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.

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## THE LEICESTERSHIRE HISTORIAN

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The case of the large-headed tennis raquet
Kate Thompson

I have recently been involved in one of the most amazing incidents of my archive career, when I went to New York to give a deposition on behalf of an American law firm.

The story began around 1916 when one Frank Wordsworth Donisthorpe, a member of a well known Leicester family, invented a large-headed tennis raquet. He was apparently quite a celebrity in the tennis circles of the day and something of an inventor. In 1952 a distant relative of his gave to the City Museum two scrapbooks of the Donisthorpe family and two small notebooks. In 1968, contrary to all normal practice, the scrapbooks were lent to a member of the family living in Devon, who promised to keep them for no more than a month. Ten years later enquiries from the first of a number of patent lawyers alerted the County Record Office to the position and after some difficulty the scrapbooks were returned.

Nothing more was heard until the spring of 1988 when lawyers for the sports firm Head approached us again. They were defending a United States patent case taken out by Prince Sports and the two scrapbooks contained photographs and newspaper cuttings vital for the court case. About October I was asked if the books could go to the States for the court case, to which I replied ‘Only if I go or a member of my staff goes with them’. Never expecting this flippant comment to be taken seriously I forgot about it, until it became clear that both I myself and a museum colleague were in fact being flown out Club Class to New York, put up in the Sheraton Park Avenue Hotel and generally treated handsomely.

The deposition took place over four days: my colleague was questioned for eleven hours and I myself for eight and a half. The court case proper may not be resolved for some time yet.
EDITORIAL

The fiddler seen visiting a poor cottage on our cover typifies the life of the travelling musicians and ballad-sellers who used to peddle music and songs throughout the country. Roy Palmer, the author of *The Folklore of Leicestershire and Rutland*, is a national authority on ballads and songs of all periods and has studied the host of printed broadside ballads that survive. He has written for us an account of all those he has found connected with our county. Our illustration is taken, by courtesy of Tony Marcovecchio, from an engraving of 'The Blind Fiddler', painted in 1806 by Sir David Wilkie. The original painting is in the Tate Gallery but was formerly in Leicestershire, in the collection of Sir George Beaumont at Coleorton Hall.

The sad life of Joseph Merrick has been the starting point for much speculative fiction concerning the nature of Victorian attitudes to the human condition. It is refreshing to have Kate Thompson’s factual account of his life setting out clearly his origins in Leicester.

Our Second World War reminiscence by Blanche Harrison is illustrated by what, she writes, is ‘the only photograph I have left as a souvenir of the wartime clippie ... I look a bit grim, don’t I? But I really thrive on laughter; so I look at it now and then!’
The story of Joseph Merrick must be one of the saddest ever recorded; yet at the same time it can be strangely uplifting. Here was a man with the most appalling deformities who nevertheless appears to have been a gentle, kindly soul and to have gathered round him some of the leading figures of the day. He did not suffer from elephantiasis but from a disease called multiple neurofibromatosis. There is a tendency in certain people to form particular types of tumour, known as neurofibromas and composed exclusively of a dense proliferation of nervous and fibrous tissue. The tumours may occur singly or in great numbers within many different tissues of the body and can vary between the size of a pin-head and an orange. Most commonly they form within layers of skin, where they may only change the skin pigmentation; but in the most extreme form diffuse tumours develop within the network of nerve fibres within the skin. They become associated with a thickening of the skin and subcutaneous tissue, so that large folds of skin are formed. During the last half century or so a number of other manifestations of the disease have been recognized and tumour formation or clinical abnormality has been described in practically every tissue and organ of the body. Most general practitioners will only come across two or three cases in their working lives and cases which are severe enough to cause distress are very rare. Many patients also suffer from other discomforts, such as epileptic types of convulsion, and one in ten shews evidence of mental retardation. The disease can often run in families, even if it misses some generations; but there is no evidence of this in Merrick’s case. Needless to say he was among the very worst afflicted victims of the disorder ever to have lived to be recorded in the medical annals. Multiple neurofibromatosis is still incurable and hardly any more treatable than it was a century ago.

Merrick, in his ‘autobiography’, told the oft-repeated story that he suffered from the disease — which he thought was elephantiasis — because his mother was frightened by an elephant while pregnant with him: ‘The
deformity which I am now exhibiting was caused by my mother being frightened by an Elephant; my mother was going along the street when a procession of Animals was passing by, there was a terrible crush of people to see them, and unfortunately she was pushed under the Elephant's feet, which frightened her very much; this occurring during a time of pregnancy was the cause of my deformity'. He appears to have been born a perfectly healthy and normal baby and the symptoms did not begin to appear until, according to his own account, he was five. He was born on 5 August 1862 at 50 Lee Street, the son of Joseph Rockley Merrick, a warehouseman, and his wife Mary Jane. Mary Jane was 26 when Joseph was born and, according to an article in the *Illustrated Leicester Chronicle* of 27 December 1930, was herself a cripple. Joseph was her first child and she was already pregnant when she married, at Thurmaston. Three months before Joseph’s birth Wombwell’s Royal Menagerie was in Leicester and the incident with the elephant could well have occurred. The child’s second name, Carey, was taken from the surname of the Baptist minister William Carey.

According to the *Illustrated Leicester Chronicle* article, Mary Jane first noticed something wrong when the baby was 21 months old, somewhat younger than Merrick himself suggested. This was a firm swelling in his lower lip, which grew and spread as a hard tumour into the right cheek, until the upper lip was pushed outwards by a mass of pink protruding flesh. Later a bony lump appeared on Joseph’s forehead, his skin grew rather loose and rough in texture and his bodily proportions were beginning to be marred by a peculiar enlargement of the right arm and both feet. The mass of flesh under the upper lip eventually protruded for several inches from his mouth in a grotesque snout closely resembling an elephant’s trunk. The family moved to 119 Upper Brunswick Street, where a second son, William Arthur, was born on 8 January 1866. About this time Joseph fell and damaged his left hip; the joint became diseased, leaving him permanently lame. A third child, Marion Eliza, was born on 28 September 1877. The family moved to 161 Birstall Street and on 21 December 1870 William died from scarlet fever. On 19 May 1873 Joseph’s mother died of bronchopneumonia. His father moved the rest of the family to 4 Wanlip Street and on 3 December 1874 married his landlady, Emma Wood Antill, a widow of 29, at Archdeacon Lane baptist chapel. Joseph became more of an outcast and his stepmother apparently made his life ‘a perfect misery’. His father also seems to have rejected him. The family moved again, to 37 Russell Square, and Joseph attended the board school in Syston Street until the age of 12, the statutory school-leaving age established by the 1870 Education Act. Not surprisingly he found it difficult to get work but was eventually taken on at Messrs Freeman’s cigar manufacturers, at 9 Lower
Hill Street, where he worked for almost two years; but the growing weight and clumsiness of his deformed right arm made it impossible for him to carry out the finer movements needed for hand-rolling cigars. His lack of a job was apparently not helped by his stepmother’s barbed references to the fact that he was not contributing to the family’s income. His father obtained a hawker’s licence for him and he sold stockings and gloves from door to door. His appearance drew curious stares and his deformed mouth made his speech increasingly difficult to understand. One day he failed to sell the required quota and he spent what money he had taken on food. When he returned home he received a severe beating and he left, never to return. He continued hawking on his own account and spent the nights in the lowest of the town’s common lodging houses. He was on the verge of destitution and little more than a vagrant. His father had abandoned him but luckily his uncle, Charles Merrick, heard of his plight and offered him a home. Charles was a hairdresser, tobacconist and umbrella-repairer, with premises at 114 Church Gate. Joseph continued as a hawker for a further two years but when his licence came up for renewal it was withdrawn. He obviously realized that he would become a burden to his uncle’s family; so, after spending Christmas 1879 with them, he applied to enter the Leicester Union Workhouse. On this first occasion he stayed until 22 March 1880 and then left voluntarily. Failing to find work he returned again three days later, to remain for four years. During this period, probably in 1882, he entered the Leicester (Royal) Infirmary to have a large part of the ‘trunk’ on his face surgically removed, estimated by Merrick himself as weighting between three and four ounces. Unfortunately there is no information in the Infirmary records to give any further details.

Joseph could see no way out of his difficulties but apparently hit on the idea of writing to Sam Torr, the proprietor of the Gladstone Vaults (now G E Motor Factors) and quite a noted music-hall star, who was interested in exhibiting specialities and novelties at his premises, reopened in September 1883 as the ‘Gaiety Palace of Varieties’. After some negotiations with fellow entertainers Torr was able to offer Joseph the chance to exhibit himself as a freak and he left the Workhouse for the last time on 29 August 1884. He was presented as ‘The Elephant Man, Half-a-Man and Half-an-Elephant’ and probably made his debut in Nottingham. He may also have appeared in Leicester; but as winter approached he travelled to London with Tom Norman, one of Torr’s partners, who specialized in freak shows. Joseph was installed in a shop in Whitechapel Road in November 1884, across the road from the London Hospital. Norman hung a large canvas sheet across the shop front painted with the image of a man halfway through the process of turning into an elephant and
charged twopence to see Merrick. It ‘attracted’ a young surgeon from the Hospital, Frederick Treves, who still recalled its impact forty years later:

This very crude production depicted a frightful creature that could only have been possible in a nightmare. It was the figure of a man with the characteristics of an elephant. The transfiguration was not far advanced. There was still more of the man than of the beast. This fact — that it was still human — was the most repellant attribute of the creature. There was nothing about it of the pitiableness of the misshapen or the deformed, nothing of the grotesqueness of the freak, but merely the loathing insinuation of a man being changed into an animal. Some palm trees in the background of the picture suggested a jungle and might have led the imagination to assume that it was in this wild that the perverted object had roamed.

Treves was apparently not the first surgeon to see Merrick and his attention had been drawn to him by his house surgeon, Reginald Tuckett. When Treves went to see for himself he found the exhibition temporarily closed. Tracking down Norman he finally persuaded him to allow a private view on payment of one shilling. He later described that first meeting in The Elephant Man and Other Reminiscences, published in 1923:

The showman pulled back the curtain and revealed a bent figure crouching on a stool and covered by a brown blanket. In front of it, on a tripod, was a large brick heated by a Bunsen burner. Over this the creature was huddled to warm itself. It never moved when the curtain was drawn back. Locked up in an empty shop and lit by the faint blue light of the gas jet, this hunched-up figure was the embodiment of loneliness.

