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Editor: Joyce Lee

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Editorial

Readers will be saddened by the passing of Alan McWhirr, Hon. Secretary of the LAHS, in April this year, and as part of the celebration of Alan’s outstanding life and work, the tributes paid to him by Professor Marilyn Palmer, Squire Gerard De Lisle, John Florance, The Venerable Richard Atkinson and Canon Glynn Richerby at the Memorial Choral Evensong at the Church of St James the Greater, Leicester on 20th June 2010, are printed here in full. Alan came to Leicester as a student from his native St Albans, and for over 50 years played a vital role in the archaeology and history of Leicestershire. As a leading and inspirational member of the LAHS and many other committees and working parties he was indispensable, sharing his extensive knowledge to help protect and preserve Leicestershire’s archaeology, heritage and local churches. He was also greatly valued as Churchwarden and archivist of St James the Greater. Alan became a popular broadcaster and speaker, making archaeology and history accessible to the wider community. He contributed significantly to archaeology at the University of Leicester, and was best-known nationally for his work on Roman Britain, notably as Director of Excavations at Cirencester. Alan’s contribution to the Leicestershire Historian both as a writer and for his support was always greatly welcomed by the current and previous editors. Alan will be very sadly missed.

The recent Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society Networks Education History day saw a number of interesting talks given by speakers from the Networks groups on various aspects of education in Leicester and Leicestershire. Contributions from speakers for this edition of the Leicestershire Historian include Shirley Aucott’s article on Leicester’s Belmont House School which examines a school photograph from 1883 together with a rare surviving handwritten identification key to throw light on the lives of those portrayed, and discusses girls’ educational opportunities and the position of women in society in the nineteenth century. Meanwhile, Terry Sheppard describes the lengths to which the incumbents of Rothley went to in order to keep the rate school out, whilst Caroline Wessel presents her findings on the Desford Industrial School, a nineteenth-century institution of discipline, education and training for ‘naughty boys’, asking the question was the concept of the school a good or a bad thing.

The gritty, compelling and poignant story of life in and out of another institution is pieced together by Kenneth Hillier who traces the Harper Family’s stays at the workhouse at Ashby-de-la-Zouch, a town better known historically for its spa and social life. Meanwhile, contemporary conditions in many parts of Leicester were also often far from desirable as Erica Statham tells through the work of the Inspectors of Nuisances, the predecessors of environmental health inspectors.

Near to one of the nuisance-afflicted and poorer parts of Leicester was Wharf Street Cricket Ground, one of the principal sites in the town for balloon ascents, a popular form of public entertainment which as Cynthia Brown shows sometimes led to riotous outcomes. For others, the availability of leisure time also saw a growing interest in the natural and built environments, with a new form of publication - the guide book - being introduced during the early nineteenth century aimed at the growing number of visitors, whilst also often being used to advertise the rapidly expanding local trades and businesses, as J. D. Bennett describes.

Two further articles also focus on published works. Bob Gibson draws attention to the increasing obscurity of the Burton Brothers of Lindley, hoping to restore interest in the brothers’ work and their two most important publications The Anatomy of Melancholy and The Description of Leicestershire, whilst John Hinks examines the development of the provincial book trade in Leicester, in particular the growth of the town’s radical print communities and networks of printers, booksellers and newspaper proprietors.

Centuries earlier, stonemasons were busy carving large reliefs such as that at Stoney Stanton to communicate messages to a largely illiterate public. Known today as the Stoney Stanton Tympanum, Bob Trubshaw sets out to answer the question raised in Pevsner’s Leicestershire ‘What is the meaning of this Germanic barbarity?’

This year’s Recent Publications section shows the wide variety of works of local interest which continue to be published. As always, my grateful thanks go to John Hinks and his team of reviewers for this invaluable part of the Leicestershire Historian. John is retiring as Reviews Editor after this edition, having produced this section for a number of years for which the Society gives considerable thanks.

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 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
On Monday, 14th December 1891, a fifty year-old man, suffering from depression, was transferred from Ashby Workhouse to the Leicestershire and Rutland County Lunatic Asylum on Victoria Road, Leicester. Sent there by Alfred Orchard, medical officer to the Ashby-de-la-Zouch Union, he was diagnosed with Melancholia. The official certificate read: ‘He seems very depressed and despondent: says he is in a very poor way & feels very middling and low, and that at times he feels very giddy & can hardly tell then whether he is or how he is going especially if he looks at a bright light; and says he should be truly thankful if the Saviour would take him out of his misery’. (1) Five days earlier he had attempted to take his own life.

John Harper, seemingly, had little to live for. His wife had left him some years ago; he had been out of work and living in a run-down lodging house in the Mill Bank Yard off the Green. Twenty years later a report was to describe the area as the ‘only one part in the Town which could be regarded as a real “Slum”...it would almost appear as though the builders of the town had intentionally tucked these plague spots out of sight in order to deceive an easily deceived world’. (2)

Throughout 1891 Harper had been in and out of Ashby Workhouse. No wonder the County Asylum Report continued: ‘He is in a desponding mood: has fretted a good deal, he says, and thought he ought to be out of the way. Apparently, no hereditary taint was found, and very little was obtainable concerning his parents. What was known was that he came of a large family and they were reported to be ‘a good for nothing idle lot & this is the best of them’. (3) A study of a variety of sources can build up a picture of Harper and his siblings, even though the researcher is peering through a ‘glass, darkly’.

John Harper’s father, George, was born in Ashby c.1809 and throughout his adult life was described as an agricultural worker. He married Sarah Robey, also a native of the town, and by 1841 they were living in a yard off Market Street. Over the next thirty years they were to move from one ‘court’ to another on the south side of the street – Star Yard, Robinson’s Yard and King’s Head Yard. A damning report of 1849 castigated this area between Market Street and Ivanhoe Road (the present South Street) as being ‘in the most deplorable condition; the whole of the soil and subsoil being saturated with decomposing animal and vegetable matter’. A major drain was liable to flood and frequently ‘forced up the stones of house floors...the smells from this drain were awful’. (4) It became choked in 1847 and cases of typhus were rife. This was the environment in which George and Sarah Harper brought up the ten children who survived into adulthood.
John Harper had three older brothers – Thomas (b.1830), George (b.1835) and William (b.1839), four younger brothers – Robert (b.1844), James (b.1845), Charles (b. 1849) and Abraham (b.1857), and two sisters Eliza (b.c.1834) and Emma (b. c.1857) who also survived at least into their teens. None of the boys, except possibly one, ever managed to break out of the milieu or working pattern of their father. Worse, most were to find themselves in front of the local magistrates’ court at its Petty Sessions. All, except one – like their parents – died in Ashby Workhouse.

By 1851, eight of the ten children were living in Star Yard with their parents. Two of the boys were attending the Green Coat School in Lower Church Street. The school, founded in 1769 by Alderman Newton of Leicester for 25 boys, had amalgamated with the Blue Coat School (established c.1719) in the early nineteenth century. The Headmaster between 1841 and 1872 was the impressively named Willis Wingfield Postlethwaite and his remit was to educate poor boys to read, write, and cast accounts, and instruct them in the principles of the Christian religion as professed in the Church of England. (5) William Harper was admitted, aged eight, with eleven other boys on 13th April 1848; subsequently leaving between Easter 1853 and Easter 1854. John, aged seven, joined him on 29th October 1849, leaving before Easter 1855. They had been chosen, along with the other boys, on the recommendations of the Vicar of St. Helen’s Church, the Revd. Marmaduke Vavasour (Very sour to his critics), the churchwardens and the Overseers of the Poor. Clothed in green cloth coats and waistcoats, with cotton cord trousers and adorned with bands and caps, the boys must have occasioned comment as they set off from Star Yard each morning. In addition to the 3Rs, they had to sing the Psalms, subscribe to the Athanasian Creed and tone the Responses in Divine Service in the nearby parish church. (6)

By 1861 the two eldest Harper boys had left the family home: Thomas to work as a general labourer, now married to Maria and with three boys of his own – John, William and Thomas (7); whilst George followed in his father’s occupation of agricultural labourer, with a lodging address in the Green. William and John, notwithstanding their recent education, were still living in Star Yard and were classed as general labourers. By now, their 17 year-old younger brother Robert, had joined them. Neither Robert nor James appear to have been selected for the Green Coat School, but the two youngest boys had been admitted – Charles, as a seven year-old on 3rd October 1859; and Abraham, as an eight year-old on 23rd June 1861, and were under the ministrations of Mr. Postlethwaite. (8)

The first evidence that a Harper had strayed from a law-abiding life occurs in 1862, when, on Saturday, 3rd May, George Harper was committed for trial, having stolen a hat from Thomas Ault, beerhouse keeper on the previous Sunday. (9) Ault ran The Plough, on the west side of the Green and it is most likely that the culprit was the son George, who was living at the time in a lodging-house a few yards away. Either George learned his lesson, or was lucky, as he did not trouble the magistrates again.

Smithard's bakery lay opposite The Plough, Ashby-de-la-Zouch. (Reproduced by permission of the Trustees of Ashby-de-la-Zouch Museum).
By the early 1870s, all eight brothers were in some form of work, even though we have no way of knowing if it was regular or intermittent. Thomas was a gardener (now with eight children); George and William were bricklayers' labourers; whilst John, Robert, James, Charles and Abraham worked on the land.

It was in the middle and late 1870s that matters took a turn for the worse, or they got careless. On Saturday, 4th November 1876, Robert and Abraham appeared with William Poyser on a charge of having done damage to a quantity of hay, the property of Mr. Henry Slater. Revealingly, several previous convictions were proved against Robert, who was sentenced to twenty-one days' hard labour. Abraham, perhaps caught for the first time, was sentenced to a mere seven days. (10) Six months later, William Poyser, Henry Riley and Robert were charged with having on the 22nd May stolen a gill of ale, value 1s. 6d., the property of John Lawley. From the evidence it appeared that Mr. Lawley, had, with the sanction of the justices, a booth in the Bath Grounds and, not having time that night to convey his things home, left a man in charge. The man left at 6 o'clock next morning, and at seven the prisoners were seen by a boy named Kendall drawing beer from one of the barrels with a bucket.

More hard labour followed. (11) A year later Robert was back in court, this time with his younger brother Charles. Both were fined 5s. each for being drunk and riotous in the town on 25th May. The brothers were sent to prison in default of paying the fine. (12) Robert returned before the Petty Sessions in 1879, again for a fine of 5s. plus costs or seven days' hard labour, having been arrested for drunkenness on 19th July. This time he was joined by Abraham, who was fined 10s. 6d. and costs or fourteen days' hard labour. Clearly, the youngest brother had caught up and surpassed Robert's inebriated state. (13) Charles was also to misbehave again, being charged by Police-constable Cowley with having stolen three dead fish, value 1s. 6d., the property of Mr Green on 6th March 1880. Remanded in custody, at the subsequent Petty Sessions the crime had grown to encompass four dead fish and he was sentenced to 14 days' hard labour. (14)
Circumstances had also worsened for the Harpers’ parents. At the Petty Sessions in late November 1878, Charles, Abraham, Robert, George, James and John had been all severally charged with having disobeyed an order of maintenance for the support of their father. The defendants revealingly pleaded that they could not obtain work, and that they had great difficulty in supporting themselves, let alone their father. (15)

Within the year, their mother was dead, dying in the Ashby Workhouse on 22nd September 1879. Their father hung on until 28th June 1883, existing on a diet for the infirm, when he finally expired in the same workhouse. (16)

Ashby Workhouse was going to seem like a second home to the Harper brothers as the 1880s became the 1890s. Unfortunately, not all of the Admission and Discharge Registers have survived; but those that do provide the following information. George, William and Robert all made use of its facilities in 1895. William, a widower since 1882, was admitted at the end of January, in a dreadful state:

Two years ago, a man named Harpur (sic), of Ashby, was found in an out-house at Ashby, nearly frozen to death, and soon after his arrival at the Workhouse parts of his feet fell off. He was removed to Leicester Infirmary where it was deemed necessary to amputate both legs near the knee. He recovered, and is quite well now at the Workhouse. Singular to relate, his brother William Harpur, who has no home, was admitted to the Workhouse on Wednesday last, the 30th ult. He walked there from Market Street, and complained of pains in his right foot, which he attributed to his bad boot. Next day he was seen by Dr. Orchard, medical officer of the union, and his assistant Dr. Thornton, who pronounced the poor fellow to be frostbitten, and resorted to amputation. They severed all the toes on the right foot, and the patient is now detained in the infirmary. He is unable to give any distinct account of how or when he was frost-bitten, but enquiries show that he was homeless, slept anywhere during the winter, and was only recently ejected from a fowl-pen, where he had been sleeping overnight. (17)

However, it would be the three youngest brothers who were the first to die: Abraham on 10th July 1897 and Charles on 17th October 1898, both in the Workhouse and both under fifty. James died in Ashby and was buried on 28th July 1897. William lasted but two more years, dying in the Workhouse on 14th May 1899.

Meanwhile, as records show, Robert does not appear to have given up the petty crimes of the previous decades, and in December 1894 he had been summoned to appear before the local magistrate for day-poaching. The prosecution’s witness, Tom Granger, said that he lived at the toll-gate on the Packington road.

On the day in question (18th November) he saw the defendant, who turned back and went into a field in the occupation of Richard Taylor, where he bent down about 20 minutes, and got up and went over a style into a field where witness was. He asked the defendant what he had been doing, and accused him of setting traps. Defendant denied it and left. Witness went to Mr. Taylor’s field, where he saw defendant stooping, and found two traps used for catching rabbits. (18)
... As a general rule, one meets with the least welcome in the dirtiest houses. The social position of the people is depressed in a direct ratio to their physical and moral condition. They become careless and indifferent. (19)

With their lives of petty criminal activity and inebriation the Harpers surely testified to this analysis.

The Ashby Workhouse Master reported that an Ashby man had been admitted into the workhouse in a state of starvation, having been found badly frost-bitten in a barn off Willesley Road, occupied by Mr. J. Bywater, a sweep residing in Ashby. The discovery was made by Bywater, who found Harpur (sic) lying in a helpless state on the floor. He is supposed to have been there about eight days, and when found he asked for water and begged not to be removed. Bywater, however, sent for assistance, and the man was removed to the workhouse. An examination went to show that he had lost all the use of his legs, his feet and ankles being as black as ink, owing to the frost. It is stated that he had been missing for a fortnight, while he had been in the habit of sleeping out at nights; and it is quite clear that but for Bywater's discovery Harpur would have died of starvation. Up to a fortnight ago Harpur had for some time been an inmate of the Ashby workhouse... Dr. Orchard, the medical officer, thought he would lose both feet, they being so badly frost bitten. — The CHAIRMAN: Do you think he is likely to live? — The MASTER: The doctor does not give much hope, although he is a little better to-day. His feet are as black as ink. He explained that Harpur on a previous occasion had lost a toe, but this was through gangrene. (20)

Nearly nine years earlier, on that afternoon of 9th December 1891, alone in his bedroom in the cheap lodging-house in Mill Bank Yard, John Harper must have reached the lowest ebb of a 'melancholy, long withdrawing roar'. He had asked his landlady, Mary Ann Bailey, for a needle and thread to sew some of his tattered clothing. However, it was a pocket-knife that he had in his hand when he was forestalled.

The unfortunate wretch was John Harper. He did recover, after a spell in the Leicester Infirmary where the double amputation took place. Back in Ashby, he actually released himself from the Workhouse in September 1895, but was back in again the following January. There he remained until his death, aged 59, on 18th March 1900.

The records that make up this article tell of a family which was typical of the many others who were herded into the 'plague spots', hidden behind the genteel façade that was Ashby 'the Spa Town'. Only rarely can we see the human being behind the generalities and official figures. Thanks to his short stay in the Asylum at Leicester, John Harper can come that bit closer:

He is a tall man [5' 6¼"] with a wrinkled weather beaten face; short dark hair, clean shaven face: greyish green eyes: tongue clean. Pulse rather slow: no organic disease of heart or lungs: heart's pulsations slow; body rather thin and ill nourished. Has slight scratch on thyroid region where he attempted to draw a knife across. Does not sleep well. (21)

Requiescat in pace.

References and Notes:
3. County Asylum Case Books, no. 5238.
4. William Lee, Report to the General Board of Health on an Enquiry of the Town of Ashby-de-la-Zouch, (London: W. Clowes & Sons, 1849), 10. By the mid nineteenth century many of the old medieval burgage plots that lay between the central Market Street and the two parallel back streets had
been fashioned into courts or yards into which were packed the poorer classes.


6. Information on the Green Coat School Admissions comes from: Returns from Ashby-de-la-Zouch to Newton's Charity, ROLLR: 3D42/1/690-725.


8. Returns from Ashby-de-la-Zouch to Newton’s Charity, op.cit.


16. Ashby-de-la-Zouch Poor Law Union Records: Admission and Discharge Registers 1879, 1880 and 1882-1883, ROLLR: DE 1909 G/1/60/16 and G/1/60/18.

17. Burton Chronicle, 7th February 1895.

18. Burton Chronicle, 14th December 1894.


21. County Asylum Case Books: August 1891-March 1893, no. 5238, ROLLR: DE 3533/200. John was discharged on 28th January. Plenty of nourishment and sleep had done him good and he was ready to return to Ashby as early as 24th December. It was remarked that he was very useful in the ward, very respectful and had a cheery manner about him. I have been unable, so far, to establish who was being referred to by John when, hoping to be soon released from the County Asylum, he said he would like to help his brother who was a Cab driver in Nottingham. All the brothers, except James, died in Ashby Workhouse, so it may have been him; but he, too, was to be buried in Ashby cemetery – like the rest, in an unmarked grave.
When the Balloon Didn’t Go Up

Cynthia Brown

Ken Hillier’s article in the Leicestershire Historian about Dolly Shepherd, the ‘Edwardian Parachute Queen’, who made her descents from hot air balloons, (1) prompted me to follow up some references to balloon ascents in Wallace’s Local Chronology of Leicester, including an unsuccessful attempt from the Wharf Street Cricket Ground in August 1836 by Mrs Margaret Graham. They are interesting examples in their own right of nineteenth century public ‘spectacles’, and the enormous crowds that they could attract. They also give some insights into the technology of ballooning at that time, and the considerable costs involved. However, because the expectations of the crowds were so high, unsuccessful attempts to ascend could provoke not only the ‘unmeasured complaints’ that followed Mrs Graham’s failure to take off in 1836, but also rioting and destruction of property, including the balloon itself on one occasion. I would like to consider some such episodes here for what they might tell us about the nature of these protests, the response of the authorities, and the life of a professional ‘aeronaut’.

The first successful demonstration of a hot air balloon, an unmanned linen balloon lined with paper, was staged in June 1783 by the Montgolfier brothers, Jacques and Joseph, papermakers of Annonay in southern France. The first manned flight took place on 21st November that year, when Pilatre de Rozier and the Marguis d’Arlandes ascended from Paris in a Montgolfier balloon, returning safely to earth thirty minutes later. In both cases the balloon was inflated over a fire of straw, but before the end of that year a balloon invented by the French physicist Professor Jacques Charles and inflated with hydrogen gas also took off from Paris. This used a new technique of coating silk with rubber, and a valve-and-ballast system to control its altitude which became the model for hot air balloons for many years to come.
By the 1820s balloon ascents were well established in Britain as a form of public entertainment, with the 'aeronauts' travelling from town to town to demonstrate their skills. The first recorded ascent from Leicester appears to have been on 26th July 1824, when Mr Charles Green took off from ground adjoining the Gas Works in Navigation Street, off Belgrave Gate. (2) Mr Green's own first ascent was from St. James's Park in London in July 1821, in a balloon inflated with coal gas. He made over 500 flights before retiring in 1852, including an overnight flight in his Royal Vauxhall balloon in November 1836 from Vauxhall Gardens in London to Nassau in Germany – the balloon being renamed the 'Great Nassau' to commemorate this achievement.

The newspaper report also refers to 'the collection in the meadow [that] was not equal to the expectation of the spectators to watch from whatever vantage points they could secure. The amount only reaching £21 16s. 4d. – a sum trifling considering the immense number of persons congregating together on the occasion'. Nevertheless, Mr Green placed a notice in the Leicester Chronicle to publicly acknowledge the support which he experienced. (4)

Mr Green's acknowledgement in the Leicester Chronicle 30th July 1825 for the 'distinguished patronage and support' he received in Leicester for his balloon ascent the previous day. (Reproduced by permission of the Record Office for Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland).

The usual practice at ascents was to charge for entry to the enclosure from which the balloon was launched, leaving other spectators to watch from whatever vantage points they could secure. The newspaper's belief that 'Mr. Green was otherwise handsomely remunerated for his daring enterprise'
suggested that this was the arrangement here. Perhaps Miss Stocks also paid for the privilege of flying as a passenger. This was also common practice, as was displaying the balloon to the crowds while it was still safely tethered by ropes. On this occasion, it was:

at times permitted to rise above the enclosure sufficiently to show the car to the surrounding multitude... about half-past four, it was launched afloat, and a more beautiful ascent was never seen. It quitting the earth with a motion so slow and lingering – with such tardy reluctance, and at an angle of inclination so acute, as to afford the highest possible delight to the numerous spectators assembled. A discharge increasing its buoyancy, it soared aloft like an eagle.... (5)

Not all such attempts ended in success. In August 1836, large numbers of spectators came from town and country to witness an ascent by Mrs Margaret Graham from the Wharf Street Cricket Ground. While thousands reportedly paid for entry, many more congregated on the Spinney Hills and Dane Hills and ‘the house tops were occupied by expectant gazers’. However, Mrs Graham’s planned ascent at 5 p.m. was reportedly delayed by an escape of gas during an accident at the Gas Works, and when she finally took off around two hours later the balloon was insufficiently filled with gas and failed to gain height. After hitting a building at the entrance to the ground, it cleared this ‘only to run foul of the chimneys by its struggles, and rending its brown silken sides. With considerable difficulty, the huge monster was disentangled... [and] fell down to earth a flabby mass, discharged of its noisome contents which half-poisoned the throng... Who shall venture the attempt to convey an adequate idea of the general disappointment. (6)

On this occasion, the crowd’s disappointment resulted in nothing worse than ‘warm feeling... [which] vented itself in unmeasured complaints, the whole affair being declared a trick...’. (7) Far worse consequences attended an unsuccessful ascent in September of that year by Mrs Graham’s husband George, though in neither case should failure have been entirely unexpected. The Grahams had already made a number of near-disastrous ascents, including one from Plymouth in 1825 which ended in the sea after 14 minutes, destroying the balloon and requiring them to be rescued by boat. (8) As suggested by the Leicester Chronicle under the headline ‘GRAHAM’S “SPLENDID BALLOON” – DISAPPOINTMENT THE THIRD’, Mr Graham’s failure to ascend from the Wharf Street Cricket Ground on 28th September 1836 was not the first such incident locally:

Mr. Graham’s balloon, which, through ill-luck or bad management, made bungling ascents (if ascents they could be called) at Hinckley and in this town, was this week again advertised for an ascension from the Cricket Ground... the inflation to be accomplished by “pure hydrogen gas”...

