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Cover picture: Beaumanor Hall, Leicestershire, stained glass window, photographs by Anthony Wessel, see page 23

Editor: Joyce Lee

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Editorial

This year’s *Leicestershire Historian* features a number of contrasting topics, whilst providing an insight into the wealth of material and artifacts in record offices, museums and elsewhere that is available to researchers.

A silver cup and a rare minute book enable Caroline Wessel to transport us behind the scenes into the world of ‘The Club’, an extraordinary fraternity of intelligent, successful and enquiring Victorian gentlemen, who met regularly in each other’s houses during the second half of the nineteenth century, indulging in sumptuous food, excellent and rare wines, and ‘the spirit of generous and noble friendship’.

Half a century earlier, the prolific Leicester artist John Flower was producing large numbers of topographical sketches and watercolours. Recent work by Neil Finn on cataloguing the extensive collection of over 200 of Flower’s works which are held at the Record Office for Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland, provides a new and well-illustrated assessment of historical significance of the artist’s lesser known topographical works for Leicester and Leicestershire.

A remarkable figure in a different field was Dolly Shepherd, the pioneer Edwardian Parachute Queen, a regular visitor to North West Leicestershire, whose life and adventurous exploits are brought to life by Kenneth Hillier using source material and memorabilia from the Dolly Shepherd archive. Famous artistes and entertainers from an earlier period feature in J. D. Bennett’s article on the history of Leicester’s first purpose-built theatre. Later, as Leicester’s public facilities developed, so did its capacity as a conference centre. In 1919, the new ‘city’ hosted the 54th Church Conference, the proceedings and the relationship with Leicester are described here by Gerald Rimmington.

2008 marks the 450th anniversary of the death of Hugh Aston, a remarkable early Tudor composer who settled in Leicester and made a significant contribution to the town’s affairs. Patrick Boylan examines the actual identity of Aston, his association with the Newarke collegiate institution where he became director of music at St Mary’s College, the role that Aston played in Leicester’s civic life and the extent of his surviving compositions.

Jennifer Harris contributes a fascinating article on the history of Thurmaston through the development of its industries, notably framework knitting and the hosiery industry, the brick and tile works and basket-making, and how the community has tenaciously responded to change. Industrialisation also led to the demand for cheap public transport and in Leicester one of the responses to this was the development of the horse-drawn tram service which Lois Edwards helps us to discover more about through the lives of the tram horses. Meanwhile, goat-keeping in Leicestershire features in David Ramsey’s article, along with what looks at first sight an unlikely connection with whetstones.

The case for a Wyvern town trail in Leicester is amply demonstrated by Celia Cotton in her fascinating article on the Wyvern in Leicester which identifies where to see all manner of Wyverns, along with their interesting historical connections. Cynthia Brown provides an interesting insight into the historical research methodology that she has been using on the Hands On History course at Vaughan College, where course members have been researching the centenary history of the Leicester Branch of the Workers Educational Association, making extensive use of the college’s archives. Further afield, Bob Gibson examines a series of Leicestershire connections with the first permanent English settlement in North America, the Jamestown settlement of 1607 and the Virginia colony in the early years of the seventeenth century.

This edition contains the much-welcomed appearance of the listing of Local History and Heritage Groups in Leicestershire that Caroline Wessel has compiled, with the cooperation of the groups concerned.

2008 also sees a bumper Recent Publications section, and as always my grateful thanks go to John Hinks and his team of reviewers for this section which plays a vital role in keeping readers up-to-date.

The *Leicestershire Historian* aims to promote the study of the county’s history by providing a platform for established and new authors, and through encouraging the pursuit of research and project work. It also aims to publicise the work of local groups and organisations, and seeks to raise the awareness of research sources.

Contributions for future editions are welcome from individuals, local groups, museums and other organisations and should be sent to the Editor for consideration. Articles can be short half-page items or longer in-depth pieces, and can be submitted at any time. If you would like to discuss an idea in advance, please contact the Editor.

Joyce Lee, Editor
In May 1860, a group of gentlemen, though ‘differing greatly in character and opinions’, enjoyed a friendly supper party after one of them had delivered a ‘Lit and Phil’ lecture. ‘Various exciting subjects were discussed with the greatest freedom, but with perfect good temper,’ and as the evening drew to a close someone declared ‘This must not end here!’ These immortal words became the group’s motto and were later engraved on the fine and intricately-worked silver Loving Cup of ‘The Club’. Its members met regularly in their different homes for the next fifty years, indulging in sumptuous food – ‘grateful stimuli to philosophical palates’ excellent and rare wines, and ‘the spirit of generous and noble friendship’.

The Club had its structure and rules: the keeping and unanimous passing of Minutes in the Record Book, the Loving Cup toast, the composing of Club Poems, the start time of meetings, the modesty of supper menus, the approval of invited guests – and the eternal membership of ‘The Club, ‘even unto old age and death’. However, the strictest rule was that ‘the utmost freedom should be given to the expression of opinion, and there should be no limit other than that prescribed by good taste’. Club members should be controversial and unprejudiced, ‘diverse or antagonistic in theological and political views’, yet ‘Club friendship was proof against all outdoor quarrels’. The Club motto ‘This Must Not End Here!’ would ensure that at each meeting, another must follow – *ad infinitum*.

So who were these ‘queer old fogies’, as The Club Poet humorously described them?

Charles Caillard (1805-1873), the oldest Club member and a Lit. and Phil. President, was a French chevalier and refugee from Paris, who could remember Waterloo, fought on the barricades of Paris in 1830, fled to England for liberty, and settled in Leicester as Professor of Modern Languages. He was the first to suggest lady members of the Lit. & Phil. and was ‘the brave defender of all social liberties and the unfailing advocate of all that was artistic, tasteful and refined.’ He took up the idea of The Club and hosted its inaugural meeting.
William Billson (1830-1901), solicitor and Borough Treasurer, was a native of Leicester and his home on the corner of De Montfort Square boasted a well-chosen and well-bound library.

The dark-haired George Franklin (1815-1893) came from Coventry to Leicester in 1845 to be a master at the Proprietary School (now New Walk Museum). From there, he started up his own successful Stoneygate School. Of Liberal politics, he was a Lit. and Phil. President, a published writer, and an artist as well as a scholar. The ‘little gems of art upon his walls’ included watercolours by the renowned artist, David Cox.

Revd Charles Coe (1830-1921), was Minister of the Great Meeting Chapel in Bond Street, whose influential Unitarian congregation (including several members of the Club), wielded a strong Radical influence on the political affairs of the town. A published writer and Lit. and Phil. President, Coe moved away to minister in Bolton, but was the last surviving member of The Club. Still living in 1909, he deposited its Record Book and Cup for safe keeping at the Leicester Museum.

Another clerical member of The Club was John Picton (1821-1882), Anglican Rector of Desford, whose church he allowed to fall into deplorable disrepair. Ordained in 1848, and educated at Dublin University, he certainly had the gift of the gab, acquiring a reputation within The Club for his long, rambling, but highly entertaining anecdotes about famous personages known to him, in preference to philosophy or argument – ‘the Rector being with us, anecdote reigned supreme.’ Forgetful too, it seems, for ‘Picton, though expected, neither turned up nor wrote, according to his usual practice.’

Frederick Mott (1825-1908), prosperous wine merchant with royal patronage. A Borough Councillor, supporter of a Museum and Free Library for Leicester, Lit. and Phil. President, published writer, Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society, Liberal and free-thinker, Mott was the acknowledged rebel of The Club. Described alternatively as pugnacious, a firebrand, argumentative and eccentric, he delighted in stirring up fiery arguments at every turn. He controversially wore a beard and even published a paper (1855) defending beards. A great country-lover, he led The Club’s excursions to Charnwood, his place at Benscliff, and his country cottage at Birstall.
George Stevenson (1820-1904), solicitor and magistrate, was a Lit. and Phil. President, Mayor in 1869, and a published writer and art collector. Due to his persistent efforts the Leicester Free Library was established in 1871. The same year he resigned as Alderman over the controversial siting of the new Town Hall, but was soon re-elected. It was at his supper in De Montfort Square that the idea of The Club was first mooted.

William Napier Reeve (1811-1888), 'our white-haired patriarch, the smallest amongst us in body, but perhaps the largest in heart and brain', was a solicitor, Clerk of the Peace, Clerk to the Lunatic Asylum, Lit. and Phil. President, and also a prolific author under the pseudonym 'Eliot Roscoe'. A venerable and eloquent host at Club meetings, his lavish suppers frequently exceeded the regulation modesty dictated by Club rules.

John Williams (1818-1899), sharebroker and accountant was also a magistrate and Secretary to the Water Works Company. Born in Denmark though of pure British blood, he distinguished himself at the Abbey Park Opening, by conversing fluently in Danish with the Danish Princess of Wales. Club members admired his drawing room, conservatory and fine library of books, and were kept in a state of delight and admiration by his bursts of eloquence.

George Toller (1815-1885), solicitor, was three times Mayor, and like Stevenson, became embroiled in disagreements over the site for the new Town Hall. A popular figure, in 1872 he was appointed Town Clerk, but after six weeks found the strain too much and resigned through ill-health. The large family home stood on land that is now Toller Road.

Arthur Paget (1848-1909), was from a leading Leicester family. A successful architect with prizes from London’s University College, he joined the Goddard architectural practice in 1873. A Liberal and Unitarian at the Great Meeting, he was something of a Shakespearean scholar. One of his Papers was a fascinating attempt to reconstruct Shakespeare’s theatre buildings from contemporary stage instructions. His own firm designed his spacious home on West Walk, where he lived with his wife, Clephan’s daughter, Jane.

James Hollings (1806-1862), schoolmaster, Mayor, magistrate, three times Lit. and Phil. President, writer and historian, stands as the figurehead of The Club. For it was he who rose at that very first informal supper, and with characteristic enthusiasm exclaimed ‘Stevenson, this must not end here.’ His words were engraved on the lip of the Cup, but he did not live to see it, for he died tragically soon afterwards at the house of his brother-in-law, John Biggs, prominent citizen of Leicester. Head of the Leicester Proprietary School, his main subjects were Science and Latin, but he wrote prolifically on the town’s history, including a definitive Paper on the Civil War in Leicester. A fine memorial to Hollings used to stand close to the Museum. Its Latin inscription was composed by Franklin and most of The Club were on the committee supervising its erection. Hollings reputedly had ‘the heart of a woman and the brain of an encyclopaedia, learned on all points but unable to say no’, and was remembered for his genial heart, kindly temper, universal knowledge, and fluent and cheerful conversation.

Reeve, solicitor, 'a brave spirit and generous heart', 'crowned with patriarchal snows'. (Reproduced by permission of the Leicester Literary and Philosophical Society).

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The new Leicester Club in Welford Place, ‘in the agogies of birth’ and with £4,500-worth of shares already subscribed by prosperous town businessmen, is challenging Market Street’s County Club, bastion of the landed gentry. And the General News Room, formerly a leading institution, is ‘at the doors of death’, as ‘the clubs are killing it’. There is fear of a mistake in purchasing Gas Works shares, because of the coming electricity; and Toller’s cab is hit by two horses broken loose from the Tram-car. The Art Gallery has just spent £500 on De Wint’s painting of Lincoln; but should the remaining £1,500 in the fund be spent on two or three great paintings, or a greater number of works each costing less?

National figures of importance also populate the Minute Book pages (Cardinal) Newman the Romanist is considered ‘the greatest intellect of the day’; Ellen Terry, seen in the flesh, is ‘piqueante but scarcely beautiful’; atheist Charles Bradlaugh and Mrs Annie Besant teach disgusting doctrines about population control; and D’Israeli, though a slippery character and hard drinker, taking four or five glasses of brandy before speaking in the House, ‘sends women wild’. A report ‘that the Queen is growing dull-witted and stupid’, and calls Gladstone ‘the enemy’ is not to be believed. The Prince of Wales, though incurring gambling debts at Melton Mowbray, is a good husband, father and master. He frequently sends for the pianist Charles Hallé, with whom he enjoys many hours of delightful music and conversation.

Religion continuously provokes deep thought and outspoken word, and a change in theological views by all churches during the previous fifty years is noted. The brave question, ‘Is the history of Christ truth or fiction?’ is posed. The Episcopalians, Roman Catholics, Broad Church, Positivists and Salvation Army are all considered, though Reeve believes that the worship of the antique Jupiter is shortly to be revived! A schism at St Martin’s church is reported, whereby the Ritualists stand when the vicar passes down the aisle, but the Rationalists rigidly sit in their places. And Reverend Hoppes holds 4,000 people spellbound at the Floral Hall, where he proclaims on the true meaning of Faith.

A remarkable ‘modern-ness’ abounds in these lives of 140 years ago. Fox-hunting is considered cruel; homeopathy is both admired and derided; punishment for criminals should be reformatory as well as deterrent, and capital punishment is questionable; the dilemma of euthanasia cannot be solved; competitive exams keep clever boys back because of
cramming; anxiety is the chief destroyer of health — and dentists in America have invented a way of filling teeth with gold leaf!

The gossip, weather, fashion, wit and colloquialisms recorded in the Minute Book transport us directly into the everyday Victorian middle-class world. The wealthy Mr Thomas Paget is to marry Miss Stratton, even though he is sixty and she just twenty-five, but it is considered ‘quite justifiable for the purpose of procuring an heir to his wealth.’ The prolonged eight-week period of below freezing temperatures and four inches of snow during 1878/9 causes many accidents, and throws builders and gardeners out of work.

**THE CLUB AT BENSCLIFF, JULY 31, 1873.**

There's no more inspiration, old Castaly's dried up;
There’s nothing but a julep left to fill our empty cup;
For Reeve's away, and Caillard lies paralyzed and sick,
And even the jolly Rector's gone lame and rheumatic.

Toller grows portly, Williams shows horizontal creases,
Billson gets stout, and Stevenson decidedly obese is,
Franklin's dark locks are grizziling fast, Clephan's are worse for wear,
Coe's growing lazy, dull old Mott's as stupid as a bear.

A Club worn out and blase! what holds us still together?
Why don't we scatter like a heap of dust in windy weather?
Eleven queer old fogies pretending to be funny!
Best give it up, and stay at home, and grub all day for money.

Ah, well! the world's a riddle, and man has many moods,
And though we're fat and fifty, we love the green old woods,
There's something in the sloping hills and lichen-crusted crags
That's medicine for an ancient soul, and stirs it when it flags.

We won't pretend to fathom the subtle ways and means
By which our grim philosophy's all blown to smithereens,
We don't know how it is, nor why, nor what's the raisin d'être,
We only know that beans is beans, and cabbage is't tater.

That stout, and stiff, and stupid, we still have hearts and brains;
That thirteen years of friendship bind us fast like brazen chains;
That Castaly and Helicon may turn to dust and rags,
But the Club and the Cup at Benscliff shall meet while the old world wags!

F. T. MOTT.

Poem composed by Mott, from The Club Minute Book (Reproduced by permission of the Record Office for Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland).
The new male fashion of wearing beards is popular amongst junior clerks, but older legal men still shave. White tie with tails for gentlemen at dinner is sometimes now replaced by black tie. And a fashionable Leicester dinner party comprises seven courses and dessert with half a dozen different wines. Wit is ever present and anecdotes, riddles, conundrums and spelling tests spice the verbal exchange. But most of all, colloquial speech patterns enable us to 'hear' the very dialogue – 'Mr Reeve being thus put to a non plus and obliged to speak out', or 'there was a curious contrariety of opinion', or 'supper was specialized by a rich confection.'

But the ritual of The Club Cup – 'the symbol and banner of life' is the highlight of every gathering. Its contents vary from a summertime bumper of champagne, iced Claret, sparkling Muscatelle or iced Hock-julep, to a winter beverage of hot milk punch, mulled Claret, mulled Hermitage, Whisky Curacao, or 'a liquor so warm and rich and fascinating that an encore was called for and freely given.' The Cup is housed in a box of wood taken from a pillar of the old Leicester Castle oak felled 700 years ago, 700 years growing before felled, so timber 1300 years old and – 'to us a symbol of endurance, courage and patriotism'. It is these three admirable qualities that bind together this extraordinary fraternity of intelligent, successful, but above all innovative, dissenting and enquiring gentlemen, in an age of expanding thought, philosophy, belief and inventiveness. Truly, The Club – as reflected in its 'behind-the-scenes' Minute Book – is a fascinating and enlightening insight into a vibrant Victorian world.

Notes and References:

'The Club' is not to be confused with the Leicestershire Club, a separate and much larger organisation.

The Club Cup is housed at New Walk Museum, Leicester, and can be viewed by appointment only.

The wyvern is a mythical beast which appears on gables, gates, gravestones, bridges, boundary markers, walls, weather vanes and even chairs in Leicester. This article sets out to answer three questions: What is a wyvern, where does it appear in Leicester, and lastly do wyverns feature in other towns?

A splendid two-legged wyvern threatening unwanted visitors to No. 2 University Road. (Reproduced by permission of Colin Hyde, East Midlands Oral History Archive).

The wyvern is part of the family of British heraldic beasts which includes the dragon, griffin, cockatrice, unicorn and opinicus. (1) Interestingly, European heraldry does not include the wyvern, instead calling these beasts ‘dragons’. In British heraldry the wyvern is distinguished from the dragon by having two legs or no legs; whilst a dragon always has four legs. As for the rest of their bodies, wyverns and dragons both have membraneous wings, scaly bodies, barbed tails and arrow-headed tongues. In its heraldic form, the wyvern can appear on the shield as a ‘charge’, or as a crest atop the shield, or on either side as a supporter.

Heraldic mythical beasts are attributed with positive qualities and in this respect wyverns are regarded as a sign of strength to those who bear the symbol. Wyverns also symbolise power and endurance. However, in the bestiaries of the Middle Ages, the wyvern was used as an allegory of Satan, being associated with war, pestilence and sin. It was especially said to spread plague, this being a heinous charge in a medieval Europe which was reeling from the horrors of the Black Death. The medieval alchemists who ‘dressed their knowledge in obscure codes and allegories’ used the wyvern to represent matter in its basest of state, the alchemist himself being ‘depicted as the worthy knight overcoming the beast, that is, transforming it into gold.’ (2)

Today in Leicester, there are ample wyverns to justify the City Council creating a ‘Wyvern Trail’. A walk around the Town Hall, Guildhall and market areas in the central area of Leicester alone takes in over 20 wyverns. There are also other hot spots a little further out of the city centre. These include Freemen’s Common, the New Walk area and thirdly around the London Road station. With input from Gwyn Jones and Colin Hyde (3) a list of wyvern sightings has been compiled and no doubt there are other examples to be found. The wyverns in Leicester fall into three categories. Firstly ‘civic’, which are associated with public buildings such as De Montfort Hall; secondly those with railway associations and thirdly a category best described as ‘individual’ to cover those on buildings which were originally the homes of individuals and business properties.

A major reason for the proliferation of ‘civic’ wyverns in the centre of Leicester is not hard to find, since the Borough of Leicester’s arms are a cinquefoil and wyvern. The Leicester arms were confirmed at the Heraldic Visitation of 1619, but had been in use long before then as the personal devices of the Earls of Leicester. (4) An early document in the Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland Record Office shows the ‘Armes and Town Seales used by the Mayor and Burgesses’. Dated March 1681, this document includes a painting of the Borough arms, including the wyvern crest, and the cinquefoil device, although not the wyvern on the several seals.

Both Leicester’s old and ‘new’ town halls prominently feature wyverns. The Guildhall in Guildhall Lane was Leicester’s Town Hall from the late fifteenth century so not surprisingly it has wyverns in a variety of forms. When the Mayor’s Parlour was ‘new built’ in 1637 the highly ornamental fireplace surround included the Borough arms with a wyvern crest. In the Great Hall is a ceiling panel also incorporating the wyvern crest, whilst both the Great Hall and Library have chairs topped by carved wyverns. Outside, the weather vane on the building can be seen to incorporate a golden wyvern, this having recently been restored during refurbishment works in 1993, whilst close by, the Borough arms are finely carved on a slate gravestone commemorating Joseph Smith, Macebearer for the Borough for 25 years who died in 1826.

Wyverns of Leicester
Celia Cotton
Leicestershire Historian 2008

A golden wyvern is incorporated in a ceiling panel in the Great Hall, Leicester Guildhall.

A selection of sightings at the 'new' Town Hall of 1876 in Town Hall Square include a carved wyvern on the opening memorial stone dated 1874, two wyverns carved in stone above the Horsefair Street entrance, whilst in the main entrance are two brass plaques which list the Honorary Freemen of Leicester (1892-1956 and 1961-2001), both of which incorporate the arms with wyvern crest. A particularly accident-prone sandstone wyvern sits on top of the gable to the main façade. On 27th February 2008 the Leicester Mercury reported that 'Part of Leicester Town Hall was damaged when the wing of a stone wyvern - a mythical creature fell off the building*. This was not the first occasion that this particular wyvern posed a health and safety risk: in May 1970 the Leicester Mercury reported that 'the imposing figure of the Leicester Wyvern which dominated the gable over the front entrance to the Town Hall was, seemingly, decapitated. The stone head and beak, weighing some 30lb crashed on to the roof of the building and then fell over 60 feet on to the bonnet of a parked Rover 2000 car, which belonged to the Clerk of the Peace.' (5)

Accident-prone wyvern on the main façade of the Town Hall, Leicester.

In 1919 Leicester was granted city status and in 1926 the College of Arms allowed two red Lancastrian lion supporters to be added to the original coat of arms, along with the motto ‘Semper Eadem’. These new City arms are included on the Bowling Green Street façade of the Town Hall, part of the extension built in 1925, and they also appear depicted in brick (1989) in Town Hall Square. Not far from the Town Hall, in the entrance of the Bishop Street Library, a metal plaque incorporating the Borough arms commemo rate the opening on 8th May 1905 by Andrew Carnegie. (6) Nearby, the NatWest Bank on Granby Street has a stone plaque dated 1869 showing a coat of arms with lion and dragon supporters and a legless wyvern crest. This building was originally the National Provincial Bank, designed by William Millican in 1868. Perhaps this was the coat of arms of the National Provincial Bank, but it is strange that the form of the wyvern is a perfect match for that in the Leicester arms. Heading towards the Market Place, gold wyverns sit atop the clock outside Starbucks on Market Approach and on weather vanes on the Corn Exchange, the Clock Tower (1869) and over a building near British Home Stores on Gallowtree Gate.

A second wyvern cluster can be seen by starting at Welford Road, opposite the New Inn public house near the Victoria Park Road junction, where a black cast iron boundary marker 'Pursuant to the Award of the Commissionere dated August 1891' incorporates a legless wyvern. Further along Welford Road the wyvern and cinquefoil motifs from the
Borough arms appear at 161 Welford Road on Freeman’s Cottages which were built in 1856 and 1885. No. 161 also has a wyvern weather vane. A hundred yards away, the Welford Road Cemetery gates, erected in 1895 to prevent animals from the nearby cattle market straying in, are topped by some curiously oriental looking stone wyverns. These are 2007 replacements and of a different design to the original wyverns, which have disappeared. From this vantage point the golden wyvern atop the weather vane of the Counting House pub on the former cattle market site is visible.

Freeman’s Cottages, 161 Welford Road, Leicester, wyvern weather vane.

Oriental looking stone wyvern atop the Welford Road Cemetery gates, Leicester.

Leicester also has a number of wyverns associated with its railways. A good example which is easy to view is on London Road on the bridge wall on the opposite side of the road to the entrance of the present-day railway station, this is a wyvern crest in the carved sandstone coat of arms of the Midland Railway. The arms include a six-panel shield which incorporates emblems of six of the largest centres that the company reached: Birmingham, Bristol, Derby, Leeds, Leicester (represented by a cinquefoil in the bottom left panel) and Lincoln. Interestingly, the crest for the Midland Railway coat of arms is a legless wyvern identical in form to that in the Leicester arms. This raises the question, is the Midland Railway wyvern taken from Leicester’s arms? This appears likely. One source (7) suggests that the Leicester & Swannington Railway, founded 1832, adopted for its badge the wyvern from the Borough arms. Then when the Midland Railway purchased the Leicester & Swannington Railway in 1845, it adopted the wyvern for the crest in its coat of arms. (8) However, the Midland Railway wyvern is green and red whereas the Leicester wyvern is silver or white.

Midland Railway coat of arms with wyvern crest, London Road, Leicester.

The façade of the Leicester London Road station, designed by Charles Trubshaw in 1892, has many stone carvings incorporating urns, cherubs, cornucopia, dolphins but no carved wyverns. However the two splendid tiled ‘DEPARTURE’ panels are ‘propped up’ by a two-legged wyvern at each end. In 2008 a traveller emerging from London Road Station and turning towards the town centre will also encounter a wyvern on the wrought iron gates at each end of the pedestrian underpass: these are painted gold, in the same pose as on the Midland Railway crest, and on a red roundel, whilst in the opposite direction going out of town, south along London Road they will see the building ‘Wyvern Court’ above Shimla Pinks restaurant. A hundred years earlier in 1908 a traveller on the Midland Railway would emerge from London Road Station to see the ‘Wyvern Hotel’ a ‘Commercial & Family Hotel’ at 4 Station Road, designed by Arthur Wakerley for the travel agent Thomas Cook.