Unfortunately the passage of time between the event and his recording of it led to some errors of detail. The most puzzling one is that he called Merrick John, in fact striking out Joseph in the text and inserting the wrong name, a mistake perpetuated ever since. Even someone as used to horrendous sights as Treves must have been sickened by his first sight of Merrick, describing him as ‘the most disgusting specimen of humanity’ he had ever seen; ‘at no time’, he added, ‘had I met with such a degraded or perverted version of a human being as this lone figure displayed’. He described him in some detail:

(He) was a little man below the average in height and made to look shorter by the bowing of his back. The most striking feature about him was his enormous and misshapened head. From the brow there projected a huge bony mass like a loaf, while from the back of the head hung a bag of spongy, fungous-looking skin, the surface of which was comparable to brown cauliflower. On the top of the skull were a few long lank hairs.
The osseous growth on the forehead almost occluded one eye. The circumference of the head was no less than that of the man’s waist. From the upper jaw there projected another mass of bone. It protruded from the mouth like a pink stump, turning the upper lip inside out and making the mouth a mere slobbering aperture . . . The nose was merely a lump of flesh, only recognizable as a nose from its position. The face was no more capable of expression than a block of gnarled wood. The back was horrible, because from it hung, as far down as the middle of the thigh, huge, sack-like masses of flesh covered by the same loathsome cauliflower skin.

The right arm was of enormous size and shapeless. It suggested the limb of the subject of elephantiasis. It was overgrown also with pendent masses of the same cauliflower-like skin. The hand was large and clumsy — a fin or paddle rather than a hand. There was not distinction between the palm and the back. The thumb had the appearance of a radish, while the fingers might have been thick, tuberous roots. As a limb it was almost useless. The other arm was remarkable by contrast. It was not only normal but was, moreover, a delicately shaped limb covered with fine skin and provided with a beautiful hand which any woman might have envied. From the chest hung a bag of the same repulsive flesh. It was like a dewlap suspended from the neck of a lizard. The lower limbs had the characters of the deformed arm. They were unwieldy, dropsical looking and grossly misshapened.

Treves arranged with Norman to examine Joseph properly at the Hospital. He was dressed in a special set of outdoor clothes which fully concealed him from the public view, consisting of a pair of huge, bag-like slippers for his feet and calves, a voluminous black cloak and a hat fitted with a ‘veil’. In the anatomical department of the London Hospital, Treves concentrated on Joseph’s physical abnormalities. His head measured 36 inches in circumference, his right wrist twelve inches and the most swollen finger of his right hand five inches. Treves arranged for some photographs to be taken of Joseph and diagnosis by the Pathological Society of London. This took place on 2 December 1884 and was reported in the British Medical Journal the following week. Not surprisingly no one present came up with a constructive suggestion to help Merrick and in fact Treves was criticised for bordering on being a freak showman himself. Four months later he tried again and presented his photographs and clinical findings to a further meeting of the Pathological Society held on 17 March 1885. This time he got a response from Dr Henry Radcliffe Crocker, a physician at University College Hospital who specialized in skin diseases. His explanation was rather vague but as accurate as could be expected in 1885.
Meanwhile the tide of opinion was changing and Norman’s freak shows were regarded as offending against public decency. Merrick’s exhibition was closed down by the police and with Norman he left London. There is no record of what happened in the following eighteen months; he probably returned to Leicester, where a pamphlet, *The Autobiography of Joseph Carey Merrick*, was published. The show still toured the provinces but was closed down more and more often. Despite this Joseph managed to save about fifty pounds from his earnings. As the pressure from the British police increased Merrick was taken to the continent; however the tour was a failure — the European police taking the same line as those in Britain — and in June 1886 Merrick was abandoned in Brussels, after his savings had been stolen by his Austrian ‘manager’. He pawned his few possessions to raise his fare home. His journey was a nightmare one and when he finally arrived at Liverpool Street station he was surrounded by a curious crowd. The police intervened and provided sanctuary in the waiting-room; Merrick produced Treves’ visiting card which he had kept since their first meeting and the surgeon was sent for. He accepted responsibility for Joseph and took him back to the London Hospital where he was washed, fed and put to bed, although Treves was technically in breach of hospital regulations by admitting Merrick, as his case was incurable. He was startled at Joseph’s deterioration since he had last seen him; he had developed bronchitis and there was some suggestion of a heart disorder.

Not surprisingly Joseph was wary of anyone approaching him but gradually became more at ease. By November, however, the authorities could no longer turn a blind eye, particularly as Joseph was occupying a private ward. No other institution was prepared to accept him and the chairman of the management committee, Mr F C Carr Gomm, felt he could go no further without the authority of the full house committee. At this point a vigorous publicity campaign appears to have been mounted on Merrick’s behalf. On Advent Sunday, 28 November 1886, Dr Charles John Vaughan, the son of the vicar of St Martin’s in Leicester, preached a sermon in London on the text ‘Who did sin, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?’.

Two days later Carr Gomm quoted from the sermon in a letter to *The Times* published on 4 December:

Sir,

I am authorised to ask your powerful assistance in bringing to the notice of the public the following most exceptional case. There is now in a little room off one of our attic wards a man named Joseph Merrick, aged about twenty-seven, a native of Leicester, so dreadful a sight that he is unable even to come out by daylight to the garden . . . I will not shock your readers with any detailed description of his infirmities, but
only one arm is available for work . . . He has been taken in by our hospital, though there is, unfortunately, no hope of his cure, and the question now arises what is to be done with him in the future . . . women and nervous persons fly in terror from the sight of him . . . he is debarred from seeking to earn his livelihood in any ordinary way, yet he is superior in intelligence, can read and write, is quiet, gentle, not to say even refined in his mind . . . It is a case of singular affliction brought about through no fault of himself; he can but hope for quiet and privacy during a life that Mr Treves assures me is not likely to be long.

When the hospital management committee met to discuss Merrick’s case three days later Carr Gomm reported that a hundred pounds had been contributed and a Mr Singer had offered fifty pounds a year if Merrick were kept at the London Hospital. There was an outstanding public response to Carr Gomm’s appeal and letters arrived by every post. Merrick’s plight was even reported in the provincial press and his uncle offered to have him back. The necessity for frequent bathing precluded this solution and it was agreed that Joseph should remain permanently in the London Hospital; two small rooms in ‘Bedstead Square’ were converted for him, one as a bedsitting room and the other as a bathroom. Treves stipulated that there should be no mirrors in either room. The surgeon visited him every day and instructed his house surgeons to do the same; in addition he spent a couple of hours in conversation with him on Sunday mornings. Joseph was reluctant to talk about his family but idealized his mother, whose portrait he carried. He was also reticent about his life in the freak shows but apparently shewed no bitterness at the blow life had dealt him. He was an avid reader and understandably lost himself in a fantasy world; in particular he had a very romantic view of women. He suffered from periods of depression and was often in physical pain and could only sleep sitting up with his head resting on his knees.

Despite the fact that his needs were now catered for he was becoming more lonely and isolated. Treves needed someone who would ignore Merrick’s appearance and treat him with courtesy and consideration. He finally asked a friend, a young and pretty widow, if she thought she could enter Merrick’s room with a smile, wish him ‘Good morning’ and shake his hand without betraying any trace of revulsion or embarrassment. She agreed and Merrick was so overcome that he wept uncontrollably, afterwards confiding to Treves that it was the first time a strange women had smiled at him, let alone shaken his hand. Treves pin-pointed the event as the moment when Merrick began to regain a measure of self-confidence and the lack of mirrors enabled him to forget how horrendous he appeared.
He began to leave his rooms at night for short walks in the hospital grounds and an increasing number of people began to visit him. The actress Mrs Kendal, whose husband had met Merrick, took a special interest in him and sent in presents. Unfortunately the letters of thanks he wrote to her, and which she presented to the London Hospital, have not survived but a cardboard model of a Gothic church which he sent her does. Joseph in fact was developing into something of a celebrity and there were constant requests to visit him. Gradually he became more relaxed; he would sit at his window and talk to passers-by, some of whom visited him to hear about his latest distinguished guest. He was naively curious about the outside world and in particular about Treves' home which he was eventually taken to see. The pinnacle of his new life was undoubtedly the visit from the Prince and Princess of Wales on 21 May 1887, on the occasion of their opening new hospital buildings. The visit was recorded by a lady-in-waiting to the Duchess of Cambridge, whose son accompanied the royal couple. Joseph later received a signed photograph of the Princess, which reduced him to tears and which became his most treasured possession. The Princess visited him on other occasions and sent him a Christmas card each year. From the Prince he occasionally received a bag of game from the royal estates. One surgeon wrote: 'It became a cult among the personal friends of the Princess to visit the Elephant Man in the London Hospital'.

One Christmas Treves asked Joseph what he would like as a present from gifts of money sent in for the purpose. His somewhat incongruous choice was a gentleman’s dressing case containing brushes and comb, a shoe-horn, hat-brush, razors and toothbrushes. Treves removed the mirror before handing the case to Merrick. Among Joseph’s unfulfilled dreams was a visit to the theatre. Mrs Kendal arranged for him to occupy a private box at the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane, to see a pantomime, probably in 1887 when ‘Puss in Boots’ was showing. The event was an experience of the greatest delight to him and he talked of the show for weeks afterwards, as Treves later reported:

His reaction was not so much that of delight as of wonder and amazement. He was awed. He was enthralled. The spectacle left him speechless, so that if he was spoken to he took no heed. He often seemed to be panting for breath . . . (he was) thrilled by a vision that was almost beyond his comprehension . . . The splendour and display impressed him, but, I think, the ladies of the ballet took a still greater hold on his fancy.