In an interesting insight into the process, the Chronicle also reported that the public was admitted to the ground for a fee of one shilling to watch the process of filling the balloon with 12,000 cubic feet of hydrogen gas:

About a score of casks were filled, in whole or in part, with a mixture of iron fillings, sulphuric acid, and water; the gas they thus generated was conveyed by means of pipes into a cask containing lime-water, and thence into the balloon. The quantity of sulphuric acid consumed was not less than a ton and three-quarters. (9)

Despite these careful preparations, Mr Graham’s flight on take-off was, in the words of the Chronicle, ‘horizontal, not perpendicular...[it] required a “heave-up” from the bystanders to enable it to clear a pallisading of the enormous height of some three feet eight inches!’. Mr Graham’s own ‘top-heaviness’, it suggested, had ‘perhaps some connection with his failure to ascend’. However, no doubt due to his promise to make another attempt on the following day, the response of the crowd to this initial failure was restrained: ‘John Bull, though sorely vexed at this renewed disappointment, retained his good humour most admirably; and after perpetrating sundry jokes... departed from the ground in peace’. (10)

On returning to the Cricket Ground the following day however, the would-be spectators discovered that Mr Graham had already taken off without waiting for the crowd to reassemble. Some of them broke into the ground and made a bonfire of the casks used to generate the gas, to which was added ‘other combustibles’ including a water-tub, a bench, a table and ‘the folding gates of the principal entrance...’ (11) The crowd had to be dispersed by the Borough police force, and several people were arrested and brought before the Magistrates the next day. John Armes, alias ‘Bacco Jack, a coal-higgler, was identified by a waiter at the Cricket Ground as ‘a sort of general’ who ‘officiated as “stoker” at the fire which was kindled’. Armes ‘declined to make any defence’ and was fined £2 plus costs, with imprisonment with one month’s hard labour in default. Three other men were fined 15 shillings each for throwing...
stones, but several others were dismissed without punishment ‘in consideration of their previous good characters’. (12)

This relatively lenient approach was echoed by the statement of the Mayor, the banker Thomas Paget, that:

He was resolved from the first that the Riot Act should not be read, if it could possibly be avoided, and that the military should not be called in. Indeed, he had at first tried to dispense with the police, but he was obliged to call in that force... Nothing could be more prompt than the assistance which they rendered, and their great forbearance was most exemplary. No disturbance of such a nature had been got rid of less individual injury... He had no fear it would ever be necessary in Leicester to call in the military... (13)

Mr Paget was perhaps mindful of the serious rioting that had occurred just a few years earlier in Bristol, Nottingham and other urban centres (though not in Leicester itself) during the agitation for the reform of Parliament, and the involvement of the military in quelling it. As the first Mayor of the reformed Corporation, now elected by the ratepayers under the Municipal Corporations Act of 1835, his response to the destruction provoked by Mr Graham’s non-ascent may be explained in part by a wish to demonstrate the effectiveness of the Borough police in dealing with civil disturbances. In the process, this might serve to justify the increased burden on the ratepayers that its formation represented, for: ‘The protection of life and property, the preservation of public tranquility, and the absence of crime, will alone prove... whether the objects for which the police were appointed have been attained’. (14)

However, it seems clear that the Mayor and his fellow magistrates also shared the view of the Leicester Chronicle that:

The populace, though their recourse to “Lynch Law” cannot be justified, were not without palliation, the disappointment-upon-disappointment being very mortifying and exasperating; and the resistance which they made to the constituted authorities of the Borough was comparative [sic] trifling. (15)

The ‘principal author’ of the disturbance, in Mr Paget’s view, was not ‘Bacco Jack but William Barker, landlord of the Anchor Inn on the corner of Halford Street and Charles Street, and lessee of the Cricket Ground:

The populace, though their recourse to “Lynch Law” cannot be justified, were not without palliation, the disappointment-upon-disappointment being very mortifying and exasperating; and the resistance which they made to the constituted authorities of the Borough was comparative [sic] trifling. (15)

The ‘principal author’ of the disturbance, in Mr Paget’s view, was not ‘Bacco Jack but William Barker, landlord of the Anchor Inn on the corner of Halford Street and Charles Street, and lessee of the Cricket Ground:

your conduct in this affair has been very blameable. You must be aware that the excitement of yesterday arose out of the treatment which the people received in connection with the balloon... On the first occasion, you were perhaps excuseable: and the disappointment was borne by the crowd with great forbearance. I have not a word to say in extenuation of the disturbance which followed the second disappointment; but I must say that after the experience which you had of Mr. Graham’s want of skill, you should not have engaged him again. Your taking the money of the public a second time, and a second time disappointing them, is unpardonable. You are the immediate cause of the sufferings of the men who have today been visited with punishment, and of the excitement and alarm which yesterday prevailed. I must also say that, although you were the principal author of the disturbance, you did as little as you possibly could to repress it. (16)

Mr Barker, while admitting that he was at fault, claimed that ‘after the first failure he was anxious... to do something to satisfy the public mind’, but ‘he was yesterday quite unable to quit the house, being too lame to walk’. In the circumstances however, it was little wonder that the next aeronaut to be engaged by Mr Barker, a Mr John Hampton, approached his ascent in August 1839 - only the 19th of his career - with ‘delight... mingled with much anxiety and fear... aware as I was of the lamentable failures of Mr. and Mrs. Graham on a former occasion, and how much prejudice and doubt I had to remove to regain the confidence of the town in supporting my aeronautic exhibition’. (17) Mr Hampton had served in the Royal Navy before becoming a professional aeronaut, making his first ascent in June 1838.
(18) In the event, he put on 'a magnificent exhibition', despite his 'Albion' balloon being:

about a third less in size than the great "Nassau", manufactured, we understand of the same description of material, and got up at an enormous expense, indeed, we had no idea the outlay could be so great... its appearance when fully inflated is very imposing, and presents to the eye in its buoyant state, with the bright glare of the sun upon its huge bulk, a truly gorgeous and magnificent picture. At six o'clock to the minute, the tremendous acclamations of the joyous throng announced the launch of the aerial machine into its native element. (19)

The 'great satisfaction' afforded by his ascent persuaded the lessees of the Cricket Ground to make arrangements for another ascent two days later. Attendance at this was reported to be 'numerous and highly respectable, and the police arrangements under the direction of Mr. Goodyer [Chief Constable] were in every way efficient'. (20) Nevertheless, given the expense of mounting such spectacles, both to the aeronauts whose living depended on them, and the promoters of the events themselves, arguments about who should bear the responsibility and the costs of maintaining public order were almost inevitable when things went wrong.

Balloon ascents seemed to be as popular as ever in the 1840s. Mr Green's ascent in his 'Nassau' balloon in June 1846 attracted a 'brilliant assemblage on the cricket ground [and] thousands of spectators on the neighbouring hills'. (21) The report of an ascent by Mr Green in July 1847, accompanied by Mr Hildyard, the Borough Recorder, and Mr John Moxon, refers to special trains for the spectators, and 'the appearance of a general holiday' in the streets. (22) However, the crowd that witnessed Henry Coxwell make 'one of the best ascents ever made from Leicester' in July 1858 was reportedly 'not so numerous as that seen on similar occasions', (23) and as they became less and less of a novelty, balloon ascents increasingly appeared as part of larger programmes of entertainment such as annual fêtes, rather than events in their own right.

Arguments about responsibility and the costs of maintaining public order at such events resurfaced in Leicester in July 1864 when Mr Henry Coxwell's 'Britannia' balloon was destroyed during a Foresters' fête. The Wharf Street Cricket Ground having been sold for housing development in 1860, the annual 'Demonstration and Fête' of the Midlands and North Eastern Counties Foresters' Courts was held on the Racecourse in Leicester on 11th July 1864. Mr Coxwell, a former dentist who made his first ascent in 1844, was billed to make an ascent: 'in his new MAMMOTH BALLOON, Britannia. Just exhibited at the Crystal Palace. This balloon is 90 feet high, 180 feet at its greatest circumference, and the Car is capable of accommodating 25 persons'.

Tickets for the 'Final Ascent' (for passengers accompanying him on the flight) were £3. 3s.; those for a partial ascent (tethered by ropes) 2s. 6d. Other attractions included foot races 'for a silver cup and money', Germain's Coloured Opera Troupe giving 'their inimitable Negro Entertainment accompanied by recitations', and fireworks to conclude. Special trains run by the Midland Railway 'at extremely low rates' brought spectators from as far afield as Wakefield, Birmingham and Bedford, and the crowd was estimated at around 50,000. (24) However, whether by accident, as the Chronicle suggested; by design, as some of the crowd apparently believed; or through wanton destruction, as Mr Coxwell himself held, the balloon never took off. This provoked, in the words of one spectator:

a disgraceful riot. The arrangements for the keeping of the ground... were so bad as to preclude the possibility of Mr. Coxwell making his necessary, and of course, most important arrangements. The temporary barriers around the balloon were broken down soon after 2 p.m., and the dense mob rushed in, surrounding the balloon, and setting Mr. Coxwell at defiance... He could get no clearance... Mr. Coxwell opened the valve and allowed the gas to escape. As soon as the mob perceived this, they rushed to the balloon on all sides, clinging, tearing and trampling, and then some brutal persons seized upon Mr. Coxwell, knocked his cap from his head, tore his coat from skirt to collar, and hustled him in every direction... I never witnessed such barbarous ignorance, baseness, and injustice in my life... (25)

At this point Mr Coxwell was escorted from the ground by the police, allegedly pursued by cries of 'Rip him up', 'Knock him on the head' and 'Finish him'. While it was generally agreed that the police had 'done what they could', there were reportedly only eight on duty, and 'owing to their insufficient number they were of little use... Many people left the ground expressing their strong disapprobation of the failure. The proceedings went on afterwards much better, and the omission was atoned for somewhat by the unexpectedly magnificent display of fireworks'. (26)

Mr Coxwell, in a letter to The Times on the following day, said that he had been forced to let out the gas 'so as not to endanger the lives of my passengers, among whom were two ladies... nothing short of the destruction of my balloon, and indeed an attempt on my own life, appeared a sufficient sacrifice'. He strenuously denied accusations heard among the crowd that 'the balloon then present was not my largest and newest balloon, but a small one' – and that 'there existed a disinclination on my part to ascend'. Instead, he
laid the blame squarely on 'a want of foresight in providing sufficient policemen to keep in check so large a gathering...'. (27).

In scenes somewhat reminiscent of a riot in 1773, in which framework knitters in Leicester destroyed a hosiery machine seen as threatening their employment 'and carried the fragments in triumph through the streets', (28) the hoop of Mr Coxwell's balloon was later paraded through the town, along with shreds of the balloon itself which were sold as trophies. While they were less common than in the past, Leicester was no stranger to riots in the mid-nineteenth century. The number of working men in the town with a parliamentary vote was still limited after the 1832 Reform Act, and rioting remained a form of protest against perceived attacks on custom and tradition, or violations of what was seen as fair and just. In February 1847 a violent disturbance took place in The Newarke in Leicester destroyed a hosiery machine, Laid the blame squarely on 'a want of foresight in providing sufficient policemen to keep in check so large a gathering...'. (27).

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In February 1847 a violent disturbance took place in The Newarke in Leicester. In evidence given on oath, and thus likely to be accurate, he calculated the damage to the balloon in Leicester at £700. Further incensed by a letter to The Times from the Chairman of the Foresters, which 'insinuated that it was [his own] duty to provide for protecting himself against a crowd', he resolved to recoup the cost from the offenders. He appeared unexpectedly at the Town Hall in Leicester later in July 1864 at the conclusion of the Magistrates' business, accompanied by his solicitor, citing a law that anyone convicted of causing more than £30 of 'wilful damage' was liable for a fine in proportion to the damage, and in default, imprisonment...'. He therefore 'wished to make a complaint, to put himself under examination on oath, and to enter into recognisances to prosecute any offender that might be discovered. It was well that the offenders should know what their liability was...'. (32)

Following a discussion between Mr Coxwell's solicitor and the Town Clerk as to whether the relevant Act applied in this case given 'that at the time the Act was passed balloons were not contemplated' - his evidence was taken down under oath; but as he was unable to identify those people responsible for the damage, it appears that no prosecution was ever brought. (33) Given that they were reputedly among the 'rousher' elements of the crowd, had the culprits been convicted it seems unlikely that he would have recouped anything like the full cost of the damage from them. Help was forthcoming, however, through a subscription raised by James Glaisher, F.R.S. of the Royal Observatory, Greenwich, with...
whom Henry Coxwell had made a number of ascents to study the effects of altitude on the human body, including one in 1862 to a height of almost 30,000 feet. (34) In late August 1864, in a rather belated attempt to restore the reputation of the town, a subscription was also opened in Leicester to help reimburse the cost of the balloon, supported by Foresters in the local area. (35)

No further incidents of this nature appear to have occurred in Leicester, though balloon ascents continued to be part of annual events such as the Belgrave Flower Show, and ‘one-off’ spectacles like the ‘Clarendonia’ festival in 1888 featuring ‘the BRAVE LEONA DARE, who rises 8,000 ft. into the air suspended by her Teeth only’ from a balloon piloted by Signor Spelterini. (36) Rare as they were however, they did serve to illustrate the reluctance of the local authorities in Leicester to take responsibility for ensuring public order and safety at such gatherings beyond providing a small number of police officers. Passing byelaws regulating drinking, gambling and other aspects of spectators’ behaviour was one thing; ‘interfering’ in the contractual arrangements between aeronauts and the promoters of their ascents in the free market environment of the nineteenth century was another thing altogether. Given the expanding ‘market’ for commercial leisure opportunities during that century, it seems clear that arguments about where the responsibility did actually lie – with the organisers of ascents or the aeronauts themselves – were less concerned with public order and safety per se than with the large amounts of money that stood to be lost or gained from such ‘spectacles’.

References and Notes:
2. J.D. Bennett, ‘When the balloon went up’, Living History Newsletter, 26 (Leicester City Council, 1999).
3. According to John Timbs, Curiosities of London (1867), on 25th May 1824 ‘Lieutenant Harris, R.N., ascended from the Eagle Tavern, City Road, with Miss Stocks; the former killed by the too rapid descent of the Balloon’. (http://www.victorianlondon.org/entertainment/ballooning.htm).
4. Leicester Chronicle, 30th July 1825. The notice itself is dated 28th July 1825. Wallace’s Chronology notes that Mr Bradley had a timber yard near to the Gas Works, which were located off Belgrave Gate, adjacent to the canal.
5. Leicester Chronicle, 29th July 1826. The balloon landed an hour later at Atherstone, where Mr Green no doubt released the customary carrier pigeon with a note of their location, to enable it to be retrieved.
7. Ibid.
8. Science and Society Picture Library (www.scienceandsociety.co.uk). In 1851 their Victoria and Albert balloon was also destroyed in an ascent to celebrate the Great Exhibition, and over a career of some thirty years they became ‘as famous for their apparent good fortune in surviving these adventures as for their aeronautical skills’.
9. Leicester Chronicle, 1st October 1836.
10. Ibid.
11. Ibid.
12. Ibid.
13. Ibid.
15. Leicester Chronicle, 1st October 1836.
16. Ibid.
17. Leicester Journal, 9th August 1839.
18. In October of that year he became the first Englishman to make a successful parachute jump, from a height of 6,000 feet above Cheltenham, taking 12 minutes 40 seconds to descend.
20. Ibid.
21. Leicester & Midland Counties Advertiser, 27th June 1846.
22. Leicester Chronicle, 3rd July 1847. This was probably the John Moxon listed in the 1841 Census as a tailor in High Street, Leicester.
23. Leicester Chronicle, 31st July 1858.
24. Leicester Chronicle, 9th July 1864.
25. Leicester Chronicle, 16th July 1864.
26. Ibid.
27. Henry Coxwell letter to The Times, reprinted in the Leicester Chronicle, 16th July 1864. However, one eyewitness, in a letter also published in the Chronicle on 16th July 1864, referred to the view expressed by members of the crowd that it was ‘one of his old dodges’, suggesting that it was not the first time Mr Coxwell had failed to make an expected ascent.
29. Leicestershire Mercury, 20th February 1847.
31. Leicester Chronicle, 8th October 1836.
32. Leicester Chronicle, 23rd July 1864.
33. There is no reference to any prosecution in reports of the next Borough Quarter Sessions in October 1864.
34. British Medical Journal, 13th December 1862.
35. Leicester Journal, 2nd September 1864.
36. Leicester Chronicle, 4th August 1888. She did, however, have a safety rope in the event of need. ‘Clarendonia’ was held on land opposite the former Racecourse, now Victoria Park, and organised by Mr J.H. Clarke, manager of the West End Cycle Works.
Desford Industrial School: a nineteenth-century institution for ‘naughty boys’

Caroline Wessel

Desford Industrial School in Leicestershire first opened as a secure juvenile institution for male young offenders in 1881. It continued in this role until its closure in 1984 and for just over a century provided shelter, education, training and discipline for ‘naughty boys’. Although a harsh, authoritarian and confined boarding establishment, it is possible that it nonetheless offered a better alternative to perpetual crime for destitute, orphaned or homeless boys. Was this in fact the case?

Desford Industrial School was situated on a breezy hill just east of the village of Desford, and was built to accommodate two hundred boys, who came from London and other large towns, as well as Leicester. Their offences included ‘absconding from home’, ‘being beyond control’, ‘damaging property’, ‘burglary’, ‘wandering and being destitute’, ‘begging’, ‘living with prostitutes’ and ‘associating with thieves’. Their ages ranged from five to sixteen, and, once there, they had to remain at the School until they were sixteen. The boys were subject to a very strict and severe code of discipline. The School was built for shelter and hard work, and initially education took a secondary role. The boys had to labour each day in the School’s various workshops, and on its 90-acre farm that provided food for the inmates, and also grew vegetables for a stall in Leicester Market.

In 1881 the first Superintendent was Mr Thomas Adcock and his wife was matron. The other staff included a schoolmaster, farm bailiff, mechanic and tailor. Adcock’s first two weeks were spent preparing the school for its official opening on 15th January 1881 by M.P and educationalist, The Rt Hon A. J. Mundella. The boys arrived at the school one or two at a time over the following months, but five years later there was a total of 192 youngsters. Adcock laid down four essentials for the reform of the young offender – ‘a sound elementary education, to teach the boys a definite trade, to introduce farming and gardening, and to maintain a sound discipline.’

So how did Desford’s harsh regime compare with the alternatives, if these boys had remained in poverty, exposed to immorality and crime in their home areas? Henry Mayhew, in his London Labour and the London Poor, records a conversation with a young orphan lad with no job, who became a pickpocket. Already the boy had been in prison thirteen times, and flogged four times, but it had not changed him. “Each time I came out harder than I went in”, he said. For in prison there was a criminal hierarchy and a lad would be laughed at for begging, so had to steal to prove his worth. (4) In 1869 journalist James Greenwood wrote that in London ‘children living on the streets, or those living in overcrowded houses with little or no parental care, had to find some way of staying alive. Many of them drifted into crime. They often did not know that what they did was wrong. They were destitute of all those things that children should have as a right – food, clothing, shelter, security and care.’ (5)
In Leicester, *Reports* on the work of the Leicester Domestic Mission (1846-1877) written by Joseph Dare tell the same story – children in such a "ragged filthy condition as to be a disgrace to a christian country...the mother has offspring by several men, is "enceinte" [pregnant] and perpetually drunk. She sends out her children in this condition on purpose to excite commiseration; if the children were dressed up tidy today, the clothes would all be stripped off, sold for drink, and the children driven forth half naked to play the same game tomorrow.' (6)

Compare these shocking conditions with a detailed eyewitness account of the spacious and varied facilities at Desford Industrial School given in 1884 by 'Rambler', a *Leicester Chronicle* journalist:

It is an imposing brick structure, relieved with stucco, of fine architectural proportions, with a massive brick tower and a bold entrance porch of Norman arches. Passing along a corridor we come to the school-room, a moderate-sized room well lighted and furnished. Behind this are large lavatories, fitted with a number of basins, over which are blacking brushes; also a clothes store, the walls of which are fitted with numbered lockers in which every boy keeps his clothes separate and in order.

A door opposite leads into a large asphalted and walled-in playground, with a limited extent of shelter. Along one side of the playground are ranged workshops, at which the boys are taught trades. The first is the shoemaker's shop, well fitted with the usual implements, including a good pressing machine. The boots turned out are strong and well-finished, and some are sold in Leicester Market. Next is the tailor's shop, fitted with wide tables and sewing machines, and behind this a carpenter's shop. Outside the playground are the gasworks, engine house, dairy and various outbuildings. Then comes the large dining room, the kitchen, with four large steam coppers and a steamer, a bakery, where half the bread is baked – 15 cwt being consumed altogether in a week – the washhouse, where there are large machines for beating and whirling the clothes, and for fumigation; the laundry with steam-mangle and hot air closets; the larder and swimming bath. We then ascend to the dormitories, which are arranged so as to be well watched by the teachers, from whose apartments the long rows of beds can be surveyed.' (7)
Rambler’s account shows Desford Industrial School, despite its harsh regime, to be a much pleasanter environment than that of the poorest areas of London, from whence came 59 boys in 1881, compared with only 38 from Leicester. In 1903 American writer, Jack London, went to live amongst them and recorded that, ...in such conditions the outlook for children is hopeless. They die like flies, and those that survive, survive because they possess excessive vitality and a capacity of adaptation to the degradation with which they are surrounded. They have no home life. In the dens and lairs in which they live they are exposed to all that is obscene and indecent. And as their minds are made rotten, so are their bodies made rotten by bad sanitation, overcrowding and underfeeding. When a father and mother live with three or four children in a room where the children take turn about in sitting up to drive the rats away from the sleepers, when those children never have enough to eat and are preyed upon and made miserable and weak by swarming vermin, the sort of men and women the survivors will make can readily be imagined. ...There is not room in which to turn around. The youngsters run the streets and by the time they are twelve or fourteen the room-issue comes to a head, and out they go on the streets for good. ... (8)

The birch, used for punishment until 1904. (Reproduced by permission of the Desford & District Local History Society Archives).

Log Books of 1881-92 (9), give a good indication of this. The worst punishment was of course loss of freedom, through confinement by a perimeter fence. But other punishments included loss of marks, loss of play, occasional loss of a portion of a meal, and for the common offence of absconding, the act of birching which was used up until 1904.

However there were also rewards for good behaviour, including a Good Conduct Scheme, when ‘if a boy behaved admirably, a point was awarded, and if a certain amount of these were obtained a Good Conduct Party was held, with the treat of a bun for tea.’ Other privileges for good behaviour included supervised visits to Leicester, to Abbey Park or the swimming baths, when boys travelled in by train, but had to walk the eight miles back.

And what of the boys’ education? Mundella’s Education Act of 1880 obliged all school authorities to include a ‘3 Rs’ schooling into the day’s schedule, and the Desford Log Books record that reading, writing, arithmetic, spelling, geography, conduct, word-building and mental arithmetic were all taught. However their industrial training was still considered to be more important than lessons as, on leaving School, this is what would give them a trade.

What is more, the boys’ education appears to have been an uphill struggle. For we learn from the Log Books that when most boys entered the School their ‘education attainment was almost nil’. One boy had ‘a mental capacity not up to much’, another was described as ‘backward’ and most were in the habit of truancy. In addition, during the busy agricultural months of the year, the brighter boys were expected to work extra hours on the school farm, rather than study in the classroom. However, in 1884 a school band was started up, and sport and athletics grew to achieve a very high standard, so that in due course the youngsters had a much more all-round and rewarding general education.

But the biggest change occurred in 1921 with a new headmaster, Mr C. J. W. Lane, and the new name of ‘Desford Boys School’. Mr Lane introduced a prefectorial system, privilege walks, allotments for boys, summer camps away, and a house system where housemasters were seen as ‘fathers’. The boys attended Sunday services in the parish church (and woe betide them if the plate collection did not add up!) After the war Gilbert and Sullivan operas were performed each year.

