The Leicestershire Historian, which is published annually, is the magazine of the Leicestershire Local History Council and is distributed free to members. The Council exists to bring local history to the doorstep of all interested people in Leicester and Leicestershire, to provide opportunities for them to meet from time to time, to act as a coordinating body between the various county history societies, to encourage and support local history exhibitions and generally to promote the advancement of local history studies.

In particular the Council aims to provide a service to all the local history societies and groups throughout the county, by keeping in touch with them and offering advice. An Information Pack is sent to all groups who become affiliated to the Council and items are added to it from time to time.

One-day Conferences are held in the spring and autumn, to which members (both individuals and groups) are invited, to meet and compare notes about their activities. An up-dated list of groups, many of them affiliated as members of the Council, is published in the magazine. There are summer outings and the AGM is held in May, kindly hosted by one of the affiliated groups.

The different categories of membership and the subscriptions are set out below. If you or your group wish to become a member, please contact the Secretary, who will be pleased to supply further information about membership and future activities.

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# THE LEICESTERSHIRE HISTORIAN

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Professor W G Hoskins

The name of Professor Hoskins, especially in Leicestershire, is synonymous with English local history. To quote Dr Joan Thirsk’s obituary of him in *The Independent* in January 1992, ‘No one succeeded as W.G. Hoskins did in showing how the history of the English landscape could be unravelled if you looked at it with a sharp eye, asked the right questions, and then went to the documents and books in search of the right answers.’

Much of his best work was done while based at University College Leicester, later Leicester University. His friendship with the principal there, F L Attenborough, led to his writings being illustrated with the latter’s photographs and to the first Department of English Local History being set up for him in 1948.

Hoskins transferred to Oxford but returned to Leicester in 1965 as the Hatton Professor of English Local History. At the inaugural meeting of the Leicestershire Local History Council the following year he gave us an inspiring talk on ‘Fieldwork for Local Historians in Leicestershire’ and he agreed to be our President, which he remained until his death.
Mary Mason and Betty Dickson

Our Jubilee issue was largely a tribute to these ‘twin pillars for the durability of the Council’. Now that Mary has retired to Exmouth and Betty has, after years of indomitable struggle, admitted that ‘the time has come’, it is fitting to repeat here our enormous debt of gratitude to them both.

At our Silver Jubilee Celebration at the Leicestershire Museum on the 25th of October 1991, Mary gave a short commemorative address. To illustrate the energy with which these two have guided the Council, it is worth quoting two paragraphs:

‘In our 25 years there have been peaks and troughs, as in any organization, but we feel that we have weathered the troughs and enjoyed the peaks, one of which must surely be the Reminiscences Competition, for which we received eighty entries. A shining thread that has woven its way through each year has been the annual production of our Leicestershire Historian, culminating with our Jubilee issue. Sometimes we have had to have an active fund-raising event to keep us out of the red, but our members have always continued their support and encouragement, when others (outside the fold) have wondered whether we are going down the right road.

Several years ago Betty Dickson and I attended a regional meeting at Newark, when it was pointed out to us that we had ‘got it wrong’. This was said gently and kindly; but we should not be operating with both groups and individual members. Well, we didn’t think we had got it wrong, and still don’t. Today we have 75 individual members (some of them exiles who appreciate the contact), 4 overseas libraries and 42 groups, from which regular members join us both at seminars and on outings.’
EDITORIAL

A reminder that Ashby-de-la-Zouch was a fashionable spa resort in the 1830s and 1840s is our cover picture of the Ivanhoe Baths, much enlarged from the detailed engraving in Hextall’s *The History and Description of Ashby-de-la-Zouch* of 1852. Mr Bennett’s article is a survey of this and of eight other less important spas within the county.

Ken Heselton’s article on a forgotten corner of railway history is an excellent example of the good use that can be made of the material you find when you were looking for something else.

Steve Drodge has written for us an account of technical education in Hinckley that profits from the coincidence of the dates of the centenary to 1992.

Chris Davies made many generous and scholarly contributions to the local history of Market Harborough, not least in his published books and articles. The fruit of one of his enthusiasms, the pursuit of a type of gravestone he identified, remained unpublished at his death. We are fortunate to be able to publish this work and I am grateful to Steph Mastoris and David H Smith, who is making his own study of the design of such stones, for help and advice in preparing the manuscript for publication.
LEICESTERSHIRE SPAS
J D Bennett

When people think of English spas, they think of Bath, Harrogate, Cheltenham or Buxton; they do not think of Ashby-de-la-Zouch, Hinckley, or Leicester, much less of Belvoir, Burton Lazars, Moira, Nevill Holt, Sapcote or Shearsby. Yet all these places were found to have mineral springs with curative properties, though only Ashby-de-la-Zouch was to develop into anything resembling a fashionable spa and attract more than a local clientele.

There were indeed many small country spas throughout England in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, whose fame never extended beyond their county boundaries. Spa waters, be they saline, chalybeate (containing iron) or sulphureous, or a mixture of these, and whether taken internally or externally, were regarded as a cure for practically every affliction known to man.

You can see the site of Leicester’s first spa if you leave the city centre by the Humberstone Road — a terrace of four late Georgian brick houses on the left-hand side called Spa Place. A mineral spring was discovered here in 1787 when a well was being sunk for cattle, and Spa Place, containing ‘neat marble baths and every convenient appendage for bathing’ was built
three years later. Though in 1794 it was announced in the *Leicester Journal* that 'Leicester Spa is now in high perfection', the venture was not in fact a success, and by 1798 the buildings had become a General Baptist College, then later private houses, and are now used as offices.

Leicester’s other spa orginated about 1830 when a mineral spring was found on land near what is now Fosse Road North. As a result, the area later became known as Newfoundpool. A Hydropathic Institution with houses for attendants was built, on a more ambitious scale than Spa Place; but it was no more successful, and by 1835 closure was already imminent. The main building was converted into a private residence, though it is possible that some of the baths remained open on a part-time basis. An attempt was made as late as 1853 to give them a new lease of life, when it was claimed that 'these baths will be found equal, if not superior, to any other baths in the neighbourhood', but to no avail; and in the 1880s, when the area began to be developed for housing, the Hydropathic Institution took on a new role, as the Empire Hotel.

Ashby-de-la-Zouch was already established as a spa by the time the Leicester Hydropathic Establishment was built. Spa development had begun with the construction of the Ivanhoe Baths and the laying out of the Bath Grounds in 1822, when the water from the saline spring found at Moira some years previously was conveyed to an underground reservoir here. The Baths were followed in 1826 by the Hastings Hotel (now the Royal Hotel) and several terraces for the accommodation of visitors, Ivanhoe Terrace, Rawdon Terrace and Prior Park. Ashby’s fame was undoubtedly helped by the fact that one of the chief scenes in Sir Walter Scott’s popular novel of 1819 *Ivanhoe* takes place in Ashby Castle, and certainly in the 1830s and 1840s the town enjoyed considerable success as a fashionable minor spa. Then decline set in and by the 1870s the Ivanhoe Baths had closed. They gradually became more and more dilapidated and were finally demolished in 1962, though the other spa buildings can still be seen.

It seems unlikely that the attempt to promote a spa at Hinckley in the late 1840s had much affect on Ashby’s fortunes. A medicinal spring was discovered near the Ashby Road in 1847 and the following year mineral baths in the Tudor style were erected. In spite of the enthusiastic testimonial included in the *Medical Guide to the Hinckley Mineral Spring and Baths* of 1849, the hoped-for visitors did not arrive. By the early 1890s the baths had closed, having by that time acquired a license and become an ordinary public house called the Mineral Baths Hotel. Now there is only the name Spa Lane to remind us of this aspect of Hinckley’s past.
The Ivanhoe Baths and the Royal Hotel (formerly the Hastings Hotel) at Ashby-de-la-Zouch, from the engravings in W & J Hextall’s *The History and Description of Ashby-de-la-Zouch; with Excursions into the Neighbourhood*, Ashby-de-la-Zouch, 1852.
Before any of the urban spas had developed, there were several tiny rural ones out in the Leicestershire countryside. The earliest one was at Nevill Holt, where a mineral spring was discovered in 1728 by a farmer making a pond. An arch was constructed over the place where the spring rose and around 1740 two pamphlets were published extolling the virtues of 'Nevill-Holt Spaw-Water'. There seem to have been problems with the supply: 'the Spa affords only a hogshead of water in 24 hours, and sometimes less in a great drought', wrote the Leicestershire historian John Nichols in 1798. In spite of this, it was still spoken of as being 'a good deal resorted to by invalids' in 1831 and a hundred years later the remains of a small spa building could still be seen in Holt Wood.

