

THE LEICESTERSHIRE
ARCHAEOLOGICAL & HISTORICAL SOCIETY
THE GUILDHALL · LEICESTER · LE1 5FQ



NEWSLETTER 117 Winter 2022

Welcome to the latest edition of the LAHS Newsletter – and best wishes to you all for a very Happy Christmas and New Year. Contributions to future editions of the Newsletter are as always welcome at any time. These can be emailed to the Newsletter editor, Cynthia Brown, at newsletter@lahs.org.uk.

If you are an LAHS member and have not been sent the Newsletter by email, or you have been sent a paper copy of this newsletter and you would prefer to receive it by email, then please do let us know by sending a message to membership@lahs.org.uk. It may be that we do not have a current email address for you, which is why we have sent a hard copy.

LAHS NEWS

LECTURE PROGRAMME FOR 2022 – 2023 SEASON

Unless otherwise notified, lectures for 2022–23 will be held in the Victorian Art Gallery at Leicester Museum & Art Gallery, New Walk, and start at 7.30 pm. Please use the main entrance to the Museum on New Walk, and arrive in good time to avoid disruption once the lecture has started. Members will be notified nearer the time if pre-booking is necessary through Eventbrite, or if a lecture will be delivered by Zoom as well as face-to-face.

Thursday 26 January 2023

Mary Attenborough: the Leicester years

Richard Graves, local historian

Thursday 9 February 2023

Members' Evening

If you would like to present the results of your research to fellow members please contact the Hon. Lectures Secretary by email at lectures@lahs.org.uk or by phone on 0116 2120271.

Thursday 9 March 2023

The Alan and Joan North Memorial Lecture

After the Romans in Leicestershire and Rutland

Peter Liddle, independent archaeologist

Thursday 30 March 2023

Religious nonconformity and the early Leicester labour movement: the case of the Churches of Christ

Peter Ackers, Emeritus Professor, History of Industrial Relations, Loughborough University

Thursday 20 April 2023

Burial and settlement around the causewayed enclosure at Husbands Bosworth

Matthew Beamish and James Harvey, University of Leicester Archaeological Services

To be confirmed

Thursday 11 May 2023

Cheekpieces and chasing lions: further puzzles from the Hallaton Helmet assemblage

Helen Sharp, Leicestershire County Council Museums Service

Thursday 25 May 2023

Ironstone quarries of Leicestershire

Bob Trubshaw, author and publisher

A REQUEST FROM LAHS HON. LECTURES SECRETARY

Hon. Lectures Secretary Yolanda Courtney is inviting short presentations – not more than 20 minutes - for the Members' Evening on Thursday 9 February 2023. She would also welcome offers of lectures or suggestions for the 2023 - 24 season. In either case, please contact her by email at lectures@lahs.org.uk or telephone 0116 2120271.

OTHER LAHS NEWS

NEWS FROM THE LIBRARY

The Library is currently closed as usual for the winter period. All being well it should reopen on Sunday 5 February 2023 at its regular time of 2 – 4 pm on the first and third Sundays of each month. This information is on the LAHS Membership Card.

The Library (Jury Room) has become a regular place to visit for guided tours of The Guildhall, mainly to see the view down into the Great Hall. However this is good publicity for the Society as the guide always points out how LAHS was instrumental in preventing the demolition of the building in the 1920s. He also says how good the Library is! Graffiti on some of the window panes is also of interest. The Guildhall staff have been helpful in arranging repairs to one of the bookcase locks and the main door catch, both of which are part of the building's alarm system.

We are grateful, as always, to those who are kind and thoughtful enough to donate relevant publications. Recent acquisitions include:

BOOKS AND PAMPHLETS

HEXTALL, K. Sapcote: more snapshots in time. (Sapcote Heritage Group). 2022. Donated by the publisher Heart of Albion.

MANTERFIELD, J. ed. Borough government in Restoration Grantham: the Hall Book of Grantham 1662 – 1704. Lincoln Record Society Vol. 110. 2022.

MARKET HARBOROUGH HISTORICAL SOCIETY History of Market Harborough. Part one: from prehistoric times to the 18th century; eds. L. Holden & P. Aucott. 2022. Donated by L. Holden.

MARQUIS, S. & SOWDEN, T. Leicestershire Adult School Union 1889 – 1989: a centenary brochure [1989]. Donated by S. Marquis.

