

THE LEICESTERSHIRE
ARCHAEOLOGICAL & HISTORICAL SOCIETY
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NEWSLETTER 128 Autumn 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 2025 - 26

All lectures start at 7.30 pm. Venues to be confirmed. Free entry. No need to book.

Thursday 25 September 2025

Scarborough Lecture: the Medieval Jewish communities of the East Midlands

Dr Dean Irwin, University of Lincoln

This lecture will explore the Jewish presence in the East Midlands, which were home to several Jewish communities during the 12th and 13th centuries. It will consider what can be learned about the individual Jewish men and women who lived there, and the interactions that they had with their Christian neighbours. Dean Irwin is a Visiting Fellow at the University of Lincoln.

Thursday 16 October 2025

Edwardian Leicester

Cynthia Brown

The Edwardian period in Leicester was both eventful and formative for the future. This lecture will consider how issues such as poverty, poor health, substandard housing and long-term unemployment were addressed, and with what success. It will also explore the lighter side of Edwardian life in the town, from its theatres, music halls and cinemas, to the novelty of the 'Homecoming to Leicester' event in 1910, when around 300 'exiles' returned to the 'grand old town' from all over the world for a week of festivities.

Thursday 13 November 2025

Subject to be notified

Thursday 11 December 2025

The Beaumanor Coach and its restoration

Amy Bracey

The Beaumanor Coach was commissioned by the Herrick family of Beaumanor Hall in Woodhouse, Leicestershire, in 1740. Its importance as a commission at the time and as a rare survivor today has been recognised as being a highly significant object from Leicestershire Museum Collections and Leicestershire's history, and The Carriage Foundation's research has further enhanced our appreciation and understanding of this 'remarkable, rare and exceptional example of coach building from the first half of the eighteenth century'. The lecture examines the coach, its construction, and conservation by The Carriage Foundation.

Thursday 22 January 2026

30 Years of British comedy

Geoff Rowe, founder of the Leicester Comedy Festival

Geoff will talk about his experience of producing and promoting British comedy, including the development of Leicester Comedy Festival. He will also relate anecdotes about performers he has worked with, including Ken Dodd, Barry Cryer, Jo Brand - and more.

Thursday 12 February 2026, 7.30pm

LAHS Members' Evening

The annual LAHS Members' Evening provides an opportunity for members to present the results of their own research to the Society through a presentation of 15-20 minutes maximum with slides. If you would like to participate, please contact the Lecture Secretary at lectures@lahs.org.uk.

Thursday 12 March 2026

Alan and Joan North Memorial Lecture – Septimus Severus and Roman Leicester's links to North Africa

Dr Simon Elliott

Septimius Severus (145-211 AD) ruled the Roman Empire from 193 to 211. Born in Leptis Magna (modern-day Libya), he was the first emperor of African origin. He rose through the military ranks and seized power during a period of civil war, establishing the Severan dynasty. He is known for his military campaigns in Parthia and Britain, as well as his reforms to the empire's military and administration. Simon Elliott is the author of the biography *The African Emperor: the life of Septimius Severus*, on which this lecture will focus. The LAHS North Lecture is named after the late Alan and Joan North, long-standing members and supporters of the Society, who were particularly interested in the Roman Period.

Thursday 23 April 2026

Subject to be notified

Thursday 14 May 2026

Bronze Age metals and metalworking from Leicestershire

Dr Rachel Crellin

As part of the Leverhulme-funded 'New History of Bronze' project at the University of Leicester we have been studying the Bronze Age metalwork from Leicestershire. Our work has involved studying evidence for the production, use and destruction of these objects using metalwork wear-analysis as well as techniques such as 3D scanning, microXRF and X-ray analysis. In this talk the project will share results from our analyses of material from Leicestershire and contextualise them within the broader project. There will also be an opportunity to view pieces used for the study from Leicestershire Museums Collections.