The medicinal spring at Burton Lazars had been known since the Middle Ages, when a leper hospital had been founded. After the dissolution of the monasteries in the sixteenth century the spring was lost sight of until 1760, when it was rediscovered and the water piped to a position near the Oakham Road, where a bathhouse was built. Many cures were claimed for people suffering from skin complaints. Its popularity waned, however, and in 1846 White's Directory of Leicestershire commented 'the spring was nearly destroyed some years ago, and is now but little resorted to'. Three years later the bathhouse was pulled down the spring covered over.

Belvoir Spa is shewn on the first edition of the Ordnance Survey one inch map of 1824, about half a mile north-west of the castle, just inside the wood called Calcroft's Close, on the north side of the road. It is not clear how long this saline spring had then been in existence. As late as 1931 local people could still remember a woman who used to walk regularly from Redmile to drink the water at the keeper's house, now demolished.

It was the discovery of a saline spring at Moira in 1805 which was the prelude to Ashby's rise to fame as a spa. The spring was found when a new coal mine was being sunk and although a commodious hotel was built shortly afterwards, along with the Moira Baths, this and some additional houses proved to be 'insufficient for the accommodation of the numerous visitors'. As a result a scheme was devised for transporting the water three miles to the nearby town of Ashby. There is no trace now of Moira's short-lived era as a spa.

There is still a Bath Street in Sapcote, a reminder of yet another rural spa. This was a chalybeate spring known locally as Golden Well, because of the iron salts in the water. A bathhouse was erected over it in 1806 'in which hot or cold baths could be had'. One of the advocates was the famous
Doctor Chessher of Hinckley and among the people who came here for treatment was little George Canning, the crippled son of the future Prime Minister George Canning. After Doctor Chessher’s death in 1831 the number of visitors to Sapcote Golden Well dwindled, though it was still in existence in the 1920s, fitted with a pump. The bathhouse was then in use as a stable.

The Bath Hotel outside the village of Shearsby is the site of what was once Shearsby Spa. Here in 1907 you could stay for 4/8d a day while taking the waters. The baths were apparently in the cellars of the hotel. Shearsby Spa seems to have developed some time after 1810 and was among the more successful of the rural spas. In 1887 it was described somewhat over-enthusiastically as the Cheltenham of Leicestershire. Its water was recommended for the treatment of rheumatism. General Pearson, who owned the 1866 Derby winner Lord Lyon, sent a carriage and pair every day from his house at Stoke Albany in Northamptonshire to fetch a supply to treat his racehorse for this affliction. As late as 1927 it was still possible to come here for treatment, at Leicestershire’s last spa.
Stone memorials began to appear in the churchyards of England in the seventeenth century, after the Civil War. Before that memorials had been in wood, the commonest form of which were grave boards. These were planks of wood five or six feet long and one foot wide, with an inscription carved on one side. They were supported on short posts and positioned along one side of the grave, not at the head and foot as the new stone memorials were.

The earliest stones were small and the vast majority have been eroded by three centuries of English weather, so that their inscriptions are inclined to be illegible. The exceptions are found in the slate districts and in particular, for this discussion, in Leicestershire and the surrounding counties, which were supplied from the Swithland quarries: slate is so hard that the designs and inscriptions made on it are as clear today as when they were first cut.

At first the inscriptions were crudely designed, aiming only to fill the surface available. The spelling was uncertain, the spacing capricious and the decoration naive.

Soon the lettering and design became more complex. The best known examples are located in the Vale of Belvoir. The characteristic symbol, filling the top third of each slate, is a cherub's head with stylized wings. This represents an angel, the symbol of the flight of the soul to heaven. The crudeness, even starkness, of the image hardly changes throughout the whole range of nearly two hundred slates, evidence that there was little outside influence affecting this school. None of the slates are signed and the identity of the engravers is obscure.¹

From the 1730s the pattern books of furniture-makers like Chippendale and architects and decorators like the Adam brothers became widely available and these stimulated and guided the slate-cutters to develop a very fine tradition of design and decoration. In addition they signed their work, so that it is possible to identify them and estimate their individual output.

This article is concerned with a hitherto unrecorded group of engravers who worked in the south of the county, centred on the village of Husbands Bosworth. They were active between 1700 and 1730 and the distribution of their work is shewn on the accompanying sketch map. None of it is signed. Its distinguishing feature is that the slates are decorated with stylized garden
flowers, tulip, rose, sunflower and scabious. As the tulip is the most prominent of these, the slates are dubbed the 'tulip slates' of South Leicestershire and North-West Northamptonshire.

The lettering is consistently good and shews that even at this early stage there were mature models to copy. After all every village had its Church Bible, with a well-designed title page as model. The convention of a prominent initial letter is seized upon to make the main decoration of the early examples. Also curlicues are used to fill up empty spaces and there are gothic capitals in odd places.

Many slates have a somewhat cluttered design, which fills the available space with the inscription, squeezing in smaller letters and words. There is a conscious design to enclose the inscription with a squarish shield balancing on the point of an inverted ogee arch.

Some stones can be identified as engraved by the same hand, as suggested in the comments on the illustrations, but it has not been possible to sort out the whole collection and attribute groups to certain individuals. Nor is it possible to say with any certainty how many individuals there were; there could have been as many as four. But it is noticeable on the map that the inner ring of North Kilworth, Husbands Bosworth, Theddingworth, Lubenham and Welford houses 31 stones, more than the total number in the 20 other churchyards. The engravers must have worked in one or more of the five villages named.

The use of stylized flowers seems to begin with a simple tulip growing out of the point of the inverted arch. The next step is to have a tulip bulb growing downwards from the point. Various combinations of tulip, rose, scabious and sunflower are then developed, with or without the underground bulb.

The general characteristics of the slates are shewn in the following illustrations, which are photographs of rubbings made by Harold Jones. It has been argued that black and white rubbings are more spectacular than the slates from which they are taken and thus give a false impression. But there is nineteenth-century evidence that slates were sometimes painted and modern engravers use either gold or white paint to pick out designs and lettering on dark memorial stones. It is reasonable to suggest that black and white rubbings may be nearer to the original appearance of these slates than are the monochrome survivors still standing in the churchyards.
The ten 'tulip slates' illustrated:

a. 1712 Anne Bryan, Church Langton, 17''
   The lettering has a whiff of homespun decoration in the two capital Bs. The main artistic effort is the elaborate decoration of the initial H, with tulip, scabious and interlacing lines.

b. 1713 Thomas Bate, North Kilworth, 12''
   This inscription has a close resemblance to a, having the same elaborate initial letter and even the same homespun decoration in the initial T and B. There is one important difference: in a, the near petal of the tulip is represented by an angled line; in this the near petal is drawn in full.

c. 1707 Elizabeth Branston, Stanford on Avon, 24''
   The design is the standard squarish shield balanced on an inverted ogee arch. The decoration of the initial H is the same as in a. There is a casual gothic capital for ‘Interred’ and two curlicues in lines 2 and 3. Overall the lettering is strikingly good. This early stone stands in Stanford churchyard, flanked by two others by the same hand, commemorating members of the same family. They constitute half of the total number of angled tulips.

d. 1714 Mary Lark, Shearsby, 23''
   General design similar to c. Although the initial is still decorated gothic, it is in a different idiom from the first three, much simpler and more abstract. It is the standard initial H found in the bulk of this collection. There is a certain suppleness in the introduction of calligraphic initials and the curlicues in the first three lines are used to fill unplanned spaces. The decorative stamp at the base is composed of stylized rose, tulips, leaves and buds. The tulips are of the style preponderant in this collection, shewing the near petal fully drawn.