POSTLES, D. Some medieval taxation returns: Leicestershire and Nottinghamshire, 1327 and 1341-2. 2020. Donated by the author.

St. Aidan's, New Parks, serving the community for 50 years, 1959 – 2009. 2009.

SCREATON, B. & HADDOCK, J. Cosby village heritage trail. [2022].

SPREE, A. Leicester; the postcard collection. 2022. Donated by the publisher Amberley.

SUDDABY, A. & GIFFORD, V. Ernest Gimson's Inglewood: the house and the people who have lived in it. [Ratcliffe Road, Knighton]. 2022. Donated by A. Suddaby.

The following 17 items have all been donated by Dr. and Mrs. G. Lewis.

Across the Welland: times and seasons recorded by the people of two villages. [Barrowden and Wakerly]. 1988.

BELL, D. Leicestershire ghost stories. 2013.

BOWLES, G. & KIRrane, S. Knitting together: memories of Leicestershire's hosiery industry. 1990.

ELLIOTT, B. Stories of Oadby. 1982.

FOXTON INCLINED PLANE TRUST Foxton locks and inclined plane: a detailed history. [198-].
Foxton locks and inclined plane: a photo guide. [1998].

FRANKS, D. Great Northern and London & North Western Joint Railway. 1974. (Market Harborough – Bottesford).

HICKMAN, T. Around Rutland. (Britain in Old Photographs). 1996.

HOPEWELL, J. Leicestershire and Rutland. 1989.

LEICESTER MERCURY Images of Leicester. 1995.

Leicestershire county guide [handbook]. 1983.

PAGE, C. Foundations of fashion: the Symington collection: corsetry from 1856 to the present day. [R & WH Symington & Co., Market Harborough]. 1981.

TANNER, M. Crime and murder in Victorian Leicestershire 1837 – 1901. 1981.

WHITELAW, J. Hidden Leicestershire and Rutland. 1996.

WILSHERE, J. Leicestershire (incl. Rutland) place-names: a short glossary of their meanings. rev. ed. 1986. (1977 ed. in stock).

WRAGG,
F. Edwardian childhood: a retrospect. [Oadby]. 1986 (1987 rep.).

WRAGG, F. Oadby remembered 1918 to 1990. 1990.

PERIODICALS

Harborough Historian 39 2022. As well as the regular range of articles on Market Harborough there are others on Church Langton, John 'Paddy' Logan, Kibworth Harcourt windmill, Husbands Bosworth and Lubbenham Polish Resettlement Camps (actually in Northants.). Donated by the Editor.

Hinckley Historian 89 Summer 2022. Includes Silver Jubilee celebrations 1935; From Earl Shilton to Constantinople...; Bricks of Hinckley. Donated by Hinckley & District Museum.

Leicestershire VCH News Summer 2022. Reports on the Lutterworth book (published Oct. 2022 @ £10, £12 wef 1/1/23); work on Brooksby, Loughborough. Copies of the first three paperbacks : Buckminster & Sewstern, Castle Donington, Ibstock still available. Urgent need for subscribers to the 200 Club. Donated by the Editor.

SPAB Magazine Summer 2022 and Autumn 2022 issues both have reports on Kibworth windmill. This 'splendid local landmark' is now operational again.

Contents lists of articles relating to Leicestershire and Rutland in East Midlands History and Heritage and The Reliquary, as previously mentioned in these pages, are now available for reference with the respective files. Catalogues from local bookseller Cottage Books continue to be received.

Aubrey Stevenson, Hon. Librarian

LAHS HISTORY FAIR 2022 - BEAUMANOR HALL

We can confirm that the LAHS History Fair that had to be postponed in September 2022 has been rearranged for Saturday 18 March 2023 at Beaumanor Hall, near Woodhouse Eaves. Further details will be available at a later stage. Please note that this is a Saturday rather than the usual Sunday event due to the availability of the Hall.

REVIEWERS REQUIRED FOR THE *LEICESTERSHIRE HISTORIAN*!

As editor of the 'Recent Publications' section of the *Leicestershire Historian*, Cynthia Brown is very grateful to everyone who contributes reviews to this – but we would welcome some new recruits to our number. A list of publications will be circulated in the New Year, and you can decide for yourself which of them – and how many of them – you could review. Review copies will be available for some, but we regret that these are for loan only as they are destined for the LAHS Library. Reviews will be due in mid-April, to allow plenty of time for inclusion in the 2023 edition. If you might be interested, please contact me with an offer of help or a request for more information at newsletter@lahs.org.uk.

