

**LEICESTERSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL  
AND HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

The Guildhall, Leicester LE1 5FQ

President T. G. M. Brooks, LL.D., D.Litt., J.P.

# NEWSLETTER



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Editor Kay Gowland

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## County Museum Service now under threat

As we approach local government budget time we now come to expect our elected members to look at museums as an area of activity which can be cut back without too much opposition. The Conservative controlled cabinet at county hall, lead by Mr Harry Barber, has agreed to cut the opening of the manor house at Donington le Heath from seven days a week to two in order to save £20,000. The effect of closing during the week, with the resultant cut in staffing, will mean that the very successful week end events will now be under threat as staff will not be available to plan and mount those exhibitions. This will in turn reduce the number of visitors and in due course Mr Barber will, no doubt, point this out and suggest closing the museum down completely.

The leader of of the county council has also suggested that in the future he would like to see Snibston Discovery Park privatised. The problem here is that Mr Barber has not thought through properly all the implications of this strategy. What does he plan to do with all the thousands of objects which the people of Leicestershire have given in trust to the museums service? Just give them away so that any future owner of the museum can sell them?

We urge all members of this society who live in the county to make their views known to the leader of the county council. Write to him today expressing your support of the service and your total opposition to cuts in that service even though the budget has now been agreed.

## Egyptian mummies in Leicester Museum

### A date for your diary

The first lecture in the 2002/3 season will be given by Professor Rosalie David, Keeper of Egyptology in the University of Manchester Museum. Professor David has been carrying out extensive research on mummies from the Leicester City Museums collections. Her talk will be entitled "The Leicester Mummies: Scientific studies on life, disease and death in Ancient Egypt". The meeting will take place in the Victorian Gallery of New Walk Museum on Thursday 10th October 2002 at 7.30pm.

Please put the date in your diary and invite as many friends as you can.

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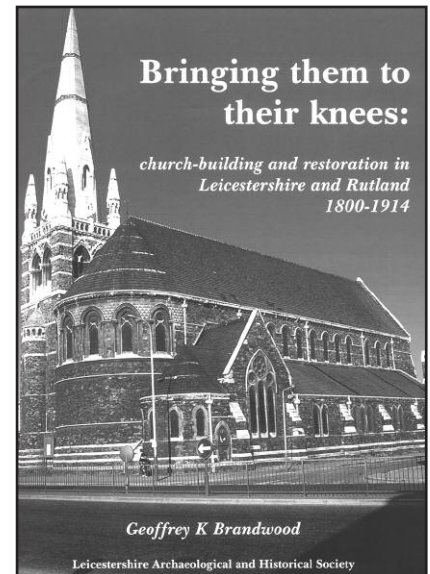
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## New publication by the society

Dr Geoffrey Brandwood, a long standing member of this society, has written a book which the society is publishing. It is the result of many years of research into the nineteenth-century churches of Leicestershire and Rutland. The book is entitled *Bringing them to their knees: church-building and restoration in Leicestershire and Rutland 1800- 1914*. It will contain about 156pp, including 53 illustrations, and a gazetteer of references to churches which had major work carried out on them between 1800-1914. The price of the book is £15, plus postage and packing of £3

**Each member of the society can obtain one copy at the reduced rate of £12 (£15 by post)**

**Members can obtain their copy by sending a cheque for £15 to the Honorary Secretary by the end of May 2002. After that the price will be £18 by post.**



## THE NICHOLS ARCHIVE PROJECT

*The Trustees of the Society's Research Fund have awarded Julian Pooley a grant towards his major research project on the Nichols family. Here he gives some idea of what he will be doing.*

The name of John Nichols (1745-1826) will be familiar to members of this Society. Although his encyclopedic history of Leicestershire continues to stimulate county historians, his name is equally famous among book trade historians, scholars of literary history, art history and Renaissance culture through his role as a master London printer, editor of the 'Gentleman's Magazine', friend of Johnson, biographer of Hogarth and historian of the court culture of Queen Elizabeth and King James I. These panoramic interests led him to accumulate a huge collection of letters and manuscripts. His family inherited his collections, shared his interests and continued his literary and antiquarian friendships. Their correspondence, diaries, travel journals and manuscript collections are an extraordinarily rewarding source for scholars in a range of disciplines. Although these collections are now widely scattered, the Nichols Archive Project is reassembling them, assisted by a generous grant from this Society. Calendars of the letters are stored on an Access database which can be searched for names, places or publications. There are links from this database to transcripts of longer documents such as diaries and journals and to a union index to all of these fascinating documents. There is also a link to a 'Chronology' of the lives of the Nicholsons between 1745 and 1873 incorporating a checklist of the publications they were associated with.