e. 1699 Richard Bryan, Husbands Bosworth, 26''
   A close translation: ‘Here the ashes of Richard Bryan are deposited who met death on the 12th day of March 1699 in the 57th year of his age’. There is reason to believe that this stone was not cut until about twenty years after Richard Bryan’s death. Firstly the style is too sophisticated for 1699 and secondly the memorial to his widow Mary is dated 1720. It is less splendid than this, implying that it was cut first. The initial H is more heavily ornamented than in d. The lettering is also heavily cut and is very impressive. So also is the clean-cut stamp, made up of tulips, rose, leaves, buds and tulip bulb.
f. 1723 John Ward, Husbands Bosworth, 29"
Very much like d, and probably cut by the same man. The stamp is
sunflower, lanceolate leaves, tulips and tulip bulb.

g. 1721 John Wyatt, Shearsby, 24"
The shield is now merely indicated by the lower half. The initial capitals
are a very mixed lot but the lettering in general is very competent. The
stamp is developing into decoration, with tulips reaching half way up
the inscription.

h. 1720 Richard Watkin, North Kilworth, 31"
The style of this lettering is very much like d and f, and could have been
cut by the same man. There is continuing development of decoration
and in the stamp a new theme, the heart shape.

i. 1729 Roger Astell senior, Cold Ashby, 25"
A return to the practice of filling the whole slate with lettering. A sub­
stantial epitaph, one of the better ones for such an early date. The stamp,
of tulips, leaves and buds, suggests the ogee by its downward-facing
point.

j. 1717 Thomas Kirtland, West Haddon, 35"
The surname on the stone is spelt wrongly; the correct form is derived
from other sources. There is a certain amount of naivety in curlicues
and casual gothic initials. On the other hand there is a definite attempt
to develop decoration, using the same units, sunflowers, tulips and
leaves. This is in addition to the more orthodox stamp of tulip and bulb
at the base point. The trite epitaph is one which is repeated dozens of
times on the slates of Leicestershire.

References:

1. M W Barley, Transactions of the Thoroton Society of Nottinghamshire,
LII, 1948, p70

2. F Burgess English Churchyard Memorials, 1963: p33 'If the applicants
require a handsome inscription, with letters of white or gold . . . he will
point with satisfaction to headstones which are in preparation in his yard’
quoted from Rev F E Paget, Tract upon Tombstones, 1843; p37 ‘Country
Churchyards are filled with hideous slate slabs covered with a profusion
of gold letters and flourishes’ quoted from Rev E Trollope, Manual of
Sepulchral Memorials, 1858
KEY

2 figure within sign shows number of 'tulip slates' identified at that place

2 figure below sign identifies place by reference to list of locations

SKETCH MAP TO LOCATE THE 'TULIP SLATES' OF SOUTH LEICESTERSHIRE AND NORTH-WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE
Locations of the ‘tulip slates’ identified:

The letters after the dates refer to the illustrations and the asterisks indicate memorials within the church. The numbers by the place names refer to the sketch map and the reference numbers are to photographs and rubbings at Harborough Museum, LEIMH 118-1988.

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a. Church Langton, Anne Bryan, 1712

b. North Kilworth, Thomas Bate, 1713
c. Stanford on Avon, Elizabeth Branston, 1707

d. Shearsby, Mary Lark, 1714
f. Husbands Bosworth, John Ward, 1723

Husbands Bosworth, Richard Bryan, 1699
g. Shearsby, John Wyatt, 1721

h. North Kilwort, Richard Watkin, 1720
i. Cold Ashby, Roger Astell senior, 1729

j. West Haddon, Thomas Kirtland, 1717
K Yeaman Heselton

Whilst attempting to obtain information on land ownership in the parish of Great Easton, an examination of deposited railway plans and reference books in the Leicestershire Record Office revealed that during the ‘Railway Mania’ of 1845 there were a number of schemes projected which involved lines running along or across the Welland Valley, most of which passed near to Market Harborough.

One of them, the Rugby and Huntingdon Junction Railway, was projected from the then London and Birmingham Railway (later LNWR) at Rugby station to a junction with the London and York Railway (later the Great Northern Railway) at Great Stukely, about a mile and a half north of Huntingdon. This particular railway was to have taken a route south of Harborough, via Welford, Husbands Bosworth, Sulby, Naseby, Clipston, Kelmarsh, Arthingworth, Harrington, Thorpe Underwood, Rothwell, Thorpe Malsor, Cransley and Broughton. There would, however, have been a branch to Stamford, which would have circled Harborough to the north. The junction was in the parish of Clipston, and the line would then have run through Thorpe Langton, Weston, Medbourne, Drayton, Bringhurst, Great Easton and thence down the valley to Stamford. Market Harborough obviously had an interest in this railway as one of the solicitors was James Ley Douglass of that town.

The Rugby and Stamford Railway was intended to run from the London and Birmingham Railway near Rugby station to a junction with the Syston and Peterborough Railway west of Stamford. This railway was to run through the southern outskirts of Market Harborough. It was engineered by Robert Stephenson and Charles Liddell, notable railway engineers. It took a line almost identical to that later followed by the LNWR sponsored Rugby and Stamford line. The latter railway built a station for Harborough on the eastern
edge of the town, near the church of St Mary-in-Arden. It was later to become a joint station when the Midland Counties Railway (by that time the Midland Railway) extended its line southwards from Leicester.

One ambitious line, though it invaded the Welland Valley, ignored Harborough completely. This was the Northampton, Lincoln and Hull Railway, for which the surveyor was J U Raistrick. The line left Northampton by means of a tunnel at Abington and headed north-east for Kettering by way of Sywell and Broughton. It then turned northwards through Weekley, Geddington and Great Oakley, reaching the Welland Valley through a long tunnel which came out at Cottingham. It then ran through Great Easton and Caldecott to Seaton. Here the line turned northwards and followed, roughly, the course of the later Kettering to Nottingham line of the Midland Railway as far as Oakham. It then headed north-east for Grantham and Lincoln. This was the only projected railway planned to pass through the parish of Great Easton, which did not take more or less the same line as the 1850 Rugby and Stamford Railway as built. It is an interesting project for a Great Easton historian, because it reveals the names of the local Surveyors of the Highways in 1845.

Another railway with ambitions was the Boston, Stamford and Birmingham Railway. Strangely enough Boston was reached by a branch line. The main line was actually intended to run from a junction with the Midland Railway (later the Midland Counties Railway) at Wigston to Wisbech, via Great Glen, Kibworth, Church Langton, Ashley, Medbourne, Brinhurst, Caldecott, Seaton, Ketton, Stamford, Barnack, Helpston, Eye and Thorney. The Boston branch left the main line at Peakirk and followed almost exactly the later Great Northern branch from Werrington Junction. The engineer was the distinguished railway pioneer Charles Vignoles.

The Boston, Stamford and Birmingham did, however, make provision for a Market Harborough branch. This left the main line at Church Langton, trailing away in a southerly direction, then running north of the river Welland. It ran south of St Mary-in-Arden, swung north of St Mary’s Road and terminated north-east of St Dionysius’ Church. The station would have been roughly on the site now bounded by High Street, Church Square and Roman Way. In those days it was an area of small yards, Burgess’s, Miller’s (or Stiles, Platford’s or Elliott’s) and Eland’s. It was a mixture of industrial and domestic property. Thomas Scott owned much of the land on which the station would have been built.

It would have been more convenient for the inhabitants of Market Harborough to have a station in the centre of the town and the Fenland produce would
have been welcome. In due course, no doubt, the Boston, Stamford and Birmingham or the Midland would have run through-trains to Leicester. The number of Harborians who wished to travel to Boston or Wisbech, however, must have been minimal, especially as the journey involved a change of trains at Langton.

The scheme apparently never got further than the submission of plans. The terminus would probably have been a small one with two platforms and an overall roof. It would have opened up the area of small courts, as the Company would have wanted an open space in front of the building. It would most likely have been either Railway Italianate or Railway Gothic.

There was one other 1845 scheme affecting Market Harborough. This was the resurrection of a railway projected nine years earlier, in 1836. The main line of the South Midland Counties Railway, which was engineered by Francis Giles, would have left the London and Birmingham Railway at Courteenhall, near Roade, where the present Northampton line diverges, then passed through Northampton, Kelmarsh, Market Harborough and Kibworth, to a junction with the Midland Counties near Leicester. There would have been a branch to the Leicester and Swannington Railway and another to Stamford. The Bill had a first reading in the Commons but the whole scheme collapsed for lack of financial support. There was, incidentally, another proposal in 1836 for a cross-county railway from Harborough. This was the Cambridge Transverse Railway, which reached Cambridge via Kettering, Huntingdon and St Ives. This railway too never materialized.

