

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



NEWSLETTER 126 Spring 2025

Welcome to the latest edition of the LAHS Newsletter. 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.

LAHS LECTURE PROGRAMME FOR 2024 - 25

All lectures commence at 7.30 pm. Please note the different venue for the 2025 lectures. Information about car parking will be provided nearer the time.

Thursday 13 March 2025, Ken Edwards Lecture Theatre 3, University of Leicester, LE1 7RH
The Alan and Joan North Memorial Lecture: the life of a Roman soldier and the story of the last battle of Boudica AD 60/61

Eddie Smallwood, historian, author and tour guide

Thursday 10 April 2025, Ken Edwards Lecture Theatre 3, University of Leicester, LE1 7RH
Diet of the Grey family at Bradgate House: bringing together the historical and archaeological evidence

Rachel Small, University of Leicester Archaeological Services

Thursday 22 May 2025, Gaulby Parish Church, LE7 9BE
The Pilgrims' Way

Mike Burton, former journalist and history teacher

Parking will be available on the verges of Front Street, and along Main Street towards Billesdon.

LAHS NEWS

NEWS FROM THE LIBRARY

The Library reopened at the beginning of February after its customary winter closure. All being well it should be open as usual on the first and third Sunday of each month from 2 – 4 pm until 19 October, apart from 20 April which is Easter Day. All the latest additions were published in 2024 and have been kindly donated by the authors or publishers to whom we are grateful as always. Reviews will be published in the *Leicestershire Historian*.

BOOKS

CONNOLLY, T. A handmade world. History of Croxton Kerrial.

HARTLEY, R. The medieval earthworks of North-East Leicestershire. Revised and enlarged edition published by Leicestershire Fieldworkers. The author is a Society Vice-President.

JENKINS, R. Tigers in the trenches: the Leicestershire Regiment on the Western Front 1914-1918. Published by Lookout Press (Leicester). www.heritageco.co.uk. The author is a Society Committee member.

POSTLES, D. Provisions for the people: the food supply of Loughborough 1851-1897. Available as a free download from <https://davelinux.info/BOOKS/provisioning1.pdf>

SATO, K. Life story of Mr. Mahesher Singh Bhumbra, a former Chair of the Nirankari Advice Centre in Leicester. Previous volumes in this Memory and Narrative Series are in the Library.

SCREATON, B. Cosby: a Leicestershire village: the second volume.

ZIENTEK, J. Launde Abbey Retreat House...1980s/90s...

Weddings at St. Mary's Humberstone...1939 to 2024.

PERIODICALS

Essex Archaeology & History Vol.13 (4th series) 2022.

Harborough Historian 41 2024. Includes articles on Kibworth, Hallaton, Leicester Mechanics' Institute.

Hinckley Historian 94 Winter 2024. Includes an article on Wykin and an appeal for contributions.

Leicestershire V.C.H. News 15 Sept.2024. Articles on Loughborough with reference to a LAHS blog and a report that David Wykes (Society Committee member) has become a Trustee.

Lincoln Record Society Vol. 112 The material world of a Restoration Queen Consort: the privy purse accounts of Catherine of Braganza; ed. M. Hayward.

Rutland Record 44.

Society of Antiquaries of Scotland Proceedings Vol.153. Includes an obituary of Dame Rosemary Cramp (1929-2023), who was born in Cranoe and was a past President of LAHS.

SPAB Magazine Autumn 2024; Winter 2024.

Worcestershire Archaeological Society Transactions 3 series Vol.29.

NEWSLETTERS

These are on the Library table, current copies only.

Essex Journal, Heritage Now, Lincoln Record Society News Review, and, Trustees' Report, SPAB What's On, Worcestershire Recorder.

Cottage Books catalogues are also there covering rural life past and present. There are always Leicestershire items for sale. The latest reveals that this local bookselling business was started in 1970 and the owner is now in her 80th year.