For further details contact Julian Pooley FSA c/o Surrey History Centre, 130 Goldsworth Road, Woking, Surrey, GU21 6ND.

*In addition, Julian Pooley will be giving a paper in next season's lecture programme*

## The opening of Abbey Park, 29th May 1882

Abbey Park was opened by the Prince and Princess of Wales, who would later become crowned as King Edward VII and Queen Alexandra on the death of Queen Victoria some nine years later. It was quite a late addition to Leicester's public parks and the opening was a very grand affair with two large firework displays, one organised on Victoria Park by a Mr C.T. Brock whose company later became a household name. It was said that many thousands of people watched the fireworks, (the grand finale at the Abbey Meadow display was the flight of 1,000 rockets), Buildings were decorated, especially along the route travelled by the Prince and Princess of Wales from London Road station to the park. Many public houses, shops and hotels also had illuminated displays from dusk, with free coal gas being supplied for this purpose by the Corporation Works.

The royal couple left the park after the opening ceremony, luncheon (for invitation see page 8) and speeches, to travel back on the train. On returning to London they later wrote to the council stating that they had enjoyed the day and got home "not at all tired" after their journey.

**Robert Spurr**

## Gazetteer of Markets and Fairs on the web

*Samantha Letters of the Centre for Metropolitan History, Institute of Historical Research, writes:*

I thought that you might be interested to know that the Leicestershire section of the Gazetteer of Markets and Fairs in England and Wales to 1516 is now online. The Gazetteer is a major reference work which will become a primary research tool for historians, historical geographers and economists. The Gazetteer will also be of use to non-professionals, for example those interested in local studies. It aims to provide as much information as possible regarding the establishment and operation of markets and fairs from c.900 onwards. The appeal of the Gazetteer will extend beyond those interested in the medieval period, as the markets and fairs established at this time formed the core of the network which survived into the sixteenth century and beyond.

The network of legally-established markets and fairs in medieval England was dense and highly developed. It is possible to study the development of these markets and fairs much earlier than elsewhere in Western Europe. However, despite the importance of English markets and fairs, until now a

**The web address is:**

<http://www.history.ac.uk/cmh/gaz/gazweb2.html>

comprehensive national survey has not been available. Work has been focused on individual county studies, which vary widely in chronological range and in the sources utilised. The Gazetteer will have utilised more sources than any other study. It has been compiled by Dr Samantha Letters using printed primary material, beginning with the Calendar of Charter rolls (1199-1516) and then working systematically through other records of the central administration. The Gazetteer covers a longer chronological period than most county studies and instead of simply listing markets and fairs, attempts to determine which actually functioned and how long each survived.

The Gazetteer includes markets and fairs held by prescriptive right (or custom) and those established by a grant, generally a royal charter. It is arranged by county, and then by place in alphabetical order. Standard information is provided for each place, including grid references, whether it was a borough or a mint and an indication of its wealth, to provide context and a basis for comparison.

The Gazetteer contains more information than even the most comprehensive county studies for England; there is no comparable study for Wales. A short introduction discusses the sources and methodology and explains how to use Gazetteer. Detailed indexes are provided for the places recorded.

I hope that the Gazetteer will be of interest to you.

## Back numbers of the Victoria County History

Boydell & Brewer Ltd announce that as from the 1st April 2002, they are now distributing all available backlist volumes of the Victoria County History at £35 each. The only volume available for Leicestershire is no. 4. If you are interested in purchasing this volume, or seeing what volumes are available for other counties, contact Boydell & Brewer Ltd, PO Box 9, Woodbridge, Suffolk, IP12 3DF, or email [boydell@boydell.co.uk](mailto:boydell@boydell.co.uk)  
For their web page see [www.boydell.co.uk](http://www.boydell.co.uk)

## Swithland Slate Headstones

*Member, David Ramsey writes:*

On paying a visit to St. John Baptist, King's Norton in early February I found that the pre 18th century gravestone which I had recorded there on a visit in 1985 has now disappeared. I am concerned that these disappearances may well be happening elsewhere in the county especially as the early stones are far more portable than the later ones. I wonder if anyone within the LAHS has

made notes on the locations of the above stones - both within the county and elsewhere - and if they would be willing to share data with