Not far from the London Road Station, a small flock of wyverns live in the New Walk area. The Museum includes the Borough arms in sandstone on its Waterloo Way and Princess Road West facades, dated 1876 and 1891 respectively. Number 2 University Road, on the corner with
New Walk, has a gable-end wyvern. This building was designed by Stockdale Harrison for Mr Harvey, solicitor, in 1878. The original wyvern was in terracotta but it was lost in 1990 and replaced in 2000 by a glass fibre version created by Graham Morgan, Principal Curator in the School of Archaeological Studies. A stones throw away at 154 Upper New Walk is a second wyvern atop ‘The Friars’ also designed by Stockdale Harrison (1889). As Stockdale Harrison designed both these wyvern-topped buildings one could conjecture the wyverns were his idea. Continuing to the top of New Walk, the gates near the London Road / Granville Road junction which are dedicated to Kate Eliza North (Lady Mayoress 1914-1918 and the wife of Sir Jonathan North), have metal plaques showing the City arms. The City arms also appear on two façades of the nearby De Montfort Hall (1913).

Other Leicester wyvern sightings require a drive or a rather longer walk around the city. The 1899 façade of the old Glenfield Hospital on Groby Road includes the cinquefoil and wyvern motifs: here the wyvern is painted green, perhaps to contrast with the white background. The Fire Station on Lancaster Road has Leicester’s largest wyvern nestling on its roof. This white, cast metal wyvern dates from 1927 and was sculpted by Joseph Henry Morcom, who also designed the Liberty Statue which formerly topped the Liberty Buildings on Eastern Boulevard Leicester.

Leicester’s largest wyvern atop the Fire Station, Lancaster Road, Leicester.

Colin Hyde has provided details of some further wyvern sightings: a former factory or warehouse on the corner of Southampton and Morledge Streets has a stone plaque over the entrance which includes a coat of arms. The shield is topped by a knight’s helmet and on top of that is a cuter than usual legless wyvern.

Colin Hyde has also noted wyverns in Abbey Park: in plaques above the north and main east entrances and also on the pillars opposite the park on Abbey Park Road; at De Montfort University where there are at least three wyverns on the Hawthorn Building in the Newarke; on the bridge over the brook in Spinney Hill Park; wyverns in plaques on tram/bus shelters on Uppingham Road and Western Boulevard; West Bridge on the pillars; and finally in Newarke Street where a building has a wyvern on a little balcony above its entrance. Gwyn Jones adds two more wyverns to the list: on the gable of the Gatehouse Chaplaincy Centre opposite Mayor’s Walk, University of Leicester and in the design of a gravestone of a former mayor of Leicester at Belgrave Cemetery, near Red Hill Circle.


When a Victorian architect designed a property there was a range of terracotta creatures he could include to top the gable end with. Leicester has at least four such wyverns protecting its rooftops. These may have been chosen because the wyvern was already in people’s consciousness through its civic associations or perhaps the architect or home-owner looked through their rooftop furniture catalogue and simply thought ‘I’d like one of those splendid beasts’. The two excellent examples on New Walk have already been mentioned. The third example is ‘Fernleigh’, at 19 East Avenue, Clarendon Park. This was built in 1878 and in 1880 was occupied by Joseph Read, hosiery manufacturer. Its wyvern appears to be the original terracotta one, with patches of lichen. The fourth example is ‘Hawthorns’ at 12 Knighton Park Road, designed by Isaac Barradale c.1882.
By the early twentieth century a number of Leicester businesses were using the name ‘wyvern’, perhaps because of familiarity through its civic associations, or maybe a desire to be closely identified with the Borough. It was possible to buy a Wyvern pen, get ones laundry done at the Wyvern Sanitary Laundry, read The Wyvern, stay at the Wyvern Hotel and obtain a mortgage from the Wyvern Permanent Building Society. At least two of the above used the wyvern as a logo. A cinquefoil topped by a legless wyvern, very similar to the Borough arms, appears on pen boxes from the Wyvern Fountain Pen Co, Vulcanite Works, Woodboy Street which was founded in 1887.

The Wyvern, a ‘topical, critical & humorous journal’ which cost 1d and was published weekly at the Victoria Buildings, Bowling Green Street, included a legless wyvern and cinquefoil motif on its front page, again, similar to the Borough arms. Regular topics in the journal included ‘The Wyvern Library’, ‘The Wyvern Speaks’ and ‘The Wyvern Wonders’. The latter sought articles from the public for a prize of five shillings, warning that ‘nothing personal, scandalous or vulgar will stand a chance of winning the prize’.

Trade directories further show the proliferation of the name Wyvern. For example, between 1903 and 1916 we find the Wyvern Permanent Building Society, Alliance Chambers, Horsefair Street; Wyvern Sanitary Laundry Co Ltd, Barkby Thorpe Lane; Wyvern Publishing Co at 20 Halford Street (1903), St Martins (1916); Wyvern Works, Friday Street, home of David Hill, boot heel manufacturer until the 1920s. (9) None of these survive today, but there are later occurrences of the wyvern name.

By the late 1940s children attended the Wyvern Infants School on Wyvern Avenue (founded 1933) and their fathers, if freemasons, may have attended meetings at the Wyvern Lodge and driven a Vauxhall Wyvern motor car (however the Vauxhall badge is not a wyvern, but a griffin). Pupils at the City of Leicester Boys’ School wore blazers with a wyvern badge and may have joined the ‘Green Wyvern Yachting Club’. This was formed in 1947 and took its name from the two schools where the founders taught: the colour of the uniform of Alderman Newton’s school, coupled with the wyvern from City Boys’. (10) In 2008 the Freemasons lodge survives, as does Wyvern Primary School which continues to use a wyvern in its badge: a two-legged version.

The wyvern is not solely a Leicester phenomenon: a two-legged wyvern was a symbol of the Kings of Wessex (including Alfred the Great) and the Wessex flag is a gold wyvern on a red background. Its appearance in the Midland Railway crest also results in wyverns appearing in station buildings and bridges elsewhere. A small sample of Internet wyvern sightings follows: Swindon has a Wyvern Theatre, Herefordshire and Worcestershire folk may listen to Wyvern FM Radio Station or make their own music through purchasing a Wyvern Church Organ. Wyvern Business Systems are Hereford builders of bespoke PCs and Essex University students’ magazine is called Wyvern. Where the wyvern motif is used, it is almost invariably the two-legged form and colours vary. The Internet also includes references to the legless Mercian wyvern. Whilst the wyvern name is used in business, schools etc., it has never become a surname and is very rarely used as a forename. Interestingly, ‘Wyvern’ was used as the nom-de-plume of Colonel Arthur Robert Kenney-Herbert of the Madras Cavalry who wrote Culinary Jottings for Madras in 1878, although no evidence has been discovered yet to link the Colonel and Leicester.

In conclusion, Wyverns have had a special association with Leicester for at least 400 years: long may they protect our rooftops!

Notes and References:

1. A Griffin is a cross between an eagle and a lion; a Cockatrice is a wyvern with a cock’s head, comb and wattles; an Opinicus is a griffin with the tail of a bear instead of a lion.
3. Colin Hyde, East Midlands Oral History Archive, Centre for Urban History, University of Leicester. Website: www.le.ac.uk/emoha/leicester/wyverns.html, accessed May 2008. This website includes photographs of Leicester wyverns as well as wyverns further afield.
4. Derek Seaton, Leicester’s Town Hall, (Leicester City Council, 2004).
6. Colin Hyde advises that at least one other Leicester library building incorporates a wyvern, including the Garendon Street library in Highfields which has a carved sandstone wyvern over its entrance.
Towards the end of the seventeenth century, seventy years before the Enclosures of 1763 dramatically changed the physical landscape, Thurmaston was undergoing its own metamorphosis. Whether by choice, chance or circumstance, the village was turning towards an irreversible industrial legacy, a world away from the self-sufficient agricultural existence that had up until then been the mainstay of the hamlets of Thrustaston North and South.

Just three miles away along the Fosse Way, the county town of Leicester, had already woken up to a new trade in knitted hose, and it did not take long for those in Thurmaston with the necessary means, to take the initiative and apprentice their sons to what looked like a promising business. Leicestershire, with its flocks of long-wool sheep, was well-placed to provide the fine worsted yarn, well-suited for the production of wrought stockings, shaped and fashioned on the frame, and then stitched by hand into a well-finished product.

By 1700, frames were being worked in the village, and records of the 1720s show that local boys such as Thomas Smith in 1722 and Thomas Swan in 1728, were being apprenticed in the well-established hosiery workshops such as Widdowson’s in nearby Wanlip. After seven years, such apprentices expected to gain the status of Freeman, with the prospect of conducting their own business and taking in their own apprentices in their own village. Thus began Thurmaston’s industrial heritage, initially affecting the better off, but with the coming of the Enclosures which dealt their blow against the landless villager, it exploded into an enterprise that encompassed virtually the entire village for almost another two hundred years.

Transport improvements towards the latter part of the eighteenth century significantly aided these developments, with the opening of the lucrative Loughborough to Leicester branch of the canal network in 1794, and new turnpike roads, providing better access for the supply and transport of finished products. The world was opening up to the framework knitter in terms of demand and opportunity and Thurmaston was duly following suit. What the village may have lacked in visual attraction, it was gaining in industrial amenities.

The village also saw the opening of a brick and tile works, exploiting a clay pit to the east of the Fosse Way, supplying work to some, and materials to others. New three-storey houses were constructed, large windows on the upper floors allowing maximum light for the framework knitters. These buildings supplemented the older farm buildings along the main street, which were increasingly being split into multiple dwellings, with Thurmaston having few resident Georgian gentry.
By 1801, the population of Thurmaston was 706, comprising essentially a working class with few still tied to agriculture. The parish registers show that most were involved in the hosiery business. Initially, men operated the heavy knitting machines. Hours were long and when daylight was insufficient, candles had to be lit and eyes strained until the required quota of knitwear was reached. Women and children assisted by seaming and winding.

Residents from neighbouring villages, such as William Sarson from Queniborough and William Toon from Syston, aware of this trend and in need of a new way to support their families, were moving in and adding to Thurmaston’s population. Charles Foister of Rearsby arrived as a carpenter, but his offspring were to become framework knitters. Some of the incomers worked in tiny garden workshops, often attached to the houses of already established hosiers like Joseph Towe, a Freeman since 1789 and William Pymm, who was taking apprentices by 1790. Others rented frames and relied on a hierarchy of middlemen to supply materials and payment for their stockings, living in little clusters and communities along the main street in cheap housing often provided by the entrepreneur who raked in profit at every opportunity. Those with savings would invest in a frame, then collect their own yarn and return the finished articles to the big hosiers’ warehouses in Leicester. Unmarried men could also live-in with an employer as journeymen. Whatever their situation however, the system was still one of a cottage industry, based on a villager working in his own home or that of a master, serving and relying on another for his livelihood. In that respect, very little had changed from pre-enclosure subservience.

However, the initial expansion of the framework knitting industry in the late eighteenth century was soon dealt several heavy blows. Wars on the American continent, while of little interest to the poorly-educated Thurmaston framework knitter, affected him nonetheless by disturbing foreign trade, producing food shortages and a rise in prices of virtually everything the stockinger needed. A previously good living dropped substantially. Women and young boys were put to work on the knitting frame in order to boost a family’s income and they subsequently flooded the workforce. In contrast, war with France had the opposite effect. Demand for knitwear increased in order to supply the armies, while the number of workers reduced as husbands and sons joined the voluntary forces.

When fighting ceased, Thurmaston turned to producing socks in an effort to pull itself back from the brink. Fashions were changing, men preferring trousers to short breeches and women turning to longer skirts. Wrought stockings, the speciality of the local knitting frame, were no longer required in such great numbers; socks were the new commodity. Seasonal price problems still caused fluctuations in the market, but ever resourceful, Thurmaston’s workforce delivered cotton goods during the summer and the more traditional worsted hose in the colder months.

Even the Luddite frame-breaking of new machinery, a serious occurrence in the East Midlands, did not tempt the Thurmaston villagers away from their determination to improve their standard of living. Neither did many become Chartists, forerunners of the trade unions. Thurmaston’s only real growing concern was one of dissent against the established church, with the trend towards Methodism which had arrived in the village around 1777, offering a comfort and support that seemed lacking in the politics of the Chartists, and set the ordinary framework knitter apart from the employers, who on the whole were of the established church.

During the early part of the nineteenth century, the new wide knitting frame upon which several socks could be made at once, and the practice of making inferior products called ‘cut-ups’ (cutting the sock at heel or toe and stitching them into shape, a weaker article and often passed off as wrought) both reached Thurmaston, causing, as in many other villages at this time, an overproduction of both socks and sock makers.

The struggles of the 1820s and 1830s received some relief during the following decade. The Midland Counties Railway cut along the eastern boundary of the village, offering further opportunity for trade and also for workers to move between the various centres of employment.
Sand and gravel deposits were also being extracted from numerous pits within the village boundaries, which together with the presence of a further brickworks beside the railway at the northern end of Thurimaston provided further diversity for employment. The 1841 census shows the growth of new housing, and in the village, neat rows of new cottages would have contrasted with the earlier boom-era tiny back-to-back dwellings standing on badly drained ground. As late as 1883, the ordnance survey map reveals the slum houses, which still survived in areas known as the ‘Dials’ and the ‘Marsh Yard’.

By 1844, Thurimaston had 400 frames in the village and a population of 1209. This number of frames was second only to the larger centres of Sileby and Wigston, and was nearly half the number of those being worked in the town of Loughborough, and a third of those in Shepshed. There were also four framesmiths with a journeyman and apprentice listed in the census, showing there was still a steady need for new machines and for the maintenance of those being used.

The following year, the inadequate diet, health, working and living conditions of the sock makers was highlighted in R.M. Muggeridge’s 1845 ‘Report On The Condition Of Framework Knitters’, and may have encouraged local squire Thomas Allen to donate land for allotments to help the workers feed their family. The squire also gave land for the building of a National School in order to provide the children of the framework knitters with an education, but payment of the fee was something that they could ill afford.

Two of the testimonies in the Muggeridge Report were actually from Thurimaston residents, and show their lives to be far from rosy. Both were dissenters. Walter Upton had tried and failed to interest people in the union movement and had, instead, joined with others to set up a Primitive Methodist Chapel. He told of his struggle to avoid the workhouse, turning to agriculture when trade was slack, and of payment by ‘truck’. Thomas Hartshorn, a fellow sock-maker, was a Wesleyan Sunday school teacher. He had received one of the allotment gardens and was renting two frames from a village manufacturer; one worked by his son aged just nine.

Thurimaston’s population dropped between 1851 and 1861, an examination of the census reports revealing a temporary exodus of young workers, with some seeking employment in nearby Nottinghamshire. For those who stayed, the contemporary boom in woollen glove-making allowed further diversification in the village. This, although requiring more skill, gave a better return for the work involved. This willingness to diversify is a key feature in Thurimaston’s success in the hosiery industry during a climate of market fluctuations, poverty and discord that continually beleaguered the trade.

The following decade brought the national abolition of frame rents, which cut off a valuable source of income for the hosier and an Education Act, which effectively put a block on the availability of cheap child labour. Bag hosiers and other independent entrepreneurs were quick to exploit a new situation, building their own small framework knitters’ workshops around the village. Work was more forthcoming if the knitter rented a frame within the shop, rather than struggle to maintain a living from one at home, even if served by a hosier. Conditions, however, were appalling. A row of machines would be packed back to back against each longer wall of these tiny oblong buildings, with the winding machines taking up most of the gangway between them. Long windows allowed as much daylight as possible to fall upon the knitters’ work, but when this failed, candlelight, magnified by glass globes, had to suffice. With eight, ten or more frames on average in Thurimaston’s new frameshops, the constant noise of metal against metal and the air full of wool or cotton fibre from the knitting process would have been oppressive. Factory Acts to relieve the situation were virtually unenforceable with too many small ‘factories’ to supervise.

The 1880s brought an improvement with two more brickworks along the railway at the south end, and at the north end the arrival of basket-makers, W. T. Ellmore & Son, adding a new dimension to the industrial scene, drawing workers from other villages as well as the local work-pool. A ‘New Thurimaston’ consisting of just two streets and two knitters’ shops was built at the southernmost boundary with Belgrave. By the end of the decade there were at least eighteen of these newer frameshops throughout the village as well as a scattering of the old add-on or garden workshops.

A woman in the 1890s working with a circular Griswold sock-making machine, which is attached to a table. (Sketch courtesy of A. Malone.)

A great innovation for the knitting industry during the early 1890s was the small, circular Griswold sock-making machine. Patented in Leicester from an American invention,
nimble-fingered young women were especially useful for this type of advancement, which being easily portable could also be used for outwork in the home. Charles Foister, advertising in a parish magazine for Griswold operatives, built up a thriving business, and by 1901 the census reveals many young girls in this profession.

It was also a time of prosperity for Thurmaston. Main Street was updated with late Victorian housing and new side streets added, replacing most of the remaining cottages of wattle, daub and thatch. With many villagers now working outside of the home, these terraces no longer required the large windows of the framework knitter. Roads and pavements received regular dressings of gravel and granite. Poor sanitation, the cause of much death and disease, slowly improved, and gas lighting was introduced. Many new corner shops offered a superior quality of foodstuffs and provisions.

The ensuing war of 1914 took many workers away from Thurmaston, but also provided an additional market for both the knitter and the basket-maker. The forces required woollen socks and gloves, while Ellmore was able to supply baskets for shells and observation balloons.

As before, when conflict was over, the scene at home took a downturn. Fashions changed again, and too many people were chasing too few jobs. The town of Leicester was also drawing labour away from the village, especially to the rapidly growing boot and shoe industry, and to the better conditions within its larger hosiery factories. Thurmaston was now struggling to compete. Ever-present financial constraints prevented improvements to the old-fashioned small factory workshops. Only Ellmore had expanded, introducing steam power at the turn of the twentieth century.

A landmark water tower topped with a figure of Britannia, signalled the beginning of 'Britannia Works'. While the hosiers traded their underwear, Ellmore's cane and willow products were promoted and sold to ocean liners with showrooms opening around the country.

Only three of the old-style knitting firms were still operating by the end of the second decade of the twentieth century. When Charles Foister died in 1918, his business went to Leicester, where his two sons were already making a name for themselves. A second frameshop had branched into Argyle hose, a popular trend of the time, while gloves continued in another. By the 1930s, the knitting frame had breathed its last, although many Griswolds were still being used in the village for outwork until as late as the nineteen-fifties.

Thurmaston had to move with the times. It needed investment and opportunity, all of which came too slowly and spasmodically to salvage a heritage, which had gripped the village for two hundred and fifty years. Fervour to improve at any cost spread post-war housing and commercial estates to the boundaries in all directions, obliterating many signs of previous history. For the past fifty or so years, various types of industry have come and gone, an assortment of smaller enterprises now punctuate the local landscape, with a large shopping centre dominating the north end.

Sadly, the community today bears little evidence of framework knitters' cottages and workshops, with those that remain being disguised by modern living. Even Ellmore's tower, a solitary symbol of a new age, was demolished in the name of progress after a mere eighty or so years. For Thurmaston, the picture from the 'chocolate box' has long since gone, but open that box, and an equally compelling heritage lies waiting for any who would care to look, an illustration of villagers showing fortitude and tenacity in their endeavour to overcome the hand that life had dealt them.

During the nineteenth century, as in many of the towns and cities across Britain, Leicester's population dramatically increased. In fact the population rose by over 200,000, from 17,005 in 1801 to 219,619 in 1901. As the town expanded in both population and area, so did the demand for cheap, affordable public transport and in 1863 Solomon Andrews started a horse-drawn bus service which ran along Belgrave Road into the town centre and out the other side along London Road. Ten years later in August 1873, Leicester Corporation allowed the Leicester Tramways Company to begin a horse-drawn tram service in Leicester, and the following year on Christmas Eve 1874, the first tram ran from the Clock Tower to Belgrave. The service proved extremely successful and in 1901 the Leicester Corporation acquired the company; the size of which can be seen by looking at the assets which the Corporation purchased: 35 pair horse drawn trams, 4 single horse drawn trams, 30 pair horse buses, 4 brakes, 10 trolley and carts and 370 horses. (1) However, just three years later the trams had become electrified and the horses were sold. (2)

The life that the horses led is reflected in the Leicester Tram Company Register (3) and in the Minutes of the Tramways Committee. (4) As the horses were bought they were all listed, along with their markings and the price paid for them; the seller was also recorded in the register. The Corporation usually bought the horses as 5 or 6 year olds with no preference for mares or geldings (listed as horses in the register). The predominant colours were bay and black, a smattering of roans and greys, however there does not appear to be any skewbald (brown and white) or piebald (black and white) horses bought. No heights were given but by looking at the images the horses appear to be around 15 to 16 hands and quite well-built. (5) The eventual fate of the horses was also recorded and the reason for sale is often recorded alongside. The horses were bought from dealers across England: Mr Creech a dealer from Bristol, and Mr Williamson from Leeds were frequently mentioned. Other horses were bought more locally, including some from H. H. German of Ashby-de-la-Zouch. Typical of the entries in the register is a bay mare, with 4 black legs, aged 6, bought from J Creech of Bristol. She was bought on 8th August 1898 for £42 and sold to a Mr Beck four years later for £7 10s. 0d., a loss of £34 10s. 0d.

An 1893 plan shows the stabling which was used for the horses. (6) It was in that year that the new stable yard was designed for the Leicester Tram Company. This was located...
off Grape Street in Leicester, north-west of the Clock Tower. The design allowed stabling for 120 horses, with a further 6 spacious loose boxes situated by the cottage also on site. The stables were in blocks of twenty stables, and in rows of 10, facing each other. The dimensions of the stables, being just over 5 feet wide, suggest that they were in fact stalls. The horses would have been led in and tied loosely to a tie ring in the wall that allowed the horse movement in its head and neck. The horses faced the wall and ate from a trough in front of them. Although the area was not big enough to allow the horse to lie down, it was quite a common way of keeping horses that had to work for a living, as it used the space efficiently. The whole of the yard was under cover which provided a dry and wind-free area to work in. Indicated on the plan are feed bins of corn and oatmeal. A steaming tank and a gruel tank are also marked. The hay store was three stories high, an indication of the amount of hay that 120 horses would need. A walled area in the centre of the yard was for the collection of the manure. This would keep the yard clean and the muck-heap would be presumably cleared out every day. The men were not forgotten as a mess room that was heated by steam pipes can also clearly be seen on the plan.

As with all animals, some horses were more suited to the work than others, and many were still working for the tram company ten years after being bought. Many of the horses were sold to private individuals, for presumably lighter work, but almost all the horses were sold at a loss. The worn-out tram horse would have its use for pulling smaller carts and would be an advantage in the streets of Leicester being completely at home with the sights and sounds of a working urban life. In March 1900 some of the horses were sold to the War Office, presumably for use in the Boer War. These were the only horses that were ever sold at a profit; they all were sold for £50. This was quite a large sum of money considering that the most that any of the horses were bought for was £44, with £42 being the most common price. Some of the horses that were sold on were listed as lame. Occasionally mistakes were made and the horse was sold on as being ‘unsuitable to our use’. Presumably such horses did not have the correct temperament, or possibly the strength and stamina for the work. Tram horses would have to have a calm temperament, a horse that panicked and bolted would be a danger to itself, the driver and passengers, and other people on the street. Occasionally a horse would bolt; one was destroyed after bolting at Aylestone terminus and suffering a broken pelvis. The destination for this horse and others who suffered terminal illnesses or fatal accidents was Mr Mason the horse slaughterer, whose business was on Wood Street; their carcasses being bought for 11 shillings.

The hard working life of the horse can be seen when looking at the reasons for which the horses were sold on. Many of the entries just state ‘past our work’ or ‘lame all round’ giving no specific reasons. However when a disease or condition is mentioned then it is usually indicative of hard work or concussion. Conditions such as ringbone, laminitis, and lameness in the stifle are all mentioned as reasons for selling horses, and can all be brought on or exacerbated by the continual stress and concussion to the joints and feet by the constant pounding on the metalled roads.