The 1845 revival of the South Midland Counties Railway seemed to be destined to succeed. It followed the course of the earlier scheme, it had the backing of both the London and Birmingham and the Midland Railways and, finally, it had the great George Hudson as its chairman. Clearly he was keen to extend his Midland Railway empire. The scheme included a branch to Bedford, Hudson's first move towards London. The latter project probably temporarily sealed its fate, as it was rejected by the Commons Committee.

It is interesting to note the subsequent history of the scheme. It was taken over by the Midland Railway and the main line was then projected to run from Leicester to Hitchin via Bedford, with the Northampton line merely a branch. Another branch ran from Pytchley to Huntingdon. This scheme also failed to get through Parliament. It was not until 1853 that the Midland Railway reached Hitchin and another ten years before the Bedford to St Pancras line was opened.
The proposed line of the South Midland Counties Railway more or less followed the course of the subsequent Northampton to Market Harborough line but swung away to the west as it approached Harborough and went through the parishes of Arthingworth, Great and Little Oxnendon, Little and Great Bowden, Lubenham, Foxton, both Kibworths, Burton Overy, Great Glen, Newton Harcourt and Wigston. There was a branch from Lubenham which went down the valley to Stamford passing, incidentally, much closer to the village of Great Easton than the line built in 1850. The important thing is that the inhabitants of Market Harborough were not expected to walk to Lubenham to catch a train; provision was made for a short branch to a terminus in the town. The branch actually left the main line by a trailing junction convenient for passengers from Leicester but involving a change for travellers to the south. Presumably there would have been a station at the junction, which was in line with a continuation of Gardiner Street, on the other side of the canal from The Woodlands. The line then curved round and headed straight for the High Street, terminating in Angel and Dairy Yards. The station would, again, probably have been a two-platform affair with a short train shed.

If things had turned out differently, therefore, Harborough might never have been on a main line railway reached from a station on the outskirts of the town. It could have had two small termini, useful for travelling to Leicester and not much else. In any event, both would probably have been closed in the Beeching cuts of the 1960s and the station sites re-developed.

Sources:

Deposited Plans and Reference Books at Leicestershire Record Office, QS 73/
South Midland Counties Railway /16
Northampton, Lincoln and Hull Railway /70
Rugby and Huntingdon Junction Railway /76
Stamford, Market Harborough and Rugby Railway /78
Boston, Stamford and Birmingham Railway /82 & 83
Rugby and Stamford Railway /100
The sites of the two Market Harborough stations projected in 1845, the South Midland Counties Railway High Street station and the Boston, Stamford and Birmingham Railway Church Street station; drawn on the town plan in *Hidden Harborough* which locates the yards and rows
THE EARLY DAYS OF TECHNICAL EDUCATION IN HINCKLEY
Steve Drodge

In 1992 technical education is celebrating its centenary in Hinckley. The biggest dates in relation to school education are relatively well known; 1870 and the Education Act which set up school boards and the first national system of schooling, 1944 and the development of the primary and secondary system, and perhaps, we shall see, 1988 and the far-reaching changes of the Education Reform Act. Key dates in the development of technical education are less familiar. The sector has shared, of course, some of the impact of wider legislation, of the acts above and the many other education acts over the years; but there are additional statutes which have had an impact peculiarly on technical education. Two of these together both commence the story of this article and bring it right up to date. The Technical Instruction Act 1889 for the first time empowered councils (the newly created county and borough councils) to fund and organize technical education in their areas. This led directly to the commencement in 1892 of technical classes in Hinckley, as in hundreds of other places around the country. Precisely one century on, the recently passed Further and Higher Education Act 1992 has the effect, among others, of removing further education colleges, the principal descendants of the technical classes of 1892 (and among them Hinckley College), from the sphere of the responsible county or metropolitan councils and setting them up from 1993 as independent charitable trusts. The coincidence of the date may not be significant, but it is certainly striking.

This article will not follow the entire course of the development of technical education in Hinckley but will concentrate on its very early days, back in the 1890s. To put that briefly in context, the classes served a growing clientele, until in 1931 they were housed in purpose-built accommodation
for the first time and the Hinckley Technical College came into being. After the Second World War the college expanded onto a second nearby site, at first in existing accommodation and subsequently in a series of additional specialist buildings. The college, now simply Hinckley College, is still based on these two sites on the edge of the town centre. Lodged at the college are the minute books of the Technical Education Committee, which was charged with the running of the early classes, and of the Board of Governors of the college. This account draws essentially upon those minute books.

The first public act leading to the commencement of Hinckley technical classes was a meeting held at the Grammar School on the 23rd of October 1891 and attended by numerous local worthies, together with Mr A J Baker, the county council’s organizing secretary for technical education. Following the Technical Instruction Act, the county council’s response had been to set money aside and to spend some of it on making this co-ordinating appointment. Mr Baker was able to explain to the meeting that Leicestershire was prepared to expend some four to five thousand pounds per year on technical education, of which Hinckley could expect to receive perhaps two hundred. He indicated that ‘trades’ themselves would not be taught: ‘all that was proposed to be done was to teach the principles and science underlying any particular trade or occupation, not the thing exactly itself’ — a rather odd expression, but one which conveys clearly the intention to concentrate on theoretical underpinnings. The reason for bringing in this programme of technical education? The economic advantages accruing to Germany and the Scandinavian countries through their earlier espousal of technical education and training. Have we heard this somewhere before?

At any event, the people of Hinckley were convinced and a committee was immediately set up to get matters underway. From the start, and within the first couple of years, the membership of the committee included names still familiar in Hinckley today — Atkins, Hall, Pilgrim and Hawley, soon to be joined by Davenport and Pickering. Interestingly, the committee also included four women members, perhaps a fairly unusual occurrence for the time. This had only become possible through local government legislation of some ten years earlier which permitted the election of women onto school boards and similar bodies. The new committee lost no time in setting about its business and met again just three days later to agree its scope, resolving to seek to provide classes in an impressive range of subjects: ambulance (I take this to mean what we would now call first aid), agriculture, hygiene, mechanics, shorthand, drawing, and domestic economy, as well as lectures on the ‘staple trades of the Town and District’. The concept of the Committee members at this early stage appears, therefore to be slightly different from that of
Mr Baker, mixing what may well be his idea of the scientific foundation of industry (in the form of the trade lectures) with some broader practical instruction and some clearly skill-based, commercially-orientated classes.

Putting the plans into effect was evidently not completely straightforward. The committee received and discussed requests from both the Hinckley School Board and the Grammar School Trustees for assistance in running classes. How best to handle this appears to have been a matter of some debate and, at the next meeting, the committee decided to ask the governing bodies of both of these organizations, together with the National School and the Art Classes (some classes were already in operation, though not on such a firm footing), to come together to propose which classes should be offered.

Unfortunately the minutes of the next meeting, at which the new proposals were tabled, are silent as to their nature, so we must infer from the meeting after, at which arrangements were discussed. As with many innovations, the procedures and appropriate course of action seem to have caused the committee members some difficulty; for the county organizer, Mr Baker, was invited back to advise on the programme. The resulting classes are rather different from those originally proposed, under the influence, presumably, of the school governors and with the guidance of Mr Baker on county council policy. So we find the first classes, starting on the 5th of January 1892, were to be in cookery and nursing (daytime classes for women being held in St George’s Hall, evening classes on the same day taking place at the Board School). The committee also decided on a practical mechanics class and established a sub-committee to examine the possibility of ‘practical instruction in Hosiery and Boot Manufacturing.’

