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‘Connecting history, heritage and archaeology groups across Leicestershire and Rutland’
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Cover picture: Two enigmatic life-sized ‘Terms’ which stand just inside the gates to Church Road Gardens, opposite Belgrave Hall. See page 51.

Editor: Joyce Lee

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For six months, from the late summer in 2012 and over the winter, many people in Leicester and elsewhere held their breath as the results from the archaeological excavations at the Grey Friars friary in Leicester were keenly awaited. Then on the 4th February 2013, the news was broken to the world that the battle-scarred remains of King Richard III had indeed been found. Amongst the first detailed accounts of this outstanding historic discovery are those in Antiquity 2013 (vol. 87, no. 336), and in the Transactions of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society 2013.

A fascinating picture of the topographical features and people of the central area of Leicester some 300 years later was delivered by William Gardiner to the Leicester Literary and Philosophical Society in 1844, highlights from which appear in print for the first time here, enhanced by a commentary from J. D. Bennett.

Three miles north of the centre of Leicester is Belgrave Hall. Today, whilst many will be familiar with the house, gardens, and park opposite, few will probably have paid much attention to the four life-sized outdoor statues there. These were once part of a larger collection of sixteen ‘Terms’, the missing twelve of which Erica Statham sets out to trace, following the trail to Enderby and beyond.

The laundry room at Belgrave Hall was one of the more unusual places where an adult school group was set up in Leicestershire in the nineteenth century, as Enid Harrison describes in her informative article on the origins and development of the Leicestershire Adult School Union.

In the late 1860’s, Markfield became the location for a new form of transport known as a ‘wire tramway’, the first of its kind in the world. Andrew Moore examines why Markfield was chosen for this unexpected pioneering experiment, what it involved, and what became of it.

Also little-known about until very recently, is the intriguing story behind an unprepossessing brick structure in a field close to Mount St Bernard Abbey. Maureen Havers and Terry Sheppard describe the work done by Charley Heritage Group to reveal this former blast shelter, and its associated RAF Outstation which played a key role in the ‘Battle of the Beams’ during World War Two.

Leicestershire soldier Everard Aloysius Lisle Phillipps posthumously received the VC for his action in the Indian Mutiny. David Howell presents the conflict from a contemporary nineteenth century British perspective through the letters of this young British officer.

Documents in the Herrick and Nichols archives form an important part of the material used by Caroline Wessel to uncover the hitherto little-known artistic talents and extraordinary charitable work of Mary Ann Herrick.

It was extremely difficult for a woman to become established as a serious career artist in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, but as Shirley Aucott admirably shows, Leicester born Mary Annie Sloane, who was to play a major role in the arts and crafts movement nationally, was one of the exceptions to this.

Celia Cotton provides a well-researched case study of late eighteenth century enclosure in Thrussington, discussing its inevitability, and the impact on the parish and its inhabitants.

To help counter unemployment in the 1930s, the Borough Council of Leicester adopted a scheme to provide ‘homesteads’ for unemployed men and their families. The poignant tale of this social experiment set up on land between Beaumont Leys and Birstall is brought to life by Cynthia Brown.

Cynthia Brown and her team of reviewers again provide excellent coverage and reviews of recently published books, journals and other items which go together to form this invaluable part of the Leicestershire Historian.

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
To ‘parade your wares’ as it were, on a national Heritage Open Day is an ambitious and daunting prospect for any group. ‘Does our bit of unknown heritage warrant a wider audience? Will anyone come?’ were questions we asked ourselves. In Charley Heritage Group’s case, as the illustration shows, the attraction was no more than a brick ruin in the middle of a field, and with no explanation, seemingly little more enticing for a visitor than a cattle shelter. But the Group had researched its history, and knew the intriguing story it concealed – a story that had been Top Secret in World War Two and barely spoken of since.

After its foundation in 1999, the Charley Heritage Group had set about collecting all sorts of information about the area. This included recording many of its older residents’ memories about how World War Two had affected their lives. As part of this, a local Coalville man, Ken Nicholls, had provided invaluable first-hand historical information about the brick structure in St Joseph’s field. It was, he revealed, a blast wall, its purpose having been to protect radio transmitters. Ken had worked on the site, and was able to describe how the blast wall had been used to help deflect German bombers from their targets by the use of radio beams.

This information about the blast wall had been filed away in the Group’s archives with no long-term plan as to what to do with it. That was until two new members joined the Group – Michael Froggatt and Terry Sheppard – both of whom had a particular interest in World War Two. Michael and Terry were both keen to research the blast wall and the role that it

On Saturday 8th September 2012 a large number of people who had heard that a very special wartime story was being spelled out that day in a field close to Mount St Bernard Abbey high up in the Charnwood Forest, made their way to the site. Turning off into Oaks Road at the Charley Parish Millennium Stone, they would come across the field entrance marked by a Royal Air Force Flag flying at the top of a pole. Car parking was available a little further along the Oaks Road at Abbey Grange, as was the inviting prospect of a Charnwood cream tea in the local tea room.

At the field, known as St Joseph’s Field, visitors were warmly greeted by the cadets of 1188 Squadron of the Air Training Corps who brought an authentic touch of wartime RAF blue with their uniforms. A little way into the field visitors were greeted by the sight of an unusual solid brick and concrete structure anchored firmly in position. Round the other side, the structure was open-ended, with a large bay on the left, and a smaller bay on the right. Sheltering inside the larger bay was a camouflaged military communications drawbar trailer, mimicking the situation that was in place in World War Two. Elsewhere in the field were four large tents, each with their own displays, representing four sheds which would also have stood here then.

This was the Charley Heritage Group’s contribution to the national Heritage Open Day scheme - its way of telling a story that has been hidden and secret since those far-off days of the Luftwaffe bombing offensive of 1940-43.

The curious looking brick structure in St Joseph’s Field, recently revealed to have been a World War Two blast wall.

The trailer sheltering in the blast wall on Charley Heritage Group Open Day, 8th September 2012.

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had played in what became known as the ‘Battle of the Beams’.

Mike presented a talk to the Charley Heritage Group about Air Ministry Scientist Dr R.V. Jones, the brains behind Britain’s World War Two ‘beambender’ defence project. Meanwhile, Terry went along to talk to Ken, bringing with him his own breadth of knowledge of the war years. The resultant 20-page oral testimony, along with archive material, and new information uncovered by further research at the National Archives, was published in 2010 in the Charley Heritage Group’s book World War Two in Charley. Inextricably linked to the story, was that of the Coalville Outstation RAF 80 Wing (Signals), the unit which had occupied St Joseph’s Field during the War. Also in 2010, the ‘beambender’ site in St Joseph’s Field was featured in the BBC’s The One Show on which Ken told his tale to millions – presenter Chris Evans commented that the feature was one of the best history films he had seen on the show.

To prepare for the Heritage Open Day in 2012, the Abbot of Mount St Bernard Abbey (owners of the land) readily gave his permission to do what we wanted, and there followed weeks of clearing the growth and burning the brash. Help from Tom Bower, the Farm Manager, significantly speeded up the work. Eventually, the structure stood clear and unfettered, probably for the first time in decades. Richard Froggatt, Mike’s son and new to the Group, had acquired an ex-military Rubery Owen, two ton, four wheel drawbar trailer, almost identical to that which would have been in the bay in 1942. This he filled with radio equipment and other artefacts of the period.

On the open day, the cadets of 1188 Squadron Air Training Corps (Coalville) arrived with their Commander, and set up their camouflaged position, radio transmitters and map stations. Meanwhile, display boards were mounted in the central exhibition tent to tell the story of the origin of RAF 80 Wing and its part in deflecting the German radio beams, as well as explaining the technology in a clear and graphic way. Mike Froggatt produced a wealth of 1940s artefacts from his own archives to stir the memories.

To everyone’s delight Ken Nicholls arrived to perform the opening ceremony, and the ATC Cadets formed a Guard of Honour as he cut the ribbon and walked unaided across the field which he had trod so many years before. During the day, Ken talked to young and old about the purpose of the ‘beambender’ and his own role in RAF 80 Wing. A number of the older visitors shared tales with Ken about their freedom to roam the ‘Forest’ in their younger days, but with the parental proviso that they kept well away from St Joseph’s Field, although with no explanation as to why. Some had thought the military had a shooting range in the field, others a storage facility for weapons, but for most, the true purpose of the site had remained unknown until now. The weather truly helped to make the open day successful and memorable, with over 300 visitors taking advantage of the chance to learn about what had previously seemed so insignificant a structure, and its important role in the defence of the country. So it was that in 2012 the Charley Heritage Group recreated in St Joseph’s Field the wartime Coalville Outstation of RAF 80 Wing (Signals).

But what was RAF 80 Wing? And if this was an Outstation, where was its Headquarters? Were there other Outstations, and did they really bend beams?

Key to answering these questions was the work of Dr Hans Plendl, an expert German radio scientist in the 1930s, who along with Dr Ernst Kramar, had solved the problem of how to guide the bombers of the expanding Luftwaffe back to a safe landing on their airfields, especially in inclement weather. Working with the company founded in 1880 by Carl Lorenz, they invented the Lorenz Blind Landing System which worked by having transmitters located at the edge of the airfield which would send out two parallel and slightly overlapping beams. One would be heard in the pilot’s headset as a series of dots 1/8th of one second long, the other as dashes 7/8ths of one second long, depending on the offline position of his aircraft. If a pilot was flying in line with the distant runway he would be in the beam overlap and would hear the continuous note of the equi-signal with the phased beams appearing as one note.

The Lorenz blind landing principle. (Author’s transcriptions of the original data in the 80 Wing Record at the National Archive, class ref. Air 40/2334-Radio Countermeasures, Air Intelligence.)

Plendl also knew that the primary purpose of these bombers was to fly long distances from home over enemy territory and set their bombs down right on the selected targets, and his new mission became the development of a system to help the pilots and navigators find their targets. Apart from getting a VHF beam to be sufficiently narrowly concentrated and powerful enough to reach enemy territory, there was the
curvature of the earth to deal with. VHF beams do not bend round the earth, and Plendl reasoned that if the transmitting aerial was on high ground, and if the aircraft 200 miles away was high enough, then a beam capable of being picked up by the Lorenz equipment in each bomber could be used for target finding.

In great secrecy, Plendl conceived the Knickebein (‘Crooked Leg’) system. It consisted of Lorenz-type transmissions, but turned round the other way. With signalling bases at Kleve, just over the Dutch border in Germany, and at Bredstedt in northern Germany, a Luftwaffe bomber heading for a British city, for example Birmingham, would leave its airfield and eventually fly into the outward beam from Kleve. When the pilot got into the equi-signal area he knew he was on course. When the pilot picked up the Bredstedt signal, he knew it was time to drop his bombs.

The Knickebein beam system, as illustrated in Theo Bruer’s book in the Stadtarchiv in Kleve, Germany. (Reproduced with acknowledgement to the Stadtarchiv, Kleve, Germany.)

Plendl’s design needed a massive aerial array to power out the beams. The dimensions for this needed to be 100m wide and 30m high, and capable of being turned on a central pivot, with wheels at the edges to align onto a target. An idea of the extent of the signal structure erected on the hill outside Kleve can be gained from the picture below. The circular wheel track is visible on the bottom left of the picture, the tracks of which could still be seen on the ground in 2013. An identical aerial was erected at Bredstedt. Later aerials erected in France, which were much closer to British targets, were of smaller sizes.

Meanwhile in London in 1936, whilst the finishing touches were being put in place to the Knickebein installations at Kleve and Bredstedt, Dr R. V. Jones of Air Intelligence, (whose work had put him at the forefront of infra red radiation), was asked to come up with a piece of kit whose work had put him at the forefront of infra red radiation), was asked to come up with a piece of kit which could be used in a night flying aircraft to detect a nearby enemy bomber. Jones intuitively hit onto the possibility that enemy bombers might be using some sort of target-seeking system based on transmissions within the radio spectrum. Evidence was beginning to come across his desk that backed up his hunches. A scrap of paper harvested from the always-thorough searches of crashed enemy bombers had the following detail on it:

Radio Beacon Knickebein from 0600 hrs at 31.5 mc.

The British team recognized that the German word Knickebein meant crooked leg along with what looked like some sort of directional radio beam on the 31.5 megacycle frequency. Then came a top-secret decoded enigma message with the word Knickebein, followed by the name of the German town of Kleve, and the co-ordinates of the Nottingham town of Retford. Was a radio beam coming out of Kleve, with Retford being used as a practice destination? The transcripts of interrogation sessions and the private conversations of captured German aircrew were also passed across to Dr Jones’ desk. From these, he was also particularly interested in references to X-Gerat.

Of considerable interest was a further piece of paper, this time from a Heinkel 111 shot down in France and which contained very detailed information about Knickebein. It identified the German towns of Kleve and Bredstedt as the beam sources, together with their position and the frequencies used. Jones was now clear in his mind that the enemy had some means of flying down a beam laid out from Kleve onto an English target using the point where a second beam from Bredstedt crossed the first beam – the beams forming the ‘crooked leg’. But what puzzled him was that the original crashed bomber did not have any obviously special receiver that might be part of the system. To try and solve this mystery, he requested the Royal Aircraft Establishment at Farnborough to have a fresh study of the equipment in the crashed bomber.

Like all bombers, the Heinkel had the standard blind landing receiver system developed by Lorenz. The scientists at Farnborough tuned in very carefully to the Lorenz kit on the bomber. To their surprise, they found that it was of a sensitivity much higher than that needed for normal blind landing operations. Jones reasoned therefore that the Knickebein system could work with the normal blind landing kit in every bomber.

This was a very chilling prospect, and on 18th June 1940 Jones persuaded the RAF to put up a search plane to try and find the beams. They found nothing though, nor anything when they repeated the exercise two days later on 20th June. On the 21st June the RAF wanted to end the flights, but Churchill, who strongly supported Jones, insisted that the next one took place. Jones reasoned that the most important target in the mind of the enemy would be the Rolls Royce engine factories at Derby, where the famous Merlin engine was being built. That would mean that any beams from Kleve and Bredstedt would have to come in across Lincolnshire, so he advised the flight to head north from its starting base in Hertfordshire. The next day at a special meeting the flight crew appeared and gave their report:
Everybody sat up with a jolt. Dr Jones had even got the Derby targeting right. The prognosis was dire. It was likely that every German bomber could ride these beams. A response was carefully designed which needed a specialist RAF unit to handle it, and to keep the tactics secret. Jones’ hypothesis was totally vindicated.

As a result RAF 80 Wing (Signals) was born, and developed very quickly under another scientist turned airman, Wing Commander E. B. Addison. The unit’s motto was ‘Confusion to our Enemies’, an apt name very suited to the tactics it used. It was recognized that outright jamming of the beams would be hard to do tactically, and would probably encourage the Germans to switch frequencies regularly, and so would give away the British knowledge of the beams. Therefore the plan was to develop very effective listening stations to detect the beams and the frequency used, and then to broadcast a similar signal to mix in with the German beams. This would mean the German aircrews picking up a very confused pattern of dots and dashes, which it was hoped would cause many of the pilots to give up relying on the Knickebein beams for navigation, whilst remaining unaware of British interference.

From this work, the term ‘Beambending’ entered the RAF lexicon, although in reality the German beams remained straight. However, the aircrews were encouraged to deviate because of 80 Wing’s powerful dashes competing with the weaker German equi-signal.

Commander Addison set up a formidable HQ at Radlett, Hertfordshire to control the British operation. The British codenamed the German beams Headache, and the growing number of Outstation counter transmitters of 80 Wing were appropriately given the name Aspirin.

The Knickebein system was not the only beam pattern deployed by the Luftwaffe. Plendl also invented a more accurate, complicated beam system called X-Gerat. This was deployed exclusively in a specialist pathfinder squadron, KGr-100, flying out of Cherbourg, whose elite crews had the task of setting a target ablaze with a massive incendiary bomb attack, so that the main bomber force could locate the target visually. The RAF called this threat Ruffians, and it was this system which was used by the Luftwaffe in the Coventry Blitz in November 1940 when over 500 people died. The Pathfinder aircraft from Brittany lit up their target which could be seen as far away as London. Only eight installations of the RAF’s countermeasure transmitters, Bromides, were in place that night, and not all of them were working.

In what became known as the ‘Battle of the Beams’, the third system put in place by the Luftwaffe was Y-Gerat, which gained the codename Benito. A very sophisticated single beam was laid from France by a live ground operator to a bomber equipped with a visual display on an oscilloscope and a transponder to reflect its position. The ground operator was in charge, even signalling when to drop the bomb load. This system by definition could have only one bomber every five minutes using the single beam, so it had to be used for picking off selective high value targets. The counter-measure jamming transmitter developed for 80 Wing for this threat was called Benjamin, possibly a pun - Ben-Jamming. Benjamin was very effective, playing on the vulnerability of the two-way signals between the bomber and its ground controller.
Whilst Luftwaffe pilots could attempt to fly back along the Knickebein beams, they also relied on homing beacons. 80 Wing’s counter response to this was to equip some of its Outstations with Meacon transmitters (Masking the Beacons) which were used to send spurious position fixes to the German pilots.

![Site plan of 80 Wing’s Coalville Outstation at St Joseph’s Field.](image)

St Joseph’s Field was chosen as the location for 80 Wing’s Coalville Outstation because it straddled the flight paths to the vital war material factories in Derby and those of the West Midlands and South Yorkshire, and it was 600 feet above sea level.

Without much ado, four sheds were erected in the field. The larger shed in the centre of the field was the stores, the domain of the Sergeant in charge. One shed held the Aspirin transmitter and the vital telephone link to HQ at Radlett. When the telephone rang, it would be an order to crank up one of more of the transmitters, and shortly afterwards, a second call would specify the frequency to be used. Two further sheds each had a Bromide transmitter, whilst a Benjamin instrument was housed in a trailer parked inside the blast wall. Each transmitter was powered by a stand-alone diesel generator parked alongside, which added to the time-scale in going operational. The crew of Wireless Mechanics usually numbered 12, and maintained a round-the-clock presence in shift teams of four. Initially some of them were boarded as guests at the adjacent St Joseph’s Cottage, but eventually the crew members were allocated civilian lodgings in Shepshed and other nearby places.

Similar activity was played out in over 25 such hastily created Outstations across Britain. RAF deposits at the National Archives do not show the map co-ordinates of the fields used in this furious battle of the beams. Our detective work is currently tracking the stories of these other Outstations to compare with 80 Wing’s Coalville Outstation. We have identified the field used at Mundesley on the Norfolk coast, where we are in correspondence with a 92 year old widow who married one of the Outstation’s RAF Mechanics. Similar work is progressing at Mow Cop in Cheshire, Templecombe in Somerset, Hagley near Kidderminster and Scole, in Suffolk. At the moment the structure in St Joseph’s Field appears to be a unique survivor, with no similar residual structures having come to light elsewhere so far.

A very interesting offshoot of the Charley Heritage Group’s continuing exploration of the ‘Battle of the Beams’ is in carrying the research to where it began, to Kleve in Germany. In May 2011 Terry Sheppard visited the State Archive in Kleve, with an appointment to see the Director. A detailed dossier on the Kleve Knickebein operation was helpfully made available. It included a book written by Theo Bruer which described in detail the construction project that produced the huge aerial and its operating station at Kleve. Like the secretive creation and operation of 80 Wing Outstations, the inhabitants of Kleve were kept in the dark about what was going on up the hill to the west of the town. Indeed, in a quotation from the book, Theo Bruer recalls that, ‘it wasn’t until 1999 that Josef Janssen (previous chair of the Kleve Town Council) found out about the Kleve Knickebein installation at a conference in Berlin. It must have been extraordinarily important for the war strategy. In far-away Berlin Mr Janssen did not know where this installation was. Research he did in Kleve did not help. Soon afterwards he came into contact with me (Theo Bruer) having been a contemporary witness’. The chapter also lists the specific locations of the 12 Knickebein aerial installations that were built across occupied Europe as part

![The reverse side of an aerial photograph taken at the War’s end in 1945. The photograph shows the centre of Kleve in abject ruins after the Allied bombardment to clear the way for its ground offensive into the Rhineland. Part of the Knickebein Collection at the Stadtarchiv in Kleve. (Reproduced with acknowledgement to the Stadtarchiv, Kleve, Germany.)](image)
of the bombing offensive. In the concluding part of his chapter Theo Bruer relates how the use of the Knickebein beams became so compromised by British countermeasures that their practical use was only of value on the North Sea part of the bombers’ flight path.

Apart from the book, the Kleve Dossier contains many photographs and maps. Some of the material had been gathered from Allied sources, including a large scale map produced in English in December 1944, just prior to the February 1945 ground breakout from Groesbeek in Holland, through Kleve towards the Rhineland. A most telling exhibit was an aerial photograph of the thorough destruction of Kleve in that assault, especially the message on the reverse.

The Archivist at Kleve was a Dutchman, commuting over from Arnhem each day. His final word was to indicate on a map that anyone was welcome to go to the site of the Kleve Knickebein installation and walk over it. The site had never returned to civilian use after the war, having been retained as an occasional military training ground. The local rules were that the public could treat it as a country park when the military were not using it. The area is very extensive along the top of a grass topped ridge running west-east. The sloping sides were deeply wooded, and at the highest point there is a piece of scrubland circular in shape. On the ground in that circle were many examples of concrete works showing through, all fitting what would clearly have been the supporting tracks for that massive 100m wide Knickebein aerial. To capture the moment, Terry set his camera to take a piece of video. While it was running, and the birds singing, a German family out for a walk came into the picture from behind some bushes, enjoying the fresh open air and the peaceful place. That is of course how it should be. No more the hurling of explosives and fire at each other, but the ability to walk freely in the peace of that country park in Kleve, around St Joseph’s Field in Charnwood and elsewhere.

Sources:
Oral testimony of Ken Nicholls J.P., from his service as LAC Nicholls, RAF Wireless Mechanic.
RAF Records, Class AIR 540, The National Archives, Kew.
Knickebein Collection, Stadtarchiv, Kleve, Germany.
Charley Heritage Group, World War II in Charley: Charnwood’s Hidden Parish, (Coalville, 2009).
Peter Kirk, Peter Felix and Gunter Bartnik, The Bombing of Rolls Royce at Derby, (Rolls Royce Heritage Trust, Derby, 2002).

For further information, see Aspirin, Bromide and Benjamin: the Secret War against the Luftwaffe Navigation Beams, compiled by Terry Sheppard, published 2012 by the Charley Heritage Group.
It was extremely difficult for a woman to become established as a serious career artist in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Hindered by a male-dominated society, women were the outsiders in a male profession. The impact of the women’s movement, growing in strength and consciousness from the mid-nineteenth century onwards, had played its part and women artists became more numerous and visible. Battles had been won, but there were many more to fight. To move away from home and live as a middle-class, single woman in London was very much frowned upon, particularly if you moved within artistic circles where morals were often thought to be ‘loose’. To go against the social mores and conventions of the time you had to be a strong-minded woman and Mary Annie Sloane was just such a woman.

Mary was born at 9 Welford Road, Leicester, on 10th December 1867, the second daughter of John and Sarah Sloane, née Stretton. Her father was a house surgeon at Leicester Infirmary from 1855 to 1859, after which he became a general practitioner until his death in 1891. Her mother had a liberal and relatively good education, and believed in advancing women’s position in society. Mary had five siblings, Eleanor Jane, Sarah Kate, Agnes Frances, John Stretton and Hans Hill. Both John and Hans followed in their father’s footsteps and became doctors. Agnes died, aged six years, Eleanor became a classical scholar, and Sarah involved herself in various children’s charities including the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children.

Mary attended Belmont House School, Leicester, where the headmistress was, for some of the time, Anna Chrysogon Beale, sister of Dorothea Beale of Cheltenham Ladies College. Another teacher, who had taught at Cheltenham Ladies College, Agnes Kilgour, was also dedicated to improving the education of girls and the position of women in society. Mary was also fortunate to have a very talented art teacher, Edith Gittins, who also subscribed to improving the position of women in society and was an ardent suffragist. She was also a great admirer of John Ruskin, the Pre-Raphaelites, William Morris and the Arts and Crafts movement, and her passion for the latter must surely have had some impact on the path that Mary was to follow. Edith probably encouraged her talented pupil to take up a place at the Leicester School of Art to further her studies after leaving school, although her brother, John, aged only nine, had enrolled in 1879 and her sister, Eleanor, in 1883. Here, there were many Leicester female role models for Mary to aspire to, for example, Elizabeth Eleanor Marshall, who was specifically mentioned in the headmaster’s annual report for 1874:

We have this year, not only obtained a Queen’s Prize, but also a Silver Medal. This is the highest prize yet awarded to the School, and excepting only 10 gold medals, is the highest prize given by the Dept. The work to which this Silver medal was awarded, was a group of Still-Life, painted in water colour, by Miss Marshall, a student of the morning class, and it is gratifying to know that it was so much admired whilst being exhibited at South Kensington Museum, that Miss Marshall was prevailed upon to dispose of it to one of its admirers for the purpose, I understand, of being placed in some public art museum in America. (1)
In March 1884 the Leicester School of Art also appointed its first female teacher,

[It was decided] that Miss Agnes E. Farman be appointed assistant mistress, in place of Mr Adam with a salary of £30 per annum, subject to 3 months notice on either side and that with the understanding that Miss Farman undertakes no teaching other than that of the School. (2)

However, in October 1888, when Agnes applied for a more senior teaching post at the School, a meeting of the School’s General Committee decided that ‘They see reasons which prevent them from appointing a lady to the post about to be vacated by Mr Barfield’. (3)

Mary enrolled at the Leicester School of Art, on 5th October 1885, when she was 17. (4) At the end of her first year she was awarded a second grade certificate for obtaining the mark ‘pass’ in one or more subjects. (5) The following year she obtained a government third grade prize for anatomical studies and an elementary first class prize for ‘Practical, Plane and Solid Geometry’. (6) She was not mentioned in the School’s annual report for year ending 1888 which means she left at the end of 1887. This is confirmed by the records of the Society of Women Artists which shows Mary to be living at 4 Brunswick Square, London, in 1888. Two years after this, in 1890, she became a student at the Herkomer Art School in Bushey, Hertfordshire.

The Herkomer Art School had been established in 1883 by Hubert von Herkomer who introduced several progressive innovations for that time. He chose, for example, to site the school in a rural setting, rather than a major city, to enable the students to paint en plein air and use local people for their studies instead of models. The school was also noted for its innovative system for teaching figure drawing which aimed to help students develop their own style of art. For Mary, one of the most important aspects of attending this school may have been that Herkomer wanted to encourage women to become career artists. Perhaps influenced by the Slade School of Art (established in 1871), which offered female students education on equal terms to men, Herkomer had from the very start provided life classes for women and although he segregated the sexes in these classes, and covered male models with a loin cloth, albeit a very brief one, this was very innovative for the time. Dame Laura Knight, born ten years after Mary, experienced the problems of not drawing from live models when she attended Nottingham School of Art from the age of 14:

No nude model was ever then provided at the Art School. This entailed my having to make endless studies from life size plaster casts of antique statuary instead. Superb as the originals may be they are not the real thing, but only show the genius of someone else’s understanding. (7)

In all other classes at the Herkomer School male and female students worked alongside each other and it may have been whilst there that Mary had her first introduction to engraving as:

The students had the optional facility of excellent tuition in engraving and mezzotint etc., and many of them found their true metier in this form of art. (8)

The School records show that Mary left in 1892 after completing two years of study, whereas the average length of stay was three to four years. However, Mary may have had one, or more, of her etchings in the 1892 exhibition held by Herkomer and his students at the Fine Art Society. According to Grant Longman ‘An unusual feature was the inclusion of 21 engravings and mezzotints’. (9) An etching by Mary entitled ‘A Shepherd from the Nativity Play Bethlehem (a play by Lawrence Housman)’, is owned by the present Bushey Museum and Art Gallery. It is very accomplished, but is unfortunately not dated, although it has to be post-1902, the year in which the play was written.

Several short biographies of Mary state that she went on to study engraving under Sir Frank Short who became a teacher of etching and engraving at the National Art Training School, South Kensington in 1891. A reason for Mary leaving the Herkomer School after only two years may have been because she wanted to further her studies in engraving and saw the opportunity to do this at the National Art Training School. Unfortunately, the archival records of the South Kensington School are very sparse, and those that have survived show no record of Mary having studied there. However, the Victoria and Albert Museum’s Prints, Drawings and Paintings catalogue states that two etchings by Mary of Art Objects in the Victoria and Albert Museum were made in the Etching Class of the National Art Training School. No date is given, but it would have been sometime between her leaving Herkomer’s School in 1892 and the National Art Training School becoming the Royal College of Art in 1896. Whatever the case, Mary is thought to have become friends with Sir Frank Short and his assistant, Constance Mary Pott. The Royal College of Art’s historical student database records only extend back to 1909, but show that Mary registered as a student in 1918 and graduated in 1925. By 1918 Mary would have been 51 years old and because the College did not admit anyone over the age of thirty at that time, even allowing for the disruption of the First World War, it is thought by the College’s Special Collections Manager that there might be an error in the database.
Mary's friendship with May probably developed further through the Women's Guild of Arts, founded in 1907. The original honorary secretaries were May, and Mary Sargant Florence. The founding principles of the Guild were to bring together women working in the field of arts and crafts, enabling them to share the aptitudes and possibilities of each other's work. Membership was strictly open only to women who were:

... seriously engaged as craft workers and designers, candidates being elected on the strength of their work, of which a representative example shall be admitted for inspection at a meeting of the Guild. (11)

The provisional committee comprised of Miss Batten, a framer, Grace Christie, a tapestry weaver, Mary Sargant Florence, a mural decorator, Countess Feodora Gleichen, a sculptor, Florence Kingsford, an illuminator, Mary Lowndes, a stained glass painter, Mary Thackery Turner, an embroiderer and May, who was recorded as a jeweller. One of the reasons for the Guild being formed was due to the Art Workers Guild not allowing women to become members, but the Women's Guild had no objection to men becoming members of their guild, believing that they should be:

... encouraged to come into our midst and talk to us in the intimate and comrade like way that is stimulating to an artist's work capacity. (12)

In 1909 May went on a lecturing tour of America and Canada during which time Mary Annie Sloane took over her secretarial duties for the Guild. The following year, owing to an increased workload, Mary was asked if she would consent to further assist May with the secretarial duties.