OTHER NEWS

ENGLISH HERITAGE 'AT RISK' REGISTER

Historic England has recently published its 2022 'Heritage At Risk Register'. This gives a snapshot of the health of England's historic places and those most at risk of being lost as a result of neglect, decay or inappropriate development. It includes proposals to extend Lea Cottage at Ulverscroft, an Arts and Crafts house by the important local architect and designer Ernest Gimson, built in 1897. The full register for the Midlands, including Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland, can be accessed at [Historic England - Heritage at Risk Register 2022, Midlands](#).

KIBWORTH HARCOURT MILL PROJECT

The repair project at Kibworth Harcourt Mill was completed in June 2022 by the Mills Section of the Society for the Preservation of Ancient Buildings (SPAB). The majority of the mill dates back to at least 1711, and the interior is covered with graffiti of millers who worked there over the years. Visit [Kibworth Harcourt Mill Project | spab.org.uk](#) for more details of the project and the Mills section itself.

LEICESTER CIVIC SOCIETY

Leicester Civic Society is pleased to announce its new chair, Burt McNeil, and deputy chair, Stuart Simmonds. The Civic Society is an independent, voluntary organisation that seeks to improve Leicester's built environment and celebrate its heritage. If you are interested in knowing more, or perhaps becoming a member, visit the website at [About - Leicester Civic Society](#).

TRANSCRIPTIONS OF LEICESTERSHIRE WILLS AND TESTAMENTS

Just in case you missed it in the recent circular to members, David Postles is currently transcribing all the Leicestershire wills and testaments up to and including 1520. This work is approaching conclusion (about 30 items to add at the time of writing), but the material to date can be examined - bearing in mind that it is a work in progress which will need some refinement. See Part II at <http://www.historicalresources.myzen.co.uk/medleicsdocs.pdf>.

LEICESTERSHIRE MUSEUMS ACQUIRE EARLY MEDIEVAL PENDANT

A 1,400 year old gold pendant was recently acquired by Leicestershire County Council Museums a year after being discovered by a local metal detectorist. The gold bulla pendant is now displayed alongside other pendants and beads from the Anglo-Saxon period at Melton Carnegie Museum in Melton Mowbray. The find was reported under



the Treasure Act to the Portable Antiquities Scheme and recorded by the finder - self-recorder Phil Harding, who has also provided the above image.

See <https://finds.org.uk/database/artefacts/record/id/1044459> for the finds record. Pendants of this type became popular in England during the 7th century and would have been worn on a necklace with other beads and pendants. The Desborough Necklace in The British Museum is the most famous example, along with another spectacular find reported from Northamptonshire in the national news in December 2022. There is more about this at [Medieval necklace found near Northampton 'internationally important' - BBC News](#).

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

VICTORIAN SOCIETY – LEICESTER GROUP

All meetings take place at Bishop Street Methodist Church, 10a Bishop Street, Town Hall Square, Leicester, LE1 6AF, at 7.30 pm. They are open to everyone, but attendees are asked to contribute £2.50 towards the cost of room hire and other expenses.

Tuesday 10 January 2023

Choosing and Viewing Victorian Paintings in Leicester's Public Art Gallery

Dr Miriam Gill

Tuesday 7 February 2023 (including AGM)

Farewell to the land of my childhood - emigration from Britain in the Victorian Period

Cynthia Brown

Tuesday 7 March. 2023

A Victorian Friary

Peter Kilty

RURAL LIFE PAST AND PRESENT

Out-of-Print and Difficult-to-Find Books

Local history, rural and agricultural history, recollections, country characters, farming reminiscences, canals, folklore, traditions and customs, rural occupations and skills, rural architecture, including wind and water mills, country living in the past, Gypsies and other Travellers, etc.

Established 1970. Extensive stock. Free catalogues, postal only.

COTTAGE BOOKS,
THE COTTAGE, REMPSTONE ROAD
GELSMOOR, COLEORTON,
LEICESTERSHIRE
LE67 8HR

e-mail jenny@boyd-cropley.co.uk

LEICESTER CITY, COUNTY & RUTLAND AT RISK WAR MEMORIALS PROJECT

Open Days, Chancel of All Saint's Church, Highcross Street, Leicester LE1 4PH

Saturday 28 January 2023 and Saturday 25 March 2023, 11 am-4 pm

Further details at www.atriskwarmemorials.co.uk or mail@atriskwarmemorials.co.uk.

