

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



NEWSLETTER 130 Spring 2026

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 and are held in the Clephan Building, 0.01, De Montfort University, unless otherwise notified. There is a link to car parking details under each lecture on the LAHS website. Entry to the lecture is free and there is no need to book.

Thursday 23 April 2026

Axeheads and outcrops: finding the source of Group XX Neolithic stone axeheads in Charnwood Forest

Dr Jonny Graham

Since its identification over 65 years ago, the source of Neolithic axeheads from petrological Group XX has been a matter of conjecture, with archaeologists determining that it was located somewhere within Charnwood Forest. Recently, I and two colleagues from the Implement Petrology Group utilised portable X-Ray Fluorescence (pXRF) to match the geochemistry of axeheads held in museum collections with outcrops throughout the Charnwood landscape as a means of finding a potential source. In this paper, I will discuss the history of research into Group XX and outline what the findings of our project mean for these Leicestershire axeheads and their origin. Leicestershire Museums will be bringing stone axes linked to the talk for viewing.

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. This talk 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

The Library reopened after the regular winter closure on 1 February and will be open as usual on the first and third Sundays of each month from 2 – 4 pm until the end of October, with one exception - 5 April which is Easter Day.

ADDITIONS TO STOCK

New publications continue to be acquired by donation, purchase, and exchange. Those listed were all published in 2025 unless otherwise indicated. As always the Society is grateful to those kind enough to donate items.

BOOKS AND PAMPHLETS

BARTON, S. Family fortunes: how the Winstanleys acquired Braunstone in the Civil War's aftermath.

HOSKIN, P. & DRYBURGH, P. eds. Land and God: the city, county and diocese of Lincoln over nine centuries: essays in honour of Nicholas Bennett. Lincoln Record Society Vol. 114. This includes "Robert Grosseteste's letter collection" (Grosseteste was Archdeacon of Leicester and prebendary of St. Margaret's before becoming Bishop of Lincoln); "Lost rolls of Bishop Sutton (1280-99) including the Archdeacons of Leicester".

IRVINE, J. Finding Troy: a Roman mystery in the heart of England. By the discoverer in 2020 of the Roman mosaic in Rutland. This can be purchased from Amazon, £8.99.

NEW DISHLEY SOCIETY Robert Bakewell: Britain's foremost livestock breeder. Donated by the Society.

NEWITT, N. Housing the people of Leicester: a history of social housing 1900 – 2000. Leicester Pioneer Press, £19.95. Donated by the author and publisher and Vice-President, L.A.H.S..

TANNER, M. Hanged on Leicester's gallows. This is an expanded version of "Crime and Murder in Victorian Leicestershire", 1981.

TOLTON, J. The Freeman of Leicester : a short history. £20. Donated by Leicester Freeman's Deputies. See www.leicesterfreemen.co.uk.

PERIODICALS

Essex Society for Archaeology and History Transactions. 14. 2023.

Harborough Historian. 42. Donated by the Editor, Market Harborough Historical Society. As well as articles on Market Harborough there are others on two iconic Leicester libraries, Hallaton, Kibworth, Leicestershire protest marches, and a Gaulby clockmaker.

Hinckley Historian. 96. Donated by Hinckley Museum.

Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society Transactions. 98. 2024.

Leicestershire Historian. 61.

Leicestershire History. 1, 2. These are archive copies, not for loan.

Leicestershire VCH News. Autumn 2025. Includes an article on Nanpantan, information on the forthcoming book by Pam Fisher "Loughborough since 1750", Charnwood Forest enclosure award 1829. There is the opportunity to join the Leicestershire VCH Trust's 200 Club. VCH is Victoria County History.

Rutland Record. 45. Donated by the Editor. There is an obituary of Edward Baines, who members may know from his Rutland Bookshop in Uppingham' Civil War in North Luffenham; tailors in Uppingham.