Meetings of the Women’s Guild were held in members’ studios and workshops where papers and demonstrations were given. In 1912 the Art Workers Guild also gave the Women’s Guild permission to continue using Clifford’s Inn Hall rent-free for their meetings. On 29th June 1916 Mary

Mary certainly made London her main home and whilst living there she clearly moved in artistic circles. From c1895 until 1899 she lived at 3 Montague Mansions, Portman Square. From there she moved to 57 (later to become 77) Bedford Gardens, Kensington. The 1901 census records her as living there and her occupation is given as an artist and etcher on copper. This building was probably purpose-built flats with large front windows which would have made it ideal as a studio. The building seems to have been a popular residence for artists, for in the late 1880s William Magrath (1838-1918) an Irish watercolour artist, lived at the same address. (10) The electoral roll shows Mary to be living there constantly until 1924 when she purchased the lease to 8 Hammersmith Terrace from Mary (known as May) Morris who had lived there since her marriage to Harry Sparling in 1890. Mary still seems periodically to have lived at Bedford Gardens after 1924, possibly using it more as a studio, as 8 Hammersmith Terrace did not have the large windows suitable to light a studio.

Living next door to Mary, at 7 Hammersmith Terrace, was the printer and typographer, Emery Walker (1851-1933) who was the intimate friend of William Morris. Hammersmith Terrace is a mid-Georgian row of houses situated on the banks of the Thames in West London. Today Emery Walker’s home is a museum overflowing with Arts and Craft treasures which belonged to Walker, William and May Morris and Philip Webb.

How Mary became friends with May Morris is uncertain, but it is through her that Mary was introduced to many members of the Morris circle, such as George Bernard Shaw, Ford Madox Brown, Edward Burne-Jones and Philip Webb, at Morris’s summer home, Kelmscott Manor, Oxfordshire. Mary is thought to have stayed at the Manor many times and whilst there made several portraits of May, including a watercolour of her working in the tapestry room, c1910. This painting was exhibited in the Women’s Guild of Arts contribution to the 1916 London Arts and Crafts Exhibition. It is now held at the William Morris Gallery, Walthamstow, along with several other examples of Mary’s work, including a watercolour of William Morris’s bedroom at Kelmscott Manor. There are also three drawings and a study of May.

Mary Annie Sloane on the backdoor step of no.8 Hammersmith Terrace, London. (Courtesy of Arnold Young.)
gave a paper and a demonstration on etching. There are many other references to Mary’s involvement with the Guild, for example, on 9th December 1915 an ‘At Home’ invitation was issued to members by May Morris, Mrs R Frampton, Maud Beddington and Mary to attend Maud Beddington’s studio at 9 St Paul’s Studios, Talgarth Road, for the purpose of making known:

... member’s work done or designed for public buildings, etc – Banners, stained glass, designs, cartoons, photographs of memorials and other works were among the exhibits. The sales amounted to £44.5.0.’ (13)

The records of the Women’s Guild reveal links with Leicester which Mary may have forged. On the 30th November 1915 Agnes Wallace Bruce, daughter of Thomas Fielding Johnson, the Leicester industrialist, and his wife, Agnes, held an ‘At Home’ for members at her residence, 9 Airlie Gardens, London W8. She had become an associate member, c1914. Mary’s sister, Eleanor, also became an associate member in 1916. On two occasions, one in 1917 and the other in 1919, talks about Leicestershire villages were given, at Clifford’s Inn Hall, by the Leicester artist, George W. Moore Henton.

Apart from the giving of papers, talks and demonstrations, Guild members also held social gatherings. Such an occasion happened on 7th April 1916 when Louisa Strode and Mary invited members to 9 St Paul’s Studios to hear music and Russian Folk songs sung by Boris Lensky, Miss Campion and others. Mary’s association with the Guild lasted for many years with her becoming its president in 1953. These wonderful records of the Women’s Guild of Arts, have been missing for many years and now that they have been recently donated to the William Morris Society, along with other items including 90 glass slides which show examples of Guild members work, they open up a whole new area of research, not only into Mary’s involvement, but also into other members’ work and their contribution to the Arts and Crafts movement.

Despite May Morris’s close friendship with Mary she did not leave her a legacy in her will, she may instead have given her items during her lifetime, as Mary’s will indicates. Mary did attend the auction of the remaining contents of Kelmscott Manor after the death of May’s friend and companion, Mary Lobb, who had continued to live there after May’s death in 1938. The auction was held by Hobbs and Chambers of Farringdon and Cirencester, on the 19th and 20th July 1939, at Kelmscott Manor. The catalogue shows that Mary purchased lot 329 which was two watercolours of rooms at Kelmscott painted by herself, the cost of which was three pounds ten shillings. Her friends who attended the auction:

Recorded their sadness, not only at the passing of an era, but also at the auctioneers’ indifference. Much of the furniture and effects from the house were left in the garden during heavy overnight rain, and so presented a pathetic sight to the assembled bidders. (14)

Catherine (known as Kate) Whitaker, Mary’s friend and companion, also purchased items at the auction, but unlike Mary she did receive a bequest in May’s will:

To Miss Kate Whitaker of Number 8 Hammersmith Terrace London W.6. the bureau and oil painting by

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**Mabel, c1914. Original drypoint by Mary Annie Sloane. (Copyright Shirley Aucott.)**

The nucleus of a Women’s Guild library was also formed at this meeting. At a later meeting Mary, along with Louisa Strode and Estella Canziani, are recorded as donating books to the library. On 2nd June 1916 Catherine Ouless and Mary gave an ‘At Home’ at 45 Circus Road to discuss the Arts and Crafts Exhibition proposals and to show members the Guild’s library.
The bureau was then bequeathed to Mary when Kate died. It would seem that Kate, as well as Mary, had been a friend of the Morris family and this can be seen in an extract from a letter written to her by Jane Morris (mother of May) from Kelmscott Manor, on 30th December 1909:

Many thanks for sending choco: to Jenny [sister of May] ... I have excellent news from May, she is well and both throat and voice lasting well.’ (16)

The above news of May refers to her whilst she was on a lecturing tour of America and Canada.

In addition to Mary being a member of the Women’s Guild of Arts, she was also a member of the Society of Female Artists (later to become the Society of Women Artists), which was established in 1857. This organisation gave women the opportunity to display their work to the public by means of their annual exhibition, which has been held from its founding year to the present day. It is through this Society that we are given by far the most insightful knowledge of Mary’s wide-ranging subject matter. Their records also help to give a rough guide to events in Mary’s life. During the period 1888 (which is probably when she became a member), until 1947, Mary exhibited 153 pieces of work in their annual exhibitions, her listed works including watercolours, prints and drypoints, with prices ranging from £1 to £31. This made her one of the Society’s most prolific members in terms of output.

Mary’s first exhibition entry in 1888 was a watercolour of the ‘Old Town Hall, Leicester’. The next entry, in 1891, was executed whilst at the Herkomer School and is entitled ‘Dining Hall at Charterhouse’. The wide variety of work which Mary exhibited covered topics from the everyday, such as ‘The Evening Meal’ and ‘A Garden in Summer’, to more exotic subjects giving some indication of where and when Mary visited foreign climes. In 1901 and 1902 her exhibits include Dutch scenes of Edam, Leiden and Dordrecht. In 1908 Spain features with scenes of Tarragona, and in 1913 there are several scenes of Tuscany, where she is thought to have travelled with May Morris. After the First World War, in 1919, she exhibited a work entitled ‘Athens’ a city she visited with her sister, Eleanor. The following year she exhibited a work entitled ‘A Water-Carrier in Majorca’ which may have been the year she travelled there with May Morris. It has also been suggested that Mary lived for a time in Cornwall. She was certainly staying at a boarding house, with her mother, in St Mary’s on the Scilly Isles, when the 1911 census was taken. She must also have visited Devon in the same year as a watercolour, by her, entitled ‘A Visit to the General Stores, Otterton’, dated 1911, came up for auction in 2006.

Out of the 153 works exhibited at the Society of Women Artists only three are listed as not for sale, one of ‘Nancy’, one of ‘Ann’ and the other is of ‘Flower Makers in a London Court’. There are many portraits sprinkled throughout the years of exhibiting, all of which only give the forename of the person with the exception of one which is entitled ‘Laura Pendennis’, who is possibly the character in William Makepeace Thackeray’s novel, Pendennis. A few others are identifiable such as John, her brother, and Peter, Patrick and Ann, his three children. There is also one entitled ‘Kate’ and this may be her friend Kate Whitaker.

Kate was a very close friend of Mary, and they lived together for many years. The records of the Women’s Guild of Arts indicate that they may have been living together c1921 as an invitation was addressed to both of them at 174 Campden Hill Road, Notting Hill Gate, Kensington. This invited them both to The Glass House, 11 Lettice Street, Parson’s Green, Fulham, to see a piece of stained glass made by Margaret Edith Aldich Rope for St Chad’s Church, Far Headingley, Leeds. Mary Lowndes and Alfred Drury had The Glass House purpose-built as a stained glass studio in 1906 with the aim of providing suitable space for individual stained glass artists to work. The Electoral Roll then shows Mary and Kate to be living together at 8 Hammersmith Terrace from 1929, on and off, until 1957.

Mary exhibited her work in the late nineteenth century and for a large part of the twentieth century in all of the top London galleries, including the Royal Academy from 1896 to 1924 and the annual exhibitions of the Women’s Society of Artists from 1888 to 1947, the Leicester Society of Artists from 1914 to 1961 and for many years the Royal Society of Painters, Etchers and Engravers, who elected her as an Associate (A.R.E.) in 1900. The Paris Salon also gave her an honourable mention in 1903 for her etching of ‘Aylestone Packhorse Bridge’.

Many public institutions, other than the previously mentioned William Morris Gallery, Walthamstow, hold examples of Mary’s work. The Science Museum hold two pieces, both etchings with drypoint, one entitled ‘Stocking Weaving’ and the other ‘Dropped Stitch, Enderby’. The Victoria and Albert Museum hold fifteen pieces, seven are engravings of various Leicester scenes, four are engravings of the various places abroad visited by Mary, and the remaining four are characters appearing in plays, two of which are from an adaptation of The Princess, by Alfred Lord Tennyson. This play was performed by the Belmont House Society, established in 1886, by Mary’s two former teachers, Anna Chrysogon Beale and Agnes Kilgour, with
the intention of encouraging former pupils of Belmont House School to continue to engage in intellectual pursuits after leaving school. It is therefore likely, that Mary was a member of the Society, and may even have been one of the performers in the play.

Despite her prolific output and the acknowledgement she received for it, Mary has not received a great deal of attention as an artist until recent years. Leicester City Council New Walk Museum and Art Gallery held a small exhibition of her work in 1985 and some of her work was included in the 2010 exhibition ‘Looking at Landscape’ arranged by the Leicestershire County Council Heritage and Arts Service. More recently (November 2012 to March 2013) a small exhibition of her work was appropriately held in the coach house of Kelmscott House, Hammersmith, the former home of William Morris which now houses the William Morris Society. As recently as 2010, three signed watercolours by Mary were donated to the William Morris Society by a member of the public who had been the custodian of them for many years.

The Leicestershire County Council Heritage and Arts Service hold’s fourteen pieces of Mary’s work, eight are of various views of the village of Enderby, Leicestershire, and the remaining six are of Leicester and other Leicestershire villages. They also hold four of her smocks, possibly worn when painting. The Leicester City Council New Walk Museum and Art Gallery hold thirty eight pieces including scenes of Leicester and its old buildings and places she had visited abroad, but the majority consist of scenes of the village of Enderby and its trade of framework knitting.

Although Mary lived for most of her adult life in London, she always kept in contact with her home county of Leicestershire. A detached house at 1 The Nook, Townsend Road, Enderby, seems to have become her home for a period during the summer months. This may have been a family summer home, as her mother, Sarah, is recorded as living there as early as 1900. This could not have been Sarah’s permanent residence for when she died in 1931 her address was given as 13 Welford Road, Leicester.

Mary and her friend, Kate Whitaker, came to live more permanently in Enderby in the mid 1950s, but Mary still retained her house, 8 Hammersmith Terrace and many of its contents, at the time of making her will in 1958. The will strongly reflects her friendship with the Morris’s and her life in London:

Mary and Kate’s retirement to Enderby was fairly short-lived as Kate died on 25th January, 1958, aged 95, in the Sundial Nursing Home, Leicester and Mary, in the Ava Nursing Home, Ratcliffe Road, Leicester, on 29th November 1961. In her will Mary asked for her ashes scattered and her name and dates carved on the Sloane family grave in the churchyard of St John the Baptist Church, Enderby. Although this was done, the year of Mary’s death is inaccurately given as 1960. After her death her house in Enderby was auctioned and bought by Blaby District Council who demolished it and built bungalows for the elderly on the site, but the name of Sloane lives on as the road leading up to the bungalows is called Sloane Close.

Mary Annie Sloane (right of group) outside her house in Enderby. (Courtesy of Arnold Young.)
There is so much more research to be carried out into Mary’s life and work. Her friendships with Kate Whitaker and May Morris certainly need further investigation. Bequests in her will to the two artists, Dorothy Aldrich Rope and Catherine Ouless, who were long-standing friends and a bequest to another friend, Dr Una Fielding, who was the great-granddaughter of John Morris, brother of William, may also yield further information. Other areas to research are Mary’s membership of societies and organisations. She was for example, a member of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society, as were her mother, two sisters and her nephew Peter George Sloane.

Encouraged by her mother to become active in the women’s suffrage campaign, Eleanor became the honorary treasurer and secretary of the Leicester & Leicestershire Women’s Suffrage Society and it is likely that Mary may have been a member of the Artists Suffrage League, established by Mary Loundes (vice chair of the Women’s Guild of Arts), in 1907, with the aim of encouraging artists to create posters, postcards, Christmas cards and banners for suffrage events. If Mary was a member she would surely have been involved in making many prints for such events. It is also thought that Mary was a member of the Humanitarian Society and because of her close friendship with May Morris she may have had Socialist sympathies.

What we do know for certain about Mary is that she was a progressive, thinking woman for her time and clearly had self-belief. This had been assisted by her family, her school teachers, where she trained, who she knew, the interest and encouragement in her work given by other artists and by joining a network of women artists who gave each other mutual support and shared ideas, aspirations, techniques and skills. Above all it was Mary’s artistic talent that made her a major player in the women’s arts and crafts movement in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

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A new and unusual mode of transport was started in Leicestershire on 13th February 1869. It was known as a wire tramway, the first installation of its type in the world, and was constructed to carry granite from a quarry in Markfield to Bardon Hill station, a distance of just over three miles. Its primary purpose was to demonstrate the concept of an overhead conveyor system which incorporated a continuously moving wire cable, and enabled heavy materials to be transported in load-bearing carriers. For most of its length it ran alongside the Leicester to Ashby turnpike road creating what must have been an amazing sight for those who travelled along this stretch of road at that time.

Over the next few years the concept was developed rapidly in this country, and also in America where it was used in the gold and silver mines and was to lead to the development of the San Francisco cable cars. Much later came the most recognisable example, the ski-lift.

So why was Markfield chosen for a pioneering piece of machinery, what did it involve and what became of it?

The use of a wire cable in constant motion and powered by an engine was a new concept. Transportation using stationary ropes from which loads were slung – often from pulleys – and moved along by gravity or pulling with separate ropes, had been used for centuries for crossing valleys and rivers, and also in building construction. Crude systems devised for moving loads hung from endless ropes which circulated between horizontal pulleys had also been frequently tried (1). By contrast, the wire cable system was designed to transport loads over long distances, in all weathers and was especially useful on hilly terrain. It was also quicker and cheaper than constructing a railway, and after the initial outlay, far cheaper to operate. It also had many advantages over common contemporary transport methods such as pack animals, drawing by oxen, or – as was being used between Markfield and Bardon – horse and cart.

Breedon Everard had a middle son, the ambitious John Breedon Everard. John did not enter the partnership immediately, being articulated instead to the civil and mining engineers Brown & Jeffcock for four years. He then worked as assistant resident engineer under William Barlow on the construction of St Pancras station. He was there for three years until its opening in 1868, and was responsible for overseeing the building of its foundations, tunnels, great roof and connecting railways. (5) Although returning on occasions to complete outstanding work at the station, he started his own very successful practice as a civil and mining engineer in Millstone Lane, Leicester.

It is possible the contact between the Wire Tramway Company and Ellis & Everard came from the forward-thinking James Ellis who had heard about the new design and contacted the designer or, more likely, that one of the proprietors of the Wire Tramway Company came into contact with John Breedon Everard whilst he was working in London, through their mutual interest in civil engineering. As it turned out, J. B. Everard was engaged to coordinate the installation of the wire tramway, this being one of his first jobs in his new practice. (6)
Despite being an original and initially successful, albeit short-lived system, very little has been written about Markfield’s early wire tramway. J. B. Everard’s autobiography mentions his connection with its installation but little further, and its existence is recalled in the book Markfield into the Millennium. (7) The tramway also featured in the 19th February 1869 edition of The Engineer, a leading publication at the time whose circulation reached the English-speaking countries of the world, as well as in other professional and trade journals. Whilst there are also technical books that detail the subsequent developments of the machine and acknowledge Hodgson’s first installation, (8) the most useful sources of further information discovered to date are in contemporary press reports.

The Leicester Chronicle of 16th January 1869 was the first to briefly mention the tramway during construction, whilst the first articles appeared in the London press starting with The Morning Post of 15th February 1869. The next day, The Standard set the scene of the inaugural day:

On Saturday [13th February] a party of engineers and representatives of the press started from the St Pancras station by the ten o’clock Midland express for Leicester to see the novel system of wire rope transport practically at work. ... the distance from the town to the wire rope is about eight miles by carriage so that a visit can be comfortably made, with plenty of time for inspection, within the day.

Clearly the Wire Tramway Company was out to publicise their product as much as possible, and coincident with the opening, small adverts were placed in national newspapers inviting enquiries for their new system. As well as reports of the opening in the London and Leicester press, (9) the news also reached the major provincial papers, and after a few weeks there was even mention in very minor papers in America, Australia and New Zealand.

Most of the reports gave some technical details of the tramway, along with many facts and figures. The more salient ones are as follows.

The cable was half-an-inch in diameter, spliced at intervals to form a continuous loop nearly six and a half miles long. It ran on pulley wheels 15 inches diameter which were supported in pairs on the top of about 120 wooden trestles. The load-bearing half of the cable – travelling from Markfield to Bardon – ran over the pulleys on one side of the trestles, and the return half on the opposite side. The trestles were spaced at intervals of approximately 150 feet but this varied according to the rise and fall of the land and position of the bends. The maximum spacing was 600 feet.

The trestles were three-legged as shown in the diagram below, and sunk into the ground. Given the experimental nature of the system, it is doubtful that the trestles had any substantial foundations, which, along with subsequent disturbance of the ground for road and other works, reduce

Sketches which accompanied an article about the Markfield wire tramway in The Engineer, 19th February 1869, at the time of its opening. The top sketch shows the single moving cable design, and the bottom sketch, the principle of transporting loads hung from a fixed cable using a powered endless cable. (With acknowledgement to Grace’s Guide, http://www.gracesguide.co.uk/File:Im1869EnV27-p132.jpg)

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the likelihood of finding evidence of their position today. The trestles varied in height between 14 and 40 feet, presumably at the higher levels when a clear passage was required underneath or to prevent fraudulent removal of the carriers.

At either end of the tramway, the cable ran around large horizontal wheels, with one adjustable to tension the cable, and the other providing the driving force. The power was taken from a 16 horsepower portable steam engine, most likely sited on quarry land at the higher, Markfield end rather than by at the Bardon end which was by Bardon station. The driving wheel was an adaption of a Fowler's 'clip drum', the type being used beneath traction engines at that time for driving the first cable-hauled ploughing systems.

The carriers for the goods being transported, comprised wooden boxes suspended from metal arms which were shaped to clear the supporting pulleys, and to allow the centre of gravity of each box to hang directly beneath the cable. The top of each arm was attached to a hardwood block which had a v-groove on the underside allowing it to sit on the cable and still pass over the pulleys. The blocks also had a pair of small grooved wheels attached at their side. These could automatically run onto rails and lift the blocks clear of the cable for a short distance when negotiating bends, or, at the ends of the tramway, they would run onto longer rails to prevent the carriers running round the horizontal wheels. From these end rails, the carriers were lifted off manually for emptying or filling.

There were up to 250 carriers on the cable at a time. They were in constant motion and travelled at 4-6 miles per hour. With each box having a capacity of just over 1 cubic foot and holding approximately 1 hundredweight, it allowed over 10 tons of granite an hour to be delivered – or approximately 100 tons per day – which was well within the requirements of the quarry.

For the route which the tramway took there are only brief details as shown in an account in the Leicester Advertiser of 20th February 1869:

The line commences at Markfield Quarry, and passing over some grass land, turns round an angle post, and then runs along one side of the high road for about two miles. It then crosses the road, proceeds a short distance down the other side, and passes over the fields, to Messrs. Ellis and Everard's works, against the Bardon station, where the stone is delivered.

Because there is no mention of the line passing over a road soon after crossing the grass land near to the quarry, it appears that having turned the corner it then ran for two miles along the south side of the high road (i.e. the Ashby turnpike, known as Shaw Lane). This would have taken the line near to the Beveridge Lane turn where it crossed over the main road. This was the position of a toll gate and on seeing the carriers passing overhead, travellers waiting at the gate may well have thought it a cunning way to avoid paying tolls! The line would then have run over land rented by Ellis & Everard as part of the Bardon Quarry site, and on past the site of St Peter's church (which was yet to be built). The probable route was then behind Bardon Hill House, home of Breedon Everard, and the Birch Tree Inn (now near the Bardon Road roundabout on the A511) before crossing the narrow lane to Coalville. (10) After another quarter of a mile it reached the rail head near to Bardon Hill station where a siding was reserved for the broken Markfield granite and granite setts for distribution by rail.

Except for some minor mishaps on the inaugural day, all the newspaper reports gave very good reviews, and said that the many people who witnessed the event could see a successful future for the system. On the way back, the invited guests were taken to Leicester and dined at the Bell Hotel, before the London contingent made their way to the railway station.
Advantages of running the tramway at the side of the road included easy access for installation and maintenance. It also avoided payment to landowners had the line run over open fields, which would have been a shorter route. Approval had been required, however, to run the tramway by the road, (although apparently parliamentary approval had not been necessary at this point), and according to the press reports, this was given by the 'local public authorities', who, from later sources, appear to have been the trustees overseeing the Leicester to Ashby turnpike, and possibly the parish councils. (11) In gaining approval, the strong relationship between the turnpike trustees and Ellis & Everard would most certainly have helped, with the quarry company supplying broken granite to the turnpike trustees who in turn were responsible for the maintenance of the road at the side of the tramway. Although the trustees may have lost the tolls from the granite once it went by overhead tramway, this income would have been off-set by greatly reduced road maintenance costs, with fewer heavy conventional carts on the road.

With a relatively cheap transport system in place, which according to the Daily News of 22nd June 1869 was 'a complete success', and which had led to similar machines being sold abroad, it seems reasonable to expect that the tramway would have had a longer life (even if periodically requiring up-to-date modifications).

Nothing about the length of time it ran, however, can be found in the local press, although possible evidence for its demise can be found in a detailed report of a visit to the Markfield quarry by the British Association in May 1870 and which does not mention the tramway. (12) Had the tramway been in operation, surely it would have been noted? This suggests that the installation lasted for less than a year and three months.

Presenting better clues to its duration, are the advertisements which the Wire Tramway Company placed in the national press. Firstly, in June 1869 they were offering to build, at their own expense, an example of their patent system for transporting stone to the railway. It would have been permanently employed, but that the turnpike trustees beside whose road it ran were unable to give definitive authority for its remaining without act of Parliament, which would cost twice as much as the construction of the line; it was therefore shipped to the New Zealand quartz diggings. Another heavier line was immediately afterwards fixed near Ashby-de-la-Zouch at Messrs. Ensor's fire-brick works, and has for the last two years given complete satisfaction...

Several interesting points arise from this snippet. Firstly, that the trustees had to go back on their initial approval. (16) This could have been due to requiring an Act of Parliament for the tramway to continue, or the result of complaints to the Justices of the Peace to whom the trustees were answerable. Complaints and concerns about the operation can easily be envisaged from fears of the cable snapping to loads falling off the cable onto the road.

Such opposition, combined with the expense of seeking a private Act of Parliament – which may well have been rejected – would have provided sufficient cause for the project to be abandoned. Unfortunately there are no records remaining of the Quarter Sessions of the Justices of the Peace or of the Turnpike Trustees meetings, nor of any further reports in the local press to verify what happened and when. The quarry would have resorted back to the use of horses and carts until powered road transport became available, and would have paid toll fees for use of the turnpike road until 1874 when the Ashby Road Turnpike Trust was ended.

It is also interesting to note from the newspaper article that this was not the end of the system completely. The components from the tramway were shipped out to New Zealand for use in the quartz mines, in the Thames area of New Zealand where traces of gold had been found causing a mini gold rush.

Despite any difficulties with the initial operation, the Wire Tramway Company's various publicity ploys did have some success with orders completed in several countries on the continent, in the antipodes and the Americas. There were only a few in Britain, with a further Leicestershire example being constructed at Ensor's brickworks at Woodville near Ashby-de-la-Zouch. This overhead installation was completed as early as October 1869, the brickworks' owner,
no doubt, having seen the pioneering tramway at Bardon which was only 9 miles away. At the same time, the owner was also patenting ideas for brick-making machinery. (17)

In the United States, the very first installation – in Nevada – is featured in a publication about a silver mine. (18) The tramway was ordered so that silver ore could be transported during the winter months when snow blocked the roads. The Wire Tramway Company’s agent arranged for shipping the tons of wire and equipment (including telegraphic apparatus) to San Francisco via Cape Horn, and then overland to the mines, arriving on site himself to supervise the installation. The machine worked well until the freezing snows came and created unforeseen problems with the wire. The agent then had to make the long return journey to resolve the situation.

Among the enquiries made about the system, one came from Ceylon for transporting coffee and rice. The proposed tramway was to be 60 miles long and formed from 12 separate machines, with loads automatically transferred from one section to another. As part of the preparation for this, a tramway was built especially for trial and exhibition purposes. This was five miles long and built on the Sussex Downs, passing over the Brighton racecourse. It was installed about a year after the opening of the Markfield tramway, and incorporated the latest developments including metal carriers with a single pivoting attachment to engage steeper inclines, thicker wire and trestles made of iron. It was open to the public – much to the delight of small boys who were prone to hang from the moving carriers – and was on show during the first nine months of 1870. J. B. Everard was employed in the installation of both this trial line and in the development of the Ceylon project. (19)

Advertisement from the Glasgow Herald 3rd May 1872, showing the extent of the markets which the Wire Tramway Company was aiming at, just three years after the opening of the Markfield line.

Other instances of the wire tramway quickly emerged in America following various articles in a wide range of newspapers and journals during 1869. First to seize on the idea was Andrew Smith Hallidie, an immigrant from England who had set up a wire cable manufacturing business with his father in San Francisco. Not only was he able to supply the components more readily in America than Hodgson, but as early as February 1870 he was already patenting improvements to the design. Smith Hallidie’s first installation was in 1872, and thereafter, his business almost monopolised erection of the aerial tramways (as they became known) that served the gold and silver mines in the west. (20)

Hallidie also applied the idea of moving loads by using a continuously running cable, to powering trams running on rails. He was keen to do this after seeing horses struggling to haul trams up the steep San Francisco hills. He developed the idea by running the cable underground, with a device for the driver of the tram (or cable car) to operate that gripped the moving cable through a groove in the road and hauled the tram along. The driver would then release the device when stopping. Progress was rapid and the first San Francisco cable car was running by August 1873. (21) The system still operates today.

Another important development of the system was one in which the load was supported on a static continuous cable, with the carriers being moved along by a separate, constantly running lighter cable. Although more expensive, this meant that much heavier loads could be transported. This arrangement was developed by the Bleichert brothers in Germany in 1874, although it had been foreseen by Hodgson and was even outlined in the articles about his single line system which appeared in the original reports in the press in February 1869.

The carrying of passengers was also mooted as early as 1869 with the following ambitious and novel suggestion:

... leading engineers have been discussing the possibility of constructing a stout wire tramway between Dover and Calais, which should be supported from a line of pillars sunk in mid-ocean, and along which passengers could be conveyed. The cost would be comparatively small, and suspensory trains could, it is argued, be despatched across the Channel without difficulty or danger. (22)

Whilst a channel crossing of this nature is clearly a far-fetched idea to us today, chair lifts and suspended cable cars did eventually make an appearance, becoming popular especially in scenic mountainous areas and ski resorts in the early twentieth century, a further important development of the continuously moving wire system.