LEICESTERSHIRE AND RUTLAND FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY

The Leicester Group of the Leicestershire and Rutland Family History Society is looking for a new venue for 2023, and there will be no meeting in January or February. Please check its website at [LRFHS - Leicester](http://www.lrfhs.co.uk) for updates. Topics arranged for later in 2023 include 'Pinfold, Poachers and Hidden Places of Oadby' by Bill Davice; 'The Rise and Fall of Leicester's Trams' by Malcolm Riddle; and 'The History of Leicester Cinemas' by Brian Johnson. Details of meetings of other LRFHS groups are at [LRFHS - Meetings](http://www.lrfhs.co.uk).

ARCHAEOLOGY

UNIVERSITY OF LEICESTER ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICES (ULAS)

We are very pleased to report that ULAS has been nominated for *Current Archaeology's* 'Research Project of the Year 2023' award for their work on Leicester's archaeology. The award celebrates the research projects that have made the pages of *Current Archaeology* over the past 12 months. ULAS's nomination is based on two articles, one promoting the Highcross monograph, and another discussing Leicester's links with Roman Africa. The winner will be decided by a public vote. Any member of the public can vote at <https://archaeology.co.uk/vote>. Voting closes on 1 February 2023, and the results will be announced at the end of February – so spread the word and get voting! You can read the articles at <https://the-past.com/feature/reinventing-ratae-exploring-roman-and-medieval-leicester/>; <https://the-past.com/feature/leicester-and-roman-africa-exploring-ancient-multiculturalism-in-the-midlands/>.

You can also keep up to date with the latest ULAS projects in its website at [ULAS News](http://www.ulas.le.ac.uk). These include its work on Leicester Cathedral, and a section on 'Trenches, Training and Television: the importance of community engagement to the success of the Rutland Villa Project'.

LEICESTERSHIRE FIELDWORKERS

Some 2023 dates for your diaries.

- 19 January** - Dr Andrew Birley talking on Excavations at Vindolanda (title TBC)
- 6 February** - **Vanishing Windmills of Leicestershire and Beyond** by Mark Temple (Hinckley Archaeological Society talk)
- 16 March** - Dr Will Bowden talking on the Caistor Roman Town Project
- 18 May** – to be confirmed
- 15 June** - AGM and talk (subject to be confirmed)

All talks take place at 7.30 pm. Venues will be confirmed closer to the date.

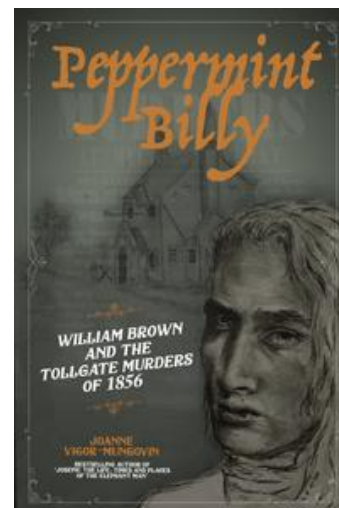
Back copies of the Fieldworkers' newsletter *The Fieldworker* are available at [The Fieldworker - Leicestershire Fieldworkers \(leicsfieldworkers.org\)](http://www.leicsfieldworkers.org). The latest edition is June 2022, and the September edition will also be uploaded soon.



‘PEPPERMINT BILLY’ – AN APPEAL FOR INFORMATION

Local author Joanne Mungovin writes that on 14 July 2023 The Guildhall in Leicester will recreate the trial of William 'Peppermint Billy' Brown, 167 years after he was convicted of the murder of Edward and James Woodcock in Melton Mowbray. It will feature defence and prosecution lawyers, witnesses and the actual court transcript. A jury will be sworn in, and after the evidence has been given, the jury will decide whether William Brown is guilty or not. Nearer the date, members of the public will have the opportunity to apply to be on the jury or in the public gallery. Refreshments will be served after the event.