SPAB Magazine. Autumn 2025, Winter 2025. SPAB is the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings, owner of the windmill in Kibworth.

NEWSLETTERS, etc. Current copies only on Library table.

Essex Journal reports that there is free online access to its publications at <https://www.esah1852.org.uk/publications>

Heritage Now reports that St. Margaret's Works have met a "rather tragic end for an important part of Leicester's industrial past".

Lincoln Record Society News Review. 24. and Trustees' Report.

Thoroton Society Newsletter (Notts.).

Worcestershire Recorder.

Cottage Books catalogues.

ROYAL ARCHAEOLOGICAL INSTITUTE

Seeing the Institute's stand at the History Fair in Oakham last year prompted me to search the Library's file of Archaeological Journal, 1844-2017, which revealed that the annual summer meetings had been held in Leicester in 1870, 1933, 1955, 2003. There are extensive reports of 3 of these with much information on Leicester and numerous locations visited on excursions.

Vol. 27 p.325-350, Vol. 90 p.358-407, Vol.112 p.150-194.

AN ENQUIRY

Having received an enquiry that could not be answered satisfactorily I should be pleased to hear if the 2 questions relating to Anstey can be verified.

- The village was the sight of the last wolf to be killed in England.
- When Bonnie Prince Charlie and his followers reached Derby some actually came further south to the green in the village foraging.

Documentary evidence would be welcome which I could forward to the enquirer.

Aubrey Stevenson. Hon. Librarian.

PUBLIC HERITAGE FUND - COMEDY FESTIVAL ARCHIVE UPDATE

'We have now catalogued and preserved over 1,000 images from the collection. These are all labelled with the performers, year and venue and will be available as part of the De Montfort University (DMU) collection of Leicester Comedy Festival items. We think this is one of the largest collections that exists of live comedy performance since 1994, and it will eventually be publicly available online via DMU. For almost two years volunteers have gone through the digital images we have collected, labelling each, researching the performers, and other information to ensure accuracy.

'We have also formed a loose consortium with Brunel University, University of Kent and DMU, and applied to HLF before Christmas for funding to expand the Leicester project nationally. We would work with Leicester Comedy Festival's archive and that from the Frog & Bucket Comedy Club in Manchester (one of the UK's leading comedy venues). If our bid is successful, this project will last three years, with the capacity for public events across the UK, and we will end up with a significant collection of images documenting live comedy performance'.



Tony Slattery and Gary Delaney
backstage at Curve in 2020.
(Credit: Alex Leam)

LAHS MEMBERS' SURVEY – THE RESULTS

Thank you to everyone who completed the LAHS Members' Survey questionnaire. We had 93 responses, and the Committee will follow up the many useful suggestions and comments over the next few months. For now, the headlines are as follows.

LECTURES AND THEIR ORGANISATION

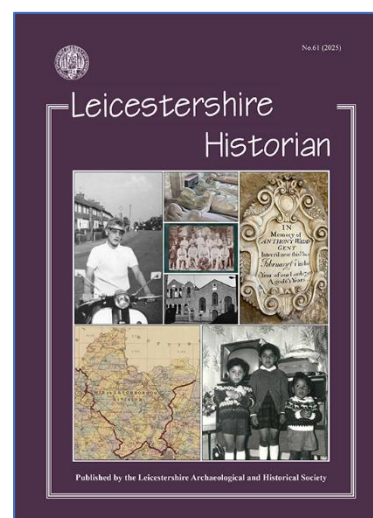
Over 80 per cent of members who responded to the questionnaire would like to have online lectures, either online only or a mix of online and in person talks. As a result, from next year, we will move to a mix of in-person talks - the Scarborough Lecture in September, the North lecture in March and the AGM in the summer – and online talks across the winter. We will have the in-person talks in venues with parking available as close as possible. We will also offer refreshments. Many of our respondents commented that they would like an opportunity to socialise before or after the lecture. With the winter online talks series, we hope to improve accessibility to the talks for those members who cannot or do not want to travel to Leicester on dark nights. We will begin the series in October 2026, and the links to Zoom will be sent out to members by email a few days before each talk. We will explore the possibility of recording the talks, to be hosted on YouTube.