Ellis & Everard continued haulage by road, turning to steam-powered vehicles at their Bardon Hill quarry, and probably the same at Hill Hole, Markfield. Whilst a narrow-gauge railway was later successfully employed at the much larger Cliffe Hill quarry less than a mile away from Hill Hole, (23) the size of the latter would not have warranted such expense. When Hill Hole closed in c1920,
granite production became concentrated at Bardon Hill where J. B. Everard continued as one of the partners. The company flourished, and is known today as Pick Everard, a leading national independent engineering and architectural consultancy which has retained its links with Leicestershire, with its headquarters in Leicester.

As for the Wire Tramway Company, this was taken over by one of its first proprietors, W. M. Bullivant, who successfully ran it alongside his own cable manufacturing concern. Its inventor, Charles Hodgson, went to live in America. He died in London in 1901.

Advertisement for the Wire Tramway Company, December 1889, depicting the type of terrain to which a wire tramway is well-suited. (With acknowledgement to Grace's Guide, http://www.gracesguide.co.uk/Wire_Tramway_Co.)

Although making only a fleeting appearance, and not representing a world-shattering event such as the railway world's Rainhill Trials, the Ratby to Bardon wire tramway was a first. It played a small but important part in the development of this unusual form of transport, which, although not seen so much in this country, continues to serve many industrial operations and thousands of leisure resorts throughout the world. Next time, when being transported suspended from a cable at a ski resort or in a cable car over the Thames, spare a thought for the pioneering line that once ran alongside the Ashby turnpike through the Leicestershire countryside!

References and Notes:
1. The most notable of the ancient ropeways was built by Adam Wiebe at Danzig in 1644, being recorded on an engraving. More recently, examples of a stationary cable system came into use locally and known as 'Blondins' (after the tightrope walker). They were stretched over quarries and travelling winches hung from them which could descend into the pit to bring stone to the surface. Ian P. Peaty, Mountsorrel and its Associated Quarry Railways, (Irwell Press, 2012).
2. Hodgson's family had run mining companies in Ireland, and also owned peat processing plants for which Hodgson had already patented machinery. D. Collins, A Valley Remembers Glann, (Kilcummin Parish, Our Lady of the Valley, 2011), pp. 42-4. (PDF accessed online.)
3. For a short time Breedon Everard had previously worked a small granite quarry, then known as Billa Barra, one-and-a-half miles west of Markfield.
5. J. B. Everard, Memoranda on the Life of John Breedon Everard, (Record Office for Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland (ROLLR), nd, ref: L920 EVE).
6. Some sources have inadvertently attributed the design as well as the installation of the tramway to J. B. Everard.
7. Various Authors, Markfield into the Millennium, (Leicestershire Libraries & Information Services and Markfield Local History Group, 1999).
8. A. J. Wallis-Tayler, Aerial or Wire Rope-ways, (Lockwood, 1911); R. A. Trennert, Riding the High Wire, (University Press of Colorado, 2001) are suggested for further reading.
9. Leicester Guardian, 17th February 1869; Leicester Journal, 19th February 1869; Leicester Advertiser, 20th February 1869; and Leicester Chronicle, 20th February 1869.
10. The main road to Ashby ran through Hugglescote at that time and not Coalville.
11. An indication that permission for the tramway would have been required from the Turnpike Trustees is that in a similar situation, according to a surviving letter of 4th January 1871, (ROLLR, QS106/2/1/3) permission was given by the Leicester and Welford Turnpike Trustees for the General Post Office to erect posts for telegraph wires alongside their road.
12. Leicester Chronicle, 28th May 1870.
15. As part of the company's publicity, a model of the tramway, about 100 yards long, was exhibited at shows throughout the country.
16. E. Bainbridge, 'On the mode of conveying minerals by wire tramway', Transactions of the North of England Institute of Mining & Mechanical Engineers, 20 (1870-71), p.4. The Act of Parliament was required by the trustees because the tramway passed over the high road. (PDF accessed online.)
20. R. A. Trennert, op. cit.
21. There were already other forms of rail traffic hauled by cables, but these were winched along by cables wound round a powered drum and were unsuitable for the streets of San Francisco.
23. This line was opened in 1897 and ran across country to a siding in Beveridge Lane adjacent to the main-line railway. M. H. Billington, The Cliffe Hill Mineral Railway, (Turntable Enterprises, 1974; Plateway Press, 1997).
William Gardiner (1770-1853), hosiery manufacturer, author and composer, is remembered now for his three volume, gossipy set of local memoirs, *Music and Friends*, and as the man who introduced the music of Beethoven into England. (1) For many years he was a leading figure in the cultural life of Leicester, and in 1835 was a founder-member of the Leicester Literary and Philosophical Society.

One of the lectures Gardiner gave to the Society was called ‘Recollections of Old Leicester’. It was delivered on 23rd December 1844, and although not printed in the Society’s Transactions, was published in the *Leicester Journal* the following month, where it has lain forgotten ever since. (2) Perhaps not surprisingly, it drew on material from the first two volumes of *Music and Friends*, which had appeared in 1838; interestingly, it also included details which were contained in the third volume, which was not published till 1853.

*William Gardiner’s Leicester:*

When he was two, William Gardiner was sent to Mrs Loseby’s dame school in High Street, and then to Henry Carrick’s day school (‘academy’) in Silver Street. He was present at the Grand Music Meeting at St Martin’s Church in 1774, held for the benefit of the new Leicester Infirmary, and later was to help organise the Leicester Music Festival at St Margaret’s Church in 1827. For many years the Gardiners’ hosiery business was in Bath Lane, and later in Newarke Street. The Leicester Literary and Philosophical Society, of which Gardiner was a leading member, met at various places in the town, including the Midland Counties Fire Office in Welford Place, the Amphitheatre in Humberstone Gate, the Exchange in the Market Place, and the Guildhall, before coming to rest at the newly opened Museum in New Walk in 1849. For some years he shared a house on the south side of High Street (what became no. 90, between Carts Lane and Highcross Street) with his sister, Sophia. A lifelong member of Great Meeting in East Bond Street, Gardiner died in 1853 and was buried in the new Welford Road Cemetery. After his death, Sophia Gardiner moved to Tower Street, and spent her last years there; she died in 1864 and was buried with her brother.

*Recollections of Old Leicester by William Gardiner:*

‘... What I propose, is to give some account of the state of society in this town as far back as I can recollect; and as in conversations with my father, I have heard him recount many things which happened before my time. I shall make free to incorporate these with my own thoughts …

‘The vacant ground that lies between the High Street and Sanvey Gate, bounded by the Highcross Street, and the wall by the side of the ditch, now called Church Gate; I say, within these confines, is a vast square that was covered with churches and monasteries. At the demolition of religious houses, large spaces were thrown open, and converted into gardens. These were enclosed by mud walls, which formed what were called the back lanes, frightful alleys, without a house … On pulling down the Town Gaol, it was discovered that one side of the kitchen was formed on the remains of St Peter’s Church, the site of which was not known before. (3) At this time, bricks had not been used; as we do not find any building of that material much older than the Great Meeting, erected in 1708. The dwellings were entirely made of framed timber, with their gable ends next the street. The only stone house was Lord Hastings’, in the High Street. One turret now remains, which I remember being cased with brick. (4) The water for domestic purposes was supplied by draw wells, and severe enactments were passed by the Corporation against washerwomen cleansing linen at these wells. Afterwards, pumps were furnished to all the principal streets, which were then considered a safeguard against fire ...

‘The first coach was started by Mr Nedham, who built his house, at the east end of St Martin’s Church (5) … It was drawn by four heavy, long tailed black horses; started on the Monday morning, arrived in London on the Wednesday, and
returned on Saturday evening to Leicester. In the *Leicester Journal*, 1774, a person advertises for a partner in a chaise to London; and another wishes to engage only a third part of a seat, and as a recommendation speaks of himself as a light and slim person. When I went to town to the commemoration of Handel, we started at four o’clock in the morning by the Leicester fly, and we passed Saint Paul’s as the clock was striking twelve at night. (6) … The slow rate of travelling made the coaches an easy prey to highwaymen; Woburn and Birstall Sands were dreaded. These gentry learnt at the coach-offices when the inside was stored with a booty worth taking. I find in the *Leicester Journal*, 4th June 1774, the Derby coach, with six insides, was robbed of their watches and money at Oadby town end, and the Nottingham coach, near the Spittal House, the same night. (7) …

‘The increasing size of Leicester, within the last fifty years, has scarcely been exceeded by any town in the kingdom. (8) I remember when there was but one house a hundred yards beyond the Three Crowns – a thatched cottage – the Jolly Miller – agreeably shaded with a cluster of tall trees, and beside it a pond of water, in which the postboys washed their horses. (9) In front of the Horse Fair (leading from the Crowns to the South Gate) there was a large garden, in which stood the Recorder’s House, which house now finds itself placed on one side of Belvoir Street. (10) In the front of this was Phipps’ field, a fine piece of grass (although afterwards a cornfield) which extended to the present race course. (11) During the American war, I recollect the French prisoners had this field as a play ground, and on a Sunday afternoon crowds of spectators were present to witness their gambols. (12) …

‘I have heard my father say, he remembers the Church Gate being literally the town ditch; the mid-way being so much below the side pavement, that an active person might have jumped over a full loaded wagon. The Abbey was close on the high road … This monastery has been rendered famous, as the last residence of Cardinal Wolsey … The Cardinal was buried in the Chapel, the floor of which is now converted into a flower garden. I just remember some fragments of the windows, the only part of the Abbey then remaining. The present ruins are the remains of the private residence of the Devonshire family, who lived here in great splendour … I remember being present when a digging was set on foot to find the Cardinal’s bones.

‘In 1774, the town gates were taken down, and the walls allowed to be built upon. The large High Cross was removed from the principal street, and a single column, which originally formed a part of that building, was left in its place. This also has been wisely removed. (13) … An important epoch was the navigation being extended from Loughborough to Leicester. Before this time, the coal was brought upon the backs of horses and asses, from the pits at Coleorton … Soon as we began to be supplied with coal by the navigation, the pit owners in Derbyshire tempted Sir George Beaumont, by a large sum, to shut up his pits at Coleorton, and for more than twenty years the old supply was cut off. The invention of railroads, however, has at once destroyed this compact, and the Swannington Railroad has lowered the price one-third, has extended the manufactory, and greatly added to the comforts of the poor. (14) The invention of the notched wheel by William Dawson, a stocking-maker, who lived in the Horsepool Street, has been the means of introducing entirely new descriptions of work into the manufactory, by this simple contrivance. (15) …

‘The whole of the houses from the North Gate to the South Gate, and from the East Gate to the West, were entirely built of wood. The town wall ran from the South Gate to the corner where stands the Lion and Lamb; from thence by Gallowtree Gate, Church Gate, Sanvey Gate, to the river. (16) In the gardens of the better houses, now occupied by Dr Freer, Dr Shaw, Mr Burnaby, Mr Nedham, &c are to be seen the mulberry trees, planted by Act of Parliament, in Charles’s reign, with the intent of cultivating our own silk. (17) …

‘The Shambles was a large old building at the bottom of Shambles Lane, which was, some hundred years afterwards, converted into Green Coat School. (18) All the principal inns and roads were on the outside of the eastern wall … An unsightly building, for the sale of butchers’ meat, ran from the White Lion to the Conduit, which remained for many years, till the good taste of the inhabitants removed it. (19) At that time there was another building, called the Gainsborough, the lower part of which was a prison, perhaps situated where the Exchange now stands. (20) At this time there might be three drapers’ shops in the Market Place. I remember Mr Bentley’s and Samuel Matthews’. The window places were quite open without any glass; the shutter was contrived to fall down like a shelf, upon which the tammy and linsey-woolseys were exposed for sale. (21) Thomas Simpson, the celebrated self-taught mathematician and F.R.S., was a weaver of this home-spun. (22) … In the White Apron Fair, held between the Cross and the Southgates, I remember scores of women sitting on chairs, with their home-spun linen on their knees, to accommodate the less wealthy customers. … In 1788, Richard Phillips, a schoolmaster, settled in Leicester, and … formed a Philosophical Society, called the Adelphi. (23) Of this brotherhood I was a member … We numbered at last seventeen members; but the French Revolution breaking out in 1789, we were called upon to discontinue our meetings, lest politics should creep in to our discussions … Of distant impressions, none are so strong in my recollection as the great Music Meeting on the opening of St Martin’s organ, in 1774, when I was four years and a half old … When the music ceased, the eyes of the congregation were fixed on a black man in a singular dress. It was … Omai, just brought from the Sandwich Islands by Captain Cook. He stood up in wild amazement at what was going on, for he was brought
down to see what effect this grand crash of sounds would have upon him …

‘The most important [musical] society was St Margaret’s Catch Club, formed of the singers of that church, and those of the Great Meeting, who dined together, with the heads of the town, once a year. At these jovial meetings, rounds and catches were performed, as being full of mirth and hilarity. It is stated in 1774, ‘there will be a concert, gratis, at the Assembly Rooms, at eleven o’clock, after which the company will adjourn to the Three Cranes, to dine at two’. (24) … ‘We never had a regular built theatre in this town. There was an old building in Millstone Lane, called the play-house, which afterwards took the name of the Tabernacle; and I remember seeing John Wesley, with his white ringlets hanging down his back, going to preach his first sermon there. (25) Afterwards a modern chapel was built on the spot. About the year 1770, plays formed a delightful and fashionable amusement in the county. … I see by the Leicester Journal, that the Kembles and Siddons, in their early career, visited Leicester … long before they became eminent on the London stage. (26) …

‘In my father’s time, there were only two carriages kept in Leicester: Mr Lewis, the principal hosier, and the Recorder, Wright’s’. (27) There were no carts or waggons; everything was conveyed on the backs of horses. It was common to see a string of bell horses at a manufacturer’s door, waiting to be loaded for all parts of the kingdom. (28) Those who did not aspire to keep a carriage, kept a double horse - a strong steady animal, with a pillion behind the saddle, for ladies; and for mounting, horse blocks were placed in different parts of the town …

‘Dancing, sixty years ago, seems to have been almost the only entertainment in Leicester, and kept up with such spirit, that never less than twelve subscription assemblies took place in the year. What gave such éclat to this accomplishment, was the eminent teacher, Mr Frudd, who I well knew … (29) He taught every week at Mrs Linwood’s, and Miss Pepinn and Ayscough’s, and other ladies, were admitted to his lectures in their houses. (30) In 1774, is advertised Mr Frudd’s ball, to begin at half-past four, soon as tea was over in the afternoon … In the same paper is another instance of these primitive times, Mr Winstanley, the sheriff, will give a ball, to begin at six o’clock, and ladies and gentlemen may have tickets by sending to Mr Gregory for them. (31) …

‘During the American war, when the French prisoners were here, they introduced the manly exercise of skating, and the constant frosts, the thermometer often being below zero, drew out every one that could raise a pair of skates, to attempt the same. In February 1784, a pantomimic masquerade was performed by thirty or forty skaters on the ice, between the West Bridge and Vauxhall … Thousands of gazers were present upon the banks, enjoying the sight. (32) …

‘The dog days were insupportable, by their excessive heat. All handicraft business in the middle of the day, for two or three hours, was suspended, and the thermometer rose to what would be called a West Indian heat. Then the corn was well ripened, and got in without those mishaps that attend a rainy season; but the moist weather of late years, though detrimental to corn, has been highly succulent to the gardens. When I was young, comparatively, there was no garden stuff. Tons of vegetables are brought into the town now, where none were offered for sale before. My grandfather remembered the first potatoes that were brought to the Cross. (33) The people bit them, and spit them out again. No one would buy; the man gave them away, and said he would come back with a supply in a fortnight. Customers he had in abundance. This is not much further back than the beginning of the last century. What would we have done without them? The poor must have famished …

‘The Free School … formerly was well conducted. The High School was taught by the Rev Mr Pigott; the Middle School by the Rev Daws Ross; and the Low School by the Rev William Bickerstaff. (34) It was then a valuable institution for the education of the sons of freemen. I have heard my father say, he recollected the old Lord Stamford, and his brother, the Hon Booth Grey, as boys, coming every morning to the upper school from Steward’s Hay. (35) The Mayor and Corporation appointed the masters, and judged of the scholars’ progress. The boys had used to make their speeches in Latin and Greek, at the Cross, before the Body Corporate, but how they were rewarded, I do not recollect. The lower schools had hot buns given to them in the porch, at seven o’clock in the morning; and once a year was a supper, called a potation, for the lower masters, who invited their friends, at which there were plenty of libations of punch and ale. …

‘In poetry … we had a pre-eminent genius of the name of Rozzel. (36) He … was a stocking-maker. The Revolution Club established by the Messrs Woods, in conjunction with the Whig gentry of the county, honored Rozzel with the title of Poet Laureate to their Society, and every 4th of November he produced an Ode upon Liberty, and the excellence of our Constitution as established in 1688. (37) Some thirty years afterwards, Mr Combe, the printer of the Leicester Chronicle (set up by Mr Ruding, of Westcotes) became the champion of liberty, and wrote many songs. (38) …

‘In this desultory manner have I brought before you, what I have seen and known of my native town … On looking back, I am inclined to say, that in the middle rank in which I have been brought up, that we live more rationally, and have greater enjoyments than our forefathers. They no doubt, had more solid beef and pudding, and more leisure, than us, but they had not a tythe of our luxuries, and knew nothing of the pleasures we derive from books and science, and a thousand other things, which a refined state of society affords …

2. _Leicester Journal_. 3rd, 10th and 17th January 1845.

3. The remains found when the Old Borough Gaol was demolished in 1792 are usually thought to be those of St John’s Hospital.

4. The Huntingdon Tower, demolished in 1902.

5. It was started by Richard Nedham in March 1760, and ran from Nottingham to London, via Loughborough, Leicester and Market Harborough.

6. In May 1791.

7. The Spittal House was an almshouse at the end of Belgrave Gate.

8. The population of Leicester was 16,953 in 1801; by 1841 it was 50,853, with 12,137 houses and another 300 in course of erection.

9. The Three Crowns, at the corner of Horsefair Street and Granby Street, was demolished in 1867; the Jolly Miller disappears from directories after 1822.

10. The Recorder’s House was on the north side of Belvoir Street.

11. Phipps’ field was so called because it was rented by Alderman Thomas Phipps, who was mayor of Leicester in 1749; ‘the present race course’ is now Victoria Park.


13. The column was removed in 1836 to the Crescent in King Street; from there it went to Highcross House in Gwendolen Road c.1923; to the Newarke Houses in 1954; and to its present location in Cheapside in 1977.

14. The Leicester Navigation was opened in 1794; the Leicester & Swanington Railway was inaugurated in 1832.

15. The use of Dawson’s wheel, invented in 1791, greatly improved the manufacture of fancy hosiery. Horsepool Street is the present Oxford Street.

16. The Lion & Lamb in Gallowtree Gate was pulled down c.1878 to improve access to the Market Place.

17. Dr John Freer lived in Southgate Street; Dr George Shaw in New Street; Beaumont Burnaby in Friar Lane; and John Nedham in Belgrave Gate.

18. The Greencoat School (Alderman Newton’s), near St Nicholas’ Church, opened about 1785 in the old shambles, where the butchers had once sold their meat. Shambles Lane was later called Applegate Street.

19. The White Lion was in the Market Place; the Conduit, a source of water for many citizens, was in Cheapside.

20. The Gainsborough – the origin of the name is unknown – a combined market hall and prison, was replaced by the New Gainsborough in 1748. This is the building Gardiner refers to as the Exchange, which in turn was replaced by the present Corn Exchange in the 1850s.

21. Tammy was a fine worsted cloth; linsey-woolsey was a coarse mixture of wool and flax.

22. Thomas Simpson (1710-1761), the ‘Bosworth prodigy’, who found fame through his mathematical treatises.

23. Sir Richard Phillips (1767-1840), author, bookseller, publisher and founder of the short-lived _Leicester Herald_ (1792). The Adelphi Society, which met in Phillips’ schoolroom in Bond Street, was suppressed in 1793, when he was sent to prison for selling Tom Paine’s _Rights of Man_.

24. The Assembly Rooms were approximately on the site of the Clock Tower; the Three Cranes, one of the town’s leading inns, was in Gallowtree Gate.

25. No reference to a theatre in Millstone Lane has been found. John Wesley preached in the Tabernacle, a former barn, on a number of occasions in the 1770s and 1780s. The building, at the Southgate Street end of Millstone Lane, was taken down in 1787, and replaced by a purpose-built chapel, in turn largely replaced by Bishop Street Methodist Chapel in 1815.

26. John Philip Kemble visited Leicester in 1776; his sister, Sarah Siddons, and her husband, William, were here in 1774 and 1778.

27. William Lewis, of Highcross Street. Sir Nathan Wright was Recorder of Leicester, 1680-84. He died in 1721, and as Gardiner’s father was not born till 1743, he may be confusing him with George Wright, Sir Nathan’s grandson, who was M.P. for Leicester, 1727-65.

28. Bell horses are probably packhorses, which had bells on their harness.

29. Mr Frudd, of Nottingham, was a violinist and dancing master.

30. Mrs Hannah Linwood, mother of the celebrated needlework artist Mary Linwood, ran a boarding school for young ladies in Belgrave Gate; Misses Peppin and Ayscough had one in High Street.

31. Clement Winstanley (d.1808) of Braunstone Hall was High Sheriff of Leicestershire in 1774; John Gregory (1727-1789) was proprietor and printer of the _Leicester Journal_.

32. This took place on 2nd February 1784. The Bath Gardens, or Vauxhall Gardens, near the West Bridge, were a place of outdoor amusement, with illuminations, fireworks, concerts, plays etc. They closed in 1797.

33. The High Cross, where fruit, vegetables, and other produce were sold by country people at the Wednesday Market.

34. The Rev James Pigott was headmaster of the Free Grammar School in Highcross Street; Rev John Dawes Ross the usher, and Rev William Bickerstaff the under-usher.

35. An old shooting lodge, Steward’s Hay, near Groby, was incorporated in the now-demolished Bradgate House in 1856.

36. Charles Rozzel(l) (1754-1792) was the champion of the Revolution of 1688; 4th November was the anniversary of William III’s birth, which they celebrated with a dinner at the Lion & Lamb and other inns. The Messrs Woods were probably Henry and Thomas Wood, leading hosiery. The club ceased to meet after 1792.

37. The Revolution Club, formed in 1782 to promote political progress and parliamentary reform, was named after the English Revolution of 1688; 4th November was the anniversary of William III’s birth, which they celebrated with a dinner at the Lion & Lamb.

38. Thomas Combe, bookseller and printer, of Hotel Street. Walter Ruding of Westcotes Hall was the chief proprietor of the _Leicester Chronicle_ which started in 1810.
Enclosure of Thrussington

Celia Cotton

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, enclosure resulted in dramatic changes to the landscape as the medieval open fields were replaced by the patchwork of hedged fields which we are familiar with today.

Enclosure allocated landowners one or more larger plots, replacing their previous numerous, disparate strips of land, giving them the opportunity to make more efficient use of their land. They were also often allocated common and waste grounds for their exclusive use. This was however at the expense of any poorer inhabitants who relied on the free resources from the common lands, whilst prior to enclosure, any villagers with the ‘right of common’ could graze a stinted number of cattle and sheep, collect wood and gorse for fuel (1), and gather other free resources from these common lands, all of which supplemented the household ‘pot’.

This article explores these themes for Thrussington, a Leicestershire village in the East Goscote Hundred, which had around 80 homes when its relatively late enclosure took place in 1790. (2) Key historical sources used for this study are the original documents prepared during the enclosure process, including minutes of the enclosure commissioners’ meetings, a detailed field survey, the enclosure award, land tax assessments, charity records and local history publications.

Thrussington Enclosure Plans

By 1760, at least 197 out of 396 places in Leicestershire were entirely enclosed (3), and in the Thrussington area by 1789 the surrounding parishes of Rearsby, Ratcliffe on the Wreake, Seagrave and Hoby had already been enclosed for 15 or more years following Acts of Parliament. (4) The relative tardiness of enclosure plans for Thrussington may be due to one of its three lords of the manor not supporting enclosure, whilst a major fire in Thrussington in 1785 may also have resulted in a temporary delay.

However on 19th March 1789 the Bill entitled ‘An Act for dividing, allotting, and enclosing the Open Common Fields, and several other Lands and Grounds in the Parish of Thrussington, otherwise Thurstanton, otherwise Trussington, in the County of Leicester’ was considered by the House of Commons. This Bill was supported by all three lords of the manor - the Right Honorable George Capel Coningesby (Lord Viscount Malden), the Reverend John Orton and Joseph Noble Esquire - none of whom lived in Thrussington. Malden was the MP for Okehampton, Devon from 1785 to 1790, also Patron of the Vicarage and Parish Church of Thrussington and impropriator of the great tithes of corn and hay; John Orton was the Rector of Rearsby, a parish adjacent to Thrussington; whilst Joseph Noble was a banker who lived in Melton Mowbray.

There was however, local opposition to the Bill: the Journal of the House of Commons notes ‘the Parties concerned had given their Consent to the Bill to the Satisfaction of the Committee except the Owners of One Yard Land and Two Acres who refused to consent to the Bill’. (5) A yardland was around 30 acres.

The objectors may have numbered as many as 8 to 10 individuals who each owned just a few acres (see Table 2) but they were heavily outweighed by those in favour, who although similar in number, owned much of the land, and the Act was passed on 30th March 1789.

The Act appointed John Claridge of Upton upon Severn, Worcestershire, William Fillingham of Flawborough, Nottinghamshire, and William Dickenson of Copshall (Gopshall?), Leicestershire as commissioners, and that the land ‘shall be surveyed and measured by John Smith, of Packington,... and John Seagrave, of Kirby Bellows... this...Survey, Admeasurement, and Plan, shall be delivered to the
said Commissioners … on or before the twenty-ninth day of September 1789’. (6)

The three commissioners were responsible for preparing the Enclosure Award. This document set out the allocations of land and improvements to roads and drainage, and also the process to turn the open field system into enclosed fields, including fencing, hedging and the management of grazing stock.

The Survey, Admeasurement and Plan

Before enclosure, Thrussington had three large open fields (Ratcliffe, Middle and Hoby) which provided over 950 acres of arable farming, one field being left fallow each year. These fields lay to the west, north and east of the village, and cultivation would have been a communal affair with men (and for certain jobs also women and children) ploughing, sowing, weeding and harvesting. The arable land was supplemented by over 44 acres of pasture land, Great Meadow and Little Meadow, to the south side of the village running down to the river Wreake. (7)

The land to be enclosed also included a large area of common or waste ground to the north of the parish, known as the Lower and Upper Wolds, which ran up to Six Hills, with the Fosse Way forming its western boundary. The Wolds was an uncultivated area and included Thrussington Wolds Gorse which as well as being used as a fox covert by the Quorn Hunt, was used as a source of fuel by the inhabitants of Thrussington. The Wolds area was used for sheep and cattle grazing and must have looked much wilder in aspect than the cultivated open fields and meadows to the south of the parish.

The 1789 field survey survives as a paper booklet and shows details of ownership of each of the three fields, two meadows and land in the 'ring of the town'. (8) Unfortunately any accompanying plan does not survive.

The survey shows that each of the three open fields was subdivided into several furlongs of typically 20-30 acres, each named to reflect its position or features, for example Coalpit Leys, Dob Headland, Crabtree, Hen and Chickins, Foulstick Leys, Gravel Pit, Marlpit and Otterdale. The surveyors valued the land in shillings per acre, often noting more than one quality of land within a furlong, and their valuations ranged from 6 shillings per acre for the poorest quality to 30 shillings for the best.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Acreage (a)</th>
<th>No. strips (b)</th>
<th>No. plots (c)</th>
<th>Total value (d)</th>
<th>Average value/acre in shillings (e)</th>
<th>Min, max value/ac in shillings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ratcliffe Field</td>
<td>395</td>
<td>1176</td>
<td>535</td>
<td>£310 18s 7d</td>
<td>15.74</td>
<td>6, 30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle Field</td>
<td>202</td>
<td>538</td>
<td>216</td>
<td>£157 15s 0d</td>
<td>15.61</td>
<td>10, 30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hoby Field</td>
<td>353</td>
<td>912</td>
<td>425</td>
<td>£296 19s 5d</td>
<td>16.81</td>
<td>6, 30</td>
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<tr>
<td>Little Meadow</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>£13 16s 5d</td>
<td>25.00</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Great Meadow</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>£43 0s 3d</td>
<td>26.16</td>
<td>25, 30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coalpit Leys</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>£3 11s 11d</td>
<td>7.24</td>
<td>6.5, 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foss</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>19s 0d</td>
<td>10.00</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ring of the Town (f)</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>£86 8s 8d</td>
<td>30.03</td>
<td>28, 36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>1068</td>
<td>2761</td>
<td>1318</td>
<td>£913 9s 3d</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Summary from field survey of 1789 of the fields, meadows due to be enclosed and the old enclosures in the 'Ring of the Town'.