The pattern of class provision in the first years of the new regime is perhaps surprisingly varied. The first proposed classes duly took place, including the hosiery and boot and shoe classes which the sub-committee was to investigate. To these, others were soon added: science and art, hand and eye, horticulture, dressmaking, drawing, chemistry, French. What emerges rapidly is that there is a shift from a trade-orientated programme towards a more general further-education pattern. Continuation classes feature from the start, but become increasingly dominant, whilst framework knitting commences strongly, but soon drops out of the picture. What is going on here? There appears to have been a national development, in the classes following the Technical Instruction Act, away from industry-based technical provision and towards a more science-orientated programme. In the subsequent development of technical colleges in Leicester itself there was,
from the start, a significant non-technical element in provision. In this sense, the pattern of the classes provided by the Technical Education Committee in Hinckley may simply reflect a wider tendency to drift from the technical and specialized to the general. Nevertheless, with large numbers of people interested in pursuing framework knitting, the question poses itself as to why the provision lapsed. Most probably the limited ability of the committee to offer 'hands on' instruction was simply overwhelmed by the demand. One meeting, very early on, finds members discussing numbers, and agreeing that forty to fifty could be accepted in the framework knitting class automatically, with the proviso that more might be admitted after consultation with the teacher. At the same time the hire of a single frame was being considered. That this was quite inadequate is self-evident. The classes carried on in this unsatisfactory fashion until 1894, when the Hinckley committee, like the Loughborough committee, secured a grant of fifty pounds from the county council in order to purchase frames. The numbers do not reveal how many were bought (nor indeed, if they were actually were bought) but they were to be placed in the Grammar School, where these particular classes were held. This was certainly progress. Six months earlier the solution to the problem had been to provide text books; 'much of the failure of these classes this session is due to the absence of this necessary assistance to the students', as the minutes note. These moves, however, if indeed they actually took place, were evidently not sufficient. At the beginning of 1895 the committee discussed the possibility of moving the classes into one of the factories, in order to have ready access to suitable machinery. It was agreed to approach Messrs Davis and Son about the use of their premises. This, too, must either have proved unsatisfactory or have fallen through. Within three months the committee was seeking county council support to pay students' fares to Leicester to attend classes. It was some years before they could recommence in Hinckley. Boot and shoe classes followed a somewhat similar pattern. They were also subject to the textbook problem and evidently fell foul of low numbers.

However, even if they could not run each year, they appear to have run often, and the minutes record successes in external examinations. The other clearly technical and vocational area which appears among the minutes is that of construction, only to be dismissed.

As the programme developed through its first two or three years, therefore, it settled down into a threefold pattern: general education and continuation classes, presumably based on the pre-existing classes at the schools, but bringing them within a new framework; science classes, such as chemistry and possibly the mechanics, which seem to correspond to Mr Baker's
suggestions; and a diminishing, but not entirely extinguished, element of practical instruction directly in trade skills.

The minute books are not forthcoming about who the students were who attended the early classes. There is limited information about numbers; the framework knitting figures quoted earlier and more reasonable figures elsewhere of twenty or thirty to a class. But of the people themselves we learn only that there was a mixture of ages. On the one hand there is a reference to Grammar School boys attending two of the classes and this age group is reinforced by a proposal from Mr Baker (again guiding the committee) to remit the fees of 'any boy or girl who attended 7 times out of 8'. On the other hand the committee also saw fit to waive the fee (2/6d) for attendance at the Science and Art classes for elementary school teachers. This having been agreed, the arrangement was extended to all pupil teachers. The classes were clearly not being held exclusively for teachers, trained or otherwise, so we have to accept the reality of classes with students of varying ages (as is, indeed, the case with community education classes today, though less so with vocational classes).

Beyond names, the minutes also tell us little about the teachers. Some were evidently local professional men. Dr Bradshaw Smith was engaged in teaching the twenty-night Ambulance course for a fee of six guineas, for instance. Mrs Titmus, the dressmaking teacher, evidently came from some distance, for the committee decided to pay her travelling expenses; similarly the framework knitting teacher, a Mr Quilter, is known to have been a teacher at Leicester Technical College. 3

The Technical Education Committee brought together work which was already being undertaken in Hinckley, co-ordinated its funding, and in some respects — particularly its efforts, only partially successful, to establish clearly industrial classes — augmented it. In doing this it formed the link between local organizations (the Grammar School and the School Board) and the county council, as represented by Mr Baker, who became a regular attendant at the committee's meetings. A number of members of the committee were also members of one or other of the town's boards. These were asked to form sub-committees to look at those aspects of the local programme and to make recommendations to the committee as a whole. Evidently the committee did not see it as its role to tell the other organizations what to do. Equally it did not feel bound simply to accept without discussion or referral all proposals which might come to it. Similarly, whilst county council policy is always listened to, it is clear from the minutes that it is not always fully accepted. We have seen that the initial programme
differed somewhat from the approach first outlined by Baker and there are also subsequent statements of policy from the county council representative which are not always strictly adhered to. Beyond the county council there was no direct national authority, though from very early on the committee did turn to the City and Guilds of London Institute, still of course a major examining body today, for certification, and this in turn required external monitoring.

The beginnings of technical education were modest, patchy and probably fairly typical of small manufacturing towns. The minutes of the Technical Education Committee suggest that the members may have found the task more problematic than they had expected. They chose to depart to some degree from the county council’s recommendations and struggled to maintain some of their key technical classes. Facilities were evidently poor and fragmented and it was to be many years before purpose-built premises became a possibility. But, whatever the difficulties and disappointments, this was a start upon which later developments were able to build.

References:

SNIBSTON DISCOVERY PARK AND COMMUNITY GALLERY

In June 1992 Leicestershire County Council’s most prestigious attraction, Snibston Discovery Park, was opened on the former colliery site adjacent to the Ashby Road out of Coalville. In this, its newest and largest venture, the Leicestershire Museums Service aims to provide recreation and also education about science and industry in the environment, past and present, and to play in addition a role in the regeneration of the town and surrounding area.

The exhibition hall is the largest new science and industry museum built in the British Isles since the War. The opening marked the start of the development of the hundred-acre Discovery Park. Currently work is being undertaken to complete the 250 year old Sheepy Magna wheelwright’s shop complex and to open the Miners’ Control Lamp and Medical Rooms in 1993. The Museum represents a turning-point in local museums in that it is market-driven and places as great an emphasis on public facilities (such as the café, shop and toilets), access for the disabled, front-of-house operations and customer-care as on the displays themselves.

In working towards the opening of Snibston and its further development Leicestershire County Council Museums, Arts and Records Service has benefited much from the cooperation and support of a whole range of local groups, organizations and societies. Many partnerships have been forged with local and regional industry, leading to sponsorship of particular areas of the project. In addition those groups working in the north-west of the county have given invaluable help in preparing the displays that make up the Community Gallery.
Snibston, the first new science and industry museum to be built in Britain since the 1950s, is already a major tourist attraction; but it is also very much a local museum. Pride of place in the new building’s impressive foyer is given to the Community Gallery, 150 square metres of exhibition space equipped with purpose-built display screens and showcases. Leicestershire Museums have reserved this space for displays mounted by the local community and by groups from further afield in the county.

Snibston serves as a tourism gateway for Leicestershire. Visitors to the Discovery Park are introduced to the broad sweep of the county’s industrial history and then encouraged to visit its other museums and places of interest. The Community Gallery has a key part to play in unfolding the history of Leicestershire, its changing displays providing local detail which complements the permanent exhibits of the main museum. Appropriately the Gallery’s first displays tell the story of Coalville and its surrounding villages. Working with the help of Museum staff, local groups and individuals have brought together a fascinating exhibition of archival material, objects and early photographs, much of which has never been shewn in public before.

For the people of the Coalville area the exhibition has helped identify Snibston as their museum; but it also belongs to the county as a whole. If you would like to promote your group, society or village, and are prepared to take on the task of mounting an exhibition in the Community Gallery, you should contact Mike Moore, Leicestershire Museums Non County Council Museums Liaison Officer on Leicester 473228.

GETTING INTO PRINT

On Saturday the 23rd of November 1991, the Leicestershire Local History Council held its well-attended Autumn Seminar entitled ‘Getting into Print’. Five speakers combined to make it a useful and encouraging event, not only for groups recording events but also for individuals who have researched information which they would like to share with others in print.
Caroline Wessel, an active member of the Desford History Group, is the author of several local history publications and, among many other pursuits, lectures on heraldry and broadcasts on Radio Leicester. She explained the evolution of her publications, from typewriter and photostat copies to the publishing of Portrait of Beaumanor, and encouraged groups to look for sponsorship in their community.