Current Archaeology 415 Oct. 2024 has an article by Helen Sharp, Society Committee member, on Recreating the Hallaton Helmet, with acknowledgements to the Society. The Library has no file, but has a copy of this issue.

To finish, a couple of interesting observations found in the Library:

Proceedings at the opening of the Leicester and Leicestershire Collegiate School , 1836. The Rev. Andrew Irvine, Vicar of St. Margaret's church, Leicester said..." ladies will not learn Latin. There seems to be something in the delicate texture of the female mind that shrinks from so sturdy a study...". This followed a speech totally in Latin by the Vicar of St. Mary's.

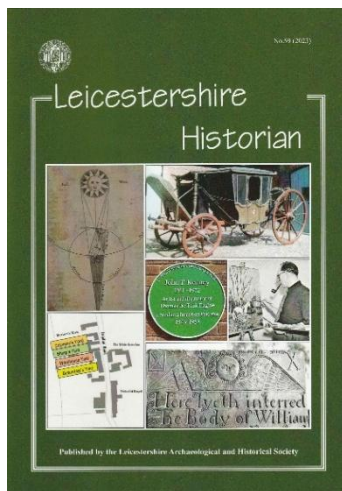
A report of this Society at a General Meeting held at Lutterworth in 1861, compiled by Thomas North: To a casual observer Lutterworth might appear to offer few attractions to claim the visit of the members of an Architectural and Archaeological Society.

Aubrey Stevenson, Hon. Librarian.

YOLANDA COURTNEY

We were very sorry to hear of the death of Yolanda Courtney on 13 February. Yolanda served on the LAHS Committee for many years and was both a Trustee and Lecture Secretary. She was also instrumental in securing funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund for the *Changing Leicester* exhibition in 2016, developed by LAHS in partnership with Leicester City Museums and the East Midlands Oral History Archive to present Leicester's heritage since World War II. Yolanda also had a long career in both the county and city museums services. She was very knowledgeable on many aspects of social history, and had particular expertise in the field of public house tokens in England and Wales. She had been in poor health for some time, and was admitted to hospital last month, where she contracted an infection that led to her death.

LEICESTERSHIRE HISTORIAN ARTICLE WINS AWARD FROM THE BRITISH ASSOCIATION FOR LOCAL HISTORY



We are very pleased to announce that an article by Karima Shirfield in the 2023 edition of the *Leicestershire Historian* has been awarded runner up prize in the 'long article' category of the British Association for Local History Publications Awards 2025. 'Eleanor Frewen Turner (1786 – 1879) "angel in the house" and "woman of substance"' draws on diary entries and correspondence from the life of Eleanor Frewen, a member of Leicestershire's landed gentry, to argue that she deserves recognition for fulfilling both these roles.

Karima writes that: 'I "met" Eleanor Frewen Turner as part of my work as an Archive Assistant at the Record Office for Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland (ROLLR) from 2018 to 2022. Eleanor's correspondence is kept there as part of the Martin's Manuscripts, and one of my tasks was to repackage the items in that collection, especially the letters which needed to be put in a chronological order, so as to make them more readily accessible to our customers. This is how I came across Eleanor's correspondence, and I did some more research about her. I was surprised to find that there was none on the Internet, although there was plenty of information about her sister, Mary Mohl. On reading Eleanor's correspondence, I was deeply touched by the resilience and fortitude she showed throughout her long life of grieving the loss of her loved ones, and also the care she provided to her grandchildren. When I realised that she outlived all her children, I was hooked. I talked about her to a colleague archivist at the ROLLR, Jess Jenkins, and she encouraged me to write about her.'

As a historian, I am particularly interested in studying and researching both women and men from the late Georgian and Victorian era who would not have written about themselves, perhaps because of their social status or simply because of their temperament. Eleanor fell into that latter category and the conviction grew in me that she should be better known. I also wanted to argue that some women of that era could be both 'conformist' (the "Angel in the House" element) whilst also having "Agency" (the "Woman of Substance" part) at the same time (rather than being one or the other) and that the concept of "greatness" could also be emerging from being able to combine the two'. We would like to congratulate both Karima and Joyce Lee, until recently the editor of the *Leicestershire Historian*, on this notable achievement.