‘Peppermint Billy’ was the last man to be hanged in Leicester. His conviction has always been questioned and shrouded in mystery. In January 1857, six months after Williams' execution, the Lords of the Treasury ordered the £100 reward offered by the British government for the apprehension and conviction of the murderer to be distributed equally among the sixteen witnesses who helped convict him. To make this event even more memorable, Joanne is seeking descendants of those witnesses, to speak the words of their ancestors during the trial. This would add another layer of meaning and depth to the experience. Joanne has already started the research necessary to find the descendants – see the list of names and information below. This is just basic research, and there may be a few inaccuracies with dates; but if you can help Joanne to identify any of their ancestors, please email her at peppermintbillytrial2023@gmail.com.



Leicester Witnesses

- Thomas Powell - b.1818 Warwickshire, labourer; Martha Powell - b. 1816 Warwickshire, charwoman (husband and wife of Bedford Street, Leicester; children William, Samuel and Sarah Ann
- William Asher – Bedford Street, Leicester
- William Moulding - b.1824; d.1868; buried Welford Road Cemetery, Leicester; married Hannah Smith 1851 (she may have died in Leicester workhouse age 83 in 1902)

Melton Mowbray Witnesses

- Thomas Roberts, Constable of Scalford; b.1819 in Scalford; d.1997 in Nottinghamshire
- Henry Reed – farm hand/servant; b.1843 in Melton
- John Carpendale, farmer; b.1826 in Ashwell, Rutland; married Mary [sic]
- William Moore, baker; b.1824 in Scalford; d.8 Sept 1916, 16 Church Street, Melton
- Francis O’Hare, fishmonger/salesman; b.1832 in Melton; d. 1915 in East Retford, Nottinghamshire; married Mary [sic]
- Thomas Taylor, labourer; b.1821 in Eastwell, Leicestershire; d.1915 in Leicester County Asylum (?); married Mary Nautch
- William Smith, labourer; b.1828 in Harby, Leicestershire; married Mary [sic]

Out of County

- James Gretton, Cropwell Bishop
- John Cooke, watchmaker, Hockley, Nottinghamshire
- James Mason, landlord of the Blacksmiths Arms in Wetherby, West Yorkshire

GEORGE HORT – LEICESTER’S FORGOTTEN WORKING-CLASS HERO

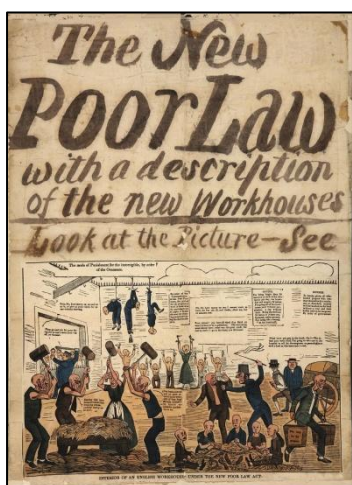
By Steve Marquis

Steve suspects that very few readers of this article will have heard of George Hort, who was born in the St. Margaret’s area of Leicester on 17 January 1783. He would spend the rest of his life as a largely impoverished stockinger, but also as an intrepid fighter for the town’s framework knitters and other poor working people over four decades. During this period, Hort was one of the foremost leaders of the Leicester Framework Knitters Union, and the dominant figure during the union’s most militant phase from 1824 until 1830. He also led two of the most significant and bitter campaigns undertaken by Leicester’s working class during this time: the fight against the 1834 New Poor Law, and the union’s attempt to finally eradicate the ‘truck system’.

I first came across his name while researching my book *Luddism, Chartism and the Leicestershire Framework Knitters, 1811-1850, ‘A Descent into Hell’*.^{*} It appeared regularly in the local press from 1824 until well into the 1850’s, interestingly receiving a far more hostile coverage than any other working-class leader, including Thomas Cooper. He barely gets a mention at all in the two most significant histories of this period, *Radical Leicester* by A. Temple Patterson (1954) and J.F.C. Harrison’s *Chartism in Leicester* (1959). In Patterson’s case, I believe that this reflected his own prejudices rather than Hort’s relative importance: his treatment of Thomas Cooper and Hort’s close associate, Thomas Wright, reinforces the view that he was hostile to the more militant Leicester working-class leaders.