A Paper for a Home Office conference that Headmaster Lane wrote in 1934 gives an insight into his philosophy, which he called ‘School Tone.’ He believed that Tone could turn a boy from a villain into ‘a nice little well-mannered chap’ and he defined Good Tone as ‘a blend of individual freedom and corporate discipline.’ He advocated a school
that was homely rather than institutional – Christian names rather than surnames and certainly not unkind nicknames, should be employed – and he believed in religious instruction, organised games, and plenty of praise. There should be flowers and plants on the classroom window sills, lessons should sometimes be taken outside in the open air, and syllabuses should include nature study, outdoor survey work and physical training. Furthermore, he believed that the ‘three virtues that promoted good Tone were Happiness, Truthfulness and Diligence.’ (10) However, despite Lane’s high ideals, a first-person memory recalls him as ‘an awful bully’ – suggesting that life at his School was not quite as pretty as his Home Office Paper suggested!

But life for the poorest destitute children in the Metropolis was nonetheless considerably worse. The year prior to Lane’s Paper, George Orwell had published his harrowing account of travelling the road with tramps in and around London – ‘an awful sight...a graceless mangy crew, nearly all ragged and palpably underfed.’ He described the relentless staggering from one workhouse to another, their foul and stinking conditions, the near-starvation, the homosexual assaults, the absence of paid work, and the constant attempts all day to resist arrest by the police (11) – a way of life that would otherwise undoubtedly have befallen many of the Desford lads.

But although it appears that life for Desford’s ‘naughty boys’ improved under Mr Lane, a first-hand description received in 2001 from Mr Frankie Bell (12), who attended Desford Boys School in 1947, still paints a very harsh picture. He describes a daily routine that was rigidly adhered to. After rising very early, making beds, scrubbing floors, polishing, and lighting the masters’ fires, boys then had to wash, in strict rotation by house, and were brusquely scrutinized for cleanliness by masters. Next came the first Roll Call of the day, when, if a boy failed to respond quickly, he would be hauled out and beaten, and the whole Roll Call would commence again. This might happen many times, regardless of the boys’ increasing fatigue and hunger pangs, should a single poor fellow miss his name.
After Roll Call, the boys were marched into the dining room for breakfast, no boy being allowed to eat until given permission. After breakfast there was Assembly in the gymnasium. The headmaster would then start on his own method of discipline, always without exception resulting in a boy getting beaten in front of the whole school. After Assembly the day would be filled with school lessons, broken by dinner, roll calls, school, tea, roll call and bed. A last bit of degradation was to be hauled out of bed after about an hour to be examined to see if a boy needed to go to the toilet.

So was the concept, the system, and the actual administration of nineteenth-century industrial schools, and of Desford in particular, a good or a bad thing? It would certainly appear to be a better alternative to the conditions of poverty and degradation described by Mayhew, Greenwood, London or Orwell. In the School’s early days the newly developed concept of reforming and educating children, rather than punishing them or exposing them to stronger criminal influences, was a beneficial advance. The system of preparing them for future employment with an industrial training in farming, shoe-making, tailoring or bakery was good for both boys and for society; the sport, music, drama and nature study made for a broader education; and the team spirit and instillation of moral principles provided a solid preparation for adult life. But was the meagre academic education and the exceedingly harsh and sadistic discipline right, or really necessary? In 1895 it was reported that 80% of the Desford boys were reformed. So, set in the context of its times, Desford Industrial School’s regime was probably a great deal better than the poverty, starvation, immorality, degradation, cruelty – and even danger – of a boy’s original environment. And, what is more, the School would have offered a golden opportunity for a better future to hundreds of youngsters who would otherwise have been without all hope.

So perhaps the last words should go to Mr Frankie Bell who, on meditating on his time at Desford Boys School, reflected, ‘Looking back on everything, perhaps the School was a pivotal point in my life. But at the time I was too young to appreciate it.’

References:
12. Mr Frankie Bell – name changed to preserve confidentiality; his memoirs

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The Desford Industrial School building was built by the Henry Herbert building firm, at that time called T. & H. Herbert. For further information on the firm, see Caroline Wessel, ‘Henry Herbert & Sons – a notable family of Leicester Builders’, *Leicestershire Historian*, 43 (2007), pp.3-7.

In 1974 the name of the School was changed once more to Polebrook House, and in 1984 the establishment was finally closed and turned into a retirement home for senior citizens. At the time of writing the main house is now completely derelict with a ‘Dangerous building’ notice posted on it, and nettles all around. The rest of the retirement village is smart and well-maintained. There is a rather wild, but very extensive fruit orchard, presumably the same trees that bore the fruit sold by the boys in Leicester Market.
Networks of Print in 'Radical Leicester'
John Hinks

Leicester was to become an important printing town during the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries but the earlier growth of its book trade was unremarkable compared to other provincial market towns. What is striking about Leicester's book trade is the high proportion of its practitioners, between roughly 1790 and 1850, who held radical political opinions and were well-placed, as printers, booksellers and newspapermen, to use their professional skills to promulgate their views. The production and distribution of political literature in England, during and after the Civil War, reflected the whole spectrum of opinion but its enduring impact was the spread of a variety of new, radical ideas. Seditious literature was found in Leicester as early as 1663, when two booksellers reported receiving packets of unsolicited republican literature. The mayor seized the books and recorded his concern about those who ‘print such books as may disturb the peace both of Church and State...’. (1) The earliest book known to have been printed in Leicester was a political one: Faction Unmask'd, printed by John Gregory (2) in 1755, dealt with an election controversy.

In the eighteenth century the developing provincial book trade played a key role in making new political ideas accessible way beyond the confines of the metropolis, leading to ‘an unprecedented degree of political awareness in the provinces’. (3) Donald Read observes that the emergence of the term 'public opinion' in the 1760s was indicative of ‘a new continuity of extra-parliamentary influence in politics’ arising largely from easier access to the printed word in the provinces. (4) Throughout the 1790s the Government was concerned for the safety of the realm, not only on account of the French Revolution and its aftermath, but also because of persistent discontent in Ireland. Fear in high places often resulted in harsh measures against those who spoke or wrote anything which might be construed as revolutionary, and against those who printed or distributed books, pamphlets or newspapers of a radical nature. Political life became very polarised during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries; certainly in 'Radical Leicester' it was difficult not to take sides. Although a few printers and booksellers were Tories, the majority held radical political views. Other provincial towns may have had a radical bookseller or printer but Leicester was quite exceptional in the scale of its radical book-trade activity.

A royal proclamation of 1792 against criminal and seditious writings has been described as 'the Government's declaration of war upon the journalists' (5) but was more than that: it declared war on all who printed or distributed radical literature. The tightening screw of legislation prohibited sedition in speech or writing, and the anonymous publication of newspapers was prohibited. Seditious societies were suppressed by an Act of 1799 which also required printers to register their presses in an effort to control the flow of radical literature. In the often turbulent political setting of Leicester such measures meant that booksellers and printers of a radical persuasion were closely watched by the authorities, risking prosecution for carrying out what they surely regarded as a normal part of their everyday business. The more extreme radicals were labelled (some even described themselves) as ‘revolutionaries’ but much English radical activity, especially in the rapidly growing industrial towns of the Midlands and the North, tended to focus on more domestic issues. A priority for many activists was the long campaign for parliamentary reform, which eventually resulted in the Reform Act of 1832. In Leicester, the reform campaign was a hard-fought struggle, characterised by much bitterness and sporadic violence. Religious dissent and radical politics, inextricably woven together in the consciences of many local people, had a firm foothold in the town, giving Leicester its well-deserved reputation as a major centre of English radical activity.

This was a time of increasing polarisation in the provincial press. Many radical newspapers emerged during the 1790s, encouraging previously moderate Tory papers like the Leicester Journal towards a more overtly reactionary position. The radical papers adopted a new style of journalism introduced by Benjamin Flower in his Cambridge Intelligencer: ‘From the outset, by using the editorial, he sought to instruct public opinion on the major issues of his day... [showing] that he had outgrown the ‘scissors and paste’ tradition and the earlier dependence on the London newspapers.’ (6)

This innovation was copied by other papers, including the Leicester Journal: ‘From 1807, the editorial in the 'Leicester' column, where a strong Tory point of view was expressed, became the central feature of the newspaper.’ (7)

A pioneering radical paper was the Leicester Chronicle, edited by Thomas Combe, a prominent newspaperman, bookseller, printer, librarian and public speaker, ‘an oracle on literary subjects’, who also taught reading and grammar at the Misses Simpsons’ Boarding Academy for Young Ladies. (8) Combe’s bookshop and library were for some
time situated close to the new Assembly Rooms and Theatre in Hotel Street, a strategically sound location encouraging the custom of the affluent gentry. John Nichols commented on how the Assembly Rooms, opened in 1800, provided:

> every convenience for the gratification of taste, and the amusement of the mind, a coffee-room handsomely furnished, and supplied with all the London papers, affords the gentlemen of the town and country, as well as the stranger, to whom its door is open, an agreeable and commodious resort; while on the opposite side a spacious bookseller’s shop, under the management of Mr. Combe, the very intelligent as well as attentive proprietor, furnishes the literary enquirer with a series of all the new publications. (9)

Following the demise of Combe’s newspaper, another *Leicester Chronicle* ran from 1810 to 1864, edited for many years by Thomas Thompson and his son James, the distinguished local historian. The Chronicle was printed and edited from 1812 to 1813 by George Bown, a prominent radical book-trade figure, who has the distinction of being mentioned in E. P. Thompson’s *The Making of the English Working Class* as an example of unusual longevity in radical political activity: ‘Few centres can boast a record as long as that of George Bown of Leicester, who was Secretary of its Constitutional Society in 1792, was arrested in 1794, and who was still writing as an advocate of ‘physical force’ Chartism in 1848.’ (10)

The new Assembly Rooms, Leicester (now the City Rooms), built 1792-1800. (Reproduced by permission of the Record Office for Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland).

Bown connects the early radicalism of the French Revolution period to the Chartist era of the 1840s. He was secretary of the Leicester Constitutional Society for Promoting an Equal Representation of the People in Parliament, one of a number of radical organisations forced to close down in the face of Government pressure. Undeterred, Bown began to organise informal meetings in a public house on Monday evenings. James Thompson noted that members of the society addressed each other as ‘Citizen’ and had to declare their revolutionary principles as a sort of password to gain admittance. (11) When he was heard praising the French revolutionaries, the landlord reported Bown to the authorities and he was arrested and charged, though unsuccessfully, with organising seditious meetings. Bown sometimes tinged his political comments with a sardonic sense of humour. Advertising the Poll Book of the 1812 election, he remarked:

> It has already been observed that many, very many, actual paupers have voted, and no less than five persons, long mouldering in their graves, have been personated, and grace the majorities of Mr Smith and Mr Babington. (12)

At the same time Bown advertised his classes for young ladies, expressing (for his time) quite enlightened views about women’s education:

> It is not now considered sufficient, that the acquisitions of the softer sex should be confined to the duties of household management, with some superficial, perhaps frivolous accompaniments. To the lighter decorations of drawing, music, dancing &c., it is become necessary to add, the solid, yet not less delightful endowments of science and literature...
Bown offered classes called ‘Institutes of Science and Literature’ together with training in composition and elocution to enable young ladies confidently to converse in society about their newly acquired knowledge. (13) Pamphlets written in his old age, such as *Physical Force* (1848), bear witness to Bown’s unwavering radical views. Although still advocating the use of violence as a last resort, Bown now argued (to a large extent reflecting local public opinion) that the two Chartist factions, ‘physical force’ and ‘moral force’, could only achieve results if they were united.

The radical printer John Pares (14) was arrested three times on account of his politics. In 1798, while Pares was taken to London for questioning, his house was searched and his papers seized in the hope of finding evidence of treason; apparently nothing was found as he was released a fortnight later. (15) He was less fortunate in 1802 when he was convicted of publishing ‘a song of seditious tendency’ and imprisoned for twelve months. (16) Pares was one of the leaders of the Leicester Hampden Club, founded in 1816 when Hampden Clubs were expanding rapidly in the provinces as forums for radical reading and debate. The Corporation, regarding the Hampden Club as a hot-bed of revolutionary activity, paid a spy to infiltrate it and Pares narrowly escaped prosecution for publishing two seditious pamphlets which were read out at a meeting. The Town Clerk reported Pares to the Home Office as ‘a dangerous fellow’ who would be ‘better out of the way.’ (17) Another wave of repressive legislation led to the arrest of many Leicester radicals and Pares was charged with publishing a ‘seditious, blasphemous, and malicious libel’. (18) Although acquitted, he was almost ruined by the expense of the case.

Although many working people soon came to feel betrayed by the middle-class reformers, the passing of the 1832 Reform Act was initially celebrated enthusiastically. In Leicester there was a great procession, the centre of attention being a portable printing press fitted up in a colourful cart bearing the mottoes ‘Liberty’, ‘Education’ and ‘Reform’.

People flocked to see what it was: ‘it was soon understood to be the mighty engine... which had taken so prominent a part and performed such deeds of strength in the great conflict of Truth and Justice with Error and Oppression.’ (19)

The production and distribution of the printed word had been crucial to the advancement of the cause of reform. In Leicester, as elsewhere, radical activity was refocused rather than terminated in 1832. A considerable measure of parliamentary reform had been achieved, if not enough to satisfy many hard-line radicals, but attention now turned to the redress of other longstanding grievances, including growing dissatisfaction with local government. The Corporation, which had governed Leicester since Tudor times, bore the brunt of agitation against the old regime. There were good reasons for this: the Corporation had always been an undemocratic oligarchy, but by now it had also become blatantly corrupt.

A key figure in this wave of radicalism was Joseph Foulkes Winks, Baptist minister, printer, publisher and radical activist. (With acknowledgement to Carley Baptist Church, Leicester).
Winks came from Loughborough in 1830 and quickly immersed himself in Leicester's radical politics. He soon became a thorn in the Corporation's side, exposing their abuse of charitable funds and the partiality of the magistrates. (21) Winks was a leading light of the Leicester and Leicestershire Political Union, which vehemently opposed many perceived injustices including newspaper duty, the despised 'tax on knowledge'. Like many Dissenters, Winks refused on principle to pay Church Rates; in 1840 eleven reams of his paper were seized and sold in lieu. (22) In addition to his tireless work as a Baptist minister and one of Leicester's leading printers, Winks was also the General Baptist Union's publisher and personally edited five monthly magazines. (23)

Thomas Cook is now remembered as a pioneer of the travel industry rather than as a printer and stationer with radical opinions. (24) Joseph Winks had baptised the young Cook in 1826 at Melbourne, Derbyshire, where the minister had his first printing press. When Winks moved to Loughborough, Cook was briefly apprenticed to him before moving on to Market Harborough, where he began publishing temperance tracts in 1840. Within a year Cook was established as a bookseller and printer in Leicester, trading initially as the Midland Temperance Press; a typical publication is the penny monthly Anti-Smoker and Progressive Temperance Reformer. Cook also campaigned vigorously against poverty, publishing the Cheap Bread Herald and, during a period of great poverty in Leicester in the 1850s, running soup kitchens and providing potatoes for the poor.

Thomas Cook worked successfully for some years as a printer and publisher in Leicester, but his famous pioneering railway trip to a temperance rally in Loughborough in 1841, followed by excursions further afield, led ultimately to the establishment of a large international travel business which became so successful that Cook gave up his book-trade activities in 1854. Cook held radical political views but his energy was mainly devoted to the cause of temperance, and his forays into political action were rare, though he and Winks were among the three thousand attending a great Chartist meeting in Leicester in 1848. (25) This was just before the so-called 'Bastille' riots: the Leicester workhouse, nicknamed the Bastille, was the focus of opposition to the new Poor Law, culminating in three days of serious rioting. Cook joined a committee gathering evidence against the actions of the police and special constables during the riots. (26) Otherwise, Cook kept his distance from overt political activity; he was a moderate radical who deplored the 'physical force' Chartist advocacy by George Bown.

The bookseller John Seal and his brother Richard were prominent 'moral force' Chartists and leading lights of the Leicester Working Men's Association. Radical book-trade activity in Leicester is perhaps summed up by John Seal's stirring advertisements. This 1836 example is typical:


addressing 'the friends and admirers of cheap political knowledge' Seal informs them that he sells newspapers and pamphlets 'advocating the just rights of the wealth-producing millions and opposing the aggrandisement of the non-producing few. (27)
Chartism flourished in Leicester and nationwide particularly in the 1840s and, despite its tendency to fragment into squabbling factions, it is recognised by historians as the first national radical movement with genuinely working-class roots. (28) Thomas Cooper, the self-educated, energetic (and rather headstrong) Chartist, spent only a short time in Leicester (1840-42) but had an enormous impact on the local Chartist movement and especially on its newspaper publishing activities. He took over the ailing *Midland Counties Illuminator* in early 1841 and transformed it for a short time into a regional Chartist paper of some importance, although some of the details of his involvement with the paper remain uncertain. (29) Later in his life, following a period in prison, Cooper gave up his radical politics and became more religious; coincidentally he, too, was baptised by Joseph Winks, an old friend, during a visit to Leicester in 1859.

Historians tend to agree on the difficulty of identifying a tradition of British radicalism. There was no cohesive or continuous radical movement, but one survey of the years 1760-1848 concludes that:

Nevertheless the tradition of native British radicalism is real enough, with links forged by men who survived to join successive organisations, and by a literature which ensured the transmission of ideas and the accumulation of a body of radical thinking which each generation could savour and to which it could add new insights. (30)

Literature was indeed key to the survival of radicalism, not least in Leicester, and the story of those who printed and distributed radical books, newspapers and pamphlets is an illuminating one. This article has outlined just some of Leicester’s radical book-trade activity. (31) Future articles will explore the pioneering career of the flamboyant Richard Phillips (active in Leicester 1788-95) and several members of the radical Cockshaw family.
The Midland Counties’ Illuminator, 13th February 1841 — the first issue edited by Thomas Cooper. The paper took its title from Milton’s words ‘What in me is dark, illumine’, quoted on the masthead, which also lists the six points of the People’s Charter. (Reproduced by permission of the Record Office for Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland).

References and Notes:
1. Leicester Borough Records, Hall Papers XV, no. 471, Record Office for Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland.
12. Leicester Chronicle, 17th October 1812.
13. Leicester Chronicle, 17th October 1812.
14. Not to be confused with the Leicester banker of the same name.
16. Leicester Journal, 16th July 1802.
17. Patterson, Radical Leicester, p.118.
18. ‘A Dialogue between the Privileged Class and the People’ (an extract from Volney’s The Ruins of Empires).
20. Patterson, Radical Leicester, p.188.
21. Leicester Chronicle, 30th March 1833.
22. Patterson, Radical Leicester, p.250.
25. Leicester Chronicle, 8th April 1848.
26. Leicester Chronicle, 10th June 1848.
27. Leicestershire Mercury, 31st December 1836.
31. This article is partly based on the author’s thesis, The History of the Book Trade in Leicester to c.1850, (Loughborough University PhD, 2002) and partly on his further research on book-trade networks, supported by a grant from the British Academy. See also his ‘Some Radical Printers and Booksellers of Leicester c.1790-1850’ in The Mighty Engine: the Printing Press and its Impact, ed. by P. Isaac & B. McKay, 2000, pp.175-184.
This paper aims to give an introduction to the place of the William and Robert Burton brothers in early seventeenth century literature, and of their work against the social background of that era.

The early seventeenth century has long been considered to be ‘a learned age’ (1), whilst contemporary authors such as Wood (2) consider the breakaway of Northern Europe from the spiritual authority of Rome to be a key event in the evolution of the scientific and more secular thinking that proved to be a catalyst to the dominant Western civilisation of the last five centuries. Both of the Lindley-linked Burton brothers played a role in this great transition.

Burton Family Background

The Burton family roots reach back to the time of William the Conqueror, when Infulphus de Burton held land in the Tutbury area of Staffordshire, and subsequently at Falde, about nine miles away. Five generations later in 1511, James Burton’s acquisition of land through marriage to Elizabeth, one of the daughters and co-heirs of John Herdwick of Lindley (3), brought the Burtons to Leicestershire.

William Burton was the eldest of four sons of Ralph Burton and Dorothy Faunt of Foston, and was born at Lindley on 24th August 1575. Robert, the third son, was born on 8th February 1577, his place of birth, however, being less clear. Some sources state Lindley, others Falde. (4)

William Burton

William Burton is remembered today as the author of the first modern county history of Leicestershire - The description of Leicestershire - originally published in 1622. He was educated at the Grammar School in Nuneaton (5), and went on to Brasenose College, Oxford matriculating in October 1591. He is recorded as being present as a ‘scholar’ during the visit to Oxford of Queen Elizabeth in 1592. In 1594 he gained a BA degree and continued to Inner Temple to pursue a career in law. By 1599 he was a reporter in the Court of Common Pleas, and was admitted as Barrister in 1603. According to Burton’s own account, his legal career was hindered by health problems, and he abandoned London to pursue a ‘private country life’. However, whilst in London he forged an interest in antiquities and topographical matters that led to his work on Leicestershire.

William’s time in London coincided with the Elizabethan Society of Antiquaries, originally founded by Archbishop Parker in 1572, and active over the two decades spanning 1586-1607. (6) The Society included many top intellects of the period including William Camden, John Stowe, Robert Cotton and William Lambard. Some initial inspiration for Burton’s ground-breaking work on Leicestershire may well have come from both Lambard, who in 1570 had produced one of the earliest county histories, A Perambulation of Kent, and John Stow, whose Survey of London was published in 1598, at the time when Burton was in London. There is also firm evidence of a strong influence much nearer to home through Burton’s working relationship with the Staffordshire antiquary, Sampson Erdeswick of Sandon. Erdeswick, also a member of the Society of Antiquaries,
undertook much genealogical research on both Staffordshire and Cheshire in the late Elizabethan period, although his overall influence was probably hindered by his strong adherence to recusant Catholicism. William also acknowledges the influence of an uncle from the Faunt family, another family of immense Catholic influence, though it seems unlikely that Burton would have had little, if any, opportunity to meet him.

Arguably Burton’s standing and influence in the field of early topographical writing may have become somewhat forgotten over the years, but among a network of Midland antiquaries active in the early seventeenth century, he is described as ‘pivotal’. (7)

Though his one major publication was his work on Leicestershire, Burton was hugely influential in encouraging fellow antiquaries to pursue similar publications in several other counties. Among his close contacts were Sir Simon Archer of Tanworth-in-Arden, who laid the groundwork for Dugdale’s *Antiquities of Warwickshire*. Others included Thomas Habington (also a strong recusant), an authority on Worcestershire and Thomas Gerard, who undertook work on both Dorset and Somerset. Burton also endeavoured to continue the work of his Midlands mentor, Erdeswicke, and hoped to produce a similar edition on Staffordshire to his Leicestershire work, but this was never completed.