ADVANCE NOTICE

Thursday 9 July 2026

LAHS Annual General Meeting

LAHS NEWS

NEWS FROM THE LIBRARY

Additions to the Library since the last report include:

BOOKS

FELDMANN, N. City trail 2024: an urban guided walk through Leicester. 2024. Donated by the author for the Leicestershire & Rutland Society of Architects.

HODGKINSON, B. ed. The Louth St. James churchwardens' accounts: 1527-1570. Lincoln Record Society Vol. 113 2025.

LEICESTERSHIRE BOOK SOCIETY Members' handbook. 2025. (incl. History, by D. Mitchell. 2023). Donated by S. Moran, Secretary, LBS

MITCHELL, D. Leicester Squash Club: the first seventy-five years. 2013. Donated by the author.

MITCHELL, D. & LOBO, F. Leicestershire Golf Club 1890-2025: abbreviated history. 2025. Donated by D. Mitchell.

MORRIS, M. & SCOTT, S. Exploring Roman Leicester: the story of the Jewry Wall Baths. 2024. Donated by P. Hackett, Jewry Wall, who gave us the interesting talk following the last AGM. The book includes references and acknowledgements to the Society.

ROWBOTTOM, J. Farms of Aylestone. 2025. Aylestone Journeys into the Past Vol. 6. (Vols. 1-5 are already in stock). Donated by the author, AJ Publications. rowbottomjoan@gmail.com.

PERIODICALS

Antiquaries Journal Vol 104 2024

Archaeologia Cantiana Vol 146 2025 (Kent Archaeological Society)

Derbyshire Archaeological Society Journal Vol 144 2024 Includes: The extent of navigation on the Trent and its tributaries before 1700.

English Place-Name Society Journal 55 2023; 56 2024

Hinckley Historian 95 Summer 2025. Donated by Hinckley & District Museum. See LAHS Newsletter Summer 2025 p.11

Journal of Historic Buildings & Places 4 2025

Leicestershire History 1 Summer 2025. LAHS archive copy only.

SPAB Magazine Spring 2025; Summer 2025-08-13

Thoroton Society (Notts.) Transactions 123 2019 – 128 2024. Vol 126 2022 includes : Noble and gentry responses to Elizabethan and early Stuart revenue collection in Notts and the East Midlands. Thanks to the efforts of Gillian Rawlins when Membership Secretary the file of this exchange journal is now up-to-date.

NEWSLETTERS

Current copies of the following are available on the Library table:

Essex Journal; Heritage Now; Lincoln Record Society News Review; Thoroton Society Newsletter.

Thanks to the recent History Fair there is also a sample copy of the Royal Archaeological Institute Newsletter, Spring 2025 . By coincidence it mentions Cheney Bursaries from the bequest of Frank S. Cheney, who before he moved to Suffolk was a member of LAHS and held the following offices: Hon. Sec. (Excursions) 1961/2-1963/4, Hon. Sec. (General) 1963/4-1964/5, Hon. Librarian 1964/5-1970/1.

We continue to receive catalogues of antiquarian books from local bookseller Cottage Books which contain an extensive range of material from Leicestershire and all parts of the country. Plenty of titles to fill your own bookshelves.

GLASS !

There has been interest over recent months in the graffiti to be seen scratched on the windows of the Library. I hasten to add that this is old and not the behaviour of Library users. An academic delivering a lecture on glass in the Guildhall spent some time photographing various details, some of which are back to front.

Aubrey Stevenson, Hon Librarian.

NEW LAHS OFFICERS

We are very pleased to tell you that the vacant roles of LAHS Website Officer and Blog Editor, and Lectures Secretary, have now been filled. Joe Hall will combine the website and blog roles with his editorship of the *Leicestershire Magazine*, and Rebecca Hale has now taken over as Lectures Secretary. We would like to thank them for volunteering, and are looking forward to working with them.