## Important archive given to the county

An important collection of local family papers has been donated to the county. The Hazlerigg archive was given to the government under a scheme which accepts cultural material in lieu of tax bills. In turn the government has given the archive to the county and it will be housed in the record office at Wigston. Speaking about the collection of papers in the *Leicester Mercury*, Robin Jenkins, Keeper of Archives, said "We are delighted. We had it on loan before, but now it actually belongs to the county, so we are very pleased to be the custodians of it. It is historically very interesting. It is a large family collection of material which mostly relates to the estate in Noseley. You can get a real feel of life in those times, and tucked away at the end there are very significant Civil War letters sent to Arthur Hesilrige. The value put on the archive was £102,000.



## Brief summaries of some current ULAS fieldwork

Staff from the University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) recently spoke to the Society and reported on some of their current and recent projects. Here they give brief reports on some current projects.

### **St. Nicholas Place (former antiques complex)**

Evaluation trenches prior to development have been dug to determine the surviving levels of archaeology and their state of preservation.

Two trenches dug in the rear yard revealed medieval and later stone walls indicating the remains of buildings to the rear yard of the properties fronting onto St. Nicholas Place and Guildhall Lane. Few deep modern intrusions were noted. The depth of this first trench was less than 1m and revealed well-preserved medieval remains. The second trench was located around the north-western corner of the Norman undercroft. It revealed the damaged remains of the original stone walls in the corner of the undercroft and what appears to be the quoins of the former entrance on the western side.

A series of trenches was dug in the cellars of the existing building and a number of well-made Roman walls with associated destruction deposits and floor layers have been located. One trench has revealed a possible stylobate footing for a colonnade.

In order to assess the depth of undisturbed natural a number of medieval pits and other intrusive features were excavated. This showed that the damage by medieval pitting is far less extensive than originally thought. The features do not penetrate undisturbed natural ground, and in one case have revealed a stone wall on a different alignment to all of the others recorded, and may indicate an earlier structure on the site similar to the Blue Boar Lane excavations in 1958 where a townhouse was superseded by a *macellum*, see J.S. Wachter's *Towns of Roman Britain* 1995.

### **Anstey**

Trial trenching has been completed in the village. A few archaeological deposits, of probable medieval date, were found in the trench nearest the street frontage. The others contained very few features, and rapidly filled with water.

### **Coventry New Hospitals, Walsgrave, Coventry**

The evaluation in advance of proposed new hospital buildings has now been completed. Very few archaeological features were revealed, and none of these were dated, even though 43 trenches were excavated. A trench was located in the area of a former moated site shown on earlier OS maps, and after battling through 2m of very compact overburden laid down during the construction of the existing hospital buildings, the remains of the moat were seen.

### **Earl Shilton Bypass**

An earthwork survey of medieval fishponds and surrounding area is being undertaken using GPS equipment. It was hoped that this would make the job quicker than a standard EDM micro-contour survey. This was not the case, due to the appalling weather etc.

### **Humberstone Farm**

The excavation of site has been seriously affected by the rain, such that the excavation team has had to pulled off site, and only machine stripping is in progress. It is unclear when excavation will commence. The second area has revealed a large amount of sub-circular enclosures, a number of houses and large areas of inter-cutting pits.

### **Humberstone, Quakesick Valley**

Trial trenching of a small area is due to commence on a second area within this proposed residential development.

### **Loughborough, The Rushes**

An area has started to be machine

stripped for excavation. Little to report as yet.

### **Melton Flood Relief**

Excavation at Wyfordby has identified structural and occupation remains of 12th century date, and an earlier phase with structural evidence which *may* be Saxon. Excavation has continued further west in the deserted medieval village on a broadly contemporary 'hollow way'. This in fact proved to be a positive structure with internal cobbled surface, enclosed by banks with rubble cores, and structural features butting up to it.