In 1623, William inherited the Lindley estate from his father, and his subsequent activities included refurbishing the tiny chapel of St John Baptist at Lindley, influenced it is thought, by the new Laudian, or anti-Calvinist thinking. (8) Originally built by the Herdwick family in the mid-fifteenth century, the chapel was small, just 38 feet long, and by Nichols’ time at the turn of the eighteenth century, was reported to be ruined. (9) Sadly today, the remains of the chapel are among items included on English Heritage’s *Heritage at Risk* register.
In 1593 Robert followed his elder brother to Brasenose College, Oxford. Nine years later in 1602 he received his BA degree, by which time he was at Christ Church remaining there until his death in January 1640. He received the living of St Thomas, Oxford in 1616. Though Burton is attributed with the view that it was only possible to gain a benefice by resort to simony (10), he also gained the livings of Walesby in Lincolnshire (1624-31) and Seagrave in Leicestershire (1632-40). In Walesby a curate carried out most of the duties, but Burton does seem to have taken some interest in Seagrave. It is believed that he retained a glazier to care for the chancel windows, and enlarged the rectory where his nephew, Cassibilian, also a historian, seems to have resided from time to time. (11) It is recorded that Burton and his curate became engaged in a dispute with a local landowner over pastureland where Burton grazed his horses. However, the list of rectors shown in Seagrave Church has the phrase ‘notably absent’ appended alongside Burton’s name. (12)

In 1626 Robert Burton became Librarian at Christ Church. As an avid collector of books he also amassed a personal collection of over two thousand volumes. (13) His own literary output numbers three works, of which two are now largely forgotten. His first work, Alba, a Latin pastoral comedy, was performed before the new King James I at Christ Church on 27th August 1605. It proved a flop and was never revived. (14) His second work, begun in 1606 and revised in 1615, was another satirical piece entitled Philosophaters which ridiculed contemporary scholarship, especially in connection with its traditional thinking on syllogism (deductive reasoning), and was set in a thinly disguised Oxford. This work was lost for over two centuries and only rediscovered by the Roxburghe Club in 1862. Finally, his massive Anatomy of Melancholy, first published in 1621, went through five editions in his own lifetime. (15) Although it fell out of favour, and was out of print for much of the eighteenth century, it remains among the most significant texts of the early seventeenth century.

Burton’s memorial in Oxford’s Christ Church Cathedral simply refers to him as ‘Democritus Junior’, the pseudonym Burton initially used in his great work. Democritus was a fifth century BC Greek known as the ‘laughing philosopher’. Considered insane by several of his contemporaries, he gained great amusement from examining the follies and ironies of life. He also held unproven and unfashionable scientific views, especially on astronomy and atomic structure, and believed the earth to be round. Thus, Burton’s adoption of the ‘Democritus Junior’ pseudonym was likely to have been both a deliberate taunt to his contemporaries, and also a probable cover for his growing beliefs that much early seventeenth century medical and scientific thinking was honed around an increasingly questionable body of knowledge, whilst, as portrayed in his Philosophaters, he considered much contemporary English scholarship had become sterile.

Burton’s interest in melancholy as a disease is sometimes seen as stemming from his own susceptibility to the condition, but melancholy was a widespread affliction in late Elizabethan England, and a highly fashionable topic of the age. (16) There are several earlier works on the subject that are now largely forgotten other than by academics. Among these are A Treatise on Melancholy by Timothy Bright, first published in 1586 and reprinted in 1612 (17), and a poetic description of the melancholy soul by Nicholas Breton published in 1600. Bright, a physician with a dubious practice history (18), suggested there were clear divisions between mental and physical causes of sorrow, and many believe Shakespeare used the work when writing Hamlet. (19)

Medical thinking and practice in early seventeenth century England still largely revolved around the theories of Claudius Galen, a Greek-born physician who had practised in Rome some fifteen centuries earlier. There was a particular reliance on the theory of the balance of the ‘four humours’; black bile, yellow bile, phlegm and blood; a practice rooted even further back in ancient Greece from the time of Hippocrates.

![Humour-Element-Season-Planet-Attributes-Organ](image)

**An outline of the attributes and elements associated with the various humours.**

The English word ‘melancholy’ stems from the Greek ‘melan’ = black, and ‘choler’ = disease and thus melancholy refers to a perceived imbalance of black bile in the system. Early seventeenth century thinking probably regarded the sanguine temperament the most desirable, with melancholy being regarded as the antithesis of the sanguine, and perhaps the greatest ‘enemy to life’. (20)
There was also a widely accepted view of disease as an imbalance of the humours, with a reliance on a traditional resource of a mix of herbal and astrological lore to maintain or restore their desirable equilibrium. Like many, Burton also accepted the accord between the two professions of medicine and religion. (22)

Burton’s work comprises three separate volumes. The first deals with the definition, causes, symptoms and properties of melancholy; the second, and shortest, examines possible remedies, whilst the third examines two very specific topics in detail, love melancholy and religious melancholy. The whole work has a very long preface where Burton envisages his own form of Utopian society, with the medically distressed and infirm cared for out of the public purse, and which has been likened to a blueprint for a late twentieth century welfare system. (23) His methodology appears to have been merely to research and forage every available literary source from the classical world of Greece and Rome, to English authors such as Chaucer, and the latest works of his contemporaries such as Ben Jonson and Francis Bacon. There is no evidence of empirical work or any real quest for new data, and there is a huge reliance on anecdotal material.

Burton’s work has long prompted debate and invoked a wide variety of scholastic opinions throughout the English-speaking world. The literary aspect of the work was seen by Fuller and later by Dr Johnson as overpowering the medical. Dr Johnson, himself susceptible to bouts of melancholic moods, described the book as the only thing worth rising for two hours earlier than necessary. (24) Some sources cite Burton’s mix of theological and medical approaches as radical (25), Muller considered him a ‘social critic’, while James King dismisses his work on the grounds of his ‘almost comic inability’ to solve the elementary tasks of writing a book. (26). Others consider his Anatomy as being ‘the greatest medical treatise ever produced by a layman’. (27)

What is indisputable is that Burton’s work came at a time when huge changes in both European philosophical thinking and scientific knowledge were rapidly unfolding. A canon of new scientific thinking had been intensified by the publication in 1543 by Copernicus on his views of heliocentric theory. These ideas were further highlighted at the turn of the seventeenth century by the work of Tycho Brahe, Johann Kepler and Galileo Galilei, and in England by the little-known Thomas Hariot.

However, there were dangers for those radical thinkers who ventured beyond the then acceptable parameters of theological thinking. Among such radical thinkers was Sir Francis Bacon whose Advancement of Learning (1605) questioned at some length much of the then established scientific thinking. Bacon suggested ‘medicine is a science which hath been more professed than laboured, and yet more laboured than advanced’. He strongly advocated the need for experimentation to support hypotheses, although stopping short of pushing his views beyond a point acceptable to established theological or Church thinking. Also contemporary to Burton is the pioneering work of William Harvey on blood circulation and widely contested by established medical practitioners of the time.

From his it is abundantly clear that Burton was aware of these unfolding discoveries in several areas of scientific knowledge, and of other huge changes taking place in the early seventeenth century in the European, especially Northern European, view of the spatial and topographical world. Burton recognises the new thinking that was taking astronomy into a quite separate discipline, whilst also acknowledging the expanding geography of the time.

Though sourcing from multifarious and often conflicting backgrounds, Burton did proffer his own strongly-held views, not least on diet. He tells us that melancholy men ‘most part have good appetites, but ill digestion', Burton also cautions against over-indulgence and condemns a whole variety of individual foods as being melancholic inducers, suggesting ‘venison is melancholy and begets bad blood’, whilst cabbage is deemed to cause troublesome dreams and transport black vapours to the brain. Burton’s remedies are equally specific and even groundbreaking. There is much deliberation of established Galenic practices such as blood-letting and purging agents, but Burton ventures way beyond the traditional ideas of his age with the introduction of a concept that music may have remedial qualities and with a proposition that the mind might be rectified by mirth. (28)

Patrons, friends and contemporaries of the Burtons

Four hundred years on it is difficult to accurately determine the precise social circles of the Burtons, especially as they were clearly not in the mainstream of the rather decadent court life of James I or his successor, Charles I.

William Burton’s Description of Leicestershire has a dedication to George Villiers, Marquis of Buckingham, one of the most high-profile, powerful and wealthy men of the early 1620s. Villiers had strong Leicestershire links, having been born at Brooksby, whilst his family were also associated with the Staffordshire manor of Hanbury, adjacent to the Burton interests at Faulde. Evidence produced in the mid-nineteenth century by the Rev J. M. Gresley, a founder member of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society, suggests that William’s history was originally intended for his own private use, but it was published ‘after it had slept for a long time’ under pressure from George, Marquis of Buckingham. (29)
In contrast, Robert Burton’s *Anatomy of Melancholy* is
dedicated to one of his Christ Church students, George, 8th
Lord Berkeley (1601-1658), sometimes known as ‘George
the traveller’, and who agreed the arrangement for Robert to
become Rector of Seagrave. A letter in the British Library
from Robert to Lord Berkeley’s steward, John Smyth of
Nibley, shows him to be staying at Lindley in August 1635
with his brother, William.

Indications that Robert’s circle numbered several from his
local Leicestershire and Staffordshire roots can be deduced
from the *Anatomy* and include, among others, Sir Henry
Goodere of Polesworth, Sir George Gresley of Drakelow,
George Purefoy of Drayton, William Purefoy of Caldecott,
Sir Francis Willoughby of Wollaton and Revd. James
Whitehall of Checkley. It is Whitehall along with Robert’s
brother William, who are thought to have influenced Robert
on the revised (1624) edition of the *Anatomy*. (30)

Whatever flaws or imperfections modern analysis may
uncover regarding the work of the Burton Brothers, there
can be little doubt that their studies and texts have had an
enduring influence on their respective areas of scholarship
for almost four centuries.

Robert’s work in particular continues to provoke much
academic debate among both literary and medical
fraternities, whilst William’s *Description of Leicestershire*
was acknowledged and extensively used by John Nichols in
his *History and Antiquities of Leicestershire*, and has come
to be regarded as the first modern history of the county of
Leicestershire.

It is however sad, even melancholic, that, outside the
academic community, the work of the Burton brothers,
especially that of Robert, is increasingly obscure, whilst
twentieth century development in the form of a World War
II airfield and the subsequent Motor Industry Research
Centre where the village of Lindley once stood, has all but
obliterated the tangible evidence of the once-strong
Leicestershire links to the Burton family. Both brothers are
buried outside of the county – Robert at Christ Church
Cathedral, Oxford, and William at Hanbury in Staffordshire.
(31) In Leicestershire, Burton family memorials can be seen
in Higham parish church, including one to Ralph Burton,
father of the two authors, and it is hoped that this paper will
restore local interest in the brothers’ work.

*Higham Church, Leicestershire, home of memorials to the Burton family, from John Nichols The History and Antiquities of the County of Leicester, vol. IV, plate CVI, opp. page 641.*
References and Notes:

This paper is based on one of three South West Leicestershire Literary Lectures presented during the Heritage Open Weekend in September 2009 with a view to rejuvenating interest in some of the area’s literary figures.

The key texts referred to are:


Robert Burton, The anatomy of melancholy: what it is, with all the kinds causes, symptoms, prognostickes & several cures of it: by Democritus Junior with a satyrical preface .... (1621).

Everyman Library ed., 1932. All quotes for this paper from Burton’s work are made from this edition.


6. Chapters 1 & 2 of J. Evans, A History of the Society of Antiquaries (1956) offer much background to persons involved in antiquaries and similar interests during the late Elizabethan period and the early years of James I.


27. H. Jackson, (1932), xiii.


31. Nichols seems to be alone in favouring Tutbury as William’s burial place.
The following is a brief glimpse into the working life of an Inspector of Nuisances in nineteenth-century Leicester based on Leicester Mercury newspaper cuttings kept by the Leicester Inspectors of that period.

Imagine living in a house that had no clean running water, no flushing toilet, that relied on privies and cesspools, where the inhabitants had nowhere to dump their rubbish except in the street or by the river, and where their children were lucky to survive infancy due to regular outbreaks of cholera, tuberculosis or smallpox, and you have some idea of what life was like for the typical urban dweller in Britain in the first half of the nineteenth century. Our towns and cities were ‘filthy and unwholesome’ places to live and it didn’t matter whether you were rich or poor.

Recommendations made by the Buccleuch Commission (1845) led to the Nuisances Removal and Diseases Prevention Act 1846 which allowed ‘for the speedy removal of certain nuisances (defined by the Act as) accumulation of any offensive or noxious matter, refuse, dung or offal’. The Act also gave powers to prevent people living or working in ‘unwholesome conditions’, and to take action against a landlord or owner of ‘any foul or offensive drain, privy or cesspool’ that would be prejudicial to health. However, it soon became clear that prosecution alone would not solve these problems of urban living - drastic redesign of the sewerage system and a radical rethink of how to prevent dirt and disease was necessary. As a result, Edwin Chadwick, a Poor Law Commissioner, conducted an enquiry into the causes of poverty and bad health, and the Public Health Act 1848 came into effect. Under this Act, Local Boards of Health were created who appointed an Officer of Health, a Surveyor and an Inspector of Nuisances later called a Sanitary Inspector.

The Inspector of Nuisances was the man on the ground; the person who investigated complaints, recommended action and appeared as a witness in a prosecution. Leicester’s first Inspector of Nuisances was George Bown who under the direction of the two Medical Officers of Health, Dr John Barclay and Mr John Buck, worked to make Leicester a clean and healthy city. Leicester’s Board of Health introduced some additional bye-laws which prevented pigs from being kept within 30 feet of human habitation, enforced the emptying of privy holes and cesspools, and made sure all the streets had proper drains.

As the century progressed so did the scope of the Inspector’s work. One aspect of this was making sure that the milk that was sold was milk and not a mixture of milk with some other liquid such as water. Watering down the milk might not seem so serious to us now, but then milk was considered to be a staple food particularly for the young. The Leicester Mercury 10th March 1893 reported a particularly serious case where Francis Manning, a farmer from Oadby, was selling ‘milk’ that was half water and he was fined £5 or a month in prison. The Chairman of the Bench hearing the case said ‘this is a shameful and most flagrant case and I do not know how children can live if they have such milk’.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Our active and zealous Inspector, Sergeant Wright, who keeps the Register of the Sanitary work which has been done during the year, reports that the number of notices served in the year 1869, were 388, viz.,—</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dilapidated and offensive Privies and Cesspools 104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foul and offensive Drains ... ... 109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defective Water Closets ... ... 37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deficient Privy Accommodation ... ... 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To cleanse Filthy and Unwholesome Houses 72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To remove Swine ... ... ... 52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To remove Accumulation of OFFAL, &amp;c. ... 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>388</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The annual nineteenth century Health Reports for Leicester include information supplied by the Inspectors. Extract from the report for 1869 detailing the number of notices served during the year. (Reproduced by permission of the Record Office for Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland).

There were many prosecutions for selling margarine as butter and for having on sale foodstuffs which were rotten such as tomatoes ‘which unscrupulous people might use for mixing up with other (good) tomatoes for the purpose of making tomato sauce and injurious consequences might ensue from the consumption of the sauce.’ ‘Putrid and stinking’ fish and unfit and diseased meat was often seized by the Inspectors, the Chairman of Bench remarking in one instance that he ‘could not allow unsound meat to be foisted on the poor’.

The Inspector of Nuisances also had responsibility to ensure that local publicans did not sell diluted spirits – rum, whisky, brandy and gin were all ‘sampled’ and sent off for testing to the public analyst by the inimitable Tom Bent, Chief Inspector of Nuisances, and numerous prosecutions ensued against those found wanting.
It has been suggested that one reason our nineteenth-century ancestors drank so much alcohol is because of the lack of clean water, which continued to be a major problem until the building of the reservoir at Thornton. Until then, many people still relied on a local well such as the one at Glebe cottage on Wigston Road, Leicester, which was closed down after the appropriately named Inspector Wells had taken a sample and sent it off for analysis. The water drawn from it was considered to be ‘unfit for domestic use’.

Overcrowded and insanitary workshops fell within the Inspector’s remit and one George Cooper of Friar Lane, Leicester was instructed to rectify 40 – 48 Fleet Street to make it fit for people to work in.

The Inspector was also one of the town’s ‘moral guardians’. The Leicester Mercury reported on the 29th March 1894 that one William Lee, lodging house keeper, of numbers 9 and 22, Bedford Street, was summoned for allowing persons of the opposite sex, not being man and wife, and over the age of 16 years, to occupy the same room containing only a double bed. When the Inspector asked the man occupying the room for his name “he replied, Arthur Willson and then, at his suggestion, the woman he was with, gave the name of Annie Willson, but witnesses said that was not her real name.” The implication was that the premises were being used for prostitution. Both the Inspector of Nuisances Tom Bent, and Detective Sergeant Greaves, gave evidence to that effect and the landlord was subsequently prosecuted.

Surprisingly maybe, considering the industrial nature of Leicester and the ‘laissez-faire’ attitude to big business at this time, the Inspectors of Nuisances had the job of monitoring air quality. The Authorities were well aware that a smoky atmosphere was not good for the inhabitants of Leicester and it was a legal requirement for boilers to be fitted with a ‘smoke consuming apparatus on the door’. Many cases were brought to the notice of the Bench where firms had allowed their furnaces to pollute the air with smoke for too long a period. The owners of Hawley and Johnson in Woodgate, Leicester were prosecuted on 9th December 1896, for having a chimney which emitted dark smoke. The Inspector said that it had been smoking for over 18 minutes and therefore was injurious to health.

However, probably the most onerous of the Inspector’s duties and the one that would have put him in some personal danger was the monitoring of infectious diseases. In this role he would have assisted the local Medical Officer of Health. It was the Inspector’s job to keep watch on houses where there were suspected cases of notifiable diseases, such as cholera and smallpox. This was to ensure that infected people remained indoors and did not mix with the local population, so as to prevent the disease being passed on. In April 1893 there was a minor outbreak of smallpox in Leicester and the Inspector had the job of watching the home of one James Burbank who was suspected of having contracted the disease. The Inspector reported seeing Burbank in his garden and then followed him to the fish market where he attempted to carry on his business as a fishmonger, which of course was unacceptable, as he should have remained in quarantine in his home until such a time as it was deemed he was no longer infectious.

As already outlined, the work of an Inspector of Nuisances was wide and varied and to be able to carry out this work the occupant of the post needed to be trained to a high level. Inspectors were required by law to have gained the Certificate of the Sanitary Inspectors Board in order to carry out their duties, and thus was created the beginnings of a profession that would eventually evolve into Environmental Health; an activity that is still fundamental to local government in the twenty-first century.
I
t is very rare to find a school photograph from the
nineteenth century that has a key revealing the identity
of everyone who appears on it. Thanks to Betty Dickson
and her husband Charles who skilfully drew the key, this is
the case for a group photograph of pupils and teachers at
Belmont House School, De Montfort Street, Leicester. (1)
As a prominent committee member of Leicestershire
Archaeological and Historical Society, and a founder
member and principal worker for the Leicestershire Local
History Council, Betty knew the value and importance,
particularly as some of her ancestors had attended the
School, of lodging such a photograph and its key with the
Record Office for Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland. The
photograph was most probably taken in 1883 when the
principal, Anna Chrysogon Beale, retired. Such a treasure as
this demands an exploration into the lives of everyone who
appears in the photograph.

The origins of Belmont House School are to be found in the
early nineteenth century with a girls’ boarding school in the
Newarke, Leicester, which was run by Ann Roughton. In
1853 the school was taken over by Catharine and Eliza
Stringer. It was later expanded when Catharine
commissioned the building of a new school on De Montfort
Street, to which she gave the name Belmont House School.
The School then passed to Katharine Amos in the 1860s, and
subsequently to Anna Chrysogon Beale in 1876.

Throughout the School’s history, it had always provided an
education for the daughters of the middle classes, many of
whom came from non-conformist backgrounds. This was
still the case in 1883, as demonstrated by the occupations of
the fathers of the girls. Edith May Atkins’ father, for
example, was a hosiery manufacturer, Martha Louisa
(Pattie) Bennett’s father was a corn and feed merchant, who
twice became mayor of Leicester, Annie Elizabeth Bidlake’s
father was an architect and surveyor, Elizabeth Ann (Cissy)
Fosbrooke’s father was a barrister, Ethel Selina Fowler’s
father was a solicitor, Mary and Eleanor Sloane’s father was
a surgeon and Elizabeth (Elly) and Geraldine Guinness’s
father was a clergyman. Many of the girls attending in 1883
would have had mothers who had also attended the School
when it was run by Eliza and Catharine Stringer. Sarah
Sloane, née Stretton, the mother of Mary and Eleanor, is one
such example.

Anna Chrysogon Beale was the sister of Dorothea Beale,
principal of the highly prestigious Cheltenham Ladies’
College. The College, along with the North London
Collegiate School, founded by Frances Buss, lead the way in
providing girls with a more academic education than had
traditionally been provided. It is Dorothea who is usually
given all the credit for establishing the high standard of
education at the College, but Anna was also responsible for
this, as told by Agnes Kilgour and Sophia Du Pré who were
teachers both at Cheltenham Ladies’ College and at Belmont
House School:

... during the ten years from 1862 to 1872 [Anna]

had her share in the foundation of the traditions of the

College and the standard to which the pupils were

extpected to aspire. (2)

She [Anna] had much to do with the building up of

the College, both in work and discipline. (3)

Agnes Kilgour herself taught at Cheltenham Ladies’ College
from 1876 to 1882, moving on to teach at Belmont House
School, where she took over as principal when Anna Beale
retired in 1883. Agnes remained in this post until 1887 and
then returned to Cheltenham Ladies’ College to become
Head of Division Two. In 1895 she returned to Leicester to
marry the widower, William Evans, after which she became
involved in a wide variety of educational activities in the
town, including becoming a member of the School Board, a
governor of Wyggeston Girls School, a teacher and governor
of Vaughan Working Men’s College and a governor of
University College, Leicester.

Sophia Mildred Du Pré attended Cheltenham Ladies’
College and, for a brief time, was taught by Anna Beale.
Anna must have been impressed by her pupil as she offered
her a teaching post at Belmont House School where she
remained until 1887. Like Agnes Kilgour, Sophia, too,
returned to Cheltenham Ladies’ College, but remained there
until she retired in 1917:

Miss du Pré was one of those who unmistakably bore

the indelible stamp of ‘Miss Beale’s Own,’ with her

unshakeable faith, her unswerving sense of duty and her

benevolent autocracy. (4)

According to a Cheltenham Ladies’ College ex-pupil one of
Sophia’s teaching strengths lay in the field of drama:

Miss du Pré’s English lesson must have been a real joy,

and we were all proud of her dramatic work. How we

enjoyed the Barnaby Rudge she adapted and put on for
us, and her ‘Miss Mattie’ was surely exactly what Mrs

Gaskell had in mind. (5)
The teaching staff and pupils of Belmont House School, De Montfort Street, Leicester, c1883. (Reproduced by permission of the Record Office for Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland).

Key to the names of the teaching staff and pupils of Belmont House School, De Montfort Street, Leicester, drawn by Charles Dickson. (Reproduced by permission of the Record Office for Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland).
With such talents as this it was probably Sophia who was responsible for the first dramatic performance of the Belmont House Society, founded in 1886 by Anna Beale and Agnes Kilgour to encourage ex-pupils to maintain some intellectual study and social activities after leaving school. The play was an adaptation of *The Princess*, by Alfred Lord Tennyson. For a school and society aiming to raise the level of education for girls and women this was a very apt poem to stage as a play. *The Princess* is the story of Princess Ida whose main aim in life was to establish a women’s college. Although this does not come to fruition in the play, as the heroine decides to marry, the poem acts as an ideal vehicle through which the characters can express their ideas and emotions about the position of women in society, particularly relating to their lack of educational opportunities.