PUBLIC HERITAGE FUND

We have been pleased to award a grant to Social Gallery, a community interest company which aims to improve wellbeing and social connection through creative projects. Their work engages communities and individuals with shared experiences in social history projects, leading to the co-creation of exhibitions, films, books and events. Social Gallery will develop a podcast which focuses on individuals from the 1960s to



the 1990s who participated in Leicester's music, art and creative/cultural scenes. Hippies, teddy boys, mods, rockers, punks, casuals, skinheads, musicians and artists, to name but a few, all have a story to tell about Leicester's rich and varied cultural scene, and the aim is to capture those stories for future generations to learn from and enjoy before it is too late. The PHF has contributed funding towards podcasting equipment for the project. The unedited podcasts will be passed on to the East Midlands Oral History Archive, while the edited versions will be available via YouTube. The image (provided by Shaun Knapp) shows the Social Gallery directors, left to right, Joe Nixon, Christina Wigmore and Shaun Knapp, pictured at a previous project.

For more details of the LAHS Public Heritage Fund, including guidelines and an application form, see [Public Heritage Fund - LAHS](#).

GIVE A GIFT OF LEICESTERSHIRE HISTORY

If you struggle to find the right gift for a friend or relative who is interested in the history of Leicester and Leicestershire, you can now purchase a gift issue of the Society's *Leicestershire History* magazine. When you purchase this gift option you receive a copy of the latest issue, plus a unique Leicestershire-themed card and discount code offering the recipient 50% off the next issue, should they choose to subscribe. The gift arrives with you, the purchaser, in a normal envelope. Inside is a copy of the magazine, plus a card (and unsealed envelope) which contains information on how the recipient can get the discount. There is also room on the card to write a message of your own before presenting the gift. Please note that this gift bundle will be posted to the purchaser, not the recipient of the gift. The recipient will not gain access to the online version unless they take out a subscription. To find out more, visit www.leicestershirehistorymag.com and select the 'Gift an issue' option.

LAHS DISSERTATION PRIZES FOR LEICESTERSHIRE AND RUTLAND ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORY

LAHS awards four annual dissertation prizes for extended projects that focus on the Archaeology and/or History of Leicestershire and/or Rutland. There are two prizes for Archaeology, for the best Undergraduate (BA/BSc) and the best Post-Graduate (M-level) dissertations, and two prizes for History, one for Undergraduate and one for Postgraduate levels. The subject area includes comparative studies, where Leicestershire/Rutland is one of the main comparisons, and where examples from the counties are the majority of those used. It also includes art and design histories, and museum and heritage studies where the focus is on Leicestershire and/or Rutland.

The 2026 prizes are for dissertations written during the 2024-25 academic year. Dissertations should not previously have been published or be in publication. Each prize winner will be awarded £250 and the opportunity to publish some of their work in the *Leicestershire Historian*. The abstract will be published on the LAHS website. Guidelines and an application form, which should be submitted with a copy of the dissertation, are available at <https://lahs.org.uk/grants/dissertation-prizes>. **Please note that the deadline for 2026 prizes is 31 December 2025.** Enquiries should be directed to the convenor of the prize committee, Professor Elizabeth Tingle, at competitions@lahs.org.uk

OTHER NEWS

EAST MIDLANDS AIRPORT (EMA) – 60TH ANNIVERSARY

East Midlands Airport had its origins in the 1950s when the county councils of Leicestershire, Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire developed plans to finance and run a new airport near to where the M1 motorway was scheduled to be built. The former site of RAF Castle Donington, a World War II training base for the Pathfinder Force was selected, and officially opened by HRH the Duke of Edinburgh in July 1965. In its first year of operation as a commercial airport it recorded 114,888 passengers. Its terminal and runway have been greatly extended over the past decades, and now over 4 million passengers fly from the airport each year. It also operates an extensive cargo operation estimated to contribute around £1.6 billion to the national economy. The East Midlands Aeropark is also located at the airport. This has a collection of heritage aircraft, while viewing mounds also offer a good vantage point to see aircraft taking off and landing at EMA. For further information about the history of the airport, see [Our history | East Midlands Airport](#).

