capacity, the Cheseldens, Heathcotes, the Wingfields and many more acting as magistrates and sheriffs. Rutland had its villains as well as saints: Sir Everard Digby of Stoke Dry was executed for his part in the Gunpowder Plot and Titus Oates, known in his day as ‘the King of Liars’, was another notorious plotter. Rutland clergy have also been distinguished. The Rev Jeremy Taylor, once vicar of Uppingham, was the author of a religious classic, *Holy Living* and *Holy Dying*. Perhaps the clergyman to whom Rutland owes the greatest debt was the Ven Robert Johnson, vicar of North Luffenham and Archdeacon of Leicester, who founded the hospitals and schools at Oakham and Uppingham. The schools were later to make Rutland home to many ex-pupils from all parts of Britain and beyond. A great nineteenth century headmaster, Dr Edward Thring of Uppingham, transformed his school of forty-five pupils into a new kind of public school, offering its pupils a wide curriculum beyond the traditional classics. A family like the Hallidays, stonemasons since the seventeenth century who helped to build the Finchs’ new Burley on the Hill, left their mark on other buildings and villages which still delight the eye today.

This is a welcome addition to other studies of Rutland, a book for dipping into and perhaps for further editions with more entries in years to come.

G K L
This book describes the mediaeval deer parks, eleven in all, in the Charnwood Forest area and shews where traces on the ground may still be seen today. A deer park was usually quite small, about one to two hundred acres, surrounded by a pale, with deer leaps at intervals, where animals could get in but not out. It served many purposes and formed a useful part of the manorial economy. It was often used by other grazing animals and could include a fishpond and a rabbit warren. Timber was carefully husbanded, being coppiced or pollarded.

The pressure to expand the area of land under the plough in the high mediaeval period and the gradual absorption of some deer parks into the formal parkland of the later centuries and of others into the new agricultural improvements of later enclosures, are all described here. Bradgate Park alone, partly through the whims of later owners, has retained some of its late mediaeval features. The history of the ownership and development of each park is fully described, with references to documents and earlier printed material. This is followed by a topographical description, and here the maps, plans and modern aerial photographs are most valuable. Bradgate Park in its present form is the late fifteenth century creation of the Greys, lords of the Manor of Groby, who expanded it and built the Bradgate House we see today. The house was abandoned in the eighteenth century but the park was still heavily preserved for game and in public ownership has remained a refuge for wildlife and a public amenity.

It is difficult to do justice to such an interesting, detailed and well illustrated book, carefully documented with excellent notes, bibliography and a valuable glossary of mediaeval technical terms. It is lavishly produced; but it is unfortunate that the format used has so often meant the separation of the illustrations from the text to which they refer.

G K L
THE MEDIEVAL EARTHWORKS OF NORTH-EAST LEICESTERSHIRE
R F Hartley Leicestershire Museums, Art Galleries and Records Service 1987 £3.50

This latest volume in a systematic survey of the county sets out very economically an immense amount of information. A gazetteer gives details of all the particular sites, the most important ones being illustrated by large scale plans. There follow two dozen pages of two and a quarter inch landscape maps covering the whole area. These not only help locate the sites but also display the patterns or ridge and furrow of the former open fields identified from aerial photographs. Although no dates are given for the R A F vertical photographs, the point is made that they were taken before the recent return to arable farming in the district had obliterated many of these features.

J G

TWO AND A HALF TO SKEGNESS And Other Stories
Tom Hammond Anderson Publications, 29 The Fairway, Blaby 1987 £1.99

This modest book is a delight. The author does not claim it to be a factual history so much as an evocation of his lifelong fascination with the railways of Leicestershire he knew and used so much. When he comes to recite his anecdotes and stories, however, he includes a fund of personal knowledge of the development and decline of the local network of lines and stations, such as the tiny, isolated Trent station, ‘the Midland junction to anywhere’. Living in ‘Wigston Three Stations’, a season ticket took him to his first job in Leicester and was then used for returning to the city in the evening and at most weekends.

The writing style is clear, economical and entertaining and each section is well constructed with its own particular message. The whole is illustrated with a dozen appropriate photographs and very smartly printed and produced.

J G
This is principally a compound archaeological report, combining full details of five excavations from 1958 to 1974 with notes from twenty-two other excavations and observations. For the local historian this can all be taken as the supporting evidence for the sustained discussion of the nature and role of the town walls in both the Roman and medieval periods. This suggests that the final phase of walling was not so much for defence as for the control of economic activity. Although the walls were gradually plundered for building material and disappeared, the four gates still remained in use to close the town at night and as practically the only access for traffic in and out of the town and its markets until 1774.