Alan McWhirr, well known on the local history scene, is a broadcaster and was the Editor of Leicester and Rutland Heritage (which sadly is no longer published), as well as being involved with the publication of the Transactions of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society. He emphasized the importance of telling a story and said the first paragraph should always make an impact. Have your article well balanced with illustrations if possible and do your homework regarding the historical content.

Denis Baker, a lecturer at the Coalville Technical College, entitled his talk ‘Taking the plunge’. In 1982 he set up a group which ran the Swannington Festival to commemorate the opening of the railway to Swannington. The following year Coalville 150 was inaugurated and he was started in local history. When it came to writing up the events afterwards he ‘took the plunge’ and regaled us with the successes and pitfalls of authorship. He said a bad photograph spoils a book and if in doubt about anything, don’t put it in. He acknowledged the encouragement of his colleagues and said fortunately he didn’t have to worry about money as the Museum and Library Services paid for his Coalville 150 publication.

Steph Mastoris is Keeper of Harborough Museum and over the past two years had produced two books of historic photographs in conjunction with the publisher Alan Sutton, as part of their Old Photographs series. He called his talk ‘Searching out the snaps’ and said that making things available to others is a way into history. There are two kinds of photographs, the static which is a finished event and the active which is leading to other things. Although he himself had no worries about the profit or loss of this book, finances and deadlines are very useful for concentrating the mind. It is important to be rigorous with documentation; he advised using a duplicate receipt book when borrowing photographs.

The last speaker was Bob Trubshaw, a professional (although he would say part-time) printer. He spoke about what is involved in getting your manuscript typeset, printed at an affordable price, promoted and distributed. He gave
a most succinct and inspiring exposition of how to get into print, as well as providing instructive leaflets to take away.

At the end of the morning’s talks and the vigorous questioning periods, it was felt that it had been a very worthwhile seminar. It was encouraging for all those who were in any way hesitant about having material published and were looking for the expertise of those who had achieved this goal. Most important, we learned that the cost of all this need not be prohibitive or insurmountable.

M M

‘HISTORY IN PROGRESS, 1991’
CONFERENCE ON LOCAL HISTORY IN SOUTH LEICESTERSHIRE AND NORTH-WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

This annual autumn gathering, organized jointly by the Harborough Museum and the Department of Adult Education of Leicester University, took place on Saturday the 19th of October 1991, with approximately forty people attending.

This year’s guest lecturer was Dr Marilyn Palmer, Senior Lecturer in the Department of History, Leicester University, who gave a copiously illustrated lecture on the technology of the English landed estate. A plentiful supply of servant labour and a desire for personal privacy delayed the installation of facilities like water closets and piped hot water. Yet the same landowners and their bailiffs were quick to recognize the value of hydraulic, steam or electric power to increase the profitability of their estates. Prosperity was more likely to arise from innovation in the exploitation of mineral resources than from agriculture. Dr Palmer took the National Trust to task for failing to acknowledge in its guide-books the central role of technology in the lives of people inside and outside the big house and, indeed, in bringing many of these estates into existence in the first place.

The rest of the day was given over to short reports on current historical projects being undertaken in the area. Sue Makay, Assistant Museum and Gallery Manager, was undertaking the completion of the Manor House Museum in Kettering. Following on a talk at this meeting in 1989, she outlined curatorial considerations, research and design problems which went into producing an exciting interpretative gallery for the earlier phases of Kettering history.
After lunch Jean Morris introduced us to the diaries of the Reverend Vere Packe, the incumbent at Shangton during the middle and late nineteenth century. She used the diaries to illustrate many aspects of village life as seen through the eyes of the parson in a parish of around a hundred souls. It was surprising to learn how much Packe travelled by foot, horse and train and how much leisure he had to undertake such excursions. He seems to have been an exceptionally popular and diligent incumbent.

Barry Summers demonstrated the analysis of the 1851 Census for Market Harborough on a personal computer. He shewed how the data, which had been processed manually by a research group under Sam Mullins in the early 1980s, had been entered into a database so that it can be analysed very rapidly. The resulting graphics were clear, concise and highly illuminating.

After tea Geoff Pitcher gave a most useful account of the compilation of the Braybrooke parish map, which had taken two years. Originally perceived as an aid to interpreting the village history, it had proved a very marketable product, two hundred copies having been sold. Skills were needed not only in compiling the information but also in the layout, graphics and printing. Here was food for thought for other groups keen on attempting a similar project.

Diana Fisher gave the final report, on her analysis of the occupation structure of the Harborough area in the 1980s. Using techniques and sources similar to her analysis in the nineteenth century, she drew some most interesting comparisons. With the decline of tenant farmers and smallholders, the proportion of agricultural trades had fallen greatly. The same was true of the traditional manual crafts of wood, leather and metal working. Perhaps the greatest change had taken place in the service industry. These had changed in nature, moving from transport to more leisure and commercially advisory services and their presence within the main villages varied according to the economic role of each settlement. At Hallaton, a major service centre in the nineteenth century, very little remained. The increase in the services at Kibworth, on the other hand, reflected its extensive urbanization.

The conference once again proved itself an extremely useful opportunity for disparate groups of researchers to get together and share their knowledge and experiences. A few local societies mounted displays of their own work or current publications.
LEICESTERSHIRE AND RUTLAND LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETIES

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

c  ASHBY-DE-LA-ZOUCH Local History Society
   Mrs J M Bolderson, 12 Tower Gardens, Ashby-de-la-Zouch

bc  ASHBY-DE-LA-ZOUCH Museum
    North Street, Ashby-de-la-Zouch

bc  BARKBY Local History Committee
    Mr R Adams, 29a Brookside, Barkby, Leicester

ac  Herricks and BEAUMANOR Society
    Mr D Andreas, 8 Hastings Road, Woodhouse Eaves, Loughborough

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

bc  BIRSTALL and District Local History Society
    Mrs P A Kirk, 92 Stonehill Avenue, Birstall, Leicester

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

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

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

COALVILLE 150 Group
   Mr S Duckworth, 125 Highfield Street, Coalville

MANTLE Oral History Project
   Springboard Centre, Mantle Lane, COALVILLE

c  COALVILLE and DISTRICT Local History Society
   Mrs J Timson, Coalville Library, High Street, Coalville

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c DESFORD and District Local History Group
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bc DUNTON BASSETT Local History Group
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   Miss I M Norman, 77 Lorne Road, Leicester
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b FOXTON Inclined Plane Trust
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abc FRISBY-ON-THE-WREAKE Historical Society
   Mr R Pinfold, Field View, 55 Main Street, Rotherby, Melton Mowbray
   Newsletter
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   Mr A A Huscroft, 50 Chadwell Road, Leicester
ac GREAT EASTON and District Local History Society
   Mr K Heselton, 24 Barnsdale Close, Great Easton, Market Harborough
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   Mr E Treliving, 11 Deangate Drive, Houghton-on-the-Hill, Leicester
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ac LEICESTER Literary and Philosophical Society  
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Transactions

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Mrs E Chambers, 28 Rectory Lane, Thurcaston, Leicester

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Leicestershire Record Office, Long Street, Wigston Magna, Leicester  
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a Friends of the LEICESTERSHIRE Record Office  
Mr R P Jenkins, Leicestershire Record Office, Long Street, Wigston Magna, Leicester  
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abc LEICESTERSHIRE and RUTLAND Federation of Women’s Institutes  
135 Loughborough Road, Leicester

a LOUGHBOROUGH and DISTRICT Archaeological Society  
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   Mr S Mastoris, Adam and Eve Street, MARKET HARBOROUGH

a MARKET HARBOROUGH Historical Society
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BOOK REVIEWS
Mrs H E Broughton, J Goodacre

WORKING-CLASS LIFE IN VICTORIAN LEICESTER: The Joseph Dare Reports
Barry Haynes Leicestershire Libraries and Information Service 1991 £11.55

In 1845 the influential Unitarian congregation based at the Great Meeting Chapel, Leicester’s ‘Mayor’s Nest’, established a Domestic Mission to the poor of the town. The first missionary, Joseph Dare, undertook the ‘patient, unwearied and indefatigable performance of the onerous duties of his office’ for over thirty years. Not only did he make an estimated four thousand home visits a year but he also produced a printed annual report. Taken together, these reports form an invaluable account of working-class life in the town and of some of the provisions made for the poor, a rich source of details for local historians. Taken together, however, they also form a lengthy, discursive and repetitive body of writing; so Barry Haynes has for a start done us a great service by setting out in the second and larger section of his book a systematic series of edited extracts.