Although the horses worked hard they were certainly fed a high-energy diet, the minutes of the Tram Company show that the food was bought from various sources in Leicester and Hull. For example at the meeting held on 2nd September 1903 it was agreed that the following could be purchased:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Price</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>100 tons of hay</td>
<td>J Sheddon, Leicester</td>
<td>£4 per ton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50 tons of hay</td>
<td>Prentice &amp; Co., Leicester</td>
<td>£4 per ton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 tons of hay</td>
<td>Blastock &amp; Co., Leicester</td>
<td>£7/6 per ton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100 quarters of hale maize</td>
<td>W B Ridley, Hull</td>
<td>21/- per 480lbs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65 quarters of kiln dried maize</td>
<td>C Hillerns &amp; Co., Hull</td>
<td>20/- per 480lbs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>200 quarters of oats</td>
<td>E F Willey &amp; Co., Hull</td>
<td>33/6 per</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>150 quarters of oats</td>
<td>J Bennett &amp; Son, Leicester</td>
<td>21/- per 24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80 quarters of oats</td>
<td>T J Goodacre, Hull</td>
<td>19/- per 24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>120 quarters of oats</td>
<td>J Worthington, Leicester</td>
<td>21/- per 24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>200 quarters of maize</td>
<td>J G Lambert &amp; Co., Hull</td>
<td>21/- per</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>250 quarters of maize</td>
<td>Everitts Ltd, Oulton Broad</td>
<td>21/1 ½ per</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This type of diet is fed to horses in hard work and it would have provided them with a good source of energy to carry on their work; the oats and the maize providing the high-energy food and the hay the roughage vital to a horse’s health and well-being. The actual amounts that the tram horses were fed do not survive in the records but there is an account in the Horse Keeper’s Minute Book (7) of a recommendation that the amount of hay to be reduced to 112lbs from 168lbs and the hard feed, the maize, oats and beans to be increased as this would save money. It was also recommended that hay should be fed in racks during the day. At the same meeting it was agreed that tenders for 50 new rugs could be obtained from Mr Nixon, Messers Rodhouse & Briggs and Mr Harris. It was also stated that 13 horses had been purchased at a cost of £580 8s.0d., 13 horses had been sold for £116 11s.0d. and that one horse had died. Both the diet and the purchase of rugs for the winter do show that the horses were well cared for, but if the horses were not fit for the job then the trams...
would run a delayed or reduced service and profits would be
down. At the end of the day the horses were an important
asset of the company, essential for keeping the transport of
Leicester running efficiently, and sentimentality could not
play a part.

In 1903, the year before the tracks were electrified, the
Corporation owned 69 vehicles; it had carried 10,813,430
passengers over 960,934 miles and had taken £46,325 6s.
6d. (8) In 1904 the minutes of the Tramways Committee
record the selling of the horses by auction, and at the
meeting of 15th June 1904 it was reported that 57 horses had
been sold for a total £1,122 8s. 6d. by the auctioneers
Messrs Whittle & Attenborough. The minutes also stated
that 128 horses with their harnesses would be sold at auction
by the auctioneers Messers Hincks, Shakespear and
Lawrence. The horse cars and omnibuses were to be sold
‘for the best price that they can obtain’ At the July meeting
of 1904 it was reported that another 100 horses had been
sold raising 1,180 guineas. The remaining horses were to be
sold equally by both firms of auctioneers. September saw
another 111 horses sold, which along with 18
old cars, omnibuses and sundries made £2,175
9s. By the December meeting all the remaining
horses had been sold. Listed under ‘Sale of
Horses and Sundries’ it was reported that on
3rd November 101 horses had been sold for
£1,744 1s 4d, the buses and cars for £92 13s
and sundries £143 7s 7d. So as the trams
finally moved over to electric traction over 250
horses had been sold, all at a loss. The era of
the horse-drawn tram had come to a close in
Leicester.

References and Notes:
1. The Official Brochure of Leicester City Transport,
(c.1950). The Record Office for Leicestershire,
Leicestershire and Rutland (ROLLR): L388.
2. G. G. Hilditch, The History of Leicester City Transport,
3. Leicester Tram Company Horse Register No. 2. ROLLR:
3D62/3.
5. A hand is 4 inches and a horse is measured to the wither
or shoulder so 16 hands would be 5’ 4”
7. The horses kept at the Friday Street yard and owned by
the Leicester Corporation. Horse Keeper’s Minute Book.
ROLLR: CM48.
8. Opening of the New Administrative Offices, Abbey Park
Road, (1937). ROLLR: L388.

Three horses pulling a tram along Applegate
Street around 1903. For steep hills an extra
horse was put into harness to help pull the
tram. (Reproduced by permission of ROLLR,
location mark DE3736 Applegate Street.)
Research into the origins and identities of the investors in the London Virginia Company that existed from 1607 until 1624, led to the identification of a number of Leicestershire connections with the first permanent English settlement in North America (the Jamestown settlement of 1607), and with the Virginia Company of the early years of the seventeenth century.

Background to the Virginia Company

On 10th April 1606 King James I issued a patent founding a Royal Council for Virginia. Its purpose was to explore and establish a colony in North America. This followed on from various earlier attempts from 1578 onwards to colonise the unoccupied lands north of the modern Florida and north of the then Spanish area of influence in the New World.

The 1606 patent covered all territory between latitudes 34° to 45° North, in today’s geography everything from the Carolinas to Maine. Those willing to participate in and fund the new venture formed themselves into two separate groupings: those based in London, and a second group largely from Plymouth and the West Country. The London group were to concentrate on the southern part of the territory, whilst the Plymouth group would look to the northern part. However, the Plymouth group soon faltered after just one unsuccessful attempt at settling the Kennebec River estuary (present-day Maine) in 1607-8, being overcome by the harsh winter climate. Meanwhile, the London Group laid down the foundations for what was to become the first permanent English settlement in North America.

On 19th December 1606 three small ships, the Susan Constant (100 tons), Godspeed (40 tons) and Discovery (20 tons), left Blackwall and eventually reached the site that was to become Jamestown in May 1607. Estimates of the numbers on board the three ships vary from between 120 and 143, though only 104 appear to have actually reached their destination on the James River. This apparent discrepancy is probably resolved by Price’s more recent tally of 105 colonists and 39 crewmen.

The affairs of the Virginia colony were run by a special council appointed by the King. The council, or Company as it became known, nominated the on-site leaders of the new venture. The Company was obligated to hand over to the Crown a fifth of any precious metals that were discovered, but was granted certain local revenue raising powers for a period of twenty-one years. Among the Council were influential figures such as Sir Robert Cecil, though the 1606-7 expedition was largely financed by a small group of individuals, chief of them being Edward-Maria Wingfield, who travelled with the first voyage and became the first leader of the new colony. He proved to be most unsuited to the role and returned home effectively bankrupt leaving the fledgling colony struggling for survival. Another major backer and leader, and relative of Wingfield, Bartholomew Gosnold, was one of several fever victims in August 1607. The whole enterprise was soon showing signs of being severely under-funded. Consequently, drastic action was required and a second Charter was drawn up in 1609.

The new corporation took the grandiose title of the Treasurer and Company of the Adventurers and Planters for the City of London for the first colony of Virginia and under the terms of this Second Charter of April 1609, shareholders...
were invited to subscribe for stock in the Company. The minimum investment was £12 10s 0d for one share, whilst individuals who purchased two or more shares gained additional privileges in the form of membership of an ‘inner council’ (5); which in 1609 consisted of fifty-two members.

By 1612 the Virginia project was again beset by huge difficulties both in Virginia and also by the Company’s rapidly deteriorating financial position in England. Hence a Third Charter, dated 12th March 1612, was drawn up to bring in additional shareholders to the project. Over three hundred new backers’ names were added. This Third Charter also extended the powers of both the Company and, in particular, individual investors in matters of private land ownerships in Virginia and any profits that might be gained from the development of holdings of this nature. (6)

Although the 1609 Charter names over 650 individuals as shareholders, there appears to be only one investor with a birth link to Leicestershire; albeit perhaps a tenuous one to an obscure family in the north of the county. This investor is George Bolles, born in 1538, who Phillimore describes as a member of the Grocers Company and as ‘the son of Thomas Bolles of Newbold (Co. Leics)’ (7), his mother being Jane Winter, a member of the Winter family of Worthington in north Leicestershire. Bolles was in fact Master of the Grocers Company in 1606 and Sheriff of London in 1608-9 at the time of the Second Virginia Charter. He went on to become Lord Mayor of London around his eightieth year and was knighted during his mayoralty. By this time however, Bolles’ Leicestershire links were probably overshadowed by his links to Lincolnshire where he had acquired a mansion and estates at Scampton through marriage to a wealthy widow, Joan Gates. He died in 1621 and was buried at St Swithins Church, London.

In contrast to the situation in 1609, the Third Charter of 1612 produced several links with prominent Leicestershire families. Among the new Leicestershire names on the 1612 Charter was Henry Hastings, 5th Earl of Huntingdon, considered to be the leading political figure in Leicestershire in the early seventeenth century. Although his role in national politics was potentially limited by financial difficulties, this did not deter him from speculating in the new settlement. He was known to be on amicable terms with prominent Virginia supporters such as the Earls of Southampton and Pembroke, and became a substantial backer of the Virginia project, paying £220 (over £25,000 in today’s money) in return for 1,000 acres of land in the new Virginia Plantation (8). He remained however in England himself, giving power of attorney to two persons to act as agents for his interests in Virginia. The two men were Nicolas Martiau, born in France of a Huguenot family, and Benjamin Blewett. The two travelled to Virginia aboard the Francis Bonaventure in spring 1620. Little seems to be known about Blewett, but Martiau’s fortunes in Virginia prospered. He became a substantial landowner and, through the marriage of his daughter, Elizabeth, to Colonel George Reade, he is now counted among the earliest American ancestors of George Washington, his great-great-great-grandson.

Another investor with strong Leicestershire connections was Sir William Herrick of Beaumanor, who was a member of the Goldsmiths Livery Company, being its Prime Warden in 1605. Herrick had personal experience of overseas travel, having been sent as a diplomat to Turkey by Queen Elizabeth I. (9) By the time of his investment in Virginia in 1612 he would have been in his mid-fifties. Although his main home was near Richmond (Surrey), he had purchased the Beaumanor estate in 1595 and married Joan May the following year. (10) Herrick’s fortunes prospered under James I as the new monarch made him both court jeweller and a Teller of the Exchequer. Apparently undaunted by the lack of return on the family’s Virginia investment, one of William’s sons, Henry, continued the family interest in the New World by emigrating to New England in 1629.

The Herrick marriage link with the May family led to a further Leicestershire connection with the Virginia enterprise. Sir Humfrey May was another new name on the 1612 Charter and is also shown on a list of shareholders published in 1620. Four years later in June 1624, May, as Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, became one of the fourteen members of the Commission deputed to look at the problems of Virginia that led to the dissolution of the Company and to Virginia becoming a Crown Colony. (11) Though descended from a Sussex family, May was elected MP for Leicestershire in the 1624 and 1625 Parliaments. (12)

The splendid twenty-one panelled stained glass window above the main oak staircase of the current Beaumanor house depicts not only the coats of arms of Sir William Herrick and Sir Humfrey May, but also in the upper panel, the arms of another Virginia investor, Sir Baptist Hicks.
Sir Baptist Hicks’ link to the Herricks was through his marriage to another daughter of the May family, Elizabeth. Hicks himself came from a successful line of Mercers and was among the prominent investors on the 1609 Charter, where he is shown as a Council Member. In common with Sir Robert Herrick, Hicks was considered to be one of England’s wealthiest citizens at this time and is perhaps now best associated with the Gloucestershire wool town of Chipping Campden, in whose parish church he is buried. It could possibly have been through the May family links, that both Sir Humfrey May and Sir Robert Herrick were introduced to the investment opportunities in Virginia.

Two further 1612 investors with Leicestershire roots came from the Beaumont family. One was Sir Thomas Beaumont (1555-1614), the third son of Sir Nicholas of Coleorton. Through his marriage to Catherine Farnham of Stoughton, Thomas gained the Manor of Stoughton, which remained in the Beaumont family until 1737. He was knighted in 1603 and there is a memorial to him in St Mary and All Saints Stoughton, where one of the bells is inscribed with his name. Thomas made frequent, but not always profitable, investment forays into the North Warwickshire coal industry together with similar ventures in Leicestershire, Nottinghamshire and as far away as Northumberland.

The second Beaumont was John Beaumont, second son of Sir Francis of Gracedieu. John had become head of this branch of the family in 1605. John and his younger brother, Francis, were both prominent members of London’s early seventeenth century literary circle, and close friends of the Warwickshire (Hartshill near Nuneaton)-born poet Michael Drayton, whose *Ode to Virginia*, penned on the departure of the 1607 adventurers, reflects the optimism surrounding the initial voyage. John also had strong recusant leanings and connections, which, at the time of the 1609 Charter, confined him to restrict his movements to within five miles of his Gracedieu residence. By 1610 he was allowed to revisit London and re-join the literary group that frequented the Mermaid Tavern and included both Michael Drayton and Ben Jonson. John later enjoyed a role as a court poet, thanks to the Beaumonts’ inter-marriage link with another Leicestershire family, the Villiers. (13) Described as one of the ‘outstanding pioneer coalmining families of the age’ (14), speculation in Virginia’s potential, but at this stage unknown, mineral wealth, may have been the Beaumont family’s motive for investment.
A female member of another branch of the Beaumont family, Anne Beaumont, also produces a link with one of the most mysterious and intriguing of all Virginia investors, Sir Christopher Perkins. Perkins is described as a ‘diplomat’ in the *Oxford Dictionary of Biography*, but his career, comprising membership of the Jesuit fraternity before turning informant to Walsingham and Cecil, has the characteristics of a late sixteenth century James Bond. By the early seventeenth century, Perkins was not only a Member of Parliament for Morpeth, but clearly part of Robert Cecil’s ‘network’. He is listed as a 1609 investor and described as Dean of Carlisle. He married Anne, daughter of Anthony Beaumont of Glenfield in 1617, possibly attracted to the family by ambition. Anne’s sister, Mary Villiers was the mother of George, Duke of Buckingham, whose stature in Court was very much in the ascendancy in 1617. (15)

William Wollaston’s memorial at Shenton church.

A further investor with Leicestershire links who first appears on the 1612 Charter is William Wollaston. In 1612 Wollaston had more direct links with his native Staffordshire, and did not make Leicestershire his major domicile until 1625 when he purchased the manor of Shenton from Sir Richard Molineux. (16) The extent of Wollaston’s wealth, based on his early coal-mining interests in North Leicestershire, is still amply demonstrated today in the form of the splendid Shenton Hall that he built in 1629, (although now with considerable later improvements). Wollaston himself lived to see the post-Restoration period, he died on the 10th December 1666 at the age of 86 and is commemorated in St John’s Church Shenton.

A later addition to the list of Virginia investors with a Leicestershire link is Theodore Goulston. Born in 1572, his roots were in Wymondham, where his father was Vicar. After studying at Merton College, Oxford, he moved to London in 1606 and entered Gray’s Inn. However, his interest in legal matters seems to have been overtaken by one in medical affairs, and he returned to his native Wymondham to practice as a medical man. He rapidly obtained a medical degree from his old College in Oxford, and on 22nd December 1610 was admitted to the College of Physicians, going on to obtain a Fellowship of the College on 29th December 1611. (17) He returned to London, where his medical reputation soon became a formidable one, especially it seems, after when in 1614, he was credited with saving the life of the Archbishop of Canterbury, George Abbott. His interest in Virginia may have arisen from both his known meetings with representatives of the Algonquin Indians who visited London around 1616, and his professional relationships with Virginia investors such as George Abbott and Sir Edwin Sandys. Goulston had also successfully treated Sandys in 1614, and his grateful patient had rewarded him by enabling his election as a free brother of the East India Company. (18) In 1619 Sandys became Treasurer of the Virginia Company and in December 1619 Goulston bought a substantial holding of six shares from various sources in the Company. (19) Within months he became a Council Member of the Company and was consulted by the Company about the suitability of Dr Pott for appointment as physician-general for Virginia in 1621. Goulston’s successful medical practice earned him substantial wealth and investments, and in his will he endowed a scholarship to the College of Physicians and the Gulstonian Lecture remains an annual feature of that College.

A further Leicestershire link with the Virginia Company occurs through the work of John Brinsley, headmaster of Ashby Grammar School. Brinsley came to Ashby in 1600 and his work on educational delivery techniques, first published in 1612, attracted much interest, including that of the Virginia Company. Brinsley produced a further report in 1621 especially for the Virginia Company, which, by that time, was formulating plans to create a college and school in the settlement. (20) Brinsley is not known to have been an investor and nothing further seems to have come of the project, probably as a result of the 1622 massacre in Virginia (21), and by that time, the Company’s ever-deepening financial crisis and corrosive internal dissensions.

By the terms of the Third Charter of 1612, the Company was allowed by the King the privilege of organising lotteries throughout England as a further means of raising finance for the enterprise. (22) It is recorded that Henry Hastings, 5th Earl of Huntingdon also took an active interest in the Company’s attempts to find settlers. (23) Therefore, it seems quite possible that Huntingdon may well have had a hand in bringing the Virginia Company lottery to the streets of Leicester. The records of the Borough of Leicester contain one of the few direct references to the conduct of one of the Virginia Company’s Lotteries in May 1618 in ‘the towne of Leicester’, aimed at ‘the advancement of that most noble and Christian Plantation which wee now have great hope and
greater than heretofore, shall stand and flourishe to the honor of God, the benefit of his Realme and the enlargement of His Majesties Domyions'. (24)

The fall of the Virginia Company

By about 1620 the Company was able to take some financial comfort from the export of tobacco back to England as a means of producing revenue, although the King was averse to "that outlandish weed" and the issue of tobacco and health was raised in the Chamber of the House of Commons as early as 1621. (25) Even so, the Company was in serious financial difficulties, with unpaid dividends and the increased use of lotteries making potential investors wary, whilst the Company debt was now over £9,000 (well over £1 million in today's values). There was also a great rift within the Company with two rival factions both vying for control and pursuing quite different aims in the development of the Company; one, fronted by the Puritan-sympathising Sir Edwins Sandys aiming for settlement, the other, consisting of powerful merchants purely interested in speculation and profitable trade.

On the 24th June 1624 an order in Council set up a special commission to investigate the problems of the Virginia Company. The Council comprised fourteen members, among them was Sir Humphrey May in his capacity as Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster. The Council recommended the dissolution of the Company and the 'takeover' of the Virginia enterprise by the Crown in the form of a royal colony.

The eighteen years of the Company had perhaps ended in failure, but as Anderson remarks, the foundations laid by the early Virginia settlers and investors, though with considerable difficulties and sacrifices, provided the base for later economic growth in the Chesapeake area. On the other hand, back in England, the actions of the Sandys-led faction in the latter stages of the Company may be seen as among the first seeds of the increasing dissension between some influential members of English Society and the Crown that would become increasingly apparent in the next two decades leading to the Civil War.

References and Further Reading:
1. N. Ferguson, Empire, (Allen Lane, 2003).
8. The original papers concerning this transaction are held in the collection of the Huntington Library in California
16. J. Nichols, Vol 4 Pt 2 p541 shows the pedigree of Wollaston of Shenton Hall.
21. On Friday 22nd March 1622 the Colony suffered a frenzied, and hitherto out of character attack from the local Powhatan tribe. Estimates suggest as many as 400 settlers, about a third of the settlement, were wiped out in the attack.
22. 'The Third charter of the Virginia Company (12 March 1612)', English Historical Documents Vol IX. American Colonial Documents to 1776, 65-72.
The importance of the music of the early Tudor composer, Hugh Aston, has been recognised for a very long time, even though what was almost certainly a very substantial body of work was very largely lost during the Reformation, and only a dozen or so identified compositions by him survive. Indeed, we find a remarkable tribute to Aston’s significance in the work of one of the greatest composers of the later Tudor period, William Byrd, (ca. 1539-1623) who used an otherwise now lost work by Aston as the basis of his well-known composition Hugh Aston’s Ground (1), and variants of other Aston works were known by the late sixteenth century.

However, there has been great confusion about the actual identity of Hugh Aston (sometimes Assheton or Asseton) the composer. He was completely misidentified in the original editions of both the Dictionary of National Biography and Grove’s Dictionary of Music and Musicians, and just about everything biographical about him is wrong in W H Gratten Flood’s widely quoted Early Tudor Composers, (1925), and even in the Hugh Aston volume of Tudor Church Music (vol. 10, 1929). (2)

The first record of Aston the composer that seems to have been traced so far is in the Oxford University records for 27th November 1510, when he successfully applied for the award of the degree of B.Mus., submitting a Mass and Antiphon as test pieces and stating that he had been studying music in the University for eight years. (Assuming he had entered Oxford at around the age of 16 or 17, as was typical at the time, this would suggest that he was born around 1485, though there is no other information about his origins and early life.) However, the two submitted compositions seem to have been more than just approved: it was ordered that the two pieces be retained by the University. Several writers suggest that his very closely related Mass Te Deum and Antiphon Te Matrem Dei manuscripts, preserved in the Bodleian Library, Oxford, are these two diploma works. (3)

Nothing is known of him or his movements, whether in England or further afield, until 1520/21, but from then onwards he appears in the records and accounts of, or relating to, a number of important Collegiate Choral Institutions across the Midlands. (4)

The Treasurer’s Accounts of the Dean and Chapter of the Collegiate Church of St Mary, Warwick, for 1520/21 (now in the Public Record Office) show a payment to “Hugonis Asseton laborantis a Coventr” (i.e. ‘working at Coventry’) for travelling from and back to Coventry to advise on the purchase and installation of a new organ, (5) but there is no information as to whether he was by then permanently working in Coventry or simply there temporarily, enabling Warwick to minimise the expense. However, he seems to have had a longer-term association with Coventry’s Benedictine abbey (now the Cathedral), at least in an advisory capacity, as this was one of the seven religious houses in respect of which Aston received a state pension in his retirement. (6)

By 1525 Aston was settled in Leicester, and he seems to have remained in the town for the rest of his life. In that year he was listed as Magister Choristerorum [Master of the Choristers] in Bishop Longland of Lincoln’s formal Visitation of the Hospital and College of St Mary, The Newarke, Leicester. This had been ordered by the Bishop in response to complaints to the Privy Council about the residence within the College of a wealthy female benefactor, Lady Hungerford, contrary to its Statutes. During this Visitation Aston was questioned under oath about his knowledge of quarrels within the College, the sworn deposition being recorded, apparently verbatim, in a mixture of Latin and English. (7)

In the early sixteenth century the famous ‘Hospital and New College of The Annunciation of St Mary in The Newarke’ occupied a walled area of around four acres just outside the boundary of the Borough of Leicester, immediately south of the Castle, now mainly covered by the campus of De Montfort University. However, by the time John Speed published his first plan of the town in 1611, only six decades after the institution was suppressed during the Reformation, almost all traces of this remarkable religious institution had gone, along with most of the Leicester Abbey, and other major religious establishments, notably the large Greyfriars and Blackfriars monasteries.

Today the most substantial survivals of the Hospital and College are two of the main entrances: the Newarke (otherwise Magazine) Gateway of ca. 1410 and the Turret (or Rupert’s) Gateway of 1422-3 between the Castle and the Newarke enclosure, and the very much altered Trinity Hospital with its chapel of ca. 1420. The other remaining structures are William Wigston’s Chantry House of ca. 1513
(now part of the Newarke Houses Museum), short lengths of the walls of the enclosure, two re-built arches of the Collegiate Church of St Mary of the Annunciation preserved in the basement of the early twentieth century Hawthorne Building of De Montfort University, and fragments of a fourteenth century building (possibly the Dean’s residence) in the remains of the former St Mary’s Vicarage, also now part of the University’s property. (8)

First established by Henry, 3rd Earl of Lancaster, in 1330 as a chantry and hospital with an establishment of a Master, four Chaplains and five women attendants to help take care of both short-term and chronic, long-term, patients (9), the Hospital and College was re-endowed and greatly expanded by his son, Henry, 4th Earl and later the 1st Duke of Lancaster. Under the new Charter of Foundation and Endowment of 24th March 1355/6 (10) the College had, and was primarily governed by, a Dean and twelve canons or prebends. Each of these thirteen were to be served by a supporting vicar, and the canons and vicars were all to be already in priest’s orders at the time of admission. There were also to be four lay clerks and six (boy) choristers, while the hospital function was expanded to provide for the care of fifty poor men and fifty poor women.

The 78 Statutes, plus a number of supplementary Statutes or variants, set out in very great detail all aspects of the rules and operation of the Hospital and College, not least its liturgical activities, which were to follow the Salisbury (‘Sarum’) Rite. Music was clearly intended to be an important part of the life of the institution, and among many other things there had to be a daily sung Mass in honour of Our Lady, and there was a list of more than two dozen high feasts on which High Mass, Matins and Vespers had to be celebrated, led by the Dean in choir. There were other very detailed provisions relating to the choir and choral offices, including dress, attendance rules and the examination in reading and singing of both choral vicars and boy choristers before their appointment.