GEORGE VILLIERS STUDY DAY - MELTON CARNEGIE MUSEUM

Thursday 18 September 2025, 12.30 – 6.30 PM



A day 'dedicated to all things Villiers' will bring together five leading authors and academics to discuss the eventful life, looks and portraiture of the 1st Duke of Buckingham. There will also be a visit to the birthplace of Villiers, Brooksby Hall and Church at the end of the day. The speakers are Lucy Hughes-Hallett, author of *The Scapegoat: the brilliant brief life of*

the Duke of Buckingham; Professor Maria Hayward, who will look at how George Villiers used clothes to promote himself at the court of James VI and I; Karen Hearn FSA, Honorary Professor, University College London, on the early images of George Villiers; art historian Dr Megan Shaw; and Jon Sleigh, learning curator and author, who co-curated the *Villiers Revealed* exhibition at the museum. For the programme and further details, including coach transfers and booking, telephone Melton Carnegie Museum on 0116 3053860, or email meltonmuseum@leics.gov.uk.

MARY LINWOOD: ART, STITCH AND LIFE - LEICESTER CITY MUSEUMS

A retrospective of the life and work of the Leicester textile artist Mary Linwood will open in September at New Walk Museum and Art Gallery. Mary Linwood was a celebrity artist in the early 1800s, but has since been largely forgotten. She created detailed embroidered versions of famous British paintings using a technique known as needle painting. Alongside running a successful school for young ladies in Leicester, she exhibited her embroidered works in touring exhibitions and established the first gallery in London to be run by a woman. In her lifetime she was supported by the wealthy and powerful, and was widely respected and well known. Since her death, however, she has been overlooked and undervalued. This exhibition is the first retrospective of Mary Linwood's work since 1945, featuring 14 embroidered works from the Leicester Museums collections. Alongside these historic pieces there will be new textile artworks by Ruth Singer, reflecting on Mary's life and legacy. The exhibition runs until 22 February 2026. Entry is free, and there is also a programme of related events. See [Event Details – Leicester Museums](#) for more information.

THE HISTORY, PRESENT AND FUTURE OF PUBLIC HEALTH IN LEICESTER CITY

In his annual report for 2024-2025, Leicester's Director of Public Health Rob Howard uses records from the city council's archives to highlight how issues faced by the public health pioneers of the past – such as vaccine resistance, housing quality, fuel poverty and inequality – remain challenges today. The report can be downloaded from [The History, Present and Future of Public Health in Leicester City](#).

ROMAN LEICESTER WALKING TRAIL

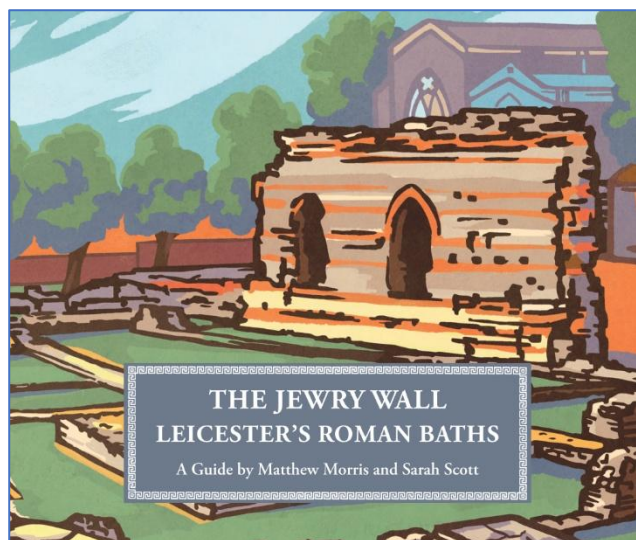
The Friends of Jewry Wall have produced a walking trail of Roman Leicester, starting and finishing at Jewry Wall Museum, and taking in such sites as the West, South and East Gates, the Fosse Way, and the Roman market or macellum. Also included are some sites further afield, including Vine Street courtyard house, the Raw Dykes, and several Roman cemeteries. The trail can be downloaded at [Layout 1](#).