J G

THE HISTORY AND ARCHITECTURE OF THE TURKEY CAFÉ
Jean Farquhar and Joan Skinner Sedgebrook Press 1987 £2.00

Of the many fine Victorian and Edwardian buildings in Leicester The Turkey Café must rank as one of the more memorable and curious. Perhaps prompted by The Oriental Café in Market Square, Arthur Wakerley, Leicester architect and stalwart of the Temperance Movement, sought the advice of the Royal Doulton Company for a design for the building in Granby Street which he had purchased in 1900. The ‘whimsical building in the Moorish style’ which resulted, with the turkey on the skyline, provided a cheerful and attractive teashop from its opening in 1901 under the proprietorship of J S Winn. Later changes in fashion brought alterations to the interior and in 1963 the Winn family sold their interest in it to the Bruccianis. Currently The Turkey Café is the premises of Rayner (Opticians) Ltd.

The site of the Café has seen many changes and its history, traceable back to 1806, provides an interesting account of an inner city area. The book also describes in detail the architecture of the building and is well supported by plans and photographs. Overall it is recommended for students of architectural history and all interested in the history of Leicester.

H E B
William Gardiner’s *Music and Friends* is quarried so regularly as a source of information about early nineteenth century Leicester that it is easy to ignore his role in the wider musical world. He was the first champion in this country of the music of Beethoven. Mr Syer pinpoints the first English performance of any work by the composer, in Leicester in 1794, with Gardiner taking part on the viola. He has also traced details of the chain of people involved in conveying the manuscript of this string trio from Bonn to Leicester.

Gardiner is also the source for the fact that an early Leicester intellectual and scientific society, the Apollo, was disbanded after the outbreak of the French Revolution, to avoid suspicion of dangerous radicalism. Mr Syer prints a letter from the Mayor Leicester to the Home Secretary seeking guidance as to how to deal with an unfortunate immigrant from France whom he obviously suspected: ‘She says she has been in England 10 years . . . She speaks English as if she had not lived in this Country 10 weeks . . . She has been seen with Nobody but the Secretary of the Jacobin Club here. But this may possibly arise from accident, as he is the Brother in Law to the Person with whom she lodges.’

These two pamphlets, complete with notes and references, are the first of a series on Leicestershire history lovingly hand set and printed by the author himself.
descendants of the 1980s. The author herself shares a common Bates ancestor with her subject.

She describes his childhood, his very early interest in insects, his dissatisfaction as a young man with life as a hosiery apprentice and as a clerk in a Burton brewery and his chance friendship with Alfred Russell Wallace, who he met when Wallace was a teacher at the Collegiate School in Leicester. Their boredom with their humdrum business lives led them to embark on a natural history expedition to the Amazon. This was to be financed with a modest one hundred pounds from Bates himself and by arrangements to sell duplicate specimens from the expedition through their London agent. Bates had already published a scientific paper and built up a modest reputation for his early work on insects at home. They left for the Amazon in 1848 and for Bates this was the beginning of eleven years of collecting, recording and observing the natural history and the social customs of peoples and animals of a whole new tropical world. After he returned to England he settled in London, married a Leicester girl, 'a plain domesticated woman’, and enjoyed a full family life. The scientific world to which he returned was torn by the controversy aroused by the publication of Charles Darwin’s *The Origin of Species*. Bate’s own work confirmed many of Darwin’s findings and the two became firm and lifelong friends. It was Darwin who persuaded Bates to write his own classic work, *The Naturalist on the River Amazons*, published in 1863. As the Assistant Secretary of the Royal Geographical Society Bates played an active role in the scientific life of the country until his death in 1892.

Bates left behind him a family of four, a daughter and three sons, his eldest daughter having died shortly before her father. The eldest son Darwin became a distinguished electrical engineer and his brothers Charles and Herbert Spencer emigrated to New Zealand, where some descendants still flourish. The naturalist’s brother Frederick made a good living from his Eagle Brewery in Northampton Square, Leicester and was also a distinguished entomologist, specialising in beetles. His grandson Oliver Kerfoot continues the naturalist tradition by his work on ecology in Southern Africa.