The wide-ranging research of Dr Roger Bowers on the English choral colleges (11) shows that by the early to middle fifteenth century these, as well as the English cathedrals and major monasteries, were using a wide and ambitious range of music, both more traditional plainsong and the newly emerging polyphonic music, typically in up to four or five parts (one or two trebles, alto, tenor and bass). There must have been a very great number of new compositions and exchanges of music scores both at the national and international levels to meet the needs of such an ambitious liturgical and choral programme. Sadly, however, only a tiny fraction of the works that must have existed and been performed survive today, partly at least because of the recorded large-scale and organised destruction of choir books along with other liturgical books during the Reformation.

The high status and musical reputation of the Newarke collegiate institution was already acknowledged long before Hugh Aston arrived, apparently in the early 1520s. By the late fifteenth century it had acquired the extraordinary privilege, apparently shared only with the Chapels Royal, of having the right to recruit outstanding musicians and singers from other institutions without their consent, in other words to poach the very best musicians of the country. Perhaps the very highly regarded Aston was himself recruited by The Newarke using this privilege, but there seems to be no documentary evidence of exactly when or how he came to settle in Leicester.

The open space in the foreground outside the Trinity Hospital in Nichols’ engraving is the site of the Collegiate Church. The (? three storey) building just showing on the left hand edge of the drawing is presumably St Mary’s Vicarage - one of the original medieval buildings of the College, thought most likely to have been the Dean’s House, the ruins of which were recently investigated by ULAS for DMU.

The Dean and each Prebend were to have their own house inside the Close. A communal dwelling house was to be provided for the 13 Vicars complete with a kitchen, bakehouse and brewhouse, and another house was to be constructed within the Close for the six choristers. At various later dates, through to the early sixteenth century, a total of three chantries were established within the College, each with its own chantry priest and a house for him in addition, as with the surviving Chantry House of William Wigston.
However, once here he seems to have been determined, or at least more than content, to stay. In the mid-1520s Cardinal Wolsey offered him the post of master of the choristers at his richly endowed new Cardinal College, Oxford, now Christ Church, but Aston turned this down and John Taverner was appointed instead. (12) In Leicester his initial salary was £10 a year (the same as the Canons of the College) and he was provided with a free house just outside the Newarke Gateway in Hangman’s Lane, now Newarke Street, and by 1540 this had risen to £12 a year. (13)

However, he clearly had many other opportunities for substantial additional earnings, for example for a wide range of special liturgies and services etc. For example, there are provisions in a number of Wills for payment to him for participation in funeral services, and he may well have had advisory or other retainers at several other significant collegiate institutions. In his retirement, he appears to have received not only a £12 a year State pension in respect of his position at the Newarke, but other annual pensions totalling £6 13s. 4d. in respect of other suppressed choral institutions Sulby and Pipewell in Northamptonshire, Coventry and Kenilworth in Warwickshire, and of the Abbeys of Launde and St Mary de Pratis [=Leicester Abbey] in Leicestershire. (14)

Aston’s surviving compositions (15) are mostly vocal works, typically for five unaccompanied voices. However, three or four keyboard compositions also survive: *A Hornepype*, *Hugh Ashton’s Maske* (widely re-worked, e.g. by William Byrd’s in his own keyboard piece *Hugh Aston’s Ground*), *My Lady Carey’s Dompe*, and *The Short Measure of My Lady Wynkfyld’s Rounde*. His keyboard works are regarded as of first importance for the period, and arguably more advanced than any continental keyboard compositions of the period. The choral works were also innovative, not least in terms of his extensive and ingenious use of *ostinato* (16) – the repetition of basically the same musical figure or phrase in a particular work or movement in a way that can sound startlingly modern today.

![Hugh Aston’s Gaude Virgo Mater Christi for five voices: opening page of a sixteenth century manuscript copy of the Medius (Alto) part, (which in this case is the lead voice). (C) British Library Board. All Rights Reserved. (British Library: Harley MS 1709 f.39: reproduced with permission.)](image-url)
Though undated, on stylistic grounds most of the compositions seem likely to date from Aston’s time in Leicester. However, the surviving choral works have a strongly Marian trend, even though this was becoming less fashionable by the 1520s: this perhaps reflects the emphasis on the Virgin Mary with the requirement that there should be a daily sung Mass in honour of Our Lady at The Newarke.

The works include two tolerably complete masses: Missa Videte manus meas (six voices) and Missa Te Deum (A second incomplete copy of this is titled Te matrem Dei, apparently an adapted text - by Aston himself? - creating the equivalent of the Te Deum mass, but in honour of the Mother of God). The remaining works are mainly Antiphons on various texts honouring the Virgin Mary: Ave Maria ancilla Trinitatis, Ave Maria divae matris Annae, Gaude Mater Matris Christi (Gaude Virgo Matris Christi in some copies), O Baptista vates Christi, Te Deum Laudamus (Te Matrem Dei Laudamus – see Te Deum above in one copy; there is also a late Elizabethan version using an English translation of the Te Deum in King’s College, Cambridge).

In addition there is a devotional song by Aston: Ave domina sancta Maria, and an anonymous incomplete Mass in the British Library is attributed by Professor Nick Sandon to Aston because of its apparent relationship to the well-known Hugh Ashton’s Maske for keyboard (see above). Among the Antiphons the text in honour of John the Baptist (O Baptista vates Christi), is particularly interesting and unusual, and in this respect Nick Sandon points to a possible connection with Launde Priory (now Abbey), Leicestershire, which was dedicated to the Baptist, (17) and in respect of which Aston was to receive a pension from the time of his retirement in around 1546, less than two years before the Dissolution of the Hospital and College of The Newarke, (see above).

However, within Leicester Hugh Aston was not just the director of music at the St Mary’s College. By the early 1530s if not earlier, he was also becoming a prominent Leicester citizen, serving on the town council, for most if not all of the last two decades or more of his life representing the First or Southgates ward. This was one of the ten wards of the town, covering the area outside the town walls, covering the area immediately outside The Newarke, in which his Hangman’s Lane house was located. The Newarke itself was not part of the town and hence outside the control of the town council, and was to remain so until the eighteenth century. However, as Aston was not living within the excepted area of The Newarke he would have been eligible for election or appointment to civic office within the town.

For the time the council seems very large in relation to the population, and comprised the ‘Twenty-four and the Forty-eight’. While the terminology did not start to be standardised until towards the end of the sixteenth century, the ‘Twenty-four’ senior members of the council were in effect (and by the 1550s were being routinely referred to as) aldermen two per ward, while the ‘Forty-eight’ comprised four burgesses per ward. (18) However, the apparently large number was probably necessary as the members of the ‘Twenty-four’ at least had to undertake a wide range of civic responsibilities personally, including providing the Mayor annually.

The view of the entrance to The Newarke from the direction of Hangman’s Lane just outside the walls of The Newarke (and the South Gate of the Town Walls) where we know Aston lived, from John Nichols The History and Antiquities of the County of Leicester, Leicester volume (Newark and Trinity Hospital).

In Bateson’s (much abbreviated) summary of the sixteenth century Borough Records of Leicester there are more than two dozen references to Aston and the positions he held, and by 1550 the ‘First [later Southgates] Ward’ was referred to in the Borough Book of Acts as ‘the ward of Mr Hugh Aston’. (19) By 1532 Hugh Aston had probably joined the ‘Twenty-four’ as an Alderman (and he became a Justice of the Peace, perhaps at the same time), since in that year he was appointed Auditor of Accounts North Quarter 1532-3, continuing in the office through 1533 to 1535. He later served as Auditor of Accounts South Quarter for 1538-9, and then again annually from 1544 to his death in 1558. He was one of the two Town Coroners for two years, 1536-1538, and Steward of the Fair for 1543-4, 1548-9 and 1557-8.

However, Aston’s most important civic role was that of Mayor of Leicester for 1541-1542. a significant year for Leicester, as the all-important Market Charter was renewed at a cost of 26s. 8d. The Chamberlains’ Accounts for his year of office show the usual expenses of both official
hospitality (a dinner for the visit of the Lord Privy Seal), and the council's own banquetting in the Corpus Christi Hall (now the Guildhall) (‘... at Corpus Christi hall for alle after yat Mr Mare had eton weynsson [venison] 8d.’). In view of his profession as a musician it is perhaps significant that it was during Aston’s mayorality that the substantial sum of 24s. was spent by the council on new liverys for the Town Waits (musicians). (20)

Later, Aston was listed in 1550 among the three Justices of the Peace who with the Mayor served as a Portmoot Jury for testing and imposing fines in respect of weights and measures irregularities relating to the south quarter ‘... being within the ward of Mr Hugh Aston that ys to say without the Southe gate’. (21) In February 1554 he was one of four nominated by the Common Hall to be one of the two representatives of Leicester in the first Parliament of Queen Mary and King Philip to be held in Oxford, though two of other nominees were finally appointed the following month. However, the following year Aston did represent Leicester in the 1555 Westminster Parliament, relatively short but very important in terms of its legislation. (22) This included not just the well-known penal measures for the suppression of heresy, but also the first highways act, from which all contemporary road and traffic law, arguably even local government law and powers, is derived.

His re-appointment to civic offices for 1557-8 indicates that Hugh Aston remained active in civic life at that time, despite his advanced years (he must have been around seventy by then). The exact date of his death in 1558 does not seem to be recorded, but his burial at St. Margaret’s Leicester on 17th November 1558 is noted in the diocesan records. (23)

NOTE: A Commemorative Service is planned to be held in St Margaret’s Church, Leicester, at noon on Saturday 15th November 2008 to mark the 450th anniversary of the death of this remarkable musician and civic figure. Both choral and keyboard works by Aston will be included in the service, together with some extracts of the plainsong of the Sarum Rite Requiem Mass which would have been used for Aston’s funeral (and which he would have himself performed and conducted very many times through his long musical career). It now seems very likely that in addition De Montfort University will organise a lecture illustrated by some of Aston’s works in the Trinity Hospital Chapel on the previous evening. Please check with the venues or in the local press for up-to-date details of these events if you are interested in attending.

References and Notes:
4. A number of significant references to Aston have been traced by Dr Roger Bowers in the course of his PhD research: Choral Institutions within the English Church:-their constitution and development 1340-1500. (University of East Anglia, 1975, 2 volumes). A full text PDF download of this very important study should be available from the end of 2008 from the British Library Online Thesis Service: http://www.bl.uk/britishthesis/.
15. Sandon, 1981, op. cit. p.186-191. Prof. Sandon has now published critical and performing editions of most of Aston’s surviving choral works: see http://www.anticoedition.co.uk/ for details of these.
The Workers’ Educational Association (WEA) was founded by Albert Mansbridge in 1903 with the objective of providing access to a university education for working men and women. The Leicester Branch was established in 1908, and plan to produce a history to mark its centenary later this year. Rather than commissioning someone to do this work, the Branch saw this as an opportunity to utilise its extensive archive (currently housed at Vaughan College, Leicester) as the basis for a course, enabling learners to develop historical research skills. I was invited to run this course, ‘Hands on History’, which commenced in September 2007 and has run throughout the academic year.

The archives include Annual Reports, Minutes of various committees, course programmes and publicity, and records relating to specific initiatives such as pre-retirement courses, work with trade unions and school governor training. Some of the class had prior experience of historical research, but many did not; so as well as extracting information from the archives, we have used the course to develop their critical and analytical skills, to assess the potential bias of the sources (including those available on the Internet) and to try to answer the frequent ‘Why?’ questions that arise from the archives.

Needless to say, we have had to identify other sources to fill in the gaps and place the Branch archives in their wider historical context. The earliest Annual Report that we have dates from 1911, but we managed to track down summaries of the earlier reports in local newspapers. Reading reports of the same event from different newspapers is very instructive in alerting learners to the newspapers’ particular political standpoints – and they certainly enliven the research and help to give a sense of the place of the WEA in the wider life of the town. Commenting on a donation of £25 from the Local Education Authority, for example, the *Leicester Daily Post* declared that: ‘We waste quite enough money in trying to educate those who do not want to be educated, so that — when we find our spending authority disposed to give a little towards helping those who are willing to help themselves we must devoutly exclaim “Hear, hear”...’ (1)

We have also spent much time trawling the newspapers for obituaries of people associated with the Branch. Some of them were prominent public figures such as the trade unionists and local councillors instrumental in setting up the Branch, or those like Edgar Tyler, its President for many years, who was also very active in other educational organisations. Others, although appearing year after year in the Annual Reports, have been more difficult to track down — like Florence (Flo) Pole, Secretary of the WEA Rambling Club, one of the many social activities organised by the Branch, and long-serving member of its Executive Committee. Thanks to the combined efforts of several students, we eventually managed to find the notice of her death in the *Leicester Mercury*, track down her obituary, and make contact with some surviving relatives who have loaned us photographs and other items.

Oral history interviews, public appeals and learners’ personal contacts have provided other information and insights that the archive documents do not offer. Thanks to a research grant from the Leicestershire Archaeological & Historical Society, one of the learners and I have also been
able to visit the WEA national archive in the TUC library at London Metropolitan University. The material here, including scrapbooks of newspaper cuttings, photographic collections, and boxes of reports and pamphlets, has been invaluable in placing the activities and concerns in the context of the WEA’s work nationally, and the many new initiatives and financial and other challenges that it has weathered over the years.

We are now working on a publication based on the research, and in line with the conditions of the LAHS grant, will be contributing an article on the history of the WEA to a future edition of the Leicestershire Historian.

For me, this has been one of the most challenging but rewarding classes that I have ever taught, and it has also resulted in some unanticipated and very positive outcomes that go beyond the history itself. Realising that we knew little about current WEA students in the Branch, one of the learners has conducted a survey which has provided very interesting and (in the light of government consultation about the future of adult education) timely information about their profile and their motivation for attending WEA classes. The class was also nominated for an Adult Learners Award in 2008, and I and some of the learners were invited to meet with the relevant OFSTED inspector during the national WEA inspection earlier this year, to talk about the research and its educational outcomes.

As well as adding to the ranks of those poring over microfilm readers and searching through the indices at the Record Office for Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland, our research has caused us, in the nature of the subject, to engage in the ongoing debate about adult learning and the place that ‘liberal’ education has, or should have in this. Some things have certainly changed over the past 100 years – one advert for a course on ‘The Making of Modern England’ in 1910 declared that ‘The class will be strictly limited to 70’ – but the WEA remains the largest voluntary provider of adult education in Britain, and we have all greatly appreciated and enjoyed the opportunities for creative learning that ‘Hands on History’ has offered us.

Notes and References:

‘Working Lives’ research-based course:

Whilst ‘Hands on History’ is finishing during 2008, a further research-based course ‘Working Lives’ is starting Autumn 2008, on Tuesday mornings 10.15 am – 12.15 pm at Vaughan College. The following information has been received about this course:

Both the nature of work and the conditions in which it is done have changed radically over the past 200 years. This course offers an opportunity to explore some of these changes while developing your own skills of historical research. What did the work involve; did it have ‘prospects’; what were people paid; what sort of relationship did they have with their employers; and what happened when their working lives came to an end. We will consider these and other questions through hands-on research in the classroom into original documents, oral histories and other sources. The occupations we cover will include domestic service, the hosiery industry and railway workers, but there will also be scope for you to research an occupation of your own choice. No previous experience of historical research is necessary. Contact for more information is Amanda Miles at WEA office at Vaughan College, 0116 251 9740.

Outline information about the Officers and Committee members of the Leicester and District WEA Branch in its early years from the 5th Annual Report held in the Branch’s archives at Vaughan College.
Two thousand five hundred feet above Ashby-de-la-Zouch a twenty-one year old girl, having checked the small aneroid attached to her wrist, tugged on a ripping-cord. Within seconds the huge gas balloon above her, its valve sprung open, was rapidly deflating and falling earthwards. After a sudden drop of some 250 feet, the canopy of a parachute (released simultaneously from beneath the balloon) billowed open. With both hands tightly clutching a trapeze bar, and only a webbed sling as additional security, the girl gently swayed towards the ground. It was 3rd August 1908, one hundred years ago; the occasion – the Bank Holiday Fete; the girl – Miss Dolly Shepherd, the Edwardian Parachute Queen.

What was remarkable about this particular jump was that, just eight weeks earlier, Dolly had suffered concussion of the pelvis, spinal paralysis and bruising to most of her body. She had been told she would never walk again. She had become national news and was one day to feature in the Guinness Book of Records for ‘The First Mid-Air Rescue’.

The national and local newspapers of the time had a field day. (1)

By the time of her double leap ordeal in 1908, Dolly was already a veteran parachutist. After half an hour’s training and for a fee of £2 10s. she had made her first jump as a 17 year-old above the Alexandra Palace in London in 1904. She was to become a regular visitor to the Midlands, and to Coalville and Ashby-de-la-Zouch in particular. On her visit to the May Bank Holiday Fete in the Bath Grounds, Ashby in 1907, with a show audience of ten thousand visitors, she even managed to upstage Ashby Hastings Cricket Club’s defeat of Leicester County by 250 runs to 99 that day. When her parachute was seen to open successfully, ‘there was loud applause. Mr Jones, coachbuilder of Measham, drove in the direction of the descent, and arrived in a field near Willesley just as Miss Shepherd alighted (not far from where the descent was made last year by the lady who fell into a tree), and brought her back to the grounds’.

Parachutists’ Thrilling Adventure A Terrible Ordeal Double Leap for Life From a Height of Two Miles

A Parachute descent by two young ladies at London Park Fetes last night was attended by a thrilling escape from a terrible death. The two ladies were Miss Daisy Sheppard [sic], an experienced parachutist, and Miss Louie May, and their parachutes were attached to a mammoth balloon, which, in the presence of a large crowd of spectators, made an ascent from the park during the evening. While in mid-air, however, Miss May’s parachute became entangled with a rope or portion of netting, and failed to act. Meanwhile, the balloon was rapidly ascending, exceeding the height of 4,000ft., at which the descent was to have been made, and attaining an altitude of 7,000ft.

Miss May readily realised the imminent danger in which she was placed, and, as the balloon continued on its upward flight, made a desperate attempt to reach her companion on the second parachute by climbing across the balloon. To add to her plight, she herself became entangled in the netting, and was in great peril of being hurled headlong through the air. But at last she succeeded in joining Miss Sheppard, who had fortunately delayed her descent on becoming aware of her companion’s difficulties. Then, hanging on to one parachute, the two girls descended.

They were discovered last night at Field, near Leigh, twelve miles from Longton. Owing to the increased weight on the parachute they had made the descent at a great speed and were, in consequence, badly shaken on reaching earth. Miss Sheppard was unable to move, but help was speedily forthcoming, and medical assistance at once procured.

Another account says: Attempts to get the entangled balloon clear occupied the time until the balloon had reached the fearful height of eleven thousand feet. Then the young lady, whose parachute was entangled, resolved upon a desperate expedient. Taking her life in her hands, she made a flying leap from her side of the balloon to her companion, who helped her on to the narrow bar. Then the two girls, with wonderful nerve, leaped from the trapeze together, and made the descent on a single parachute, which had remained in proper working order.

For a time they dropped like a stone, but while still at a great height the parachute opened and began to check their descent. Intended for the weight of one person, however, the parachute came down much quicker than the normal pace, with the result that while Miss May had the good fortune to escape unhurt, her companion, Miss Sheppard, received serious injuries.

When they reached ground the ladies were eleven miles away from their starting point.
Following her appearance at the Ashby show in early August 1908 when she should still have been recovering from her ordeal above Longton, Dolly, 'an old favourite', went on to perform a double parachute decent at the Coalville and District Horticultural Society's tenth annual exhibition later that month. They alighted in the vicinity of Abbots Oak, where the two ladies were hospitably entertained by Mr Justice Joyce, 'and this accounted for the delay in their return'. On their tardy arrival at the showground, however, 'they received quite an ovation, and the Coalville Town Band struck up See the conquering heroes come. The natives of Coalville were not going to release Dolly as quickly as her ripping cord. They repeatedly questioned her about her marriage plans 'of which there had been persistent and circumstantial rumours'. Dolly laughingly replied that it was 'all rot' – the sons of the farmer who had looked after her at Longton, and who were prime suspects, were, in fact, 13 year-old twins. Dolly stayed in Coalville for over a fortnight, descending No. 2 pit at the Snibston Colliery, remarking that she 'enjoyed the novelty of going down instead of up very much'.

There were hazards a-plenty. The following year, the 11th annual exhibition of the Coalville and District Cottagers' Horticultural Society was held in the field off the Half-Way House Ground in August 1909. Fine weather may have favoured the event, but Dolly was soon to experience very different conditions. At 6.30 p.m. the balloon rose, Dolly waving her usual Union Jack at the upturned faces. At 4,000 feet she tugged on the ripping cord. Nothing happened. Several pulls later – still nothing. The pin had jammed in the release mechanism. Dolly would have to hang on until enough gas in the balloon had escaped through the neck of the bag to allow a descent. Looking up once more, to her horror Dolly saw that the flap had blown inside the neck of the balloon, virtually sealing it. With the cold increasing and with the aneroid now reading 12,000 feet, Dolly began to sing, shouting at the balloon 'Goodbye, Dolly, I must leave you'. The light faded. Dolly was through the clouds. Then there was nothing but blackness – just the moon. Then – strains of music. Dolly felt she was hallucinating. The music grew louder – it was a real band playing somewhere in the darkness below. A few minutes later, Dolly landed on terra firma. She let go of the bar and extracted herself from the sling. The balloon, relieved of her weight, disappeared into the night (to be found three days later, with the parachute still attached, in the North Sea). Within a mile, Dolly was knocking on the door of a cottage in Whissendine, north of Oakham. It was later estimated that she had drifted over 35 miles and had been clinging to the trapeze bar for well over three hours.
Once again in Coalville, at the end of August 1910, Dolly prepared for a double ascent with a Captain Eames. As the balloon rose, Dolly ran forward clutching the trapeze bar, expecting to be whisked swiftly and smoothly into the air. Cheers from the crowds suddenly turned to cries of horror: instead of soaring skywards, Dolly was dropping back to earth to crash land onto several bystanders. Not seriously hurt, Dolly managed to faint several times. One of the spectators, Mrs Bolton, wife of a vanman, was cut on the face through being accidentally kicked by Dolly and was carried unconscious to a nearby tent. The cords attaching the bar to the parachute canopy had been severed. It was never established whether this was by accident or by a more sinister reason.

A more amusing, if embarrassing, incident occurred at Ashby. A windy day and a layer of low cloud meant that Dolly was unable to select a suitable landing spot with her usual accuracy. A few feet from the ground, the turbulence of the wind swung her backwards into a high barbed-wire fence. Impaled on the spikes, her feet still off the ground, holding on to the trapeze, Dolly realised with horror that the lower part of her uniform had been ripped from her waist and was hanging down below her knees. Unable to move, rescue only came in the guise of a young man, who had been walking in the nearby field. Sir Walter Raleigh would have been proud. The blushing youth managed to extricate Dolly from the fence and speedily took off his coat to form a screen behind which necessary adjustments could be made. By the time others had arrived Dolly was reasonably presentable. The episode remained a secret between Dolly and her Sir Galahad – one Bert Wilton. They met whenever Dolly came to Ashby and corresponded for many years afterwards.

Every so often members of the parachutist team Dolly belonged to ‘disappeared’. If their absence was remarked upon, the leader Captain Gaudron would merely say that they had ‘left the team’. They had – and this mortal coil. Dolly had had her scrapes, but continued to give shows until early 1912. One spring evening, high above Alexandra Palace, she clearly heard a voice. ‘Don’t come up again, or you’ll be killed.’ She looked round at the empty sky. ‘All right’ she said out loud. Back safely on the ground, she gave her Union Jack to one bystander, her cap to another and her parachute badge to a third. She never parachuted again.
Dolly served in the Women’s Emergency Corps, later the Women’s Voluntary Reserve, and then the WAACs during the Great War; in the Second World War she joined the Auxiliary Fire Service as a volunteer. At the age of ninety she flew with the Red Devils over Sussex. She was the guest of the RAF Falcons Parachute Display Team at Eastbourne Air Show in July 1983. She died on 21st September that year, only two months short of her 97th birthday.

Notes and References:

Ashby-de-la-Zouch Museum holds the Dolly Shepherd Archive of original memorabilia. The Museum has a small permanent display on her life as well as a life-size model of Dolly descending ‘from the skies’.


1. Source: Newspaper cutting in the Dolly Shepherd Archive, Ashby-de-la-Zouch Museum. Cut out by Dolly, and which has the hand-written date Tuesday 9th June 1908.