HISTORY FAIR

Most of our respondents have attended and enjoyed a History Fair. We hold these events every two years, and the next one will be in the summer of 2027.

PUBLICATIONS

In terms of the LAHS publications that LAHS like most, the reasons given varied, but the *Leicestershire Historian* came out in front (just!) with *Transactions* very close behind. The committee is resolved to continue with these publications, but we still need an experienced editor to work on the *Leicestershire Historian*. Please contact Elizabeth.tingle@dmu.ac.uk if you might be interested in taking on this role. Most respondents have read the website blogs, and we encourage you to continue to send in contributions. There was also some interest in a digital only subscription to LAHS, which the committee will explore.



COMMUNICATIONS

Everyone praised the newsletters and email updates, which are the main sources of information for members. Many people also use the website. This will continue. Social media is used less. Facebook is the most familiar to members, with the other social media platforms less popular. However, they are useful sources of information, so in case you would like to try them out, the links are here:

Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/leicsarchandhistsoc>

Instagram

https://www.instagram.com/leics_arch_hist_soc / https://www.instagram.com/leics_arch_hist_soc

X/Twitter <https://x.com/LeicsArchHisSoc>

Bluesky <https://bsky.app/profile/leicsarchhissoc.bsky.social>



LAHS LIBRARY AT THE GUILDHALL, LEICESTER

For some time, the committee has been concerned that the LAHS Library at The Guildhall is underused. The librarian works hard to ensure the resources are organised and up to date, and is keen to increase its use. Of those who responded to the survey, just over 10 per cent had used the Library at some point, but most had

never visited. There were many reasons for this, including distance, opening times, and knowledge about the collections. Promoting the Library resources and holding events in the lovely space of the Jury Room will be a priority for discussion going forward.

GRANTS AND PRIZES

Many members have not applied for grants or prizes, so we encourage you to check them out on the website, just in case, or pass on the information to people or groups that might be interested in applying. In terms of new ventures, most respondents were not interested in competitions, apart from a small number in essay or photographic competitions. The committee will take this forward for further discussion.

OTHER SUGGESTIONS

There were many other detailed and thoughtful suggestions about activities for LAHS members - too many to list here - but there were some recurring themes. These included:

- more activities for younger people, schoolchildren, and young adults
- field trips for members
- conferences and workshops
- county-based activities in partnership with other groups and societies
- more opportunities for socialising with members

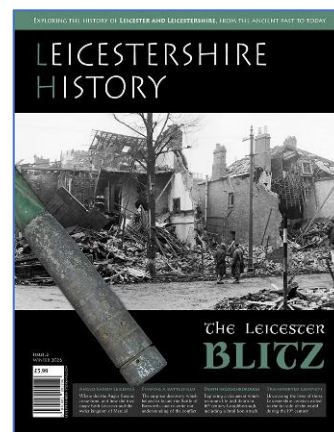
We would really like to be able to offer more, and more varied, activities for members, but for this we need volunteers. So, if you have a particular interest that you would like to take forward for the society – run a field trip in your area, for example, hold a workshop on a subject of historical, archaeological or heritage interest – then please get in touch.

Thank you again to everyone who completed the questionnaire. Its results will be valuable in shaping our future activities – but feedback is not just a one-off event. We hope it will be ongoing, so please do continue to share your thoughts and suggestions at any time.

Elizabeth Tingle, Chair of LAHS.

LEICESTERSHIRE HISTORY MAGAZINE

Members of LAHS will have been sent a link to the online version of Issue 2 of the *Leicestershire History* magazine. As the online version is viewable only in your web browser, we suggest you save the link to your favourites so you can easily find it in future. The online version is not downloadable. Those would like to sign up to the print version can do so by visiting the [magazine website here](#) and subscribing to one of our 'print and online' options. The online version of issue 1 is also [still available here](#).