This is an interesting account of an able Leicester family, with an impressive list of Bates Freemen of Leicester, family portraits, a bibliography and useful genealogical tables as an appendix.

G K L
The publication of books of old postcards of localities has developed into a thriving industry. These two books are part of a series intended to cover every town in the United Kingdom, apart from the 2,825 already produced for other countries in Europe. Each contains the customary two page history, hopping from the Domesday Survey to the present, and helpful captions identifying the location of, and pointing out many details in, most of the seventy six excellently reproduced views. Successions of street scenes include Hinckley’s former narrow Church Walk and busy Market and Castle Street. Together, however, they inevitably form an incomplete picture of what these places were like. There is no street map and no information about the postcards themselves, who published them, when they were posted and where they are now. There are minimal acknowledgements, mainly to Gregory Drozdz for the information in the captions. Their great value is, of course, in making conveniently available a fascinating source of information for local historians and a source of entertainment for present inhabitants in comparing old views with present appearance.

J G

LUTTERWORTH AS I REMEMBER IT: Memories of Lutterworth in Leicestershire by people who lived and worked there
edited by Rosemary Stead Leicestershire Libraries and Information Service 1987 £1.95

This fourth of the Leicestershire Libraries booklets on ‘life as it was’ records the memories of people who lived in Lutterworth in the first half of the present century. The contributors all stress the physical changes which have taken place, such as the disappearance of the traditional yards and alleys linking larger streets, like Dixon Square which led from Bell Street to Station Road, Peacock Yard linking Bank Street to High Street and the one off Woodmarket nicknamed ‘Sodom and Gomorrah’. In yet another little square, Woodbine Terrace, lived the man who rang the daily curfew bell at 6 a.m and 8 p.m. Now it is a car park. The most remembered holiday event in Lutterworth was Feast Week, the first week in August, with a traditional fair and, for the lucky ones, a traditional meal of roast duck and steamed fig pudding.
Most contributors remembered children's games, their schooldays, shops and shopping, local characters and many have personal recollections of both world wars.

This booklet has some interesting illustrations but unhappily lacks a sketch plan. It would have helped in such a small town to have seen the actual locations of the places referred to in the text.

G K L

THE DEACON FAMILY OF LEICESTERSHIRE CLOCKMAKERS

P A Hewitt The Antiquarian Horological Society,  
New House, High Street, Ticehurst,  
Wadhurst, East Sussex 1986-7 £3.00

The life and work of Samuel Deacon of Barton in the Beans, clockmaker and Baptist minister, are well recorded. During his long lifetime religious books and hymns of his were published and after his death in 1816 the fulsome memoirs of him as 'preacher, pastor, mechanic' included some of his poetry and letters. Many Deacon clocks survive and the family continued in the trade until 1951, so that the contents of their workshop and many business records have been preserved. A full study of the family is needed to place in context their contribution to clockmaking and the New Connexion of General Baptists in the Midlands and also the part that their music played in both these fields of activity. This illustrated booklet is an introduction to their clockmaking and is reprinted from issues of Antiquarian Horology. Mr Hewitt sets out the family history and then uses the business records and drawings, picking out interesting details such as the names of suppliers of clock movements and materials and of wooden clock cases, the specifications of musical clocks, calculations of annual income and notes on work by apprentices. Some clocks were marketed in neighbouring villages by means of a 'clock club', to which each member might pay four shillings a month and threepence 'to be spent on ale'.

J G
A HISTORY OF BITTESWELL
Kathleen Bray (no imprint) (1987) £2.00

The author has much of interest to tell us of this small rural community, having lived in the village all her life. She deals with the history of the church, the school, the roads and lanes, the village greens and trees and describes some of the houses and other buildings, touching throughout on the lives of families and individuals who have lived in this pleasant parish. Thinking also of the future she is at pains to commit to paper facts and observations which might otherwise be lost to local historians. A light and pleasant booklet illustrated with photographs and sketches, this village history is well worth reading by anyone with an interest in the county.