### An invitation to Swannington

The Swannington Heritage Trust invites members of the Society to the Swannington Village Trail and to visit Hough windmill either individually or in a party. Denis Baker, chairman of the Trust and a member of this Society, organise guided visits around the mill and suggest that a group might like to tour the mill and have a buffet at one of the village pubs afterwards. Guided walks of the Village Trail are usually provided at a weekend and take about five and a half hours, including lunch at a local hostelry. If you would like further details then please contact Denis Baker at 7 Hospital Lane, Swannington, LE67 8QD, or telephone 01530 222330

**Members are reminded that subscriptions are due on 1st May 2002. Reminders will not be sent.**

## Possible new Roman road discovered

*The following appeared in the November 2001 edition of Network News the newsletter of the Leicestershire & Rutland Archaeological Network, Leicestershire Museums Arts & Records Service, and is reprinted here with permission. It was written by Chris Royall, Archaeological Warden for Medbourne.*

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The attention of members of the Hallaton field-walking group was drawn to the straightness of a footpath on the northern side of Hallaton. On walking the path it was noticed that there were stones in its surface and Roman pottery in the field bordering the path. In the corner of the field on the other side of the track pieces of Roman tile, pottery and tesserae were seen. The group eventually walked the field and identified the location of a villa.

When looking south along the track it was also noticed that Nevill Holt church was directly in line. Maps of Hallaton showed that part of the East Norton road and the Medbourne road were also directly in line with the track. On investigation the Nevill Holt aspect it was found that a footpath lead from the Drayton road track towards the church, that is, towards Hallaton and when looking in the other direction Drayton road was also in a direct line.

On the green at Drayton is a very small church of ancient origin (St James, the smallest church in

Leicestershire with a possible Norman arch) which lies alongside the line of the track which continues towards Cottingham along a short piece of road before embarking across the fields. At the Cottingham end, close to the old mill on the River Welland, is the end of the track, everything being in a straight line. If the track is projected further south it leads through the line of the Gartree Road.

Convinced that the tracks and footpaths were a Roman road it was possible to project the line of the road northwards where it appears to pass through Skeffington and Cold Newton and Lowesby. The road leading to Cold Newton, whilst having a number of angled turns, appears to lie along the line of the track. What is needed is a study of the footpaths and hedges along the northern projected line to see whether there is more supportive evidence of the true direction of the track. The line of the road was to be flown and photographed during July 2001 in the hope that other evidence can be adduced.

Other armchair and computer orientated field-walkers may feel inclined to look at maps of their areas looking for straight pieces of road that, when projected, line up with other straight pieces, together with footpaths and hedges, which would lead to further study. There is still an enormous amount to learn about this period in history, where the roads that were used are and where all the farms and villas are located.

## Pankhurst picture will hang in city museum

A pastel and charcoal picture showing a woman working in the Equity shoe factory in Western Road in 1907, has recently been purchased by Leicester City Museum Service for the sum of £9,400.

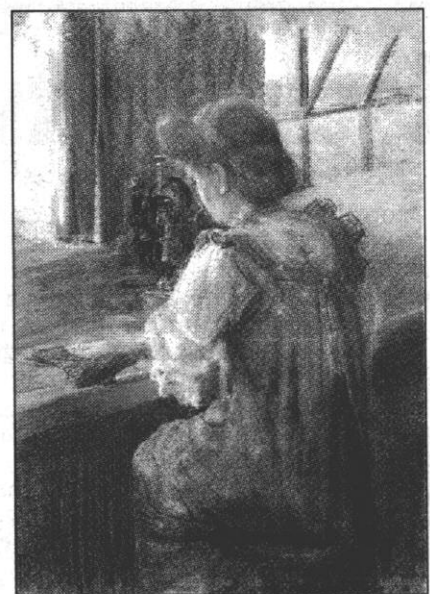
The picture is the work of Sylvia Pankhurst, the youngest daughter of the well-known suffragette, Emmeline Pankhurst. It has been suggested that she was invited to Leicester by Alice Hawkins a leading Leicester suffragette who worked at the Equity shoe factory.

The acquisition was made possible by several groups contributing money for the purchase at auction. They included the City of Leicester Museum Trust, Equity Shoes, KFAT union and the Purchase Grant Fund of the Victoria and Albert Museum.

Councillor Nigel Holden, the cabinet spokesman for the arts, said "It was a real team effort and I would like to thank everybody for their part in bringing this important picture back to Leicester where it belongs".

## Another picture about to be auctioned

Just as we are about to publish this Newsletter we have heard that a ?? of Johnson, the architect who ??? is about to be auctioned at ??