Clearly, the links between Belmont House School and the prestigious Cheltenham Ladies’ College were very strong. Girls from Leicester and Leicestershire who attended Belmont House School would have benefitted greatly from having such progressive teachers who were earnestly seeking to raise the level of girls’ education and to give them, for the first time in the Town, the opportunity to take the London Matriculation. It is highly likely, therefore, that some of the pupils would have aspired to progress to centres of higher education that were beginning to open up to them. Four such pupils are presently known to have had success when going on to further study after leaving school. They are Elizabeth Maude Guinness, Victorine Jeans and Mary and Eleanor Sloane. There may, of course, be others whose stories have not yet come to light.

Throughout the nineteenth century, marriage was perceived to be the natural order of things for women from all social classes. The role of wife and mother was the career path that most women were expected to follow. A lack of educational opportunities, few job prospects, and wages below subsistence level meant that most middle class women were dependent on their families to support them unless they had independent means. To provide for one’s daughter was an important element in establishing family status, particularly for the father. It was also a way of maintaining the marriage prospects and the respectability of girls and women. It is, therefore, no surprise to find this pattern existent in the lives of the girls and women in the school photograph.

Eight of the girls seem to have married and the census shows they all lived at home and appear not to have had an occupation before marriage. However, it has to be borne in mind that women’s occupations were often not recorded on the census until well into the twentieth century. The girls that married were: Edith May Atkins, Martha Louisa (Pattie) Bennett, Annie Elizabeth Bidlake, Elizabeth Ann (Cissy) Fosbrooke, Ethel Selina Fowler, Geraldine Guinness, Ella Jacobs and Edith Emily Stone.
The census does not reveal the activities taken up by girls after leaving school, or getting married. The range of possibilities open to them, to some extent, depended on the society in which they moved, their father or husband’s wealth and approval and the attitudes of the girl herself. It is difficult to know, for example, which organisations they were actively involved in, what educational pursuits they followed, what charity work they might have done and whether, or not, they were involved in the women’s suffrage campaign. Mary and Eleanor Sloane were both active Suffragists, and it is extremely likely that some of the other girls would also have been. After all, they had good role models in their teachers, as Anna Beale and Agnes Kilgour were the founding joint secretaries of the Leicester & Leicestershire Women’s Suffrage Society. Edith Gittins, who gave drawing lessons at the School, was also a staunch Suffragist.

The census records show that Emily Florence Agar, Florence Jane Carnall, Janet Cooper and Dora Susannah Vipan were still single and living at home without having an occupation in 1901. The other girls that remained single were Clara Gordon, who, up until 1891, remained at home with her widowed mother, and had no occupation. Alice Ada Lorrimer was a visitor in a household at the time of the 1901 census and again no occupation is recorded for her. Annie Tabberer appears on the 1901 census as a housekeeper who was living with her widowed brother-in-law, the Reverend Frederick Easter, and his young children. Margaret (Maggie) Whitworth appears on the 1911 census as head of household and a teacher of music.

The three pupils whose stories unfolded in most detail are Elizabeth Maude Guinness, identified as ‘Elly’ in the photograph, Victorine Jeans and Mary Sloane.

Elizabeth Guinness was born in Wantage, Berkshire, in 1869, the daughter of the Reverend Robert and Grace Guinness, née Butler. The family came to Leicester in 1874 for her father to take up the living at St Andrew’s Church. He also became the Chaplain at Leicester Infirmary from 1878 to 1881. Four years later in 1885 the family left Leicester to live in Great Bowden when her father became the vicar of St Dionysius Church, Market Harborough.

In 1888 Elizabeth entered the Royal Holloway College for Women to study English. The College had been the inspiration of the self-made millionaire Thomas Holloway and his wife, Jane, who had originally suggested the idea. Unfortunately, neither of them lived long enough to see the College open its doors to the first women students, numbering just 28, in 1887. In 1892 Elizabeth was awarded a second class Honours Degree by the Oxford University Examination for Women. (6) Following this she was offered the post of College librarian. Three years later she also became a lecturer in English. In 1899 the growing number of students entering the College and the subsequent responsibilities this placed on the principal, Emily Penrose, necessitated the appointment of a vice-principal and this was offered to Elizabeth, who accepted. This was just one year before the status of the College was raised when it became part of the University of London.

Elizabeth Maude Guinness whilst Vice Principal of Cheltenham Ladies’ College (exact date unknown). (Reproduced by permission of Cheltenham Ladies’ College).

An ex-student of the College described Elizabeth as follows:

In trying to describe Miss Guinness in her early days as Vice Principal ... one is driven to using that over-worked word ‘Atmosphere’; for she seemed to live and work in a world whose intellectual climate, however natural its exhilarating air might be to her, was an entirely new experience to most of us.
Not that she had any trace of intellectual arrogance, nor did she make any claim to high scholarship. It was merely that she loved knowledge and rejoiced in ideas. (7)

Although Elizabeth was clearly at home in the academic life, she seems to have generated a relaxed and friendly atmosphere to incoming new students:

Her charm and distinction brought to many a shy and gauche schoolgirl her first experience of how delightful University life could be. (8)

Elizabeth also seems to have cut a rather glamorous figure that challenged the stereotypical image of women academics as masculine, frumpy women who became figures of fun:

As a student I remember my thrill of pleasure in first seeing her at the head of the dinner procession, dressed in a beautiful evening gown, wearing fascinating jewellery. (9)

The ambition of another student of Elizabeth’s, called Marion Pick, was:

... fired by the ‘wonderful ensembles’ and ‘lovely jewellery’ of Miss Guinness: Soon I had made up my mind to become a Lecturer here and waft along the Library in a real toilette. (10)

Elizabeth’s jewellery seems to have been a strong feature of her identity and two bequests in her will reflect this: ‘To Konradin Lady Hobhouse of Hadspen House, Castle Cary, my two diamond broaches’ and ‘To my niece Mrs Margaret Grace Bridges the remainder of my jewellery.’ (11) In addition to her striking and graceful image, Elizabeth was also seen as a dedicated teacher and a good hockey player. But above all else the College Library was apparently ‘her first love’ and it is where her portrait adorned the wall. (12)

In 1908 Elizabeth resigned her post of Vice Principal at the Royal Holloway to take up the post of Vice Principal at Cheltenham Ladies’ College. A sideways move many would think from a university position, but the reasons for this remain unknown and one can only speculate. Coming from such an elevated position in a university college, Elizabeth must have made a valuable academic contribution to the teaching staff of Cheltenham Ladies’ College and been an excellent role model for her pupils in ‘... the Cambridge Room where 30 clever girls worked for what was then called the Higher Certificate.’ (13) Once again Elizabeth’s personality seems to have been a great contributory factor to the general running of the College:

Her ready tact made her a great source of strength to her colleagues on the Staff. She was never flurried in any crisis and her sense of humour invariably showed her the bright side of things and made her very delightful to work with. (14)

In July 1924, aged 56, Elizabeth resigned her post at the College. This was much to the regret of her students:

To the girls, especially in her own room ... the blank will be great when they return to find her no longer presiding with grace and kindliness in her old place. (15)

From here Elizabeth went on to work for the League of Nations Union which had been formed in 1918 to promote international justice, collective security and a permanent peace between nations. During the inter-war years the L.N.U. played an important role in educating society about the principles of the League of Nations. Given Elizabeth’s career background, her work for the L.N.U. may have been in the field of education, but this needs further research. During the Second World War, Elizabeth worked on the promotion and establishment of Communal Feeding Centres – these eventually became known as British Restaurants. They were established by the Ministry of Food and run by local authority committees on a non-profit making basis. Restaurants were opened in various venues, including schools and church rooms, where a three course meal could be obtained for 9d.

Elizabeth is said to have worked for various other causes, but once again further research is needed. However, it would seem that her education at Belmont House School laid the foundation stones of her academic career and catapulted her into the vanguard of women in higher education in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. She died in Bath on 14th August 1960.

Victorine Elizabeth Jeans was also to take advantage of these new higher educational opportunities for women. She was born in Chichester, Sussex, in 1867, the daughter of Thomas and Elizabeth Jeans, née Filer. Victorine’s father was a Crown Inspector of Taxes and this meant that the family were forced to move about the country quite frequently. This is possibly why they came to Leicester. They arrived in the Town sometime between 1871 and 1881 and chose to send their daughter to Belmont House School. Victorine must have left Leicester shortly after the school photograph was taken when her father’s job necessitated a move to Manchester. Whilst living there, Victorine attended Manchester High School for Girls from 1884 until 1887.

The annual school report for 1884 included a comment that Victorine deserved ‘special commendation’ for her studies on Euclid. (16) In 1885 she ranked second in the school’s annual exams and was award a school scholarship. (17) At
the end of the 1886 academic year she passed the Cambridge Local Examinations, Standard A, and in 1887, the Cambridge Higher Local Examination with a distinction in French. (18) She then received a scholarship to fund her university studies at Victoria University (Owen's College, which became the University of Manchester) where in October 1887, she passed the University's Preliminary Examination, in the First Division. In June the following year she passed the University's Intermediate Examination and was awarded the class prize in Modern History and jointly shared the class prize in English Literature. She then also awarded the Cobden Club book prize for that year. (19)

In 1891 Victorine made history by becoming the first woman at the University to be awarded a major university prize. This was the triennial Cobden Prize, worth £60, for her essay, *Factory Act Legislation. Its Industrial and Commercial Effects, actual and Prospective*. The essay was reviewed by L. L. Price in the *Economic Journal*, vol. 2, no. 5 in March 1892, and published by Unwin in the same year. (20) Surprisingly the essay was re-published in paperback in 2009; over one hundred years later, and copies can still be purchased.

After Victorine graduated she remained in contact with the University and in November 1889 became a founding member and the first secretary of the Social-Debating Society. She also became a reporter for the women student’s magazine, *Iris*, in 1889 and 1890. After receiving the Cobden Prize she was appointed as an assistant mistress at the new High School for Girls, Whalley Range, Manchester. (21) The School was founded in 1891 by a committee of local professional and business men who wanted to establish an academic high school for girls which was within walking distance of the desirable housing estate of Whalley Range. Victorine did not teach at the School for long as by March 1894 she had moved to Kent and it is here where she died at the young age of 32 on 10th June 1900.

Sisters, Eleanor Jane and Mary Annie Sloane, born in 1865 and 1868 respectively, the daughters of John and Sarah Sloane, *née* Stretton, both went on to further their education after leaving the School. Eleanor went on to study classics and Mary to study art. Eleanor gained an external B.A. in Classics from the University of London in 1897. (22) She then went on to study for an M.A., and to encourage others to study for higher academic qualifications by becoming the Leicester secretary for the Cambridge Extension Lectures.

Mary would have received some of her early drawing lessons from Edith Gittins, who was a faithful disciple of John Ruskin and a lover of the Pre-Raphaelites and the Arts and Crafts Movement. Edith exhibited some of her work at the New Water Colour Society and the Royal Academy, and later became a member of the Society of Leicester Artists and the Leicester Sketch Club, where her work was also exhibited. Leicester Museum and Art Gallery holds several of her paintings and the Great Meeting Unitarian Chapel, Leicester, also has on display her painting of the Quantocks.

Mary probably inherited Edith's love of the Arts and Crafts Movement as she became a close friend of Mary 'May' Morris, the daughter of William Morris, and Mary was a regular visitor to the Morris family home at Kelmscott Manor. Mary's friendship with May is reflected in her art held by the William Morris Gallery, Walthamstow, London. They are two watercolours: 'May Morris in the Tapestry Room at Kelmscott Manor' and 'William Morris's bedroom at Kelmscott Manor', and four drawings of May.

Mary first studied art at the Leicester School of Art, followed by a period of time studying etching and engraving at the Royal College of Art and private tuition from Hubert von Herkomer. To improve and develop her work, Mary travelled widely on the continent, spending some time with May Morris, in Florence and Majorca, and some time with her sister, Eleanor, in Athens. Mary went on to exhibit her work at the Royal Academy (from 1896 to 1924), the Paris Salon, the Royal Society of Painters, Etchers and Engravers,
of which she became an elected member in 1900, and at several other leading London galleries. Seeking sisterly support, she also became a member of the Society of Women Artists from 1914 to 1956.

In addition to the William Morris Gallery, several other museums and art galleries hold copies of Mary’s work in their collections. These include the Victoria and Albert Museum, the National Gallery of Toronto, and Leicester Museum and Art Gallery.

Mary was also a member of the Leicester Society of Artists where several of her works were exhibited, including three examples when she was 91 years old. Several of her paintings have been sold at London Auction Houses in recent years, including a watercolour, entitled ‘A Still Life with Honesty and Chinese Lanterns’, which was dated 1888. Mary died in Leicester, at the age of 94, on 29th November 1961.

As for the others on the photograph, there are three people that it has not been possible to identify: Annie Evans because the commonness of her name makes accurate identification difficult, Miss Fawcett because her forename is not given and lastly the person who has been hatched out, possibly by Charles Dickson, simply does not have a name.

The other mystery, which is quite intriguing, is why were so many of the pupils and teachers looking in a different direction to that of the camera?

If anyone has further knowledge of the people who appear in the photographs I would be most pleased to hear from you.

References:
1. Information given by Caroline Wessel.
2. Agnes Archer Evans, In Memoriam Anna Chrysogon Beale (Cheltenham Ladies’ College Archive) p.6.
5. Ibid.
8. Ibid. p.43.
9. Ibid.
11. The will of Elizabeth Maude Guinness, 30th September, 1960.
13. Part of a pupil project about vice–principals of Cheltenham Ladies’ College (Cheltenham Ladies’ College Archive).
15. Ibid.
17. Ibid. (1885).
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"What is the meaning of this Germanic barbarity?" - the Stoney Stanton Tympanum

Bob Trubshaw

The Stoney Stanton tympanum, now over the north door to the chancel, but originally over the main (south or west) doorway. There is no clear evidence as to why there is a vertical slot. There are no parallels for this being original and it is the author’s view that this is a fairly recent modification to take a bracket supporting a lantern over the doorway.

The entry for Stoney Stanton in the first edition of Nikolaus Pevsner’s *The Buildings of England: Leicestershire and Rutland* starts:

Norman tympanum now over [north] doorway of the chancel. A very odd representation. On the [left] an ox (lamb?) and behind it a bishop with crozier and blessing with raised hand. The ox attacks a dragon (is attacked by a dragon?). On the dragon perches an eagle, and from the [right] a second dragon attacks the first. What is the meaning of this Germanic barbarity?

Pevsner does not answer his own query and although Elizabeth Williamson, the editor of the second edition, amends the final sentence to ‘What can it all mean?’, she too leaves it as a rhetorical question. However, the stonemason depicted what must have been an exciting story that would have been readily understood by his contemporaries. So what can be sensibly said about the meaning of this splendid sculpture?
The protagonists comprise a man, three animals - one clearly mythical - and a large bird. Williamson refines Pevsner’s description to:

On the [left] an ox (?) and behind it a bishop with crozier and blessing right hand. The ox attacks a dragon (lion?) whose head is drawn back. From the [right] a wyvern attacks it and an eagle perches on it.

Clearly there is some doubt over the ox, and given that such beasts would be depicted with horns, it is unconvincing that the left-hand beast is an ox. One possible explanation for Pevsner’s interpretation is that this was influenced by the emblems of the Evangelists - whereby a lion, ox, eagle and angel signify Mark, Luke, John and Matthew respectively. However, as the scene on the Stoney Stanton tympanum does not fit representations of the Evangelists, there is little reason to suppose the left-hand figure is an ox. The more obvious candidates are a large dog or feline - perhaps a lioness or leopard, allowing for the probability that the stonemason would have seen neither alive and would be copying other depictions. With reference to the wyvern, the Stoney Stanton tympanum. Detail of the left hand figures. The animal has been suggested as being an ox or lamb, but is more likely a large dog, lioness or leopard. Behind it is a figure, possibly a bishop or saint, holding a crozier or similar.

Although this menagerie of monsters is unique to the Stoney Stanton tympanum, there are parallels at Parwich and Hognaston, two near-adjacent villages in Derbyshire. However there the Lamb of God, or Agnus Dei, is a prominent motif and the accompanying creatures are less Otherworldy – note the eponymous ‘hog’ at Hognaston. However the backward-turned head of the right-hand beast at Parwich, perhaps a lion, closely parallels the central creature at Stoney Stanton. Also, common to all three carvings is a bird (two birds at Hognaston).

The only other similar tympanum is at Little Paxton in Cambridgeshire. Although this too has a bishop and assorted animals, the scene here is dominated by the wheel cross which is now shown separated from the Lamb of God. The animals seem domesticated, whilst the bird has flown away. Here, it looks like the Lamb of God has been transformed into two lambs (or sheep), one either side of the cross, and both kneeling in deference to the symbol of God. If this interpretation is correct, then the Agnus Dei has inspired a visual reference to the description of the Nativity in the apocryphal Gospel of St James, where the ox and ass are described as joining Mary and the shepherds in kneeling by the manger where the infant Jesus lay. (1)

All four tympana incorporate at least two motifs found on the others, but none of the motifs are found on all four. Arithmetically, the count is: bishop (3), one or two birds (3), Lamb of God or prominent wheel cross (3), backward-facing ‘lion’ (2), hog/pig (2), and possible dogs (2). Of these, the Stoney Stanton carving does not share the Lamb of God/wheel cross or the hog/pig.
Leicestershire Historian 2010

Parwich tympanum includes a Lamb of God, with another lamb/sheep-like creature facing and a pig (hog) and bird above. The backward-facing lion-like beast on the right appears to have two large leaves at the end of its tail but as the carving is somewhat damaged in this area then other interpretations are possible, including the ‘leaves’ being the wings of a dragon.

The tympanum at Hognaston, Derbyshire with birds, Lamb of God, bishop, hog, dog? and (incomplete) biting beasts.

Little Paxton tympanum with the wheel cross dominating. This is flanked with two kneeling animals (probably lambs or sheep), with a bishop and what may be a horse completing the composition.
Such tympana would have originally been painted, perhaps quite garishly, and in a pre-literate society the decoration of a church was intended to clearly communicate well-known Christian parables and legends, usually Biblical but sometimes taken from the lives of the saints. The nearest Biblical story approximating to the Stoney Stanton carving is Daniel in the lion’s den, but even if we take the left-hand and central beasts to both be lions, this fails to explain the wyvern and the large bird.

We can discount the Stoney Stanton bird being the dove of the Holy Trinity as this iconography is not found in Norman carvings. Also, the bird looks too threatening, and whilst Pevsner and Williamson suggest the bird is an eagle, alternatively it could be an ominous raven or crow. In Old English and early medieval literature such birds are thought of as Otherworldly messengers and bearers of omens, with the early Christian authorities in England issuing repeated edicts against practicing divination from watching the flight patterns of birds or by listening to their cries. The need for these recurrent decrees suggests that such practices remained part of ‘popular culture’ for many centuries. Indeed, in a curious example of imposing a Christian veneer on such practices, the prophet Daniel has been credited with inventing the interpretation of divinatory dreams of birds. While this might be thought to support the interpretation of the Stoney Stanton tympanum as Daniel in the lion’s den, the birds in the Derbyshire carvings are clearly not part of a depiction of Daniel.

What we have here then are examples in these carvings of the intention to supplant earlier pre-Christian ideas about birds with Christian ideas. Examples of this Christianising of pre-Christian bird portents can also be frequently discerned in the hagiographies of the early saints. Prominent among these is the account of St Cuthbert who persuades a sea eagle to change its ways and defer to the needs of the saint by feeding him with fish. On the continent, St Desiderius of Vienne and his companions also benefited from an eagle willing to drop them food, whilst St Servatius of Tongres, St Bertoul of Flanders, St Lutwin and St Medard were all protected by eagles acting as either an umbrella or a sunshade. However, we should not take all this too literally, as the birds form a cross-like shape in the sky, symbolically protecting the saint from the demons who in the early medieval worldview, mostly lived in the space between the earth and the moon. Other saints who benefited from birds after martyrdom, included St Vincent, St Vitus and St Stanislaus of Cracow, whose bodies were protected by one or more eagles from dogs and other carrion-eating beasts.

The eagles which feature in these lives of the saints appear to be clearly borrowed from pre-Christian worldviews but with new meanings superimposed on their previous divinatory significance. In Anglo-Saxon England, ravens seemed to share with eagles such auspicious associations, and even today popular folklore still holds that Britain is safe from invasion so long as ravens reside at the Tower of London.

However, if we look further afield to Europe to a gold bracteate from Skrydstrup in Denmark, we have what appears to be the clearest pre-Christian precedent and explanation for the events depicted on the Stoney Stanton carving to date.

Bracteates were produced between c.400 to c.800 AD and were worn as protective amulets. The Skrydstrup bracteate is thought to show either Odin or Tyr, with a wolf, stag, intertwined snakes and two birds. Scandinavian legends which support the Odin theory, as retold by Snorri Sturluson in the thirteenth century, tell how there were two ravens who sat on Odin’s shoulders and who spoke into his ears with all the news they saw or heard. The ravens’ names were Hugin (thought) and Munin (memory). According to legend, Odin sent out the ravens at dawn to fly over all the world and they would return later the same day at dinner-time, bringing Odin knowledge about many events. The legend can either be taken at face value or could be regarded as a disguised reference to divination through observing the flight of birds. However, the central figure on the bracteate could alternatively be a depiction of Tyr, since the way in which the central figure’s hand is in the mouth of the wolf, recalls the legend of Tyr who sacrificed a hand to the wolf Fenir. Consequently, whilst the figure on the
Skrydstrup bracteate could be either Odin or Tyr, or a merging of both, it is clearly a depiction of a deity amidst assorted animals, suggesting the legends were familiar to the maker and owner of the bracteate.

If we acknowledge attempts by early Christianity to over-write existing legends such as the Germanic and Scandinavian ones referred to here (7), then it is feasible that a version of the legend depicted in the bracteate with a saint or bishop supplanting the Odin/Tyr figure (and a different exegesis), had entered popular or 'folk' Christianity by the late eleventh or early twelfth century, and turns up in this guise on the tympanum at Stoney Stanton, the bird having lost any association with divinatory powers, although it appears to remain an 'auspicious' presence, whilst the bishop or saint draws upon the power of God to quell the quarrelsome demonic beasts around him. (8)

While the full meaning of 'this Germanic barbarity' remains unclear, the pre-Christian bracteate seems to be the oldest of what might be thought to be a 'series' of five surviving images, with the Stoney Stanton tympanum continuing the chronology into the Christian era. The Agnus Dei of the Parwich and Hognaston carvings seems to represent a slightly later stage in the christianisation of the legend, with the Little Paxton carving perhaps following shortly after.

References and Notes:
1. The sheep are described as being motionless rather than kneeling, so if the Little Paxton scene is a reference to St James' account, then it is an 'adapted' one.
4. If all this sounds remote from modern thinking, then bear in mind that many people today know – even if they do not 'believe in' – such auspicial aphorisms as ‘one for sorrow, two for joy, three for a girl, four for a boy, five for silver, six for gold, seven for a secret that must never be told’ (and numerous variants for up to twenty birds) to be repeated when sighting magpies – close cousins of ravens and crows.
6. There is also a legend which tells that Odin lost an eye in return for gaining the wisdom of the runes, again, a reference to divination.
8. This may also be a precursor to the well-known legend of St Michael slaying the dragon (as depicted in the splendid, but somewhat later, tympanum at Hallaton) or may be the only evidence for a different legend which is not otherwise known. Such legends would not be a part of formal Christian teaching (and thus are not to be found in the surviving Old English literature, although so little has survived that we can only guess what might have been written down at the time) and would be swept aside by later medieval parables and preaching.