OTHER NEWS

ADA LOVELACE STATUE IN HINCKLEY



A statue of the 19th century mathematician and pioneer of computing, Ada Lovelace, has been installed in Hinckley, near her childhood home at Kirkby Mallory Hall. The daughter of the poet Lord Byron and mathematician Annabella Milbanke, she worked closely with inventor Charles Babbage on his idea for an 'analytical engine' – although this was never built due to a lack of funds. The campaign for the statue, a replica of one in London, was led by the Ada Lovelace in Hinckley Community Interest Company, and its £100,000 cost was paid for by donations and fundraising. It has been placed outside the Hinckley campus of the North Warwickshire and South Leicestershire College, where it is hoped that it will inspire girls and young women to study science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. There is more information

about the statue at [Statue of computing pioneer Ada Lovelace installed in Hinckley - BBC News](#), and about Ada Lovelace herself at [Ada Lovelace: Opium, maths and the Victorian programmer - BBC News](#). Image: Wikipedia.

LEICESTER CITY MUSEUMS

The 'You Are Here' exhibition tells the story of the evolution of Leicester Museum & Art Gallery over the past 176 years. It explores the story of the New Walk Area, the Museum itself, and its collections from its very origins to the present day and beyond. It has been co-produced with Museum Service volunteers, including those working with the Museum's archive, and brings together objects, photographs and research to reveal this ongoing story. Entry is free, and the exhibition runs until 31 December 2026.

Abbey Pumping Station will be hosting an Easter holiday event on Tuesday 7 April 2026 from 11:30 am – 4 pm. This will include a chance to ride on the diesel driven Narrow Gauge Railway, which will be running for just £1 per ride on the day. Pay by cash at the station or by card at reception/café. Entry to the museum and grounds is free. Please note that all children must be accompanied by an adult on the diesel driven train rides. Further details at [Event Details – Leicester Museums](#). If visitors require any assistance, please speak to a member of staff.

ARCHAEOLOGY

ULAS REFLECTIONS ON 2025

Here are some of the highlights of ULAS activities during 2025, reproduced with permission. There are more reflections on the past year at [Digging Into 2025: A Year of Discovery, Innovation, and Celebration at ULAS – ULAS News](#).

COSSINGTON: LIFE AROUND THE POND



At Humble Lane, Cossington, our team battled mud and winter floods to uncover a multi-period landscape. From Neolithic flints to Iron Age pit alignments and Roman livestock pens, the site tells a story of adaptation and continuity. A central pond, still functional after 2,000

years, hints at its role in farming and perhaps ritual practices. Environmental samples promise to reveal even more about ancient diets and land use.

WANLIP: WHERE SAXONS MEET ROMANS

After nearly 11 months of fieldwork, work for the redevelopment of the Wanlip Sewage Treatment Works has revealed a tapestry of human history and water management. Anglo-Saxon sunken-featured buildings (SFBs) dotted the crest of the hill, while Roman enclosures sprawled across its southern slopes. The site surprised us with waterlogged pits preserving wooden artefacts—a rare Saxon shovel fragment, a wooden bowl, and even a leather shoe. These finds offer a glimpse into everyday life 1,500 years ago and will keep our specialists busy well into 2026.

EXCAVATING THE GAINSBOROUGH CHAMBER AT LEICESTER MARKET

Few projects captured public imagination like Leicester Market. Beneath the bustling heart of the city, our team uncovered Roman domestic housing, medieval market surfaces, and dozens of post-holes marking former market stalls. The star of the show? The Gainsborough Chamber—a civic building first recorded in 1533, complete with a subterranean room once described as “a most vile prison.” This discovery made both national and international headlines, reminding us all that archaeology isn’t just about the past — it’s about the stories that connect us to it.