Despite all this excitement Merrick’s physical condition continued to deteriorate. The ‘trunk’ began to grow again and badly affected his speech,
he suffered from bouts of bronchitis and his heart was failing. Further photographs were taken in 1889 which illustrate the changes in his appearance. Inwardly he seemed content and was confirmed into the Church of England in a private ceremony in the hospital chapel. He had one other aspiration, to visit the countryside he had read about in his books. In the summer of 1889 he stayed at Fawsley Park near Northampton. The journey was something of a problem and a railway carriage was run into sidings so that he could board it unobserved, a process repeated in reverse at Northampton. He stayed in a cottage on the estate for six weeks and wrote long descriptive letters to Treves of all he saw. On his return he needed to conserve his strength more and more, often staying in bed until midday. At about 3.00pm on 11 April 1890 he was found dead in bed by Treves’ house surgeon. An inquest was held four days later and the following morning The Times carried a full report on his death. His uncle Charles travelled to London for formal identification, although his father was still alive. It was concluded that he had died from asphyxia when his head had fallen back and suffocated him. His skeleton was kept by the hospital, where it is still housed. Carr Gomm sent a letter to The Times describing Merrick’s stay in the London Hospital and concluded: ‘It was the courtesy of The Times in inserting my letter in 1886, that procured for this afflicted man a comfortable protection during the last years of a previously wretched existence, and I desire to take this opportunity of thankfully acknowledging it.’ Treves submitted a report to the British Medical Journal about Joseph’s final weeks of life and his death at the age of 27:

... the general health of the ‘elephant man’ was relatively good shortly before his death ... At 1.30pm on Friday he was in bed (he seldom got up until the afternoon) and appeared to be perfectly well when the wardmaid brought him his dinner. Between 3 and 4 o’clock he was dead in his bed.

Casts were made of Joseph’s body, which was then dissected, although this fact was specifically denied in the British Medical Journal report, perhaps to avoid creating distress among those who had befriended him. Skin samples were also kept but their storage jars dried out during the second world war. The exact cause of Merrick’s death was not determined, although his attempt to sleep normally no doubt brought it about. Treves’ view differed from that of the inquest verdict, as he later described:

... he was found dead in his bed ... in April 1890. He was lying on his back as if asleep, and had evidently died suddenly and without a struggle, since not even the coverlet of the bed was disturbed. The method of his death was peculiar. So large and heavy was his head that he could not sleep lying down. When he assumed the recumbent position
the massive skull was inclined to drop backwards, with the result that he experienced no little distress. The attitude he was compelled to assume when he slept was very strange. He sat up in bed with his back supported by pillows, his knees were drawn up, and his arms clasped round his legs, while his head rested on the points of his bent knees.

He often said to me that he wished he could lie down and sleep ‘like other people’. I think on this last night (sic) he must, with some determination, have made the experiment. The pillow was soft, and the head, when placed on it, must have fallen backwards and caused a dislocation of the neck. Thus it came about that his death was due to the desire that had dominated his life — the pathetic but hopeless desire to be ‘like other people’.

It is easy to see Merrick’s life as one of unmitigated despair but it seems clear that, certainly in the last few years, he was as contented as many people with more obvious advantages. The final word should rest with Treves, who concluded his account of Joseph thus: ‘As a specimen of humanity, Merrick was ignoble and repulsive; but the spirit of Merrick, if it could be seen in the form of the living, would assume the figure of an upstanding and heroic man, smooth browed and clean of limb and with eyes that flashed undaunted courage’.

Sources:

Michael Howell and Peter Ford, *The True History of the Elephant Man*, 3rd ed, 1989: I gratefully acknowledge permission to quote substantially from this book. In particular the clinical details are the result of the late Michael Howell’s intensive investigations into the disease.
AY UP, ME DUCK; OR, SOME LEICESTERSHIRE BALLADS AND SONGS
Roy Palmer

Despairing of finding songs of his own county to sing, Richard Turner of Wigston wrote one of his own in 1986:

(Chorus)
Ay up, me duck, oo ya beauty.
We’re goona ‘av us dinner in a bit.
Suck ye rock and lick yer okie,
That’s what you’ll hear when you’re down Leicester way.

Went for a walk round Old John tower,
Kids and dogs and deer for company,
When out the ruins came a figure,
Lady Jane, and clear as day here’s what she said:
(Chorus)

In fact a number of manuscript or printed ballads mention Leicestershire, or have local settings and protagonists. Some celebrate events or seek to campaign in elections. In addition there is or was a body of songs, chiefly variations on a national pattern, which circulated orally.

There was apparently no street ballad printing in Leicester before the nineteenth century. Sheets issued in London sometimes mention the place to lend exoticism or verisimilitude for metropolitan readers and perhaps to help vendors with provincial sales.

Lady Jane Grey, whom Turner’s song mentions, was herself the subject of several pieces. Of two manuscripts items, one, ‘Lady Jane’s Lament’, was not printed until the nineteenth century:

Now must I lose my head:
a guiltless death I die.
Ay, why sholde my deare bloud be shed?
Now tell me, England, why?

The other, a madrigal entitled ‘She that was named Queene & never crowned’, has remained unpublished to this day:

She that was named Queene and never crowned
From tower most high beheld
Who she had wedded for her deere love
   And princely prid beheaded
What trump of gold or fame hath ever sounded
   A tragedie more strange
Than eyes of bewtie to se the head
   Struck off of husband daintie
     And presently, which was a greater wonder,
   Her head upon the block was strok asunder.\(^3\)

Others were printed in the sixteenth century, but only after the death in 1558 of Jane’s successor, Mary Tudor. Ulpian Fulwell’s *Flower of Fame*, with several ballads on Jane, came out in 1575. In 1560 there were several editions of a street ballad entitled ‘The Lamentacion that Ladie Jane made’:

This was the lamentacion,
   That Ladie Jane made:
   Saying, for my fathers Proclamacion,
   Now must I lose my head.\(^4\)

Another ballad of the same year, with the title simply of ‘The Lady Jane’, is now lost.\(^5\) So too is a sheet on a more humble person, an unnamed ‘prisoner who suffered deathe at Leicester in Lent 1586 at thassizes’.\(^6\)

‘Damnable Practises’ of 1619 deals with a celebrated case of witchcraft at Belvoir Castle and the hanging at Lincoln of some of those involved.\(^7\) ‘A Leicester-shire Frolick; Or, The Valiant Cook-Maid’ tells how five tailors were robbed of their wages by a cook-maid dressed as a highwayman, with a black pudding for a pistol.\(^8\) The only reference to the county is in the title. Local detail is similarly lacking in ‘The Leicester-shire Tragedy: or, The Fatal Over-throw of two Unfortunate Lovers, caus’d by Susanna’s Breach of Promise’.\(^9\) Susanna Lynard promises to marry one man but forsakes him for another. The first kills himself on her wedding day and his ‘bleeding ghost’ haunts her. She falls into a ‘feaver’ and dies, thus serving as a warning to all false lovers.

The local origin of one or more protagonists is given in such ballads as ‘The two Lester-sheire Lovers’, ‘The two Nottinghamshire Lovers, or the Maid of Standon of Nottinghamshire, and the Leicestershire Man’ and ‘The Wronged Lady: or, The Lord’s Daughter of Leicestershire’.\(^10\) The last must have been reasonably popular at least; for it had a sequel, ‘An Answer to The Wronged Lady’.\(^11\) ‘The Godly Maid of Leicester’, registered in 1675, has an explanatory sub-title: ‘Being a true Relation of Elizabeth Stretton, who
To the tune of *And yet me thinkes I love thee.*

The two Lester-sheire Lovers.

Walking in a meadow green
for recreation sake,
To drive away some sad thoughtes
which sorrofull did mee make,
I spyed two lonely lovers
did beare each other's woe,
To 'poynt a place of meeting
upon the meadow broe.
The true Mayde of the South:

O R,

A rare example of a Mayde dwelling at Rye in Susses, who for the love of a young man of Lether-shire, went beyond sea in the habit of a Page, and after, to their hearts content, were both married at Magrum in Germany, and now dwelling at Rye as aforesaid. To the tune of,

Come, come, my sweet and bonny one.

Within the Haven Towne of Rye,

There dwelt a Page whose constance transcendeth all compare,

This Courtly Dove
Did dearly love
A Youth, who did appear
In raiment and face,
To be the grace
and pride of Lether-shire.

This young man with a Noble face,
Who liet his service well,
Went from his native Lether-shire,
in Sussex to dwell;
Where dwelling now
The Towne of Rye,

They little Cupid, god of Love,
began to play his part,
And on the sudden from above,
He shot his golden dart,
Which did constrain
These Lovers to dance
to please each other more:
Sweet Margery
Lover Anthony,
The pride of Lether-shire.

Thus with conceiv'd sympathy,
Their Lovers were combin'd,
One touch'd the other heartily,
Yet neither told their mind:
She long'd to speak,
Her mind to break.
lying upon her Deathbed, was wonderfully delivered from the Temptations of Satan; worthy the noting of all that would live and dye in the fear of God'.

Once more, the only thing specific to the county is the mention of Leicester. At least 'The true Mayde of the South' has a refrain about 'the pride of Lester-shire': it tells of Margery, a woman of Rye, who 'for the love of a young man of Lestershire', called Anthony, 'went beyond Sea in the habit of a Page'. Two centuries later the ballad is still being sung by a Sussex man, Gordon Hall, who has recorded it on a recent cassette.

In 'The Leicestershire Garland' of about 1700 the action moves to a precise local setting (possibly Garendon Hall, near Shepshed):

Part 1st. The faithful Courtship between Thomas Hullman of Loughborough, and Elizabeth Smith of Garingdon in Leicestershire; Containing the young Man's Passionate expressions of Love and Loyalty Which at length conquered the Damsels Heart, who gave him a solemn promiss never to marry any but him: . . .

Part 2d: The Unfortunate Lover, or the cruel Father, who upon hearing of the intended marriage lock'd his Daughter up in a Chamber of strict confinement; with an account how by contrivance of hers he ascended into her Chamber, whereupon seeing her deplorable condition, ended his Life upon the point of a sword; and she followed the same Example, to the grief and lamentation of all the family.

The story may be true; it would be interesting to try to establish its historicity.

'The Leicestershire Freeholder's Song' is anti-Roundhead (and thus presumably anti-Whig) and dates from a parliamentary election campaign of 1714-15. Ballads were used in electioneering until well into the nineteenth century. Another eighteenth century campaign in which they played a part was that directed against encroachment on the common land of Charnwood Forest by those who established and fenced rabbit warrens. In 1753 a ballad opera entitled The Charnwood Opera was directed against William Herrick of Beaumanor, whom it attacked both for his warrening and sexual rapacity. The opera is still in manuscript, but an edition is planned.