Gold bracteate (amulet) from Skrydstrup, Denmark, depicting Odin or Tyr with a wolf, stag, intertwined snakes and two birds. Drawing by Lindsay Kerr. (With acknowledgement to S. Pollington, Leechcraft, Anglo Saxon Books, 2000, p. 484).
Today, Rothley's Church of England Primary School has the modern status of 'Controlled'. This means that whilst Leicestershire County Council foots all the bills, the Council shares control with the parish church in small but significant ways. This includes the Vicar having the first right to be Chairman of the Board of Governors, whilst the Parochial Church Council has the right to nominate two foundation governors. The P.C.C. can also put up parent governors, which it does. In practice these arrangements mean a very subtle but deep influence over the school's ethos and standards.

Some one hundred and seventy years earlier in 1836, the motivation to have a church-oriented ethos over the early development of elementary education in Rothley was at the top of the agenda at Rothley's vicarage. In June of that year William Acworth had been installed as Rothley's Vicar by the patron, Thomas Babington, of Rothley Temple. Acworth was already well-known to Babington as the curate across the Soar at Cossington, where he had been serving under Babington's son John, who was the Rector there. Thomas Babington, now 78, motivated by the feeling that he had not done enough for the education of the village children of Rothley, laid a charge on William Acworth as he offered him the living: Start a National School in the Village.

Aworth took up residence in the commodious vicarage at the side of Rothley church, and set about carrying out his patron's wishes. On 1st March 1837 he applied to sign the school project into Union with the National Society for Promoting the Education of the Poor in the Principles of the Established Church. Acworth committed his scheme using these words:

Having joined the National School System, a month later, on 1st April 1837, Acworth applied for Grant Aid for the school from the Society, and through the Society to the Lords of the Treasury for the available Government Grant. He pitched his words as follows:
Rothley is a populous village containing more than 1000 inhabitants. There have been two full services in the parish church every Lord's Day for many years, both graciously and faithfully performed, and yet there is in the village more than ordinary profanity and immorality.

This is I believe mainly owing to the absence of religious education among all & lapses of the youthful part of the population. There is one inefficient endowed school, and 3 other daily schools in which children are instructed at the expense of their parents. But on the Lord's Day their children either attend no school or the one which their parents prefer. The chief means of improving the state of the parish would be the establishment of a good school.

Acworth had a long struggle to achieve the building of the school. He became exasperated by his encounter with the bureaucracy of it all, the paucity of the grants, and the unwillingness of his parishioners to offer any more help other than the cartage of materials.

He also had to deal with the Hickling Endowed School, begun in 1683. In this letter to the National Society dated 31st December 1839 Acworth shares his exasperation in these words:

Rev Sir

I am greatly obliged by the information sent me in yours of the 26th Ultimo that the Lords of H M Treasury have at length made me a grant of £69 in aid of my new buildings.

By enquiring as you have done in a previous letter whether the endowment for education in this parish could not be considered more availing than it is at present. I am sure that you do not mean to say that I have been wanting in personal enthusiasm to render it so.

The truth is that when I became incumbent about two years ago, I found the existing school and its endowments of about £14 per annum in the hands of one of the greatest profligates of the village, and that, of the 3 Trustees -- two were I fear infidels who never attend any place of worship, and the other is a Huntingtonian who has for many years gone every Lord's Day to Leicester to hear a very high Calvinistic preacher.

I have managed to buyout the Master and have prevailed with the Trustees to allow us to appoint a Master who is a worthy young man and a member of our Church. The result has been upon the whole satisfactory -- but I am obliged to act with extreme caution as the Dissenters here are of very vinegary temperament -- and moreover there is at present and has been for some time past so much perversity among my people who are principally employed in the manufactory of stockings, that nothing short of a compulsory enactment of the legislature would induce many parents to send their children to school while they can earn at home from 1/- to 2/- a week.

I am sure I can say that I am very anxious to establish an efficient school but mutiny when the difficulties in my way stare me in the face. I am ready in despair to throw up my incumbency and to fly to that boundless contiguity of shade after which the gentle spirit of Cowper sighed.

The Revd. Richard Burton, a towering Victorian figure. He came to Rothley as curate in 1858, and became Vicar there in 1869 just as the crisis to double the size of the National School, or face a Board School on the rates came. Burton also restored the church in 1877 and is shown here standing in the doorway of the new Vestry. He also became the first chairman of the new Civil Parish Council in 1894. He died in 1909 and is one of the last four people to be interred in the churchyard.
Thirty years after Acworth’s appointment his school was booming. By 1869, under its then incumbent, Richard Burton, MA, JP, the 38 foot by 22 foot schoolroom was bursting at the seams. Its business model was working well with regular subscriptions from the landed yeomen and gentry, small weekly attendance payments from the parents, and some government grant aid. But all across the country overcrowding in schools and lack of facilities was widespread. W. E. Forster was also actively pursuing these issues, and the famous Statute of 1870 named after him which made education compulsory and laid down the opportunity for every child to freely receive an elementary education, also laid down an ultimatum for voluntary schools like Rothley. ‘Provide new and enough facilities for the children of your area within six months or have a compulsory School Board imposed on your area’.

The School Board idea was anathema to Richard Burton. After 11 years as Curate in Rothley he had just succeeded to the Incumbency. The School Board route would mean that school building capital would come in the form of a government loan to be amortised over 50 years by an annual charge on new local rates. Moreover, for Burton it would mean a loss of control over the curriculum to the Board, whilst the ability to instruct the pupils in the Principles of the Established Church would slip out of the hands of the Vicar and the existing School Managers.

Consequently, Burton applied to the National Society for a grant. In order to provide the much-needed facilities, he proposed in his application to buy the two cottages adjoining the existing school and throw them onto the demolished party wall of the existing building to double the size of the original classroom space. But he added a very telling comment in a postscript to his application letter: ‘we all want to escape a rate school’.

But pride and practicality inflated the aspirations and the price. Within a project total cost of £499 7s 11d Burton hired top Leicester architect Joseph Goddard who had no truck with throwing together cottages. Instead, Goddard demolished them and put a splendid Victorian frontage across both the old and new builds.

Burton wanted people to know that he had avoided the Rate School, so he added a street-side carved embellishment ‘The National School 1871, Revd R Burton, MA, Vicar’, thus declaring to the world his part in the triumph.

For three decades Burton played his part in the delivery of the church-related curriculum. However, by 1901, the new County Education Authorities were delivering a new ‘expand or hand over to a Board’ ultimatum. Burton was ailing and out of energy for a new fight. Moreover, Frederick Merttens, the new Lord of the Manor at Rothley Temple, would not support a solution involving another voluntary whip-round. But rescue was at hand.

Robert Frewen Martin of The Brand, champion of church schools in Leicestershire, and Sophia Herrick of Beaumanor, organized the proverbial whip-round and donations of land for the building of a new School Room on Mountsorrel Lane, using ‘keeping out the rate school’ as their rallying cry, and so the Rate School was kept at bay, and the Church kept control of its special agenda in the school.

The situation was repeated in 1913 and again in 1928. On these occasions other local worthies kept the voluntary dream alive, raising money for further extensions on the Mountsorrel Lane site.

Thus we have a brief insight into the history of today’s Rothley school with its Controlled Status, and the name Church of England School firmly embedded in its title. William Acworth and Richard Burton would be proud of the long term outcome of their early efforts to ‘keep the rate school out’.

The name plate of the modern Rothley School, bearing the evidence in its name that the ‘rate school’ was kept out.
Guide books for the inquiring visitor started to appear in the late eighteenth century, as people began to travel more and acquired a fresh interest in architecture and history. They were published for the spa towns and newly fashionable seaside resorts, then more surprisingly perhaps, also for the industrial towns.

Leicester has the distinction of being one of the first of the industrial towns to have a guide book, this being *A Walk through Leicester* by Susanna Watts, published anonymously in 1804. The printer and publisher was Thomas Combe, a Leicester bookseller and proprietor of the town’s principal circulating library. Although the guide was intended primarily as *A Guide to Strangers*, there was also ‘a wish that it may not be unacceptable to those who are at home’, a theme often repeated in guide books.

There were no illustrations, but it included a plan of Leicester. A second edition appeared in 1820 and there was a reprint of the first edition in 1902. A further facsimile reprint was published in 1967 by Leicester University Press with an introduction by Professor Jack Simmons who called the original edition ‘one of the earliest competent guide-books ever written to any of the major towns of England’.

In the county, Thomas Wayte, an Ashby bookseller and postmaster, led the way by publishing *A Descriptive and Historical Guide to Ashby-de-la-Zouch and the Neighbourhood* in 1831, which included a number of attractive engravings. The town was already a flourishing spa, with its Ivanhoe Baths, Hastings (later Royal) Hotel, Bath Grounds, and lodgings for visitors, its fame further boosted by the publication of Sir Walter Scott’s novel *Ivanhoe* in 1819. In the following decades, Ashby also became a destination for some of Thomas Cook’s excursionists, with the opening of the railway between Leicester and Burton-on-Trent in 1849.

Coincidentally, one of the next significant publications after Wayte’s came from Thomas Cook. Cook had moved to Leicester from Market Harborough in the autumn of 1841, partly due to ‘a good deal of rowdymis directed against those who professed temperance’ in Market Harborough. Having given up his woodturning business, he concentrated on printing and the sale of books. His activities as an excursion agent were to follow. From his address at number 1 King Street, Leicester, he printed and published *A Guide to Leicester* in 1843. As well as containing both historical and practical information, this also included a directory and almanack. Another edition, optimistically entitled *The Annual Guide to Leicester*, which also contained a directory with a view to trade and business as well as serving visitors’ interests, appeared in 1849 but no follow-on editions were published.

Susanna Watts’ idea of a guide book which was based on a walk or series of walks, was adopted by other writers including James Thompson, a local historian and later the editor and proprietor of the *Leicester Chronicle*. Thompson used the idea in his own guide, *The Handbook of Leicester*, first published in 1844. This consisted of ‘five walks, which may be taken in successive mornings, or according to the leisure of the visitor’. There were at least two more editions, the third one in 1859. The few illustrations included one of ‘King Richard the Third’s House [the Blue Boar Inn] as standing 20 years ago’.

A short space below the church [All Saints] is the spot where formerly stood the North Gates; here a narrow lane, which once obtained the name of St. Clements, from its leading to that church, but which is now degraded into Deadmans Lane, is the passage to a Meeting House belonging to the Society of Quakers. The street continuing in a right line, now takes the name of

NORTH-GATE STREET

and conducts us to a bridge over the Canal beyond which is the North or St. Sunday’s Bridge. This is an elegant stone structure, erected in 1796 and when viewed from the Abbey meadows below, it forms with the trees and slopes beyond it a very pleasing scene. Its three arches are small segments of a larger circle.

At the foot of the bridge in an area enclosed by a low wall, and distinguished by a few scattered grave-stones, the church-yard of St. Leonard meets the eye. The church of which no trace remains, was demolished by the Parliament Garrison in the reign of Charles the first; as from its convenient situation it might have covered the approach of the enemy, and given them the command of the bridge. The parish still remains distinct, and the occasional duty is performed by the minister of St. Margaret’s.

Susanna Watts’ *A Walk through Leicester*, (1804).
Thompson’s Handbook of Leicester, (1859), King Richard III’s house.

Whilst older histories and antiquities concentrated on the dynastic and genealogical aspects of the country houses, as these houses became more accessible and visited, so too developed the publication of country house guide books. Published diaries also served as guide books. Well-known travel diarists included the Hon. John Byng, later 5th Viscount Torrington, who on one of his Midland tours recorded his visit to Belvoir Castle in 1789, where he found everything was ‘in neglect, and Ruin’. However, by the time that Thomas Cook took an excursion party there by horse-drawn carriage in 1848, the recast Castle was considered to be ‘by far the most superb architectural ornament of which Leicestershire can boast’. Cook compiled and published a Handbook of Belvoir Castle in connection with the visit. It was not Cook’s first publication of this kind; for he had previously published handbooks for trips to Liverpool and the North Wales coast, and to Scotland. In the preface to the Belvoir Castle handbook, he acknowledged his debt both to William White’s recently published Directory of Leicestershire, and to James Thompson’s Handbook of Leicester. He also included a precautionary note headed ‘Hints to Visitors’, regarding their behaviour some ‘rude folk from Lincolnshire’ had disgraced themselves on a previous visit - as well as descriptions of the route from Leicester and places of interest near the castle. This was almost certainly the first guide book ever produced for a Leicestershire country house.

A few years later, the arrival of the railway at Ashby may have encouraged William and John Hextall, who were also local booksellers, to issue their History and Description of Ashby-de-la-Zouch in 1852. This contained contributions from a number of local people including James Thompson, and combined a history of the town with a guide book. Among the illustrations was a frontispiece showing Market Street, drawn by the artist George Gregory.

The poet William Wordsworth visited Leicestershire on a number of occasions as a guest of the Beaumonts of Coleorton, and was much impressed by the scenery of Charnwood Forest.

In 1860, Frederick T. Mott, a Leicester wine and spirit merchant and amateur botanist, compiled A Guide to the Country Lodgings in the Neighbourhood of Leicester, Loughborough and Ashby-de-la-Zouch, including Charnwood Forest, followed by Charnwood Forest: its air, its scenery, its natural curiosities, antiquities and legends, which by 1868 had reached its third edition.

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The brothers John and Thomas Spencer, who had a bookshop and circulating library in Leicester Market Place, also published a guide to Charnwood Forest, which they described as 'by far the healthiest resort in the Midlands'.

**Spencers' New Guide to Charnwood Forest, to the Monastery of Mount S. Bernard, and All Other Objects of Interest in the Neighbourhood.**

*Fourth Edition.*

Leicester: J. AND T. SPENCER, And all Booksellers.

Spencers' New Guide to Charnwood Forest, (1875?), title page.

This went through a number of editions; the fourth, called Spencers' New Guide to Charnwood Forest, to the Monastery of Mount S. Bernard, and All Other Objects of Interest in the Neighbourhood (1875?), and contained many local advertisements, including ones for lodgings for 'artists, tourists and picnic parties'. Like many Victorian guide books, it included notes on botany and geology.

Spencers' New Guide to Charnwood Forest, (1875?), advertisements aimed at artists, tourists and picnic parties.

This was one of a number of local guide books which the Spencer brothers issued during the 1860s, 1870s and 1880s. Their best known one is probably Spencers' Illustrated Handy Guide to Leicester, the third edition of which appeared in 1878. Although largely a reprint of the 1868 edition, it had a supplement 'bringing the information down to the year 1878' and which described the 'very great additions, improvements and alterations' to have taken place in Leicester meanwhile. Historically, this publication is particularly valuable for the illustrations and descriptions of the industrial premises which became such a feature of the town centre, and by the time of the 1888 edition, photographic illustrations were also included.

Guide books also appeared for other Leicestershire towns. The Rev William G. Dimock Fletcher's Historical Handbook to Loughborough received many favourable reviews when published in 1881. It 'will be a boon to all visitors to Loughborough, and to the inhabitants will be
Spencers’ Illustrated Handy Guide to Leicester, (1878), advertisement for Evans & Stafford’s, partly aimed at railway travellers.

invaluable’, said one reviewer, with fellow local historians, the Rev John H. Hill and William Kelly, being equally appreciative.

The following year in 1882, Frederick W. Bottrill, who described himself as a ‘machine printer and stationer’ published something similar for the south of the county with his Illustrated Handbook of Lutterworth, with Notes on the Neighbouring Villages.

Conferences and annual meetings held in Leicester also stimulated the publication of guide books. The British Medical Association held its annual meeting at Leicester in 1905, and a Guide to Leicester and Neighbourhood was published in connection with the meeting. The guide included much practical information as well as walks round ancient and modern Leicester. The BMA was followed two years later by the British Association for the Advancement of Science, and a revised, enlarged edition called A Guide to Leicester and District was produced, in which the sections on geology, flora and fauna and the bibliography were greatly expanded. Both guides were edited by Mrs G. Clarke Nuttall of St Albans, and were printed by Edward Shardlow, a well known firm of local printers. They were illustrated, and had indexes and maps, which by now showed the routes of Leicester’s new electric trams.

These two important meetings almost certainly prompted the enterprising John D. Horn, a former hosier and haberdasher who by this time was a toy and fancy goods dealer, with a ‘fancy bazaar’ in Carts Lane, to write and publish an Illustrated Guide to the Places of Interest in Leicester in 1905. He followed this by an Illustrated Guide to the Places of Interest in Leicestershire, Rutland and Northamptonshire in 1907. Both contained many advertisements, the 1905 edition showing numerous shop premises in Leicester. Costing only 3d and 4d, they were within reach of a large number of people.

When the British Association next met in Leicester in 1933, S. H. Skillington and Colin D. B. Ellis compiled a Historical Guide to the City of Leicester, which it was hoped would ‘be valued not only by our visitors but also by the general public of Leicester and Leicestershire’. The publisher was local bookseller Edgar Backus, and the volume was illustrated with photographs taken by Sydney W. A. Newton, who had been the official photographer for the building of the Great Central Railway in the 1890s. As well as general information, it included complementary chapters on old and modern Leicester and a town map.

London publishers had become increasingly interested in provincial guide books in the nineteenth century, as railways increasingly made places more accessible. One such publisher was John Murray, whose English Handbooks began to appear in 1851, which although neither particularly cheap nor containing illustrations, did have many excellent town and county maps. These were based on railway routes, and as well as historical, architectural and practical information, there were long introductions covering physical features and geology, communications and industrial resources, and as such they probably appealed as much to residents as to visitors. The Handbook for Travellers in Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire, Leicestershire and Staffordshire was first published in 1868. A third edition had appeared by 1892 and there were further reprints in 1904 and 1907, by which time the series had been sold to map publishers Edward Stanford.

Somewhat more popular and less expensive was the series of county guides published by the Edinburgh firm of Adam and Charles Black. Their Guide to Leicester and Rutland appeared in 1884. This had an introduction to the county and a plan of Leicester. Like Murray’s guides, the series was well-indexed and included a large number of hotel advertisements.
Methuen launched their *Little Guides* series in 1897. These had a distinctly antiquarian bias, with the emphasis on buildings which were pre-1700. Illustrated with photographs, they included county maps, and unlike those published by John Murray and A. & C. Black, were arranged alphabetically, thus ensuring 'that no place escapes mention'. For good measure, they also included indexes. Furthermore, their authors were named. The *Leicestershire and Rutland* volume, first published in 1912, was written by Alfred Harvey and Vernon Crowther-Beynon. Harvey was responsible for writing the Leicestershire section and Crowther-Beynon, who lived at Edith Weston, for Rutland. There were no advertisements, other than a list of the other titles in the series. A second edition appeared in 1924. The series was modernised and re-launched after the Second World War, but unfortunately Leicestershire had not been included in this later series by the time it was discontinued.

The noted *Buildings of England* series, published by Penguin Books, began life in 1951, and was something completely new. Intended as the counterpart to a well-known series of architectural guides published in Germany, it was founded by Nikolaus Pevsner, an art historian from Germany who settled in England in 1934. Work on the series began after the Second World War, based on library research and personal visits by the indefatigable Pevsner to all the buildings described. *Leicestershire and Rutland* was first published in 1960. An introduction outlining the architectural history of the county was followed by a gazetteer of towns and villages, with a selection of photographs, a county map, an architectural glossary, and indexes of artists and places. A second, revised and expanded edition, in the new larger format, by Nikolaus Pevsner and Elizabeth Williamson, with Geoffrey Brandwood, appeared in 1985.

In conclusion, the above-mentioned guide books, both historical and more recent, contribute not only to our wealth of published historical sources, but also to our enjoyment and understanding of the Leicestershire countryside and its towns today.

**Sources:**

3. J. D. Bennett, *Writing about Leicester: a local history booklist*, (Living History Unit, 2000).
Tributes to Dr Alan McWhirr given during the Memorial Evensong at the Church of St James the Greater, Leicester, Sunday 20th June 2010.

Alan McWhirr. 50 years celebrations of teaching archaeology in the University of Leicester, 2008. (With acknowledgement to the University of Leicester).

Welcome by the Vicar of St James the Greater, Canon Glynn Richerby.

I t does not seem all that long since I presented Alan with a John Flower print of a Leicester scene on the occasion of his retirement from the School of Archaeology and Ancient History in the University of Leicester - he had developed a considerable interest in topographical drawings and was working on this until his final illness and recent sad death. His loss is felt greatly by very many people and he did so much in his life, but I just want to talk about his contribution to the world of archaeology. I first met Alan when he taught me about Roman archaeology on the University of Leicester's Certificate Course in Archaeology at Vaughan College in the early 1970s, where he was employed as an occasional tutor for the University’s Department of Adult Education. Although I am primarily an historical and industrial archaeologist, I retain a great interest in the Roman world as a result of Alan’s enthusiasm and have visited as many Roman sites in Europe and the Middle East as I have been able to fit in.

Alan was almost predestined to become an archaeologist by being born in St Albans and he became involved with the Roman site of Verulamium as a schoolboy, digging there with Sheppard Frere before coming to the University of Leicester in 1957. The General Degree which was then offered at Leicester enabled Alan to take not just maths and chemistry, which he went on to teach at Gateway School, but also archaeology, then in its infancy in the History Department of the University. As Alan himself said in the book celebrating 50 years of teaching archaeology in the University, which he, myself and Neil Christie put together for our anniversary in 2008, the mere eight weeks he had had of digging experience with Sheppard Frere led to his - naturally - being put in charge of one of the first student field courses on a Roman villa at Tixover in Rutland.

Professor Marilyn Palmer takes up the story …
Although earning his living as a teacher after graduation, and so only able to dig in the holidays, Alan retained his interest in Roman archaeology and went on to direct excavations in Cirencester from 1965 until the late 1970s, a project which had many connections with the Verulamium digs - the new Cirencester Excavation Committee even acquired many of their wheelbarrows from St Albans. The real triumph for Alan came with the excavation of the Beeches Road site in Cirencester, where he directed the excavation of a substantial town house of the late Roman period, which included the iconic Hare Mosaic, now used as the logo of the Corinium Museum. Working with him were several people who were to become eminent in the archaeological world, including Martin Millett, Christopher Catling, David Viner, Tim Darvill and David Brown, some of whom are here tonight. Alan also played a major role in bringing these important excavations published, cajoling a succession of project grants from various public bodies to bring the Cirencester Excavations series of volumes into life and eventually to completion. This required playing a long and patient game, as the six volumes appeared over no less than a quarter of century from 1982. The final one was dedicated to Alan, and presented to him at the Society of Antiquaries in London in December 2008 'in recognition of his service and commitment to the archaeology of Cirencester'. Alan’s frequent visits to Cirencester usually required a long round trip from Leicester of some 150 miles, about which he more than once recalled the contemplative nature of a drive down the Fosse Way, that great highway of the early Roman period, and still today not entirely devoid of its own special character.

Alan gained his PhD for his work on the Roman brick and tile industry in Britain and wrote widely on this topic. Following early retirement from what had become Leicester Polytechnic, he joined what was then the Department of Archaeology of the University of Leicester in 1988 on a part-time basis - the same year I also came to Leicester from Loughborough University. Alan was always an inspired teacher: I well remember one occasion when he decided to give a lecture on Roman military practice in a suit of Roman armour. He clanked across the campus, but found when he got to the lecture theatre that his voice echoed round inside the helmet and he had to take it off! This was well remembered by students years afterwards!