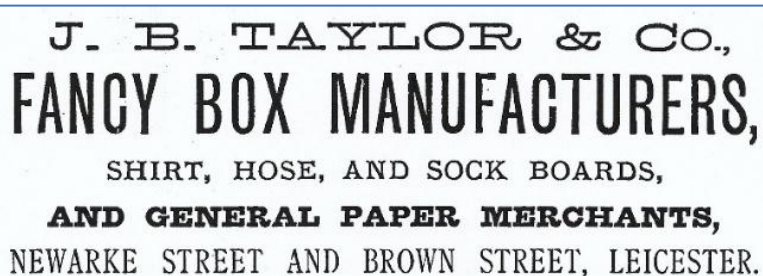
PUBLIC HERITAGE FUND

The LAHS Public Heritage Fund (PHF) recently awarded funding for two very different projects: The Historic Towns Trust: Mapping Leicester's History project was awarded a grant to create and publish a large-scale map of central Leicester, in digital and fold-out-paper form, reflecting the city's unique history from pre-Roman times to the early 20th century. The map will be available for purchase and its digital version will be used as a free school and community resource. It will include a gazetteer on the reverse that gives a brief history of Leicester, and descriptions of the major buildings and features shown on the map, plus rare images and early photographs. For more information see www.historictownstrust.uk/. The project will also feature outreach activities with the general public, as well as school children and individual communities from the city, to reach as broader audience as possible and to celebrate Leicester's history.

The second project to be awarded funding is the Leicester Comedy Festival Archive Group, which aims to catalogue digital photographs and other archive material from the nation's largest comedy festival. This has been a major part of Leicester's cultural scene since the 1990s. A few years ago, the charity donated its physical archive to De Montfort University's Special Collections Unit, and items are now freely available to members of the public who may want to visit the archive. Since then the founder of the Festival (Geoff Rowe) has been trying to catalogue the considerable digital archive of photographs from the festival, to ensure this is preserved and can be included in the DMU main archive. The grant will help him to provide resources for a volunteer team to assist with this process. See below for an update on the project.

CARDBOARD BOX MAKING IN LEICESTER – A FOOTNOTE

Since my article on cardboard box making in Leicester was published in the 2024 edition of the *Leicestershire Historian*, I have been contacted by a number of people with family members who worked in the industry, and found it useful context for their working lives. One of them, aged 16 in 1921, was employed at the Co-operative Society Printing Society works in Cranbourne Street, conveniently close to the family home, as a 'Box hand – cutter'. From another contact I learnt that while from another contact I learned that his grandmother was employed as a box maker at Poole, Lorrimer and Tabberer, another hosiery company in addition to Corah's which made its own cardboard boxes. I have also been fortunate enough to acquire a copy of the *Homecoming to Leicester Souvenir* of 1910, with a



J. B. TAYLOR & Co.,
FANCY BOX MANUFACTURERS,
SHIRT, HOSE, AND SOCK BOARDS,
AND GENERAL PAPER MERCHANTS,
NEWARKE STREET AND BROWN STREET, LEICESTER.

brief article on the box-making company of J.B. Taylor and Co., which had recently moved from Newarke Street into a new factory in York Road to take full advantage of machinery, mainly imported from the US. Here, we are told, 'for cutting, bending and shaping, measuring and joining, absolutely the latest type of machinery is utilised... One kind of machine is able to turn out from four to five gross [144 pieces] in an hour' – destined for boots and shoes, corsets, hosiery goods, shirts and gloves, 'and some more artistically finished serve as show cases'. The article is now available online to LAHS members at [Leicestershire Historian - LAHS](#).

Cynthia Brown

WHY NOT CONSIDER PUBLISHING YOUR OWN RESEARCH THROUGH LAHS?