Here is a wonderful opportunity to read the views of one man about such a period of change in the county town; but by placing them clearly in the context of the Mission, Barry Haynes has also accepted the challenge to make this into an important study of urban life. In the first section he uses extracts to build up an account of the work of the Mission. This helps us to understand the way Dare’s labours fitted in with Leicester society and its leading figures. We can also appreciate the strengths and limitations of his attitudes to those in need of spiritual and material relief.

Excellent layout in A4 format is complemented by lavish illustration; although the ‘high-tec’ elongation of half-a-dozen of the photographs to fit the format is wasteful of good images.

J G
A HOME OF OUR OWN: 70 years of Council House Memories in Leicester
Bill Willbond Leicester City Council 1991 £4.95

*A Home of Our Own* is about Leicester City’s council estates and the people who lived on them. Published to coincide with the City Council’s seventy years of housing celebrations, the book looks briefly at living conditions in the nineteenth century and the need for council houses. It then recounts the personal memories of tenants and looks at estates development through their eyes. It gives a glimpse of what their living conditions were like before estates were built and their early lives as tenants; how estates were developed in the thirties and how they built a community spirit that was to see them through the war years and beyond.

The book is a fascinating compendium of interviews with tenants, liberally endowed with archive photographs of the tenants and the houses under construction and other historical material. The author, formerly Press Officer with the Housing Department of Leicester City Council, has been well placed to bring together the information and set it within a wider context. Moreover his own commitment and interest in Leicester and the development of housing make the book a most perceptive and enjoyable work.

H E B

THE HINCKLEY CHRONICLES: The Papers of A. J. Pickering & Thomas Harrold ed David J. Knight the editor, John Cleveland College, Hinckley 1990 £1.00 (40p post)

Arthur J Pickering is best known for his article on Roman sites in south-west Leicestershire and the book on Hinckley, published under his name in 1940. He died in 1974 but Hinckley Grammar School possesses some of the material from his private museum. David Knight has undertaken the task of cataloguing all the papers and has found that they also include notes by Thomas Harrold, another Hinckley antiquary from an earlier generation. Harrold was known for collecting local sayings, anecdotes and superstitions but his busy life as a surveyor and auctioneer never left him time to draw the notes of this ‘labour of love’ together for publication. David Knight has transcribed the most interesting documents from this miscellaneous collection, adding helpful introductory notes. Look out for the Harrold family’s dispute with a troupe of travelling players, for whom they fitted out a barn as Hinckley Theatre.

J G
AROUND THE WELLAND VALLEY IN OLD PHOTOGRAPHS
Steph Mastoris Alan Sutton 1991 £7.95

The publisher Alan Sutton has embarked on an ambitious series of uniform books reproducing early photographs and intended to cover the whole of the country. Their quality of presentation is impeccable and because they are widely marketed they are very good value. This one, a follow-up to the same author’s *Around Market Harborough in Old Photographs*, reviewed in our last issue, gives us nearly 280 photographs.

The selection has been made to illustrate agriculture and rural trades in the villages surrounding Harborough. There are many street scenes and village buildings, groups and events, including a splendid series covering the Hallaton bottle-kicking over the years.

Even though such books achieve far more in making source material widely available than as works of history in themselves, it is a pity that they do not always contribute much in the way of helpful captions and detailed acknowledgements to the photographers, publishers and owners of the pictures. In the case of these two volumes, we have the advantage of an excellent introduction to local photography and skilfully written captions, all the fruit of active collecting and research centred on Harborough Museum, so that it will be a simple matter to find out more details about individual pictures or indeed order copies from the Museum.

J G

AROUND FOXTON: Memories of an Edwardian childhood
Sarah Dallaston Heart of Albion Press,
2 Cross Hill Close, Wymeswold 1991 £3.50

Another product of Bob Trubshaw’s press is a gently edited and illustrated transcript of recorded reminiscences by his grandmother. Her mother died when she was five and for three years she lived with her grandparents in the bottom lock cottage at Foxton Locks, where her grandfather was head keeper. She was in service at Bunker’s Hill Farm, then at a farm in Saddington and then in Stoneygate. She went ‘walking out’ with the butcher opposite. After they were married in 1927 he worked on Leicester buses and they lived in a council house in Bainbridge Road.
Three dozen pages make up an A4 book of more than family interest, especially for details of life in service and childhood on the edge of the canal. One feels for her Grandma, ever anxious that her granddaughter might fall in.

J G

DONINGTON HALL AND PARK: An Illustrated History
Castle Donington Local History Society
the Society, 7 Borough Street,
Castle Donington 1991 £2.00

Although the history of Donington Park stretches back to before the Norman Conquest, it is in 1461, when Edward IV granted the stewardship of the castle and manor of Donington to Sir William Hastings, that its real history begins. The park was used for hunting by its royal owners and there is no firm evidence of a mansion on the site until probably the tail end of the sixteenth century. The principal residence of the Hastings family at that time was Ashby Castle and it was not until the Civil War that, following the ruination of Ashby Castle, the Hastings took Donington as their main Leicestershire seat.

The booklet charts the history of the ‘New Hall’ completed in 1795 and contains photographs and a commentary on its content and the families who lived there. Particular emphasis is placed on the 1914-18 war, when Donington was requisitioned and used as a camp for German prisoners. It contains excellent photographs of the prisoners during that period. In addition the authors detail the development of Donington Park as a race track from 1931, when the first motor cycle races were run on the gravelled roadways.

The Castle Donington Local History Society has previously produced other publications of an extremely high standard in a photograph-based format. This is in similar style and contains a wide range of good quality illustrations, complete with commentaries, dates and acknowledgements. The outer cover is particularly attractive, shewing the Hall on the front and on the back the motor cycle Grand Prix at Donington in 1990. The booklet is a tribute to the area and should sell well in the Donington Park Museum shop. It is a credit to the Local History Society for identifying a good range of interesting sources and coordinating them so effectively.

H E B
THOMAS COOK OF LEICESTER
Robert Ingle  Headstart History  1991  £4.00

Thomas Cook is a household name around the world. The travel company which he founded bearing his name has its roots in Leicestershire and particularly in Leicester, where Thomas lived from 1842 until his death one hundred years ago. The turning point in his life was in Kibworth while he was walking from Market Harborough, his home at the time, to Leicester for a temperance meeting in Humberstone Gate. He recalled, 'About midway between Harborough and Leicester... a thought flashed through my brain — what a glorious thing it would be if the newly-developed powers of railways and locomotion could be made subservient to the promotion of temperance!' This was the inspiration for packaged excursions, publicly advertised, which laid the foundations of his subsequent career and the entire travel industry.

Robert Ingle is noted throughout the county for his eloquent and convincing portrayal of Thomas Cook, a role which he has enacted on 'high days and holidays' since 1983. The story of Thomas Cook contained in his book records the entire life of the pioneer and is particularly significant for its local perspective. Although work has been done on Thomas Cook in the past, none has emphasized one of his true strengths, that is his commitment to the working classes, especially the people of Leicestershire. Robert Ingle brings all the developments out clearly, including Thomas’s difficult relationship with his son John Mason, the hard-headed businessman. Leicester has done little in the past to celebrate its most famous son and certainly this publication makes a great contribution towards his recognition. The text and style of the book is enjoyable to read and it is clearly laid out. It is certainly recommended reading for all, particularly those of us who enjoy travelling.

H E B

CAB AND COACH
Gregory Drozdz  from Michael Handford, 6 Spa Lane, Hinckley  1990  £3.95

Hinckley is proud to possess two road vehicles associated with the town, a Hansom cab and the Tantivy Stagecoach, which was made in 1837. Gregory Drozdz’s book commemorates the local movement for their
permanent display by publishing a lively and evocative account of their origins and local significance.