When Graeme Barker and the Department of Archaeology decided to initiate distance learning courses in archaeology and heritage in 1996, the obvious person to ask to take it on was Alan McWhirr since he had so many contacts in the archaeological world and was well known for getting things done, as he had shown in Cirencester! He showed enormously innovative skills in producing distance learning materials for a variety of postgraduate courses in Archaeology and Heritage, followed by PhDs by distance learning and then, to meet a growing demand, for Certificates in Archaeology. He made the best possible use of his extensive publishing skills in producing attractively designed materials, but also demonstrated considerable initiative in the ways in which the courses were marketed. The students poured in, and those of us who were asked to write modules for the course had to work very rapidly to meet the demand but always did so as none of us ever wanted to let Alan down! As a result, the School of Archaeology and Ancient History in the University of Leicester is the world leader in archaeology courses by distance learning. Alan also initiated the School’s important Monograph Series in the early 1990s, doing much of the editing, production and marketing himself.

Alan also used his archaeological knowledge to great effect in his work for the Leicestershire Archaeological Advisory Committee, set up after the establishment of the Leicestershire Archaeological Unit (LAU) in the mid-1970s to advise the Leicestershire Museums, Arts and Records Service on archaeological matters. When the county archaeological unit was dissolved in 1995, Alan was also largely instrumental, with Graeme Barker, in persuading the University of Leicester to take it on. He therefore helped to establish the University of Leicester Archaeological Services or ULAS, which has played a major role in archaeological work in the city and county ever since. For some years, he acted as the Secretary to Management Board of ULAS and his advice and knowledge is sadly missed by the staff of ULAS, many of whom are here tonight. Alan also served on the Conservation Advisory Panel to Leicester City Council.
and he was always a champion of wider conservation issues in the City and County.

Alan was always willing to give his time to speak to local groups and take them round sites and museums in the county: In 2009, he led over one hundred people around Burrough Hill in Leicestershire as part of the Festival of British Archaeology, a site where he had worked on excavations in the 1960s. We shall sadly miss his presence in this year’s Festival and we are all having to come to terms with just how much he did. Personally, I really miss meeting him on the exercise machines in Cannons Health Club near the University early in the morning and having a quick coffee afterwards, as well as chatting to him in the University’s Senior Common Room at lunchtime. I also miss not having him to rely on for knowing just who to ask about matters to do with the city and the county of Leicestershire. These are just a very few words but we in the University will be holding a longer tribute to commemorate Alan’s work on Saturday October 23rd and I do hope that those of you who would like to contribute to this would get in touch with me via the University so that we can make this a full and meaningful tribute to someone who will be very sadly missed, not just for what he did but for who he was. We in the University offer our very sincere condolences to Helen and his family.

Professor Marilyn Palmer

Today, I have been asked to list and encapsulate the assistance and direction which Dr Alan McWhirr gave and provided to the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society, founded in 1855, to the Victorian County History Project 2007-2010 and to the Society of Antiquaries of London 1970-2010.

His Royal Highness, the Duke of Gloucester, visits the LAH Society to celebrate its 150th anniversary, along with the Lord Mayor of Leicester, Cllr. Piara Singh Clair, and Alan, the Society’s Hon. Secretary, October 2004. (With acknowledgement to David Ramsey).

After an immensely successful archaeological excavation at Cirencester, Alan came to live at Leicester and gave his all to the County of Leicestershire.

He was for over 50 years, a key player of so many Leicestershire Societies and Committees and in the affairs of the Leicestershire Archaeological Society by filling different posts in the hierarchy of the Society. He also saved the local review the Leicestershire Historian, and by merging it with the Society, a popular outlet was obtained for the Society; this was supplemented by the Newsletter which has lived up to its reputation.

One of Alan’s many talents was to be able to produce some workman-like art work and type-set for flyers, reviews etc, and this not only saved the organisations much expense but, more accurately, reflected the real wish of the groups concerned.

His input has been tremendous in the revival of the Victoria County History and, as a result of his efforts, the working group hopes to appoint a co-ordinator later this year. He presented several reports to the Society of Antiquaries of London – all about Cirencester – and having been elected in 1970, he became a Member of the Council in 1976.

I realise that, by keeping this brief, I have had to skip so many facets of his life but, as we celebrate his very busy life, we pause to remember him as a valued friend and colleague and to offer his wife and family our sincere condolences. Leicester will never be the same without him, his passing leaves an enormous gap in so many fields and to misquote, I believe Thomas Hardy, ‘He was a good man and did well.’ May he rest in peace.

Squire Gerard De Lisle

Alan began broadcasting on BBC Radio Leicester soon after the station opened in 1967 and he rapidly became a well-known voice on our output. For many years he presented a weekly programme about local archaeology called Digging up the Past. In doing this he was following in the footsteps of that great populariser of archaeology, Sir Mortimer Wheeler. But he was also pre-figuring a programme like Time Team which makes archaeology fun as well as accessible to people who might not otherwise take an interest in it.

Alan was every presenter’s dream. Always enthusiastic, always well-informed, he spoke in beautifully organised paragraphs, the product of a well-stocked, clear mind. He rapidly became one of those people local radio comes to depend on and so, perhaps, take for granted: I mean the expert who can be relied upon to turn out at short notice and
often early in the morning to speak fluently and entertainingly on a subject, even when the presenter has only a dim idea of what it’s all about. I still recall an occasion on my morning show when Alan appeared before the microphone to talk about a dig in the city. I asked what I realised was a daft question even as the words left my mouth. There was a tiny pause, a wry smile crossed Alan’s features and he simply said: ‘Well, that’s a point of view,’ before providing one of his inimitably clear and engaging explanations of why the dig was significant and deepened our sense of the history of his adopted city.

I also have fond memories of a wonderful Breakfast programme back in the 90s. It was broadcast from a hot air balloon which took off from Abbey Park and then proceeded to drift over the city and out into the county. This was a bit of broadcasting which in these safety-conscious times would be unthinkable. Alan, needless to say, was in the basket dangling beneath the balloon, and in his element, along with presenter, engineer, pilot (or whatever he was called) and the Heath Robinsonish transmitting equipment. Alan’s contributions were superb. Prose poems describing the scene below, disquisitions on how history was written on the landscape, remarks on crop marks, stories connected with local history.... He painted the picture. You were THERE. That is the greatest compliment you can pay a broadcaster.

Alan was able to do all this because he saw no conflict or tension between the academy and the wider world. He was as happy dressed as a Roman legionary talking to children at a Jewry Wall Museum Open Day as he was giving an academic lecture or writing a learned paper. All of these activities were infused by an infectious enthusiasm which in turn was prompted by a feeling that history mattered. And in Alan’s book, the more people who felt like this the better.

Why did history matter to Alan? As I was preparing this tribute I came across something in a book by G. K. Chesterton (another enthusiast and populariser) which I suspect summed up Alan’s sense of history’s importance: ‘The disadvantage of men not knowing the past is that they do not know the present. History is the hill or high point or vantage, from which alone men see the town in which they live or the age in which they are living.’

For many years he also contributed to rugby commentaries (rugby was one of his passions) and to our religious output. On one memorable occasion he did not delete an expletive when he thought the microphone was closed. Sunday Breakfast programmes have never been quite the same since.

If I may speak personally in conclusion.... I will miss Alan greatly. Whenever we met we would go through an elaborate ‘Ah, Dr. Me Whirr!..... Ah, Dr. Florance!’ routine like two old crusty academics but with the bonus of hilarity. This would invariably be followed by gossip, family news, complaints about the council, all carried on with smiles and laughter. Brilliant academic though he was, his wisdom and knowledge was worn lightly. They in no sense made him intimidating. There was no one like him. If only we told people that and how much we value them before it becomes impossible face to face. But then, I have great confidence that Alan can hear the tributes being paid to him today. And I know he is enjoying them!

John Florance
The life of an Archdeacon is influenced for good or ill by the quality of the Chairman of the Diocesan Advisory Committee – the body that advises on all proposed changes and developments to the fabric of our Parish Churches. I count myself blessed to have had in Alan one of the very best, for it was a role in which all Alan’s gifts came together – his immense knowledge and expertise; his passion for antiquity and for the church; his wisdom, personality and faith.

The Bishop of Leicester, who is very sorry he can’t be here tonight, and I, celebrate Alan as an outstanding servant of this Diocese, its churches and its parishes. He knew when to move the committee on from unnecessary attention to what didn’t matter, and when to slow us down to focus on what did. He held together the riches of the past with the mission needs of the present and future, and when those were in tension he enabled people to identify a way forward. Memories flood back of site meetings across the Diocese where Alan would share his expertise, or his leadership of DAC visits where he would point out the riches in the places we visited before slipping out to take a picture of a rare tombstone or some other feature.

We enjoyed his company, his geniality, his consideration and his cheery ‘hello’ spoken, as one colleague on the DAC has put it, in his typically resonant tone. He taught us all whether by greeting me as a new Archdeacon with the gift of two books on the churches of Leicestershire, one his own compilation of the history of this church; or the wise mentoring he gave to our current DAC Secretary who speaks warmly of his friendship, kindness and the way he enabled her to develop professionally.

Equally significant was Alan’s contribution to the Leicestershire Historic Churches Trust. Given the Trust’s current vitality and impact it is hard to imagine or remember its parlous state in the early to mid-1980’s. Invited by Bishop Richard to become a Trustee Alan was soon not just an active Trustee but the Trust’s Chairman. Over the next two decades Alan led the Trust forward with the creation of the Annual Ride and Stride Day his main achievement. But there were Millennium Guides and much else besides, all undergirded by Alan’s knowledge, passion and photographs.

The plaque above the tomb of Sir Christopher Wren in St Paul’s Cathedral states – Reader, if you require a monument look around you. It is a fitting tribute to Alan for the churches of this Diocese bear witness to him – a repair here; a wise compromise there; a creative development or new facilities in so many places.

And all the time this immense and generous contribution to our Diocesan life was done with great modesty – a modesty I fear that meant that we didn’t always recognise the stature of the gift he was to us. But a gift he was, and I and colleagues know with great sadness what and who we have lost. Alan, as I have said, was an outstanding servant of the Diocese of Leicester, a faithful disciple of Christ, and for that we give thanks to God.

The Venerable Richard Atkinson

All that we have heard testifies to Alan as a lovely Christian man whose energy and commitment to the many causes he adopted was boundless. This occasion would be incomplete without hearing something of Alan’s involvement here, and that – despite his wide range of interests – he was primarily a family man.

As with so many people drawn to this church, Alan became involved when his son James joined the choir in 1978. He became quickly established and was made deputy churchwarden in 1984 and Churchwarden in 1987. Alan applied himself to the care and maintenance of our premises – a special concern he kept up tirelessly after his term of office as churchwarden ended in 1990. His knowledge of the interest of English Heritage and other amenity societies in our listed church building was invaluable when we set about the project of re-roofing the church in the late 1990’s – and more recently in getting the necessary permissions for an extension to house a new flight of stairs and a lift. Alan gave constant, almost daily attention to these church buildings, often calling early in the morning after he had been to the gym to make a thorough check of the premises. There’s a sense in which he expressed worship through practical care of the buildings. During the week he would make a list of small practical jobs that he and I might tackle together on a Saturday after Morning Prayer. How I miss those Saturday mornings and the opportunity to chat with him as we did jobs together! Medium- and long-term projects would be scheduled for contractors – with whom Alan would make all the necessary arrangements. He knew St James’s through and through – its features and its people.

As archivist, Alan carried the memory of our church, and published Century to Millennium – the story of the life of this church in its first hundred years. His talks about the history and significance of the church always drew large and appreciative audiences from beyond the congregation.

When it came to special services – such as the Advent Procession or the Annual Battle of Britain Thanksgiving service – Alan would be helpful to the uttermost in the background – giving close attention to the special arrangements and the subtle control of sound and light. So indispensable had Alan become that the running of our...
church seems unthinkable without him. He was committed
to the best of tradition and also keen to see new things
happen.

Having said all that in addition to previous tributes, Alan
was above all a loving husband of Helen and father to James
and Rachel. His grandchildren doted on him, although he
never saw the latest grandson born in Finland during his
illness. All four of his grandchildren are here this evening –
as we’ve been happily aware! Let us express gratitude to
Helen and her lovely family for their generosity in
ungrudgingly sharing Alan with the rest of us.

Alan was uncomplaining about the disease that struck him
down, and the complications that developed. He wanted no
special prayers for his recovery and was matter-of-fact about
the possibility of dying.

The deepest sympathy and support of all of us surrounds
Helen and the family in our shared sense of loss. We gain
strength from being together this evening, and draw
inspiration from Alan for the living out of our own lives.

May he rest in peace and rise in glory.

Canon Glynn Richerby
LEICESTERSHIRE AND RUTLAND: GENERAL

BALTI BRITAIN
Ziauddin Sardar

Ziauddin Sardar’s discussion of British Asian culture is a highly personal account interwoven with impressive historical detail. The book has three main strands: one is Sardar’s conversations with British Asians in London, Leicester, Glasgow, Birmingham and Oldham; the second is a description of his own life as a British Asian, including his adolescence in Hackney, his arranged marriage in Bhawanagar and his experience of bringing up his children in London; while the third strand focuses on the historic links between the Indian subcontinent and Britain. Using the combined insights offered by this material, Sardar reflects on, and gives an in-depth analysis of the nature and health of multiculturalism in Britain.

Sardar does not shy away from the challenging aspects of his topic. As well as trying to elucidate the term multiculturalism, he discusses at length the Oldham riots in 2001 and the London Transport bombings of July 2007, giving the reader insight into the reaction to these events within the British Asian community. However, although much of the book is serious discussion, more light-hearted sections make it an entertaining as well as an educational read. One memorable example of this is the chapter on Birmingham which includes a witty account of the Balti craze. Sardar’s largely positive chapter on Leicester opens the book and includes conversations with Kashmir Singh, a Punjabi taxi driver who came to Leicester in 1972, and Leicester’s former Asian Lord Mayor, Culdipp Singh Bhatti. This adds local interest for Leicester readers to an absorbing and readable book.

Siobhan Begley

CROOKED MILE
Ben Beazley

Crooked Mile is the first novel of Leicester historian Ben Beazley and it is an exciting and atmospheric thriller. The novel is set in the 1880s and the main characters are based in an imaginary Midlands town named Kelsford. The story opens with a robbery and a murder and we follow the efforts of the Kelsford police, in particular Inspector Tom Norton, to investigate the crime. Although Kelsford is not apparently Leicester, it seems to have much in common, and Leicester readers will enjoy references to places with familiar-sounding names such as Slate Street School and Flixton Canal. Life in Kelsford may seem provincial but beneath the surface, international intrigue impinges on the town. One character, Ruth Samuels, is involved with an organisation that helps persecuted Jews escape from Russia, while other local residents have links to the Irish Republican Brotherhood. Some of the action takes place in Kelsford and its local pubs and businesses, but the story also takes us to the East End of London and much further afield to Eastern Europe and New York. Beazley’s characters are well drawn, both Tom Norton and Ruth Samuels are engaging and the less savoury characters are memorable. The plot moves along at a satisfying pace and will keep readers absorbed until the end. This is an ideal book for a long journey or holiday reading and Beazley’s care with historical detail makes it an enjoyable read for both local historians and the general reader.

Siobhan Begley

ESDAILE’S RUTLAND MONUMENTS: WITH A DESCRIPTION OF BOTTESFORD CHURCH AND PARISH
Andrew Esdaile
Kessinger Publishing (reprinted 2009, originally published 1845), ISBN 9781104123833

We can really only applaud the recent growth in the reprinting of scarce, out of copyright, volumes. The value of Andrew Esdaile’s survey of church monuments at Bottesford, with brief descriptions of the surrounding parishes (including Belvoir Castle) lies now in its own antiquity. We are given a snapshot of Bottesford church, for example, prior to two restorations and a century and a half of alterations and losses. Esdaile’s descriptions and interpretations may be dated and his terminology often jars with modern usage, but this would be to miss the point – the reprint gives us valuable evidence of the Vale of Belvoir as it was seen in 1845. As the author rather presciently remarks: ‘Time we see is a destroyer of all things. If this Little Book should survive any Number of years, situations noticed in it may not remain as they are now, but have passed away like many which are recorded.’

Robin Jenkins
THE DRAWING MASTER: THE LIFE AND WORK OF WILMOT PILSBURY, RWS, 1840-1908
Christopher Halliday
The author, 2009, 134 pp, illus.

Wilmot Pilsbury’s forty-year career as a landscape watercolourist and art teacher was both active and productive. Initially based in London, Pilsbury came to Leicester in 1870 as head of the newly-formed School of Art, where day and evening classes were held for artisans and for women. Originally housed in unsuitable premises in Pocklington’s Walk, the school moved to purpose-built accommodation on New Walk, near the Museum, in 1876. This clear and well-written account of Pilsbury’s career, as educator and artist, is full of fascinating information, including details of the house built for him in Knighton Park Road. After ten years, Pilsbury left the School of Art to concentrate on his own developing career as a watercolour painter. His paintings, a number of which are reproduced in this book in colour, are very detailed by modern standards but nevertheless competent enough. Pilsbury’s importance for Leicestershire lies less in his paintings of local scenes, including Bradgate Park, than in his role as first head of the School (later College) of Art, which became part of Leicester Polytechnic, now De Montfort University. This thorough and readable account of Pilsbury’s life and work is complemented by a detailed bibliography, a full list of his exhibited works, and a list of his works now in museum collections – there are five of his paintings in Leicester Museum, New Walk.

John Hinks

THE HARBOROUGH HISTORIAN
No. 26, October 2009
Market Harborough Historical Society

The journal of the Market Harborough Historical Society is a model of how such publications ought to be: readable, well illustrated, informative and very attractively produced. This issue includes articles on, inter alia, the Revd Vivian Redlich of Little Bowden, martyred in New Guinea in 1942; West Langton Hall; and an anniversary perspective of Handel’s Messiah and its Church connections. Transport history is well served by articles on turnpike roads around Harborough and 200 years of the Harborough Canal – both with some fascinating illustrations. Essential reading for anyone with an interest in the history of this part of our diverse county.

John Hinks

AN ILLUSTRATED GUIDE TO THE PRINTED MAPS OF LEICESTERSHIRE, 1576-1900
Derek Deadman and Colin Brooks
Leicester, Landseer Press, 2010, 383 pp, illus. £35.00

There has recently been a great surge of interest in historic maps, with a major exhibition at the British Library, a number of television programmes and a spate of publications on this important subject. This study of the printed maps of Leicestershire is therefore very timely and is the first detailed list produced for many years. Descriptions include not only the more traditional forms of printed map but also ‘strip-maps’ (early predecessors of our modern road atlases), pioneering regional maps, and maps of Charnwood Forest. The informative text written by Derek Deadman is complemented by numerous photographs of maps by Colin Brooks. The latter are, unfortunately (but perhaps inevitably), reproduced in black and white, unless you wish to invest £85 in the limited edition of fifty copies with 114 coloured illustrations. The standard of production is more than adequate, although some of the maps (especially those of the whole county) are rather small. This will surely become the standard listing of local maps for many years – invaluable to historians and collectors alike.

John Hinks

IN SEARCH OF DANIEL LAMBERT
Philippa Massey

This small booklet was produced as a result of a lecture for the Stamford Museum in 2009. Philippa Massey begins the story by explaining why Daniel Lambert fascinated her from
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childhood after seeing his sock at Stamford museum and being told that at the age of six she could fit into it. The narrative starts with Lambert’s connection with Stamford: he died and was buried there and there was a hastily written obituary in the Stamford Times. Massey then dissects the rumour from the facts of the life of this remarkable man. Using contemporary sources such as newspapers, she builds a picture of a gentleman who was well regarded by his peers and could manipulate his own publicity. She dispels the myth of the man famous only for being large and reveals a person who was witty, charming and clever. The booklet is easy to read and well illustrated, often with images that have been created by the author. It will be of interest to those who are curious about such an iconic man and would like to know more about him.

Lois Edwards

LOCAL HISTORY ON THE GROUND
Tom Welsh

Many books have been written in recent years about how to ‘do’ local history. This one is unusual – and unusually useful – in being written by a professional physical geographer. Welsh’s perspective on the landscape, both natural and man-made, is very refreshing and informative for historians. Making good use of traditional and modern mapping and photographic techniques, this well-illustrated study will be of great interest and considerable use to local historians from non-geographical backgrounds. There are especially interesting chapters on ‘Roman Roads and Other Long Lines’, ‘Exploring Suburbia’ and ‘Exploring Villages’. There are ample diagrams and drawings and most of the many photographs are reproduced in colour. Highly recommended.

John Hinks

Michael Goldschmidt

This is an exemplary history. Michael Goldschmidt’s account of the last years of the Royal Leicesters and the survival of the ‘Tigers’ as a diminishing element of the Royal Anglian Regiment could hardly be bettered. The book itself is attractively produced, with excellent illustrations in both colour and black and white. The story is pleasingly told too, in a lively, entertaining style which manages to convey an immense amount of detail with humour and human interest. Although we join the Royal Leicesters with the great conflicts of the twentieth century behind them, the regiment was still to see plenty of action: in Cyprus, Borneo, Aden and Northern Ireland. The account of peacetime soldiering, with the T.A. and T.A.V.R. as much as the regulars, is not neglected with detailed descriptions of training camps and exercises.

For this reviewer, an archivist attempting to make sense of the regiment’s records, the painstaking re-creation of the many transformations of the ‘Tigers’ is priceless. The thorough discussion of the regiment’s legacy, in chapters on the museum, chapel and many other aspects of commemoration, might also stand as a model for other regimental historians. This regimental history deserves a place on the shelves of anyone with more than a passing interest in our county regiment. Colonel Goldschmidt has produced a readable and meticulous account, a worthy record of a distinguished regiment.

Robin Jenkins

MEMOIRS AND RECORDS OF THE NORTHAMPTONSHIRE AND RUTLAND MILITIA (1873)
Robert James D’Arcy
Kessinger Publishing (reprinted 2009, originally published 1873), ISBN 9781104346430

Local interest here must centre upon one brief chapter at the rear of a volume largely concerned with the Northamptonshire Militia. For over a century, from its first embodiment in 1759, the tiny Rutland Militia lived on borrowed time. Scarcely ever mustering much above a hundred men, the corps bowed to the inevitable in 1860 and amalgamated with that of its larger neighbour to the south. D’Arcy’s account of the Rutland Militia opens in 1808, with a flurry of correspondence recording the willingness of the militiamen to serve, if required, in Spain. There follows a brief history of deployment from one garrison to another, of peacetime musters and (intriguingly) presentations of Prayer Books and later Bibles, by the SPCK and Rutland Gentlemen respectively, at the time of the Crimean War. There is a lively history of Britain’s auxiliary forces, from before the Norman Conquest, which might be of use to students of Rutland’s militia but in truth there are better and more up to date sources. Though a worthy enough subject for reprinting, Kessinger Publishing would probably have served Rutland better by duplicating Major C. A. Markham’s History of the Northamptonshire and Rutland Militia (1924). That more substantial volume tells much the same story, in far greater detail, and with scholarly references and pleasing illustrations.