FORTHCOMING EVENTS

All details are correct at the time of writing. Please check nearer the dates.

ABBEY PUMPING STATION, LEICESTER, LE4 5PX

Saturday 28 March 2026, every half hour from 11 am – 3 pm

Steam with the Team - Guided Tour

A rare opportunity to descend into the depths of the hidden workings of the massive steam engine, taking you to normally inaccessible areas. Tours will last approximately one hour and can accommodate 20 visitors. They are not suitable for children under 10. For more details and bookings - [Event Details – Leicester Museums](#).

GREATER WIGSTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Meetings are held at the Little Hill Primary School, Launceston Road, Wigston, LE18 2GZ, at 7.15 pm (doors open 6.45 pm). Free admission to members; non-members £4. Any enquiries – secretary@wigstonhistoricalsociety.co.uk.

Tuesday 17 March 2026 – preceded by AGM

Arming a Knight

Jedd Jaggard

Tuesday 21 April 2026

Husbands Bosworth Settlement Camp

Bozena Kuncewicz

LEICESTER CATHEDRAL - RICHARD III

ANNIVERSARY EVENTS

Booking through Eventbrite at [Richard III Week: In the Presence of a King | Leicester Cathedral](#).

Monday 16 March, 7 pm

The Princes in the Tower

Matthew Lewis

Rather than consider who might have murdered the Princes in the Tower in 1483, Matt Lewis asks if they were they murdered at all?

Wednesday 18 March, 7pm

1 King, 2 Princes, and Shakespeare's Lie

In this one-man performance, Richard returns to confront the myths, the lies and the Shakespearean legend that made him infamous.

Thursday 19 March 2026, 7 pm

Excavating and analysing the King in the Carpark

Jo Appleby

This talk sets out the events of the excavation of the remains of Richard III and their subsequent analysis.

RURAL LIFE PAST AND PRESENT

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

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LEICESTER CIVIC SOCIETY – GUIDED WALKS

Saturday 18 April 2026, 10.30 am – 12.30 pm, starting from the gates of Prebend Gardens, Prebend Street, off London Road, LE2 0JA

South Highfields

Discover more about the streets of South Highfields, including stories of some of the past residents, the oldest Indian restaurant in Leicester, the Leicester Blitz and some personal memories of our walk guide who previously lived in the area. The walk will be led by James Gunn and finish back near Prebend Gardens.

The Civic Society is currently planning a new series of walks for 2026. These will include a tour around the city of Derby, a Wigston walks, many new walks around Leicester, and ‘something a little different’, to be disclosed later! Details of will appear at [All Events - Leicester Civic Society](#). Advance booking essential.

LEICESTER VAUGHAN COLLEGE – MARCH FORUM

Thursday 26 March, 6.15 – 7.45 pm, venue to be confirmed

Promoting Leicester – a city of history and progress

Dr Sally Ann Hartshorne

This forum will consider how the balance of the history and progress of Leicester has been promoted to visitors and residents since the council established its Publicity and Development Committee in the 1930s. Everyone welcome, but to help with catering numbers (tea and cake) please book your free ticket at [March Forum: Promoting Leicester - A City of History and Progress - Leicester Vaughan College](#).

LEICESTER VICTORIAN SOCIETY

Friends Meeting House, Queens Road, Leicester, LE2 1WP, 7.30 pm

All welcome; £3 charge towards the cost of room hire and other expenses.

Tuesday 7 April 2026

Industry and Ardour – a brief history of allotments in Leicester

Cynthia Brown

Allotments are now more popular than ever – but there has always been more to them than producing food or flowers. This talk will look at their origins in Leicester to rescue working men from ‘the deadly fountain of poverty’, through to ‘back to the land’ movements in the later 19th century, their crucial role in digging for victory in both World Wars. It will also consider the role of allotment societies, their social aspects, and some of the challenges they have faced – rabbits not least among them.