Notes: a) to nearest acre b) surveyors used a range of descriptions reflecting variations in use, shape or position of strips (ie land, ley, rood, close, headland, headley, balk, hade, pingle, wong; and when none of these was right 'piece at top') c) most plots comprised 2 or more adjacent strips d) value originally recorded in shillings and decimals e) total value divided by total acreage f) 'Old Inclosures in the Ring of the Town': around 50 properties.
Areas of ground with no owner were also recorded in the survey, and naming suggests communal use, eg Meer Common. The survey also listed 54 closes within the three open fields, these were hedged or fenced enclosures (much like modern fields), each having one owner. A total of 31 landowners were recorded who either held some strips in the open fields, or a plot in the ‘town’ with one or more properties, or both: Table 2 shows aggregate acreages by landowner. The 31 landowners included the Feoffees of Loughborough, a trust which owned Bridge Farm and land in Thrussington, using rents to fund the maintenance of bridges in the area, with any residual monies being disbursed to the poor of Loughborough. (9)

The Commissioners’ Meetings

Listed amongst the landowners was Jonathan Marston ‘victualler’ who owned a few strips in the open fields, and it was at his public house in Thrussington, that the Thrussington enclosure process commenced when two of the commissioners, John Claridge and William Dickenson, met on 18th May 1789 (10). Claridge appears to have taken a lead role throughout the process: he attended all meetings with his fellow commissioners and was the first signatory of the minutes.

The minutes of their first meeting show plans being made for allotting plots to landowners and managing stock during the enclosure process: landowners were to be instructed to complete their second tith of the fallows by August 1st next. Also ‘The said Commissioners ordered that every five yardlands and a half in the fallow field be folded with 121 sheep, and that each fold contain forty folding Fleaks (11) … and that the said folding be made on the most convenient part of the said field nearest their own Walks.’ (12) The first minutes also show that large quantities of gravel were required to surface the widened roads, recording arrangements for Thomas Cook of Hoby, labourer, to search for suitable sources of gravel in Thrussington under the direction of the two surveyors.

The commissioners met on seven more occasions. On 6th July 1789 they agreed the new enclosure road widths (45 feet wide to Ratcliffe, 50 feet to Hoby, 50 feet to Loughborough). Prior to enclosure these roads had grass verges where villagers could graze their animals.

At their meeting on 21st July, the commissioners considered the allotments of land, meeting this time at the Three Cranes Inn, Leicester where they were to work for five days. A further three days were spent at the Three Cranes from the 16th to 18th November, at which it was minuted that the Commons were to be cleared of ‘Neat Cattle’ on 11th December. They also ‘Ordered that the timber and wood upon the Wounds and Loundsdale to be valued by Mr John Seagrave and Thomas Draycott of Cossington on or before the first day of January next and that the Proprietors of the Lands on which the said wood and timber stands on shall take … at such sum or sums as the same shall be valued’. (13)

The allotments were reconsidered and plans discussed for road access to Rearsby mill ‘which said road is also to be used by the Owners and occupiers of lands in Thrussington … to and from the river Wreak in order to wash their sheep.’

The final note however, indicates a glitch in proceedings: 'Memorandum. That at this meeting Mr Wm Dickenson one of the said Commissioners declined and refused to act further …whereupon … at a meeting held at the house of Mrs Kirby … The Wheel in Rearsby … 4th day December 1789 … Mr Thomas Eagle of Allesley … Warwick gentleman was duly appointed'.

The three commissioners next met on 14th December 1789 at the Three Cranes and 'Mr Eagle … took and subscribed the Oath'. 'The said Commissioners decided upon and settled the allotments as schemed out at the last meeting … and ordered the same to be staked out accordingly. Also directed and ordered the fencing of the Tithe Allotments and the other Allotments and directed the Surveyors to deliver to the several proprietors an account in writing of their respective proportions of fencing. ... The said Commissioners ordered that from the first Day of January next all Right of Common belonging to or claimed by any person or persons in over and upon any of the Land by the said Act directed to be Inclosed shall cease determine and be for ever extinguished.'

Another glitch was resolved: 'The Owner of Rearsby Mill having attended at this meeting and having declined to purchase a right of road … the said Commissioners … directed that such road should nevertheless continue as a private road for the owners and occupiers of Lands in Thrussington … to and from the River Wreak for washing their sheep and other purposes.' They also 'Ordered that Mr Carter do prepare a Draft of our Award' for discussion at their next meeting.

On March 16th 1790, again at the Three Cranes, the commissioners made some final adjustments to the allotments and prepared rates to cover the costs of the enclosure process and for the maintenance of public roads. Mr Carter, who appears to have taken the minutes and communicated with inhabitants of Thrussington through pinning notices to the church door, was asked to look into the position regarding Lord Malden's contribution towards fencing of land he received in lieu of tithes.

A final three day meeting at the Three Cranes took place between the 18th and 20th May 1790 and a minute 'Ordered
as to the Cottages and Buildings that are to be taken down that the same be cleared away within 6 calendar months from this time' may indicate clearance of squatters' cottages.

The final minute was a triumphal 'we have made and executed our award'.

The Enclosure Award

The enclosure award consists of 87 close-written pages and recites from the Enclosure Act: 'And it was by the said Act further Enacted that for the more convenient and better allotting and dividing the said Lands and Grounds all and every the Crofts Closes Homesteads and old Inclosures in the said Parish of Thrussington ... belonging to any Proprietors of the said Open Fields Meadows Pastures and other open Lands should be thrown into Hotchpot and should be divided allotted and inclosed with the rest of the Lands and Grounds ...'

(14)

The current arrangement for tithes was outlined: 'Reverend William Casson Clerk and the present Vicar thereof and as such was intitled to certain Glebe Lands and Common Right in respect thereof in the said Lands by the said Act intended to be divided and inclosed and was also intitled as Vicar to the small Tythes of Wool Lamb and Pigs and all other small Tythes arising within the said Parish.'

The great and small tithes were commuted at enclosure, the Award states Malden and Casson were to receive compensatory allotments 'to be equal in value to one seventh Part of the said Old Inclosures and all other Lands so intended to be divided and inclosed.' These plots were to be 'fenced round and mounded by Quickset Hedges Ditches and Gates or Fences which Quickset Hedges should be guarded or Fenced by and with Posts and Rails or otherwise at the expense of the other proprietors of the Lands and Grounds' within six calendar months.

The area to be enclosed was 1,903 acres 1 rood and 21 perches 'excluding of all Public Carriage and Drift Roads and Ways in through and over the same and of the several Streets and Lanes within the Town of Thrussington aforesaid and the Church Yard.'

The allocations of plots start with that to the three Lords of the Manor. This is followed by details of the four sites identified for the Surveyors of the Highways to quarry 'Gravel Stone and Sand for the repairing of the Public Roads and Ways.' The allocation to the vicar, the individual allocations to the three lords of the manor and Earl Ferrers follow, and then allocations to other landowners in surname sequence.

The final pages list three rates apportioned across the landowners: to cover the £1,500 costs of enclosure (a one-off payment); and two annual rates: £1,032 10s.0d. for maintenance of the roads and £1,230 10s.0d. for drainage. These were huge sums, and it has been mooted that enclosure forced some smaller landowners to sell their land as they could not afford the costs. In comparison, the total annual Land Tax Assessment for Thrussington from 1787 to 1797 had been £45 17s.10d., which had been apportioned across around 30 individuals who paid amounts from 11d upwards. (15)

Table 2 shows landholdings before and after enclosure. Although the plan that accompanied the enclosure award does not survive, the position of each plot is described in sufficient detail to pin-point it on an OS map from the nineteenth century. (16)
The 3.59 acres allocated to Reverend Henry Browne of Hoby has unusual origins: in the seventeenth century Susanna and Dorothy Danvers of The Grange, Thrussington, were walking home in the evening after visiting and became lost in the Wolds. The 8pm striking of Hoby's church clock enabled them to find their way home, and in gratitude they granted to the Rector of Hoby a piece of land in Thrussington, asking that 'the said bell to be rung at the same time to the end of time'. (17)

**After Enclosure**

Those shown in Table 2 owned land or property or both and with a few exceptions, received additional land at enclosure and appear to have met the enclosure rates levied. Occupational data, taken from probate records, parish registers and R.E. Banks' booklets (18), show many of this group had income from other employments. However, the majority of the inhabitants of Thrussington do not appear in Table 2 as they were tenants not owners of property and/or land, and a provisional list of names has been prepared from the enclosure award and land tax assessments, baptisms and burials (19), charity payments and land tax assessments. The list includes labourers, the elderly and widows.

The following tenants did not receive charity payments and there is no evidence that they were disastrously impacted by enclosure: Barsby (Thomas, labourer), Benskin, Bradford, Brocas or Brookhouse, Dalby, Draper, Hubbard, Hudson, Hulse, Leadbetter, Morley, Phipps, Smart, Warren, Wilbourne, Wollerton.

The following either received small charity payments, typically 1s. to 5s., once or twice a year between 1787 and 1800, or were described 'pauper' in the parish registers: Adcock (widow), Armstrong, Bamkin (widow), Besson, Bennett, Brown (William), Chamberlain (Thomas, William), Crofts (widow), Cross, Earl/Eyrl, Fukes, Garner, Gilbert, Hall, Hallam (or Allam/Allen), Hampson, Hornbuckle, Hubbard, Kirk (Joseph), Lac(e)y, Matthews, Preston, Sharp, Spencer, Squire, Stephenson, Toone, Underwood, Walton (widow), Watts, Wells. Some of this group started to receive payments around 1790 and this may be linked to enclosure. Unfortunately the churchwardens' accounts which may have provided more detail about individual cases no longer survive.

In terms of recompense to the poor, 1 acre and 23 perches was allocated to the Churchwardens and Overseers of the Poor of Thrussington in lieu of lands belonging to the church and town of Thrussington. The annual rental value was
around 20 to 35 shillings, depending upon land quality; however the expenditure on the poor already exceeded £147/annum in the period 1783-5 (20), so the contribution of 35 shillings was insignificant.

Some accounts follow which show how individuals fared following enclosure:

Reverend John Orton, Rector of Rearsby and a lord of the manor
Prior to enclosure Orton owned about 178 acres of land split across over 240 sets of strips and had a half share with John Brown in around 220 acres. He and Brown between them owned over 40% of the cultivated land in Thrussington. Orton also owned 3 houses and 9 tenements in Thrussington and other small plots of land in or adjacent to the village including a garden and orchard. He jointly owned a further 8 houses and homesteads with Brown. (21) At enclosure his landholdings increased to over 280 acres, plus a half share in over 350 acres with Brown. As one of the three Lords of the Manor he was also allocated a third share of a plot of around 7 acres in the Upper Wolds as ‘compensation … for ...Right of Soil in the said Commons and Waste Lands’. He paid over £430 towards the rate to defray enclosure costs and a total of £300 in annual rates for road and drain maintenance. Orton had not however long to enjoy his new, enlarged landholdings. As Throsby notes ‘On Monday last died at Rearsby, in this county, the Reverend Mr Orton, rector of that place. His universal benevolence and extensive charity are well known, and his loss will be severely felt by the many poor families who experienced his bounty.’ (22)

Lord Viscount Malden, Earl of Essex
Prior to enclosure, Lord Malden owned over 160 acres of land and 11 houses and homesteads in Thrussington. He was also the impropriator of great tithes, which were commuted at enclosure: this brought him an extra 169 acres in compensation, and he received further allocations taking his total holding to over 640 acres. His property portfolio was reduced as some properties were allocated to other landowners. He paid a one-off rate of nearly £328, and a total of £586 in annual rates. Malden making little of any adverse effects on the poorer inhabitants, commented in 1814 extolling the benefits of small farms: ‘Advantage of small farms: In the village of Thrussington, inclosed about 24 years since, the Earl of Essex is a considerable proprietor. At the time of inclosure, the noble earl had four cottages and 26 acres of land laid out, which were let to four labouring men at the commissioners’ value: these four men have amply compensated for the noble earl's liberality, in bringing up 32 children, without any assistance from the parish; most of whom are in service, and of excellent character in their situations. If the great land-owners would follow the noble earl's example, the poor-rates throughout the country would be considerably reduced, and industry and sobriety laudably encouraged.’ (23)

Robert Earl Ferrers
Robert was a nephew of Lawrence Earl Ferrers, who was hanged at Tyburn in 1760 for shooting his steward. The title passed to Lawrence’s brother Robert 6th Earl Ferrers. The latter built the new Ragdale Hall in 1785 and upon his death in 1787, the title passed to his eldest son, Robert 7th Earl Ferrers. He used Ragdale Hall as a base for hunting. Ferrers held a few acres of land in Thrussington prior to enclosure and was allocated around 33 acres, which he immediately planted up forming Ragdale Wood, which remains today.

William Barsby, yeoman
The Barsby family of farmers were resident in Thrussington by 1649. (24) An unusual sequence of events led to their land holdings increasing in 1782, when William Barsby recovered lands from the Storer estate. (25) At enclosure, Barsby was allocated five plots, including one of 45 acres in the former common or waste grounds in the Upper Wolds, taking his total landholdings to over 130 acres. In his will proved in 1813, he divided his land amongst his children, having sold his plot in the Upper Wolds to William Bryans, a grazier, by 1797. (26)

William Black, small farmer
William Black was a small landowner owning 12 sets of strips spread across the three open fields prior to enclosure amounting to 9.61 acres. It seems likely he grew cereal crops in the open fields, and made use of grazing rights on the common lands prior to enclosure. At enclosure he received one plot in Hoby field of 13.06 acres, under four additional acres, and paid enclosure costs of £13 14s.10d. as a one-off payment, coupled with £19 10s. annual rates for road maintenance and drains. In 1799, his estate (including cows, calves, heifers and sheep) was valued under £20 (27), the costs of enclosure, coupled with loss of grazing rights, being possible causes of his reduced circumstances.

William Ferneley, wheelwright and small farmer
The father of local painter John Ferneley (28), William received three allotments at enclosure totalling over 4 acres. This is less than the Ferneley landholdings recorded in 1789 (nearly 7 acres). The death of William’s father Joseph during the enclosure process may explain this anomaly.

George Boulter
George Boulter owned a dwelling house, yard and garden occupying 11 perches in the village. At enclosure he retained this plot but lost any right of common arising from property ownership. At Christmas 1791 he started to receive regular charity payments from the Thomas Haynes fund, an indication of reduced circumstances. (30) This could have been due to loss of access to grazing or fuel at enclosure; or to ill health; or he may have been unable to support his growing family, his children being too young in 1791 to supplement the family earnings.
The enclosure of Thrussington was inevitable following the enclosure of the surrounding parishes. It is difficult to isolate the impact as local and national factors also affected the livelihood of residents, for example poor harvests and the canalisation of the Wreake in the 1790s. The upheaval must have been immense but was completed by November 1792 when William Black referred to his 'land ... lying ... in the lately new enclosed field of Thrussington' in his will.

The exercise was expensive: the value of the open fields and town was under £920 in 1789 (Table 1), and enclosure cost £1,500, plus annual rates exceeding £2,200. The roads and drainage were improved and this increased land values. Also the area of farmed land nearly doubled. Finally, Throsby and Commissioner's Minutes (7b) are filed together.

Conclusions

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The exercise was expensive: the value of the open fields and town was under £920 in 1789 (Table 1), and enclosure cost £1,500, plus annual rates exceeding £2,200. The roads and drainage were improved and this increased land values. Also the area of farmed land nearly doubled. Finally, Throsby who visited in 1790 shortly after enclosure, was able to report:

Thrussington lordship was enclosed in 1789, and contains 2000 acres of land. The principal proprietors are lord Malden, and the Reverend Mr. Orton of Rearsby. A Mr. Barsby, Mr. Lewin, and Mr. Sitson, inhabitants, own also a portion of the lordship. Commendable in the highest degree is the spirit of proprietors of this lordship for the improvement of the roads. The village is the cleanest I have ever seen: the roads through it are broad, round, and made of fine gravel, which sets well. I am told, that the roads have cost more money within these five years than the whole lordship would have sold for in the reign of queen Elizabeth. The village consists of 80 dwellings, one of which is the Reverend Mr. Casson's. Many of the houses are of brick, and look well. (33)
Towards the end of 1932 a scheme to provide ‘homesteads’ for unemployed men and their families was put before the Borough Council in Leicester. Four smallholdings of ten acres were proposed, each with a house and outbuildings, and a minimum stock of 100 fowls, 12 pigs, one cow, three steers and 12 lambs, all to be leased from the Council for a rental of £9 a year. Part of the land was also to be used for horticulture or market gardening, with the sale of produce from this and the stock expected to enable tenants to support themselves. The estimated cost was £1200, to be paid from the remaining funds of the former Distress Committee, which had been invested since 1927 and now stood at £3300. It was also proposed to raise money for further homesteads through public appeals, a street collection and the sale of a million three-penny stamps. (1)

The Homesteads scheme was conceived by Alderman Amos Sherriff, Chairman of the Council’s Unemployed Committee and one of the leaders of the march of unemployed footwear workers from Leicester to London in 1905. (2) Born in Russell Square, Leicester in 1856, he was the son of William Sherriff, a glove hand, and his wife Sarah, a seamstress. At the age of six he started work in a local brickyard, where he was employed for many years before setting up in business as a cycle maker and dealer. Not surprisingly, he received ‘practically no schooling, but as a young man, spent much of his spare time in learning to read and write, in other words, he is a self educated man, having risen from the ranks’. (3) From around 1877 he was also a member of the Christian Mission and its successor, the Salvation Army. A passionate campaigner for the unemployed throughout his political career, in 1901 he was elected to the Leicester Poor Law Board as a representative of the Independent Labour Party, and served as a Guardian for 17 years. In 1905 he became Chairman of the Distress Committee, established under the Unemployed Workmen Act of that year, and a Labour Party representative for the West Humberstone ward of the Borough Council in 1908. Apart from a short period in 1923 – 24, he retained his seat until he was elected as an Alderman in 1928, serving as Mayor in 1922 – 23 and as a Justice of the Peace from 1921. He continued to serve on the Council until 1944, resigning shortly before his death in the following year at the age of 88. (4)

Although modest in terms of the numbers involved – at that time over 16,000 people were registered as unemployed in Leicester in June 1932 (5) - the Homesteads scheme was designed to address some of the long-term unemployment that persisted in Leicester, despite the diverse industrial base that protected it from the higher levels of unemployment in other areas of the country. It was said to be the first ‘back-to-the-land’ scheme initiated by a local authority, one of its purposes being to ‘demonstrate the usefulness of these small holdings, and in consequence to encourage the extension of the principle here and elsewhere’. (6) Such schemes had a lengthy history by the 1930s. Many of them were driven by the belief articulated by the Chartist leader Feargus O’Connor in 1843, that they were the only real and lasting solution to the ills of urban capitalist society - unemployment being foremost among them: ‘Where are we to find employment for the machinery-displaced labourer but upon the land!...The position we should wish man to occupy on THE LAND is one of independence! To be there his own master!’ (7)
having been assured that ‘it would not cost the City Council or the ratepayers a penny’. (12) It already owned the land selected for the 70 acre site, part of the City Farms between Birstall and Thurcaston Road, fronting onto Greengate Lane. This was close to a water main, avoiding costly investment in the infrastructure, while the Council’s Gas Committee also agreed to connect a gas main for cooking and lighting to the site for £600. The Homesteads themselves consisted of ten wooden bungalows, each with seven acres of land – addressing concerns that, if ten acre plots were too small for a general farm, they were too large to manage efficiently as a ‘smallholding’. Around four acres were to be stocked with animals, mainly poultry and pigs, and the remainder cultivated. Each bungalow cost £136, and cost of the scheme was not expected to exceed £3000, including the stock. Rents were originally set at 3s 4d – 3s 8d a week according to the position of each plot of land. (13)

Arrangements were made for an employee of the Farms Committee to provide training for the tenants, and despite – or perhaps because of - his initial reservations, Mr Hacking also offered his services free of charge as an advisor to the project, along with experts on poultry and horticulture. ‘We do not draw any fine distinction between the county and city boundaries’, he said, ‘when we see an opportunity for helping the development of agriculture in any form’. (14)

Even so, some members of the City Farms Committee: ‘apparently did not share the optimism of Alderman Sherriff that the experiment was bound to be a striking success. More than one… said the men to be placed on the land would have a real tough job… but they also stated they were quite prepared to do all they could to assist the alderman in his plans’. (15)
When the first tenants were selected in February 1933, preference was given to men who had some prior experience of agricultural work. A shortlist of 20 married men was drawn up from 112 applicants, and the candidates were interviewed at the Town Hall by Ald Sherriff and the Vice Chairman of the Unemployed Committee, the Conservative councillor Herbert W. (‘Bert’) Hoggar. Those offered the tenancies ranged in age from 26 to 45. One had four children, three had two, and six one child each; four had been farm or agricultural workers, the remainder consisting of two market gardeners, a poultry farmer, two with experience in poultry or dairy farming, and a former waggoner. This led one member of the Unemployed Committee to comment that ‘as the scheme stands now, it is not taking the city dweller back to the land, but the land back to the city’. (16) However, there was much to be said for this approach, as demonstrated by previous ‘back-to-the-land’ experiments, from the Chartist Land Plan of the 1840s onwards. (17) As one letter to the local press put it in 1905:

... how can working men whose apprenticeships have been in the boot and shoe, building etc., trades, be expected to farm or successfully produce the results required by being given a spade or a rake, when even those who have been employed at it all their lives are complaining, and bitterly, of outside competition? (18)

In the meantime work had begun on staking out the land for the holdings, and Ald Sherriff reported that ‘at least 100 carpenters have called at his home in the hope that they might be able to obtain employment on the wooden bungalows to be erected under the scheme’. (19) Nine of the ten bungalows were occupied by the time of the official opening ceremony on 15 July 1933, and the smallholdings stocked with poultry. The personal involvement of members of the Unemployed Committee in this process produced some interesting coverage in the local press. In April 1933 it was reported that Cllr Hoggar had attended an auction at Billesdon and purchased 154 hens, 216 small chickens, 58 larger chickens and several poultry houses; and ‘before the hens had been at the Homesteads a couple of hours 30 eggs had been laid’. This report was accompanied by a photograph under the caption ‘Symbols of Easter... Councillor Hoggar among the chickens’. (20) Thirty-nine ewes, 52 lambs, two sows and litters of pigs were soon added to the stock, although plans for tenants to have ten pigs each were delayed by an outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease and the consequent restrictions on the movement of livestock. (21) In May 1933 a group of City Councillors was pictured at the Homesteads, regarding ‘with much interest sheep which had newly arrived for stocking’. Another photograph showed Ald Sherriff and Cllr Hoggar helping to unload young pigs, several of which broke free and caused ‘excitement... there was an enthusiastic chase after the stock, and one pig even got onto the main road before being captured’. (22)
The bungalows themselves came in for some criticism. Cllr C.W. Hartshorn, a member of the Unemployed Committee, described them in April 1933 as ‘very poor dolls’ houses, not big enough nor in any way fit for people to live in’. ‘Is it any good clearing up the slums in Leicester’, asked Cllr C. A. Newport on the same occasion, ‘if we are going to erect them again in Greengate-lane?’ (23) This view was apparently not shared by the tenants themselves, some of whom were familiar with life in the slums. Shortly before the official opening the Mercury reported that several wives of the tenants had asked it to express their thanks for all that had been done for them. ‘I have moved out of the slums’, said one, ‘and I never dreamed of having a place like this to live in. No one could wish for anything better’. (24)

The opening ceremony itself – attended by around 200 people but ‘greatly curtailed owing to a heavy rainstorm’ - was performed by Sir Jonathan North, who as a member of the Board of Guardians in the 1890s had himself been ‘greatly interested in the land question’. Referring to the long history of the ‘back-to-the-land’ movement, he held up a cartoon of himself from 1896 in which he was pictured as a baby in a bathtub reaching for a tablet of soap labelled ‘He won’t be happy until he gets it’. (25) Ald Sherriff himself acknowledged that:

A great deal would, of course, depend on the tenants, but he felt sure they would loyally back up the Unemployed Committee… The scheme had brought hope into the lives of men grown almost desperate through long spells of unemployment. It had given homes to families who for years had been living in rooms, and it provided them with independence, which meant so much in the lives of men and their families. From today the ten tenants on the farm would be “on their own”, and it was up to them to make good and to prove to the critics that it was possible for families to thrive on small holdings. (26)

‘It may be said of any scheme which at a cost of a few thousand pounds is able to absorb immediately only ten families [that it] has very serious limitations’, the Leicester Mercury said:

But the sponsors of the scheme are hopeful that the first cost, relatively high as it is, will prove to have been money well spent, because it will lead to further developments in the economic use of land as small holdings. This view may or may not be justified by results. It depends in some measure upon factors, such as prices and marketing, which are beyond the control either of the committee or the tenants. On general grounds, however, the experiment is abundantly justified. (27)

However, the Homesteads scheme was already experiencing difficulties, and more were to come. Some of the original tenants were receiving ‘transitional’ payments made through the local Employment Exchange to those who had exhausted their National Insurance entitlement or who were not covered by the scheme, but these were conditional on being available for work. If a man was called upon ‘to go to a situation’, he would thus be obliged to leave his smallholding or forfeit the payment. Attempts to secure a grant from the Employment Exchange to support them through their training met with no success, and nor did the deputation to the Ministry of Labour in London that Amos Sherriff headed. He returned ‘disappointed and disillusioned’, and despite his determination that ‘neither men nor devils nor Governments shall stop us going on with the scheme’, most of the tenants were left without any financial help while they were becoming established. (28)

This proved a major obstacle once the first rents for the Homesteads became due. No rent was charged before January 1934 to give the tenants an opportunity to establish themselves, but it was then set at 8s. 6d. a week, considerably more than the 3s. 4d. – 3s. 8d. originally proposed. ‘Folk on Distress “Better-Off”…’, ‘Women Standing Between Us and Starvation’, and ‘Sprouts Unsaleable’ were just some of the headlines in the local press that month, as the majority of tenants declared themselves unable to pay. (29) Far from making a living from their Homestead, they claimed they were making a loss on both stock and produce. The cost of corn to feed the poultry was higher than the income from them; the ground had to be dug manually as it had not been ploughed; and the quality of some land was said to be so poor that the sprouts they had grown could not be sold, and potatoes planted in upturned turf had rotted in the ground. (30) It was impossible to survive, they said, without other sources of income:
Some problems of this kind might have been anticipated, given the timing of the scheme. At a meeting of the Council in March 1933 Cllr Newport declared that: ‘If I was a gambling man I should say the tenants won’t be able to pay the sum during the coming year’. ‘Or any other year’, the Lord Mayor, Cllr Arthur Hawkes added, provoking the retort from Ald Sherriff that ‘on many occasions you have been proved an awful prophet’. (32) Cllr Hoggar himself, left to bear the brunt of the tenants’ complaints when Ald Sherriff fell ill, acknowledged that ‘they had perhaps made one mistake… that being that they started to prepare the land in the summer. If they ever did such a thing again they would start in the winter to get ready for the summer’. (33) Both men, however, placed the main responsibility on the tenants themselves, and clearly regarded any criticism of the scheme as a personal affront. ‘They have been spoon-fed too much’, Cllr Hoggar said:

If they had only tried there is no doubt they would have had some sort of income. They did not repair the gaps in the fence in the ploughed field at the back, so the sheep got in and ate the cabbage plants. After all I had done and all the trouble I had taken for about eight months. I was practically disgusted with it. I fear that some of them hang round the bungalows together most of the time. (34)

Ald Sherriff himself was ‘obviously upset’ when the Leicester Mercury sent a reporter to seek his views:

I have been let down… badly let down, and at a time when I am more or less helpless. I have not been out for four weeks, but I shall try to get up there as soon as I can to see what is behind it… The things they say are not true. The women have been going out to work for years and keeping the men. It is no new thing… (35)

When he was well enough to visit the Homesteads, Ald Sherriff ‘gave a little lecture to each man which undoubtedly impressed them. ‘The Homesteads have to be run like any other business … I know for a fact that there are potatoes still in the ground, not dug up from last year …’. (36) Seven of the tenants met with the Unemployed Committee soon after this and were told ‘in no uncertain terms’ that they must start paying their rents. Some agreed to pay but ‘said they did not want to do this unless everyone was made to pay… all agreed that by the time the summer arrives they will be living in the land of plenty’. (37) In February 1934, however, one tenant was given notice to quit for non-payment of rent and failing to work his smallholding. Other tenants ‘helped him to load his furniture on to a cart… [He said] his wife was ill and he did not want to cause a scene. “I have quit because my wife, two little kiddies and myself would have starved if we had stayed” …’. (38)

The men and their families deeply resented the accusation or implication that they were lazy, arguing that they simply needed more time to become established. ‘All of us have been doing all we can’, one said. ‘Although I am in arrears of rent I am convinced I can make a success of my plot’, said another: ‘We have not had a fair trial yet. Some of us
cannot afford to pay for the hire of ploughing and other
labour. I am getting my ground dug by myself gradually and it
will bring me a living, I am certain’. (39) At least some
members of the Unemployment Committee also recognised
the dilemma in which they found themselves. ‘Some of the
men impress me as being likely fellows to make a success of
the Homesteads’, Cllr Bowerman said following the meeting
between the tenants and the Committee: ‘The majority of
those who came before the Committee seemed to be very
honest folk’. (40)

Given the time they needed, by April 1934 rents were in fact
being paid promptly and the Unemployed Committee found
‘everything satisfactory’ when it visited the tenants.
‘They’re Home – Sweet- Homesteads Now’, said the
Mercury, while Ald Sherriff declared that: ‘Things are going
splendidly now. It is a difficult time of year, but the men
now feel that they are getting out of the wood. By the end of
June they will be in clover’. (41) By July they were
beginning to see a return from their plots, while the Council
itself was now satisfied that the Homesteads ‘cannot be a
financial failure, for offers have already been made for the
neat bungalows, and the rents offered have been more than
is at present being charged’. (42) Nevertheless, Cllr Hoggar
had concerns about the coming winter which proved to be
justified:

There is the ploughed field at the back which has
hardly been touched by some, and if they don’t get on
with it they will be in as bad a plight next winter as
they were this… only two or three are really making
a living out of the land so far… the rest are alright
financially, but that is because their wives and
daughters are going to work, which was not the idea
of the Committee when the scheme was put into
operation. (43)

By December 1934 headlines such as ‘Homesteads a
Failure: Only One Man Making a Go of it’ were appearing
in the local press, and the land, Cllr Hoggar said:

... except in the case of one homestead, was not in a
satisfactory state at all… the distress men we have up
there have done most of the work. No homestead
tenants were there… We wanted to be an example to
the rest of the country in getting men on the land, to
help the unemployed, but I am afraid we cannot
truthfully say, save with the one exception, that the
scheme has been an unqualified success. (44)

‘Vigorous denials’ were issued by the tenants to this
statement. ‘With one exception’, one claimed, ‘we all have
two acres of our land under cultivation, and that is as much
as one man can dig with a spade. Admittedly the other two
acres are lying idle, but that is the fault of the committee.
They have neglected us since there has been no money to
spend’. (45) The money allocated to the Homesteads by the
Unemployed Committee had indeed been exhausted, and
when no more was forthcoming it seemed possible that the
scheme might be wound up altogether. ‘There is a bottom to
the bag’, Cllr Hoggar said: ‘We can’t spoon-feed them any
longer. They will have to paddle their own canoes… They
say they haven’t got the time to dig four acres. Of course
they haven’t if they go out to work. The Committee has no
more money to spend, and frankly I don’t know what we are
going to do’. (46)

The Homesteads scheme did continue, however, and the
tenants seem to have settled into a pattern of surviving
through the winter, relying on other work or the earnings of
wives to tide them over, to enjoy the relative plenty of the
summer before the cycle was repeated. They were no doubt
mindful that abandoning the smallholding altogether meant
giving up the home that went with it; but one way and
another the rents were paid, and at a level sufficient to
contribute towards the building of two additional brick
bungalows in 1937. These cost £606, of which £454 was
paid from money in hand and the remainder ‘out of the rents
as and when received from the whole of the homesteads’.