Hort made his first public appearance in 1824 when he emerged as the new leader of a reconstructed Leicester Framework Knitters Union after two disastrous years which had destroyed its predecessor. In choosing him, the membership appeared to be looking for a more belligerent approach, and this is what they would get. He was sentenced to six weeks hard labour in 1825 for leading an attack on William Thompson’s frame shop in Newton Harcourt, when Thompson tried to restart his frames during a strike. After six years of bitter industrial disputes which were mostly lost, Hort’s leadership came to an end following yet another defeated strike, although it seems he remained a member of the union’s ruling council. Two years later, along with Thomas Wright, Hort helped revitalise a defunct union during the massive nationwide strike wave of 1832-34.

His next and most significant intervention was to lead the campaign against the detested New Poor Law, including representing people in numerous individual tribunal cases against Boards of Guardians for mistreatment in the new workhouses. Hort was also a key figure in the union’s campaign against the ‘truck system’ (payment of wages in kind) during the 1840’s, including taking action in the courts against employer’s still using truck to pay their workers. One of his final acts was to lead a successful strike of sock workers in the Loughborough area in 1849. His last public appearance was in a letter he wrote to the local press in 1853, yet again demanding better conditions for framework knitters. He died in January 1858 and was buried in Welford Road Cemetery. I believe it is time for his memory to be resurrected and his contribution to the building of Leicester’s labour movement at last recognised.



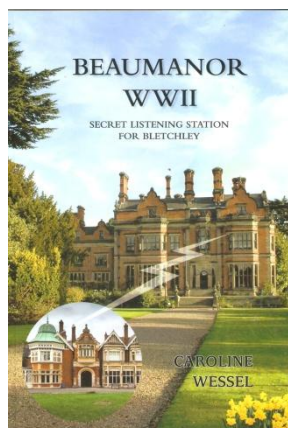
^{*}Published by Greater Wigston Historical Society, price £10. Details at www.marquisfamilyhistory.com.

RECENT PUBLICATIONS

BEAUMANOR WWII: SECRET LISTENING STATION FOR BLETCHLEY

Caroline Wessel

The author, 2022, 247pp, illus, £12



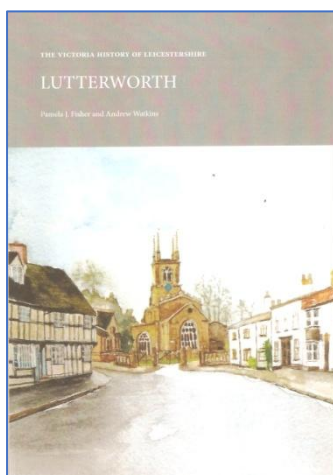
Beaumanor Hall's role as a secret listening station linked to Bletchley during World War II is perhaps well known – but this book focuses on the 276 'Unsung heroes' who served at Beaumanor 'Y' Station and are listed on the Bletchley Roll of Honour. Among them were 'a charismatic naval commanding officer', army signals personnel, civilians trained in wireless and Morse, upper class society girls, 'daredevil schoolboys', a dance band trombonist, and hundreds of ATS girls. Many are identified through the Beaumanor Staff Magazines, which 'with their satire and wit, clever poems, contemporary views and accounts of social events, bring us right into the personal lives of these remarkable people'. The book also

sheds light on the wartime requisition of Beaumanor Hall – and includes an alphabetical survey of what happened once the war came to an end. It is available from Beaumanor Hall itself; the Agora Food Shop, 42 Main Street Woodhouse Eaves; and from Julian at Clarendon Books, 144 Clarendon Park Road, Leicester. It can be ordered from the latter by telephoning 0116 2701856, with the addition of the cost of postage and payment by credit/debit card.

THE VICTORIA COUNTY HISTORY OF LEICESTERSHIRE: LUTTERWORTH

Pamela J. Fisher and Andrew Watkins

University of London Press, 2022, 155pp, illus, ISBN 9781912702824, £12 + £2.50 UK P&P