Aged ninety, Dolly meets the Red Devils and acts as ‘co-pilot’ in their Islander aircraft over Sussex. (Reproduced by permission of the Trustees of the Dolly Shepherd Pioneer Parachutist Archive and Ashby-de-la-Zouch Museum).
On 13th September 1809 Dorothy Jordan, one of the most famous comic actresses of her day, and long-standing mistress to the Duke of Clarence (the future King William IV) wrote to him:

Bull (Bell?) Inn, Leicester, Wednesday, half past one ... I played last night to a full House, which amounted to £60. It is the intrest [sic] of all managers to deceive one in this particular, but as it is impossible to measure the House beforehand, we must submit to the disadvantage, tho' it is a disappointment... (1)

She wrote again the next day

Leicester, Thursday, half past 11... I like the people here very much. The theatre has been full each night, but, as I mentioned in my letter of yesterday, it only holds £60 - so that I made £60. However, that is better than nothing ... I am this moment going to set out [for Liverpool]. (2)

The Leicester theatre which Dorothy refers to was in the Market Place South. It was Leicester's first purpose-built theatre (3) and at the time of Dorothy's performance, barely a decade old. Clearly marked on several maps (4), the theatre adjoined the Assembly Rooms (the present City Rooms), both buildings having been designed by John Johnson. The 'New Theatre' as it was initially known, opened after a delay due to the 'extreme severity of the season', on 17th March 1800. The opening performance was George Colman's The Heir at Law, a 'recent' comedy which was performed by a visiting company from the Theatre Royal, Cheltenham. There was also a specially written prologue by 'a YOUNG LADY of Leicester' (who was in fact Susanna Watts) spoken by Mr Richardson, the acting manager. (5) However, the theatre was initially only open for approximately one week, and then closed until reopening later that year in May.

Although no illustrations of the theatre have been traced to date, contemporary descriptions have survived. A second prologue, this time written by 'a Gentleman of Leicester' (Henry Carter) and probably delivered at the reopening, gives an indication of what the interior of the theatre was like:

We boast not here a wide extended plain,
Rome's Colosseum or New Drury Lane,
But that our house is just of such a size
That it may please your ears as well as eyes.
Our skilfull Architect delights to grace
With art palladian this his native place. (6)

The first manager, Mr Watson, who was responsible for a number of other provincial theatres, proudly called it 'as handsome and complete a House, for its size, as any in the country'. (7) Elsewhere, Georgian theatres in market towns were not very large judging by surviving examples at Bury St Edmunds and Richmond, and that at Leicester was no exception. Susanna Watts leaves us the following description in her guidebook of 1804:

A small theatre, built by Mr Johnson, neatly and commodiously fitted up, nearly on the plan of the London houses, furnishes the inhabitants of Leicester with a more complete display of the dramatic art than they had before enjoyed, and has been the means of gratifying them by the talents of several performers of the first-rate excellence. The popular pieces of the London stage are here every season represented in a manner pleasing to the town and honorable to the manager. (8)
By 1831, a later writer was less complimentary, calling it 'very small, built entirely of brick, and so extremely plain is its exterior that it nearly approaches to meanness'.(9)

The theatre was open during the winter season, and when the town had more visitors at the time of the Leicester fairs, the assizes and the races. There were usually two different plays every night, the second of which was often a farce, with musicians, dancers or acrobatics to keep the audience entertained during interludes. What we would now regard as marathon performances started at 6.00, 6.30 or 7.00 and ended around midnight, with half-price admission halfway through the evening. At other times there might be touring panoramas, troupes of jugglers, ventriloquists and waxworks to be seen there, with the building also being used for concerts and lectures.

Between 1801 and 1815 the theatre was managed by William Macready, an Irish actor who had previously worked at Covent Garden. Drawing on his London experience and contacts, he was able to introduce new types of scenery, new plays, and persuade many notable actors and actresses to appear at his Leicester theatre.

Dorothy Jordan's two-night engagement in 1809 was one such star performance. She was hugely popular. Audiences 'had a high treat in the transcendant comic talent of Mrs Jordan ... (and the) house each evening was crowded with much of the consequence and fashion of the neighbourhood'. (10) She played in The Soldier's Daughter, a patriotic comedy written for her by the actor and dramatist Andrew Cherry at the time of the invasion scare of 1804, and 'an old favourite' - Susannah Centlivre's The Wonder! A Woman Keeps a Secret. Dorothy returned to Leicester in 1812 performing in The Wonder! and Hannah Cowley's The Belle's Stratagem, a late-eighteenth century comedy, and made a final, three-night visit in 1814, when she again appeared in The Soldier's Daughter. The programme also included The Spoiled Child, a popular farce which she was rumoured to have written herself, in which she played the part of Little Pickle. On this last occasion she attended a small private dinner party with several well-known Leicester names including Mary Linwood and William Gardiner who had seen her act the previous evening, and also the Rev. Charles Berry of the Leicester Great Meeting.

Another great attraction of the theatre was William Henry West Betty, a child prodigy known as Master Betty or 'The Young Roscius', who had caused a sensation in London playing Shakespearean tragic parts. Charles Macready, the manager's son and a future popular actor, who was at Rugby School at the time, was 'smuggled' out of school and over to Leicester in a chaise to see the thirteen year-old actor as King Richard III in November 1804. Betty returned to Leicester in 1805 and 1806, playing to crowded houses on each occasion.

Other famous artistes to appear at the Leicester Theatre included George Frederick Cooke, whom the Leicester Journal called 'the greatest actor of the present day' (1808 and 1809), Charles Macready, who had now embarked on a stage career (1812), the famous clown Joseph Grimaldi (1817), the tragedian Edmund Kean (1824 and 1829), the comedian John Liston (1828), Charles Mathews, in one of his famous At Home performances (1834), and the singers Madame Catalini (1810) and Madame Vestris (1828).

Throughout the theatre's existence, seat prices remained constant at 1s. for the gallery, 2s. for the pit and 3s. for the boxes. Exceptionally, on a few special occasions, the management felt justified in raising prices - for instance, for Master Betty's visits in 1804, 1805 and 1806, when the gallery was increased to 2s. 6d., and the pit and boxes to 6s., and for Mrs Jordan's visit in 1809, when the gallery was 1s. 6d., the pit 3s. 6d. and the boxes, 5s. When she returned in 1814, however, very near the end of her acting career, it was 'Prices as usual'.

The profits from the opening night in 1800 were distributed among the poor of the town. This philanthropic practice was revived in 1819 when the profits from the last night of the season were presented to Leicester Infirmary, whilst a
company of amateurs gave a special performance in aid of distressed local framework knitters.

As for the fabric of the theatre, it is recorded that in 1802 heating was provided ‘by stoves being constantly kept in operation’ for the occupied interior of the theatre. Additionally, in 1803 the ‘interior of the theatre ... is now brilliantly illuminated with gas’. (11)

References and Notes:

1. Arthur Aspinall (ed.), Mrs Jordan and Her Family (1951), 108. Dorothy Jordan was the Duke of Clarence’s mistress for 20 years from 1791 to 1811. She had 10 illegitimate children by him, and when on tour she wrote to him almost every day.

2. Ibid. Notwithstanding Dorothy Jordan’s comments, £60 was a useful sum of money in 1809 - the equivalent of more than £4,000 today.

3. From the Restoration to 1750, Leicester Town Hall (the Guildhall) was the main place for actors in Leicester. In 1750 a combined playhouse, concert and assembly rooms was built at Leicester’s Haymarket / Coal Hill although by 1800 this venue was increasingly inadequate for theatrical performances. The Bath or Vauxhall Gardens were also periodically used for dramatic entertainment until their closure in the 1790s, this further contributing to the lack of adequate playhouse facilities in Leicester by the turn of the century. The subsequent separate building of the new Assembly Rooms and the new Leicester theatre was deliberate in the hope that both would be more successful as distinct functions. C. J. Billson, Leicester Memoirs (1924), 102-109.

4. For example, Thomas Combe’s map of 1802 and Ellis’s map of 1828.

5. The prologue was printed in the Leicester Journal, 28th March 1800. However, in spite of the various improvements carried out, these do not seem to have resulted in better audiences, and in 1833 playbills announcing a joint benefit for the managers referred to ‘the losses they have sustained during the present season from unforeseen circumstances (and) the expense incurred in rendering the (theatre) worthy of patronage’. (12) In September 1835 it was announced that ‘it is in contemplation, after the present season to pull down the theatre’ and to ‘build another in its place on an extended scale’. (13) The replacement theatre was well-subscribed to.

(1815), 534.


11. Ibid., 16.


Leicester artist John Flower (1793-1861) is best known for his depictions of Leicester street scenes and local buildings which appeared in the volume of 25 lithographs published in 1826. (1) These now familiar images have subsequently been reproduced on dust jackets and within the pages of many historical accounts of the town. However, these scenes represent only a very small proportion of Flower’s artistic output. This article considers the historical significance of Flower’s lesser known topographical works for Leicester and Leicestershire, based on recent work on cataloguing the collection of over 200 sketches and watercolours by Flower held at the Record Office for Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland, alongside other public collections of his artwork.

Flower was a prolific artist who produced many hundreds of pictures during a career which spanned half a century, the published volume appearing relatively early in that period. It is impossible to estimate his total output, nor to arrive at anything like a comprehensive catalogue of his work, especially as many of Flower’s pictures are in private hands and others no doubt have been lost. (2) There are, however, a significant number of his works in public ownership in his native county of Leicestershire. Leicester City Council’s Museums Service has approximately 87 of his works, including 26 watercolours. In addition to which they hold some 37 original lithographic prints and a small number of reproductions. Leicestershire County Council’s Museum Service has 26 original illustrations by Flower, these being mainly pencil sketches and one watercolour, whilst the Record Office for Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland (ROLLR) has the largest collection: over 200 topographical pictures, almost all depicting Leicester or Leicestershire scenes. These are mainly pencil sketches and pencil and wash drawings, but include 23 watercolours. (3) J.D. Bennett has provided information on a further collection of 97 topographical pictures offered for sale by a Nottingham art dealer in the late 1960s which included a number of Continental scenes, possibly made during a tour with the artist Samuel Prout. (4) The current whereabouts of this collection is not known. Flower also produced a series of illustrations for a proposed History of Staffordshire by J.M. Mathew, F.S.A., that was never published. Some 50 of these drawings have survived and are now in the William Salt Library, Stafford. (5) Peterborough Museum, the Bodleian Library and Cardiff Central Library also have drawings by Flower.

John Flower was primarily a topographical and landscape artist though he also produced some portraits, and there are a small number of still-life pictures in the local collections. He also did some ‘hack work’ including copies of well-known paintings. (6) During the early part of his career Flower worked mainly in Leicester and Leicestershire but later made sketching tours in the surrounding counties and further afield. The City Museum collection includes pictures of scenes in Warwickshire, Derbyshire, Gloucestershire, Kent, Middlesex, Yorkshire, Westmorland, North and South Wales and the Isle of Man, in addition to a number of Continental locations. The ROLLR collection includes scenes from Oakham, Rutland; near Nuneaton, Warwickshire; at Normanton on Soar, Nottinghamshire and at North Lew, Devon. Flower continued to sketch and paint aspects of his native town and county throughout his life and his last known works are of Leicestershire subjects.

John Flower, Houses near Turret Gateway, Leicester. (Reproduced by permission of ROLLR.)
The ROLLR collection consists of 219 studies bound in two large volumes. Several of these have sketches on the reverse and in total there are some 233 individual illustrations. Though the vast majority are attributable to John Flower, at least seven are the work of his daughter Elizabeth Flower (1816-1902), an accomplished topographical artist in her own right. There are five more pictures by her in the City Museum collection and another is noted in the collection offered for sale by the Nottingham dealer in the 1960s. Several pictures from the Record Office collection are reproduced in Leicester: A Pictorial History, including a fine unsigned watercolour of Leicester Castle from the west bank of the Soar, which Malcolm Elliott attributes to Elizabeth Flower. She illustrated a similar range of subject matter to her father and sometimes accompanied him on sketching tours. It is possible that other pictures in the Record Office collection are by her. A further seven pencil drawings in the collection are the work of another artist, produced much later, in July and August of 1892. These are intitled 'C.K.' and one is signed 'C. Kellet'. This was probably Cornelius William Kellet who enrolled at the Leicester School of Art in 1888 at the age of 15 and may be one and the same person as Cornelius William Kellett, buried in Coventry in 1914. Subject matter consists of early buildings, including a number of churches, mainly in the villages around Leicester.

The circumstances surrounding the acquisition of the collection now housed at the ROLLR and previously part of the Local Studies Collection held at the Central Reference Library in Bishop Street, Leicester are unclear. It is possible that these illustrations were purchased in the early 1930s when the Library was actively expanding its picture collection; more than 700 additions to the collection were made in 1932-3 and almost 600 the following year.

Of the illustrations in the collection by John Flower, approximately half are dated, the earliest being a sketch of the gatehouse at Kirby Muxloe castle made in 1813, when Flower was twenty years old. The last is a detailed sketch at Foston church, dated October 1860, just over a year before his death on 29 November 1861. Spanning almost fifty years this collection demonstrates the range of Flower’s topographical work in Leicester and Leicestershire.

As would be expected, there are various illustrations of early buildings in Leicester, including versions of some of the published lithographs. Rapid sketches, one or two evidently made during demolition, have a particular immediacy. Of note is a pencil sketch entitled Houses near Turret Gateway showing a series of jettied timber-framed buildings. These were presumably located on the west side of Castle View on the site subsequently occupied by the Old Castle Inn, a nineteenth century public house also since demolished.
In the Leicestershire Museums collection there is a fine pencil sketch of an unidentified street scene depicting a late medieval jettied building with arched doorway. The sign on an adjacent building reads ‘Sharp Builder Garden Chair Maker’. White’s Directory for 1846 lists a John Sharp Builder and Rustic Chair Maker on Highcross Street, Leicester. Subsequent directories identify him variously as a builder, carpenter and joiner, locating his premises on the west side of Highcross Street, between Friars Causeway and All Saints Open. The 1855 Post Office Directory of Leicestershire and Rutland pinpoints the location, listing Sharp’s address as 134 Highcross Street, Leicester. In the illustration there is a double-pile, wide-frontage house to the left of the jettied building and beyond that a boundary wall with gate and trees behind. This precise arrangement is shown on the first edition Ordnance Survey 1:500 map sheet XXX1.10.24 published in 1887. Although the jettied building had evidently been demolished by then, and replaced by a covered carriageway giving access to a pair of properties erected at the back of the plot, its location is readily identifiable. Interestingly there is a rough sketch in the ROLLR collection entitled Sketch of an Old House in High X Street taken down August 29 1848 showing the first floor and roof structure of a similar looking building, made during demolition, which may in fact be the same building.

The population of Leicester increased rapidly in the nineteenth century, with new factories and acres of workers’ housing spreading out over the former open fields (14). Pictures of various agricultural and other buildings on the outskirts of Leicester, including Barn in the Spa Front Field Humberstone Road, Sketch of a Summer House on the Freemens Common and Barn on the Occupation Road (now University Road), illustrate Flower was aware of the changing character of Leicester’s hinterland and a concern for recording the remaining agricultural buildings and rural landscape of the area immediately outside the town before these vanished entirely.

A series of pictures illustrating the rural character of those villages and farms on the outskirts of Leicester, already feeling the pressure of urban expansion by the middle of the nineteenth century, and subsequently engulfed by the town, may be viewed in a similar light.

A linked theme is an enduring interest in recording examples of impermanent architecture – short-lived, functional structures including sheds, fences, signposts, hayricks and the like, all of which have now vanished. Of these the sketch of a small plank-built shed at Syston, serving as a railway office, and the Sketch of a Screen (toilet) on the Railway, dated 1833, demonstrate an oblique interest in contemporary subject matter. In fact Flower recorded various contemporary buildings. Of the many churches he illustrated, for example, St George’s, Swannington was only seven years old when he sketched this in 1832. (15)

Pictures of many of Leicester’s gentry houses, both ancient and more ‘modern’, can be found in all three of the major Leicestershire public collections of Flower’s work. (16) No doubt some of these were privately commissioned by the house owners, as would have been some of the numerous illustrations of substantial rectories and other large houses. Examples include the pencil and wash drawing of the Old Manor House at Enderby September 23rd 1837, a fine example of a surviving building with medieval origins. There are three different sketch views of Belvoir Castle in the Record Office collection, one of which was included in the published volume of lithographs. These show the house following the major remodelling begun in 1801 by James Wyatt and completed by the Rev. Sir John Thoroton after Wyatt’s death in 1813 and a serious fire in 1816. The sketches are undated but must have been made in or before 1826. According to Pevsner work on the house was not finally completed until c.1830. (17)

These collected illustrations provide some indication of how Flower approached this type of work. Preliminary field sketches, often gridded, include copious notes on subject matter and lighting. From these he produced more refined and often quite exquisite pencil and wash drawings, though still with notes and detail sketches suggesting that they were not the finished product. In some instances the final illustrations were ‘drawn on stone’ by Flower and lithographic prints made. In other cases the final version may have been a watercolour, which the client received, with Flower retaining the preliminary drawings. (18) In any event the surviving preparatory illustrations provide a valuable record of the appearance of a number of substantial houses in the county in the first half of the nineteenth century, all the more so where those houses have subsequently been altered or demolished. For example, Danet’s Hall and Westcotes, on the outskirts of Leicester, Cadebey Hall, Hinckley Hall, Stoughton Grange and Swithland Hall have all now gone. The two illustrations of Stoughton Grange show this in its Gothic form, following the alterations made by Anthony Keck around 1754, but before the substantial remodelling of 1882-3; the house was subsequently demolished in 1925-6. Similarly, two illustrations of Barkby Hall show this before it was considerably reduced in size in 1870 (though whether before or after the fire in 1847 is uncertain at this stage). (19) Field sketches of Swithland Hall show the building that was burnt down in 1822; the existing Swithland Hall, completed in 1852, was built on a new site. A lithograph of the earlier hall, based on the field sketches, was included in the 1972 reprint of Views of Ancient Buildings in the Town and County of Leicester. (20)
John Flower, Barn in the Spa Front Field, Humberstone Road, Leicester, July 1836. (Reproduced by permission of ROLLR.)

John Flower, Sketch of a signpost. (Reproduced by permission of ROLLR.)

John Flower, Shed at Syston, serving as a railway office. (Reproduced by permission of ROLLR.)

John Flower, Sketch of a farm building, September 1838. (Reproduced by permission of ROLLR.)

John Flower, Hayrick at Quorndon. (Reproduced by permission of ROLLR.)

John Flower, Sketch of a Summer House on the Freemens Common, Leicester. (Reproduced by permission of ROLLR.)
John Flower, Stoughton Grange before the remodelling of 1882-3. (Reproduced by permission of ROLLR.)

John Flower, Annotated sketch of Carlton Hall near Kibworth. (Reproduced by permission of ROLLR.)

John Flower, the Old Manor House at Enderby, September 1837. (Reproduced by permission of ROLLR.)
The published volume of Views... was originally issued in parts to subscribers, as indicated by an advertisement in the Leicester Journal for 18th March 1825. (21) On the reverse of one picture in the ROLLR collection and another in the Leicestershire Museum collection are notes in Flower’s hand working out the order of publication. Where he changed his mind titles are crossed through and replaced by others. Significantly, these lists include reference to pictures that are otherwise unknown, of Lord’s Place and St Margaret’s church, Leicester. Quenby Hall is also mentioned with the note ‘I am to sketch’, though whether this sketch was ever made is not known. (22)

There are many illustrations of significant historical monuments in the three public collections, including, for example, pictures of Leicester Castle and the Newarke, Leicester Abbey and Cavendish House, and the ruins at Kirby Muxloe, Ashby de la Zouch, Bradgate, Ulverscroft and Grace Dieu. Flower returned many times to sketch some of these subjects; there are more than a dozen views at Leicester Abbey in the ROLLR collection alone, ranging in date from the 1820s to the 1850s. Flower evidently recognised the historical significance of some of his own work, for example, a pencil sketch of St John’s stone, a substantial monolith of presumed prehistoric date which stood in a field near Abbey Lane to the north of the town. Having sketched this in 1815 (on the reverse of another picture), he noted in 1857 that ‘this original sketch is now valuable’. By that date the stone had been broken up to repair roads. Another version of this illustration was included in William Kelly’s Royal Progresses published in 1884. (23) Pictures of a Roman column dug up in Leicester in 1850 and an Anglo-Saxon brooch found at Ingarsby, in addition to the published views of the Jewry Wall and the Roman milestone at Belgrave, further illustrate his interest in ‘antiquarian study’. (24)

Flower was also a drawing master he taught drawing at Ratcliffe College and at a school in Ulllestonhe. (25) Some of the latest illustrations in the ROLLR collection were made with his pupils, indicating that he continued to work as a drawing master almost until the end of his life. There are various detailed sketches made ‘with pupils’, at Quorn don in 1842, at Broughton Astley in 1844 (‘with Narboro pupils’) and at Ulllestonhe in 1849 and 1859, for example. There are also some collaborative pieces, including Buttress at Foston Ch Sketched by M Payton shaded by J.F. October 1860. A series of annotated technical drawings illustrating the rules of perspective presumably represent teaching aids; there is another similar drawing in the City Museum collection entitled Three Studies in Perspective for Buildings.

John Flower’s enduring legacy is the visual record he created of Leicester and Leicestershire in the early part of the nineteenth century. (26) It is surprising then that the illustrations in the ROLLR collection are not more widely known. This may be due in part to the fact that so few of Flower’s pictures were published in his own lifetime, when volumes of topographical views were popular. (27) It is hoped in due course to compile and publish as full a list as possible of the known works of both John Flower and Elizabeth Flower. To this end members are invited to provide (in strictest confidence) details of any original pictures in private ownership (though not reproductions of illustrations from the published volume of lithographs, very many of which are in circulation). It would also be useful to trace the collection sold by the Nottingham dealer in 1968 and to confirm the current whereabouts of pictures that were in the possession of the executors of Mrs J. Broughton, The Wilderness, Barkby Thorpe, in the 1960s, as recorded in J.D. Bennett’s Transactions article. Probably the most fitting tribute to John Flower ‘The Leicester Artist’ would be an exhibition of his work in his native town, arranged perhaps to coincide with the 150th anniversary of his death in 2011.

Notes and References:

2. J.D. Bennett produced a representative list of 65 topographical pictures by John Flower as an appendix to his 1966-7 Transactions article; many more illustrations have come to light since that time.
3. John Flower Pencil Sketches and Water Colours (Leicestershire). ROLLR: L914.2. The collection has recently been catalogued prompting this assessment of Flower’s topographical work in Leicester and Leicestershire.
8. Information on the Leicester School of Art kindly supplied by Linda Butt. Grant of Burial recorded in the Minutes of Coventry City Council for 1914.
9. Sketches by Cornelius Kellet in the Record Office collection: St Mary de Castro church, Leicester 2.7.92; packhorse bridge, Aylestone 23.7.92; St Peter’s church,
Braunstone 28.7.92; timber-framed cottage, Braunstone 28.7.92; St Denys’ church tower, Evington 13.8.92; cottages on Leicester Lane, Evington 13.8.92; St Mary’s church, Humberstone 21.7.92.


11. The sign of the Crown and Thistle, on the adjacent building to the east, is also shown in Flower’s published view of The Town Hall, Leicester with the jettied building just visible beyond it. The precise location is confirmed with reference to the notebooks of the early nineteenth century mapmaker Robert Unicume held at the Record Office for Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland. Tony Gnanaratnam of ULAS has reconstructed elements of Unicume’s survey at a larger scale from his original measurements, overlaying this on to first edition Ordnance Survey maps.


15. Bernard Daws A Brief History of St George’s Church, Swannington (1993). Swannington Heritage Trust. There are a number of illustrations of unidentified churches in the County Museum Service collection, all thought to be in Leicestershire; it is hoped to confirm the identity of at least some of these in due course.

16. Including: Aylestone Hall, Baggrave Hall, Barkby Hall, Belvoir Castle, Bradgate House, Braunstone Hall, Carlton Curlieu Hall, Cadeby Hall, Cavendish House, Danets Hall, Enderby Hall, Groby Old Hall, Hinckley Hall, Ingarsby Old Hall. Launder Abbey, Lowesby Hall, Narborough Hall, Scraptoft Hall, Stoughton Grange, Swithland Hall, Thurcaston Hall and Westcotes Hall.


18. Further research is planned in this area; it is possible that details of commissions survive in collections of family or estate papers associated with some of the gentry houses that Flower illustrated.

19. Pevsner and Williamson, 1992. See Ref. 17, p.398 (Stoughton Grange); p.90 (Barkby Hall).


21. ‘Mr Flower, Artist, Leicester, Proposes to Publish by Subscription, Twenty Lithographic Views of Castles, Abbeys, and Ancient Buildings, in the County and Town of Leicester. The Work to consist of Four Parts, each containing Five Views, on fine paper. Imperial Quarto. The price of each part to Subscribers Six Shillings...’ Leicester Journal, 18th March, 1825.


23. William Kelly, Royal progresses and visits to Leicester, from the reputed foundations of the city by King Leir, B.C. 844 to the present time (1844). Leicester: Samuel Clark. Illustration opposite p.17 entitled ‘St John’s Stone as it appeared in 1815, from an original drawing by J. Flower’ The precise location of this monolith is marked on the first edition Ordnance Survey map.