We hope you enjoy reading LAHS publications – but they also offer potential outlets for your own research:

BLOGS – published on the LAHS website, providing open access, easily findable, and available to everyone. Approximate length 1000 – 2000 words, plus a minimum of three images; can be submitted at any time to membership@lahs.org.uk.

LEICESTERSHIRE HISTORIAN - medium length articles, 2000-4000 words, focused on primary research. Published annually in print and digital format, and archived externally online. Contact editorhistorian@lahs.org.uk if you wish to offer an article.

TRANSACTIONS – for full length original studies of up to 10,000 words, of academic standard. Published annually in print and digital format, and digital format, digitally archived externally. Distributed to various universities, and appears in their indices. See [TLAHS Authors Guide v3.pdf](#) for notes for the guidance of potential authors; and contact editortransactions@lahs.org.uk if you wish to offer an article.

OTHER NEWS

A NEW EXHIBITION AT CHARNWOOD MUSEUM

A new exhibition that invites visitors to explore the meanings, memories and connections behind historic jewellery and the jewellery we treasure is open now at Charnwood Museum until June 2025. Inspired by the remarkable discovery of the 3,500-year-old Early Bronze Age necklace found in Cossington, Leicestershire, the new exhibition *My Jewellery, My Story* bridges the past and present, showcasing artefacts alongside creative displays and stories from Leicestershire's communities. A selection of archaeological jewellery not normally on display is featured in this temporary exhibition.

The development of the exhibition involved lots of community groups working alongside Leicestershire County Council's Culture Leicestershire team, and local Creative Practitioners Alison Mott and Liz Waddell. The University of Leicester Archaeological Services



(ULAS) uncovered an Early Bronze Age barrow in the village of Cossington in the 1990s. The site contained an extremely rare and high-status necklace dated to c. 1750 – 1450 BC, its beads, made from amber, Whitby jet, faience (a type of early glass) and shale, show the people of Cossington were part of long-distance trade routes, including

the Baltic which is the nearest source of amber. The materials used to make the necklace had 'other worldly' qualities such as electrostatic powers, giving the item, and by association the wearer, perceived supernatural protection. Composite necklaces may have also acquired special meaning by being assembled from heirloom beads. The necklace has recently been conserved and can be viewed at Charnwood Museum alongside a new film exploring its story. The project has been made possible thanks to funding from Arts Council England as part of the National Portfolio Organisation (NPO) programme of activities in market town museums. (Image courtesy of Leicestershire County Council Museums)

LEICESTER COMEDY FESTIVAL ARCHIVE GROUP

LAHS Public Heritage Fund has been pleased to make a grant to support the work of the Leicester Comedy Festival Archive Group, which is archiving and digitising photographs collected since the Festival began in 1994. The group has recently discovered images previously thought lost, including pictures of Stewart Lee, Jason Manford, and Festival patron Tony Slattery. The library of images includes pictures of comedians performing on stage, as well as those of festival audiences and venues, many of which were vital parts of Leicester's cultural scene but no longer exist. Once the collection has been catalogued it will be included in the main Festival archive, which is stored at De Montfort University as part of their special collections. It is believed that the entire archive is one of the most comprehensive collections of British comedy, and helps to preserve a record of UK comedy over more than 30 years. If you may be interested in volunteering for the archive, or would like further information, email Geoff Rowe at geoff@geoffrowe.co.uk.

UNIVERSITIES IN LEICESTER AND LEICESTERSHIRE ARE OPENING UP THEIR LIBRARIES TO PUBLIC USERS

The University of Leicester, De Montfort University (DMU) and Loughborough University are opening up their libraries to anyone aged 18+ who lives, works or studies in Leicester, Leicestershire or Rutland, in a partnership with Leicester City Council, Leicestershire County Council and Rutland County Council. Membership is free, and can be applied for by filling in an online form. Local public libraries can also provide support with the application process. Valid photo ID and proof of address are required to join. Library services will be accessible seven days a week, and up to ten books can be borrowed at a time. Further information is available at universitiespartnership.org/open-libraries.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

