

Lawrence Linnell (1870-1957): Leicester's Winter Sport Champion

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For most people, even sports enthusiasts, Leicester is as remote in the imagination as well as geographically from the Alps and winter sports, as anywhere could possibly be. It may therefore come as a surprise to learn that at the turn of the twentieth century, a Leicester man was an international champion in a brand new sport of the time, bobsleighting. That man was Lawrence Gale Linnell of Upper King Street in the town, and he was not the only Leicester person making the resort of Davos, Switzerland, his winter home from home. So what were these people doing there?

The alpine resort of Davos in eastern Switzerland began to accommodate guests from the winter of 1865 when two German tuberculosis sufferers appeared there early in that year. They had been enticed to the high valley which was snow-covered for half the year, after reading articles in a medical journal, which suggested the high altitude and pure air of Davos could help heal the frequently fatal illness, which was one of the biggest killers of the nineteenth century. Dr Alexander Spengler, the physician to the community, had noticed that the disease was absent from the valley he served. (1) Furthermore, he also observed that local people who travelled abroad and caught TB while working in the major cities of Europe soon recovered when they returned to their mountain home. Spengler concluded that it was the climate, high altitude and pure air that brought about the cure. It was reports of Spengler's theory that lured the two sick German patients, Felix Unger and Hugo Richter, to Davos. This was the beginning of winter tourism in Davos, and was just a few weeks after St Moritz in the same region of Switzerland also received its first winter guests.

The first British guests began to arrive in Davos from around 1875. One of the first British families to stay in the resort was the MacMorlands who went for the sake of the mother's health. Mrs MacMorland soon felt much better, and decided to write a description of the area to share her good fortune with others back in England who might likewise benefit from the Davos climate. This was published anonymously with the title *Davos: a new Alpine resort for sick and sound by one who knows it well*. (2) Other British guests began to arrive in search of cures for respiratory illnesses. Accompanying them were friends and family members in good health. The healthy needed amusement, as did the sick who were prescribed moderate exercise during the long

months or even years of recovery. Ice skating, curling and tobogganing, which provided ideal moderate exercise in winter, were soon adopted by the communities of winter visitors in the mountains. By the end of the nineteenth century the largest group of winter visitors, apart from Germans, came from Britain. For example on 13th January 1898, there were 801 Germans, 743 English, 390 Swiss and 189 French lodging in the resort. (3) In 1903 by 13th February there had been 1,149 Germans, 970 English and 696 Swiss. That winter season the total number of British (described as English in the statistics) had reached 1,008 and German visitors around 1,150. (4)



Advertisement for the Hotel d'Angleterre, Davos-Platz, Davos Courier, 1896. (Reproduced by permission of the Dokumentations Bibliothek Davos.)

Leicestershire Historian 2012

In Davos Platz, between the village and Davos Dorf, new buildings and hotels became populated by British guests, forming the English colony which became known as the English Quarter. This included the English Library, St Luke's Church, and the office and home of the British Consul which was licensed for the registration of marriages. Also in this area were situated the main hotels - the Belvedere, Buol and d'Angleterre.

The Hotel d'Angleterre, as its name suggests, was created to attract English guests and it was here that Lawrence Linnell stayed on his first trip to Davos in the 1898-99 season and again in 1906. (5) The hotel's advertisements emphasised features and facilities that would appeal to fashionable English taste. It had an open fireplace, a dark room for the use of photographers, hydraulic lift, electric light, an English library, newspapers, a billiard room, telephone and a stage for theatricals. Outside were lawn tennis courts, a croquet lawn and gardens. In fact it was, as its publicity stated, 'a first class English hotel'. As well as this, depicted visually in the advertisement are toboggan runs, skiing and ice skating. For those seeking rest and renewed health, the hotel, like most other Davos establishments, had balconies on the south facing side to rest on while undergoing the Cure. The nearby Hotel Belvedere was also particularly recommended to English travellers and invalids who would have been 'attracted by its free and open situation'. (6)

As well as the hotels, there were many smaller establishments such as the Pension Villa Freitag where Lawrence Linnell stayed each winter between 1899 and 1905. There were also privately rented villas.



Advertisement for the Pension Villa Freitag, Davos-Platz, Davos Courier, 1903. (Reproduced by permission of the Dokumentations Bibliothek Davos.)

The English guests organised games, entertainment and worship within the hotels. As the number of English guests grew, the organisation became more formalised, with the creation of entertainment committees in the largest hotels, which arranged balls, theatrical performances and other activities. Some hotels had both indoor and outdoor entertainment committees. For example, at the Belvedere, we are told in a guide issued by the hotel that:

relaxations offered indoors depends on the guests themselves. The Hotel Belvedere has always been fortunate in the possession of inmates endowed with social talents and accomplishments, this coupled with the support given by the management gives it its leading position at the social centre of Davos. (7)

The origins of the Davos skating club and toboggan clubs lay in these committees. The increase in the number of guests and hotels led to a multiplication of such committees and fostered inter-hotel sporting competitions. These gelled into resort-wide clubs which organised individual sports, the earliest of these being the skating, curling and toboggan clubs. The Davos Tobogganing Club was founded in 1883, and the skating club in 1889. (8) Frequent reports of the meetings of these committees appeared in the guests' local newspapers such as the *Davos Courier*. The guests themselves played a prominent role in the conversion of the remote mountain village into a winter sports resort.