From the mid-1930s the scheme attracted much less
attention in the press or concern within the Council itself,
testifying to a more settled existence; and it was still able to
attract new tenants on the same terms on which it was
originally founded. Under the heading ‘Prizes For The Best

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*Annotated newspaper report of the crisis affecting the Leicester Homesteads scheme. (From Scrapbook kept by Cllr Charles Edward Gillot.)*

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*Leicestershire Historian 2013*
There seems no doubt, however, that the Homesteads scheme in Leicester would never have come into being, nor survived its very real challenges, if it were not for the single-minded determination of Amos Sherriff, his ability to counter the scepticism and outright opposition with which he met, both within and beyond the Borough Council, and the steadfast support of his political opponent, Bert Hoggar, who has perhaps not received due credit for their eventual success. Amos Sherriff was 76 when he conceived the Homesteads plan, and on one level it might simply be seen as the indulgence of a ‘grand old man’ of local politics, one that the Council was willing to sanction because it carried little or no financial risk.

It is better understood, however, in the context of his passionate and unstinting efforts on behalf of the unemployed throughout his political career, and the philosophy in which they were rooted – one that was expressed in an article that he wrote for the *Church Standard* in 1924: ‘There may be substitutes for human labour, such as horsepower and machinery, but there are no substitutes for common sense, patience, integrity and courage. I believe that we should act that we may draw nearer and still nearer the age when no man should live at ease while others suffer’. (52)

‘My father worked for everybody else but himself’, his daughter said of him: ‘He could have been a big man… he’d got the brains to be a big man, if he’d have looked after himself… [but] he just lived for the unemployed and the poor…’. (53) As the *Leicester Mercury* noted just before the official opening of the Homesteads in July 1933: ‘Often the

In 1934 a similar approach to relieving unemployment became part of official government policy with the formation of the Land Settlement Association, which was responsible for providing unemployed workers and their families from depressed areas of Britain with homes and smallholdings in more prosperous parts of the country where they and their children could ‘at least find some occupation… which offered them a future in life’. (50) Two were established in Leicestershire, at Elmesthorpe and Cosby, the latter having 48 homesteads accommodating 300 people, including 200 children, each with half an acre of land and some poultry to supplement the incomes from industrial work that was expected to provide the main source of support. (51)

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problem of the unemployed is thought to be so difficult or hopeless that much is said about it and nothing done... the idealist who believes he is on firm ground must get his chance...’. In the same edition its ‘WORD FOR THE DAY’ was ‘Opposition inflames the enthusiast – it does not convert him’. (54) It was an apt and perhaps intentional description of Amos Sherriff’s approach to the relief of unemployment and the ‘almost life and death resolution’ that the Homesteads represented for him.

References and Notes:
(1) Leicester Borough Council, Minutes, 29 Nov 1932. These red, one and a half inch-wide stamps were distributed to shops, warehouses and factories from April 1933, but I have been unable to find any record of how much they raised.
(2) See Jess Jenkins, Leicester’s Unemployed March to London, 1905, (Record Office for Leicestershire, Leicester & Rutland, 2006).
(3) Henry Hartopp, Roll of the Mayors of the Borough and Lord Mayors of the City of Leicester, 1209 – 1935, (Edgar Backus, 1935). At this time his cycle shop was located on Belgrave Road.
(6) Leicester Mercury, 31th March 1933.
(7) Northern Star, 14th Jan 1843.
(8) Leicester Evening Mail, 1st February 1933.
(9) Leicester Evening Mail, 20th December 1932.
(10) Leicester Evening Mail, 1st February 1933.
(11) Quoted in Leicester Mercury, 17th February 1933.
(12) Ibid. The Distress Fund balance was expected to cover the full cost of the modified scheme.
(13) Leicester Mercury, 17th February 1933; 26th April 1933; undated newspaper cutting c1933, in scrapbook kept by Cllr H.W. Hoggar (subsequently Hoggar scrapbook), loaned to the author by Rose-Marie Harrison. It has not been possible to identify an exact date or the original source of some of the cuttings.
(14) Hoggar scrapbook, op cit.
(15) Leicester Mercury, 17th February 1933.
(16) Hoggar scrapbook, op cit.
(18) Leicester Daily Post, 24th August 1905.
(19) Leicester Mercury, 14th February 1933.
(20) Hoggar scrapbook, op cit.
(21) Ibid.
(22) Ibid.
(23) Leicester Mercury, 26th April 1933.
(24) Leicester Mercury, 14th July 1933.
(25) Referring to the long history of the ‘back-to-the-land’ movement, ‘he held up a cartoon of himself from 1896 in which he was pictured as a baby in a bathtub reaching for a tablet of soap labelled “He won’t be happy until he gets it”...’.
(26) Leicester Mercury, 17th July 1933.
(27) Leicester Mercury, 15th July 1933.
(28) Leicester Evening Mail, 23rd March 1933.
(29) Leicester Mercury, 11th January 1934.
(30) Ibid; Hoggar scrapbook op cit.
(31) Hoggar scrapbook, op cit.
(32) Leicester Mercury, 29th March 1933.
(33) Hoggar scrapbook, op cit.
(34) Leicester Mercury, 12th January 1934.
(35) Ibid.
(36) Hoggar scrapbook, op cit.
(37) Ibid.
(38) Leicester Mercury, undated cutting February 1934.
(39) Leicester Evening Mail, undated cutting December 1934; 11th January 1934.
(40) Leicester Evening Mail, 22nd January 1934.
(41) Leicester Mercury, 20th April 1934.
(42) Leicester Evening Mail, 5th July 1934.
(43) Hoggar scrapbook, op cit.
(44) Leicester Mercury, 21st December 1934.
(45) Leicester Evening Mail, undated cutting December 1934.
(46) Leicester Evening Mail, 19 Jan 1934; Hoggar scrapbook, op cit.
(47) Leicester Borough Council, Unemployed Committee Minutes, 27th July 1937.
(48) Hoggar scrapbook, op cit, cutting dated 23rd August 1938. At least one of the original bungalows was still inhabited until recently, the occupier having successfully resisted an attempt by the City Council in the 1990s to rehouse the tenants (Leicester Victorian Society, Newsletter, Autumn/Winter 2012), p6.
(49) Leicester Mercury, 14th February 1933. The Hon. Secretary of the Leicester branch was Mr G. H. Weston, a printer, of 158 New Walk.
(50) Mr A. C. Richmond, Vice Chairman of the Land Settlement Association, quoted in Leicester Mercury, 1st July 1938.
(51) Ibid. The Elmesthorpe settlement consisted of 43 homesteads on Church Farm (Leicestershire & Rutland Federation of Women’s Institutes, The Leicestershire & Rutland Village Book, Countryside Books, 1989).
(53) East Midlands Oral History Archive, interview with D.A. Bishop, 805, LO/169/120.
(54) Leicester Mercury, 15th July 1933.
Mary Ann Herrick (1795-1871): Artist and Benefactor – the ‘Dorcas’ of Woodhouse

Caroline Wessel

Most Leicestershire historians are aware of the long Herrick heritage in the village of Woodhouse, where from 1595-1915 seven generations of William Herrick resided at Beaumanor. But the documentary accounts in the extensive Herrick archives nearly all concern the men of the family. Very little has been researched or written about any of the Herrick women.

Yet one lady of strong personality, intelligence, talent and great benevolence deserves wider recognition – Miss Mary Ann Herrick, the unmarried sister of William Perry Herrick, who built the present house at Beaumanor in 1848. At the time of her death, letters of condolence spoke of her as ‘so unwearied in doing good, so eminently wise, so humble...’ and of having a ‘long career of unobtrusive benevolence, self-renunciation and unaffected piety.’

Born in 1795, Mary Ann Herrick was the daughter of Thomas Bainbrigge Herrick and Mary (néé) Perry. Thomas’s elder brother, William Herrick (VI) (1745-1832), owned Beaumanor, but, having only daughters, his estates passed on his death in 1832 to his nephew, Mary Ann’s brother, William Herrick (VII) (1794-1876). William was also to inherit the vast estates in Herefordshire and Wales of his mother’s brother Thomas Perry in 1853, on condition that William added his mother’s maiden name of ‘Perry’ to his surname. This made William Perry Herrick an extremely rich man – in fact it was said at his funeral that he was the wealthiest commoner in all England.

As children, William, Mary Ann and their younger sister, Lucy, grew up at Meredale House near Wolverhampton, at that time in the countryside. Their father, Thomas, was a Wolverhampton barrister, but it appears that he was not well-off, his younger brother, John Herrick, leaving him the bulk of his estate in his will, writing that ‘he has been so slenderly provided for.’ The family leased Meredale from the wealthy Petit family, who as records of various legacies and personal gifts show, were close family friends. The spacious Meredale House had been built in the early eighteenth century and its meadows, pastures, stables and barns must have been a happy playground for the Herrick and Petit children.

The Petit’s son, John Petit (1801-1868), was a contemporary and friend of William and Mary Ann. John Petit is chiefly remembered as an accomplished artist, travelling in Britain and on the Continent painting churches, landscapes and seascapes. Mary Ann was herself an artist of some talent, and we learn from White’s Leicestershire Trade Directory for 1863 that at Beaumanor – ‘among many fine paintings here are some admirable landscapes painted by Miss Herrick.’ John and Mary Ann would no doubt have shared a love of art, and enjoyed painting expeditions in the countryside together.

Mary Ann never married. This did however bring some advantages. She had much greater autonomy over her adult life as a spinster, because, until the Married Women’s Property Act of 1882, all of a woman’s property was owned firstly by her father, and then on marriage by her husband. It allowed her to run her life independently, and to make a number of remarkably generous charitable gifts.

William did marry, albeit late in life aged sixty-seven, mindful it seems of the need for an heir to the Beaumanor inheritance. However, for the thirty years prior to his marriage, he and Mary Ann moved in society as a couple, as documentary accounts of various Leicestershires functions demonstrate.
In 1835, only three years after arriving in the county, William was appointed High Sheriff of Leicestershire, and the accounts for his shrieval year Assizes provide minute details of the coach specially painted with the Herrick arms, the blue and scarlet livery purchased for the bailiffs and footmen, and the cost of javelin men, trumpeters and lavish entertaining in town. Miss Mary Ann would doubtless have accompanied William, and an article in an 1835 newspaper for the very day of the Assizes, gives some idea of what she might have worn – ‘a white muslin pelisse, opening over an embroidered skirt, the fronts lapelled back and fastened with lilac bows on the reverse side and round the hem… a broad-brimmed hat with two white feathers and yellow roses under the brim, primrose gloves and black kid slippers.’

In 1842 plans were afoot to build a grand new house at Beaumanor to establish the Perry Herricks’ place in Leicestershire society, and to recall the heady days of their ancestor, Sir William Herrick, Court Jeweller to James I, who had purchased Beaumanor in 1595. The new house was to be designed by the fashionable London architect, William Railton in the Jacobean style. It appears that Mary Ann, with her artistic talent, played a considerable part in the building of the new mansion, and in the personal travel journal of Mary Anne Iliffe Nichols (1813-1870) (granddaughter of John Nichols, author of the many-volumed History of Leicestershire), there is a delightful account of Miss Nichols’ and her father’s visit in 1846 to the half-built new Beaumanor:

Immediately after breakfast Mr and Miss Herrick showed my father and I over the new house … [which] was begun about four years ago. Mr Railton now says it is to be finished by Michaelmas 1847, but Miss Herrick hardly expects it to be before 1848, as Mr Railton has already put it off from time to time … The green houses and hot houses are only just begun, much to Miss Herrick’s annoyance, too late to be useful for this winter. … We also saw the curious old carriage built in London for William Herrick Esq. in 1740. Miss Herrick afterwards showed us the coach maker’s bill, which, with the harnesses, came to £92. 5s.

Miss Nichols’ journal suggests that Miss Herrick was more often than not – ‘in charge’. She also records Miss Herrick commenting knowledgeably about the half-built new mansion, whilst William remains remarkably silent!

So what was Mary Ann like as a person? From her own hand-written account books and bank book we see that she was a meticulous and highly informed business woman, having an understanding of her various Stock Exchange shareholdings and drawing up regular accounts of her income and expenditure. She had received Canal Company shares from her Uncle Thomas Perry, legacies from both parents, and her brother gave her an allowance of £480 twice a year.

On studying Miss Herrick’s bank payments over a sixteen year period, her generosity to others less fortunate than herself immediately becomes apparent. Payments include donations to: The Female Mission, the Home for Penitent Females, the Lunatic Asylum, the Blind Institute, Clergy Aid, Oaks [in Charnwood] School, the Church Extension Society, the Loughborough Dispensary, the Jews Society, an Orphan Home, the Home for Incurables, and various churches. In her will, Miss Herrick left nine substantial legacies to charitable causes.
We get a very intimate insight into Miss Mary Ann’s character from the letters of condolence sent upon her death to her brother. Her works of piety and charity are continually praised and there are descriptions of her ‘ever ready sympathy, that indulgent interest, that Christian example’ and of her ‘benevolent support, kindly disposition and generous help, being always ready to assist’. Another significant clue to Mary Ann’s character is the choice of subject for the Woodhouse Eaves church stained glass window erected in her memory. For here she is represented as the New Testament figure, Dorcas - a wealthy woman and a disciple, who was always doing good and helping the poor.

The facial features of the woman in the Dorcas stained glass window bear such a resemblance to those of Mary Ann’s brother William, it is highly likely that the stained glass portrait is a deliberate likeness of Mary Ann herself. Beyond this, the only glimpse of a physical description of Mary Ann is in the condolence letters of ‘her dear kind face’. We do however have a detailed list in her own handwriting of her jewellery. This gives the image of a Victorian lady in all her finery. The list includes a diamond brooch, a locket of blue enamel, a ring with large and small diamonds, an amethyst and diamond ring, and family heirlooms that include diamond brooches and rings. There is a particularly vivid description of a pearl necklace consisting of six rows of small pearls whose round clasp is a small diamond star on blue enamel set round with pearls, that can serve either as a pendant or a brooch.

What were Miss Herrick’s interests and leisure activities? As White’s Leicestershire Trade Directory for 1863 states, she was an accomplished artist, and Miss Nichols’ journal of 1846 further records the writer seeing ‘a few nice paintings, amongst which those of Miss Herrick are conspicuous.’ White’s Directory describes them as ‘landscape’ paintings – this suggests she regularly journeyed into the local countryside to paint the impressive scenery of Charnwood Forest. To date however none of her paintings have been traced.
What about Mary Ann Herrick’s personal relationships? Firstly, there was her relationship with William, brother and sister living together unmarried for thirty years and going out and about socially in the county as a twosome. Together they endowed churches, supported charities, attended county functions, and ran their estate. Andrew Trollope in his 1890 treatise *An Inventory of the Church Plate of Leicestershire, with some account of their donors* wrote ‘The brother and sister may truly be said to have lived and worked together.’

As already seen, it appears that Mary Ann was the more dominant personality. So what must it have been like for her when – after three decades – her brother took his new young bride Sophia into their household, to share his life and his bed? We read in a piece by Sir Robert Martin that as a boy he had viewed a portrait at Beaumanor of the young Sophia Perry Herrick, and that she was ‘most beautiful’. On the occasion of the marriage, strangely perhaps, William gives Mary Ann a valuable diamond brooch. In 1867, five years after the marriage, Mary Ann requests that on her death all her jewellery should be returned to her brother, rather than leaving it to his wife. In her last year of life, filial passion enduring, she writes a letter to her brother commencing ‘My very dear Brother’ and concluding ‘I remain with the deepest and most grateful affection towards you, ever your truly affectionate sister.’

So was Mary Ann filled with jealousy, seeing her new sister-in-law now seated at the head of the dinner table in her place? Did she find her brother’s new marital relationship difficult to bear? Or was her pious Christian nature able to overcome any such feelings? Certainly by the end of her life, it seems that she had become very fond of Sophia, leaving her 100 guineas in her will ‘to purchase a little memento which may prove to bring to her mind my great sisterly

The nineteenth-century Charnwood Forest historian T. R. Potter corresponded frequently with the Herricks, and his book *Charnwood Forest* published in 1842, contains many evocative full-page lithographs of nature scenes in Charnwood. The title page displays a view drawn from where the Herrick’s Pocket Gate slate quarry stood (now part of Charnwood Forest Golf Club), and with the old Beaumanor building in the distance. The book’s list of subscribers shows that William Herrick purchased two copies - one for himself and the other, surely for his artist sister?

Mary Ann’s leisure activities would doubtless also have included reading. The Beaumanor library, the contents of which are listed in the Herrick archive, contained a wide range of learned and intellectual tomes on subjects as varied as religion, the Classics, history, architecture and archaeology. In fact it was William who in 1855, at the inaugural meeting of the Leicestershire Architectural & Archaeological Society (the former name of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society), proposed the important resolution that the Society should be formed.

Another clue as to Mary Ann’s love of books and reading comes again from Miss Nichols’ journal. It records that whilst the Herrick/Nichols party were visiting Leicester, the group split up so that Miss Herrick could visit Crossley’s, a well-known Leicester bookseller whose shop was situated at no.5 Gallowtree Gate in the mid 1840’s. Further, a copy of a Beaumanor newspaper with the words ‘Miss Herrick’ inscribed on the front page shows that the well-informed Mary Ann required and read her own copy of the daily news. Mary Ann must also have been familiar with the poetry written by her ancestors, and she would most likely have accompanied her brother on a visit to Dean Prior in Devon in 1857 to erect a plaque in the church in memory of their illustrious ancestor, the poet Robert Herrick, vicar there from 1630-1674.

*One of a number of romantic sketches of Charnwood Forest that appeared in T. R. Potter’s 1842 guide book. (Reproduced from Charnwood Forest by T. R. Potter, published 1842 by Hamilton, Adams & Co.)*
affection to her’ and bequeathing her ‘all my old lace and my diamond and purple enamel bracelet with a drop to it.’

We know from Mary Ann’s extraordinarily detailed will that she left legacies to many dear friends and six godchildren, including Emily Cradock and Isabella Heygate, both from well-known Leicestershire families. Clearly she had warm and loving relationships with many people. She also left money to her doctor, an extremely generous gift to the parish clergyman, and legacies to a number of retired faithful Beaumanor servants including her personal maid, her nurse, and William’s gardener and butler. In addition she left £10 to every servant in her household, and an annual bequest to purchase blankets for the poor of Woodhouse.

During her lifetime, Miss Herrick used her wealth to personally give many charitable bequests of great value. Andrew Trollope further wrote of her: ‘Many were the gifts made to the church by this benevolent lady; to give an account of them all is impossible’. But he does record that she gave a quantity of communion silver to both Woodhouse and Woodhouse Eaves churches; erected the schoolmaster’s house at Woodhouse Eaves in 1860, its infant school in 1866, and in 1862 she paid £5,000 for the construction of a dispensary in Loughborough. In addition she and William built St Matthew’s church, Leicester, and also the spacious church of St Mark in the rapidly expanding industrialised parish of Belgrave. A letter written by Mary Ann to her brother eleven months before she died reveals that the initiative for St Mark’s had been mainly hers: ‘When you, to my great joy, agreed to join with me in building a church ... I feel that you will be happy faithfully to carry out this wish of mine...’; evidence once again that Mary Ann Herrick – despite being a woman at a time when (in theory) women had very little power – was the driving force behind the brother/sister relationship.

Perhaps Miss Herrick’s most personal endowment was the Woodhouse almshouses, known today as the Herrick Homes. The earliest evidence of her idea for these is in a letter she penned in August 1840, when she wrote ‘The thought of building a home for old people came into my mind whilst driving over Salisbury Plain with my brother.’ However, between 1842 and 1848 the erection of their fine new mansion must have been the couple’s main priority; whilst the Perry fortune was not inherited until 1853. But a year later, in 1854, William was appointed a trustee of Leicester’s Wyggeston’s Hospital almshouses, and this no doubt re-awakened the ‘almshouse idea’ in his sister’s mind, especially as at that time plans were being discussed to re-site and re-build the Wyggeston almshouses. Mr Railton, the architect of Beaumanor, was employed to design the Herrick houses, and on 30th June 1856 Miss Herrick laid the first stone of the four houses. The cost on completion was £1,395, the biblical inscription over the almshouse door, *Offer unto God Thanksgiving* and the initials ‘MAH’, serving as a constant reminder to its inmates of God’s bounty in the form of their benefactor. Furthermore in 1866 Mary Ann founded an annuity fund for the expenses of the homes and the maintenance of its inmates; and for the next fifteen years she ministered fondly to the residents.

In January 1871 Miss Herrick made her will. Towards the end of the year the handwriting on her documents becomes visibly shaky, and the subsequent letters of condolence speak of ‘one who was ripe for the change and to whom a longer sojourn here would have been only painful.’ She died on Christmas Day 1871, just before the completion of St Mark’s church.

Mary Ann was laid to rest in the family tomb on the north side of Woodhouse churchyard, alongside her parents and younger sister. A modest plaque inside the church commemorates her life, but her spirit no doubt lingers on at Beaumanor and roams free in the Charnwood countryside that she painted and loved so well.

References:
Herrick archives, Record Office for Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland: ref. DG9/.
Herrick Homes Trust archives.

The author is currently working towards a publication of a full biography of Mary Ann Herrick, and would welcome any further material. Contact: cmwessel@aol.com
Education was very difficult for most working class people to access in England until the nineteenth century. The changes which then started to appear were driven initially by moral and religious concerns, and it was in the East Midlands that the first independent adult school was set up in Nottingham in 1798. Founded by William Singleton, a Methodist, and Samuel Fox, a Quaker, the aim was initially to teach women in the local lace-making factories to read and write. The idea spread, and out of this developed the national Adult School movement which as early as 1816, proudly claimed schools stretching from Cornwall to Scotland. During the early part of the nineteenth century, adult schools came and went, with periods of success alternating with periods of apparent decline, some closing once they thought they had successfully done their job to educate the ‘labouring poor’. Quaker influences played a strong part in the adult schools established around the middle of the nineteenth century, and between 1848 and 1862, adult schools run under Quaker auspices were established at York, Birmingham, Bristol, Huddersfield and Luton. (1)

Efforts to establish an adult school in Leicester were considerably later than in Nottingham. In 1841 Thomas Cooper, later to become a well-known Chartist, arrived in Leicester as a reporter on the Leicestershire Mercury. He had been a member of an adult school in Gainsborough, Lincolnshire, and attempted to open a similar one in Leicester. Notable for being based on political as well as religious ideals, this was however a short-lived venture, due mainly to the distressed economic conditions of the town’s stockingers. As Cooper explained in his autobiography, when the school closed in 1842, one of the members had said to him ‘What the hell do we care about reading if we can get nought to eat’. (2)

Meanwhile, lectures, classes, mutual discussion groups and small libraries attached to churches or other institutions, were increasingly forming part of a programme of religious, moral and intellectual improvement in Leicester. Friar Lane Baptist church had a library as early as the 1820s, and the town’s leading non-Conformist establishment, the Great Meeting, had possessed a collection of books since at least the 1850s. In order to help the less fortunate and poorer inhabitants of the town, the Great Meeting also established the Leicester Domestic Mission in 1846 which provided classes, discussion groups, a small library and reading room.

For Leicester’s growing artisan class, the Mechanics Institute provided educational facilities from 1833 onwards, until its educational functions were superseded by the Working Men’s Institute, later known as Vaughan College.

Leicester’s second dedicated adult school was that begun in Sanvey Gate in 1861, the consequence of two members from the Bristol adult school attending a Leicester Quaker meeting, some twenty years after Cooper’s initial attempt. By 1864, membership of the Sanvey Gate School had grown so much that a decision was made to erect a purpose-built hall in Soar Lane. This building later had to give way to the coming of the railway in 1895 when it was sold to the Manchester, Sheffield and Lincolnshire Railway Company (shortly afterwards re-named the Great Central Railway). The money from this was used to purchase a building in Church Gate.

By this time, adult school groups had been started in the Leicester area in Belgrave, York Road, Pike Street, Dover Street, Emmanuel Church in the West End, Clarendon Park, Victoria Road and Shaftsbery Road. The Belgrave group was started in 1874 in the laundry room of Belgrave Hall by two of the Ellis sisters who lived at the Hall. Commencing early in the morning at 7.15am, the initial fourteen exclusively men participants were to learn to read and write, and receive religious instruction. By 1877 the group’s membership had increased to 60, and moved to larger premises, also owned by the Ellis family, in nearby Bath Street. The group continued to use these premises right up until 1973 when along with other old buildings in the area, the building was demolished. The group then amalgamated with a thriving women’s school who met in a modern building on the same street. This school continued to meet right up until 2003/4. The Ellis family were very influential in Leicester during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, owning several companies including Ellis and Everard, and directorships of the Leicester Permanent Building Society; Martins Bank; Taylor, Taylor and Hobson; and several railway companies. Eight members of the family took a very active part in the fledgling adult school groups. Theodore taught in various schools for 38 years, and his brother Herbert for over 30 years. Their cousins Bernard, Marian, Joseph and John were all members. Herbert lived at The Gynsills and opened his home and grounds for various adult school events. The family were also to provide three Presidents of the future Union.
By 1889 there were ten Leicester schools with over 500 members which had formed themselves into the Leicester and Leicestershire Working Men’s Educational Union, later to be known as the Leicestershire Adult School Union, ‘a notable example where the rapid growth of the movement was largely the result of the work of non-Friends.’ (3) The schools represented were Soar Lane Mission, Pike Street Board School, Sanvey Gate Mission Hall, Belgrave Lecture Room, Oxford Street (Paradise Mission), Dover Street School, Clarendon Park Mission Hall, Carley Street School Room and Shaftsbury Mission, with Emmanuel Church joining shortly afterwards. During the later part of the nineteenth century, the organisation of the adult school movement became more consolidated with the formation of national, regional and county unions.

Also in 1889, the Lord Mayor of Leicester, Alderman Lennard inaugurated what was to become known as Adult School Sunday. The journal of the national adult schools organisation One and All reported on one such service as follows: A very successful demonstration of Adult School teachers, scholars, workers and friends was held in the Market Place, Leicester, at 10.15am on Sunday morning, and quite 500 went into Bishop Street Wesleyan Chapel.......the address on Forgiveness was very appropriate with reference to the great Shoe Trade Dispute which had just come to a settlement. Six men came over from Hinckley, 3 cycling and 3 walking, a distance of 14 miles. Others came from Stoney Stanton, Anstey and all town schools well represented. (4) The reference to the Shoe Trade Dispute is interesting because the Soar Lane School had opened its rooms from 10am until 9pm each day during this dispute and between 200 and 300 men gathered there to read and play games while being locked out of their workplaces.