24. Flower’s obituary notice in the Leicester Chronicle on 7th December 1861 refers to his ‘love of gothic architecture, and of antiquarian study, and a taste for collecting objects of vertu...’ cited in J.D. Bennett 1996-7. See Ref. 1, p.78.


27. See biographical notes by J.D. Bennett in the 1972 reprint of Views of Ancient Buildings in the Town and County of Leicester. See Ref. 20.

Acknowledgements:

J. D. Bennett has provided much helpful information from his own research on John Flower and this is acknowledged with gratitude. Thanks are extended to the Chief Archivist and staff of the Record Office for Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland. Thanks also to Alexandra Davy of the Collections Resource Centre at Barrow upon Soar. Information supplied by Laura Hadland, Senior Curator of Jewry Wall Museum, Denis Baker of the Swannington Heritage Trust and Linda Butt of De Montfort University, via Alan McWhirr, is also gratefully acknowledged.

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Despite the best intentions of Woods and his colleagues, and their hard work in planning for the event, the Congress almost failed to convene. It was noted that 'within about a fortnight of the time fixed for the opening... came the most serious Railway Strike ever known, and to many it seemed that the holding of the Church Congress... was almost an impossibility'. However, the strike was settled on October 5th, a few days before the opening. (7) It must have resulted in a last minute surge of people declaring their intention to attend, for the Committee was forced to plead, in a newspaper advertisement as late as October 8th, 'for offers of hospitality' for an event scheduled to begin on October 13th. (8)

Before the beginning of the Congress there were preliminary rallies for boys, girls and men. It was noted that 'the number of lads present at the De Montfort Hall meeting yesterday [October 12th] approximated 3,000. The body of the hall was mainly occupied by local troops of Boy Scouts and the C[hurch] L[ads] B[rigade]'. The Archbishop of Canterbury, Randall Davidson, who was to preach the sermon at the opening service in St Martin’s Church (soon to become the Cathedral) and remained throughout the whole of the proceedings, addressed the men’s meeting, apparently to good effect. (9)

The theme of the Congress was 'The Church in a New Age'. The stated purpose was 'to demonstrate the special
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contribution the Church can make towards the reconstruction of national and international relationships in the New Age'. (13) The Executive Committee, chaired by Bishop Woods, had as its Vice-Chairman the Suffragan Bishop of Leicester (Norman McLeod Lang), and included in its membership the Mayor of Leicester (Alderman W. J. Lovell), the Reverend W. Elliott Thompson as Secretary, as well as five other clergymen and seven lay people (including one woman, Mrs C. F. Oliver), were clearly concerned about the role of the Church in the life of the nation as it faced the post-war years. This was outlined in the sub-themes: 'The Faith in the Light of the War', 'Christian Ideals in World Politics', 'The Christian Doctrine of the Future Life', 'Christian Ideals of Education' and 'Christian Ideals of Citizenship and Service'. The final sub-theme was divided into concerns about people in sexual relationships and those who led the single life, a recognition of the enormous loss of young men during the war, which denied marriage and children to many young women. (14)

There were, however, other concerns than recovery from war. For many years there had been an awareness that Leicester had been a city before. Between 690 and 874 it had been the centre of a see for the Bishop of the Middle Angles. (15) In 1919 though Leicester had resumed city status before the restoration of the diocese, a fact that no local politician could resist making reference to. Accordingly, at the opening ceremony, held in the Council Chamber, Alderman Lovell quipped that 'now the city has preceded the Bishop, and we hope before long the Bishop will be forthcoming'. (16)

The campaign for a bishopric was in fact nearing its conclusion. During the 1880s, when Bishop Magee was growing old and ailing, and had become rather tired of trying to cope with a diocese in which there were two diocesan conferences, one in Peterborough, the other in Leicester, so that 'everything had to be done in duplicate', it was accepted that sooner or later there would be a division into two dioceses. The appointment of Francis Thicknesse, the Archdeacon of Northampton, as Suffragan Bishop of Leicester in 1888, was regarded as a step in that direction.

During the episcopate of Edward Carr Glyn further progress was made; although the Bishop himself was not entirely convinced of the wisdom of the separation he accepted that a smaller diocese would be easier to administer. But for the intervention of World War I Leicester would already have become the venue for a restored diocese. (17) This question overshadowed the whole of the proceedings of the Congress. There was another concern, which had obtruded itself in the weeks before the Congress, the question of industrial relations. The recent 'most serious Railway Strike ever known' brought this sharply into focus. It would have been surprising if there had been no mention of it, even if it had not been planned originally. With this in mind the Leicester Journal considered that the leadership of the Leicester Congress was appropriate. Fortunately there was a presiding bishop who had been Vicar and Rural Dean in the great industrial city of Bradford and a Secretary in W. Elliott Thompson who had worked with Woods in Bradford. (18)

Bishop Woods did not disappoint, for in his inaugural address he referred to the Church's inaction during the Industrial Revolution: 'Instead of one great industrial comradeship of Britons, the workers... assembled in two opposing camps, one labelled Capital and the other Labour. And the driving force of the whole, instead of being a sense of fellowship in the common welfare, was found in a bitter and soulless competition. He declared that the Church had been 'wholly preoccupied with the redemption of the individual as contrasted with the community'. He had no precise answers to the problems, but at least it stirred up debate in a subject that might not have been aired if the railway strike had not occurred. (19)

There were many other subjects covered during the Congress. Among them was Professor A. C. Headlam's lecture on ministerial conditions of work. He complained...
that 'some 3275 livings [were] under the value of £200 a year, and 8029 under the value of £300, and [therefore] reform was necessary'. He noted that the head teachers of many first-grade public elementary schools earned more than £300 per annum. Accordingly he proposed an 'amalgamation of small livings; and a strong statutory Diocesan Finance Committee, with the power of dealing with all the Church endowments within the Diocese', together with 'a survey of the incomes and duties of the Deans and Chapters [of the Cathedrals]' and 'proper endowments of faculties of theology in the different Universities'. (20) Among the more spiritual addresses was one by Dean W. R. Inge on the 'Christian Doctrine of the Future Life', in which he declared that 'belief in perpetual progress as a law of nature was a superstition'. (21) Perhaps he exaggerated, but it was a truth that anyone who had lived through the Victorian and Edwardian eras followed by the recent war could accept.

In summing up the Congress Bishop Woods believed that there were three lessons to be learnt from the proceedings. Firstly, there was value in looking at differences between the Churches in a new spirit. He emphasised that no-one had a monopoly of the truth. Whereas at the 1880 Congress there had been concern at differences within the Church of England, there was no mention of this in 1919. Secondly, he was concerned about the immensity of the task the Church was facing. Thirdly, he felt that there was a 'new sense of the immeasurable resources of God available to the Churches' (22)

For those who were involved in the Church Congress of 1919 it must have seemed as if there was a new dawn in the affairs of the Church and the society of which it was part. When the Congress had started in 1861 they were the only place where clergy and laity met on equal terms. They were the main vehicles for promoting understanding between the Churches. There was even some hope that Congress might become a national synod for the Anglican Church, which had had no other truly representative body. Hopes were high. (23)

In the meantime, however, there had been some changes in church governance which ruled out this possibility. In 1885 a house of laity had been added to the Convocation of Canterbury. York had followed suit in 1892. By 1919 the Enabling Act was providing for the creation of a National Assembly that would bring both of these bodies together. (24) In the same piece of legislation there was also provision for statutory parochial church councils to work with incumbents. (25) Moreover, Arthur Burns has shown how Diocesan Assemblies had developed during the 1860s. (26) There were, therefore, responsible elective bodies at various levels in the Church of England; this ensured that the Church Congresses, interesting and meaningful as their proceedings might be, were not destined to fulfill a representative role.

References:

5. Rimmington, 'Leicester Church Congress 1880', 8; Also Leicester Journal, 17th October, 1919.
8. Leicester Mercury, 8th October, 1919.
10. Leicester Mercury, 13th October, 1919.
12. Ibid., 5.
13. Ibid., vi.
20. Leicester Journal, 24th October, 1919; also Leicester Mercury, 16th October, 1919.
22. Ibid., 17th October, 1919.
24. Ibid., 365. The National Assembly was known as the Representative Church Council with 'the special powers of presenting measures for royal assent provided that they were reported on favourably by an ecclesiastical committee of both houses and a motion that they should be so presented was carried in both houses of Parliament'.
Whetstones and Goats: the unexpected!

David Ramsey

Charnwood Forest as seen by the map maker John Prior in 1777. Goathouse Hill is marked to the west of the Outwoods. (With acknowledgement to Leicestershire in 1777, and edition of John Prior’s map of Leicestershire with an introduction and commentary by members of the Leicestershire Industrial History Society, edited by J. D. Welding, LLIS, 1984).

Whilst researching the history of whetstones in Leicestershire, an unexpected connection was found between a whetstone quarry and a large-scale goat-keeping operation. This article brings together this unlikely combination in north-west Leicestershire, focussing on Whittle’s Warren, formerly Goat House Hill, near to Charley in the Charnwood Forest area of the county.

Historical evidence for the quarrying of whetstones at Whittle’s Warren can be found in Nichols, who, writing at the end of the eighteenth century, refers to the quarries on Goat House Hill as producing sharpening stones, adding that the stones were most excellent for sharpening razors and penknives, and sold for two pence an ounce at Birmingham, Sheffield and Wolverhampton. (1) Possessing fine honing qualities, the Goat House Hill Stones, (or Charley oil stones), were eminently suitable for the sharpening of surgical knives.

Today, there are surviving examples of whetstones in the Leicestershire County Collection, whilst recent enquiries placed in both the Leicestershire Archaeological & Historical Society Newsletter and the Leicestershire Industrial History Newsletter requesting more information about the Leicestershire whetstones have also resulted in more examples coming to light including two new types: a large boxed honing stone suitable for workshop use and a smaller more portable type.

The stones from Goat House Hill and the surrounding outcrops were prepared for sale locally. Using Nichols as a guide, this activity most likely pre-dates 1785, whilst the occupational data on census records indicate an end date of c.1890. (2) During the period between 1851 and 1861, the manufacture of whetstones appears to have been a true cottage industry, with a few of the families and their locations being known, for example, at Coleorton, where Jess and Elizabeth Crosen, along with Joseph and Thomas Else, were preparing the stone for sale at Rotten Row (3), whilst Richard and William Stacey were doing the same at Thringstone. These villages, although some distance from Whittle Hill, are connected by the Thringstone geological fault which joins Thringstone, Abbots Oak, Green Hill, Whitwick and Whittle Hill along a thin fault line from which the whetstone rock extruded at intermittent points.

Finding the stone outcrops was not that easily done and once the sources around the Thringstone area failed to produce good stone, the workers turned to elsewhere including Whittle Hill, although when Benjamin Rose and Thomas Tracey tried to replenish their stocks of material from the Whittle Hillside they were caught with the stone and appeared at the Loughborough Petty Sessions in February 1836. Both men were sentenced to five months for larceny.
Whetstones A, B, D & G are from the Leicestershire County collection. The three stones with provenance B, D & G are strongly stained with oil and dust and varying in shape size. The cleaner stones C, E & F are from the author’s collection: C is from the Whittle Hill spoil heap, E from the Roman villa site at Rothley and F is a surface find near Roe’s Plantation northwest of Whittle Hill. (E & F were later deemed to be not true whetstones and most likely from the Beacon/Buck Hill/Outwoods area two miles south east of Whittle Hill).

Fragments of whetstone on the old spoil heap at Whittle Hill.

Whilst searching for earlier mentions of whetstones at Whittle Hill, an estate document from the Herrick collection of rents and leases dated 1560 contained an unexpected surprise – 100 goats at the Goat house on Whittle Hill but no mention of either the stone, or the quarries. The goats were at this time in the custody of one Ralph Piggot who received a significant yearly allowance for keeping them. (4) Why the Beaumanor Estate would require one hundred goats on the payroll is not easily understood. Apart from milk, meat and the hair to make ropes (goat hair was thought resistant to the effects of sea water and sought for ships ropes), the numbers and associated expense appears out of proportion to the Estate requirements unless there were commercial sales. (5)

The Herrick estate papers also give names to the Goat House Hill’s inhabitants in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. From these records we hear in 1638 of an Isabel and Robert Broadhurst of the Goat House who were fined for not frequenting their Parish Church at Shepshed. (6) The family name ‘Whittle’ appears to have become firmly attached to Goat House Hill during the seventeenth century as indicated in the 1664 Hearth Tax which show a John Whittle in the Goat house with 2 hearths, whilst William Whittle of Beaumanor is also mentioned in papers during this same period (7), and a surviving will of February 1672 expands the Whittle family tree: To my son Robert Whittle my land at Rothley and to my wife Elizabeth my lands and goods for life. To my brother, Thomas Sheffield - my house in Rothley. My brother, Francis Sheffield to be overseer.
The last mention of a Whittle at the Goat House is in the late eighteenth century, firstly when John Whittle is mentioned in the Herrick papers for 1793 (9), and then in Nichols who adds the passing of William Whittle to his notes, William having died in 1796 a resident at the warren, formerly Goat House, for nearly eighty years.

A rabbit warren was also well established at Whittle Hill by the mid eighteenth century and is recorded as being attacked by rioters in 1748. At the same time Lord Stamford’s warren a short distance away at Hunt’s Hill was completely destroyed. (10)

Precisely when the honing qualities of the whetstones on the Goat House Hill site were discovered however, remains unknown.

Today the shallow quarry sites at Whittle Hill are overgrown with bramble, gorse and fern covering the greater part of the shallow excavations, bringing vividly to mind how difficult it would have been attempting to venture through the original Charnwood Forest. A sound reason why the triangle of roads, A6 Leicester to Loughborough, A512 Loughborough to Ashby, and the A50, later the Leicester, Whitwick and Swannington roads defined the earlier limits of the Forest’s spread for so many years.

The author will be pleased to hear from anyone who thinks they may have a Leicestershire whetstone either in their garden shed or elsewhere.

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Lesley Hale, Whitwick History & Heritage Society, Denis Baker (Swannington), Grahame Clarke (Goatgate Farm, Newbold Verdon), Jeanette Ovenden (Assistant Keeper at ROLLR), Fred Hartley (Curator, Working Life Collection), Joanna Herbert-Stepney and B. Morrit (Access), Mrs Gladys Poole, Owen York (Whetstones).

References and Notes:
2. Printed packaging, catalogues and advertising materials connected with the stones have so far failed to come to hand, so any reader who can add to the present knowledge would be most welcome.
3. Rotten Row lies in the fields west of present day Thringstone and due to various boundary changes is sometimes found under Coleorton.
5. The goat we see today is a much-improved version of its seventeenth century counterpart. In this pre-enclosure period oversight and vigilance over the herd would have been paramount as opportunist thieves roamed far and wide in the area as the Loughborough Petty Sessions books clearly show.
7. ROLLR: DG20 (Grey Family) DE311/43/2.
8. ROLLR: Leicester 3/146.

In response to the appeal for original Charley whetstones (LAHS Newsletter No: 77 Spring 2008) these fine examples have been loaned to the author by a LAHS member. ‘B’ has sound Leicestershire provenance. ‘A’ has sound Leicestershire provenance. ‘A’ History unknown but based on colour and texture, almost certainly from the same geological source. The pine box containing ‘B’ has no markings – just two proud nails in the lid help to locate the lid squarely onto the base.
LAHS Networks Project

The Networks Project was launched at the History and Heritage Fair held at Vaughan College, Leicester in October 2007. The Networks Project aims to cover the role formerly undertaken by the Leicestershire Local History Council. Networks hopes to provide opportunities for the many and varied groups in the county focusing on history, archaeology, heritage and culture to make contact, and to enjoy and appreciate each other's achievements. For more information about the Networks Project, please contact Caroline Wessel, Email cmwessel@aol.com

The following list of local history and heritage groups in Leicestershire has been compiled from a questionnaire sent out earlier in 2008 as part of the work of the LAHS Networks Project. The Society would like to warmly thank all those groups who have taken the time to fill in the questionnaire and submit details for publication in this edition of the Leicestershire Historian.

Ashby de la Zouch History Society
Chris Tandy, 69 Leicester Road, Ashby de la Zouch, Leics LE65 1DD
Tel. 01530 415654 E-mail christandy@hotmail.co.uk
We provide a series of talks and visits of local historical interest for local residents and guests. Meetings 2nd Monday of the month, Ivanhoe Community College, Ashby. 7.30. All welcome.

Billesdon Local History Group
Mel Vlaeminke, c/o 5 Market Place, Billesdon, Leics. LE7 9AJ
Tel. 0116 259 6319 E-mail billesdon.lhg@homecall.co.uk
Founded in 1986, BLHG aims to research the history of Billesdon and its surrounding area, and disseminate findings by publications, exhibitions and special events.

Birstall & District Local History Society
Michael Smith, 25 Holt Road, Birstall, Leicester LE4 4AQ
Tel. 0116 267 5792 E-mail mikejwsmith@tiscali.co.uk
We spread the virtues and pleasures of local history as a pursuit by means of monthly B.L.H.S. meetings. We also
research Birstall & Wanlip history, compile an archive, and write up and publish our findings in a popular and acceptable form.

Boston Brass Collection, The
Mrs Audrey Boston, Linton House, 1 Westhaven Ct, Market Bosworth, Nuneaton, CV13 0PR. Tel. 01455 290462 E-mail a.bostoncadeby@btopenworld.com
The history of monumental brasses, their origins, and further use in this century.
Small part of the original brass collection previously held at All Saints Church, Cadeby.

Bottesford ‘Living History’ Community Heritage Project
Neil Fortey, 4 Church Street, Bottesford, Nottingham NG13 0BX (but in Leicestershire)
Tel. 01949 843320 E-mail neilfortey@metronet.co.uk
We are assembling an archive of local history from Bottesford and the surrounding area and making it accessible to the local community. HLF Funded Project. Local history leaflets, book, exhibitions, Living History days, interactive. Website: www.bottesfordhistory.org.uk

Broughton Astley Heritage Society
Mr R.W. Wrathall (Secretary), 9 New Inn Close, Broughton Astley, Leicester LE9 6SU
Tel. 01455 285366 E-mail rwrathall@talktalk.net
We are a friendly group of heritage enthusiasts seeking to protect and record the local heritage using monthly meetings, lectures, exhibitions, visits and research. Website: broughtonastley.leicestershireparishcouncils.org/27185.html #broughtonastleymheritagesociety

Burbage Heritage and Tourism Group
Arthur Cross, 48 Lychgate Lane, Burbage, Leics. LE10 2DS
Tel. 01455 633045
We are dedicated to obtaining a museum to show our many archaeological artefacts, some of national importance.

Castle Hill Country Park, Friends of
Wendy Fearn, Secretary.
Tel. 07944 415 824 E-mail fochcp@aol.com
We assist the council in the upkeep and maintenance of our local park and encourage more people to use Castle Hill Country Park.
Centre for English Local History
Christopher Dyer, University of Leicester, 5 Salisbury Road, Leicester LE1 7QR
Tel. 0116 252 2765 E-mail cd50@le.ac.uk
We teach and research local history throughout England. In particular, we run an MA course in English Local History, and supervise MPhil and PhD degrees in local history.

Charley Heritage Group
Maureen Havers, St Joseph’s, Abbey Road, Nr Coalville LE67 4UA
Tel. 01509 503943 E-mail m.havers@virgin.net
We research the history of Charley and its environs, and aim to make Charley more widely known throughout the UK.

Churches Together in Leicester City Centre
Canon Barry Naylor, The Cathedral Centre, 21 St Martin’s, Leicester LE1 5DE
Tel. 07757 853 621 E-mail barry.naylor@leccofe.org
Together is a group of Leicester churches of all denominations (including the Cathedral) that have got together to promote their history and heritage, and who work for closer relationships between churches of different denominations and traditions in Leicester City Centre.

Croft Heritage Group
Pat Parkin-Moore (Chair), 41 Arbor Road, Croft, Leicester LE9 3GB
Tel. 01455 284466 E-mail patparkinmoore@btinternet.com
Our aim is to study the history of Croft and produce a booklet.

Desford & District Local History Society
Paula Casson, 47 Desford Road, Newbold Verdon, Leicester LE9 9LG
Tel. 01455 823166 E-mail p.e.casson@btinternet.com
Meetings with speakers (4 per year), visits (5 or 6 per year). Exhibition planned for Feb 2009.

Earl Shilton & District Local History Group
Mrs Linda Bent, 51 Belle Vue Road, Earl Shilton, Leics. LE9 7HX
Tel. 01455 842430 Reserve contact: David Herbert E-mail adavher@btinternet.com
We promote interest in the local area and its heritage.

East Midlands Oral History Archive
Colin Hyde, EMOHA, Centre for Urban History, University of Leicester, University Road, Leicester LE1 7RH. Tel. 0116 252 5065 E-mail emoha@le.ac.uk
We preserve, catalogue and make accessible the oral history records of Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland. Also oral history interviewing, and training and support for others who wish to carry out their own oral history projects.

Enderby Heritage Group
Mark Carne, 51 Grass Acres, Leicester LE3 2UR
Tel. 0116 289 6783 E-mail cmarkcarne@hotmail.com
We preserve the past of Enderby for future generations. Talks, annual open event for all village groups, recording the village, research into Aldeby. All welcome, no membership fee, £1 per meeting, but activities are free, e.g. recording activities/places in the parish. Articles about the work of the group have appeared in the Leicestershire Historian for 2005 and 2007.

Fleckney History Group
Betty Morley, 38 Victoria Street, Fleckney, LE8 8AZ
Tel. 0116 240 2123
We foster and promote interest in history and artefacts relating to Fleckney. We organise and maintain a museum and make the museum archive available to the public. We hold monthly meetings for members and the general public.

Grace Dieu Priory, Friends of
Paula Godson, 5 Sandhills Close, Belton, Loughborough, Leics LE12 9TT
Tel. 01530 222399 E-mail paula@snowmoon.co.uk
We aim to maintain Grace Dieu Priory ruins and site, and to educate the public about its history and archaeology. Guide books and Ghost Walk books for sale. Guided walks, ghost walks, and events at the Priory, eg Carols in the Cloisters, summer medieval fete.

Great Bowden Heritage Group
Rosemary Culkin, 36 Knights End Road, Great Bowden, Leics LE16 7EY
Tel. 01858 463079 E-mail theculkins@knightsend.freeserve.co.uk
We encourage local people to be interested in our heritage through research, exhibitions, publications and events.

Greater Wigston Historical Society
Mrs Tricia Berry, 7 Wensleydale Road, Wigston, Leics. LE18 3RX
Tel. 0116 288 0156 E-mail triciaberry7@yahoo.co.uk
Aims: to research and publish aspects of Wigston and district’s past. Activities: monthly meetings with lectures in winter and trips out during summer. Bulletin produced 3 times a year with news and members’ research. We are building a collection of Transactions.

Heart of Albion
Bob Trubshaw, 2 Cross Hill Close, Wymeswold, Loughborough, Leics. LE12 6UJ
Tel. 01509 880725 E-mail bobtrubs@indigogroup.co.uk
Publishers of local history, folklore and mythology.
Hinckley Civic Society
Howard Wilkins (Chair), 46 Brookside, Burbage, Hinckley, Leics. LE10 2TL
Tel. 01455 635043 or 07753 831 499
E-mail chair@hinckleycivicsociety.org.uk
We are dedicated to preserving all that is good in the historical and natural environment of the Hinckley Urban core, and learning more about the history of our town.
Website: www.hinckleycivicsociety.org.uk

Hinckley Local History Group
Mrs Jill Beavin, 4 Castlemaine Drive, Hinckley, Leics. LE10 1RY
Tel. 01455 615634 E-mail hugh.beavin@btinternet.com
We meet monthly for historical talks and visits to places of interest. We produce The Hinckley Historian twice a year (no. 60 just produced), a valuable archive of Hinckley’s history and the surrounding area.

Hinckley Search Society
John Caluori, 16 Grey Crescent, Newtown Linford, Leics. LE60AA
Tel. 01530 244007 E-mail john_caluori@tiscali.co.uk
Metal detecting group founded 1980. We promote the hobby, history, archaeology, compare and research finds. Member of National Council for Metal Detecting (£5 million insurance for all members). Finds on British Museum Portable Antiquities database. Suitable land welcomed.

Ibstock Historical Society
Rachel Elliott, c/o 12 Chapel Street, Ibstock, Leics. LE67 6HE
Tel. 01530 244007 E-mail ibstockcommunity@hotmail.com
We research, report and record change in Ibstock. Monthly meeting last Tuesday of each month, check www.ibstock.org for details

Jewry Wall Museum, Friends of
Angela Monkton, 19 Queensgate Drive, Birstall, Leicestershire LE4 3JS
Tel. 0116 267 3479 E-mail am116@le.ac.uk
We support Jewry Wall Museum, Leicester, and aim to keep it open to the public by holding events to bring local archaeology to the public.