*Leicesteeer Mercury 7th March 2002*

# News from the Librarian

## Books added to stock by purchase, subscription and donation, for which the Honorary Librarian is most grateful.

- Bell, D. *Those were the days: Leicestershire in the forties, fifties and sixties.* 2001
- Boynton, H.E. *Changing face of London Road, Leicester.* 2001
- Brown, C. *Cherished possessions: a history of New Walk Museum and Leicester City Museums Service.* 2002
- Cantor, L. *Historic country house of Leicestershire and Rutland.* 1998
- Cantor, L. and Squires, A. *Historic parks and gardens of Leicestershire and Rutland.* 1997
- Churches Conservation Trust *Visit churches in Leicestershire and Rutland.* 2000
- England, S. *Magnificent Mercury: history of a regional newspaper: the first 125 years of the Leicester Mercury.* 1999
- English Heritage *Annual review 2000/2001*
- Evans, N ed *Cambridgeshire hearth tax returns Michaelmas 1664* (British Record Society Index Library Vol. 115) 2000
- Foss, P. *The field of Redemore: the battle of Bosworth 1485.* 2nd ed 1998
- Fox, J. *Staunton Harold.* 2001
- Harrington, D. ed *Kent hearth tax assessment Lady Day 1664* (British Record Society Index Library Vol. 116) 2000
- Hickman, D. ed *Lincoln Wills 1532-1534* (Lincoln record Society Vol. 89) 2001
- Hincks, J. *Beginnings of the book trade in Leicester.* 2001
- Hincks, J. *Some radical printers and booksellers of Leicester 1790-1850* (These two donated by Mr J. Hincks)
- Issacs, R. *Ragdale Hall: the life and times of an English country house.* 2001
- Leicestershire Historic Churches Preservation Trust  
No 1 North Leicestershire  
No 3 East Leicestershire  
No 4 West Leicestershire [all published in 2000]  
Nos 2 and 5 listed previously
- Ravenstone Local History Group. *Ravenstone with Snibston: a pictorial history.* 2001
- Richards, J. *Aristocrat and regicide: the life and times of Thomas, Lord Grey of Groby the Ermine Unicorn (1623-1657).* 2000
- Richards, J. *The Siege and storming of Leicester (May 1645).* 2001
- Seaman, D. ed *Norfolk hearth tax exemption certificates 1670-1674* (British Record Society Index Library Vol. 117) 2001
- Seaton, D. *A tiger and a fusilier: Leicester's V.C. heroes.* 2001

- Squires, A. *Donington Park and the Hastings connection.* 1996
- Stevenson, J. *Family guide to Charnwood Forest.* 1982
- Stevenson, J. *Newtown Linford: the old buildings and their occupants.* 1998
- Stevenson, J. and R. *John Wesley in Leicestershire.* 1988
- Zientek, M. and J. *Humberstone village and church through the centuries.* 2000 (donated by Mr J. Zientek)

## Periodicals

The latest issues of the following titles have been added to the extensive files of such material. Individual issues are available for loan. Several articles with particular interest to this area have been noted.

- Antiquaries Journal*
- Archaeologica Cantiana*
- Architectural History* Vol 44. Essays in architectural history presented to John Newman (including Extra Illustrations of Pugin buildings in T.H. King's 'Les Vrais Proncipces' by R. O'Donnell (including Ratcliffe College)
- Cambridge Antiquarian Society Proceedings.* Vol XC (including Felix's Life of St Guthlac: hagiography and/or truth)
- Conservation Bulletin*
- East Midland Archaeological Bulletin* 1960, 1961 (to fill gaps in the file)
- English Place-Name Society Journal*
- Historical Research.* Feb 2002 (including: Small places with large consequences: the importance of small towns in England 1000-1540, by Christopher Dyer, University of Leicester)
- Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society Transactions*
- Lincolnshire History and Archaeology*
- Medieval Archaeology* (including Rockingham Forest)
- Shropshire History and Archaeology*
- Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings News*
- Staffordshire Archaeological and Historical Society Transactions*
- University of Durham and University of Newcastle upon Tyne Archaeological Reports*
- Village Voice*

Amongst the 'current copies only' on the library table are *British Records Society* annual report, *Essex Archaeology and History News*, and a new title *Talking History: newsletter of the East Midlands Oral History Archive*. The December 2001 issue of *South Derbyshire Heritage News* has an article in Richard Doughty of Leicester who collects ceramic sanitary ware.

Aubrey Stevenson  
Honorary Librarian

Donations to the Library are always welcome



## Letter

Dear Editor

It may be a source of satisfaction for Mr Bob Rutland (letter, Autumn Newsletter 2001) to know of Alan Bennett's reservations regarding the Time Team, programme, but I fail to understand the purpose behind his letter, given that he does not even watch the programme.