LEICESTERSHIRE AND RUTLAND FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY – LEICESTER GROUP

Wednesday 11 March 2026, Oadby Granville Tennis Club, Leicester Road, Oadby, LE2 4AB

The alehouses of Oadby

Mark Startin.

Like most similar towns, Oadby had its share of alehouses in times gone by – some of which a few of our ancestors may have known quite well! But these places were often important hubs of the local community. Mark will be sharing tales from the histories of these iconic places.

Wednesday 8 April 2026, *Arthur Wakerley: architect, politician, visionary*

Brian Johnson.

In this talk you can learn about the architectural impact that Arthur Wakerley had in the late 1800s in Leicester, many of his buildings still standing and now Grade II listed. He was also at various times Mayor of Leicester, a politician, Wesleyan lay preacher and temperance worker.

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](#).

LEICESTER CITY, COUNTY AND RUTLAND AT RISK WAR MEMORIALS PROJECT

Open Day, Saturday 14 March 2026, Chancel, Rear of All Saints church, Highcross Street, Leicester, LE1 4PH, 11 am – 4 pm

An opportunity to view the memorials housed here, and to find out more about them. Free entry; all welcome. For further details, see [Leicester City, County & Rutland At Risk War Memorials Project - At Risk War Memorials Project](#).

LEICESTERSHIRE & RUTLAND BRANCH WESTERN FRONT ASSOCIATION

Monday 16 March 2026, 7.30 pm

The Indian Corps on the Western Front

Nigel Atter

From October 1914 to October 1915, the men of the Indian Corps fought valiantly alongside the British Expeditionary Force in the 1st Battle of Ypres in 1914, and the Battles of Neuve Chapelle, Aubers Ridge, Festubert and Loos in 1915. Later transferred to the battlefields of Mesopotamia, Marshal Foch would declare that these men 'showed us the way. They made the first steps towards final victory'. This is their story. See images at [The Indian Corps on the Western Front | The Western Front Association](#).

MARKET HARBOROUGH HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Methodist Church, Northampton Road, Market Harborough, (opposite Market Hall)

Wednesday 11 March 2026

Joseph Bazalgette, 'The Great Stink' and the Rebuilding of London

The early summer of 1858 was hot and dry, and the river Thames had become a giant sewer. The stench was so bad that Members of Parliament could not work. They were galvanised to pass an Act 'to drastically improve drainage of the metropolis', taking only 18 days from introduction to becoming law. Joseph Bazalgette, the city engineer, was entrusted to design and implement a revolutionary solution. The talk reviews the background to the problem, and how the project was undertaken and completed.

Wednesday 8 April 2026

Lampport Hall the history of the hall and gardens

Bill Lockerbie

Bill is a volunteer at Lampport Hall and has become very knowledgeable about its history and life. He will talk about the hall and its gardens, their history and development. It was here that the first garden gnomes in England were brought from Germany – but more of that in his talk...

RICHARD III SOCIETY

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

Meetings are free to Branch members, but visitors are requested to donate £3 towards the expenses of the meeting. Further details of membership can be obtained from Sally Henshaw, Branch Secretary, sallyoftarahill@gmail.com.

Thursday 19 March 2026

Medieval Bee Keeping

Caroline Wright

Bee keeping flourished during the Middle Ages with increased demand for honey and beeswax. Honey was used in food, drink and medicine, and the superior beeswax candles found favour with the nobility and the church. This talk will look at the industries that developed around bees, and the practicalities of keeping hives. Free to members; £3 for visitors. Please note that this is a Thursday, and not Tuesday as notified in the LAHS Winter Newsletter.

Thursday 16 April 2026

Journeying to Jerusalem in the 15th century

Richard Smith

This talk is based on William Wey's itineraries of his journeys to Jerusalem in 1458 and 1462.