As the above extract shows, adult schools were opening all over the county. Hinckley, Loughborough and Coalville became sub-district unions. In Loughborough within ten years from 1896 to 1906, there were 33 schools in the immediate neighbourhood, with a membership of 3200. An article from a Sileby member tells of their various activities at this time. (5) The Sunday morning meetings were divided into two parts, firstly a Bible class and then the second part was divided between those wishing to take part in a discussion and those wishing to learn to read and write. Other activities included two brass bands and membership of a County Adult School Whist League. There were also social evenings where members could play bagatelle, cards and dominos and drink tea. Other activities included weekend lecture schools. When the Hinckley sub-union organised an annual outing in 1901, 1200 tickets were sold with 2000 having been asked for.

It was in Leicester in 1899 that the National Adult School Union (NASU) was formed, and from then on Leicestershire was to take an active part in the national organisation. This included providing eight National Presidents, including Albert Rowson (1954/5) and his daughter Frances Sowden (1989/90). Edwin Gilbert was General Secretary in the 1920’s, and Tricia Dean was General Secretary for many years until the Union’s demise in 2010. Many other local members were active on committees such as the Handbook Committee which was responsible for producing a yearly collection of study material embracing history, science, literary and musical subjects.

Besides the weekly meetings for study and discussion, and getting together for social and cultural activities, members of the adult schools also took part in social work. From the beginning, the groups organised savings clubs. They also distributed blankets and coal to the poor, and organised day trips to the seaside. Individuals such as Matthew Goodman, who on joining the Oxford Street school in 1904, gave up drink and became a teetotaller, regularly visited the Courts to help those with drink problems, even providing temporary accommodation for them. The Union itself later provided support and the funding for the Newarke Guest House for ex-offenders when it opened in 1909. (6)

The West End School in Leicester was formed in 1906 as a breakaway group from Emmanuel Church. (7) They bought a site in Western Road for £300 and erected a building at a further cost of £1537. Having the advantage of their own building, they were able to offer activities throughout the week. They grew to over 300 members and ran groups for
women and girls as well as men. As well as discussions they had a choir, a gardening club, drill and dancing. (8)

Nationally, membership of NASU affiliated schools peaked at 113,789 in 1910 (9), and the period from 1910 until the Great War saw the height of the movement, both locally and nationally. In 1913 Ramsey Macdonald, the future British Prime Minister, made a speech in which he stated: I do not believe that there is anything in existence at the present moment, more fitted to balance your judgement, to enlighten your intelligence, to awaken your imagination, to make your thoughts chaste and serious, and to give you a better preparation for the undertaking of the responsibilities of life, than the Adult Schools started long ago ... . (10) Although no particular school or place is mentioned, it is significant that McDonald was MP for Leicester from 1906 until 1918.


Nationally, whilst NASU membership numbers, not surprisingly, reduced as a result of the First World War, membership remained steady during the 1920's. However, the organisation’s ‘Forward Movement’ which tried to encourage the adult schools to develop more activities throughout the week, along with more mixed schools, failed to meet expectations, and there was a sharp fall in numbers in the 1930’s. Meanwhile, competition for adult education students now came from other providers including the Workers’ Educational Association, although there were some attempts between organisations to arrange joint classes. (11) Also, as life returned to normal after the Great War, circumstances and life styles had changed for most people. Education was now available for everyone and there were other demands on people’s spare time. The motor car, the bicycle and public transport had made it possible for people to travel further afield than their own village and town. Other leisure time attractions included the coming of the cinema.

Differences have been identified between the county adult school unions, and the picture is not entirely straightforward even in one area. In Leicestershire between 1921 and 1937, men’s membership fell by 38 per cent, whilst women’s fell by just 12 per cent, and while the number of women’s schools actually increased from 41 to 42, the number of men’s schools fell from 60 to 50. (12)

There was however, still a lot of activity among the remaining schools, and contact between them for brass band competitions, music and singing, and amateur dramatics. Coalville not only had thriving schools for men and women, but formed their own Dramatic Society and for many years have produced four shows each year - 2012 saw their 183rd production. In the 1920’s, Leicester’s West End school ran its own three piece dance band, intriguingly named The Tres Jolie Danse Orchestra. The West End was particularly fortunate in having Herbert Pochin as President, a leading light having close associations with the early days of the Leicester Drama Society and the Little Theatre. The West End provided actors to take part in Little Theatre productions, and also performed at the De Montfort Hall. In the early 1930s, the Aylestone Park Adult School could boast an orchestra of over thirty musicians. Mr Gordon Harris, now a sprightly 94-year-old, recalls how his father was a member of this orchestra, and how he encouraged Gordon himself and several friends to go along to the Adult School. Speaking of his days as a member with great affection, he particularly remembers the enjoyment of the yearly Whitsuntide weekend at Cromer when up to 300 Leicestershire members would travel by train to Cromer, where they were accommodated in private homes, took meals in the Town Hall, and joined together in social activities. As late as 1936, after using various buildings over the years, South Wigston opened a purpose-built School, bringing the total number of Union schools in Leicestershire and Leicester up to 92.
Sketch map showing the location of adult schools in Leicester and proximity to tram routes, 1910. (Reproduced from Fifty Years of Adult School Work in Leicestershire, edited by A. F. Cholerton, published by Wallin and Rowe, 1910.)
After the Second World War there was, however, a steady decline in membership both locally and nationally, and whilst several attempts were made to reverse this trend, they did not prove very successful. One or two groups which had folded were revived, and in West Humberstone, a Mother and Baby club proved very successful for a time. By 1955 there were 58 schools with 1119 members in Leicestershire, but by 1970 the number of schools had dwindled to 26 with 392 members. One of the main problems was that as older members left, no younger people were coming forward. Meanwhile a number of institutions and other providers ranging from local authorities, broadcasting companies and the workplace, to the Workers’ Education Association, trade unions and the University of the Third Age, were now offering adult and continuing education. In September 1998, the Leicestershire Union held a Bicentenary Luncheon, at which it was agreed to make an annual bursary to Vaughan College library and this is still given each year to provide new books for present-day students.

Membership however continued to fall across the country, with ever smaller numbers remaining and little new blood coming in. When the last Annual General Meeting of the National Adult School Union took place in April 2010 it was decided to formally close the national organisation. It was appropriate that this should take place in Leicester, the venue of the first meeting over a hundred years earlier. Although there was great sadness at the Union’s closure, members were very proud at what had been achieved since the early beginnings of the movement, whilst fondly remembering the help, interest, encouragement and friendships that had been formed.

Despite the closure of the National Adult School Union, several County Unions, including Leicestershire, along with many individual adult school groups, have carried on locally and keep in touch nationally with each other. Today, eight many individual adult school groups, have carried on locally several County Unions, including Leicestershire: Birstall, Coalville Drama, and keep in touch nationally with each other. Today, eight

References and Notes:
3. Freeman, op. cit., pp.3-4.
4. One and All, June 1895, (the official monthly publication of the National Adult School).
5. LASU Archives in the Record Office for Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland. DE6912.
7. One and All, August 1910.
8. The Author’s father learned bookkeeping at the West End School after leaving school.
11. Freeman, op. cit. p.4, 12.

Also:
Pioneering in Education: the story of the Adult School Movement in Leicestershire*, (Leicestershire Adult School Union, c1949).

Directory of Adult Schools for Men and Women 1914-1915, County of Leicestershire:

| Anstey M & W | Cropston M |
| Arnesby M & W | Desford M |
| Askfordby M | Earl Shilton M |
| Bagworth M & W | East Langton M & W |
| Barrow M & W | Ellistown M & W |
| Barwell M & W | Enderby M & W |
| Belton W | Fleckney M & W |
| Blaby M & W | Glenfield M & W |
| Blackfordby M | Groby M & W |
| Broughton Astley M & W | Hardtore M |
| Coalville M & W | Hatheron M |
| Cosby M & W | Hinckley M & W |
| Counteshorpe M | Humberstone M & W |
| Croft M & W | Huncote M |
| Kilburn M | Quorn M & W |
| Kegworth M | Ratby M & W |
| Kirby Muxloe M | Rothley M & W |
| Long Eaton M & W | Sapcote M |
| Long Whatton M & W | Shepshed M & W |
| Loughborough M & W | Sileby M & W |
| Lutterworth M | South Wigston M & W |
| Mkt.Harborough M & W | Stapleton M |
| Markfield M | Stoke Golding M & W |
| Melton Mowbray M | Stony Stanton M & W |
| Mountsorrel M & W | Swadlincote M & W |
| Narborough M & W | Syston M & W |
| Newhall M | Thurmaston M |
| Oadby M & W | Whetstone M & W |
| Woodhouse Eaves M & W | |
Standing in the delightful gardens of Belgrave Hall, in front of the tall pillars which formerly announced the entrance to the Hall, are two prominent life-sized statues. (1) Both face inwards towards the house, looking directly at the formal gardens away from what is now described as the Monument garden. They are both ‘Terms’ – short for ‘terminal’ – the name given to statues that delineate boundaries, being derived from Terminus, the Roman God of distance and space. The figure on the right appears to have been made of sandstone, and although well-worn, is clearly female, possibly Ceres, the Roman goddess of agriculture and grain crops variously associated with spring and the harvest. The one on the left is carved in an altogether different style, again in sandstone, carrying what is thought to be a ragged staff. Although this statue could be the club-bearer Hercules, its features look more female than male. Further research on its identity to date, has however been inconclusive. The lower halves of both statues go straight to the ground at a slight angle and end in carved feet.

Close by, are two further life-sized Terms, also connected with Belgrave Hall gardens. These statues are to be found on the opposite side of Church Road, inside the public gardens now belonging to Leicester City Council. (2) The backs of these statues stand against the pillars at the entrance to the park, facing inwards towards the River Soar. Again they appear to be of carved sandstone. This time from Greek mythology, both represent the god Telamon who was one of the Argonauts, a close friend of Jason and who is mentioned in the Iliad.

Little has been written to date about these four statues, their age or provenance. This article aims to explore and pull together the scant historical references to their existence, and to use more recent oral history and field work to fill in the picture.

Firstly, there is every reason to consider that having been bought by former owners of Belgrave Hall, the statues have not been moved since. The public gardens opposite the Hall...
were once an integral part of the Hall gardens, and both sets of statues are well and truly embedded in their appropriate historical places. Furthermore, there is a description of what can be assumed to be these statues, dating back to 1790, when the antiquarian John Throsby visited Belgrave:

Belgrave is to Leicester, as many, pleasing villas are to London. It stands upon the bank of the River Soar, is about a mile from Leicester and has long been the abode of opulent families. Here resides William Vann, esq., lately High Sheriff of this County, in a newly erected dwelling [this is Belgrave House, opposite the Hall]. His house and pleasure grounds have a corresponding neatness; but the style of each is in contrast; the gardens retain the old formally trimmed yew trees. Near to him resides this gentleman’s brothers, Mr Richard and Mr J Vann, in a neat little box, in the midst of Flora’s pleasures. In the garden belonging to this house are some statues brought from Italy by Colonel Hewett who formerly resided at Stretton Hall, in this county, where they were sold, for an inconsiderable sum, at Sir George Robinson’s sale, who retired thence some years since. Among some others, I believe sixteen in all, large as life, are Pomona; Diana; Flora; Ceres; Hercules; Venus; a Satyr; a Turk and his Consort; two Emperors, and a Pope. (3)

Belgrave Hall had been built by Edmund Craddock between 1709 and 1713. The next owners were the Simons, and by the time Throsby was writing, it had passed to the Vanns. It seems likely that the statues which can currently be seen at Belgrave were originally part of a much larger collection representing a diverse mix of pieces of mythological or larger than life characters, which were brought from Italy by Colonel Hewett, and bought from Hewett by one of the Vann brothers. In theory, Colonel Hewett could have sold the statues any time between the mid-1770s up until 1790 when Throsby saw them, and any of the Vann brothers could have bought them. William would seem to be the most likely - he built Belgrave House in the 1770s, at which time the gardens were extended to include what is now the public garden on the opposite side of the road to Belgrave Hall, and where the two Telamons are situated.

Alternatively, it may have been James, the youngest of the three Vann brothers, and the only one to marry, who bought the statue collection rather than William or Richard, possibly as a wedding present for his wife-to-be, Hannah Clayton, the local vicar’s daughter. She would have lived at the parsonage next door to Belgrave Hall, and although they did not marry until 1795 (she was 38 and he was 49), he would no doubt have spent some time preparing the Hall, possibly under her supervision, ready for when they could marry. It is also possible that the statues could have been given to James and Hannah as a wedding gift, either from William or Richard, or from both.

The two life-sized ‘Terms’ which stand just inside Church Road Public gardens today, opposite Belgrave Hall.
During the eighteenth century, garden sculpture had become very popular with the aristocracy. The rising ‘middle class’, such as the Vanns would have been keen to follow this fashion, although sometimes perhaps with only a limited understanding or appreciation of the nature of the statuary they were buying, which may be the explanation for the eclectic nature of the sixteen pieces listed by Throsby.

Technically speaking, it was Richard Vann who owned Belgrave Hall, and half of the Belgrave estate which was left to him and his brother William. James, although a partner with Richard and William in the hosiery business which operated out of Belgrave and Belgrave Hall, may not have been an equal partner with his siblings, being the youngest brother and not, at this time, as wealthy. However, James and Richard seem to have been very close, often funding many joint ventures within the village.

When Richard died intestate in 1796, everything he owned went to James; Richard having neither married, nor having had any children. In 1803 when James served as High Sheriff for Leicestershire, his address is given as Belgrave Hall. Sixteen years later when James died, also childless, in 1812, the estate was willed to Hannah his wife for her lifetime, and on her death, it was to pass to James’s first cousin Ann Hunt. Ann married into the Marston family of Enderby. Hannah Vann lived at Belgrave Hall until her death in 1844. By this time Ann had died, and the Belgrave Hall estate passed to other members of the Marston family. The Marstons continued to live at Enderby, and with the Belgrave estate now heavily mortgaged, sold Belgrave Hall to John Ellis in 1845.

Although Hannah had no control over what was to happen to the Belgrave Hall land on her death, she did leave a detailed will disposing of her personal property, and her will mentions the statues. (4) From this document, it can be seen that Hannah regarded the statues to be as important as her jewellery, and the miniatures of herself and her husband. But presumably because the statues were part of the real estate, she could not dispose of them directly. However, it is clear enough from the will, that they were to be considered as heirlooms which she hoped would stay within the family.

Of the original sixteen statues, whilst four still reside at Belgrave Hall and in the gardens opposite the Hall, the remaining twelve have long since disappeared. Interestingly, the Ellis family hardly mention the garden statuary, describing them as ‘curious’ with just a cursory reference to the stone eagles which still adorn the formal gardens.

A plausible solution to the mystery can be found in the pages of Campton’s useful and informative History of Belgrave (5) which suggests that the life-sized statues ‘were removed to Enderby’, although he gives no further explanation. This seems to indicate that the Marstons fulfilled Hannah’s wishes to keep the statues in the family by removing them to Enderby, a move which the Martons would have been well-equipped for, being involved in the granite industry in Enderby, and being used to shipping heavy loads around the county.

Considering Campton’s information and given the size of the statues, and assuming the Marston family stayed in Enderby, then if any of the twelve statues which went to Enderby are still in existence, it might be expected that it would be a relatively easy task to locate them.

Oral history recounts an Enderby tale told by those who as children had played in the village in the 1920s and 30s, of a garden that contained life-sized statues which were known as the Twelve Apostles. Research has shown that this garden was owned by Harold Gittins who was the Manager of the Enderby Co-op in the 1930s. Further investigation through the aid of trade directories shows that Mr Gittins lived at Holly Croft on Broad Street at Enderby. (6)

It also transpires that the Belgrave Hall archives which are located at the New Walk Museum in Leicester have a document which indicates that Mr Gittins had some of the statues from Belgrave Hall in his garden and that he was willing to let them be re-united with those at the Hall. This document also contains photographs of the statues which would have been taken c1936, at the time when Belgrave Hall was acquired by Leicester City Council. Although the statues in these photographs look biblical and Throsby’s written identification is mainly classical, it is likely that over the years they have been given different names and attributes, and one of them could certainly be identified as the Turk mentioned by Throsby.

One of the stone eagles mentioned by the Ellis Family, as it appears in the grounds of Belgrave Hall today.
The local sculptor, who spent his childhood in Enderby, also confirmed that the statues came with the tale that they had come from Italy, and that they were bought as a wedding present for someone in the distant past – James and Hannah perhaps?

References and Notes:
1. Belgrave Hall is situated on Church Road in the heart of Belgrave village, three miles north of Leicester city centre and is easily accessed by public transport and car. The gardens are open to the public on certain days – see http://www.leicester.gov.uk/your-council-services/lc/leicester-city-museums/museums/belgrave-hall/ or ring up for details. At the time of writing although the Hall itself is closed for refurbishment, the gardens are well worth a visit.
2. The gardens in Church Road directly opposite Belgrave Hall (next to Belgrave House), are regularly open to the public today.
6. Kelly’s Trade Directory for 1941 lists Harold Gittins living in Holly Croft, Broad Street, Enderby. The author of this article lived in Enderby for 35 years, and had a conversation some years ago with Harold Gittins (by then elderly) daughter about the ’12 Apostles’ which she remembered being in her garden.

Sadly nothing came of Gittins’ offer to re-unite the statues, and a recent visit to Holly Croft at Enderby, revealed only a twentieth century property and nothing to indicate garden statuary.

Further enquiries brought to light the fact that Holly Croft had once been the front garden of ‘The Cedars,’ an impressive eighteenth century property on the opposite side of the road, when Broad Street was only a dirt track. Census details for 1881 reveal that ‘The Cedars’ had been occupied by George Marston (born c1827), along with his family and servants. He is listed as a granite merchant, and it would seem in all likelihood that he was the son of George Marston who inherited a sixth of the Belgrave Hall estate.

Disappointingly today, there seems to be no evidence that any of the statues remain in Enderby, although from time to time tales of unearthed stone torsos do emerge. This could be explained by the fact that some years back, on the death of Dr Brown, a one-time owner of Holly Croft after Mr Gittins, the statues were believed to have been broken up for rockery or roadstone.

However, this investigation concludes on a positive note, with the discovery that a local sculptor was offered what clearly appear to be two or three of the better pieces, and these now take pride of place in his garden in a neighbouring county. One of the pieces is a ‘Term’ and is partially buried in the garden. All three pieces are made of sandstone and it is not difficult to imagine that two, at least, could have come from Belgrave Hall. These pieces that have been found outside Belgrave Hall gardens, seem to be smaller than those remaining in the Gardens. This might explain why some went and some were left behind. Maybe the large ones were just too big to be ‘removed to Enderby’.

Three sculptures, now in a garden in a neighbouring county. At least two of these are thought to have come from Belgrave Hall gardens and Enderby.
It is now 156 years since the outbreak of the Indian Mutiny in 1857. During the intervening years much has been written about this event under a variety of names. Marx and Engels referred to it as ‘The First War of Indian Independence’. Later writers have called it ‘The Indian Rebellion’, ‘The Sepoy Revolt’, and ‘The Great Uprising in India’. The conflict has been explored from both British and Indian perspectives. This account presents the conflict largely from a contemporary nineteenth century British perspective, as seen through the letters of one young British officer.

It was a conflict which was to change India, and one which Everard Aloysius Lisle Phillipps, a 22 year old soldier from an old-established Leicestershire family found himself caught up in, and which led to him being awarded the Victoria Cross.

India: The Background

Britain had traded with India since the middle of the sixteenth century. Good relations with the Moghul and Hindu rulers, along with the subsequent establishment of the (British) East India Company with its operational centre in India, and various victories over their Dutch and Portuguese trading rivals, further helped the British to develop a trade monopoly with India and the Far East.

By the early seventeenth century, India was vital to the Company’s wider interests in the Far East. To protect its interests, the Company created both a civil service and an army. Substantial settlements and trading posts were developed, and by the end of the eighteenth century, the Company was militarily dominant over the whole of Southern and Central India. The governors of the Company’s ‘Commercial Settlements and Interests’ became ‘Governors of Provinces’, and the Company became ‘The Honourable East India Company’ (HEIC), known colloquially as ‘John Company’, and by the Indian population as ‘Kampani Bahadur’. By 1857, the Company ruled some 500,000 square miles of India and 40 million people as a Trustee of the British Government.

Key to the Company’s army was the large contingent of native Indian soldiers, the majority of who were Hindu or Muslim. The infantry of which were known as sepoys and the cavalry as sowars. Prior to 1857 tension had been growing between the sepoys and the British Army officers, along with a groundswell of discontent and disaffection. The spark which led to the war, and which was to threaten the British presence in India and toll the death knell of ‘The Kampani Raj’, was the introduction into the army of the Enfield 1853 pattern Rifle Musket. In particular, it was the change which required the cartridge to be bit before loading it into the new rifle accompanied by rumours that the cartridges were smeared with pig or cow fat, which were respectively unacceptable to Muslim and Hindu sepoys.

Leicestershire: Grace Dieu and the Phillipps Family

Grace Dieu lies at the western end of the Charnwood Forest, five miles from Ashby de la Zouch. The original priory had been founded in 1240 and was dissolved in 1539. It was purchased by Sir Ambrose Phillipps in 1690 whose main family residence was Garendon Hall near Loughborough which he had purchased a few years earlier in 1684. Later, it was here at Garendon that Charles March Phillipps lived, and when his eldest son Ambrose Lisle March Phillipps married Laura Mary Clifford in 1833, Charles gave Grace
Dieu to Ambrose who built a new manor house there in which he took up residence. His marriage was by all accounts a very happy union which produced sixteen children.

Everard Aloysius Lisle Phillipps, born on 28th May 1835 at Grace Dieu Manor, was their second son. Everard initially attended the UK’s oldest catholic school - St. Edmunds at Ware in Hertfordshire, before moving to Oscott College near Sutton Coldfield at the age of 13 which he attended as a lay student until 1852. Destined for the East India Company, Everard then moved to Paris to join his elder brother, and to learn Hindustani, this being a requirement in addition to Latin, Greek and Mathematics for officer entry into the Company. Meanwhile, the brothers became well-known in Paris, attending parties given by the Emperor Napoleon III, and Empress Eugenie. On completion of his studies, Everard sat and successfully passed the East India Company’s officers entrance examination at their military college at Addiscombe. Family influence helped purchase Everard a commission as an Ensign with the Company in India. From his correspondence, Everard clearly felt that it was his duty to make his mark in India. Everard left England for India on 17th October 1854 aged nineteen. His Mother wrote at the time ‘dear Everard bore the parting from us with great courage, though he seemed a good deal affected.’ Neither knew then that he would never see his family again.

**Meerut, North West Provinces, India**

Everard arrived in India at Calcutta where he was posted to the 11th Bengal Native Infantry of the East India Company at Allahabad as an Ensign. He remained there for over two years, until his regiment was moved to the military cantonment of Meerut, two miles north of Meerut town, and 50 miles north-west of Delhi, in early May 1857.

At Meerut, the British troops of infantry and cavalry were quartered in brick barracks, with the more numerous Indian troops being separated from the barracks in mud huts. The barracks overlooked the mile wide and four miles long parade ground. Behind the barracks were the officers’ family bungalows, each with its own garden. The population of the cantonment was predominantly Hindu.

Everard’s arrival in Meerut coincided with the opening stages of the Indian Mutiny, his regiment being one of the first to revolt. A few weeks before Everard’s arrival, a sepoy and devout Hindu, Mangal Pandey, had, according to the British version of events, been executed for exhorting his native colleagues to fight for their religion, and shooting and wounding a British NCO. Then towards the end of April, 85 out of 90 sowars of the 3rd Native Cavalry had refused to take part in a firing drill on the parade ground, refusing to believe statements that the cartridges were either greased with tallow or were the same as they had been using for some time. The 85 men were tried between 6th and 8th May. All were convicted and taken to Meerut prison, having been sentenced to ten years imprisonment with hard labour.

Sunday 10th May was described as ‘stiflingly hot’. The morning service at the cantonment’s Christian church began at 7am, after which most of the officers and their families would have sought shelter from the heat. Meanwhile, the local markets and bazaars were buzzing with rumour and resentment, and whilst some Indian employees of the Company had warned their British employers and officers of impending trouble, most senior British officers remained remarkably complacent. It was later in the day, just before 6pm, that the Indian Mutiny began.

The native regiments that were immediately disaffected were the 3rd Light Cavalry and the 20th Bengal Native Infantry. Believing that the Queen’s Regiment troops of the regular British army were on their way to disarm them, they broke into Meerut prison with assistance from the mob, and released the recently imprisoned 85 inmates. The native soldiers on duty apparently made no attempt to intervene.

At the same time, the 11th Bengal Native Infantry had broken into disorder. Everard, who accompanied his Commanding Officer Colonel John Finnis as he attempted to address them, related what happened in a letter home written on 1st June:

On Sunday the 10th about five o’clock we were suddenly called to the Parade ground by our Colonel whom we found speaking to our men who were violently excited. We were ordered to search our lines for any arms there might be hid. While doing so, we heard a great shouting from the 20th parade and, on going to see what was the matter, found the 20th had seized their arms and were advancing loaded upon us. We (officers) at once went towards the arms, to prevent our men getting hold of theirs, and succeeded in so doing for nearly half an hour when the fire of the 20th became too thick and near for us to remain. Some of our men entreated Colonel Finnis to let them have their arms, saying they would stand by us and drive off the 20th. The Colonel would not trust them, upon which several sepoys forced us from the parade and thus saved our lives.

As we were mounting our horses the Colonel fell by my side, shot through the heart. The 20th afterwards put 15 bullets into him. As I mounted my horse, my servant, who was holding him, was knocked over, bullets falling as thick as peas. Had not the brutes
been such infernally bad shots we would all have perished ... The sepoys were shooting every European they could meet and setting fire to their bungalow - the General and Brigadier General seemed quite paralysed, and for three mortal hours kept marching the Carabineers Rifle and Artillery backwards and forwards well to the rear of the fire.

At last, when we did reach the lines, not a sepoy was to be found. Every house was burnt to the ground, mine among the rest. Unfortunate ladies with babies in their arms were murdered or burnt ... five officers of the 20th were murdered and one wounded ... I have not been in bed since and this is Thursday, on Monday we went out to try to come up with the 11th and 20th and 3rd Cavalry. We killed a few of them, but the main body had made off for Delhi. I had the pleasure of killing two brutes, one of whom wounded my horse with his sword, whereupon I ran him through the body ... For the first three days I served with the Carabineers, now I am attached to the (60th) Rifles as orderly Officer to Colonel Jones.

With a contingent of the 11th Bengal Native Infantry now having joined the mutiny, and Everard back amongst the British lines, he was quickly attached to the 60th Rifles of the regular British army. He wrote home:

As soon as ever this row is over I shall retire from the Company’s service ... Colonel Jones asked the Brigadier to attach me to him, which he has done, so I’m in his house now during the day, not at night. At night he goes about inspecting the sentries and I go with him ... He desires me to say that if you should see his brother or sister-in-law to say he’s all right ... This outbreak just shows how the Company has endangered the country by their niggardly way of going on ... About 200 of the 11th sepoys have come back as they did not fire on their officers, and as some of them did their best to save us, are with those who come in by Sunday pardoned ... I had to go and read the proclamation to the ranks, certainly did not feel sure whether they would me shoot while doing so ... Try and get me a commission in The Queen’s service ... Now perhaps I may fulfil your idea about distinguishing myself!! I tell you I never should at any rate with natives. Write and tell Grand Papa I’m all safe.

From this passage, Everard’s open disappointment with the HEIC whom he blames for the mutiny is clear, as is his desire to leave the Company Service and obtain a commission in a Queen’s Regiment instead.

A few days later, Everard wrote to his mother:

Being Orderly Officer to Colonel Jones may give me the opportunity to have a commission given to me, so much the better, but I may need to purchase as I want you at once to get me in the Regiment. If I am not granted a commission without purchase, I want you to use what I shall get out of the legacy which is settled on the younger children. ... This ought to be the death blow of the company, their niggardly way of going on has brought it all about. All they care about are large dividends.

**Delhi: The Siege and Assault**

Thousands of mutineers from Bengal and the North West arrived at the Red Fort in Delhi. With the East India Company being the main source of power in India, the mutineers turned to Bahadhur Shah, the last Mogul King of Delhi to represent their interests for an India independent of the Company, making him their Commander-in-Chief and Emperor of the whole of India. Bahadhur Shah, a noted Urdu poet, is said to have reluctantly agreed, empowering his sons to take effective control.

Events in Delhi followed a similar course as they had at Meerut, with the slaughter of European men, women and children.

On 27th May Everard left Meerut to join the newly designated Delhi Field Force of the British army commanded by Brigadier General Archdale Wilson. The small force leaving Meerut marched by night, but as they approached Delhi on 30th May, they came under cannon fire. Writing home later, Everard related his experience:

There’s a causeway nearly a mile in length, at the end of which the enemy had placed one 9-pounder and one 8-inch howitzer which swept the causeway. On reaching the bridge the two companies extended, two more come in support and the long range of the rifles forced the enemy to abandon their guns. The Colonel sent me down to order the two leading companies to reform on the causeway and take the guns at the point of the bayonets. One of the 11th colours was with the guns - the sepoys carried it off on our taking the guns, one sepoy, Dars Singh of the 11th, fired his musket into a cart full of ammunition. Captain Andrews, Wilton and myself and about nine men were round a tumbril when it blew up. Andrews was blown to pieces and four men killed. Wilton’s head was bruised - God only knows how I escaped. I’m merely bruised, just a little blood drawn from about five places. The poor ‘Creeper’, the horse I was riding,
was shot in four places, in the rear fore-leg, in off hock, in hip and a fearful wound in the body. The shot that gave him the last wound almost melted my scabbard, a narrow escape for my leg. A most fearful affair. When the explosion took place, I thought I was hit by a shell and expected to go to pieces every minute. When the smoke cleared up the enemy had retired to a village strongly walled, on rising ground about 200 yards off. We fired a few shots and cleared it at the point of a bayonet. The sepoys fought like fiends - in one place we left about 35 all dead in a heap, killed altogether 50 and lost five men of rifles ... altogether it was a sharp little action.