ARCHAEOLOGY

THE JEWRY WALL: LEICESTER'S ROMAN BATHS – A GUIDE BY MATHEW MORRIS AND SARAH SCOTT

The stories behind Leicester's rich Roman heritage have been compiled into a book by University of Leicester archaeologists to mark the reopening of the city's Jewry Wall Museum.

The content at the St Nicholas Circle attraction has been developed with the help of the University, which has shared its expertise on everything from Roman hairstyles and clothing to language and religion – ensuring the displays are both entertaining and educational. Mathew Morris, project officer at University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS), has been digging up and researching Roman Leicester for the past 20 years, and has been an adviser to the Jewry



Wall Museum project, along with his University colleague Sarah Scott, Professor of Archaeology. As director of the University's Heritage Hub, Sarah also helped the museum designers to access University research expertise on a wide range of subjects.

The book tells the story of the Roman public baths which are located on the site, including the iconic Jewry Wall, which is the most visible evidence of Leicester's past as a regional capital of Roman Britain. Mathew said: 'What stands out for me is that, remarkably, the Jewry Wall is still here. It had a lot of close shaves, going all the way back to the 17th century where records show it was threatened a few times with demolition by various parties; then people saved it because of its antiquity. Ironically, the town's authorities wanted to build a swimming bath on the site in the 1930s, which led to the site's excavation and the discovery of a monument they decided to preserve as a heritage attraction'.

Professor Scott said: 'In the eighteenth-century people were concerned that children playing in the churchyard and climbing on the wall might cause damage. It was threatened again in the 1890s when plans were made for a new railway station in Leicester. Local people and organisations campaigned to save Jewry Wall, and it was the vicar of St Nicholas Church who saved the day. What is striking for me, is the curiosity and drive of the people of Leicester across the centuries who have campaigned to preserve, document and celebrate the Jewry Wall, and understand its significance'. Mathew agrees. He said: 'That comes out all the way through, it's the people's wall, because it's the authorities that always seemed to want to demolish it and it's the people who stood up and saved it. It's such an important site. The wall is the largest piece of Roman public architecture still standing in Britain, and Dame Kathleen Kenyon's excavation of the site in the 1930s was groundbreaking, creating a precedent for archaeological exploration which today makes Leicester one of the most excavated cities in Britain'. The book was funded by a Heritage Fund award secured by the Friends of The Jewry Wall Museum with additional support from the University of Leicester. It is available to buy in the Jewry Wall Museum giftshop, price £9.99.

Extracted with permission from [University of Leicester archaeologists explore city's Roman past | News | University of Leicester](#).

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

ARCHITECTURAL FASHION VS COMMON SENSE: THE 19TH CENTURY BATTLE OF STYLES AND ITS LEGACY FOR TODAY – A ONE DAY SYMPOSIUM

**27 September 2025, Rutland County Museum,
Oakham, 10 am – 3.30 pm, £25**

The symposium will explore the 19th-century battle of architectural styles and its lasting impact on today's designs. Organised by the Petit Society, it will delve into the work of Rev John Louis Petit, a prominent critic of the Gothic revival and advocate for architectural originality and preservation. It will feature three keynote lectures and contributions from both academic and local historians. Scan the QR code on the flyer, or visit [Architectural Fashion vs Common Sense - The 19th Century Battle of Styles and its Legacy for Today - Rutland County Museum \(Oakham\) - Lincoln Diocese](#) for details of speakers and how to register.

FRIENDS OF JEWRY WALL MUSEUM, LEICESTER

The Friends of Jewry Wall Museum are offering a series of historically themed events at St Nicholas Church on the last Sunday of the month over the summer, 11 am – 3.30 pm. The church is next to the Jewry Wall site at 140 – 156 St Nicholas Walk, LE1 4LB.