HEB

ALL SAINTS KIMCOTE AND SOME LOCAL HISTORY
R A Cowling (1972)
ORIGINS OF KIMCOTE AND WALTON 1986
LORDS OF THE MANOR OF KIMCOTE AND WALTON 1986
CHARITIES OF KIMCOTE AND WALTON 1987
D Percy Kimcote and Walton Village History Society 50p each

The late Rev R A Cowling, a former rector of Kimcote and Walton, was a well known local historian, amassing during his incumbency many notes and documents relating to his parish. He inspired others in the area and sowed the seeds of the now thriving Kimcote and Walton Village History Society. The first of these typescript research papers was written by him in 1972 and is a very interesting account of the parish church and its relationship with the village throughout its history. The three subsequent papers were written by Donald Percy using parish papers and printed material and provide an insight into different aspects of parish history. It is interesting to find that ten benefactors provided money for the poor in Kimcote and Walton over the centuries, a number far higher than in any neighbouring parishes, including Lutterworth.

HEB
Kibworth’s development through the centuries owes much to its location on the busy A6 road between Market Harborough and Leicester. Today this makes it a desirable village for the developer and it is with both recent and future expansion in mind that *A Kibworth Miscellany* has been compiled.

The author has used the expertise and writings of many for the basis of his work and has built on it with his own extensive knowledge and recollections. He brings together reports of archaeological evidence, local records and extracts from printed sources. He provides us with an entertaining tour of the village, introducing people, places and names now gone, Pudding Lane, the Half Moon pub, Eli Bale’s drapery shop and the gas works. He describes the fields such as Hall Close and Knapps Close, which have succumbed to development and the paths and tracks which are now avenues and roads.

The author’s concluding thoughts ‘What of the future?’ make this typescript booklet an interesting compilation not only for Kibworthians and others interested in Kibworth for its own sake but also for those of us concerned for the future of other Leicestershire villages under threat of constant expansion.

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**NEVER TOO LATE**

Ellen Smith (the author, ‘Greenfields’)
21a East Road, Wymeswold 1986 £4.10

This fourth volume in the author’s story of her country life in Wymeswold describes the years of her semi-retirement and her travels overseas.

At local level she describes the horrendous ravages of fowl pest on her poultry farm and the relief felt by every poultry farmer when a modern vaccine became available to remove this once common threat to solvent poultry farming. As she describes her family’s farm sales and the prosperity of her farming children, one realizes that some good things have happened in recent times.
Cheerfully illustrated and written in her own colloquial style, this is a welcome addition to a popular local series.

NONCONFORMIST CHAPELS AND MEETING-HOUSES: Leicestershire, Nottinghamshire and Rutland
Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England 1986 £1.95

This survey records the detailed work and investigation for the Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England into the Non-conformist Chapels and Meeting Houses of Central England undertaken by Mr Christopher Stell of the Royal Commission staff in the early 1970s. It includes the meeting houses of all the early sects, the New Dissent of the eighteenth century and some later sects. The Baptists and the Methodists began to play an increasing role among the dissenting churches from the mid-eighteenth century and their emotional appeal helped to broaden and expand their membership rapidly in the nineteenth century.

The entries are arranged in gazetteer fashion. Each entry includes a brief history of the chapel, a description of the building, notable items in its furniture and fittings and notes on the graveyards of the earlier chapels. Among the most notable buildings are the great Meeting Houses at Hinckley and Leicester, the former Baptist ‘pork pie chapel’ in Belvoir Street, Leicester and the modest but very charming Decorated Gothic style chapel in Evington. Of early Quaker meeting houses only two survive, in Castle Donington as a house and at Oakham the simple cottage-like building erected in 1719 once more in use as a Quaker meeting house. The Wesleyan chapel in Bishop Street, Leicester, originally built in 1815-16, is the best known of the earlier surviving Methodist chapels and the one at Rearsby is an attractive example of a prosperous mid-century country chapel. Lutterworth, Market Harborough and Wigston Magna all possess plain but handsome substantial Congregational chapels, which now of course form part of the United Reformed Church but whose roots go back to the sturdy seventeenth century Old Dissent.

Most entries are illustrated and many include bibliographical notes and there is a further general bibliography with the introductory text.
ANCIENT AND MODERN: Churches and Chapels around Market Harborough
G K Brandwood Leicestershire Museums, Art Galleries and Records Service 1987 £5.90

This most useful guide, which crosses the somewhat artificial county boundaries, gives detailed descriptions of ecclesiastical buildings in the wider catchment area of Market Harborough. It is divided into two sections, an introductory chronological guide to building materials, architectural styles and church furnishings from Norman to modern times and the gazetteer, first of Anglican churches and then of Nonconformist chapels. At the end of each section of the gazetteer there is a list of lost churches and chapels. Each entry describes the structure of the church, details of successive alterations and restorations, where these are known, interior furnishing and any other aspect of special interest. Details of nineteenth century restorations are particularly valuable, as few Leicestershire and Northamptonshire churches escaped the attention of the Victorian restorer. Many of the entries are illustrated, mostly by photographs taken by the author himself, and the guide includes a map, notes and a bibliography.