ARCHITECTURAL FASHION VS COMMON SENSE – THE 19TH CENTURY BATTLE OF STYLES AND ITS LEGACY FOR TODAY



A one day symposium at Rutland County Museum, Oakham, 27 September 2025

This symposium will be held in conjunction with an exhibition of the East Midlands work of Rev John Louis Petit, artist and architectural writer, at Rutland County Museum from 22 August – 27 September 2025. Petit was one of the foremost writers and speakers on Christian architecture in the mid-19th century, and the leading critic of the gothic revival. The symposium will draw on his work in the region, with three keynote lectures and

shorter contributions from both academic and local historians. For further information, please contact Professor Chris Baker, Emeritus Professor of Environmental Fluid Mechanics, at the University of Birmingham, bakercj54@gmail.com.

(Image: Ulverscroft Priory – Wikipedia).

CRIME AND PUNISHMENT MONTH – THE GUILDHALL, LEICESTER, LE1 5FQ

Leicester's Guildhall served as the site of Leicester's first police station in 1836, marking the establishment of the Leicester Borough Police with a force of 50 officers. This is credited to Frederick Goodyer, who was appointed as the first Superintendent of Police. His contributions to law enforcement have inspired the designation of March 2025 as Crime and Punishment Month, celebrating both his legacy and the city's historic connection to justice and public order. A series of events will look at his origins with the Metropolitan Police, explore the streets of Victorian London, including the chilling Whitechapel murders, and uncover the confessions of the infamous Sweeney Todd. For details, see [Event Details – Leicester Museums](#)

GREATER WIGSTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Little Hill Primary School, Launceston Road,
Wigston Magna, LE18 2GZ

Tuesday 18 March 2025

Medieval Pilgrimages From Leicestershire

Peter Liddle

Doors open 6.45 for 7.15 pm start. Free to members; non-members £4 per person. Further details: [Greater Wigston Historical Society](#).

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY

Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate, LE1 1WB

Sunday 9 March 2025, 6.30 pm

The Forgotten Women Pilots of the Air Transport Auxiliary

Dorothy Saul-Poole

Sunday 16 March 2025, 6.30 pm

Leicester's Smigielski Estates

Ned Newitt

For further details, see [2025 Spring](#).

LEICESTER CIVIC SOCIETY – GUIDED WALKS

Saturday 15 March 2025, 10.30 am – 12 midday

From St Margaret's to Northgates and Frog Island

Northgates is an area that most of us will have passed through but perhaps not walked around. Learn about the area's buildings, local people and a local company's surprising connection to a World-renowned artist. The walk will be led by Trevor Allen and starts from St Margaret's Bus Station café.

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.

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

Saturday 29 March 2025, 9.30 – approx. 11.30 am

Leicester History Trail Part One: Public Space

Discover more about the development of Leicester as we follow the 'History Trail' terracotta plaques, originally installed 40 years ago by the Leicestershire and Rutland Society of Architects, and updated by them in 2024 to take into account the changes that have occurred since 1984. The walk will be led by Nils Feldmann, Chartered Architect, and will start from outside Esquires Coffee, The Circle, 5 New Walk, LE1 6RU. Due to the quantity of plaques, a further two walks will take place later this year.

Walks cost £5 for members and £7 for non-members. Ticket numbers for walks are limited, and pre-booking is essential. Visit [All Events - Leicester Civic Society](#) for further details and bookings.

HOBY AND DISTRICT LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

**Wednesday 19 March 2025, Hoby & District Village Hall,
LE14 3DT, 7.30 pm**

The Stained Glass of the Horwood Brothers – the life and times of a provincial Victorian firm

Jeff Hopewell

A story of social mobility in which three generations of the same family moved from being an impoverished farm labourer and convict, to respected craftsmen, to highly regarded professionals. All welcome; £2 for non-members (pay on the door). For further information, contact Diane: 07529 220111 or email secretary@hobyanddistricthistory.co.uk.