Towards the end of the eighteenth century an unnamed local hosier was ridiculed in 'The Jealous Husband Outwitted. The unfortunate man is frightened out of his obsessive jealousy when his wife appears to him in the guise of the devil, flanked by three imps played by chimney sweeps.
The action could of course have been transferred from Leicester to elsewhere and there are indeed analogues of the ballad from Bristol and Suffolk, not to speak of the version in the writings of La Fontaine. 19

With 'The Leicester Chambermaid' we moved into the nineteenth century:

It's of a brisk young butcher as I have heard 'em say,
He started out of London town upon a certain day
Says he a frolic I will have my fortune for to try,
I will go into Leicestershire some cattle for to buy. 20

The butcher spends the night at an inn where he persuades one of the chambermaids to join him by promising her a guinea. Not only does he cheat her of the guinea the following morning but he leaves her, as she soon discovers, pregnant. When he returns the next year she confronts him with the child, secures a payment of a hundred pounds and makes him the laughing stock of the town. The Leicester setting has clung to most versions of the ballad, which as well as being widespread in print became very popular in tradition, though not apparently in Leicestershire itself.

This sheet could well have been entirely fictional. The affray at Empingham Wood in Rutland almost certainly happened, though it still has not been documented. 'The Oakham Poachers' relates how three brothers, John, Robert and George Perkins, while out poaching fire on two keepers, wounding one, and then are all sentenced to death. 21 It concludes:

So all young men take warning, and don't the law be scorning,
For in our days just dawning we are cut off in our prime
So don't the laws be scorning, two of them are transported
The other hung at Oakham. May God forgive his crime.

Copies were issued by printers in Birmingham, London and Preston, but not apparently in Leicester. By this time, though, Leicester had its own printers issuing ballads at a penny or halfpenny each. Isaac Cockshaw issued, probably in the 1820s, a Cobbettian 'Farmer's Warning' on the consequences of abandoning the old ways:

Your slow team of horses with dainty corn is fed;
They are nothing but dog's meat when once they are dead;
But keep a team of oxen to plough up your land,
When their work is done they are meat for a man. 22
The Oakham Poachers

YOUNG men in every station, that live within this nation
Pray hear my lamentation, a solemn warning tale;
Concerning of three brothers who lately were confined,
And heavy bound in irons in Oakham county gaol.

In the month of January, against the laws contrary,
Five young men, unweary, a-poaching went, we hear,
Into old woods did ramble, amongst the trees & brambles
And fired at pheasants random, which brought the keepers near.

The keepers did not venture, nor care the woods to enter.
But outside, near the centre, in ambush there they stood
The poachers being tired, as to fly away required,
At length young Perkins fired, and spilt the keepers blood

He on the ground lay crying, but no assistance nigh him
Lyke one that was a dying his blood in streams did flow,
Our way for home we were making, with nine pheasants we had taken,
Another keeper faced us, we fired at him also.

Then we was taken with speed for this inhuman deed,
Which caused our heart to bleed, when we were to prison sent;
The assizes they were near, and 1 of our comrades swore,
That we three brothers fired, for it we do repent.

Their names I now will mention, John, Robert & George Perkins;
Three brothers tried for poaching, and found guilty, as we hear.
Unto the judge they cried, pray mercy don’t deny us,
Don’t, my lord, have mercy upon our tender years.

May he who feeds the ravens, grant them peace from heaven,
May their sins be forgiven ere they resign their breath.
There ne’er was three brothers before condemn’d together
Within a dreary prison, and sentenced unto death.

So all young men take warning, and don’t the law be scorning.
For in our days just dawning we are cut off in our prime
So don’t the laws be scorning, two of them are transported
The other hung at Oakham. May God forgive his crime.
The sheet concludes with the ballad-seller’s appeal to his audience:

So now to conclude and to finish my song,
I hope that you here will not take me wrong,
You that have got money, and I have none,
Come buy up my ballads, that I may have some.

Sometimes a vendor would approach a printer to commission a sheet which he thought would sell. ‘A Copy of Verses on the Unfortunate J. Akril (Arkill), Who now lies under sentence of death at Leicester, for Mare-stealing’ was printed for J Fisher by W Jackson, no doubt for sale to the crowd which attended the execution in April 1826 at Infirmary Square, Leicester, or to people in the streets and markets soon after the event.\(^{23}\) Some of the ballad-printers were probably small tradesmen doing a diversity of work; others seem to have made a speciality of supplying the ballad trade.

Elections, executions, parish pump politics, local events and people, social comment, pure entertainment (not to say escapism): all these found a place in street ballads. One election piece is significant because it was written by Thomas Babington Macaulay. It was issued in 1826 by R Tibbutt of the Haymarket under the title of ‘A New Song’.\(^{24}\) Many other election ballads are to be found in the Leicestershire Record Office and the Leicester Reference Library.

Both in Leicester and elsewhere crime was a perennial preoccupation, as indeed it still is. To the sheets already cited one might add ‘Verses on the Horrid Murder of Four Children, at Old Basford’, which was issued by J Buckley of Leicester in 1837.\(^{25}\)

References to local people are sometimes so parochial as to be virtually indecipherable. ‘The Dishonest Snob’, issued without a printer’s name, concerns an unnamed cobbler from Belton who is charged with being two-faced, a perjurer and an embezzler from chapel funds.\(^{26}\) A contemporary would have been in little doubt as to the identity and circumstances but these now seem to be lost. ‘Remember Old Beelzebub’s Daughter’, printed probably in the 1840s by Hammersley of Union Street, deals with another intriguing but shadowy figure:

There is a Parson of small renown,
Lives on the New Walk, in Leicester town,
Whose hairs are grown grey all over his crown,
Talks of marrying ‘“Beelzebub’s daughter.’
'Tis said that this Parson, in years gone by
Courted and wooed a dear girl on the sly,
And when the time came he fought very shy,
But that was not ‘Beelzebub’s daughter.'

On the other hand the background to ‘The Wonderful Effects of the Leicester Rail Road’ is a matter of historical record, the linking of Leicester to the National rail network by the opening in 1840 of the Midland Counties line to the town. The printer was E Smith of Church Gate, Leicester’s most prolific publisher of ballads. The Madden Collection in Cambridge University Library holds these examples of his work:

Adam was a Gentleman/The Banks of Sweet Primroses
The Flower of Leicestershire/On the Banks of the Blue Moselle
Here’s a Health to the Queen of England. Or Britain’s Hopes
Jenny Jones/Oh, No, We Never Mention Her
John Bull and the New Taxes
The Lost Lady Found/How, When, and Where
A Most Curious and Interesting Dialogue on the New Rail Roads, Or, the delight and pleasure of Travelling by Hot Water (This includes ‘The Wonderful Effects . . .’)
Orphan Child/The Soldier’s Tear
Poor Mary in the Silvery Tide/The Wanderer
The Rambling Sailor/Isle of Beauty Fare-Thee-Well
Rory O,More/In the Days we went a Gipsying
The Rose of Allandale/Pretty Susan the Pride of Kildare
Struggle for the Breeches/The Flowing Bowl
Sucking Pig
William and Harriet/Sheep Head and Pluck
Woman and the Joy and Pride of the Land

This is sixteen sheets, with twenty seven ballads and one dialogue. The only Leicester printer to approach this output is T Warwick of Loseby Lane, whose six sheets have seven ballads and one recitation. These figures are put into perspective by comparison with those of the Birmingham printers, Joseph Russell (245 sheets; 425 titles) and William Pratt (316 sheets; 503 titles).

Smith’s work is almost entirely duplicated by printers in other towns. Nevertheless it is interesting to see a selection of what was being printed, sold and sung in Leicester in the late 1830s and early 1840s. Local interest is
REMEMBER OLD BEELZEBUB'S DAUGHTER.

Tune, "Hokey pokey, &c."

There is a Parson of small renown,
Lives on the New Walk, in Leicester town,
Whoso hairs are grown grey all over his crown,
Talks of marrying "Beelzebub's daughter."

'Tis said that this Parson, in years gone by,
Courted and wooed a dear girl on the sly,
And when the time came he fought very shy,
But that was not "Beelzebub's daughter."

'Tis feared this Parson now goes the "broad way,"
However its certain he has been astray,
For a short time ago he was heard at the play
Crying out for "Old Beelzebub's daughter."

From his peaceful home to the play-house he goes,
Insults, among others, manufacturers of hose,
And on them, in spite, blows his foul looking nose,
Then screams for "Old Beelzebub's daughter."

This Parson (by law) being Beelzebub's son,
Or will be when he's married his daughter,
Shall have a good spree with three fifes and a drum,
And shout hurrah for "Old Beelzebub's daughter."

But should he be up to his tricks once again,
And jilt "Old Beelzebub's daughter,"
Why then he shall go to the "old folks" below,
'Midst what he deserves—shouts of laughter.

Hammorsley, Printer, Union Street, Leicester.
limited. 'The Wonderful Effects ...' has already been mentioned. 'The Flower of Leicestershire' looks promising:

As I walked out one morning clear,
Down by the Soar's side,
My drooping spirits for to cheer,
An English girl I spied,
Like some great goddess, with a smile,
Walked forth this charming fair,
She is the blooming rose of England's Isle
And the flower of Leicestershire.

Yet nothing else in it is specifically local.

Topical items of national interest are 'John Bull and the New Taxes', first issued in 1841, and 'Here's a Health to the Queen of England', which dates from shortly before the birth of the Prince of Wales on the ninth of November 1841. The bulk of the sheets carry sentimental popular songs of the day (or of the day before), like 'Jenny Jones', 'The Orphan Child' and 'In the Days we went a Gipsying'. A few, like 'Struggle for the Breeches', have a harder edge. There is a significant minority of songs from oral tradition, like 'The Banks of Sweet Primroses', 'The Lost Lady Found', 'Poor Mary in the Silvery Tide', 'The Rambling Sailor' and 'Pretty Susan the Pride of Kildare'.