28 September 2025

Artefacts through time: helmets, swords, pottery and more

26 October 2025 (Heritage Sunday)

Blood, gore and folklore

FRIENDS OF THE RECORD OFFICE

Saturday 13 September 2025, 10 am, Record Office, Long Street, Wigston, LE18 2AH
Charles Loraine Smith, Squire of Enderby Hall and his Leicestershire contemporaries
Members and non-members welcome.

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY

Sunday 2 October 2025, Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate, LE1 1WB, 6.30 pm
Voices from the past

Colin Hyde, East Midlands Oral History Society (EMOHA)

Colin will present a selection of oral history recordings from the archive. Further details will be available nearer the time at [Programme Leaflets: Leicester Secular Society](#).

Architectural Fashion vs Common Sense - the 19th Century Battle of Styles and its Legacy for Today

A one-day Symposium at the Rutland County Museum, Oakham, September 27th, 2025

Organised in association with an Exhibition of the East Midlands paintings of the clergyman, artist and architectural writer, Rev. John Louis Petit, a leading critic of the 19th century gothic revival.

The cost will be £25 which includes lunch. Scan the QR code for programme and booking details.



This symposium will consider the gothic controversies particularly in the East Midlands, with keynote talks on Petit's role in the development of church architecture in the 19th century, and the arguments surrounding the gothic controversy, with shorter presentations focused on particular churches and communities – the Round Church in Cambridge; St. Mary's, Wymeswold; Holy Sepulchre, Northampton; All Saints Oakham; and Fowler of Louth.

LEICESTER CIVIC SOCIETY – GUIDED WALKS
Saturday 13 September 2025, 10.30 am – 12.30 pm; £5 members; £7 non-members
Deco, Neo and Moderne –

Leicester's Surprisingly Rich Building Heritage
Starting from Nelson Street, this walk will go along Charles Street and on to Belgrave Gate, taking in some of the 20th century buildings along these two important Leicester thoroughfares. It will be led by Mike Taylor, conservation specialist and urban historian.

Wednesday 17 September 2025, 11 am – 1 pm, free walk as part of Heritage Open Days
Humberstone Road and Humberstone Gate

A walking tour covering these iconic 'streets', from Leicester's tallest building, coffee, a popular vending machine, a 'hole in the wall' and much more. The talk will be led by James Gunn, starting and ending near the Rothera Bray Solicitors on Humberstone Road.

Saturday 20 September 2025, 11 am – 1 pm, free walk as part of Heritage Open Days
Leicester's Cultural Quarter

A walking tour of Leicester's Cultural Quarter taking in the social, building, street art and economic history of this area. The walk will be led by James Gunn, and start and finish outside Curve. Details of this and the other walks at [All Events - Leicester Civic Society](#). Advance booking essential.

LEICESTERSHIRE HISTORIC CHURCHES DAY TOUR - Saturday 18 October, 10 am – 4.30 pm
Following the Old Dissent into the nineteenth century

Professor Peter Ackers

The tour will take participants to three important Nonconformist chapels in West Leicestershire: Hinckley Great Meeting chapel, Barton in the Beans chapel, and Bardon Park chapel. £12 per person. For more details, see [Annual Tour - Saturday 18 October, 10 for 10.30 | Our Events | Leicestershire Historic Churches Trust - Providing grants & advice to Leicestershire Churches & Chapels since 1964](#). To book, please contact Professor Elizabeth Tingle, elizabethtingle@dmu.ac.uk.

LEICESTERSHIRE AND RUTLAND AT RISK WAR MEMORIALS – HERITAGE OPEN DAYS
Saturday 13 September, 10 am – 6 pm; Sunday 14 September 2025, 11 am – 4 pm
The Chancel, Rear of All Saints Church, Highcross Street, Leicester, LE1 4PH

As part of the national Heritage Open Days festival, which takes place every September, members of the public are invited to come along and view the war memorials and other items of remembrance we have rescued and/or restored and have been unable to relocate or rehome. Heritage Open Days follow the same format as our regular Open Days. For further information, see www.atriskwarmemorials.co.uk.