LEICESTERSHIRE AND RUTLAND FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY – LEICESTER GROUP

Oadby Granville Tennis Club, Leicester Road, Oadby, LE2 4AB

For further details of these and meetings of LRFHS branches in Hinckley, Loughborough, Market Harborough and Oakham, see [LRFHS - Meetings](#).

Wednesday 12 March 2025, 7.30 pm

Entertaining the Edwardians

Cynthia Brown

Wednesday 9 April 2025, 7.30 pm

Making Tracks: the laying of Leicester's railways

Brian Johnson

MARKET HARBOROUGH HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Methodist Church Hall, Northampton Rd, Market Harborough, LE16 9HE, 7.30 pm

12 March 2025

Historic Buildings Myth-busting

James Wright, buildings archaeologist

James will look critically at the interesting, exciting and romantic stories presented to visitors to medieval buildings, and discuss these against the actual facts that he has elicited.

8 April 2025

Harborough History and Heritage in the 1980s and '90s

Sam Mullins and Steph Mastoris

Sam and Steph will return to Market Harborough to reflect on community history in Harborough in the exciting and formative 1980s and 90s, which saw the opening of the Harborough Museum, the publication of the first *Harborough Historian*, the first annual local history conference (now History Days), and other initiatives from both curators in terms of collecting, research, exhibitions and publications.

Doors open 7 pm. All are welcome. There is a £1 door charge to help with room hire. Non-members pay an additional £3. Further details of the Society's programme are available at [Market Harborough Historical Society - Programme](#).

MEDIEVAL WOMEN: FORGING THE WAY – EXHIBITION

Leicester Cathedral, 12 – 31 March 2025, during Cathedral visiting hours

This exhibition, recently displayed at Bosworth Battlefield Heritage Centre, explores the close historical links between the Battle of Bosworth and the beginnings of the Sikh faith in Punjab. It has been brought to life by Leicestershire County Council's Culture Leicestershire team and a local Sikh women's group. While much is known about the powerful women of the War of the Roses, the group has used extensive research, stories, and images to explore their medieval peers in Punjab, and the paths they forged for generations of Sikh women around the world, dating back to 1469. Free entry.

**TENTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE REINTERMENT OF KING RICHARD III –
EVENTS AT LEICESTER CATHEDRAL**

Thursday 20 March 2025, Leicester Cathedral, LE1 5PZ, 7 pm

The Scoliotic Knight: reconstructing the real Richard III

Dr Tony Capewell will discuss his work on several reconstructions of King Richard's martial apparatus for Channel 4's *Richard III: the new evidence* and the feature film *The Lost King*. Tickets £6 – 8 from Eventbrite. Refreshments included.

Monday 24 March 2025, 7 pm

Richard's Women: their impact on his life, death and legacy

Annie Garthwaite, author of *Cecily* and *The King's Mother*, reveals the 'untold story' of the women who loved Richard, the women who feared him, and the women who brought him down. Tickets £6 – 8 from Eventbrite. Refreshments included.

Thursday 27 March | 7 pm

Panel – Revisiting the Discovery and Reinterment

In this special panel discussion, experts from the worlds of archaeology, history, and the Cathedral revisit the amazing story that captured imaginations around the world. Lively conversation and new insights are expected! Tickets £6–8 from [Eventbrite](#). Refreshments included.

For further details of these and other events and bookings, see [Reinterment of Richard III - 10th Anniversary | Leicester Cathedral](#).

ARCHAEOLOGY

This is part of a blog by ULAS Project Officer Jen Browning, reproduced with permission, celebrating the career of one of Leicester's great archaeologists, Jean Mellor. You can read the full blog at [‘With luck and good management’: Jean Mellor and the transformation of Leicester’s archaeological landscape – ULAS News](#).