From contact with archaeologists over the last decade, I have been aware of the charge of superficiality levelled at the programme and the brief time scale of action over a three day period. Nevertheless, realists amongst the profession acknowledge the success of the programme and the way in which producers of rival channels have hastened, in their different ways, to 'cash in' on the considerable level of public interest generated by Time Team.

I was a chartered Architect for over thirty years and I recall the sudden interest in architecture and town planning following in the wake of the well-publicised outpourings of the heir to the throne. Many architects regarded his interventions as unhelpful, but I shared the view of others who suggested that only good could follow from a vigorous debate within the media - I submit that there is much of a positive nature that could be discussed at the present time, when archaeological matters have the ready ear and eye of the general public. Many local authority archaeological departments are seriously understaffed, if not privatised, given the current passion of our lords and masters for reduced costs at any price. There is considerable scope for the provision within Planning and Policy Guidelines 16 to protect the archaeological heritage without our towns, cities and the countryside, but there is some reliance on a necessary set of conditions being in place. We do require enlightened councillors, professional advice at a high level and the availability of a suitably comprehensive information base upon which to tender that advice.

I am disturbed by the dubious quality and small extent of many sites and Monuments Record collections and the very large gaps in the availability of adequate Archaeological Assessments for our historic towns. The architectural profession is well organised in the tackling of national issues but I am not in a position to comment on the performance of archaeologists. There is a clear need for a considerable improvement in the means whereby our archaeological heritage can be protected by elected bodies at central and local level. I trust that the role of television will not be forgotten in a wide ranging campaign to ensure improved standards in the field of archaeological management. Who knows, Time Team may be the channel to emphasise, in a discreet manner, the value of well-organised archaeological establishments at the local authority level.

Yours faithfully  
John L Marlow

## Memories of past AGMs

Society AGMs when I first attended were held in the university restaurant, tables beautifully prepared with delicate cucumber, ham, egg and tomato sandwiches, a profusion of cream, fruit and other cakes, home made, and tea served from silver tea pots by the many vigilant black and white attired staff. After leisurely participation the report was presented, discussed and approved before the archaeological talk which followed.

As it was held at tea time only academia were able to attend, even for

me from the classroom it was a speedy trot. Anyone in business could not attend as work came first.

Although having attended lectures prior to 1958 as guests in Leicester it was not until volume XXXV that Mr W Alan North's name appeared. We had returned from Barkingside and Helpshire Lancaster, to establish back in Leicester. The new name 'Archaeological and Historical Society' was first seen in the 1955 edition which was a hard backed elegant book with a strong blue cover. Elegance indeed.

Re-reading reports such as those of the AGMs, they were erudite and awesome. Many visits were conducted in those days Deene Park, Stoke Dry, Compton Wyngates, Brooksby Hall, many fine churches and usually heartening cups of tea!

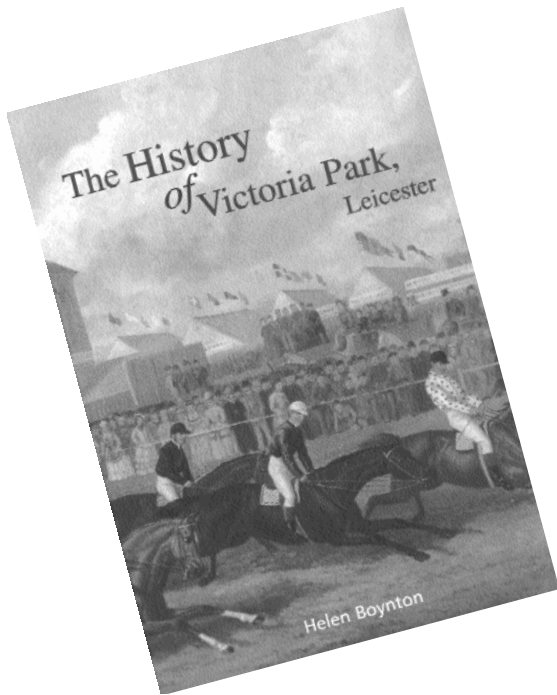
Professor Jack Simmons, Mrs Florence Skillington, Mr John Daniell, David T-D Clarke (Hon Sec) were some of the leaders mentioned.

*Mrs J F M North, Vice-President*



An invitation card sent to Mr and Mrs Wm Neale on the occasion of the visit of the Prince and Princess of Wales to open the Abbey Park on 29th May 1882 (see page 2)

## Two recently published books



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