G K L

EARTHLY KINGDOMS: a report on Leicester Churches both past and present
The Victorian Society Leicester Group (28 Rectory Lane, Thurcaston) (1987) £5.00

This illustrated survey of Victorian and Edwardian churches and major dissenting chapels in Leicester is prefaced by a thoughtful introduction on the problems of maintenance, preservation, re-use and demolition of redundant churches and chapels. It gives a brief architectural history of each building, including details of later alterations. Leicester has examples of the work of major national architects of the period as well as of local firms such as the Goddards. The work of George Gilbert Scott is seen in four churches, St John the Divine, St Andrew, Jarrom Street, St Matthew, Montreal Road and St Saviour, St Saviour’s Road, ranging in date from 1853-7 to 1875-7. Each is very individual in design and use of materials. The three churches by the Goddards of Leicester, St John the Divine, Clarendon Park Road, St James the Greater, London Road and St Barnabas, St Barnabas Road, all have varied interest; St John for its imaginative design, St James the Greater for being the first Leicester church to escape fully from Gothic style detail and St Barnabas for its interest in vernacular
design and the Arts and crafts movement. Of all Leicester’s Victorian churches, St Mark, Belgrave Gate, Ewan Christian’s masterpiece, with its spire soaring above its granite mass, is the most spectacular. More than a hundred years on it still dominates a rather dreary urban scene. Sadly, it is now a redundant church, badly in need of a new use that will preserve this feature of our city. The greatest activity in church building in Leicester was between 1885 and 1914, keeping pace with the outward expansion of the city and resulting in simpler and not very distinguished brick buildings, of which perhaps St Alban, Harrison Road is the most interesting.

Of the Nonconformist buildings the Methodist Chapel in Bishop Street and the Baptist Chapel in Charles Street are the oldest and both share a simple dignity. The remains of the Baptist ‘pork pie chapel’ in Belvoir Street by Joseph Hansom is the most flamboyant. The Victoria Road, London Road Baptist church, built in 1855-6, determinedly Gothic, now newly cleaned and owned by the Seventh Day Adventists, is a thriving and distinctive feature of the area.

There are good illustrations of both exterior and interiors of some of the more interesting churches and chapels and a useful appendix lists Nonconformist churches and halls in use by non-Christian religious groups and Anglican churches used by other Christian churches. When one considers the contribution made to the urban landscape, it is difficult not to agree with the Society that the ecclesiastical exemption for churches of all denominations from the usual planning consents should be abolished and that ‘all alterations (both external and internal), extensions and demolitions of historic ecclesiastical buildings should be handled by local authorities, as in the secular field’ and therefore be subject to public discussion.

G K L

HOLY CROSS WHITWICK: A Brief History 1837-1937
Albert E Robinson Whitwick Historical Group 1987 £2.20
WHITWICK METHODISTS
Eric Jarvis (no imprint) (1988) £1.00

These two booklets make a similar contribution to the history of Whitwick in tracing the development of a local religious community. Three local Catholic chapels were consecrated together in 1837, the chapel at Grace Dieu, the monastery at Mount St Bernard and Holy Cross chapel in the village, mainly as a result of the private patronage of Ambrose Phillips de
Lisle, the owner of the Grace Dieu estate. The mission in the area was partly concerned with immigrant Irish miners and included a convent and schools. The route of the annual ‘Finding the Cross’ procession used to take in a crucifix on Calvary Rock and a Pugin ‘temple’ in Cademan Wood. The development of the various institutions and their buildings is briefly described, including the episode of the first monastery building being run as a reformatory for Catholic boys. Wider influences, from the emancipation of Catholics in 1829 onwards, are necessarily touched on; but in a way the book on the Methodist community, although less ambitious in scope, is more aware of its background. Perhaps this results from long standing attitudes in the movement; in 1894 the subject of a local prize competition for Sunday school teachers was ‘History of the primitive Methodist Connexion’. More parochial features of this book are verses by a minister on the state of the streets in ‘Whitwick-on-the-mud’ and a charming reminiscence about blowing the organ at the age of nine, starting ‘Ten shillings a year! At last I was to be rich.’

J G
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