Archaeologists aren't alone in appreciating that the present is built upon past foundations but, for us, it is perhaps a more potent metaphor. Leicester's rich archaeology was recognised early on, the still-standing remains of the Roman Jewry Wall integrated into the heart of the city. The internationally renowned archaeologist, Kathleen Kenyon, excavated the site back in the 1930s. But she was not the only woman to have a major impact on our understanding of Leicester's archaeology. Jean Mellor was the Field Archaeologist for Leicester Museum from 1965 and later the Senior Field Archaeologist for the Leicestershire Archaeological Unit until its closure in the mid-nineties. She presided over enormous changes in attitudes, practice and the very framework in which archaeology operated...

In the 1950s and 1960s, widespread re-development of historic towns took place across the country, largely mitigated by local archaeological societies, excavating what they could ahead of construction work. In 1961, Leicester became the first Museums Service in the country to appoint a Field Archaeologist to undertake excavations within the town. Jean succeeded Max Hebditch (later the Director of the Museum of London) in 1965. She was certainly thrown in at the deep end, as almost her first project was the monumental task of organising excavations during the construction of Leicester's Southgates underpass, which cut a destructive swathe through the ancient town core...

During the late 1960s, Jean was involved with excavation of several major sites, which helped re-frame our understanding of Roman Leicester, confirming the extent of the Roman town, the street pattern and the arrangement of prominent buildings within it. Sites included the Forum and Basilica; the town defences; the West Bridge; the lifting of the Peacock pavement, as well as work at Bath Lane, Silver Street and Southgate Street.



Attitudes to what was 'important' were very much in development and changed in line with improved excavation techniques. For example, in the early years, materials regarded as less informative, such as animal bones and ceramic building material, might be routinely discarded on site. Environmental sampling (today considered a vital source of information) was practically unheard of. And the emphasis was firmly on Roman archaeology -the later periods were vastly under-resourced by comparison. But, as the 60s gave way to the 70s, attitudes were changing. Jean saw 1971 as a pivotal year, dominated by large-scale excavations at St Nicholas Circle, which lasted for nine months and finally focused on the medieval, finding traces of buildings, as well as the Roman remains. This was also the site on which many other notable Leicester archaeologists first appeared on the scene, including Peter Liddle, Terry Pearce and Patrick Clay (who recalls that he was paid £2 a day in 1973, rising to £3 in 1974!)...

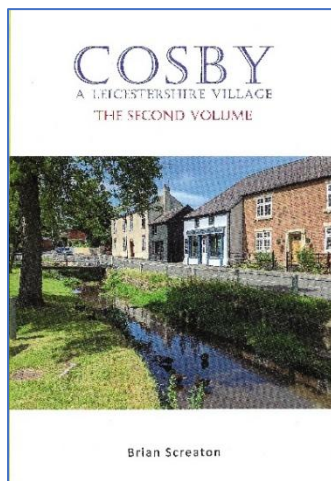
(Image courtesy of ULAS)

RECENT PUBLICATIONS

COSBY: A LEICESTERSHIRE VILLAGE – THE SECOND VOLUME

Brian Screaton

Independent Publishing Network, 2024, 272pp, illus, ISBN 9781836542650, £20



This second volume of the history of Cosby is even more extensive than the first. Among the many people who have contributed to it are the great-nephews of Thomas Foreman Hancock, who had recorded the history of Cosby over a long period of time through photographs, paintings and in writing. The book is dedicated to his memory and that of Anthony Squires, a resident of the village and ‘a prolific and meticulous local history author’.

The main chapter follows the format of the first volume in presenting an imaginary walk around Cosby in the past, one that works very well for the reader and could be used on the ground as a guide book. This begins in Croft Road, at the junction with The Nook and Broughton Road, with a photograph of Tom Arnold’s horse-drawn baker’s cart crossing the ford. It ends in Chapel Lane, encompassing

farms, businesses, places of worship, schools, inns and other leisure activities, and individual buildings of particular historic interest such as the Coaching House in Countesthorpe. Personal memories along the way add still more interest to the descriptive text.