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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LEICESTERSHIRE AND RUTLAND FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY – LEICESTER GROUP

Doors open 7 pm for 7.30 pm start. For further details of these and meetings of LRFHS branches in Hinckley, Loughborough, Market Harborough and Oakham, see [LRFHS - Meetings](#).

10 September 2025, Friends Meeting House, Queen's Road, Leicester, LE2 1WP

Crime and punishment at Welford Road Cemetery

Chris Powis

8 October 2025, Oadby Granville Tennis Club, Leicester Road, Oadby, LE2 4AB

The history of Leicester Prison

Richard Foster

12 November 2025, Oadby Granville Tennis Club, Leicester Road, Oadby, LE2 4AB

Researching a war memorial

Jan Bryars and Sue Lester

RICHARD III SOCIETY

Richard III Visitor Centre, 4A St Martins, LE1 5DB, 7 pm

Thursday 18 September 2025, 7 pm

Outlaws in the Midlands

Gareth King

This talk will include a look at the early 14th century 'Folville gang', led by Eustace Folville, from Ashby Folville, Leicestershire. Free to members; non-members are welcome for a donation of £3.

Thursday 16 October 2025

The Battle of Stoke Field

Kevin Winter, Battlefields Trust

The talk will examine the details of this battle, fought on 16 June 1487 and the last in the Wars of the Roses. It is hoped to include results from stable isotope analysis, giving more information on human remains found on the site.

SERENDIPITY INSTITUTE FOR BLACK ARTS AND HERITAGE

8 Bowling Green Street, Leicester, LE1 6AT

Wednesday 17 September 2025, 10 am – 3 pm, free

Heritage Open Day

Serendipity Institute for Black Arts and Heritage proudly marks its first year at 8 Bowling Green Street, a Grade II listed building in Leicester city centre, by celebrating the building's 160th anniversary. As the current custodians of this historic site, the Serendipity team has researched its fascinating history and the vital role it has played in Leicester since 1865. There will be an opportunity to learn about 8 Bowling Green Street at our talks at 10am – 12pm and 3pm – 5pm. The event is free but pre-booking is required, See [Heritage Open Day – Serendipity Institute for Black Arts and Heritage](#).

RECENT PUBLICATIONS

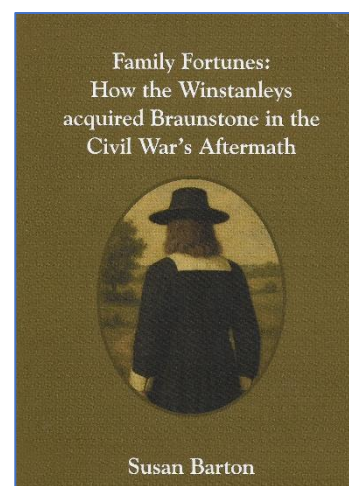
FAMILY FORTUNES: HOW THE WINSTANLEYS ACQUIRED BRAUNSTONE IN THE CIVIL WAR'S AFTERMATH

Susan Barton

The author, 2025, 66pp. illus, £10

This book is something of a departure from Susan Barton's usual focus on modern social history – one that she puts down to curiosity about how a London lawyer born in Lancashire became Lord of the Manor of Braunstone in 1650. The simple answer is that James Winstanley, a Grey's Inn lawyer, purchased the manor house and estates for £6000 from the family of Sir Henry Hastings in the aftermath of the Civil War - but as the book sets out in some detail, this was 'no straightforward transaction' in the context of such a violent and divisive conflict. Nor does it explain in itself how a 275-year association of the Winstanley family with the manor and estates of Braunstone came to be established by a man with no apparent local connections.