RECENT PUBLICATIONS

HANGED ON LEICESTER'S GALLOWS

Michael Tanner

The Author, 2025, 92pp, illus, £14.99

Michael Tanner has expanded his 1981 publication *Crime and Murder in Victorian Leicestershire* to provide a comprehensive history of the murders that resulted in death on the gallows in Leicester between 1800 and the last execution there – of Joseph Christopher Reynolds for killing a 12 year-old girl - in 1953. As he notes in his survey of the wider legal context, 220 crimes were punishable by death in 1820, including forgery, theft and public order offences such as rioting. Although intended as a deterrent – 'Men are not hanged for stealing horses, but that horses may not be stolen' – the *Leicester Journal* observed after one execution in 1813 that 'these awful public examples have so little influence on the mind of depravity', thefts of a purse, a watch and several handkerchiefs taking place during the execution itself. The number of capital offences was reduced over time, and death sentences might also be commuted; but it was not until 1969 that the death penalty for murder was finally abolished.

Each of the individual cases examined in the main part of the book offers insights into the process of the law, the manner in which the crimes and subsequent trials were reported in local newspapers, the motives of the perpetrators, and the extent to which revenge, drink, poverty, greed or 'passion' were said to have played a part. Just one example of the latter was John Green, who said after shooting his wife dead: 'She dared me to do it and I done it' – before claiming at his trial that the gun went off accidentally. There is much more of interest, interest in the book, including the fact that many 18th century hangings were carried out by a former convict, Samuel Hayweed of Appleby, who had previously been imprisoned for poaching.

A HISTORICAL FOOTNOTE

OPENING OF THE EASTGATES COFFEE HOUSE. ADDRESS BY LADY JOHN MANNERS.

If further proof was required of the increasing popularity in Leicester of those modern temperance institutions known as coffee taverns, an additional illustration would be afforded by the opening, yesterday, of a splendid pile of buildings situated at the corner of Eastgates and Church-gate to be in future called the "Eastgates Coffee House". Since the formation of the Leicester Coffee and Cocoa House Company, Limited, about eight years ago, considerable progress has been achieved in the establishment of coffee taverns



The former Eastgates Coffee House in 2023
(Reproduced under the Sgp10, CC BY-SA 4.0
<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/>, via
Wikimedia Commons)

throughout the town, no less than 12 houses of this description being in full working order at the present time. Socially, these dozen institutions have been the means towards the good end for which they were originally designed, while financially the success that has attended the company has exceeded the most sanguine expectations...

...[its] general appearance surpasses any previous effort made by this active company. The new tavern, which is intended to supersede the "Haymarket," has cost upwards of £4,000, exclusive of fittings, and partakes, in its architectural character, of the 16th century domestic style of building. The architect, Mr. E. Burgess, of Berridge-street, Leicester, has utilised the space at his disposal with remarkable results, and produced a structure which will certainly prove a handsome addition to the buildings surrounding the Clock Tower. On the ground-floor there is a coffee-room, with serving rooms attached, measuring about 90 feet in length, while on the Eastgates side of the first floor a fine first-class dining-room is provided, separated by a glazed screen from the second-class dining-room. The top floor is intended to accommodate a number of billiard tables, &c. The basement is occupied with the kitchens, smoking-rooms, and culinary offices. The fittings are in oak, excellently worked by Mr. Noble, of Nichols-street ; the walls tiled by Mr. Simpson, of London ; and the glazing in leaded glass, and the interior screens have been done by Mr. Collet, of Leicester...’.

The building was opened by Lady John Manners, sister-in-law of the Duke of Rutland and a noted temperance campaigner, who said: ‘Now, gentlemen, in establishing these houses you have taken the most practical means of setting free your fellow-countrymen from temptations that indeed, from what I hear, beset them very sorely. I earnestly trust that Leicester may have many imitators amongst the great towns’.

Leicester Chronicle, 20 June 1885

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.