These categories overlap. 'The Rose of Allandale' is a composed song of the early nineteenth century which circulated orally for a century and is popular to this day in folk song clubs. 'John Bull and the New Taxes' was sung at least until the 1940s in Ireland. 'Sucking Pig', a song of late eighteenth century origin, remained in oral tradition until the twentieth century. It is one of the few reminders among the street ballads under consideration that Leicestershire was a rural county, with appropriate interests. Other trades, other events, other pastimes which one might expect to have been treated were apparently ignored by ballad-printers in Leicester. Elsewhere they seem to have been good business. Leicester's reticence remains a mystery.

The ballad trade persisted for some thirty years after Smith's time, though it is poorly documented. In 1875 a correspondent wrote to the Leicester Chronicle to enquire what had become of the old ballads and ballad-singers:

The man and woman standing toe to toe, with their mouths all awry,
frequently a broken nose — and a black eye — and a nasal twang to make their voices distinguishable in the din. Where are the lines upon lines that used to be propped up against ‘a dead wall’ — for the gratification of the ‘Johns and Molls’ at the Statutes and Fairs? I often wonder, for I remember as a youngster possessing quite a choice of ‘songs’, which I always carried in my jacket pocket. 34

In Rutland, street singers seem to have lingered until the end of the nineteenth century at least. In Oakham they continued ‘drawling out doleful ditties’ and selling at a penny a time, ballads such as ‘Sweet Belle Mahone’, ‘Where is my wandering boy tonight?’ and ‘Just after the Battle’ (a sequel to ‘Just before the Battle, Mother’). The last tune was also used for a ballad on a murder committed by one Kate Webster.35

There was, of course, an oral tradition in Leicestershire and Rutland, though none of the items so far discussed seem to have entered it. Much will undoubtedly have been lost through want of looking and even when people looked they neglected to record what they saw. There are tantalizing glimpses from time to time. Harold St G Cramp writes in his autobiography, A Yeoman Farmer’s Son, that the vicar of Church Langton in the early days of this century, the Rev Dr Ross, ‘persuaded the old inhabitants to sing the ditties and folk songs they remembered from their childhood, and he set them down to music’. Cramp told me in a letter that one of Ross’s main informants was a man called York but I have been unable to trace the manuscripts.36

The folk song collectors of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries paid little attention to Leicestershire and Rutland. Frank Kidson gives the text of a version of ‘The Grey Mare’ sent from Leicestershire in his Traditional Tunes of 1891.37 Two years later, in English Country Songs, Lucy Broadwood printed ‘I’ll tell you of a fellow’ from a Hertfordshire woman who ‘had it from a Leicestershire maidservant’ and included ‘Now Robin, lend me thy bow’ from Pammelia of 1609 mainly because it mentions Uppingham: ‘The inclusion of this fine canon may be pardoned, in view of the difficulty of finding any more direct representation of Rutland’.38 Cecil Sharp, though he was a pupil at Uppingham School for several years, does not seem to have returned to the county in his collecting days.

Fortunately since the Second World War the revival of interest in folk songs has led to the uncovering of more material. Travelling the country for the BBC in search of folk songs Peter Kennedy found Charlie Wilson at Empingham, Rutland in 1952. Wilson, born in 1878 in the same village,
had learned as a boy in the stable after work ‘All Jolly Fellows’ from a man called George Browett. It is not only good to have a version of this song from Rutland but gratifying to find evidence of an apparently missing oral tradition. Further material comes from Elizabeth Ruddock, who gathered a splendid little collection of May songs from Barlestone, Braunston, Cottesmore, Exton, Market Bosworth, Newbold Verdon, Saxby, Sproxton, Thurnby and Tugby. These were published in the 1960s. Still more May songs have been recorded in recent years by an Ibstock doctor, E C Cawte, who has also done extensive field work on mumming plays, many of which include songs. Versions of these from Caldecott and Sproxton were included in my book The Folklore of Leicestershire and Rutland.

Another veteran student of local folklore is Eric Swift, who noted this in 1953 from a Mrs Kilby of Ratcliffe-on-the-Wreake, aged sixty five:

The first of May is a very find day,
Please to remember the maypole.
All round the maypole we do trot,
See what a maypole we have got.
Dressed in ribbons and dressed in bows,
See what a maypole we can show.
Come, come, come, the summer now is here,
Come out among the flowers and make your pretty bowers.
Come, come, come, the summer now is here.

From his father Fred G Swift, who was born in Leicester in 1869, Eric Swift remembers a wassail song, to the tune of ‘God rest ye merry, gentlemen’:

I have a little whistle bob made out of holly tree,
The finest little whistle bob that ever you did see,
For it was at Christmas time and we travelled far and near,
And we wish you good health and a happy New Year.

The Road is very dirty, my shoes are very thin.
I have a little pocket to put a penny in.
If you haven’t got a penny then a ha’penny will do.
If you haven’t got a ha’penny then God bless you.

To complement these classic items he has a couple of vivid pieces with an urban flavour which have something of the same spirit as Richard Turner’s ‘Ay up, me duck’:
I'll tell Ma when I get 'ome,
The girls won't leave the lads alone.
I'll tell Ma on our Suzanne,
She goes up town to meet 'er man.
'Igh legged boots an' feather in 'er cap,
Off she goes to meet 'er chap.

We all go to church on a Sunday,
Take a trip to Loughborough on a Monday.
Tuesday, stay at home, have a concert on our own
With a piece of tissue paper and a comb.
Mild and bitter ale,
If you can't afford a glass you can have it in a pail.
Oh what a rush there'll be to get to jail
For it's just like home sweet home.\textsuperscript{42}

References:

1. Unpublished; I am grateful to Richard Turner for communicating it.
3. British Library, Egerton MS 2009, f.11\textsuperscript{v}; I am grateful to John Goodacre for the text.
8. Street ballad printed by R Burton, West Smithfield, London (1641-74), to the tune of 'Ragged and torn': Bodleian Library, Wood Collection. E.25.28. For another copy see J Ashton, \textit{A Century of
Ballads, 1887, 271-6; cf R Wehse, Schwankleid und Flugblatt in Grossbritannien, Frankfurt am Main, 1979, no 439.


15. Bodleian Library, Douce Collection, 3(576) and 8° PP184.

16. Bodleian Library, Firth Collection, b.21 (141).

17. The planned edition is by John Goodacre and Roy Palmer. One ballad from the opera is in my A Ballad History of England, 60-1.


20. Street ballad printed by J Catnach, 2 Monmouth Court, Seven Dials, London (1813-38), and sold by W Marshall, Lawrence Hill, Bristol: Bodleian Library, John Johnson Collection; reprinted in my Folklore, 168-70. Cf R Wehse, op cit, no 90. For an oral version see F Parslow ed, Marrowbones: English Folk Songs from the Hammond and Gardiner MSS, 1965, 13, under the title ‘The Brisk Young Butcher’.

21. Street ballad printed and published at Taylor’s Song Mart, 92 & 93, Brick Lane, Spitalfields, London: Mitchell Library, Glasgow, Kidson Collection, Broadsides. Cf versions printed by W Jackson, Birmingham: Vaughan Williams Memorial Library, Cecil Sharp Broadsides and by J Harkness, Preston, no 670: Cambridge University Library, Madden Collection, vol 18. One text is given
in my *Folklore*, 185-7. For an oral version, see ‘The Bold Poachers’ in *Journal of the Folklore Society*, 6 no 26, 1922, 15-16. I am grateful to John Goodacre for pointing out that the metre and phrasing might indicate the tune ‘The Boys of Mullabawn’.

22. Sheffield University Library, Firth Collection, C83; reproduced in my *Folklore*, 171.

23. Private collection; copy in my possession.

24. Trinity College, Cambridge, Macaulay Scrapbook, MS 0.15.67; printed in *The Leicestershire Historian*, vol 2 no 11, 1980-1, 24-5. There is another copy in Leicester Reference Library.

25. Sheffield University Library, Firth Collection, C102.

26. Leicester Reference Library.


31. See my *Street Ballads in Birmingham*, forthcoming.


33. There were some songs connected with the framework knitting in Leicestershire but they were not issued on broadsides; see my *Folklore*, chapter 6.

34. *Leicester Chronicle*, 16 October 1875; quoted in my *Folklore*, 171 & 172.


41. *Folklore*, 153-64.

42. The four songs from Eric Swift’s collection are all previously unpublished. I am grateful to him for communicating them.
MY OBSERVATIONS ON BEING A ‘CLIPPIE’: CONDUCTRESS 666 FOR LEICESTER TRANSPORT
Blanche E Harrison

I was conscripted for war work from out of the shoe trade. The boss of my firm said I seemed suitable material for a land girl. I’ve never quite made out just what he meant by that remark. I am tall and fairly strong — at least I was then; so it must have been that which prompted the remark. However, I opted for public transport and never regretted it.

I started the hard way, just when winter was coming on and I had all the cold dark mornings ahead.

The first interview was at head office in Abbey Park Road. I had as my co-recruit a little cheerful girl called Edna. Talk about the long and the short of it! I was five feet seven; Edna just about managed five feet one. She really had to stretch to reach the bell. We got on famously from the start and our circumstances were similar, both having husbands abroad in the forces. We felt we were doing a real job towards the war effort, getting the workers to the munition factories and back, along with every other type of worker.

Well, as I say, the first interview was at Head Office — the usual forms filled in, and tests made regarding ability to read and write and do simple arithmetic. Having passed these tests, the next was, of course, a medical, carried out by a doctor nominated by the Transport Committee. We both successfully passed this and were told when to report for the first day at school, which lasted for two weeks tuition. Then we were sent out on the
road with an experienced conductor. The instructor in the school was a strict disciplinarian, Inspector Stannion, now deceased long since. He was good at his job and intended that we should be good at ours. During this time we were measured for our uniforms; that was, if there wasn’t one in stock, and as Edna and I were not stock size, we had to be specially fitted out. We felt quite important, though the rest of the recruits obtained theirs more quickly, being stock size. We didn’t mind waiting as we were determined to look as smart as possible. Indeed that was impressed on us by Inspector Stannion. Uniforms must be kept brushed and in good repair; also collar and tie must be worn, the leather straps and cash bag polished till they shone. These things became a matter of great pride to us. I wish I could say the same of today’s bus crews; alas, no! We learned the basic facts about conducting and using the ticket punch, which is no longer in existence. This contraption was of heavy metal and hung at our side on the leather strap and of course could get extremely heavy after a busy ‘trip’. We were taken out by another conductor for about a month, I think; then we were put on what were called the ‘spare sheets’. These sheets were all pinned up in the passage way and had to be scanned each day to see whom one was working with and what time the duty started; and woe betide us if we turned up late!