Reinforcements from Madras and Bombay were mobilised, and troops en route to China were diverted to Calcutta in support. The Sikhs, together with the Gurkas, remained loyal to the British. Outside Delhi, on a ridge about 1.5 miles from the Red Fort, the British pitched camp, and having drawn up their artillery, they commenced the siege.

Everard wrote home on 1st June urging his mother:

Mind you get me a commission in 60th Rifles. I’ve now seen service with them. I wrote to Papa about it by the last mail. I shall try to get Colonel Jones to recommend me ... he has mentioned me in the official report of the affair of the 30th May ... I will never serve with the native army again. ... The heat is awful and the quantity of water we drink is wonderful. Fancy a burning sun overhead and a burning village below in which we were for two mortal hours, men dying with thirst. I brought the men two skins of water from the river under a heavy fire of grape and round shot on my horse. I can’t write any more. I want to get some sleep.’ He added a soldier’s postscript: ‘I may not live to write again. All I can do is to trust in the same God that preserved me out of the explosion of the ammunition cart. Don’t be alarmed if you don’t hear regularly, as the post is uncertain.

Death was commonplace, not just from action but also from disease. Typhoid and dysentery were rife, and cholera had already killed the Commander in Chief, the Hon. George Anson, and would also kill his replacement, Major General Sir Henry Barnard in July.

The next day, on 2nd June, Everard wrote again to his father:

Get me a commission now and the fact of having attained it for service with the Regiment may be the making of me, and then perhaps Mama’s dream of my distinguishing myself may come true. I never could in the Company’s service in which I am determined not to remain one hour longer than necessary.

Delhi was now held by some 20,000 mutineers who were experienced troops, used to close engagement. Meanwhile, the British Force numbered less than ten percent of that figure. Reinforcements and the siege train were due but needed to fight their way in. Everard and a picket of the 60th Rifles, together with the Gurkh Sirmoor Battalion, were stationed in the fortified post known as ‘Hindoo Rao’s house’, some 1200 yards from the walls of Delhi being both the nearest post to the city and the most exposed.

The siege lasted through June and July, and into August and September.

On the 8th July Everard wrote to his brother Ambrose Charles:

I’m writing from Hindoo Rao’s house, it’s now our main picket. Shot and shell come rattling into it like blazes. We had some very heavy fighting on the 27th, the loss to the enemy very great, ours trifling ... We daily expect to make an attack. We were all named for an attack the other night, place to be taken by escalade, it was just put off. What a state of anxiety everybody in England must be in. India hangs by a thread, a failure at Delhi and India is gone ... Nearly the whole of the Bengal army has mutinied, only some ten regiments out of the seventy-four have not as they were near Europeans who kept them in order. I delight in the profession and life of a soldier ...

Everard continued: ‘Tis a glorious regiment the 60th
Rifles, whilst adding: ‘There’s not a single native regiment we can trust, except Sikhs and Goorkas. Irregulars are the greatest brutes of all.

On the 11th September Everard wrote his last letter to his mother:

I am writing under tremendous fire from city walls. We have advanced our position within two hundred yards. Four Batteries nearly ready to open and one mortar battery of ten mortars and some fifty guns in all. The whole of our guns will open tomorrow at latest and in three days we shall be in Delhi ... Very hard work for all now. Not been in bed since 7th and this is 11th. One battery of ours just opened up.

I cannot write, such a row going on. Not heard from you since 10 July. I sincerely hope to hear about my commission and see myself in Gazette of 1 August. My best love to all at home. Ever dearest Mamma, Your most affectionate son, Everard Lisle Phillipps.

Despite being heavily outnumbered and fighting on unfamiliar ground, a British assault on Delhi was ordered by Brigadier Wilson. The city walls were breached, and fire from number 3 battery smashed the Water Bastion overlooking the River Jumna. Some of the damage from the initial assault was made good overnight. Meanwhile the British troops moved into position, and early in the morning of the 14th September, after further bombardment, the assault on Delhi started. According to the records of the 60th Rifles, once inside the ramparts, Everard ‘who had been attached to our Regiment since the departure from Meerut and received the vacancy created by Ensign Napier’s death, captured the Water Bastion at the head of some Riflemen and turned the guns against the retreating enemy.’

Apparantly another Regiment, the 8th Queen’s had been marked to storm the Water Bastion but were reluctant to face the withering fire, and according to a witness: ‘Ensign Phillipps thrust forward, getting a footing on the Bastion with the aid of seven Riflemen, the remainder following.’

Also present at the Water Bastion was Bengal Engineer Lieutenant Arthur Moffat Lang (1832-1916) who wrote ‘...on we rushed shouting and cheering while the grape and musketry from every bend and street knocked down men and officers ... the whole air seemed full of bullets.’

The street fighting continued. Everard and the 60th occupied the Delhi Bank House and brought their fire onto the King’s Palace, the King and his family having already escaped. It is unclear exactly where Everard was when he was shot and killed on 18th September. Some accounts state he was at the Bank House, others that he was building a protective breastwork elsewhere with his men, and on looking through a peephole to observe the enemy, received a shot in his eye killing him instantly.

Nearly 1200 men were killed or wounded out of a force of 5000 in the assault on Delhi, 1900 of whom were Indian native soldiers. From May 30th to September 20th some 2500 officers and men had died in addition to those killed in the assault. Over 1000 died of disease.

By 20th September the fighting was all but over, and the British re-took Delhi, retaliating by looting, pillaging and killing. Although the Mutiny had received a crushing blow at Delhi, further fighting with atrocities committed by both sides, took place during the last few months of 1857 and well into 1858, notably at Lucknow and Cawnpore. Thousands of civilians and sepoys died in the war, and whilst the number of rebel soldiers was significant, the majority of the native soldiers remained loyal and played a major role in suppressing the rebellion. In the regions affected by the war, the British regained ground and by July 1858, peace had largely been restored. On 2nd August, Queen Victoria approved the bill to transfer the administration of India from the East India Company to the British Crown, and on 1st November 1858, authority for the government of India was passed to the Crown.
When Everard’s family queried this information with Colonel John Jones of the 60th, Jones’ reply was discouraging to say the least. However on the 21st October 1859, the London Gazette published a memorandum:

None the less, the Victoria Cross was not awarded posthumously at this time, and there matters rested for the next fifty years, until following pressure over VC awards.

The Victoria Cross and Postscript

Everard was buried in the Old Delhi Military Cemetery at Rajpura. Colonel Jones wrote to Everard’s father:

It may be some consolation to you to know that during the time he has done duty with my Regiment he has always behaved in the most gallant manner. He was a born soldier and fond of his profession and had it pleased God to have spared him he would have obtained a commission in the Corps and I should have been proud to have him as an officer of the Regiment. He was a universal favourite with the Officers of the Regiment and they hoped and trusted he would have succeeded in obtaining what he wished. It is the wish of the Officers of the Battalion to have placed in any place you choose to select a tablet in his memory in testimony of the esteem in which your son was held by them all.

There was to be some confusion about whether Everard had been recommended for an award. Two brother officers Lieutenants Gough and Moller wrote separately to Everard’s family:

General Wilson has recommended Everard for the Victoria Cross for his conspicuous gallantry at the storming of the Water Bastion when he led the way with seven riflemen when the storming party could not be induced to proceed. The firing was the hottest old soldiers had ever seen, yet Everard was marvellously untouched.

It will be a great consolation to you to know that up to the day of Everard’s death, his conduct in the trying scenes he passed through had been such as to gain marked notice, his name being amongst those who were recommended for the Victoria Cross, a distinction that few of us have had the good fortune to obtain.

When Everard’s family queried this information with Colonel John Jones of the 60th, Jones’ reply was discouraging to say the least.

The communication you have received in regard to your son’s name having been recommended for the Victoria Cross is the first I have heard of it, nor would such a thing be done without coming through his Commanding Officer. It may have been the talk of some young ones amongst themselves by which means Mr Gough may have heard of it.

However on the 21st October 1859, the London Gazette published a memorandum:

Ensign Everard Aloysius Lisle Phillipps, of the 11th Regiment of Bengal Native Infantry, would have been recommended to Her Majesty for the decoration of the Victoria Cross, had he survived, for many gallant deeds which he performed during the Siege of Delhi, during which he was wounded three times. At the assault of that city he captured the Water Bastion with a small party of men, and was finally killed in the streets of Delhi on the 18th of September.
during the Boer War, the London Gazette published a further memorandum on the 15th January 1907:

The King has been graciously pleased to approve of the Decoration of the Victoria Cross being delivered to the representatives of the Officers and men who fell in the performance of acts of valour, and with reference to whom it was notified in the London Gazette that they would have been recommended to Her late Majesty for the Victoria Cross had they survived.

By family consensus, Everard’s Victoria Cross was presented to his oldest surviving brother Edwin. Family correspondence in 1956 suggests there were at least 3 VC’s in Everard’s name. One was returned to Hancox, the makers, with a misspelling and not destroyed. Two more - the original and a nineteenth century copy are both still in the family’s possession.

According to the King’s Royal Rifle Corps Association web site, ‘Everard’s untimely but glorious death made a great sensation in Leicestershire, and a fine Gothic tower of rough hewn granite was built to perpetuate his memory on top of one of the rocks in High Cadman Wood in Charnwood Forest, overlooking Grace-Dieu and the villages of Whitwick and Coalville, and can be seen from miles around. Few soldiers in England have such a fine and enduring monument.’ Erected by public subscription in 1863-64, the monument was 80 feet high. Designed by E. W. Pugin, it was said to replicate the Water Bastion in Delhi, had an internal spiral staircase, the tower being originally surmounted by a flag-staff. Whilst the monument has not endured to the present day having been destroyed by vandals in 1946, the memory of Everard Aloysius Lisle Phillipps lives on.

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in 1908, attracted all the more public attention for being the daughter of the former Liberal MP for Harborough, John ‘Paddy’ Logan of East Langton Grange. Male campaigners for female suffrage are also represented, among them Josiah Mentor Gimson, President of the Leicester Suffrage Society, Dr Frederick William Bennett, a member with his wife Jessie of the Leicester branch of the WSPU, and another of its activists, Alice Hawkins’ husband Alfred.

The book draws extensively on local newspapers, pamphlets and letters as well as secondary sources, and has some fascinating illustrations. In seeking to dispel ‘some of the many popular myths surrounding the struggle to secure the franchise for women’, it addresses ongoing questions about the effectiveness or otherwise of different tactics, and the importance - or otherwise – of the work of women in World War 1 in securing the vote. Success was crucial, not as an end in itself, but as a means of addressing some of the other inequalities experienced by women in Britain; and as such, this book is also a powerful reminder that we should not ‘unthinkingly take for granted’ the rights that these women and men helped to secure.

Cynthia Brown

LEICESTERSHIRE AND RUTLAND: GENERAL

THE BURNING QUESTION: THE STRUGGLE FOR WOMEN’S SUFFRAGE IN LEICESTERSHIRE
Jess Jenkins

Much work has been done in recent years by historians, including Shirley Aucott and Richard Whitmore, into the contribution of women in Leicester, both working and middle class, to campaigns for the female franchise and women’s rights more generally - not least that of the footwear worker and suffragette Alice Hawkins. This book covers a wider territory, taking in the county as well as Leicester itself. Both in this respect, and in its comprehensive account of the suffragist movement from the mid-1850s alongside the more militant Women’s Social and Political Union (WSPU), it is a welcome and very informative addition to the existing literature on the subject.

As the author notes, ‘women’s movement’ was not a term that pioneers of women’s rights such as Mary Wollstonecraft or Leicester’s Elizabeth Heyrick would have recognised, but the brief overview of such activities from the 1790s is very useful in setting the context for the rest of the book. This takes a largely chronological approach, concluding not with the outbreak of the First World War, as most such histories do, but with an overview of the continuing fight for the franchise during the war and a reflection on some of the other battles for equality that had yet to be won. There are also short biographies of leading figures in the Leicestershire movement, along with sources for further information. They include the ‘self-effacing’ Fanny Bolus, an active member of the Great Meeting Unitarian Chapel in Leicester, who was described by a contemporary as ‘thoughtful, reliable, discreet and well informed … an ideal Secretary of many committees’. Isobel Logan, on the other hand, first imprisoned following a demonstration in Parliament Square

FREEMASONRY IN LEICESTERSHIRE & RUTLAND: THE ‘OTHER’ ORDERS AND DEGREES
Aubrey Newman, David Hughes and Don Peacock

This is a companion volume to A History of the Masonic Province of Leicestershire & Rutland (2010) by the same authors, which concentrated on the history and development of the Craft Degree in the Province. This new publication, produced to a similarly high standard, begins by outlining the early history of degrees ‘outside the craft’, including the Holy Royal Arch and the Mark Lodges. It then addresses the statistical evidence of membership and some of the challenges posed by the records. The geographical distribution of the Orders and Degrees is also discussed, one factor being the availability of accommodation in Masonic Halls within the Province. This is followed by a detailed history of individual Orders and Degrees and some of the people associated with them, much of it based on sources such as jubilee histories and the 1973 publication A History of the Degree of Mark Master Mason in the Province of Leicestershire and Rutland, edited by W. Bro. Wilfred G. Smith. While it is clearly intended first and foremost for
Freemasons themselves, it will be an invaluable source of reference for others interested in the history of Freemasonry in Leicestershire and Rutland.

Cynthia Brown

LEICESTERSHIRE PAST AND PRESENT
Robin Jenkins and James Ryan

LEICESTERSHIRE THROUGH TIME
Stephen Butt

Leicestershire Past and Present focuses on the larger market towns of the county and Leicester city centre, locations best served by photographers over the last 150 years. While primarily a collection of images – part of the ‘Britain in Old Photographs’ series - each section has a brief introduction giving a sense of the present as well as the past, in an often entertaining style. Traffic, it is said of Hinckley: ‘is a trial … and whenever we drive through we always get diverted or lost, with the confusing one-way system … [but] the traffic does move – which is a bonus!’ However, so much has changed in the town centre that Hinckley was one of the most challenging subjects in terms of comparisons between old and new: ‘without the odd gable, chimney or even curve of the pavement, it is hard to be sure when there is a match’. Market Harborough, by contrast, still retains much of its Victorian and Edwardian appearance above the level of shop windows, and buildings are easily recognised in later twentieth or twenty-first century scenes. The same applies to many of the images of Leicester, but with the added incentive for residents and visitors alike to ‘hold their heads up as they wander about the city centre. There are semi-naked ladies, fierce bearded Vikings, railway locomotives and even Nile paddle steamers to be seen …’. Ashby-de-la-Zouch, Loughborough, Lutterworth and Melton Mowbray are also well represented, and the images throughout the book are of high quality and accompanied by informative captions.

As the author of Leicestershire Through Time notes, to ‘reflect accurately the character and nature of Leicestershire in a collection of old and new photographs is no mean task’; but as a ‘gathering together of images of interest’, a representation of both the urban and rural landscape, and a record of historical change and continuity, this book also works very well. It follows the customary format of the ‘Through Time’ series, with the juxtaposition of old and modern images and a short explanatory text. There are some well-known landmarks like the Talbot Inn at Belgrave, Belvoir Castle, and the packhorse bridge and church at Medbourne, but many of the images show village scenes with which readers may be much less familiar. For instance, that of the mid-sixteenth century Yeoman’s House at South Kilworth is one of several photographs taken in the 1940s by Frederick Attenborough, then Principal of University College Leicester, and originally used to teach students of architecture at Leicester College of Art. Those featuring people are among the most interesting, including a group of stokers at the Gas and Coke Works at Kibworth Beauchamp alongside a photo of the former office building which is now a private house; and The Barn at Little Bowden, where the golf course created around 1900 by its owner Edward Kennard is being put to good use. The images are of a very good quality, and there is a useful introduction identifying their origins and some of the methodology of the photographers.

Cynthia Brown

THE SEARCHER: JOURNAL OF THE RECORD OFFICE FOR LEICESTERSHIRE, LEICESTER AND RUTLAND, NO 3 – HISTORY OF SPORT
Various authors
Record Office for Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland, Summer 2012, 38pp, illus., £2.99

Timed to coincide with the London Olympics 2012, this edition of the Searcher is devoted to a history of sports. There are nine different articles, two of which have a direct Olympic relevance while others draw from the broader world of local sport. Jess Jenkins explores Leicester’s first Olympic games held in the grounds of the Lunatic Asylum way back in 1866. John Hutchinson, Leicester City’s archivist tells us of another little known aspect of Olympic history. His tale is of Horace Bailey, a Leicester Fosse goalkeeper who won a gold medal at the 1908 London Games. Another Olympian, the swimmer Jenny Fletcher, is highlighted for her success at the Stockholm Games in 1912 in an article by Jan Pearson.

Many other major sports are covered, especially those with a local origin such as the National Hunt Chase. Lois Edwards reminds us that this race was first run at Market Harborough, an area of the country renowned for its ‘rich hunting country’. Clive Chandler covers cycling, Pat Grundy explores hockey and Adam Goodwin looks at football from the fifteenth century to its codification in Victorian times. Keith Ovenden uncovers an unusual aspect of local sport with the discovery of a black cricketer, W. Thomson, playing in 1907. The social ‘bonding’ role is one of the key themes discussed by Robin Jenkins in ‘Fun and Games in the Leicestershire Regiment’. The journal is well researched and written with humour and enthusiasm. It also features some evocative photographs and illustrations, some in
colour. Local historians should find interesting nuggets of information in each article, as well as points of interest that any sports fan can discuss and debate.

Philip French

RUTLAND RECORD: JOURNAL OF THE RUTLAND LOCAL HISTORY AND RECORD SOCIETY, 32
Various authors
Rutland Local History and Record Society, 2012, 98pp, illus., ISBN 9780907464495, £4.50

An image of a reconstruction of a landscape of around 40,000 years ago on the front cover of the 2012 edition of the Rutland Record points the reader to an article by Lynden Cooper and John Thomas on ‘Ice Age Neanderthals and hyaena at Glaston, Rutland’. Excavations over a period of several months by a team from the University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) found evidence of an Early Upper Palaeolithic open-air site there, alongside the remains of a hyaena den within the village. More of these early remains were found during a further excavation, supported by English Heritage, and this article provides a summary of the final detailed report published in 2012. Another article, by Paul Reeve, explores the Rutland connections of William Henry Fox Talbot, the pioneer of photography in the 1830s, including continuing correspondence with Thomas Kaye Bonney, Rector of Normanton in Rutland, who tutored him for a year prior to his admission to Trinity College Cambridge in 1817.

‘Oakham School’s Masters and Ushers 1584 – 1875’ are the subject of Brian Needham’s discussion of the nature of these roles – the Ushers being assistants to the Master - as well as those who held the offices over this period. In ‘A perfect pattern of manly power: coming to manhood at mid-Victorian Uppingham School’, Malcolm Tozer presents a case study of ‘contemporary gender expectations for adolescent boys from upper- and middle-class families at a critical time in British domestic and imperial history’, arguing that an education ‘true to the Victorian ideal of manliness was the central purpose’ at the school during the headmastership of Edward Thring from 1853 – 1887. The journal also carries a report on Rutland history and archaeology in 2011 by Tim Clough, including fieldwork and historic building recording. The concluding section covers deposits of archives relevant to Rutland in the Record Office for Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland, recent local publications, and the work of Rutland libraries and historical societies.

Cynthia Brown

Other recent publications

‘AND IT WON’T GO AWAY’: 25 YEARS OF LEICESTERSHIRE AIDS SUPPORT SERVICES
Leicestershire Aids Support Services
The Authors, 2012

A BRIEF HISTORY OF LEICESTERSHIRE AMBULANCE SERVICE
Peter Ufton
The Author, 2012

THE BRITISH POLICE: FORCES AND CHIEF OFFICERS 1829 – 2012
Martin Stallion and David S. Wall
Police History Society, 2nd edn., 2012

THE CLOCKWINDER WHO WOULDN’T SAY NO: THE LIFE OF DAVID TAYLOR MP
Paul Flynn
Biteback, 2012

EXPLORING THE LANDSCAPE OF THE NATIONAL FOREST
Keith Ambrose et al
National Forest Company and British Geological Survey, 2012

AN ILLUSTRATED GUIDE TO THE PRINTED MAPS OF RUTLAND 1576 – 1900
Derek Deadman and Colin Brooks
Landseer Press, 2012

KARMAN: A HISTORY OF SOUTH ASIAN DANCE IN LEICESTER AND LEICESTERSHIRE
Cynthia Brown and Werner Menski, ed.
Centre for Classical Indian Dance, 2012

LEICESTERSHIRE AND RUTLAND FOLK TALES
Leicestershire Guild of Storytelling
The History Press, 2013

THE PARISH ATLAS OF ENGLAND (LEICESTERSHIRE AND RUTLAND)
T. C. H. Cockin
Malthouse Press, 2012

RICHARD III
David Baldwin
Amberley Publishing, hbk., 2012; updated with chapter on the discovery of Richard III’s remains, pbk., 2013
COLIN MILLER
A DEGREE OF SWING: LESSONS IN THE FACTS OF LIFE - LEICESTER 1958 – 64

Colin Miller came to Leicester from Norfolk in 1958 to study mathematics at the University, which had only recently received its Royal Charter. By his own account he had little experience of the world twenty miles beyond Great Yarmouth, and his choice of university owed much to the direct rail route to Leicester from close to his home - unfortunately axed just before he started his studies. The fact that the University selected 'proportionately more female students than most other universities of the late 1950s' was an added attraction, even though they were still a small minority, and visits to the male hall of residence were strictly limited to the Junior Common Room between 2 – 10 pm on Wednesdays, Saturdays and Sundays.

He recalls the ‘lavish’ accommodation of his hall of residence, and the comprehensive housekeeping service that left students with no responsibilities beyond making their bed and ironing their own clothes. Equally memorable were the effects of combining cauliflower cheese with five pints of Mitchell and Butler’s best bitter on his first evening in Leicester, and the debates about issues of the day like capital punishment, nuclear disarmament, homosexuality and racial discrimination. He also recalls that the University was still evolving as an independent institution, and that the ‘initial attempt to emulate the traditions of Oxford and Cambridge’ was challenged by ‘an extremely vocal and active minority’ consisting mainly of the growing number of working-class students – one of its victories being against the compulsory wearing of gowns to lectures and tutorials.

His personal memories are supplemented by those of friends and colleagues, photographs, and documentary sources including the Leicester Mercury and the student newspaper Ripple which will no doubt strike many chords with students of the same generation. There is another dimension to the book, however, in his development as a musician, with a range from jazz to folk song to the ‘rather risqué version’ of Cliff Richard’s A Voice in the Wilderness for the Rag Week revue in 1960, ‘sung while performing a number of suggestive contortions over the stage’. This led to the formation of the University’s first rock-n-roll band, Aztec and the Incas in the following year, and eventual involvement in the wider music scene of the city. Not everyone shared the experience of the ‘Swinging Sixties’, but for him these were ‘exciting times’. By telling his own story he gives a vivid and entertaining sense of social change at this time, led by the ‘natural desire of most young people to be different from and more exciting than their parents’, and the emergence of a distinctive ‘youth culture’ expressed in music and fashion.

Cynthia Brown

DRINK AND DAMNATION: A LIGHT-HEARTED LOOK AT LEICESTER’S DRINKING DENS
Barrie Lount and Robert Spurr
Steamin’ Billy Brewing Co Ltd, 2012, 168pp, illus., ISBN 9781907540721, £12.95

This book is presented in ‘scrapbook’ style with a variety of photographs and other images, excerpts from Victorian directories and other documents arranged around information and anecdotes assembled over many years. It is divided into sections covering the bawdy, glutinous, rough, sporting, criminal, ghostly and strange aspects of pubs in Leicester through the ages. The ‘Sporting Tales’ section is particularly rich. The book includes references to some of Leicester’s favourite characters including the Elephant Man and Daniel Lambert. The local photographs, especially those not published elsewhere, are an important contribution to the record. It is very readable, being in part a written and
illustrated version of what might be heard in a bar room conversation. With many pubs closing in the face of home drinking and pressure for responsible drinking, it prompts the thought that there is scope for more informal histories of pubs – the local history of your local.

Yolanda Courtney

LEICESTER SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA: THE FIRST 90 YEARS
Neil Crutchley
Leicester Symphony Orchestra Publishing, 2013

As the introduction to this very readable and beautifully produced book points out, there was no shortage of musical activity in Leicester in the early 1920s, particularly after the opening of De Montfort Hall some nine years earlier. However, the quality of the music on offer, along with levels of attendance and the behaviour of the audiences was ‘variable’ enough to justify the formation of yet another orchestra, the Leicester Symphony Orchestra (LSO) itself. Karl Russell, son of William Russell, the music shop owner who helped to found the LSO, estimated that there were probably four unsuccessful concerts for every successful one; while one complaint about a concert-goer combining complete inattention to the platform with ‘unwrapping and chewing several sticky sweets’ may well strike some twenty-first century chords.

Much of the LSO’s initial success was undoubtedly due to the inspiration of its conductor Dr Malcolm Sargent, at that time organist and choirmaster at the church of St Mary in Melton Mowbray; and its leader and assistant conductor, the violinist and music teacher Grace Burrows. They were jointly responsible for the initial auditions of musicians - from Derby, Nottingham and Northampton as well as those based in Leicestershire - and other orchestras, brass bands, and theatres and cinemas all proved good sources of recruitment. The LSO gave its first concert on 24th October 1922 at De Montfort Hall, a debut described by the Illustrated Leicester Chronicle as ‘triumphant’, while warning against the assumption that ‘just because the orchestra made a good start, it will last’. It also wondered if Leicester was ‘sufficiently advanced musically to deserve a first rate orchestra’.

The ninetieth anniversary of the orchestra’s founding is enough in itself to dispel both reservations - although, as this book also demonstrates, there have been many challenges along the way. The post-Second World War period was particularly difficult, both in terms of changes in personnel during the war itself, and concerns about the future financing of concerts, while from the mid-1980s it faced significant competition from the Bardi Orchestra, founded by one of the LSO’s former cellists, Andrew Constantine. While the book takes a chronological approach to the history of the LSO, it is very far from being a dry catalogue of performances and personnel, and the famous names associated with the orchestra – Adrian Boult, John Barbirolli and Evelyn Glennie to name just a few – are never allowed to obscure the orchestra’s debt to the talent and commitment of its own often anonymous musicians. No previous musical knowledge is required to enjoy this publication, which also has copious illustrations, the majority in colour. The author was music critic and correspondent of the Leicester Mercury from 1984 – 2012, and brings to it the same depth of knowledge, lively style and warmth that characterised his reviews during that period, making it an absorbing and entertaining account for anyone with an interest in Leicester’s cultural history.

Cynthia Brown

LIVING IN A BOX (LEICESTER PREFABS)
Brian Johnson
The Author, 2012, 48pp, illus., £4.95

This book is the story of the ‘little palaces’ – the prefabricated bungalows built post-war as emergency temporary housing and said to be ‘delivered by lunchtime, in by teatime’. The author lived in a prefab in Leicester for 20 years and includes photographs and memories of both his and other tenants’ experiences. His lively description of his boyhood on the edge of the New Parks estate from 1947 is well worth reading. A major part of the book describes the history of prefabricated homes as a national solution to the post-war housing shortage. Included in the book are photographs, diagrams and specifications of different types of prefabs. The development of prefabs is very clearly explained in this well-researched and fascinating account of these houses. The Ford Motor Company, the aircraft industry, Mulberry harbours, Prisoners of War and the Tate Gallery are just a few of the links that the author uncovers.

The social and political history behind the need for the temporary homes is well-described and includes the pre-war
slums, the effects of bombing, the shortage of skilled labour, and housing for demobbed servicemen and war widows. Helpfully, the author gives the location of prefabricated homes in Leicester and the surrounding areas, including a list of preserved prefabs. Some are in museums, others await demolition while a few - in Moseley, Birmingham - are under a preservation order. This is a privately published, well-researched and readable book. Altogether it is an informative, enjoyable and interesting piece of research.

Beryl Hawkes

MADE IN LEICESTER (DVD)
Radica Wright

Taking its title from the well-known boast of Leicester’s manufacturers, Made in Leicester uses a combination of archive footage held by the Media Archive for Central England (MACE) and newly commissioned interviews. Themes covered include Leicester market, the manufacturing legacy, Sue Townsend, and ‘The Queen Comes to Town’. From the point of view of a local historian, the most interesting material is the older archive film. This ranges from 1950s and 1960s hosiery and footwear adverts to local news footage, including industry sponsored documentaries and home movie footage.

Most of the clips are dated, and it would also have been interesting to see the sources of the film. Leicester-born Rosemary Conley provides the commentary, and the film provides some rare footage of Leicester’s past, including some interesting street interviews with local people. It is also enjoyable as a nostalgic look at old fashions, long-lost buildings, and how news items used to be filmed. Perhaps the final word should go to the 1960s City Planning Officer Konrad Smigielski, who states that ‘Leicester is not Florence’. Only that comment could have been ‘Made in Leicester’!