Robin Jenkins
THEIR NAME LIVETH FOR EVERMORE: THE GREAT WAR ROLL OF HONOUR FOR LEICESTERSHIRE AND RUTLAND (5 Volumes)
Michael R P Doyle
The author, 2009, ISBN 9780956220905

Michael Doyle’s Roll of Honour is as impressive a memorial to the local Great War dead as any of the more conventional monuments which grace the covers of his five paperback volumes. The books are a physical manifestation of a vast computer database, containing even more information, created by the author and his late father. Their work began in 1990 and involved visits to archives and libraries, as well as to churches, war memorials and cemeteries in this country as well as in Flanders, Italy, Germany and even Gallipoli. There can be no faulting the energy of the Doyles, or their desire to collate, cross refer and record.

The result is a reference work of immense value. There are here over twelve thousand names, from A. R. Abbott, who is commemorated on the memorial in All Saints’ church, Kimcote cum Walton, to Frederick William Zanker, of the 8th Leicesters, who was killed in action on 3rd May 1917. These two comrades in death illustrate well the amount of information that can be expected. Abbott remains simply a name on the memorial – his parish acknowledges his sacrifice. For Zanker however, there is more. Doyle’s detective skills have unearthed Private Zanker’s rank, number, and battalion, as well as inscriptions on memorials at Arras, France, and in the churches at Melton and Tilton. That at Tilton even has him as ‘M.W.’ not ‘F.W.’ Zanker!
The entry is concluded with a lengthy quotation from his battalion’s war diary, detailing the disastrous attack on the Hindenburg Line in which he met his death. For anyone studying the local impact of the war, the service of a relative, or researching the names on a local war memorial, these volumes must be amongst the first ports of call. It is certainly to be hoped that Michael Doyle’s association with Leicestershire County Council’s war memorials project will make even more of his database accessible. As the centenary of the Great War approaches, the value of this work can only grow.

Robin Jenkins

WHO OWNED RUTLAND IN 1873?
T H McK Clough
Rutland Local History & Record Society, 2010, 60 pp, illus, tables, ISBN 9780907464440, £7.50

The Return of Owners of Land 1873, published by HMSO in 1875, in two huge volumes, is both an interesting reflection of contemporary concerns about too much land being held by too few wealthy landowners and, despite some errors and omissions, a very valuable resource for historians. Tim Clough has produced an important study of the returns for Rutland. The detailed text is complemented by numerous tables and transcripts, plus a few illustrations and a good bibliography. An informative Introduction leads into chapters on ‘The Return for Rutland’ and ‘Owners of Land in Rutland’; these are followed by a parish assessment of Lyddington and an intriguing chapter on ‘The Chipping Campden Mystery’ The nature of the puzzling land-ownership connections between Rutland and the Cotswold market town would merit further research; they can be explained only in part by the Noel family’s links with both places. This is a most useful resource for the serious local historian.

John Hinks

Other recent publications

A LOST FRONTIER REVEALED: REGIONAL SEPARATION IN THE EAST MIDLANDS
Alan Fox
University of Hertfordshire Press, 2010

THE MILITARY AIRFIELDS OF BRITAIN: EAST MIDLANDS
Ken Delve
Crowood Press, 2009

PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCIES: LEICESTER PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCIES: LEICESTERSHIRE AND RUTLAND
Patrick Arnold Publishing, 2009

TRACING YOUR POLICE ANCESTORS
Stephen Wade
Pen & Sword Books, 2009

TRACING YOUR TEXTILE ANCESTORS
Vivien Teasdale
Pen & Sword Books, 2009

WARTIME DIARY OF DR MAXSE GRIFFIN
Maxse Griffin
Rutland Times, 2009

CITY OF LEICESTER

JEWISH VOICES: MEMORIES OF LEICESTER IN THE 1940s AND 50s
Rosalind Adam
Writing School Leicester, 2009, ISBN 9780956180902
Along with a touring display and website (www.leicesterjewishvoices.co.uk), this book brings together memories of being Jewish in Leicester in the 1940s and 50s through a project funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund and managed by Writing School Leicester. Rosalind Adam and Miriam Halahmy initially ran a series of writing workshops and, as the project progressed, training in oral history was provided by Colin Hyde of the East Midlands Oral History Archive. Seventy people ultimately contributed spoken or written memories, many of whom first came to Leicester during the Second World War as refugees or evacuees. The book begins with a chapter on wartime Leicester, from first arrivals to rationing, war work, the Jewish Social Club and other aspects of social life. 'My first memory of Leicester,' said one contributor, 'was steaming into Leicester station from London to escape the buzz-bombs and breathing in the peace of the place. It was a fluke that I came here. My husband was in the army in Palestine when the buzz-bombs came over so I sent a telegram to my sister in Leicester and said “Can you put me up for a few weeks?” It was only temporary – I’m still here!' Another recalled that ‘In each of the schools I attended I was one of a very small group of Jewish children... I was expected to be very knowledgeable and to be able to answer everyone’s questions about Judaism. I wasn’t very knowledgeable and I often didn’t know the answers.’ For another ‘though I was born and bred in London and I loved London, I had the happiest time of my life in Leicester because first of all there weren’t many Jewish girls so I was sought after.’

Nevertheless, as one subheading says, it was ‘not easy being Jewish in Leicester’ after the war. Several people recall feelings of ‘being different’ or of isolation, and talk of the processes of adjusting and creating a community. Practising the faith was a large part of this, and is considered in some detail. Some well-known ‘characters’ from the Jewish community in Leicester are also recalled, including market traders, the boxing promoter Joe Jacobs, Dr Lenton, a GP who was also doctor to Leicester City Football Club, and local business families such as the Mays, Jacobs and Colemans. As the introduction to the book notes, previous histories of the Jewish community in Leicester have concentrated on the buildings and institutions of the community. The focus here is very much on the experiences of the people who made up this community, and the contribution they have made to Leicester in turn over the years. It is an absorbing account, with some fascinating photographs and other illustrations, all presented to a very high standard.

Cynthia Brown

THE SLUMS OF LEICESTER: A PHOTOGRAPHIC RECORD ILLUSTRATED BY CONTEMPORARY ACCOUNTS
Ned Newitt, ed.

This book will be of interest both to historians of Leicester and to urban historians. Newitt’s aim is to provide a picture of the poorest districts of Leicester which have almost entirely disappeared. These houses bore little resemblance to the Victorian terraces we see in the city today, such as in Highfields and Clarendon Park. Many were poorly constructed, two-roomed court houses with no amenities, squeezed in between factories and other houses. The book consists of an introduction in which Newitt provides a clear summary of housing conditions and slum clearance in Leicester in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. He usefully places Leicester’s housing conditions in a national and regional context. For example, we learn that child mortality in Leicester in 1871 was twice the national average, while by the 1960s Leicester had cleared more slums than Liverpool but lagged behind Birmingham.

The major part of the book consists of the photographic record of slum clearance areas, particularly those cleared in the 1930s. The photographs are supplemented by a variety of documentary sources, including several articles by bottle-washer Tom Barclay (which were published in the topical magazine The Wyvern in the 1890s), Medical Officer of Health Reports, OS Maps, Leicester Mercury articles, and a small number of extracts from the Leicester Oral History Archive. Although Newitt points out that residents did not describe the houses they lived in ‘as either evil or sordid’, this type of view of the ‘slums’ is less represented. However, for the historian of inner-city streets, the combination of documentary and photographic evidence provides an invaluable insight into city life in the later nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Lucy Faire
It has long been my contention that you cannot take the people out of a house or the house away from the people. The people who live in a house impact upon the building but the way in which they live can be constrained by the house in which they live. Belvoir Castle, a tourist attraction in the guide books, has been home to many generations of the same family and this book has been compiled by the Duchess of Rutland, wife of the present Duke and mistress of the house. It is her family home. She has written this book from two perspectives, of the house itself and of the people who have lived there. At the beginning of the book is the family tree of the Belvoir family from Robert de Todeni, standard bearer to William the Conqueror, to her husband, the eleventh Duke of Rutland.

After briefly explaining the four phases of the Castle and the story behind the building of the house that we all recognise today, the Duchess goes on to tell the stories of the people who have lived in each incarnation of the house, beginning in 1067 with Robert de Todeni to whom the land was given as a reward for his faithful service to William the Conqueror. In each phase of the Castle, she tells the story of the family accompanied by portraits and photographs. Then the Duchess takes us on a personal tour of the house that includes some of her family’s private quarters as well as the public rooms. With access to the Castle’s archive, she has reproduced some fascinating documents. The book contains 224 pages of clear print and many images of documents, family portraits and photographs, telling the story of a family and their home over a thousand years. It is nevertheless a fascinating and well-told story that holds the reader’s attention.

John Hinks

This small book is packed with information and well-researched detail about the inns and the people who kept them in the villages of Kibworth and Smeeton Westerby. It is obvious that this was a labour of love written by someone with a passion for the place, and a desire to see the information recorded before all trace of these establishments fades from memory. As Porter states on the front cover there were once twenty-three inns and now there are only four – as in many villages around Britain inns are disappearing at an increasing rate. The book is not a narrative; the author’s intention having been to ‘take the details from the various registers, documents, records and directories’ and he has done just that. The book is full of dates, names and details and these formed the database from which the book was created. The inns are illustrated where possible and the images are reproduced well. This book is full of interesting, well-researched facts and will appeal to anyone with an interest in these villages.

Lois Edwards

This book gives an extremely rare and detailed account of life in a Rutland village in the seventeenth century. Funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund has enabled members of the Langham Village History Group to research and produce a very professional and attractive hard-backed book. Their research has been extensive with visits to a wide variety of archives and libraries; sources consulted range from maps,
A quick look at this book confirms that it is not the usual sort of publication that we receive for review. Its format is the relatively uncommon ‘landscape’ and although a hardback, the padded cover suggests that the book is aimed at the gift market rather than the more serious local historian. Nevertheless, it is nicely produced and balances attractive watercolour illustrations by Mike Weston with an informative text by Jenny and Mike Allsop.

MEMORIAL INSCRIPTIONS AT KIBWORTH CEMETERY
George Weston, ed.

This reference book has an attractive front cover and an informative back cover, which gives details about the Kibworth History Society and how to join it. The many members of the Society who took part clearly realised the importance of transcribing the monumental inscriptions of Kibworth cemetery before the wording disappears. The transcriptions are presented in the format recommended by the National Index of Memorial Inscriptions. Not only have they achieved this mammoth task, but they have also recorded the stone mason’s name, the designs used and the type of materials used. There is a good introduction which explains that the memorial inscriptions begin in 1893, when the cemetery was opened, and go up to 31 December 2008. The directions of how to use the book are extremely clear and cross referencing can be used to find the transcription and the actual grave plot. Local historians and family historians will find the alphabetical index of people named in the book a fast and easy way to look for anyone they are researching.

Most of the gravestones give the usual information, such as the name of the person(s), their date of death, their age and a simple line of endearment, such as ‘beloved husband’, ‘loving mother’, ‘safe in God’s keeping’ and ‘together in peace’, but there are some that reveal more about the person. One example bears the inscription ‘Erected to the memory of Arthur Smith by his fellow workers as a token of esteem.’ Another example is the gravestone of Isabella Smith, which not only gives her maiden name of Keeton, which is unusual, but also has a long and detailed message on the back of the gravestone that finishes with the words ‘Above all it matters that you have been greatly loved. Nothing else matters.’ There are also some Commonwealth War Graves for anyone looking for people who died during the two world wars.

Shirley Aucott
A MINER'S CHILD
Nora Chambers
Loughborough, Reprint, 2006, £6

This is the story of the life of Nora Chambers, the miner's child of the title, told in her own words. She was born in 1921 in Ellistown. As we learn about Nora and her family we also learn something about the history of the places where they lived and worked. It is a well-written tale: more than just the story of Nora's life, it is a social history of a mining area, of the miners and their families. It will therefore be of interest to anyone with mining ancestors or an interest in the history of a mining community. For a lot of people it will bring back memories of their own childhood.

Pat Grundy

PARSON, POLITICIAN AND GENTLEMAN: THREE MEN OF THE LANGTONS
Derek Lewin

The Langtons, a group of villages not far from Market Harborough, have several claims to historical interest. In this nicely produced paperback, Derek Lewin discusses the lives of three local men from three centuries: the eighteenth-century parson William Hanbury, the nineteenth-century politician John Logan and the twentieth-century gentleman Colonel Derrick Hignett. Hanbury is perhaps best remembered for organizing festivals of Handel's music, notably The Messiah, in Church Langton. He was a man of incredible ambition: his proposed 'Minster' (larger than York, and with adjacent squares and academic buildings) would have been hideously out of place in Church Langton and was a quite impracticable plan. Hanbury's charitable activities were rather more sensible and Lewin describes them well. John 'Paddy' Logan was a railway engineer and Liberal politician remembered for his caring approach to his workforce, as well as his community and sporting activities. Colonel Hignett was a distinguished soldier and huntsman; his wartime career and subsequent role as country gentleman are described in some detail. This is a rather unusual volume – in effect a 'triple biography' – but anyone with an interest in any of the three characters, or the Langtons generally, will enjoy the fruits of Lewin's meticulous research. The text is clearly written and gives a thoughtful, balanced account of the three men. There are many photographs and other illustrations to add to the enjoyment of this unique book.

John Hinks

PUBLIC HOUSES OF CASTLE DONINGTON
Castle Donington Local History Society, 2009, 38pp, illus.

Local history societies are now able, thanks to affordable technology, to produce publications of a considerably higher standard than was the case a decade or so ago. This slender volume is a good example of a specialised local history study carried out by such a society, and very nicely produced. The pubs of Castle Donington are described and illustrated, and landlords and landladies are listed where known. A map showing the location of each public house forms the back cover. This is a commendable piece of local history publication.

John Hinks

SONS AND DAUGHTERS: VOLUME ONE
Michael Kendrick

EPITAPH FOR THE FEW
Michael Kendrick

A previous book by Michael Kendrick, Fifty Good Men and True, told the stories of fifty volunteers from the North West Leicestershire area during the Great War. Sons and Daughters: Volume One relates some of their children's experiences during the Second World War, both as adults and children, civilian as well as military, using personal memories, poems, documents and photographs. Geoffrey Boot, for instance, recalls that: 'The German bombers used Bardon Hill as a land marker; they would either veer for Coventry and Leicester or turn north for Derby and other cities'. Betty Kendrick (née Hatter) joined the ATS at Glen Parva Barracks in 1942, and after volunteering for 'ack-ack' duties, was sent to Norfolk for gunnery practice in the winter. She and her colleagues were billeted in the Grand Hotel at Sheringham, where they 'had to hang our hand-washed clothes out of the bedroom window to dry: just picture this premier hotel with several hundred pieces of frozen-stiff girls' underwear flapping in the breeze'. A large section of the book is devoted to the diary kept by Michael
Kendrick’s father, a moving record of his experiences both before and during the time he spent as a prisoner of war of the Japanese. One entry in July 1945 conveys a sense of the war drawing to its end, even in the absence of news from outside: ‘Surprisingly, the guards are easing up a bit; they don’t seem to beat us so often. I wonder what is happening on the world stage. Maybe room for a bit of optimism.’ Like the previous volume, the experiences of local men and women are placed within their wider historical context. It is readable and well-illustrated, and will be of interest beyond the area of North West Leicestershire itself. It also includes an account of the fundraising for the Coalville World War Two memorial.

Epitaph for the Few, also by Michael Kendrick, is a rather different kind of publication, consisting mainly of poems written by him to commemorate the achievements of pilots in the Battle of Britain in 1940. Many of the poems are dedicated to specific individuals who served at this time. It also includes five poems written during World War Two by the fighter pilot Wing Commander C. F. ‘Bunny’ Currant, DSO, DFC, Croix de Guerre. Both books have a Preface written by Dame Vera Lynn.

Cynthia Brown

### Other recent publications

- **HATHERN REMEMBERED**
  - Hathern Local History Society, 2009

- **MOUNTSORREL: A HUNDRED YEARS**
  - Brian Rushin
  - Reprint, 2009

- **NOT FORGETTING: ASPECTS OF VILLAGE LIFE IN BOTTFESFORD, EASTHORPE, MUSTON & NORMANTON**
  - Bottesford Community Heritage Project, 2009

### RELIGION AND PLACES OF WORSHIP

- **FAITH BUILT ON LOVE: A HISTORY OF SACRED HEART PARISH, LEICESTER, 1883-2008**
  - Kate Myers
  - Oldham & Manton, 2009

- **MONUMENTAL AND OTHER INSCRIPTIONS ALL SAINTS, LONG WHATTON**
  - Kathryn Jones & Keith Murphy
  - Long Whatton History Society, 2009

- **PARISH AFFAIRS: THE FINANCIAL DEALINGS OF THE THURCASTON PARISH FROM THE DISTANT PAST TO THE PRESENT**
  - Brenda E Hooper
  - Falconer Press, 2009

- **THE STORY OF JOHN DE MERSHDEN, RECTOR OF THURCASTON, 1391-1425**
  - Margaret Grieff
  - Falconer Press, 2010

### INDUSTRY, TRADE AND TRANSPORT

- **GETTING THE COAL: IMPRESSIONS OF A TWENTIETH CENTURY MINING COMMUNITY**
  - Jeanne Carswell & Tracey Roberts

This book was first published soon after the closure of Bagworth Colliery in February 1991, marking the end of deep mining in the Leicestershire coalfield, and was intended as a ‘commemoration’ of the lives of people involved in coal mining in the county, women and children as well as men. It is based entirely on oral histories collected...
LEICESTERSHIRE FOOD AND DRINK
Rupert Matthews

Leicestershire undoubtedly produces some very fine foods, which in France would be afforded the protection of appellation-contrôlée status. The famous cheeses – Stilton, Stichelton, and of course Red Leicester – as well as the world-famous pork pies from Melton Mowbray spring to mind. For the city, Walker’s Crisps and Fox’s Glacier Mints represent popular exports. A non-technical introduction explains the county, through its geography and history, which provides a context alongside the general history of food in the county: ‘a history of food in Leicestershire’. We might note the distinction between Leicestershire food and food in Leicestershire. Matthews also acknowledges that ‘the Asian community in Leicester turns out a wide range of craft foods’. There is a very strong argument to be made for including Indian foods in this volume, given their popularity in Leicester. Matthews then surveys the food thematically, looking at meat generally, Melton pork pies, dairy goods, Stilton, baking, fruit and vegetables, all of which are washed down with a good draught of ale, and a list of suppliers to conclude. The book is produced to a high standard and would make a fine gift. For those interested in Leicestershire foods, Matthews presents an excellent general guide, with a mixture of history and recipes. The purpose of this review is not primarily a culinary one; however we are presented with every conceivable way of eating Stilton, including in cheesecake and rice pudding. What comes through loud and clear is that the produce of Leicestershire is best enjoyed plainly and simply: Stilton needs no other accompaniment than a glass of port.

Malcolm Noble

LOST RAILWAYS OF LEICESTERSHIRE AND RUTLAND
Geoffrey Kingscott

This is one in a series of ‘Lost Railways’ books which aim to record passenger railways no longer in existence, to give a sense of ‘what they were like when they were in their heyday’, and to enable readers to trace what remains of them today. Some of the railways featured in this volume will be familiar; others, like the Charnwood Forest line, perhaps less so. This was popularly known as the ‘Bluebell Line’ after the bluebells in Grace Dieu Woods along the track, and was arguably ‘the prettiest line in Leicestershire’. The Leicester to Swannington line, opened in the early 1830s, was built primarily to bring coal to Leicester from the North West Leicestershire coalfields. However, it also carried some passenger traffic, initially in open carriages or ‘tubs’ attached to the freight trains – an arrangement that continued until 1888.

Along with the Great Central Railway, other ‘lost’ Leicestershire railways include the Joint Lines 1 and 2 from Bottesford to Melton and Melton to Hallaton and Leicester, and lines to Rugby and Northampton. As the author notes, Leicestershire and Rutland can boast ‘some of the finest examples of Victorian railway engineering’, foremost among them the 82-arch Harringworth viaduct on the Manton to Kettering line, which was built in 1875-79 and employed around 2,500 men during its construction. Freight
traffic still travels over the viaduct; but if the number of
railways that appear in this volume may come as a surprise
in itself, so may the fact that there were 75 railway stations,
all manned, in Leicestershire at the peak of railway travel in
the Edwardian era. Only ten of them now survive as stations
on the main railway network, some no more than unmanned
halts, with another five still used on ‘heritage’ lines like the
Great Central.

This is a very readable and informative book, copiously
illustrated with photographs of sites along the lines,
including plaques marking past connections and surviving
equipment. OS grid references are also given to enable
readers to follow the routes for themselves. This is not as
difficult as might be thought. As the author says: ‘it is
surprising how many of the old routes can still be traced on
the ground because, in the nineteenth century, railway
construction work, whether embankments or cuttings,
tunnels or bridges, were all built to last’.

Cynthia Brown

Other recent publications

IRONSTONE QUARRIES OF THE MIDLANDS:
RUTLAND
Eric S Tonks
Booklaw Publications, 2009

LAST DAYS OF STEAM IN LEICESTERSHIRE AND
RUTLAND
John Healey
History Press, 2009

MEMORIES OF THE LEICESTERSHIRE COALFIELDS
David Bell
Coalville Times, 2009

ENTERTAINMENT, MUSIC AND SPORT

HUNG OUT TO DRY: SWIMMING AND BRITISH
CULTURE
Chris Ayriss

This book examines the social history of swimming,
demonstrating the important role it has played in everyday
British culture. The book has a distinct personal tone and
purpose: Ayriss sets out to defend swimming in inland
waters which has almost disappeared. He argues that this has
had impact on the accessibility of swimming, particularly for
working-class male youth. He identifies various causes for
the disappearance of this traditional practice which include:
‘Victorian prudery’ which led to the confinement of
swimming among local youths; the concerns about water
pollution after the Second World War; and cost-cutting
measures by local councils which have closed lidos and
paddling pools. The book begins with an overview of
swimming in Britain over the last two thousand years. It
then goes on to examine religious and moral attitudes
regarding swimming, seaside swimming and swimwear, and
the rise and fall of sunbathing. Chapter 6 uses Leicester as a
case study to explain how ‘the British’ swimmer came to be
‘hung out to dry’. It charts the different swimming facilities
available in the town over the last 150 years and the
increasing restrictions placed on river swimming. This
chapter is the most convincingly researched and historians of
Leicester leisure and urban government will find it
particularly interesting. The final chapter of the book
describes open-air swimming experiences still available
today. The book veers more towards male experiences,
though women swimmers do feature. Sometimes the book is
hazy with dates and there are quite a few generalisations
about class, national and gender characteristics which tend
to over-simplify past attitudes. Some more evidence to
support these generalisations would have been helpful to the
reader. However, there is a lot of fascinating and detailed
material in this book.

Lucy Faire

Other recent publications

LEICESTER CITY MISCELLANY: FOXES TRIVIA
Matt Bozeat
Pitch Publishing, 2009

A SPORTING CHANCE: THE HISTORY OF THE
SPECIAL OLYMPICS GREAT BRITAIN
Susan Barton
Leicester, 2009
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)

Bringing them to their knees: church-building and restoration in Leicestershire and Rutland 1800-1914
Geoffrey K. Brandwood

Contains an extensive gazetteer of all churches in the region which had work carried out to them in the period 1800-1914.

Price: Members £12, Non-members £15 (plus £3 post and packing in the UK)

Back numbers of the Leicestershire Historian and Transactions are available.
Enquiries, Honorary Librarian, LAHS, The Guildhall, Guildhall Lane, Leicester, LE1 5FQ
Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society