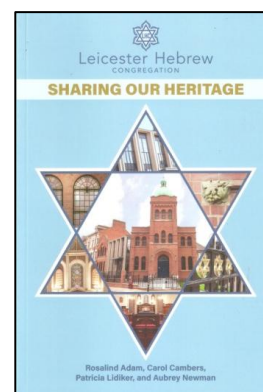


This latest volume in the VCH Leicestershire 'short' series covers the history of Lutterworth from before the Norman Conquest to the development of the jet engine by Frank Whittle between 1837 and 1942 in a disused foundry in the town. It begins with the landscape and settlement of the area, moving on to analyse the nature of landownership and Lutterworth's economic history in the form of agriculture, mills, manufacturing and services. The town's lively communal life embraces activities focused around friendly societies, churches and chapels, and a whole variety of social and charitable organisations – among them the Lutterworth Gooseberry Show Society. It ran its first show for gooseberry growers in 1811, and this remained an annual event until 1939. The theologian and rector of Lutterworth, John Wycliffe is of course strongly associated with the town's religious life, and duly takes his place here; but not at the expense of a thorough analysis of parochial administration, the fabric of the church itself, and Protestant Nonconformity. Local government is similarly well covered, from the manor through to the history of public services such as utilities, police and fire and rescue. In these respects and others – detailed notes on sources, a glossary and bibliography - the book maintains the high quality that we have come to expect of the VCH 'short' series. It is available at www.victoriacountyhistory.ac.uk/leicestershire.

SHARING OUR HERITAGE

Rosalind Adam, Carol Cambers, Patricia Lidiker and Aubrey Newman
Leicester Hebrew Congregation, 2022, 99pp, illustrated, ISBN 9781399923538

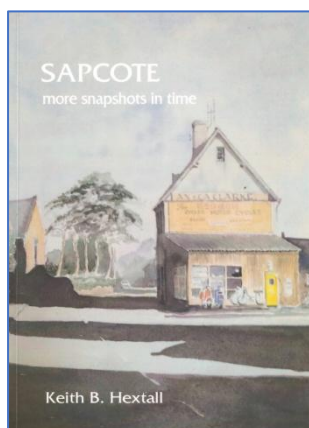
This revised and updated history of Jews in Leicester and their contribution to civic affairs from 1812 to 2022 is part of a wider project by Leicester Hebrew Congregation to create a visitor centre at the Synagogue in Highfield Street and educate others about the Jewish way of life. The first evidence of Jewish people living in Leicester dates from an item in a local newspaper in 1812. Other evidence is fragmentary until the 1850s and the formation of a congregation for religious observances, followed by the opening of a synagogue for collective worship in a former chapel. As well as covering the provision of a purpose-built synagogue in Highfield Street, and a burial ground at Gilroes Cemetery, the book has a strong focus on the people involved with the congregation and those it supported - among them Jewish soldiers and Belgian refugees in World War I, evacuees and refugees in the Second World War - and all those who made such important contributions to the social, political and charitable life of the city. The book available through Leicester Hebrew Congregation at <https://jewish-leicester.co.uk/book/>.



SAPCOTE: MORE SNAPSOTS IN TIME

Keith Hextall

Heart of Albion for Sapcote Heritage Group, 97pp, illus, £9.95



Keith Hextall, the author of this book and its predecessor *Sapcote: some snapshots in time* (2021) passed away in 2020 – but thanks to his widow Margaret his extensive local history research continues to be published. It is a very fitting memorial to his work over many years in documenting the history of Sapcote and producing a lasting archive – one that is of interest well beyond the village itself. This volume features Brown's Buses, and some streets that were not covered in the first book, beginning with Bassett Lane and Donkey Lane, the old packhorse road to Sharnford. The section on Cook's Lane features the almshouses built by Thomas Frewen of Brickwall, Sussex in 1847 with its distinctive tall chimneys, and there is a substantial section on

Sharnford Road, part of which was formerly known as Big Lane. School photographs are here in abundance, and life on the land is also well covered, from the 19th century through both World Wars and beyond, along with local quarries. 'Celebrations and Carnivals' includes images of Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee in 1897, celebrations for the end of the Boer War in 1902, and the Coronation in 1937, as well as more recent examples. Contact Heart of Albion at [Heart of Albion Press \(hoap.co.uk\)](http://Heart of Albion Press (hoap.co.uk)) for more details.

OTHER NEW PUBLICATIONS

We have recently received news of new publications from Robin and Jess Jenkins. Information about these will be circulated separately to LAHS members at the same time as this Newsletter.

HISTORICAL FOOTNOTE

This description of some of the origins of Christmas customs appeared in the *Leicester Daily Post* on 26 December 1890 (image – public domain).