Philip French

NOSTALGIC LEICESTER
Steve Ainsworth and Brendan O’Neill

The cover of this book promises ‘Page after page of pure nostalgia’ – it is though, much more than photographs that recall the city’s past and prompt the memory. Each comes with a commentary which explains its context in a comprehensive and engaging way. For instance, the opening section on ‘Street Scenes’ includes accounts of some of the businesses based in premises along the way – such as Allen House in Oxford Street from where the company of J. J. Allen ran national chains of furnishing and fashion stores before joining the House of Fraser Group in 1969. One of the most unusual photographs in the section on ‘Buildings and Structures’ is that of the erection of storm water tanks near Blackbird Road, while a reference to a ‘secret solar alignment’ based on the Temple of Janus in Rome accompanies the more familiar sight of Sir Edwin Lutyens’ War Memorial on Victoria Park. Other sections cover transport, shops, entertainment, events and people, while the final section on work consists mainly of histories of some local companies which have supported the production of the book, among them Everards Brewery, Lumbers jewellers and the Star Inn in Thrussington. More dating of images would be welcome, but there is no doubt that the book will amply fulfil the promise of awakening ‘forgotten thoughts of yesteryear’.

Cynthia Brown

WE ARE SOUTH HIGHFIELDS: LIFE IN OUR AREA PAST AND PRESENT
Penny Walker, ed.

This book reports on the findings of a project organised by the Highfields Association of Residents and Tenants and funded through the Near Neighbours scheme by the Department for Communities and Local Government. It tells the story, over the last 80 years, of one of the most interesting areas of Leicester: of how the established community and waves of ‘incomers’ have merged, and the challenges and tensions involved. This was the area where the African-Caribbean community originally settled, followed by the Ugandan Asians in the 1970s, and which has become a place where new communities are accepted, resulting in a diverse and creative community. Nearly 100 residents past and present, from around 25 different countries, contributed to the project, their stories told in the book, recounting in their own words their varied experiences of growing up and living in the area. There are also wartime stories, stories of schools, families and working lives, and stories of struggle and achievement.

Much of South Highfields is a conservation area with many interesting buildings. Their change of use over the years is discussed, and there are lively descriptions of shops, restaurants and small businesses. The book also discusses the reputation of the area and the current reality. The role of voluntary and community organisations is also outlined. This is a nicely produced book, beautifully illustrated and
well edited. It is of considerable interest to the general reader, and the local historian will find it a useful source of descriptions of everyday life and of ideas for further study and analysis. The entire recordings are held in the East Midlands Oral Archive.

Gillian Lighton

**WILLIAM WYGGESTON AND HIS WORLD**

Jill Bourne

Wyggeston’s Hospital, 2013, 80pp, illus., ISBN 9780953168415, £8.95

The name of William Wyggeston is familiar to anyone with even the slightest knowledge of the history of Leicester. His statue (conjectural – there is no known likeness of Wyggeston) is one of the local ‘worthies’ on the Clock Tower and his name lives on in the hospital and school that still bear his name. This informative and nicely presented book is a useful record and celebration of Wyggeston’s life and his generous and wide-ranging legacy to Leicester. William came from a wealthy and successful merchant family – originally from Wigston, hence the surname (in various spellings). His involvement in the governance and economy of Leicester, plus his enormous personal wealth, as a leading Merchant of the Staple, made him one of the town’s most eminent citizens. Jill Bourne presents here, with admirable clarity, the relatively small amount of information that is known about his life, and situates him in the context of his times. As Duncan Lucas’s Foreword says, Wyggeston lived through ‘dramatic and often violent times’ – including the Wars of the Roses, the Battle of Bosworth Field, and the death of Cardinal Wolsey at Leicester Abbey. Jill Bourne’s very readable text is complemented by copious illustrations in colour and monochrome, including maps and several very good reconstructions, all of which help to bring Wyggeston to life. Anyone interested in early modern Leicester and one of its truly great men will enjoy this book, which strikes a sensible balance between academic accuracy and popular appeal. Historians, schoolchildren and general readers will all find much of interest in this commendable volume.

John Hinks

**Other recent publications**

**THE BOYS OF SUMMER: A ROCK AND ROLL NIGHTMARE WITH SHOWADDYWADDY**

Dave Bartram

Fanton, 2013

Michael Tedd writes thoughtfully in this volume about nicknames in Anstey from the middle of the nineteenth to the middle of the twentieth century. He has included traditional archival history, oral history interviews, and elements of sociological and linguistic research, observing the patterns by which names are passed between generations. Often these names offer tantalizing glimpses of what is now almost unknowable without the sort of research underpinning this history. For example, one local drinker ironically called ‘Rev’ Moore was reported in the local press by this name on his death: the potential confusion without an explanation is obvious. To those historians not especially concerned about what people might have called each other across the street or in the pub, there is still food for thought. One particularly
interesting example is the notion that nick-names given to several generations of a family were used to support claims to property, demonstrating the complicated distinction between official and unofficial names. Here the author has engaged in original field work in order to obtain the necessary materials. Indeed, the way in which these different strands are pulled together is testament to the careful research which underpins this highly-readable study. It will be of interest to those concerned with Anstey, naming in general, and the wider history of social relations in this period. The handling and blending of the source material means it deserves a wide readership, and the promise of further writing on the project is as tantalizing for readers, as the nick-names themselves are windows into past social relations.

Malcolm Noble

ASHBY-DE-LA-ZOUCH PAST AND PRESENT: JOURNAL OF ASHBY-DE-LA-ZOUCH MUSEUM, NO 14
Various Authors
Ashby-de-la-Zouch Museum, 2012, 52pp

The topics covered in this edition of the Ashby-de-la-Zouch Museum journal range across several centuries, and all have a focus on the people of the town. John Louch recalls growing up there in the 1940s and ‘50s. He has particularly vivid memories of the Second World War, with its air raids, evacuees from Birmingham, work for the war effort through his local school, and the arrival in succession of the Women’s Land Army, US troops and German and Italian Prisoners of War. Ashby regulars on the Western Front in 1915 are the subject of an article by Nigel Holmes, with a focus on the eight soldiers from the town who were killed in action between March and August of that year. Christopher Latham writes about his part in a study of the occupations of people living in Ashby’s courts and yards, based on Census returns from 1841 to 1891, which includes an analysis of the occupations of women and children as well as adult males. Reflecting on the writing of her recent book Ashby de la Zouch Workhouse and Ashby Poor Law Union, Wendy Freer pieces together the life of Elizabeth Moon, a deserted wife with an infant son - just one example of the personal lives it is possible to reconstruct from Census returns and the often fragmentary records of the Poor Law.

Continuing the series on ‘The Victorians’, Eric Coxon explores the lives of some of Ashby’s ‘characters’, including Robert Thornley (1771-1842), the son of a wealthy draper and a considerable owner of property and land in the town. Said to have ‘some unenviable points to his character’, these included a miserly streak that led him to ‘go out every Monday morning to buy stale rolls of bread at reduced prices’, and ‘buy two pennyworth of liver, carry it home on a skewer, and cook it for his dinner’. Adrian Priest recalls the railways of Ashby, from his father’s work as a signalman to his own memories of collecting butterflies along a railway cutting, and of sitting on the knee of drivers taking a train of ‘empties’ to a local colliery to exchange it for one laden with coal – experiences not to be repeated in ‘these modern, safety conscious times!’ The journal concludes with biographical details of the family of Arthur and Mary Stone based on a photograph from 1896, and an overview of recent books relating to Ashby and its area. It is, as always, full of interest and testimony to the important role played by the Museum in encouraging and making available new historical research.

Cynthia Brown

THE STORY OF BELGRAVE: THE LIFE AND DEATH OF A LEICESTERSHIRE VILLAGE AND BYGONE BELGRAVE IN 120 PHOTOGRAPHS
Michael Smith
Birstall Local History Society, 2012, 146pp, illus., ISBN 9780957191518, £8

This is the latest in a series of local histories produced by the veteran historian of Birstall, Michael Smith. Many of us think of Belgrave as a bustling, heavily populated suburb of Leicester, home of the Golden Mile and former home of factories such as Wolsey and the British United Shoe Machinery Company, and the portrayal of Belgrave as a ‘village’ might come as a surprise to some modern readers unaware of its long history. The bulk of the book is dedicated to a broad review of Belgrave from its probable origins as Saxon settlement to its incorporation into the borough of Leicester under the Leicester Extension Act 1891. Using a wide variety of sources such as the Domesday Book for the Anglo Saxon period, to hearth tax returns and probate inventories in the 1600s, and maps and newspapers in the 1800s, we get a picture of Belgrave as a village affected by national events such as plague and the English Civil War, but also shaped by local people. As in many histories the limited availability of sources for the earlier periods dictates that much of the story is based around key landowners and their estates. Several chapters are also given to prominent local families such as the Vanns and Harrisons, and Rev Stephens and John Ellis who shaped Belgrave in the 1800s. As indicated in the title, the book is almost two books in one, with the final 30 or so pages featuring an interesting and broad selection of historical photographs, sometimes complimented by a modern equivalent. The book is well written and diligently researched and should provide the local historian with a good introduction to the area as well as some fascinating detail.

Philip French
mid-eighteenth century. The latter include lost hunting lodges such as The Limes, facing Sherrard Street, demolished in 1932 to make way for a Woolworth store; and The Elms on the opposite side of Sherrard Street, built in the late eighteenth century and eventually replaced by a telephone exchange and small housing development. The book is arranged into sections covering different areas of the town, enabling readers to use it as a trail if they so wish and enjoy visualising the ‘then’ from the photographs. A contents list would be welcome. Each section has a brief but useful introduction, and the images are of the high quality readers may have come to expect of the ‘Through Time’ series. It is a publication full of interest and gives a real sense of how Melton has changed over the years.

Cynthia Brown

THE ENCHANTED VILLAGE: NEWTON HARCOURT
Joe Goddard and Colin Garratt

The dust jacket tells us that this book, a collaboration between the writer Joe Goddard and author and photographer Colin Garrett, has been 27 years in the making! Why it took so long is not revealed, but the end result is a beautifully illustrated and very engaging account of the village from the late Saxon period to the present day, with each of the authors bringing to it their own personal perspective. Its starting point, intriguingly, is a local farmer’s search in 1980 for a reliable water supply – one which, by its absence, suggested that the original settlement of Newton Harcourt was a little to the south of its current location. This first section takes the history of the village up to the beginning of the twentieth century, when it was ‘still firmly an estate-controlled community of feudal character’ with five tenant farmers and their workers, a few shops, a smithy, a cobbler and the communal bake-house. As well as covering changes in village life, such as the coming of electricity and a mains water supply, the second chapter also...
considers the impact of World War II and includes several profiles of past village residents.

The book then follows a thematic format, beginning with the two canals constituting the ‘Leicester Line’, the Leicestershire and Northamptonshire Union and part of the original Grand Union canal. Its construction in 1795 was marked by the hostility of local landowners and the ‘Great Riot’ occasioned by the arrest of two navvies accused of assaulting a shopkeeper in Kibworth Beauchamp; and unlike the Midland Railway line to London that came through Newton Harcourt in 1857 - it proved less prosperous than anticipated. Colin Garrett, himself well known for his photographs and books on the history of steam locomotives, discovered the village in the late 1940s and the ‘magical spot’ on a bridge from which ‘much of my remaining childhood was duly spent … watching ex Midland, LMS and British Railways locomotives’. One of the most memorable was naturally the ‘Smelly Bone’, taking carcases from a slaughter house in Leicester to a glue factory near Market Harborough, when ‘the stench of rotting meat permeated the whole village’.

Elms Farm, St Luke’s church, Wistow, and agricultural machinery all have their own chapters, and the natural history of Newton Harcourt is well covered, along with routes for walks around the village. There is also an account of the Pig Club founded in 1941, and a reflection on the future of the village. The latter refers to the ‘strong sense of custodianship’ felt by many Newton Harcourt residents, and the hope that this book will encourage a wider interest and awareness of the village – it is clearly a labour of love on the part of the authors, and a very productive collaboration.

Cynthia Brown

THE CHANGING FACE OF ROTHLEY: THE STORY OF STEADY DEVELOPMENT FROM 1780 - 2012
PART 1: FROM 1780 – 1930; PART 2: FROM 1950 - 2012
John Brooks and Rothley History Society

These books are based on a 31-board exhibition held in October 2012, tracing the development of Rothley from a small rural community into the ‘largely residential commuter society’ that occupies it today. Part I begins with a survey of Rothley’s Medieval open fields before dealing in depth with the nature and effects of enclosure in 1782, making very good use of maps to illustrate this. The development of local farms is also covered in detail, along with buildings in the village, from mansions, to Victorian and Edwardian terraces. One aspect of Rothley that may be less familiar is the Garden Suburb promoted by the German-born businessman Frederick Merttens on the Rothley Temple Estate that he purchased in 1893, selling plots to individuals and vetting their plans for building. Many of the plans for these houses survive in the Record Office for Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland, and images of some of them are reproduced in the book.

Sections on population growth, soldiers returning after the Great War, and inter-war housing development take the first volume up to the 1930s. The second volume picks up the story from the 1950s, with the sale of farms and major new housing developments, many of the occupants being new residents moving from Birstall or built-up areas near Leicester to ‘realise the dream’ of living in a rural village. Some case studies of the use of former agricultural land are included, along with a discussion of the boundary changes to which these developments eventually led. As a section on infrastructure indicates, the speed of development often outstripped the provision of services such as sewage, street lighting, electricity and roads, to the concern of residents; and the exhibition itself was prompted in part by plans for more major residential developments in and around the village. The sources used in the books include deeds, maps, valuation surveys, farm records and Census schedules, and the second volume also draws on some of the memories of original residents of the new post-war estates. As might be expected from ‘Books of the Exhibition’, there is a great deal of visual material, reproduced to a high standard, and providing a very interesting and accessible overview of Rothley’s history from 1782 to 2012.

Cynthia Brown

STAUNTON HAROLD: HOUSES AND PEOPLE IN A LEICESTERSHIRE PARISH
Barbara Hutton and Irene Brightmer

This is the first part of a historical study of the parish of Staunton Harold to record its vernacular buildings and the people who lived and worked in them - and a reminder, if one is needed, that Staunton Harold consists of more than
the Hall, church and craft and garden centres that draw the visitors. While the Hall naturally features in this account, the main focus is on the traditional houses of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, ten of them, ranging from farms to cottages. It begins with a description of the parish through to the twentieth century, and the role of the main landowners, the Shirley family, which places the houses themselves in their wider economic and social context. Each house is then described in detail in terms of its fabric, building materials, layout, extensions and alterations, and their builders and occupants. For instance, Rose Cottage in the hamlet of Lount is believed to be one of six houses built for colliers in the early seventeenth century by three men who leased a mine from Sir George Shirley, First Baronet. This was later the home of John Johnson, steward to Lawrence Shirley, fourth Earl Ferrers, who was hanged for Johnson’s murder in 1760.

The book has been thoroughly and carefully researched using tree-ring dating as well as documentary sources such as Hearth Tax returns, wills and inventories, plans and the Shirley family papers. Some of the most interesting and informative material comes from the fieldwork in which the fabric of the houses was closely examined. Along with the recent photographs, this really brings them and their past to life. More is to come in a planned second publication that will focus on the people of the parish and explore its social and economic characteristics.

Cynthia Brown

Other recent publications

LIFE IN ARNESBY 1851 – 1901: WHAT CHANGED?  
Richard Ingram  
The Author, 2012

THE BEAUMANOR ARMORIAL WINDOW: A HERRICK PEDIGREE  
Caroline Wessel  
The Author, 2012
EDUCATION AND HEALTH

A BLESSING TO THE TOWN: 150 YEARS OF VAUGHAN COLLEGE, LEICESTER
Cynthia Brown
University of Leicester, 2012, 144pp, illus., ISBN 9780901507723, £10

Vaughan College celebrated its 150th anniversary in 2012. The College, first established as a reading room and library for working men by Canon David Vaughan in 1862, is part of the foundation and fabric of Leicester’s educational history. To commemorate the occasion, Cynthia Brown has written a new history of the College to accompany those produced for the 50th and 100th anniversaries of its founding. The book is essentially divided into two halves, and a different approach is taken in each. The first five chapters are a chronological history of the College, from its inception to its present day position as part of the Institute of Lifelong Learning of the University of Leicester. The final four chapters take a thematic approach, looking at the whole history through different spectacles. There is a chapter on ‘classes and courses’, another on ‘pounds, shillings and pence’, a third on the motto of the College ‘Sirs, Ye are Brethren’ and a fourth on ‘measures of success’.

This approach allows the reader to gain a more detailed understanding of the key aspects of the College’s development than a straightforward chronology would have yielded. In particular, the author imparts a vivid sense of the deeply held values that underpin this institution and draws out the sense of community which is present to this day. It is evident that this history benefits from endless hours spent in the University’s Special Collections Reading Room consulting Vaughan College’s extensive archive of material, and also from the gathering of recent personal anecdotes from those who remember ‘the Vaughan’. The writing draws deeply on the primary sources and personal recollections of people who were shaped by the College, and the selection of primary material for inclusion in the text is well-chosen, adding humour, warmth and life to the story. The text is enhanced with 18 pages of illustrations including images of material from the archives and previously unpublished photographs from recent albums that may well bring back memories for readers who have had a connection with the College over the years. There is a useful section at the end outlining the primary sources used, alongside a bibliography of books and articles. ‘The Vaughan’ was widely recognised as a ‘blessing to the town’. In bringing its history up to date, and celebrating the qualities that ensured its survival while similar institutions fell by the wayside, this 150th anniversary history is in turn a blessing to the College.

Catherine Parkinson

THESE WONDERFUL RUMOURS! A YOUNG SCHOOLTEACHER’S WARTIME DIARIES (NW LEICS)
May Smith

This 400 page book, edited by her son, contains the wartime diaries of May Smith. May was an elementary school teacher living with her parents in Swadlincote, Derbyshire, educated at Ashby Grammar School and Goldsmiths Teacher Training College in London. The years 1939 to 1945 are divided into separate yearly chapters and the book includes photographs, mainly of family and friends. The diaries end with the birth of May’s son. He has added some very useful endnotes enlarging on some of the events from the diaries. While all the war years are included, the years up to 1944 are covered in greater detail.

May’s recording of her life during the Second World War is both lively and informative. She is a good raconteur and
writes well. Momentous events are often briefly told, as are her reactions to them. The main thrust of the diaries is her day to day life. She was a very active and observant young woman, able to describe the day’s events in a colourful and humorous way. The result is a rich and intimate picture of her life—including shopping trips to Derby and Burton, family Christmas gatherings and evenings with friends. Her life at school is described in some detail. May wonders if she is really cut out to be a teacher, feeling more like a lion tamer at times. She has no illusions about children. They are more interested in the erection of an air raid shelter in the school grounds than ‘my wonderful talk on Buds’.

May’s writing has a distinctive characteristic in the use of capitals to denote humour and emphasis. Jilted by a clergyman, she later receives a Christmas card which she puts ‘VERY REVERENTLY’ into her handbag. There are many such examples, creating enjoyable and amusing scenes. Capitals are rarely used when writing on more serious subjects. The hardships of war—constant air raid sirens, nights in the shelter, chronic tiredness, worries about friends - are vividly portrayed, as are the attempts to maintain a normal life—shopping trips, games of tennis, holidays, WEA lectures, reading, cinema visits and much letter writing. For local historians in search of Mass Observation type material this book is a useful resource; and anyone who lived in the Swadlincote and Burton area will find these diaries a wonderful journey down memory lane, with May’s records of visits to named shops, cinemas and activities. The book might also be used imaginatively in Memory Days for older people.

Beryl Hawkes

**LOROS: HOSPICE CARE FOR LEICESTERSHIRE AND RUTLAND**
Caroline Wessel

The Leicestershire Organisation for the Relief of Suffering, much more familiarly known as LOROS, had its origins in the early 1970s, in the recognition of a need for local provision for people who were terminally ill. The first patient was admitted to its Hospice in September 1984, testimony in itself to the vast amount of effort that went into raising the requisite £500,000 funding for the Groby Road building, and securing the support of organisations such as the Leicestershire Area Health Authority. This twenty-fifth anniversary publication traces this early history and that of two other major LOROS projects: the opening of Manor Croft as a Day Centre in a converted Victorian house in Stoneygate, and the establishment of a Counselling Service for patients and their families. It also covers the full range of services offered by LOROS, from in-patient care, through to the emotional, spiritual and therapeutic care available to patients and families; care in the community; and the education and research which has not only benefitted its own staff and volunteers, but has been disseminated among health and social care workers more widely. Fundraising has remained a constant imperative. Running costs reached £1.2 million by 1990 and £5 million in 2005, the majority of it raised from within the local community. It is an inspiring story, told here in a very readable way and illustrated with many images from the LOROS archive.

Cynthia Brown

**Other recent publications**

**CITY BOYS’ SCHOOL, LEICESTER – THE STORY OF A GRAMMAR SCHOOL**
Andy Marlow and Mike Ratcliff
The Authors, 2012

**MILITARY AND WAR**

**BOSWORTH 1485**
Mike Ingram

The author of this volume in the ‘Battle Story’ series could have had little idea of how topical the subject would prove to be following the discovery of the skeleton of Richard III in Leicester early in 2013. However, as he says in his introduction, it is not intended as a book ‘about a king, but about one of, if not the, most important battle in English history after the Battle of Hastings in 1066’. The historical background of family divisions and lines of succession is explored from the mid-fourteenth century, along with the descent into civil war and the assumption of the Crown by Richard of Gloucester in 1483. The greater part of the book, is devoted to the Battle of Bosworth itself: to the commanders and soldiers of the armies, their arms, their deployment and their fortunes on the battlefield – including more recent research into its actual location - and the immediate and longer-term aftermath of the battle. There is also a very useful timeline from the birth of Richard’s father Richard Plantagenet in 1411 to that of Prince Henry, later Henry VIII, in 1491, along with a discussion of the documents on which accounts of the battle have been based. Few of them were written at the time or during the reign of Henry Tudor, emphasising their debatable accuracy or obvious bias. In the final analysis, as the author himself says, this account of the Battle of Bosworth is ‘just one interpretation of that day, and there will no doubt be others’. In the meantime, it will be of interest to anyone curious
about the events that brought Richard III to his burial in Leicester, as well as those looking for a more specific analysis of this final medieval battle.

Cynthia Brown

OF THOSE WE LOVED: A GREAT WAR NARRATIVE REMEMBERED AND ILLUSTRATED
I. L. ‘Dick’ Read

The dust jacket of this book describes it as ‘No less than exceptional… a gem of the highest quality’, and this is no exaggeration. In 1914 the author was an apprentice at the engineering firm of Gimson and Co. in Leicester, and one of the first to volunteer for military service on the outbreak of war. He joined the 8th Battalion Leicestershire Regiment and reached the rank of sergeant before being commissioned as a lieutenant in the Royal Sussex Regiment in 1917. Originally written in the 1960s for his grandchildren, this memoir was prompted by the understanding that ‘I have forgotten much; fear of forgetting more urges me on’.

Its tone is almost conversational, conveying not only a vivid sense of what was happening at each stage of the war, but of the author’s feelings about it. In the space of a few hours on the Somme in 1916, for example, he experiences ‘fear and awe’ on discovering that he had spent one night with his head resting against an unexploded shell, feels ‘a deal better’ after hot tea, some biscuit and cold bacon, before encountering the ‘gruesome sequel’ of battle that induces not only hatred of the dead German machine-gunners ‘as we looked upon our poor fellows on the rusty wire’, but the realisation that nothing in the war so far had prepared him or his comrades for the ordeals to come.

On a lighter note, though not without its own hazards, his account of his largely overland journey from Cherbourg to join his new battalion in Egypt gives detailed and finely observed insights into Europe beyond the battlefields themselves. These range from the ‘bedlam’ of shouted orders for food to ‘harassed and quite inadequate staff’ every time the train stopped, to the large numbers of uniformed Russian soldiers along the railway track and in the sidings near Le Mans, the ‘dark velvety complexions and darker eyes’ of the women of Arles below their Provencal headdress, and the final leg of the journey by an Australian ship from Taranto to Alexandria, on which the ‘spotless napery’ and supplies unobtainable in England were among several ‘pleasant surprises’. The final chapters cover his recall from Egypt to take part in the Second Battle of the Marne and the award of the Croix de Guerre with Star, through to the final advance of 1918 and the armistice. This was not the end of his military service, however. After the war he joined the Emergency Officers Reserve and was commissioned into the Leicestershire Regiment for the duration of World War II, serving in administration and home defence.

The book is beautifully illustrated with the author’s own watercolours and sketches, and maps. The appendices relate his experiences of working at Gimson, the formation of the four Service Battalions of the Leicestershire Regiment - including his own, the 8th - and provide notes on the operations of the XXII Corps during the Second Battle of the Marne. Potential readers should not be deterred by the length of the book. There will no doubt be many publications marking the 100th anniversary of the outbreak of World War 1, but they are unlikely to find a more readable, engaging and moving account of the Great War than this.

Cynthia Brown

Other recent publications

ASPIRIN, BROMIDE AND BENJAMIN: THE SECRET WAR AGAINST THE LUFTWAFFE NAVIGATION BEAMS (CHARLEY)
Terry Sheppard, compiler
Charley Heritage Group, 2012

THE ROYAL LEICESTERSHIRE REGIMENT: AN ILLUSTRATED HISTORY
Robin Jenkins and James Ryan
The History Press, 2013

RELIGION AND PLACES OF WORSHIP

HARBY ST MARY’S CHURCH: AN HISTORICAL GUIDE
Leslie Cram
Harby History Group, 2012, 28pp, illus., ISBN 9780956751515, £4.40

This guide takes a chronological approach to the features that can be seen in Harby church, explaining ‘how they reflect the changing emphases in the teaching of the church and involvement of the church in village life’. As well as examining the physical features of the church, the booklet is based on documentary historical accounts, primarily the official papers of the relevant bishops. It begins with an account of earliest church on the site, likely to have been a long wooden rectangular structure, dating from around 1200: the first written evidence for its existence appeared in a reference to a rector there in 1220 in the records of the Bishop of Lincoln. Later in the thirteenth century the wooden nave and chancel were rebuilt in stone, and
subsequent additions and enlargements are considered in some detail, through to the Victorian restoration of 1874 – 76. The role of the church in the relief of the poor and sick, and – very importantly – in educating the children of the village and establishing a school in 1860, is also explored. Other sections are devoted to specific features of the church, including the roof, the bells, vestry and organ, and the clock on the west wall of the tower that was donated in 1839 by the Duke of St Albans and his wife on their marriage in the church. The guide is well illustrated with plans and photographs, and offers a visitor to St Mary’s some fascinating insights into village life as well the church itself, past and present.

Cynthia Brown

Other recent publications

FIFTY YEARS OF METHODISM IN BLABY
Graham Webb
The Author, 2012

GRACE DIEU PRIORY: THE DRAFT ACCOUNT BOOK OF THE TREASURESSES 1414 – 1418
Various authors
Grace Dieu Priory Trust, 2013

A RECORD OF THE INSCRIPTIONS ON HEADSTONES AND MEMORIAL PLAQUES ETC. INSIDE THE CHURCH AND IN THE GRAVEYARD AT ST. JAMES THE GREAT, THE PARISH CHURCH OF BIRSTALL, LEICESTERSHIRE
Jex Woods
The Author, 2012

LEICESTER FAITH TRAIL
University of Leicester
The Authors, 2nd edn., 2012

ST DIONYSIUS: A BRIEF HISTORY (MARKET HARBOROUGH)
Geoffrey K. Brandwood and David Johnson

ST MARY IN CHARNWOOD, NANPANTAN ROLL OF HONOUR
Phil Thorne
The Author, 2012

TRADE, TRANSPORT AND INDUSTRY

Recent publications

BROWN’S BLUE
Mick Gamble
Leicester Transport Heritage Trust, 2012

FIRING THE FLYING SCOTSMAN AND OTHER GREAT LOCOMOTIVES (GREAT CENTRAL RAILWAY)
Ken Issitt
History Press, 2013

GRAND UNION BRAUNSTON – BIRMINGHAM AND LEICESTER (DVD X 2)
Videoactive, 2012

GRAND UNION – LEICESTER SECTION (DVD)
Videoactive, 2012

GRAND UNION – LEICESTER SECTION AND RIVER TRENT (DVD X 2)
Videoactive, 2012

HINCKLEY TRIUMPHS: THE FIRST GENERATION (MOTOR BIKES)
David Clarke
Crowood Press, 2012

MEMORIES OF STONE, STEAM AND STEEL: MOUNTSORREL ARTS AND HERITAGE PROJECT
Lafarge Aggregates, Concrete UK, Glassball Art Projects and Cora Glasser
Glassball Arts Project, 2012

MOUNTSORREL AND ITS ASSOCIATED QUARRY RAILWAYS
Ian P. Peaty
Irwell Press, 2012

RUGBY TO LOUGHBOROUGH (MIDLAND MAIN LINES)
David Pearce
Middleton Press, 2012

AUTHORS AND PUBLISHERS

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Publications for sale

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

1958 Hardback 256 pages 42 plates
Price: Members £10, Non-members £15 (plus £5 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 also available.
Order forms can be downloaded from: www.le.ac.uk/lahs/publications/orderform.html
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