Kibworth History Society
Mr Norman Harrison, 6 The Timings, Kibworth, Leics. LE8 0PU
Tel. 0116 279 6171 E-mail n.harrison6@btopenworld.com
We promote the study of the history of Kibworth and the local area, including family history. We hold monthly meetings and organise and publish research projects. Membership open to all persons wanting to support and/or participate in the Society’s activities. Visitors to meetings welcome.

Leicester Cathedral, Friends of
Celia Davies (Chairman), 50 Main Street, Peckleton, Leicestershire LE9 7RE
Tel. 01455 822604 E-mail celiadavies@graff.plus.com
We exist for a number of purposes, one of which is to cherish the Cathedral’s history and heritage.

Leicester City Council, Planning Policy and Design
Judith Carstairs, Planning Policy and Design, New Walk Centre, Welford Place, LE1 6ZG
Tel. 0116 252 7296
E-mail judith.carstairs@leicester.gov.uk
Local planning authority, we advise on historic building conservation.

Leicester Civic Society
Stuart Bailey, 48 Meadow Avenue, Loughborough, Leics. LE11 1JT
Tel. 01509 520904
E-mail chairman@leicestercivicsociety.org.uk
Preservation and improvement of the historic built environment of the City of Leicester. We are committed to working with all other heritage bodies in Leicester and to using our resources to publicise their activities free of charge. We publish the journal Leicester Citizen.

Leicester Decorative and Fine Arts Society
Ruth Turner, 17 Launde Road, Oadby, Leicester LE2 4HH
Tel. 0116 271 3814 E-mail turner@brassey.demon.co.uk
Promotion, cultivation and enjoyment of the decorative and fine arts. Member of National Association of Decorative and Fine Arts Societies. Nine monthly lectures by experts (guests welcome), study days and visits, social events, volunteering eg Church Recorders, Young Arts.

Leicester Group of the Victorian Society
Mr Jon Goodall, 75 Kings Drive, Leicester Forest East, Leics. LE3 3JE
Tel. 0116 239 3744
We promote appreciation of all aspects of the Victorian and Edwardian eras, with particular emphasis on architecture. Monthly talks and visits, guided walks etc.

Leicester Literary and Philosophical Society (founded 1835)
Dr M. Hamill, Hon. Secretary, Leicester Literary and Philosophical Society, c/o New Walk Museum, 53 New Walk, Leicester LE1 7EA.
Tel. 0116 270 3413
E-mail secretary@leicesterlitandphil.org.uk
Lectures/discussions with eminent speakers on the arts, literature, natural history, philosophy, sciences. held fortnightly 7.30pm. alternate Mondays at New Walk Museum, spring/winter.
Website: www.leicesterlitandphil.org.uk

Leicester Literary and Philosophical Society (founded 1835)
Dr M. Hamill, Hon. Secretary, Leicester Literary and Philosophical Society, c/o New Walk Museum, 53 New Walk, Leicester LE1 7EA.
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Lectures/discussions with eminent speakers on the arts, literature, natural history, philosophy, sciences. held fortnightly 7.30pm. alternate Mondays at New Walk Museum, spring/winter.
Website: www.leicesterlitandphil.org.uk
Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society
Dr Alan McWhirr, 37 Dovedale Road, Leicester LE2 2DN
Tel. 0116 270 3031 E-mail alan@dovedale2.demon.co.uk
We promote the study of history, archaeology, antiquities
and architecture of the county. Two annual publications,
Transactions and Leicestershire Historian, and two
newsletters. 12 lectures a year Oct-April at New Walk
Museum. LAHS library at The Guildhall.
Website: http://www.le.ac.uk/lahs/

Leicestershire Industrial History Society (L.I.H.S.)
David Lyne, 10 Somerville Road, Leicester LE3 2ET
Tel. 0116 291 9706 E-mail LIHS99@ntlworld.com
The study and appreciation of Industrial History.

Leicestershire Museums Archaeological Fieldwork
Group
Peter Liddle, Room 500, Rutland Building, County Hall,
Glenfield, Leicester LE3 8TE
Tel. 0116 305 8326 E-mail pliddle@leics.gov.uk
The Fieldwork Group co-ordinates local community
archaeology and subject interest groups around
Leicestershire and Rutland, runs a lecture and tours
programme, and arranges training and information in
partnership with the County Museums Service.

Leicestershire Villages
Chris Poole, Leicestershire County Council, County Hall,
Glenfield, Leicester LE3 8TE
Tel 0116 3056677 E-mail cpool@leicestercity.gov.uk
Access to the County Council’s services on-line. The history
pages are about putting family and local history on-line to
share with others, both inside and outside the county. An
article on Leicestershire Villages appeared in the
Leicestershire Historian 2006.
Website: www.leicestershirevillages.com

Leicestershire & Rutland Family History Society
Joan Rowbotton (secretary), 37 Cyril Street, Leicester LE3
2FF
E-mail joanrowbottom@hotmail.com
Local family history society preserving indexes, films,
fiches, books relating to Leicester, Leicestershire and
Rutland, and making them available to all.
Website: www.lrfhs.org.uk

Leicestershire and Rutland Gardens Trust
Sue Blaxland, Secretary, 3 Vicarage Close, Syston, Leicester
LE7 1HE
Tel. 0116 260 9748 E-mail sue.blaxland@tiscali.co.uk
We protect, stimulate interest and enjoyment in, and
understanding of our heritage of parks and gardens in
Leicestershire and Rutland. A lively programme of events,
including visits, lectures and study days. Also opportunities
for involvement in our work of research and recording.

Leicestershire and Rutland Museums Forum
Robin Clarke, Holly Hayes, 216 Birstall Road, Birstall,
Leicester LE4 4DG
Tel. 0116 267 0050 E-mail rclarke@leics.gov.uk
Network supporting the work of independent museums in
Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland.

Long Whatton History Society
Geoff Smith, 47 West End, Long Whatton, Loughborough,
Leics. LE12 5DW
E-mail geoff@greasley.gotadsl.co.uk
We research the history of the village and collect and
preserve historical records, documents and photographs.
Many of our records etc. are available on-line.
Website: www.leicestershirevillages.com/longwhatton/longwhattonhistorysociety.html

Loughborough Archaeological and Historical Society
Sara Haynes, 25 Woodbrook Road, Loughborough, LE11
3QB
Tel. 01509 232953 E-mail Sarahaynes1@aol.com
We promote the study of archaeology, antiquities, history
and related studies, and encourage exploration of the past of
Loughborough and district.

Loughborough War Memorial Museum
Peter Crooks, 23 Atherstone Road, Loughborough, Leics.
LE11 2SH
Tel. 01509 268561 or 07854 672 747
E-mail Carillonmuseum@talktalk.net
First and still finest Carillon (bells) in Britain. Ground, first
and second floors, preservation and display of military
memorabilia; third floor Carillon keyboard and bells.

Lutterworth Museum
Geoff Smith, 20 Dunton Road, Broughton Astley, Leics.
LE9 6NB
Tel 07810 230 612 E-mail alijgeoff@aol.com
We preserve and display the history of Lutterworth and its
surrounding villages.

Market Bosworth Society
C.J. Peat, 7 Main Street, Carlton, Nuneaton, Warks CV13
0BZ.
Tel 01455 290934
We aim to secure the preservation, conservation and
enhancement of the built and natural environments of
Market Bosworth and its environs. Annual programme of
meetings and visits. Current working groups on: Oral history
recording and publication, Town Trail project, Educational
Links, Preservation of old maps and photographs, Snapshot
project.
Website: www.leicestershirevillages.com/marketbosworth
Media Archive for Central England (MACE)
Richard Shenton, 1 Salisbury road, Leicester LE1 7QR
Tel 0116 252 5066  E-mail rs228@le.ac.uk
MACE is the public sector regional film archive for the Midlands. We aim to collect, preserve and show the filmed heritage of the region.

Melton & Belvoir Search Society
Denis Wells, 36 Framland Drive, Melton Mowbray, Leics. LE13 1HY
Tel. 01664 859350   E-mail dwell36@ntlworld.com
We aim to recover, research and record all items of interest lost and/or buried in the ground with the aid of metal detectors. We also offer a free recovery service available to anyone who has lost anything metallic of value (to them).

Nailstone Local History Group
Kathy Harman, 37 Church Road, Nailstone, Nr Nuneaton, Warks CV13 0QH
Tel. 01530 263988   E-mail Kathybob@btinternet.com
Investigation of the history and surroundings of the parish of Nailstone, Leicestershire. Group meets irregularly and includes natural history, Heritage Warden and Tree Warden.

Parks Services, Leicester City Council
Stefan Cabaniuk (Parks Officer), Park House, Abbey Park, Abbey Park Road, Leic. LE4 5AQ
Tel. 0116 233 3024
E-mail Stefan.Cabaniuk@leicester.gov.uk
We promote and publicise the history, heritage and amenities of Leicester’s parks and green spaces. Leaflets available on each of Leicester’s parks and their history. An article on Beaumont Leys and its Parks appeared in the Leicestershire Historian for 2007.

Ratby Local History Group
Dr D.L. Harwood, 8 Groby Road, Ratby, Leicester LE6 0LJ
Tel. 0116 239 4168   E-mail doug.harwood@virgin.net
We aim to raise interest in the history of Ratby through research, talks, displays and publications.

Record Office for Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland
Evie Wattam, Long Street, Wigston Magna, Leicestershire LE18 2AH
Tel. 0116 257 1080   E-mail recordoffice@leics.gov.uk
We house the archives and records of Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland, and make them available for study to the general public.

Richard III Society – East Midlands Branch
Sally Henshaw – Secretary, 28 Lyncroft Leys, Scraptoft, Leicester LE7 9UW
Tel 0116 243 3785
The Society promotes research into the life and times of Richard III. We believe many features of traditional accounts of his character and career are neither supported by sufficient evidence nor are reasonably tenable. The Society has over 4,500 members worldwide and is open to all who have an interest in the life and times of Richard III.

Rutland Local History & Record Society
Rutland County Museum, Catmose Street, Oakham, Rutland LE15 6HW
Tel. 01572 758440
We promote the study of the history and archaeology of the ancient county of Rutland through lectures, meetings, village visits, an annual journal, publishing, research and fieldwork.

Shepshed History Society
Mrs M.J. Schulz, 39 Griffin Close, Shepshed, Leics. LE12 9QQ
Tel. 01509 507815
We promote awareness of our local history and provide a cultural interest for local people.

Swordweaver Armoury
Julian Adams, 45 Northfield Ave, Wigston, Leicester LE18 1FX
Tel. 0116 288 3945   E-mail swordweaver@googlemail.com
Swordweaver is a working armoury making armour from the 7th Century to the 17th Century.

Thurcaston & Cropston Local History Society
Peter Smith (Secretary), 8 Bradgate Road, Cropston, Leicester LE7 7GA
Tel. 0116 236 7365
E-mail peterandjane.smith@btopenworld.com
Monthly speaker meetings to learn about the history of Thurcaston, Cropston and surrounding area. Supporting research by some of our members.
Website: www.leicestershirevillages.com/cropston/localhistorysociety.html

Thurcaston Heritage Group
Sue Lewis / Dawn Kirkwood, 15 Margaret Close, Thurcaston, Leicester LE4 8GL
Tel. 0116 221 6061   E-mail ianandsue-lewis@hotmail.com and dak0904@hotmail.com
We research and record the history and heritage of Thurcaston and its people.

U3A History
Bob Gill, 27 The Broadway, Oadby, Leicester LE2 2HF
Tel. 0116 270 8570   E-mail r.gill27@talktalk.net
The pleasures of learning are a driving force in U3A and members are both learners and teachers. We are Oadby and Wigston U3A History Group; there are 14 other U3As in Leicestershire.
University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS)
Nick Cooper, University of Leicester Archaeological Services, University Road, Leicester LE1 7RH
Tel. 0116 252 2847/8  E-mail nje9@le.ac.uk
ULAS carries out archaeological excavations, analysis of finds, and publication of results mainly from the Midlands. ULAS staff provide talks and displays of archaeological findings for local societies and the public, and have a particular interest in Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland.

Vaughan College, Institute of Lifelong Learning, University of Leicester
Reception, Vaughan College, St Nicholas Circle, Leicester LE1 4 LB
Tel. 0116 251 7368  E-mail lifelonglearning@le.ac.uk,
We currently offer Higher Education Certificates in Modern Social History and in Local History Research, and hold history-related short courses and events. Also the venue for Vaughan Historical and Archaeological Society meetings. An article on research-based courses at Vaughan college appears in this edition of the Leicestershire Historian in the article entitled 'Hands on History'.
Website: www.le.ac.uk/lifelonglearning/

Victorian Studies Centre (VSC), Department of English, University of Leicester
Mrs Sue Lloyd, Administrator, Victorian Studies Centre, Department of English, University of Leicester, University Road, Leicester LE1 7 RH
Tel. 0116 252 3943  E-mail sl71@le.ac.uk
The VSC is the oldest established centre of its kind in the UK. It encourages interdisciplinary research on the 19C and runs an internationally known MA course in Victorian Studies. Public lectures (autumn), seminar series (spring) and conferences - all open to the public.

Wigston Framework Knitters Museum
Alan Kind, MBE, 106 Saffron Road, Wigston, Leicester LE18 4 UN
Tel. 0116 278 2684  E-mail alan.kind@btopenworld.com
Preservation of Master Hosier’s house and two-storey nineteenth-century frameshop.

Witan Archaeology
Stephen Saunders, 5 Sperry Court, Ibstock, Leics LE67 6JN
Tel. 07957 722 464  E-mail Repton873@aol.com
The study of archaeology and history in North West Leics. We promote this study through children’s education with the Young Historian Project, run in partnership with Ashby Museum.

Wolds Historical Organisation
Patricia Baker, 14 Orchard Way, Wymeswold, Loughborough, LE12 6SW
Tel 01509 881473
E-mail patriciaannebaker@btinternet.com
We promote awareness of the history of the Wolds villages.

Woodhouse and Woodhouse Eaves Local History Group
Maureen Axon (Secretary), 30 Church Hill, Woodhouse Eaves, Leics. LE12 8 RT
Tel. 01509 890788  E-mail ma@ackymo.fsnet.co.uk
Monthly meetings with guest speaker, historical talks where possible.

Wymondham & Edmondthorpe Civic Society
Barry Watkins (Chairman), Badgers Sett, Nurses Lane, Wymondham, Leics. LE14 2 AS
Tel. 01572 787669  E-mail bazzwat@hotmail.co.uk
We promote high standards of planning and architecture in, or affecting, Wymondham or Edmondthorpe and aim to secure preservation, protection, development and improvement of features of historic or public interest. Also interest in geography, history, natural history and architecture of Wymondham and Edmondthorpe.
Website: http://wecs.le14.co.uk

All details above have been submitted by members of the groups concerned and are believed to be correct as at the time of publication. However it is inevitable that information of this nature can go out of date quickly - contact details change, email and web site addresses change, new web sites are added, plus meeting times and places change. If you experience difficulties in trying to contact any of the above groups, the local public library services can often help, as can internet websites such as Infolinx: www.infolinx.org and Google: www.google.co.uk.

We are aware that there are additional local history and heritage groups in Leicestershire who do not appear in the above list and we would like to include more of these in a supplementary list in the Leicestershire Historian for 2009.
Recent Publications
Edited by John Hinks

LEICESTERSHIRE AND RUTLAND: GENERAL

BROMLEY: A MIDLANDS FAMILY HISTORY AND THE SEARCH FOR THE LEICESTERSHIRE ORIGINS
Peter Bromley

Family history is often a fairly solitary pursuit, with information gleaned from extensive research shared only with other family members, often in a rather home-made form (although recent software makes it possible to improve presentation very easily). This attractive volume shows what can be achieved when research into one family is offered more widely through traditional printed publication. It is clearly written and, while I would normally be critical of the extensive use of long quotations from source documents, they are probably justified in this kind of publication. The large-format paperback is well designed and illustrated with photographs, charts and coats of arms. The volume will undoubtedly be of interest to members of the Bromley family and those connected with them. It is also of interest to family historians as a demonstration of what can be achieved if 'proper' publication is required, but the history of one family, however well written and nicely presented, is unlikely to engage the interest of a much wider audience.

John Hinks

GREATER LOVE: MEMORIES OF SOLDIER BOYS FROM THE GREAT WAR OF 1914-18
Michael Kendrick
[...], the author, 2007, 296pp

Michael Kendrick’s third book on the Great War consists primarily of biographies of local soldiers and sailors, the majority from north-west Leicestershire, and many with service in the Leicestershire Regiment. These are based on the memories of family members, along with letters, postcards, Christmas cards and other memorabilia, war diaries and military records. There are also sections on particular events – such as the Zeppelin raid on Loughborough – and poems by the author. It is difficult to do justice here to the depth of information in the book, and the enormous amount of research that has clearly gone into each entry. It will be a real treasure trove for family history researchers fortunate enough to find one of their relatives included here, but each biography is considered in the wider context of World War I, making the book of interest to the general reader. There is no index, but the list of contents identifies each individual, making it simple for a reader to search for a particular person, and over 500 photographs are included. The author indicates that this will be his last book on World War I. He is currently working on a volume entitled Sons and Daughters, based on the Second World War.

Cynthia Brown

THE GREEN BICYCLE MURDER AND NEW EVIDENCE
Alison M. Keay
Loughborough, Reprint, [2007], v, 62pp

This is a typical product of the Reprint stable; a simply reproduced and bound A4 pamphlet at a reasonable price (£6 including postage). It is also something of a curiosity. How near Alison Keay comes to achieving her goal it is hard to assess, as there is neither introduction nor conclusion to suggest what her intention may have been in gathering together this digest of writings on the Green Bicycle case. Both would have added considerably to the value of the pamphlet. One of the curious features of the case (as this compendium amply demonstrates) is the quantity of nonsense it has generated in the (almost) eighty years since Bella Wright’s murdered body was found on the Gartree Road. It is a mystery nearly as great as the murder, how such quantities of ink can be expended on the antics of blood-gorged ravens (or rooks) and on the markings and characteristics of revolver bullets. I missed Alison Keay’s own views on these forensic side tracks; were they reproduced for completeness despite their apparent eccentricity? Or does she feel dead birds really do hold the key to the case?

There is much of interest here but precious little new evidence. Some of what is reprinted is plainly wrong too – assertions in the opening ‘newspaper article about the case’, that Bella Wright’s grave is lost and that Ronald Light was of ‘impeccable character’ for example, are left uncorrected. There is no mention of Light’s apparent secret confession, recorded by Superintendent Bowley at the end of his trial, nor of the character-damning evidence gathered by Wendy East for her study of the case. As a summary of the case, this is a useful piece of work. It might have benefited from a few ‘health warnings’ from the compiler – but if it represents a
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half-way house, as Alison Keay works towards her definitive study of the murder and its historiography, I should value it all the more.

Robin Jenkins

THE HERITAGE OF RUTLAND WATER
R. Ovens & S. Sleath (eds)

All who have contributed to this book are to be congratulated, especially the joint editors Robert Ovens and Sheila Sleath, and the Rutland Local History and Record Society for initiating and completing the project. Within its 680 pages there are thirty contributions covering soils, geology, agriculture, archaeology, ornithology, fauna and flora, fishing, sailing and more. They are all extensively illustrated with a mixture of colour and black and white pictures and diagrams. There are two indexes, one general and the other covering surnames, organizations and corporate bodies, and a bibliography. Good design and layout clearly stand out in this production which is a splendid publication.

Alan McWhirr

PASSING MUSTER: THE MILITIA IN LEICESTERSHIRE AND RUTLAND ON THE 250TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE MILITIA ACT OF 1757
Robin Jenkins
Leicester, Record Office, 2007, 12pp

This pamphlet was printed by the Record Office to accompany a 2007 exhibition about the militia. Part-time soldiers have for a long time been an important ingredient of the British Army. This pamphlet succinctly and elegantly sets out a brief history of volunteer infantry prior to, and after, the Militia Act of 1757. Militia were at that time seen as a support for the army, rather than a substitute for them. The end of the militia came in 1908 with the formation of the Territorial Army and then the subsequent raising of the Home Guard in 1940. A discussion of how to find your ancestor in the surviving Militia Lists is given plus references to other records held by the Record Office and the Royal Leicestershire Regiment. An appendix discusses discipline and indiscipline, exclusions and substitutions, with some fascinating short accounts from the archives and information about guarding Dutch prisoners of war at Norman Cross in 1796-8. This pamphlet is available from the Record Office and can also be downloaded as a Word document from the County Council Website www.leics.gov.uk - (Record Office, Leaflets and Handlists). Recommended as a very interesting read.

Kathy Harman

INN-VESTIGATED: THE ORIGINS OF PUBLIC HOUSE NAMES
C R Townsend
Syston, the author, 2007, 58pp
£5.75 (including P&P) from 0116 260 8663 or crtownsend@talktalk.net

One could be forgiven, in these days of rapidly changing pub names, for thinking that no-one (especially the big breweries) is interested in the names of our local hostelries. It is sad when pubs, often local landmarks of considerable age, are suddenly given trendy new names which sever them from their history. The traditional names of many pubs are in fact of considerable interest and this book tells the story of a wide selection of the pub names of Leicestershire (and some from further afield) in an informative and sometimes jocular manner, with a number of inn-signs illustrated. This may not be serious, academic local history but it is readable and entertaining, and none the worse for that.

John Hinks

RUTLAND RECORD No. 27 (for 2007)
Journal of the Rutland Local History and Record Society
ISSN 0260-3322

The high quality of this annual journal is maintained with number 27. It is a credit to the Society and its editor. There are three main articles in this edition: 'Rutland passes muster: aspects of the Militia' by Robin Jenkins, 'Railways in Rutland' by John Wales and 'The Last Hunters and Gatherers of the Uppingham Plateau' by Elaine Jones. There is also the usual round-up of history and archaeology in the county edited by Tim Clough. All are authoritative and well-written accounts and are accompanied by clear and informative illustrations. Copies can be purchased by non-members of the Society.

Alan McWhirr
TO THE LAST ROUND: THE LEICESTERSHIRE AND RUTLAND HOME GUARD 1940-1945
Austin J Ruddy

If you are interested in the local history of the Second World War this book should definitely be either on your bookshelf or borrowed from your local library. When I first started to read it I thought that perhaps I would read the first half, being the chronological historical account of the Home Guard in the two counties, and then skip through the remaining chapters on military defences, people, training, uniforms, weapons. To my surprise, however, despite the small typeface which I found hard at first, this book held my attention right to the 'Finis' cartoon on the last page. This is a totally fascinating account of what the Home Guard was really about without completely removing the televised impression from Dad's Army. In Leicestershire and Rutland 50,000 men and some women were involved in the Home Guard, organised into fourteen Battalions and Anti-Aircraft Units. Whilst this structure and locations are easily known the author's detailed research has uncovered the existence of more shadowy 'Shock' sections, primed to be saboteurs should invasion take place.

It is fortunate that an invasion did not take place for many of the Home Guard would have been sacrificed to the cause of slowing up the enemy before regular troops arrived. It is also true that had invasion taken place early in the war then even this ability would not have been good. It was not until later, when the invasion threat had receded, that the Home Guard became a more efficient unit. Nowadays we complain about health and safety regulations – but there were eighteen fatalities whilst on duty (though some were from natural causes). Take for example the young man crossing the River Soar at Wanlip in a canoe with his mate during a training exercise, and, being obscured from view, was blown in two when a depth charge was set off. I was also fascinated to learn what still remains around the two counties from this time and to see pictures of places that I pass every day where roadblocks used to be.

Kathy Harman

THE WARS OF THE ROSES: A FIELD GUIDE AND COMPANION
Peter Bramley

There was a time when my preparation for a family holiday simply meant the selection of the appropriate OS maps, 'Pevsner' and Little Guide (which, though hardly current, did at least indulge my taste for ecclesiology). Then along came Simon Jenkins and his hefty Thousand Best Churches. Now, with the appearance of this attractive and useful tome, I shall seriously have to consider either a larger car or leaving one of the children at home. This is a volume to be enjoyed by a far wider readership than its title might suggest. It is beautifully illustrated, with colour plates that doubtless added much to the £25 price-tag, and engagingly written. It is certainly to be carried about by those who seek out historic England and Wales but it is also an agreeable enough read to be enjoyed by those whose travels are cerebral rather than physical. Indeed, as the better weather comes, I foresee many a foray into the past at Peter Bramley’s prompting and with him as a genial courier. The veracity of this book as a field guide is attested by the profusion of excellent photographs, presumably taken by the author, and by the practical directions to find the places mentioned (or the keys to them). I appreciate too the hints about suitable picnic spots; the provisioning of those in the field being no less important (for morale as much as sustenance) in 2008 as it was in 1458!