I lived with my grandparents at that time and my dear old Gran would call me early mornings, if I didn’t respond quickly enough to the alarm clock. She would keep calling until I padded out of my bedroom; then she would settle down again for another sleep, bless her. I often had to sign on at 5.20am, meaning I had to get up about 4.30; ugh! I don’t know how I did it. Always Gran had put porridge in the old kitchen oven overnight and how I relished it before going out into the cold. At night when I was on late shift there would be soup or rice pudding, which I love, for when I came in about 11.00pm. The trams ran in about 10.15 then. There were a lot of bus routes operating by this time, but I was always on the trams; ‘the old bone-shakers’ we called them. They rattled and swayed their way along the rails at what seemed then a great speed and of course the other traffic was far less than nowadays. The tram lines were always kept clear; a tram could not pull up dead like a bus or car, so it was wise to keep well clear of the lines.

The first six months were spent doing what was called ‘spare sheet duties’, which meant irregular shifts, and different drivers constantly, as one was requested to fill in on duties for one reason or another. To be spare strictly meant being available in the spare-room, which was a room set aside for the accommodation of a small number of crews on call for any emergency or special buses for school trips, etc. The best thing about these duties
was being able to slip out to do a little scouting round the shops and market for the little odd luxuries like bananas, cigarettes and all kinds of things in short supply. Wearing a uniform gave one a bit of edge when queues were forming. Unfair I suppose, but we didn’t really take too much advantage; there wasn’t time.

One important duty allotted to the conductor, apart from all the rest which were numerous, was changing the trolley which gave the tram its contact with electric wires overhead. One had to use a long pole with a kind of hook on the end to unhook the trolley at the terminus onto the other line ready for the return journey. This was great fun in pouring rain and the wet getting all down one’s neck and not being able to see the lines properly in the dark. However, most of the drivers were decent chaps who would take on this duty for their less able mate. Otherwise I am afraid there would have been many delays in the service.

With the war being on of course there was a black-out each night and the trams had blinds to pull down. The lights were painted blue, so it wasn’t too easy to see. We had a small shaded bulb fixed to our shoulder strap and connected to a battery carried in the pocket. This gave a light enough to work by, though our shape was a bit bulgy, with a battery stuffed into a top pocket. This didn’t prevent me from being diddled with a farthing which, if new, shone like a silver sixpence in the dim light and the sharp individual who passed it was given change also. So one had to be careful of this happening or at the end of the day the takings were short and we had to make up all shortages out of our own pockets. So we were vigilant for our own sakes. The conductor was in charge of the vehicle entirely, except for the actual driving, and was responsible for good time-keeping along the route. When I was transferred from the spare sheets to the regular sheets I had allotted to me a regular mate. We worked all shifts together from then on. My mate was a decent fellow and was a conscientious driver, which helped to make me a good conductor, I think, as he wouldn’t have any slippshod ways of working. We always left dead on time if at all possible, never too early and never late, unless things went wrong, which they sometimes did.

If my ticket punch went wrong or I ran out of tickets the procedure was to write a note explaining the situation and pass it to an inspector at the Clock Tower, and if one was lucky there would be a supply of tickets or a fresh ticket punch waiting at the next return to the tower, which was then the focal point for almost all the routes. Going out with these replacements was one of the tasks allotted to spare crews.
I look back upon these years spent with Leicester Transport with some nostalgia, as I enjoyed the job in spite of the now called unsocial hours. Sometimes on Saturday evenings I would see my friends all dressed up for an evening out, and I would feel a bit hard done by, but mostly I really liked the job.

I have always liked people and have found that in most cases one gets back the treatment one gives out. People are friendly and I used to have plenty of offers of help 'with the bell' on busy trips. We were allowed to recruit a passenger who knew the route and the stops to be on the platform wearing an L.C.T. arm band to make it legal.

This ends my account of a Clippie’s Life 1940-1945.
REPORTS
Kate Thompson, Geoffrey Brandwood and Steph Mastoris, Yolanda and Paul Courtney

EAST MIDLANDS HISTORY FAIR IN NOTTINGHAM

The Nottingham organizers had a great deal of difficulty in getting the Fair at the end of May 1988 staged at all, losing their original site at Wollaton Park and having to use the much smaller venue in the Brewhouse Yard Museum. As a result there were no outside activities but two large marquees housing local societies. As usual there was a good turnout from most of the five counties concerned and a lot of public interest. There were a number of new initiatives, such as the glossy programme produced by Robert and Susan Howard and a large banner. Once again there was a discernible improvement in the standard of displays and one society took the prize for providing its own generator to run a small film show.

ONE-DAY CONFERENCE ON WOMEN’S HISTORY IN LEICESTERSHIRE

The Leicestershire Local History Council held a one-day conference at the New Walk Museum and Art Gallery in Leicester in March 1989 on the subject of women’s history in the county. This was a well-attended and very worthwhile ‘first’ for the Local History Council. The standard of speakers was high and the subject as interesting to the men, who were present in some numbers, as it was to the women.
In the morning session Kate Thompson spoke about sources for women’s history at the Leicestershire Record Office and made a useful typed summary available. This was followed by Shirley Aucott who, it has to be said, stole the show with a presentation described by her as ‘visual, oral and tactile’ on ‘Pregnancy, and childbirth in Leicester’. This was an impressive integration of documentary, photographic and oral history sources; extracts from oral history recordings and the opportunity to handle old obstetric instruments combined to make it a memorable occasion.

During the afternoon session Sheila Burnage discussed ‘Excavating women in the hosiery industry’ and Hazel Edwards traced the changing history of the farmer’s wife from 1918 to 1950; the importance of women in the economy of both the hosiery trade and farming came over strongly. A number of short presentations on the work of local history groups concluded the day.

The overall impression of the day was that women’s history is everyone’s history too and by giving special attention to a neglected topic a more balanced historical perspective is achieved. We look forward to the Local History Council’s next event, on the theme of agriculture, which will be in November of this year.

Y C C and P C

FOURTH CONFERENCE ON LOCAL HISTORY IN SOUTH LEICESTERSHIRE AND NORTH WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

This one-day conference held each autumn is now a regular feature of local history life in the Market Harborough area. The event allows those concerned with local history to meet and discuss matters of mutual interest as well as hear reports of research in progress. As usual the event was held in the Council Chamber of Harborough District Council and organized jointly by the Harborough Museum and the Department of Adult Education of Leicester University. There was a record attendance of over forty people.
This year’s guest lecturer was Dr John Beckett of Nottingham University, who spoke on Laxton in Nottinghamshire and its open field system. He discussed the methods of open field agriculture both past and present and explained how the system had survived into the twentieth century by partial enclosure of the village fields in the eighteenth century. The lecture was most thought-provoking, especially for those who had researched aspects of common field agriculture in villages now totally enclosed. It was followed by a lively discussion.

All the reports on current research dealt with places and subjects within a ten mile radius of Market Harborough and illustrated the vigour with which local history is being pursued here. The morning session commenced with Pam Aucott, who spoke about nineteenth century photographers in the Harborough area and shewed examples of their work dating back to the 1850s. Wendy Raybold reported on her analysis of well established village families in West Haddon. Ralph Weedon outlined research being carried out at the Harborough Museum into agricultural change in the twentieth century throughout the area. Denis Kenyon reported on the detailed study of the 1851 Census for Hallaton undertaken by some of the Friends of Hallaton Museum. Barry Summers gave an account of life at the Front during the First World War as revealed in a fascinating diary kept by a local member of the R A M C. Ena Meecham described the agricultural information which has been extracted from wills and inventories of farmers in Great Easton from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries.

In the afternoon session Richard Pollard discussed recent archaeological activity in and around Medbourne by the Leicestershire Archaeological Unit. Greta Bently and Gail Niezawitowski outlined their graveyard survey of Fleckney parish church. Finally, Chris Davies described a local school of slate headstone engravers of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, distinctive in its use of floral decorative motifs. Throughout the day those attending were able to view six well presented displays, by Barry Summers, Chris Davies and groups from West Haddon, Hallaton, Husbands Bosworth and Brinshurst/Drayton/Great Easton.

Summaries of John Beckett’s lecture and most of the reports are published in the Harborough Historian No 8. The next conference will be on Saturday the 14th of October. Details are available from the staff of the Harborough Museum.

G B and S M
LEICESTERSHIRE AND RUTLAND LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETIES

a. Periodicals
b. Occasional publications
c. Member of Leicestershire Local History Council

c  ASHBY-DE-LA-ZOUCH Local History Society
   Mrs J M Bolderson, 12 Tower Gardens, Ashby-de-la-Zouch
bc  ASHBY-DE-LA-ZOUCH Museum
   13/15 Lower Church Street, Ashby-de-la-Zouch
bc  BARKBY Local History Committee
   Mrs W Madelin, 22 School Lane, Barkby, Leicester
ac  Herricks and BEAUMANOR Society
   Mr D Andreas, 8 Hastings Road, Woodhouse Eaves, Loughborough

BILLESDON Local History Group
   Mrs Vlaeminke, Sherwood Rise, Leicester Road, Billesdon

BIRSTALL and District Local History Society
   Mr B Thomas, 83 Park Road, Birstall, Leicester

BLABY Heritage Group
   Mrs H Chapman, 25 Cork Lane, Glen Parva, Leicester

BRANSTON and District Local History Group
   Miss Hall, Main Street, Branston by Belvoir, (Grantham)

ac  BRINGHURST, GREAT EASTON and DRAYTON Local History Society
   Mr K Heselton, 24 Barnsdale Close, Great Easton, Market Harborough
   *Newsletter*

bc  CASTLE DONINGTON Local History Society
   Mr B M Townsend, 7 Borough Street, Castle Donington, (Derby)

COALVILLE and DISTRICT Local History Society
   Miss M Oglesby, Coalville Library, High Street, Coalville

