Correspondence

The Editor has received the following note in response to the paper ‘A Medieval Drawing of Leicester’ by Julian M. Luxford, in the Transactions of The Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society, Vol. 83, 2009.

To the Editor:

I was pleased to receive the 2009 volume of the LAHS Transactions with the paper about marginal sketch of Leicester in the Royal Library copy of Geoffrey of Monmouth M.S. However, I was surprised not to have been acknowledged as the ‘discoverer’ of this drawing, or at least the first to recognise its significance while I was working on the Newarke Hospital and College. Also neither the British Library nor the LAHS Research Fund was acknowledged.

It is very surprising that although Julian Luxford refers to the Newarke Hospital and College church several times he seems to be unaware of Hamilton Thompson’s book, and that he claims in his (unreferenced) statement (p. 111) that the church ‘was not structurally complete until after 1414’. According to the records enough of the church existed by the time of the Will and death of the Duke of Lancaster in 1361 for detailed instructions to be given providing for his burial on the opposite side of the altar from the tomb of Earl Henry, whose body had already been transferred to the new church (Thompson, pp. 37–8) much if not all of the remaining building seems to have followed between then and 1399, when the Will of John of Gaunt provided that a SECOND chantry be created in ‘the new church of Our Lady in Leicester’ (Thompson, p. 89), so it must have been ‘structurally’ complete by then.

Although the last recorded writ for engaging workmen for building work on the church is 1414 (Thompson, p. 96), describing it as ‘structurally’ incomplete seems to be going much too far for a building that had already been in use for over half a century. In fact, as with such buildings, even today, there will very often be further works and embellishments added. For example, in the case of the Newarke church the hugely decorated ceiling particularly admired by Leland during his short visit c. 1530 was presumably added later in the fifteenth century.

Patrick Boylan, B.Sc., Ph.D., F.G.S., F.M.A., was the Director of the Leicestershire Museums, Arts and Records Service from 1972 until 1990, when he became Professor of Arts Policy and Management at City University, London.
The Editor has received the following note in response to the paper ‘Excavation of a Medieval Post-mill Mound at Manor Farm, Humberstone, Leicester’ by John Thomas, in the Transactions of The Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society, Vol. 83, 2009,

To the Editor:

After reading John Thomas’s excellent paper I thought it might be of interest to readers if I submitted a few notes regarding the demise of the mill in the early years of the nineteenth century.

The Leicester Journal of July 5th 1805 recorded the death of Mr Daniel Bishop, miller of Humberstone, aged only 45 years, ‘as a result of drinking a quantity of water while at work in the fields’. Mr Bishop’s livestock consisting of 12 in-calf cows, 4 calves, 7 fat sheep, 4 ewes, 5 lambs, 2 draught mares, a foal, and nine porklit pigs, were sold, together with his farming equipment, 35 acres of grasskeep, 2 acres of turnips and 2 of clover. Mr Bishop’s widow, Mary, allowed the windmill to fall into a state of disrepair.

Six years later the structure of the mill had fallen. The Leicester Journal of July 12th 1811 reported that its materials were to be auctioned by Mr Davison the premises of Mrs Bishop of Humberstone.

‘To Millwrights, Carpenters and Co....the whole of the windmill that has lately been blown down, consisting of wooden, sails, millstones, ironwork and other materials thereto belonging, which will be sold in small lots, suitable to any degree of purchase.’

In 1814 when the land, including the site of the mill, was up for sale again Windmill Close was tenanted by a Mr R. Porter.

A new mill, shown on Fig. 3 of Mr Thomas’s paper, was built on the western side of Humberstone within the same decade, maybe reusing some of the materials salvaged from Manor Farm Mill. On November 26th 1819 the Leicester Journal reported that this new windmill on the road to Belgrave (Gypsy Lane) was up for sale:

A post mill, nearly new, with gears, millstones, wire machines, dressing mill, and moveable utensils therein, together with the building or roundhouse on which the sail windmill stands, lately erected on a small piece of land belonging to the Devises of Edward Hartopp Esq., deceased, situated near the village of Humberstone and within three miles of the town of Leicester, subject to an annual ground rent of 5 Guineas. George Mount the tenant having been given notice to quit at Christmas will show the premises.’

Part of the Humberstone Church Charity Land, Mill Close, appearing to be adjacent to this latter mill, was sold in 1870 to pay for a new infant schoolroom and repairs to the Lunatic Asylum (The Towers). In 1855 the mill had featured on a plan issued when the part of the Hartopp estate surrounding it was sold in 1855.

Jan Zientek