Inevitably, there will be quibbles with the personal views of the author. One might reasonably ask why Ashby de la Zouch is omitted (save as a passing reference under Kirby Muxloe). What about the plaque at Sevenoaks recording the defeat of Sir Humphrey Stafford at Solefield? Would it be worth mentioning that while the Yorkist monuments at Fotheringhay are Elizabethan reconstructions, the fifteenth century originals still peep from beneath them and that surely the Royalist entrenchments at Northampton would have extended beyond the Nene bridge? These though are quibbles and it is such arguments that engage the reader and make this so worthwhile a book. Whether you like to sample your history from an armchair or scramble up and down the 'red gutters' and 'bloody meadows' that bespatter the landscape about us, I have no hesitation in commending this 'field guide and companion' to you. I would write more but I find I (and my camera) have an appointment with Sir Humphrey Stafford in St John’s, Bromsgrove!

Robin Jenkins

Other recent publications

DID BONNIE PRINCE CHARLIE VISIT LEICESTERSHIRE?
John Harrison
Loughborough, Reprint, [2007], 56pp

DRIVING SPACES: A CULTURAL-HISTORICAL GEOGRAPHY OF ENGLAND’S M1 MOTORWAY
Peter Merriman
Both these publications originate from an oral history project, funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund, which interviewed more than eighty people connected with the Belgrave area of Leicester between 1945 and 2005. The interviews are transcribed in full in Belgrave Memories: Tales of Belgrave Transcripts, while the Belgrave Memories book brings together extracts from them alongside photographs and documentary sources, to chart the history of the area over the past sixty years. As the book demonstrates, this has been a period of great change for Belgrave. At the end of World War II it was a predominantly white working class area, quiet enough to play Tin Lurkey and other games in the street, with many houses where shared outside toilets were still common. One resident recalls that, even in 1945: ‘My relations had horses and carts. On Saturday afternoons, me and my cousin used to take the horse and cart down to Sanvey Gate, we used to bed the horses down in the stables every Saturday without fail’. Even then, the population of Belgrave was more diverse than might be thought, with people from Poland, Germany and Belgium making their home there; by the end of the century, migration from the Indian sub-continent, East Africa and other parts of the world had transformed Belgrave into a multi-ethnic neighbourhood with a majority Gujarati Hindu community. Alongside the memories of existing residents, both the transcripts and Belgrave Memories book tell the stories of those who moved there during this sixty-year period, of their reasons for migrating, their early experiences of settling in Leicester, the work they did and the businesses they established, and their religious and cultural life. They also give a sense of the processes of migration within the city itself by which different religious or ethnic communities became concentrated in particular areas; and of the ways in which Belgrave continues to change. As one resident observes, ‘we’re seeing a lot more different cultures coming in. There are Somalis and Turkish, which is great. It’s adding a lot more value to the area... Even in the Asian shops you’re seeing more of the other communities coming in. They’re curious to see what the dresses, the fashion, the food as well, is like’.

Some white interviewees expressed concern that ‘our traditions are being lost because of political correctness... I think people are so afraid to offend one section or another of the community... you are almost afraid to be proud of your country or celebrate your country’. Interviewees from migrant communities also talked about the ‘generation gap’ that many feel has opened between them and their children, born and brought up in a western society, and issues around changes in Asian culture in relation to the care of ageing parents. Overall, however, the view of Belgrave presented by the interviewees is a very positive one, a celebration in many ways of the ‘tolerance and willingness to adapt’ of its population. For the general reader, the Belgrave Memories book is recommended for a very readable, well illustrated and illuminating overview of change in this area of Leicester since 1945, while the full transcripts are an invaluable resource for further study. It is good to see an oral history project that succeeds in giving a voice to such a wide cross-section of people.

Cynthia Brown

FRANCIS ‘TANKY’ SMITH (LEICESTER’S FIRST PRIVATE DETECTIVE)
C R Townsend
Syston, the author, 2007, 18pp
£1.85 (including P&P) from 0116 260 8663 or crtownsend@talktalk.net

Everyone knows a little about ‘Tanky’ Smith. Everyone knows that he was Leicester’s Sherlock Holmes; that he affected dozens of cunning disguises (though surely not as bizarre as some of those Townsend suggests) and that he pursued the missing Winstanley heir as far as his watery grave in Coblenz. We have all wandered past ‘top hat terrace’ and marvelled at the brown-hatted busts. I suspect also that I am not alone in wanting to know more. Now, C R Townsend’s attractive little pamphlet adds a few more facts to the story. We know that Francis Smith was baptised in 1814 and married in 1836 (though surely not as bizarre as some of those Townsend suggests) and that he pursued the missing Winstanley heir as far as his watery grave in Coblenz. We have all wandered past ‘top hat terrace’ and marvelled at the brown-hatted busts. I suspect also that I am not alone in wanting to know more. Now, C R Townsend’s attractive little pamphlet adds a few more facts to the story. We know that Francis Smith was baptised in 1814 and married in 1836 (though, frustratingly, we are not told Smith’s occupation). From apparently very lowly origins, he joined the new Leicester Borough police in 1840, rising through the ranks to become inspector in 1853. By 1862, Smith was sufficiently renowned to be hired by the Winstanleys, and soon after to retire into prosperous private work.
This little study answers some questions but leaves the field open for a detailed study. The author intends no more (hinting that he has the details of early cases – 'too long winded to insert') but if he whets the appetite of another researcher, who can produce the definitive 'Tanky', I should be grateful indeed. Why did Smith's police career end in such unpleasantness? Where did he get his money? The bones of the story are here – now we need the flesh. Francis Smith must have been a remarkable man and if a modern, literary detective follows up half the leads this author suggests, we should have a yarn well worth the telling.

Robin Jenkins

WOMEN OF COURAGE, VISION AND TALENT: LIVES IN LEICESTER 1780 TO 1925
Shirley Aucott
Leicester, the author, 2008, ix, 266pp, ISBN 9780954818920

Shirley Aucott has painstakingly researched the lives of around 102 women who had connections with Leicester, and in this book she reproduces accounts of these women following an introductory chapter. She also produces a very useful 'Timeline of important national acts and events that affected women's lives'. After the detailed biographical accounts there are eleven appendices which are a very useful resource, followed by an extensive bibliography and an index. This book will stimulate a great deal of interest in women who lived and worked in Leicester and encourage others interested in Leicester's past to provide the author with much additional material when she comes to update the work!

Alan McWhirr

Other recent publications

FLAVOURS OF LEICESTER: YOUNG LEICESTER ASIANS LOOK AT THEIR HERITAGE
Leicester, Contact Cultures, 2007, 24pp, ISBN 9780955585302

GEOLOGY OF GRAVESTONES IN WELFORD ROAD CEMETERY, LEICESTER

Helen Boynton
The author, 2007, 24pp

TELL ME SOMETHING I DON'T KNOW ABOUT LEICESTER: A HISTORY OF LEICESTER VOLUME 2
Derek Hollingworth
Loughborough, Reprint, [2007], iv, 113pp

TOWNS, VILLAGES AND HOUSES

ASHBY-DE-LA-ZOUCH CASTLE: HISTORIC AND DESCRIPTIVE
Thomas H. Fosbrooke
Loughborough, Reprint, [1914, reprinted 2007], 44pp

This facsimile ring-bound booklet provides a substantive account of Ashby Castle's history, particularly during the Civil War, and a detailed explanation of its architecture supported by measured drawings produced by the author. Thomas H. Fosbrooke, Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries, practised as an architect in Leicester and was keenly committed to the preservation of the county's built environment and its archaeological heritage. Despite its age, the book continues to offer an authoritative source on the castle, not only for its well known connections with Mary Queen of Scots, James I and Charles I (who stayed there for one night after defeat at Naseby), but also for the history of the Zouch family and later the Hastings family who became the Earls of Huntingdon. The publication in 1819 of Walter Scott's *Ivanhoe*, which used the castle's setting for the famous tournament, not only aroused 'considerable interest in the town and the castle', but also ensured that steps were taken towards the castle's preservation under the guidance of Francis, the first Marquis of Hastings.

The detailed account of the various castle buildings in the second part of the book provides an informative and practical guide for current day visitors. Photographs include one showing the 'chimney piece' and another depicting the arms of Francis, Second Earl of Huntingdon. Copies of the author's measured drawings of the castle buildings follow at the end of the book, including a site plan of the ruins and surrounding area with a list of the Lords of the Manor from 1066 to 1910. Thomas Fosbrooke refers to many original sources in his account, and notes the help and support he received from Lady Maud Hastings and family during the book's compilation. He was a member of the Leicestershire Architectural and Archaeological Society to whom he initially presented his work on Ashby Castle at a meeting of the Society in 1911. The paper was subsequently reproduced in the Associated Architectural Societies' Reports & Papers (Vol. XXXI, 1911, p181-224).
Leicestershire Historian 2008

As well as providing a guide for the modern visitor, this book is a useful source for anyone interested in the history of Ashby Castle, the families who lived there and the design, construction and layout of its buildings. The architectural and archaeological detail in the drawings provides an interesting visual record of professional draughtsmanship of almost a hundred years ago. Towards the end of his life, Thomas Fosbrooke maintained scrapbooks of architectural sketches and drawings, photographs, articles and other items reflecting his wide interests in the local heritage. The scrapbooks are held in the Record Office for Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland and at the time of writing are being indexed. They contain items relating to Fosbrooke's interest in Ashby Castle, notably an original sketch of the Brick Tower before its destruction in 1908 and a news-cutting reporting that the heir to the Ashby Castle estate, Reginald Rawden Hastings, was killed in action in 1915 after this book was written.

Christine Taggart

PEEPS INTO BILLESDON'S PAST

This booklet marks the twenty-first anniversary of the formation of the Billesdon Local History Group in 1986. It consists of a selection of articles contributed by its members to the Billesdon & District News and Views between 1989 and 1995, based on their research into documentary sources such as parish registers, school log books and the records of the Billesdon Union Workhouse, along with the memories of local residents. Around two-thirds of the articles were written by the late George Bromley, who chaired the group for many years. They cover a wide range of topics from ancient trackways to school life and local industries, through to World War II and the Prisoner of War Camp on the Gaulby Road. Although based on Billesdon, many of the articles also offer wider historical insights — such as that on the Potter family and their work as taxidermists. While much of this was concerned with supplying stuffed foxes heads, birds, fish and badgers, the article notes that Frank Potter also stuffed cats and dogs "but preferred the owner to see the animal before it had "set" to check its expression". This is a very informative and readable publication, with a wealth of information and analysis packed into its twenty-four pages.

Cynthia Brown

SOUTH CROXTON — THE VILLAGE ON THE HILL
Philip Snelders

An appeal for old photographs of the village resulted in an unexpected response and this spurred the author to continue collecting them as well as other material and this now all forms the Village Archive. This consists of around 1,000 photographs, maps, documents, newspaper articles and video clips and they are stored on a CD which can be purchased separately from the author. This archive has been edited into a book which will be a very useful account for future generations. There is an index. It is a valiant attempt and the exercise has been useful in collecting together material which is now widely accessible. One could be critical about certain aspects of the layout and typography, but with the constraints placed on those producing the book this is understandable.

Alan McWhirr

Other recent publications

BLUE PLAQUES IN WIGSTON MAGNA AND SOUTH WIGSTON: A CELEBRATION OF SOME NOTABLE LOCAL PEOPLE OF THE PAST
Wigston Civic Society, 2007, 36pp

BYGONE SILEBY: HISTORICAL FACTS ABOUT THE VILLAGE
R.J. Hunting
Loughborough, Reprint, [2007], x, 84pp

FEARON FOUNTAIN OF LOUGHBOROUGH
John Harrison
Loughborough, Reprint, [2007], 64pp

KIBWORTH IN 1851
Sue Harris
Kibworth Historical Society, 2007, 56pp

LOST LIVES: THE WAR DEAD OF COUNTESTHORPE, KILBY, PEATLING MAGNA, PEATLING PARVA AND SHEARSBY, 1914-1918 AND 1939-1945
Henrietta Schultka
[Countesthorpe], the author, 2007, 100pp, ISBN 9780955734304

Cynthia Brown
MEMORIAL INSCRIPTIONS AT SMEETON WESTERBY GRAVEYARDS
George Weston & Norman Harrison
Kibworth History Society, 2007, 28pp

MEMORIES OF THURMASTON
Thurmaston Heritage Group, 2007, 72pp

THE OAKHAM PARISH FIELD WALKING SURVEY: ARCHAEOLOGY IN THE PLOUGHLAND OF RUTLAND
Elaine Jones
Uppingham, the author, 2007, 96pp, ISBN 9781905933037

SOME PAGES IN OAKHAM AND BARLEYTHORPE HISTORY
Kari J. Sillanpaa
[Finland], Viafor, 2007, 34pp, ISBN 9789525695021

36 HIGH STREET WEST AND SHIELD’S YARD: A MINI-HISTORY
P.N. Lane
Uppingham Local History Group, 2007, iii, 43pp

[THRINGSTONE] ‘THRINKSUN’ BORN AND BRED: MEMORIES OF AN ENGLISH CHILDHOOD
Joan B. Blackey
Thringstone on Line, [2007]. 2 volumes

RELIGION AND PLACES OF WORSHIP

METHODISM IN BIRSTALL: 160 YEARS 1847-2007
John Kilby
Birstall, the author, 2007, 152pp, ISBN 0951360770

The author writes from close association with the chapel, a connection which has continued from his father’s and grandfather’s days. He is also a local historian, being author of the first rate Birstall Village: a brief history 1900-1999 which could be used as a model village history. A labour of love, this book is written to commemorate a particular event: 160 years of Methodism in Birstall and for a particular audience: church members and perhaps villagers who will know or have recollections of some of the people involved. Largely based on records of trustee and other meetings it includes a great deal of detail of everyday administration which makes for somewhat tedious reading for anyone outside that audience. I would have found it helpful if a clear timeline of major events and a map of Birstall showing the locations of the various buildings had been included and the book would perhaps have benefited from editing by someone less closely involved. However what does come through is the hard and dedicated work of a relatively small number of people and the impact their work has had on the local community. A section of photographs, mainly of groups of church members at various events over the years is included.

Jennifer Sandys

Other recent publications

ILLUSTRATED GUIDE TO ST MARY’S PARISH CHURCH, HINCKLEY
B. Davis
Hinckley, the church, 2007, 56pp

KETTON CHURCH AND PARISH
Geoffrey Fox
Ketton, 2007, 156pp

ONE MORE STEP... St Christopher’s church, Saffron Lane, Leicester, 1927-2007.
Susan Barton
Leicester, the church, 2007, 20pp

ST MARY’S PARISH CHURCH, MELTON MOWBRAY
George Hows

HEALTH, WELFARE AND EDUCATION

DIAMOND DAYS REMEMBERED: 60 YEAR DIAMOND JUBILEE CELEBRATION OF MEALS ON WHEELS 1947-2007
Leicestershire County Council, 2007, 109pp

The way we lived in the period just before and after the Second World War is captured in this collection of memories and anecdotes, produced to celebrate sixty years of ‘Meals on Wheels’ established by the Women’s Voluntary Service. The idea for a book was conceived by the ‘Meals on Wheels 60’ Group, comprising staff of Leicestershire County Council’s Social Services, their principal contracted community meals provider and partnership agencies. Around 1,200 elderly, frail and disabled people receiving ‘Meals on Wheels’ in the county during April 2007 were invited to complete a questionnaire designed to stimulate their memories and reveal an insight into their daily lives of sixty years ago. Their recollections and comments have been grouped in this book under broad categories ranging from daily essentials such as food, work and transport to the softer themes of fashion, entertainment and recreation.
Those who experienced the harsh winter of 1947 remember it well. Many recollect snowdrifts up to fifteen feet high covering hedgerows and paralysing transport: ‘snow so deep that trains travelling from Burton-on-Trent to Leicester could not get through Coalville’. Poverty and hardship were exacerbated with many on the dole, stringent food rationing, a national shortage of coal: ‘queuing at the gas works for coke’, and having to make-do and mend. Favourite meals included roasts, stews, pies and sausages, but chickens were in short supply ‘unless you had some in the backyard’. Spam (before the internet) was also popular. Few people could afford cars, and many recall travelling by steam trains, buses and bicycles or relied on Shanks’s pony: ‘had to walk to work from Castle Donington to Derby’. People listened to ‘Dick Barton’, ‘Workers’ Playtime’ and ‘The Archers’ on the wireless and went to the cinema. Enjoyment was still to be found amongst the hardships of everyday life.

Facts, figures and photographs from the 1940s are interspersed throughout the text to reflect and amplify the local and national scene at the time. Interesting local photographs provided by Kegworth Museum include a village nurse on a bicycle, a steam train at Kegworth Station and framework knitters working in a front parlour. Copies of adverts from newspapers and magazines offer a nostalgic reminder of those everyday essentials such as syrup of figs, vanishing cream and dental powder. There is some duplication of illustrations, but this is essentially a ‘scrapbook’ for dipping into rather than reading from cover to cover. Readers expecting a purely Leicestershire picture need to be aware that people completing the questionnaire in 2007 did not necessarily live in the county sixty years ago, and many of the memories recorded could provide a social history of almost anywhere in Britain. The early days of ‘Meals on Wheels’ are briefly described in the text, but the book would have been enhanced with some background on the development of the service in Leicestershire, perhaps as an introduction.

Local historians will find some comments and information relating specifically to Leicestershire, but this book could most usefully support reminiscence work with older people and learning in schools. It will evoke powerful images for those old enough to remember and should help young people understand how much life has changed beyond the historical facts of the war and its aftermath. Reflecting on the pleasure of ‘church bells ringing after being silenced during the war’ is a poignant reminder of the stress and hardship of those days and how strength can be gained from appreciating the basic normalities of everyday life that we take for granted.

Christine Taggart
WHETHER OR IF? RESEARCH INTO THE HISTORY OF HANDICAP IN THE COUNTY OF LEICESTERSHIRE c.1800-1900
Diane Lockley
[Markfield, the author, 2007], 49pp

INDUSTRY, TRADE AND TRANSPORT

THE LACEMAKERS' STORY: LOUGHBOROUGH, LUDDITES AND LONG JOURNEYS

This book is exactly what it claims to be, a souvenir of an exhibition about lacemakers from the East Midlands. The exhibition was displayed at Charnwood Museum and the book has been produced by three members of the Friends of Charnwood Museum. It consists of images of the panels that formed the exhibition and they tell the story very well. In addition there are some images of the artefacts that were in display cabinets. There is also a useful list of suggested further reading. If I have a criticism of this book it is that the format, reduced images of the exhibition panels, means that some of the text is rather small. This will make it difficult to read for some people but the authors themselves describe it as a souvenir of the exhibition. On that level, reasonably priced at £4.95, it is well worth it.

Pat Grundy

LEICESTERSHIRE INDUSTRIAL HISTORY SOCIETY
Bulletin No. 19 2007
ISBN 978-0-9556445-1-1 76pp
This issue contains an obituary of Peter Neaverson and a collection of some of his work which has previously been published including work on the Ticknall Lime Industry, the Impact of a railway on a developed urban area – The Great Central Railway, Leicester and the Model Farm at Carlton Hayes Hospital. It is good to see these articles brought together as a tribute to Peter Neaverson. I am sure he would have been delighted with the end product.

DVD Timken Tubes of Desford
This DVD was produced in collaboration with the company following its decision to shut down the hot and cold tube mill at Desford which had been operating since the 1940s. It was the last surviving mill in the UK producing hot rolled tubes by the Assel piercing process and so this record is an important record of a significant industrial process and the LIHS is to be congratulated in having the foresight in producing this DVD. A future edition of their bulletin will have an account of the works. Copies of the DVD can be obtained from the LIHS as can other publications. They can be contacted at LIHS99@ntlworld.com

Alan McWhirr

MEMORIES OF THE LEICESTERSHIRE COALFIELDS

This is a very readable account of the Leicestershire coalfields, drawing on interviews with former miners and others employed in the industry, such as surveyors, plumbers and clerical workers. It covers a range of topics in a lively and original way. Following an overview of mining in the county, for instance, the first chapter deals with cages and winding wheels, with one interviewee recalling the experience of travelling in the cage when the winder was ‘rushing because he’d got a queue to get rid of… you’d feel it rise then zonk, down you’d go. You should have heard the swearing’. Another recalled a particular pit pony at Desford which was ‘notorious… if he were in a bad mood he’d bite you, give you a nip. The pit men used to give him sweets to try and keep him happy’. As the book reveals, many miners did not go straight into the pit from school, but many were eventually led there by family tradition combined with
higher wages than they could earn elsewhere. Others started work on the surface, working on the screens where the coal was sorted and graded, before going underground. Almost all had a nickname of some kind – two of the most notable being those of a father and son by the name of Moon at Bagworth, respectively known as Full-moon and Half-moon.

The social life of the pit villages is also described, along with the dangers of the work itself, and problems caused by subsidence, particularly in Bagworth where three quarters of the houses were "wiped out. I don’t think I’m exaggerating... The church went... That hurt us... And we lost the school through subsidence...". The final chapters cover the strikes of 1972, 1974 and 1984, and the legacy of animosity left by the latter. One union official recalls that: ‘In 1972, we hadn’t got a clue how to strike. We’d never done it. The Transport and General Workers Union was organized to come along and teach us how to strike. Car workers knew how to strike, didn’t they?’ The closure of Bagworth marked the end of coal mining in Leicestershire – but this book is a valuable addition to the industrial history of Leicestershire and of the coal mining industry itself. It includes a wealth of photographs, many of them from the archive of the Whitwick Historical Society.

Cynthia Brown

**Other recent publications**

**THE GREAT CENTRAL RAILWAY ON OLD PICTURE POSTCARDS**
Bill Taylor

**NATIONAL SERIES OF WATERWAY, TRAMWAY AND RAILWAY ATLASES**
VOLUME 5b: LEICESTERSHIRE AND RUTLAND [less Leicester]
G.L. Crowther

**RAILWAYS AND RURAL LIFE: S.W.A. NEWTON AND THE GREAT CENTRAL RAILWAY**
Gary Boyd-Hope & Andrew Sargent

**RAILWAYS OF LEICESTERSHIRE AND RUTLAND**
David W. Webb

**SYMINGTON’S: HARBOROUGH’S LOST WORKFORCE**
Market Harborough Local History Group, 2007, 40pp + DVD

**TRAMWAYS OF THE EAST MIDLANDS**
R.J.S. Wiseman

**ULLESTHORPE WINDMILL**
Daniel Burton

**ENTERTAINMENT, MUSIC AND SPORT**

**BARWELL CRICKET CLUB BICENTENARY 1807-2007**
Barwell, BCC, 2007, 48pp

**BATS OF WILLOW, BALLS OF LEATHER: THE HISTORY OF BURBAGE CRICKET CLUB**
Burbage Heritage Group, 2007, 67pp

**CRICKET AT KIBWORTH AND SMEETON 1847-1915**
Philip J. Porter
Kibworth, the author, 2007, 40pp

**AUTHORS AND PUBLISHERS**

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Publications for sale

Leicester Abbey: medieval history, archaeology and manuscript studies
Ed by Joanna Story, Jill Bourne and Richard Buckley

Leicester Abbey was founded in 1138 and became one of the most important Augustinian monasteries in medieval England. But it is one of the least known of the Midland monasteries because of the almost total destruction of its buildings and archives after its Dissolution in 1538. This is the first volume on Leicester Abbey for more than 50 years, produced to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society.

The book presents eleven papers by leading scholars and local historians on the social, political and landscape history of the abbey as well as its archaeology, manuscripts, charters, urban rentals and library. Newly discovered charters are published here for the first time, as well as accounts of recent excavations in the abbey and gatehouse that formed the core of the post-Dissolution mansion known as Cavendish House.

2006 Hardback with dust jacket 314 pages Illustrations: many, some colour ISBN 0954238818 Price: £25 (plus £5 post and packing in the UK)

Transactions of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society
Cumulative Index to Transactions Volumes 21-74 (1940-2000)
Compiled by Auriol Griffith-Jones

This volume also includes a reprint of the index produced in 1951 for volumes 1-20.

2005 Hardback 388 pages ISSN 0140 3990
Price: Members £10, Non-members £22 (plus £5 post and packing in the UK)

Incised Slabs of Leicestershire and Rutland (prefaced by a Brief Manual of Incised Slabs)
F. A. Greenhill

Incised slabs is the name given to flat memorials, exactly like brasses save that the design is engraved in the stone instead of on brass plates inlaid in it. The main text comprises a full description of the slabs in Leicestershire and Rutland, including a considerable amount of genealogical and heraldic information about the persons commemorated.

1958 Hardback 256 pages 42 plates
Price: Members £10, Non-members £15 (plus postage and packing in the UK)

The Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society
1855-2005
Robert A. Rutland

Produced to mark the 150th anniversary of the Society, this volume chronicles the Society since its foundation. It also tells a great deal about the movements in the intellectual and social history of Leicestershire.

2006 Paperback 227 pages
77 Illustrations ISBN 0954238826, 9780954238827
Price: Members £12, Non-members £18 (plus £3 post and packing in the UK)

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