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

bc  DUNTON BASSETT Local History Group
   Mr A C Taylor, 3 Station Road, Dunton Bassett, Lutterworth

c  EARL SHILTON and District Local History Society
   Mr P Lindley, 42 Priesthill Road, Hinckley
c ENDERBY History Group
   Mr J R Crofts, 1 Sheridan Close, Enderby, Leicester
b EVINGTON Local History Society
   Miss A Sharpe, Evington Library, Evington Lane, Leicester
c FLECKNEY and SADDINGTON Historical Society
   Mrs E M Morley, 38 Victoria Street, Fleckney, Leicester
FOXTON Inclined Plane Trust
   Mr D Goodwin, Bottom Lock, Foxton, Market Harborough
abc FRISBY-ON-THE-WREAKE Historical Society
   Mr R Pinfold, Field View, Main Street, Rotherby, Melton Mowrbay
      Newsletter
   Friends of HALLATON Museum
   Mr D Kenyon, 36 East Gate, Hallaton, Market Harborough
HATHERN Local History Group
   Mr A M Swift, 18 Shepshed Road, Hathern, Loughborough
ac HINCKLEY Local History Group
   Mr D F Allinson, 97 Leicester Road, Hinckley
      The Hinckley Historian
ac HOUGHTON NEWS
   11 Deane Gate Drive, Houghton-on-the-Hill, Leicester
abc HUSBANDS BOSWORTH Historical Society
   Mrs B James, The Coppice, Mowsley Road, Husbands Bosworth,
      Lutterworth
      Bygone Bosworth
abc IBSTOCK Historical Society
   Mr D Palmer, 2 Jacquemart Close, Ibstock, Coalville
c KEGWORTH Village Association
   Mr R J Fordham, 141 Forest Road, Loughborough
c KIMCOTE and WALTON Village History Society
   Mr D V Allaway, Fairhaven, Poultney Lane, Kimcote, Lutterworth
c KNOSSINGTTON Local History Group
   Mrs V Wood, Church View, Knossington, Oakham, Rutland
ac LEICESTER Literary and Philosophical Society
   Dr D T Ford, Department of Geology, University of Leicester
      Transactions
bc LEICESTER Oral History Archive
   Mrs S Kirrane, 3rd Floor, 80 Granby Street, Leicester
a VAUGHAN Archaeological and Historical Society
   Miss D C Valentine, 29 Walton Street, LEICESTER
      Transactions
   The Victorian Society, LEICESTER Group
   Mrs E Chambers, 28 Rectory Lane, Thurcaston, Leicester
abc LEICESTERSHIRE Archaeological and Historical Society
The Guildhall, Guildhall Lane, Leicester
Transactions

abc LEICESTERSHIRE Family History Society
Miss S F Brown, 25 Homecroft Drive, Packington,
Ashby-de-la-Zouch

a LEICESTERSHIRE Industrial History Society
Dr M Palmer, 54 Chapel Street, Measham, (Burton upon Trent)

bc LEICESTERSHIRE Libraries
Thames Tower, Navigation Street, Leicester

ac LEICESTERSHIRE Local History Council
The Record Office, 57 New Walk, Leicester
The Leicestershire Historian

a LOUGHBOROUGH and DISTRICT Archaeological Society
Mr J P Brownlow, 31 Cowdray Close, Loughborough
Bulletin

C HARBOROUGH Museum
Mr S Mastoris, Adam and Eve Street, MARKET HARBOROUGH
Friends of Harborough Museum
Mr S Mastoris, Adam and Eve Street, MARKET HARBOROUGH

a MARKET HARBOROUGH Historical Society
Mr T Heggs, Harborough Museum, Market Harborough
The Harborough Historian
Friends of MELTON Carnegie Museum
Mr M O Powderly, 26 Lincoln Drive, MELTON MOWBRAY

C MELTON MOWBRAY and DISTRICT Historical Society
Mr C Bowes, 7 Palmerston Road, Melton Mowbray

C Local Archaeology and History Group (NEWBOLD VERDON)
Mr M W Harding, 57 Arnolds Crescent, Newbold Verdon, Leicester

bc OADBY Local History Group
Mr B Elliott, 17 Half Moon Crescent, Oadby, Leicester

C OLD DALBY Local History Group
Mr S S D Lytton-Anderson, Home Farm, Old Dalby, Melton
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a OLD UNION CANALS Society
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c REARSBY Local History Group
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abc RUTLAND Record Society
    Rutland County Museum, Catmose Street, Oakham, Rutland
    Rutland Record

c SHAWELL Historical Society
    Mrs E Raven, Shawell Hall, Shawell, Lutterworth

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

c SOMERBY Local History Group
    Mr R G Mellows, The Carriers, Chapel Lane, Somerby, Melton Mowbray

c SYSTON Local History Group
    Mrs L Whitehead, 29 East Avenue, Syston, Leicester

THRUSSINGTON Local History Society
    Mr R E Banks, 12 Back Lane, Thrussington, Leicester

ac WESLEYAN Historical Society, EAST MIDLANDS Branch
    Dr J Waller, 90 Forest Road, Loughborough
    Heritage

bc WHITWICK Historical Group
    Mr G R Hibbert, 81 Parsonwood Hill, Whitwick, Leicester

Friends of WIGSTON Framework Knitting Museum
    Mr I Varey, 2 Paget Court, Paget Street, Kibworth, Leicester

ac Greater WIGSTON Historical Society
    Mrs D Chandler, 3 Eastway Road, WIGSTON MAGNA, Leicester
    Bulletin

c WOLDS Historical Organisation
    Mr R Trubshaw, 2 Cross Hill Close, Wymeswold, Loughborough

bc WOLVEY Local History Group
    Mr C S Woodward, Beverley House, Wolvey, Hinckley
LEICESTERSHIRE PORTRAITS: Forty biographical sketches of Leicestershire characters from medieval times to the twentieth century
J D Bennett Leicestershire Libraries and Information Service 1988 £2.50

This somewhat idiosyncratic collection of forty portraits of men and women, either Leicestershire born and bred or incomers whose life and work became associated with the county, ranges from John Wycliffe to Pen Lloyd, a much loved figure of modern times. Each entry consists of a portrait, a brief biography and a short booklist for further reading.

The occupational range is as wide as the time scale: entertainers such as Lady Isobel Barnett and the famous dwarf Jeffrey Hudson; the sporting painters John Ferneley and Ben Marshall, the dedicated recorder of now vanished buildings John Flower and the distinguished modern etcher Mary Sloane; a famous patron of the arts and amateur artist, Sir George Beaumont of Coleorton, friend of Wordsworth and John Constable, as well as of other members of the Romantic movement, and one of the founders of the National Gallery. Trade, industry and investors are not forgotten; Thomas Cook, creator of the popular travel industry, John Heathcoat and his lace machine and J A Hansom with his ‘Patent Safety Cab’, the prototype of which was built in Hinckley. Hansom was also a popular architect, responsible in Leicester for the ‘Pork Pie’ Chapel and the building which is now the New Walk Museum. No selection of this kind can please everyone but it is surprising that it does not include the shrewd observer William Gardiner of Music and Friends, nor that dedicated Leicestershire man, Sir Robert Martin, lover of its scenery and dialect, member of the County Council for over fifty years and Chairman of it for over thirty five of them.

This book is well produced and is a pleasant introduction to many aspects of Leicestershire biography.

G K L
Director of Education for Leicestershire from 1947 to 1971, Stewart Mason used his forceful personality and many skills, backed by a supportive County Council, in an attempt to bring liberal cultured education to ordinary children and ordinary men and women within the optimistic climate of the 1944 Education Act.

This account of his many-sided personality, interests and achievements is largely compiled from the memories of those who knew and worked with him. His approach was always a very personal one, winning the trust and support of his committee and his head teachers: schools were left free to adapt and to get on with the job. He had the knack of seizing the spirit of the times, moved and adapted with it, with a very shrewd sense of what was possible. His liberating influence moved gradually, beginning with the appointment of key advisers who went into schools by invitation only and thus were welcome. The development of broadly-based instrumental music teaching in schools, with the foundation of the County School of Music and County Orchestras in 1949; the early establishment of the County Art Collection, financed from a windfall fund; the proposal to establish a Leicestershire version of the Cambridgeshire Village Colleges: all these proposals won the approval of thrifty councillors, since they would make good use of educational facilities.

In the 1950s public concern over the effects of selection at eleven became more vocal. Because it was felt that on the borderline there was little to choose between those who passed and those who ‘failed’ a new method of organizing secondary education was proposed. Instead of being in parallel, schools would be ‘end on’. All children would move to middle — High Schools at eleven and then, if their parents agreed to keep them at school until sixteen, to Grammar Schools at fourteen. The decision, taken in 1957, was approved by the Council since it made good use of existing schools and avoided — at the time — very large schools. It pleased parents, since they could now choose ‘Grammar School’ education for all their children. The first pilot schemes at Wigston and Hinckley came into operation in 1958; by the end of the 1960s the whole county was covered and the system was popular, with an increasing number of children opting to stay until sixteen. Known nationally as ‘the Leicestershire Plan’, it provided a painless route to comprehensive education for rural and semi-rural areas.
The removal of the formal selection process at eleven took many pressures off the primary schools, so that the 1960s became a time when many new methods could be tried. Some innovations attracted considerable attention overseas and the freedom to experiment or not made Leicestershire a stimulating environment in which to work.

From the 1950s a rising school population brought a substantial school-building programme and here there was close cooperation between Stewart Mason and the County Architect Tom Collins. No detail was too small for the attention of the Director. Schools were ‘tailored’ to their sites and small sums were available for allocation to the purchase of works of art for new buildings, including sculptures. As time went on design was influenced by new teaching methods and economy dictated a move from space wasted on corridors to classrooms grouped round resources centres. Theatres began to replace assembly halls and flexible sports halls to replace gymnasia.

Outside Leicestershire Stewart Mason played an important role in the reform and development of national art education. This continued after his retirement, as did his role in the purchase of works of art for the County Collection.

In general this is a very fair and balanced picture of an era, as well as of a remarkable man. Writing the history and the biography of the recent past is never an easy task but this book does convey the sense of excitement and enthusiasm felt by everyone who worked for Leicestershire education in these stimulating years. Looking back from the vantage point of the late 1980s a historian may well ask which offered most to our children, the values of civilized western culture or those of the unadorned market place.