As the title suggests, the experiences of the Winstanleys also shed much light on the impact of the Civil War at local level in the county, both in its immediate aftermath and the subsequent challenges posed during the Interregnum and the Restoration of the monarchy. They retained their position as lords of the manor of Braunstone until the compulsory purchase of Braunstone Hall and the land for municipal housing in 1925, and their connection continues to be acknowledged in the naming of the former Braunstone Hall, built in 1776, as Winstanley House. This invaluable account of their fortunes and the 'momentous national event' that shaped them is based on meticulous research into a range of historical sources, and we can only be grateful for the initial curiosity that led to them, and for sharing what Susan Barton found about this complex but resilient family.



FINDING TROY: A ROMAN MYSTERY IN THE HEART OF ENGLAND

Jim Irvine

Irvine Works, 2025, 110pp, illus, ISBN 9781036931391, £8.99
paperback; £4.99 Kindle

Jim Irvine recounts how a chance encounter with a bee swarm during a family walk in the summer of 2020 led to 'one of the most extraordinary archaeological discoveries in recent British history' – the Rutland Roman mosaic, depicting Achilles and his battle with Hector at the conclusion of the Trojan War. It begins with a lockdown picnic and his daughters collecting fragments of pottery and oyster shells, and his subsequent use of satellite imagery, crop mark analysis, and historical maps to piece together the mystery beneath his family's farmland. He goes on to describe a 'whirlwind of events': a trench dug by hand revealing a vibrant Roman mosaic; excavations by archaeologists from the University of Leicester; and the BBC's *Digging for Britain* filming of the unfolding story. He also reflects on the personal impact of the discovery, and the friendships he made along the way. For more information, visit <https://amzn.eu/d/5jqiyg4>.

A HISTORICAL FOOTNOTE

LAHS celebrates its 170th anniversary this year. Here are a few of the highlights of its existence since it was founded in 1855 as the Leicestershire Architectural and Archaeological Society (LAAS). You can find much more in Bob Rutland's 150th anniversary publication *The Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society 1855 – 2005*.

1855 The formation of the Society was recorded in the *Leicester Chronicle* (13 January 1855) as placing Leicestershire 'on a level with those adjoining in regard to architecture and archaeology; and we trust the meetings of the society will promote a right feeling concerning the preservation of antiquities, and be the means of diffusing information and instruction on questions which engage the attention of persons of education, and, indeed, of all who value a knowledge of the Past'.

1856 The Society's first recorded excursion, to Melton Mowbray.

1895 The LAAS Library was established in the Old Town Hall (The Guildhall).

1906 The first recorded presentation at a meeting by a woman, Mrs Biddle, who exhibited some coins.

1913 LAAS donated £10 towards the campaign to save the Chantry House, now part of Newarke Houses Museum.

1914 Outbreak of World War I. LAAS expressed 'profound regret of the destruction of the priceless buildings and archaeological treasures that have been so wantonly destroyed in Belgium & northern France'

1920 Change of name to Leicestershire Archaeological Society (LAS)

1923 The first female committee members are recorded.

1931 Grant of 10 guineas (£10 10s) for restoration work at St Mary de Castro church.

1939 Reduction in lectures and other activities for the duration of World War II, due to the blackout and transport restrictions.

1947 LAS campaign for the protection of the church and Iron Age hillfort at Breedon-on-the-Hill, excavated by Kathleen Kenyon, who had led the Jewry Wall excavations.

1949 First female officers of LAS elected: Mrs F.E. Skillington as Excursions Secretary, and Miss R Bennett as Hon Librarian.

1955 Name changed to Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society (LAHS). Publication of a centenary history, *The Leicestershire Archaeological Society 1855 – 1955*.

1957 Mrs F.E. Skillington elected as the first female chair of the Society.

1965 Historic Buildings Panel formed, a sub-group of the committee. Its first work was to submit a list of buildings for consideration for listing.

1997 LAHS took over the production of the *Leicestershire Historian*.

2005 150th anniversary of the Society. Publication by R. Rutland of *The Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society 1855 – 2005*.

2007 Development of LAHS website.

2020 Online lectures introduced in response to restrictions on social activities during Covid pandemic.

2025 170th anniversary of LAHS. History Fair at Oakham castle and Rutland County Museum.

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.