Cosby’s first council housing, four terraces of six houses in Park Road built in the 1920s, is also recorded, along with The Settlement in Croft Road, part of a national scheme to provide ‘cottage homesteads’ under the government’s Land Settlement Scheme, which was formally opened in June 1938. The book then moves on to record the life and work of ‘a Leicestershire legend’, Alice Martha Walker, who founded the haulage business of A. M. Walker in the 1950s. The well-known company of Rice Trailers in Portland Street also has a chapter devoted to its history, including the production of camping trailers and a ‘folding caravan’ in which a sink could be easily converted into a table.

The main part of the book concludes with a profile of William Jones of Cosby, framework knitter, glove maker, Chartist, hymn writer and poet, driven not only by the injustices he encountered, but also by ‘an ardent desire... to elevate myself in the estimation of the wise and good, in whatever class of society they are found’. There is also an Appendix devoted to Cosby’s ‘Yards’, consisting of small cottages built in response to an expansion in population in the 19th century; and there is also an extensive list of sources. Like its predecessor, the book is lavishly illustrated, and continues the author’s imaginative approach towards the history of Cosby, offering an engaging and enjoyable experience in reading it.

Email brianscreaton@gmail.com about how to purchase a copy. A full review of the book will appear in the 2025 *Leicestershire Historian*.

IF YOU ARE NOT ALREADY A MEMBER OF LAHS - WHY NOT JOIN?

Membership of LAHS offers a wealth of benefits, including copies of our two annual publications, the *Leicestershire Historian* and the *Transactions of the Society*. You can join LAHS on our website at [Membership application - LAHS](#) by completing an online application, or printing off a paper copy to send to our Hon. LAHS Membership Secretary Gillian Rawlins, c/o LAHS, The Guildhall, Guildhall Lane, Leicester, LE1 5F.

A HISTORICAL FOOTNOTE

As International Women's Day (8 March) approaches, here are the views of Lady Florence Dixie of Bosworth Hall on the position of women in the *Leicester Chronicle*, 29 October 1892.

One of the papers prepared for the meetings of the Women's Emancipation Union at Birmingham was 'Woman's position: Social, Physical, and Political', by Lady Florence Dixie... The paper declared that woman's position was all wrong, that the one which she occupied was false to nature, and that in consequence terrible evils, misery inexpressible, had arisen therefrom. The separation of the sexes in mental training was false to nature. Girls and boys should be educated together, and natural truths taught in childhood. No breath of the superiority of one sex over the other should be allowed to taint the girls' and the boys' early years, as, hand in hand, they should study and play together, looking forward to life as affording the same openings and occupations and chances for both. Then they would grow up in happy companionship and go forth into the world independent and self-reliant...



As she (the authoress) had advocated equality of mental training, so she advocated equality of physical training. The neglect of girls and women in this respect was monstrous. Their muscular training and development were absolutely ignored, and their bodies were distorted out of shape and confined in a lifelong strait jacket by the absurd attire which was looked upon as feminine. Woman was physically the inferior of man, not naturally, but by an artificial process. It was time that the hideous health-destroying strait-jacket attire of woman should be abolished. (Applause.) In fact, it was high time that man as well as woman took thought to his attire, which was hideous past expression. (Laughter.) She did not ask woman to copy man's dress; it was far too ugly. Rather adopt some pretty and graceful attire such as worn by Rosalind in the forest scene, which both men and women could adopt, and look graceful therein.

As to woman's political position, it should be the same as man's, whether she be married or unmarried. The right to vote should at once be made over to woman, so long as she possessed the qualifications which gave the right of voting. Further, she should have the right to perform every political function which a man performed, provided always that she showed her qualifications for the posts in question. Why should not a cultivated and enlightened woman be a County Councillor, or an M.P., or a Cabinet Minister? The fact was that men did not want to doff the self-assumed halo of superiority which from infancy they had been taught to regard as their right divine. If women voted, sat in Parliament, and shared in the control of the State they would force social questions to the front and abolish the reign of humbug and schoolboy play.

(Image: Wikipedia)

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