G K L
HATCHMENTS IN BRITAIN Vol 8: Cheshire, Derbyshire, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, Nottinghamshire and Staffordshire
Peter Summers and John E Titterton eds Phillimore 1988 £11.95

The Leicestershire and Rutland sections are by F M Best. There are no hatchments earlier than the eighteenth century in Leicestershire, many are nineteenth century and most are in good condition. The entries give detailed descriptions of each individual hatchment. Students of heraldry and family history will find this a useful guide and welcome the inclusion of four neighbouring counties in the same volume.

G K L

LEICESTER PORTRAIT PHOTOGRAPHERS BEFORE 1900: A Provisional list illustrated from family collections showing the work of ten studios
Jonathan Wilshere Leicester Research Section of Chamberlain music and Books 1988 £2.95

Family portraits, alas often undated and with the passing of the years often unidentified, are still a source of fascination to the searcher after family history. This welcome booklet, illustrated from the author’s own family archives, seeks to list, with their dates, Leicester photographers of the second half of the nineteenth century. Some photographers working on the county market towns are given in a separate list. Many photographers plied other trades as well — watch-makers, tailors and drapers, piano-dealers, grocers, booksellers, as well as the more obviously allied crafts of printing, engraving and picture-framing. Some of course travelled to their subjects, others had premises in other towns and the wide distribution of their studios throughout the town is a tribute to the popularity of their craft and to the expansion and prosperity of Leicester and its citizens from the 1860s.

The interesting reproductions of the backs of prints shewn on the inside cover of this useful booklet all add to its value as a guide to a little documented source of local information.

G K L
This latest addition to the series of personal memories of local people was compiled from entries in a creative writing competition organized by Leicestershire Libraries in 1987.

Though many of the entries describe conditions and attitudes which were shared by contemporaries in other parts of the county, Coalville was different. It was Leicestershire's new town of the nineteenth century and the centre of the once productive coalmining industry. The pits at both ends of the town, with their ancillary industries and the elastic webbing factory, formed the background to the whole life of the area. No one was immune from the effects of strikes and lock-outs, low pay, short-time working, the tramp of feet to early and late shifts and the shunting of coal wagons. One writer pays tribute from Whitwick to the kindness of the Booths of Grace Dieu, little more than a walk and yet a world away, for their help in times of trouble and their share in founding the Thringston Community Centre.

A local doctor gives an interesting account of medical practice before and after the formation of the National Health Service in 1948 and of the great changes in the face of Coalville in the post-war years. The old miners’ cottages of Stone Row and Club Row have vanished, the Central Field, once the haunt of travelling people, is now the Shopping Precinct and the people who once lived in the shadow of the pit-heads now live in the more spacious outskirts.

Many people recall their memories of the war years — evacuees, blackouts, bombing, fire-watching, the Home Guard and the celebrations which marked the end of the War.

Neatly produced and well illustrated, like earlier booklets in the series, a simple sketch map shewing the face of Coalville before so many changes had taken place would have added greatly to the value of the text.
In the central hall at Beaumanor is a magnificent twenty-one panelled stained glass window, commissioned by William Perry Herrick for his new mansion in 1848. Each panel shews the arms of an ancestor, by descent or marriage, of William Perry Herrick, or the coat of arms of William himself. The panels are reproduced in full colour in the book and on the front cover and are described both in heraldic terms and plainly in the text. *Portrait of Beaumanor* is, however, far more than an armorial handbook. The life and lineage of each ancestor is portrayed fully, so that an initial study of the window leads the reader, subconsciously, to an account of the Herrick family and the history of Beaumanor. To complete the story chapters are devoted to the early history of Beaumanor and to the Beaumonts and to studies of stained glass and heraldry. Finally, a travelogue takes the reader on a tour of places associated with the Beaumanor saga throughout England.

This is a very well produced book, thorough, clear and immensely readable. The photographs and line drawings are well planned and of excellent quality. All in all the author and the Herricks and Beaumanor Society must be congratulated on a fine publication.
ELMESTHORPE REVISITED
Robert W Irving the author (29 Stoneycroft Road, Earl Shilton) 1988 £2.00

Elmesthorpe derives its name from the Old English words ‘aylmer’ and ‘thorpe’, meaning ‘eel pool village’. Situated between Earl Shilton, Barwell and Stoney Stanton, it today consists of farms, a community centre, school, inn and church. The church was built in mediaeval times, when probably the population of the village was greater than it is today; certainly by the fifteenth century Elmesthorpe is noted as being deserted. The booklet describes places of interest to the visitor — the Wortley Cottages, the Wentworth Arms Inn, Church Farm and the church — and lists baptisms, marriages and burials over three centuries. A plan of the parish shews Elmesthorpe today.

This is a pleasing booklet, based originally on a study pack intended for educational purposes. Successful sales of the pack led to this publication, a good recommendation for all potential readers.

H E B

GAULBY
C P M Goldsmith (the author, Manor House, Gaulby) 1988

The author writes in her foreword ‘Gaulby lays no claim to beauty nor to fame; . . . no great manor or hall, . . . no great battles have been fought here. The Church, founded in the 11th Century, has no visible remains of its early foundation but it is a village where people have lived and worshipped and whose ridge and furrow fields have supported villagers for over a thousand years.’ This sets the tone for the booklet, which describes the history of this tiny east Leicestershire village, from its earliest days to the present. Gaulby’s population in 1086 was similar to the size it is now and in the nine hundred years between its history has followed a traditional and not unexpected path. The influence of the Powys-Keck family of Stoughton is of interest, particularly as the Kecks funded the building of the village school. The church and its restoration work in recent times is described, justifiably, in some detail. It is pleasing to note that the proceeds
from the sale of the booklet are to be used for the benefit of the church and village.

Overall this is an informative and readable parish history which will interest visitors to the village and village historians. The cover is attractive (a pity there is no author’s name in prominence) and illustrations are well placed.

H E B

STANFORD ON SOAR: and the river that changed its mind
Charles Firth (the author, 15 Kirk Ley Road, East Leake) 1986 35p

Stanford on Soar, as its name implies, once had a ford, later replaced by the toll bridge. The course of the river was altered with the advent of the Great Central Railway, which left the bridge as a skeleton some distance from the present river. This pamphlet gives snippets from the history of the village, the church and the Hall, all illustrated on the cover and endpapers.

G K L
WHIRLWIND IN LEICESTERSHIRE: a Royalist tract of 1660
Geoffrey Syer ed The Plover Press, Redfield,
Winslow, Buckingham 1987

This reproduction of an interesting little tract illustrates how in the emotionally charged climate of the 1660s even a strong wind shewed how the wrath of God punished the wicked. In the heat of the Restoration what could be better than a destructive wind on a Puritan village which also obligingly destroyed standing timber in the wicked Earl of Stamford’s woodland?

The text, with a few minor corrections, is that of Thomason Tract E.1030(6) in the British Library.

JOHN WESLEY IN LEICESTERSHIRE
Joan Stevenson, Robin Stevenson
Kairos Press, 552 Bradgate Road,
Newtown Linford 1988 £1.50

The authors’ knowledge of the subject of this publication stems from two interests, their work with the Methodist Church in Leicester West Circuit and Anstey Methodist Church and their love of Leicestershire, in particular the Markfield area and Charnwood Forest (see A Family Guide to Charnwood Forest, also from their press).

John Wesley, founder of the Methodist Church in 1738, was notable for his preaching tours of the country. During his lifetime, the authors estimate, he travelled nearly a quarter of a million miles and preached over forty thousand sermons, at an average rate of about sixteen a week. He visited Leicestershire on many occasions, often to preach to the circle of friends of Selina, Countess of Huntingdon, at Castle Donington and Ashby. He also frequented Markfield and spoke to his first crowd in Leicester in 1753. Other places connected with Wesley on his missionary tours were Glenfield, Hemington, Hoton, Loughborough and Hinckley.
This booklet is an informative description of John Wesley’s contact with Leicestershire. It also relates the local developments in the non-conformist communities at the time and thus provides an insight into the history of the non-established churches of Georgian England. The index at the end is a useful finding-aid to people and places in the text and the chronological table of events, local and national, is a worthwhile inclusion.

**ST MARTIN’S CHURCH, DESFORD: An illustrated guide**

Caroline Wessel
Desford & District Local History Group 1988

Desford parish church, one of only three in the county dedicated to St Martin, has a long history spanning eight, if not nine, centuries. The steady expansion of Desford as a village, from 170 inhabitants in 1377 to 1,050 in 1912, is reflected in the architecture and expansion of the church building. The church, therefore, has much to offer the historian and Caroline Wessel encapsulates all this, and more, in her guide. The core of the work is a step by step tour of the church, supported by background information on the building’s history, explanatory notes and a glossary of architectural terms. A helpful plan pinpoints each feature in the church and black and white illustrations by Roger Fairbrother are clear and pleasant.

This is a very detailed and professional church guide, maintaining the high standards set by previous publications from the Desford and District Local History Group. Although responsible parties are acknowledged in the text, a few lines at the front noting the names of author, illustrator and publisher might have been a useful addition and advertisement for the Group.

**HEB**
Kenneth Hillier 1989

Although by the mid 1880s Ashby had three secondary schools for boys, a school for the higher education of girls did not open its doors until February 1889. Eleven girls, paying one pound each per term, were the first to enjoy the range of curriculum activities — calisthenics, domestic economy and laws of health, along with the more conventional subjects — and by 1896 sixty one pupils were listed on the register. Staff expanded similarly to cope with increasing numbers, particularly with the opening of the kindergarten in 1895. Probably one of the most significant days in its earlier history was the 16th of September 1902, when the new Girls’ Grammar School building on Nottingham Road was opened.

The history of this interesting school and the changes which have occurred during one hundred years are, of course, reflections of national developments in education and of growing interests and pressures from Ashby’s population during this active and exciting period. The chapter divisions of the book, by headteachers’ periods of office, establish a clear format and the text has an abundance of detail indicative of the author’s extensive knowledge of the area. This account, therefore, makes fine reading for all engaged in the study of education history and of Ashby and its area. It is worth noting that its publication has been made possible through sponsorship from five local firms. Perhaps support of this nature could be sought by others to enable the production of more publications.
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