In the primitive Church Christmas Day was preceded by an eve, or vigil, and hence our Christmas Eve of the present time, which in the associations that cluster around it, in its sports and pastimes, its ancient memories, and even its devotions, has ever been in all second only to Christmas itself. One beautiful observance of Christmas Eve, having a heathen origin, is the decoration of churches and dwellings with evergreen, holly, laurel, bays, and mistletoe, being a perpetuation of a custom of the old British Druids, whose belief it was that kindly sylvan spirits sought these ornaments of living green, and hovered near them, untouched and unharmed by nipping frost until the death of winter. In the old church calendar, appointed after the universal adoption of December 25 as Christmas, the eve of that day marked "Temps. Exomantur" (Let the temples be adorned).



To the mistletoe, a favourite bough for Christmas decoration, there has attached from time immemorial a tradition of "kissing right" that is popularly considered as inviolable as any secured to Englishmen by Magna Charta [sic]. Any male who, during the Christmas season, can catch a female under a sprig of mistletoe, is entitled to a kiss, which the female – be she maid, wife or widow – is in honour bound to accord him, without resistance or remonstrance of any kind.

On Christmas Eve in all parts of Italy, the people play upon instruments, and sing before the shrines of the Blessed Virgin Mother with the poetical idea of cheering her through the pangs of maternity. In this country and on the Continent of Europe the church-bells ring out their latest and sweetest; while from a tradition that the Saviour came into the world at midnight, there is celebrated punctually at that hour high mass of the most imposing character. In Spain, Italy, and France especially, the churches are magnificently decorated; and after the midnight mass a collation is served to those who have spent Christmas Eve in the pious work of adornment.

The custom of giving presents on Christmas Day, now so universally observed, is derived from the old Roman Saturnalia, or Feast of Saturn, at which it was customary for all the members of a household to offer gifts to each other, and is not traceable, as has been sometimes stated, to the New Testament account of how kings and wise men made rich offerings to the infant Jesus. For the Christmas-tree we are indebted to the ancient Germans, who, during the continuance of their great feast of the winter-solstice, hung large yew trees with rude gifts, decorations, and lights. From them, too, came Santa Claus, Kris Kringle, Knecht Rupert, and the many other fabulous personages charged with the duty of bringing gifts to good children, as does also the beautiful fable that such offerings are brought directly by the sweet hands of the loving "Christ Child" —the infant Jesus Himself!

This newsletter is edited by Cynthia Brown and published by Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society. Further information about the Society, its publications and other activities can be found on its website at www.lahs.org.uk.

**THE LEICESTERSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL &
HISTORICAL SOCIETY**
THE GUILDHALL, GUILDHALL LANE, LEICESTER. LE1 5FQ.
Registered Charity No 503240

President:
Patrick Boylan

Mr. Matthew Beamish,
Hon. Membership Secretary LAHS,
c/o ULAS,
School of Archaeology and Ancient History,
University of Leicester, University Road,
Leicester LE1 7RH
Tel 0116 2525234
Email: membership@lahs.org.uk

Membership Form

Categories

- Individual Membership £30
- Family Membership £40
- Student Membership FREE*

Surname:..... Forename:..... Title:..... Initials:.....

Address:

.....

.....

Post Code:..... Telephone:.....

Email Address:.....

*(Only to be used for communicating information with members. *Student membership is contingent upon you providing the email address given to you by your educational institution).*

I wish to become a member at the rate indicated above.

I enclose a cheque/ I have paid by Paypal/ I have made a Standing Order arrangement with my bank/Please send me a Standing Order form *(delete as applicable)*.

If paying by Standing Order please either make your own arrangement with your bank/building society, or request a form from Hon. Mem. Sec. Please make any payments to Sort Code 60-60-06, Account Number 87270080.

Alternatively pay by Paypal: Payments@lahs.org.uk



Data Protection Act

I/We agree to my/our names being stored on a computer database

Signature/s:..... Date:.....

Gift Aid Declaration

Please treat as Gift Aid donations all qualifying previous and/or future subscription payments and/or donations I have made to LAHS (delete as applicable). I confirm I have paid or will pay an amount of Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax for each tax year (6 April to 5 April) that is at least equal to the amount of tax that all the charities or Community Amateur Sports Clubs (CASCs) that I donate to will reclaim on my gifts for that tax year. I understand that other taxes such as VAT and Council Tax do not qualify. I understand that LAHS will reclaim 28p of tax on every £1 that I gave up to 5 April 2008 and will reclaim 25p of tax on every £1 that I give on or after 6 April 2008.

Surname Title:..... Initials:.....

Address

.....

Postcode

Signature/s

Date:.....