Many of the facts of the career of Joseph Hansom and of his connexion with Hinckley are already well known, partly due to Mr Drozdz’s own researches. To this narrative he adds reminiscences by Jessie Lightbody about the life of her father as a cabman in the early years of this century. The second half of the book gives some idea of the age of stagecoach travel and of the importance of Hinckley on long-distance coach routes.

The Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council has produced this proper little book, professionally printed and illustrated with reproductions of portraits, engravings, photographs and documents, all in hard covers.

J G

LEICESTERSHIRE AND RUTLAND CLOCKMAKERS
P A Hewitt from G K Hadfield,
Blackbrook Hill House,
Tickow Lane, Shepshed 1992 £6.00 (40p post)

The development of a special craft like clockmaking cannot be studied in the isolation of an area as small as one county. On the other hand a detailed study of local craftsmen and their trade, taking note of their peculiarities of workmanship and decoration, can be very revealing. Following on the pioneer work of John Daniell, who built up the collections in the Leicestershire Museums, Mr Hewitt has devoted himself to examining local clocks in detail so that he can make intelligent comparisons with contemporary practices across the country.

It is unlikely that any early watches engraved with the name of a Leicestershire watchmaker would have been made by him. The book labelled ‘Watchwork’ from the prolific Deacon workshop at Barton-in-the-Beans relates only to repairs and cleaning. It is dated 1775 and contains advice written by Samuel Deacon:

Leave them safe and time them well
If ye would have your work excell.

From 1830 the firm was also passing on their watch repairs to London firms.
Mr Hewitt is also able to add light to the vexed problem of how far provincial clockmakers made their own clockwork or merely sold movements made, perhaps, in Birmingham. The Deacons did buy some movements complete as early as 1805; but they continued as makers and began buying in components from a Hull supplier in 1856. He shews from their records that they themselves were suppliers to clockmakers in the western half of the county and he suggests that the Corralls of Lutterworth may have had a similar role.

Two articles published in *Antiquarian Horology* have been combined to make an attractive booklet professionally printed on glossy paper. The earliest local makers and surviving clocks by them are listed. The photographs are excellent, especially the coloured one of an eighteenth-century longcase clock on the cover.

J G

**PUTTING THINGS STRAIGHT: Aligned ancient sites in Leicestershire and Rutland**

Leicestershire and Rutland Earth Mysteries Part 5

Bob Trubshaw

Heart of Albion Press,

2 Cross Hill Close, Wymeswold 1992 £3.95

The author dissociates himself from ‘New Age enthusiasts’ who have high-jacked the hunt for ‘ley lines’ which was inspired in the 1920s by the work of Alfred Watkins. He advances no idiosyncratic theory as to how these alignments of hills, churches and stones prove the wisdom of ancient civilizations but sets out his reasons for choosing two dozen of them, based on examining maps and his own field work. It would be difficult to publish detailed maps to shew them but his simplified diagrams, which take up much of the space of his A4 pages, are not very informative.

If we are ever to be convinced of their significance, it will be by such clearly presented evidence. He mentions too the work in the Market Harborough area by Frank Stongman, who in the 1930s identified not straight lines but rectangular patterns. Now there’s a thought; why stick to straight lines? What about other polygons, circles or more complex curves?

J G
GOOD GARGOYLE GUIDE: Medieval Church Carvings in Leicestershire and Rutland
Leicestershire and Rutland Earth Mysteries Part 4
Bob Trubshaw
Heart of Albion Press
2 Cross Hill Close, Wymeswold 1991 £1.95

There is wealth of medieval figurative art within the county, particularly the countless carvings, mostly in stone but also in wood, which survive in our parish churches. This booklet shews some fascinating and little known examples of gargoyles and, in addition to providing a gazetteer, it includes a detailed discussion of the symbolism of some of these motifs, such as green men, tongue-pokers and girning (mouth-pulling) faces. The intention of the booklet, according to the author, is to promote further interest and research into this neglected aspect of our heritage and above all to provide a fun element in our appreciation. It does not attempt to be definitive, although over sixty-six entries are included, many with sketch illustrations. Heart of Albion Press has previously produced three other titles in the Earth Mysteries Series, on holy wells, ancient crosses and standing stones.

H E B

THE HISTORY OF EBENEZER BAPTIST CHURCH COALVILLE
Denis W Baker
nd £3.00

The writing of local history is never finished. When Mr Baker was preparing an account of his chapel from information gathered together to celebrate its centenary in 1979, he was hampered by lack of the early minute books. He has since come across notes on the earliest minutes written in a school notebook by his own great grandfather, one of the founding members. This has enabled him to deal more fully with the origin of the chapel in a breakaway congregation from London Road General Baptists and to revise the text of his narrative, divided into sections for each of the succession of ten pastorates.

The text is very readable and concludes with an account of the centenary celebrations. To two dozen sides of A4 typescript are added five sides of photographs on superior paper, bound together in card covers.

J G
LOUGHBOROUGH UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY: past and present
L Cantor Loughborough University of Technology

1990 £7.00 (£1 post)

This pictorial history was written as a contribution to the 25th anniversary of Loughborough University of Technology, which came into being in 1966. The book describes the development of the University and its predecessors, from the establishment in 1909 of the original Loughborough Technical Institute in the centre of Loughborough to the present University on its spacious 241 acre campus on the western edge of the town. It depicts the change from a technical institute into the celebrated Loughborough College during the inter-war period, the break-up of the college shortly after the Second World War and the emergence of Loughborough College of Technology; the coming into existence of the University and its growth and development since then. The book vividly illustrates the work of the remarkable Herbert Schofield, principal of Loughborough College from 1915 to 1950. It was Schofield who began to purchase land on what was then the estate of a country house, Burleigh Hall, and began the policy of obtaining houses and halls of residence for his students.

The book, which charts the history chronologically, is supplemented by a very large number of photographs of Schofield and his successors and of significant episodes and developments in the life of the institution. Once past the rather dull cover, it proves to be an informative, valuable and well-constructed account, of interest to the local historian, the educational historian and undoubtedly to all Loughborough students.

THIS NOBLE FOUNDATION: A History of the Sir John Moore School at Appleby Magna in Leicestershire
Richard Dunmore The Sir John Moore Foundation

from Crane & Walton,
30 South Street, Ashby-de-la-Zouch 1992 £8.50 (£2 post)

The fact that Leicestershire has a rich wealth of historical resources still waiting to be 'discovered' is no more evident than in this book. Despite the foundation of the school in 1697, no history of this famous building had been written before Richard Dunmore became interested in the background to it.
Sir John Moore was born in 1620 in Norton Juxta Twycross and was the second son of the Lord of the Manor of Appleby Parva. He made his fortune in the lead trade and became master of the Grocers Company and a public figure as Lord Mayor of London in 1681/2. Although he lived in London, John Moore, a charitable man, gave large sums of money to hospitals and schools and endowed the school at Appleby, where he still had many relations. The school was built between 1693 and 1697, under the joint architecture of Sir Christopher Wren and the Leicester architect builder and sculptor Sir William Wilson. Sir Christopher Wren provided the initial design which was amended by Wilson to provide a very impressive building. Initially the school was divided into three, a Latin or grammar school, an English or elementary school and a writing school, where older pupils learned handwriting, arithmetic and accountancy. The school was intended to provide free education for the boys of Appleby and the surrounding villages and from the beginning took in fee-paying boarders. Despite being a small school it attracted the sons of families from a wide range of social classes, from the local villagers to the aristocratic families of Leicestershire and its neighbouring counties. With the exception of an interval from 1933 to 1957 the school has continued in use to the present day, albeit with many changes.

A short review of this nature cannot do justice to This Noble Foundation. The book provides a detailed account, set in chronological order, of the developments, changes and staffing at the school and particularly concentrates on the radical reforms of the late nineteenth century. It includes a range of illustrations, photographs and copies of original documents, all of which are clearly transcribed and translated to the reader. Members of the Moore family have also contributed through the provision of extensive information and illustrations and this aspect gives the book a contemporary significance. The history is of direct relevance to the people of Appleby and in particular to the children who have passed through the school, benefiting as they do from probably the most historical school building in Leicestershire. This detailed history provides a magnificent resource both for local and wider use, for local historians and for those interested in the development of education locally, regionally and nationally and is highly recommended.

H E B
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