During the 1880s, tobogganing and ice skating, led by British sportsmen and women, developed as formal sports with clubs and rules. Meanwhile, innovations in the design of toboggans led to the creation of the bobsleigh in the 1890s. The earliest bobsleighs were two toboggans joined together by a plank, the front sledge being steerable by pulling on two ropes with handles, used rather like reins. These new-style sledges were originally ridden by one person lying face-down, but soon these elongated machines were used to seat four or even five riders sitting one behind the other. Bobsleighs were given names by their owners, such as "Blitzen" (lightening), "Boule de Neige" (snowball) and "Adler" (eagle), reflecting the speed and excitement of the new sport. The first race for bobsleighs organised by the newly founded St Moritz Bobsleigh Club was held in the Engadin resort in 1897, although races had been held at the end of the season on the Cresta Run (usually reserved for skeleton sledges), since about 1892. The first international championship race, exclusively for bobsleighs was being held in Davos in 1900. The prize trophy was the Manchester Bowl named after its donor, the Duke of Manchester. At the time of this race, there were no dedicated bobsleigh runs - competitors in the event were timed racing down the main road from the outskirts of Davos Dorf down to lower-lying Klosters.



Bobsleigh competition at Davos, riders unknown, c1900. (Reproduced by permission of the Dokumentations Bibliotek Davos.)

This first international championship for bobsleigh was won by a machine steered by Leicester's Lawrence Gale Linnell. The local English language newspaper in Davos, *The Davos Courier*, in a later nostalgia article in the 1920s described Linnell as an artist. (9) Contemporary reports say his early model of bobsleigh was made mostly of wood and given the name "Trilby". Being an artist, Linnell may have been attracted to the name "Trilby" because it held some form of symbolism for him. The book *Trilby* by George du Maurier was one of the most popular contemporary novels of its time. Set in the 1850s in bohemian Paris, *Trilby* features the stories of an English and a Scottish artist. The female character, Trilby, is controlled in the novel by the hypnotic influence of the manipulative Svengali, perhaps Linnell saw "Trilby" the bobsleigh under his control in a similar way.

The favourite in the race for the Manchester Bowl had been a team riding a bobsleigh called "White Rabbit", known as the 'Bunnies' and described by the *Davos Courier* as 'cannibalistically attired in the scalps and ears of their forefathers.' According to the *Davos Courier*, "Trilby" had improved vastly and just succeeded in wrestling victory from "Kruger" (another bobsleigh) by five seconds'. (10) Discussing a forthcoming race in nearby Arosa, where "Kruger" had a chance of victory, the *Davos Courier's* reporter, in reference to the novel quipped 'it is possible that at Arosa "Trilby" may be prevented from posing for the "Altogether". This pun refers to the group photo of the day's winners altogether taken after the racing, but also alludes to

the first use of the words "in the altogether" in the novel as a euphemism for nudity.

Lawrence was not only a champion on the bobsleigh, he was also an expert skater. During the 1899-1900 winter season, just his second winter in Davos, and at the age of twenty-nine, he became one of only three members of the English Skating Club to gain the first class badge for his skill on ice (11). Rather an impressive achievement for a young man from Leicester where he would have had no opportunity to ice skate at home.

Lawrence did not just confine himself to serious sporting activities, but was also an enthusiastic competitor in the fun events of the gymkhana held on the Ice Run toboggan course. In February 1903 he came first in the Obstacle Race, which offered spectators 'a great deal of amusement'. In this race the competitors had:

first to ride between two barrels, which blocked straight riding; then climb over a sleigh dragging their toboggan over as well; ride through a narrow snow tunnel only about a foot wider than the toboggan, necessitating lying well back in order to avoid the roof; then ride over a narrow inclined plane of ice with a drop on the other side; about 100 yards lower pirouette or turn right round once on the toboggan without getting up. Finally for the last 30 yards the toboggan had to be ridden backwards. (12)

Leicestershire Historian 2012

Lawrence finished the course in just 1 minute 37 seconds and gained 27 points, the fastest time and the most points, which secured him the victory. In the second of the two events comprising the gymkhana, the cumbersomely named 'Threading the Needle and Picking of Rings', he did not fare so well, finishing in 2 minutes 2 seconds and three rings picked, compared with the winner, Mrs Gonne, who completed the course in 1 min. 44 sec. with four rings. (13)

In a resort normally associated with wealth and luxury, as well as sickness and sport, the story of the relatively impecunious Lawrence Linnell is one of the most unusual of an alpine winter regular. Lawrence frequented Davos between 1898 and the mid-1900s. After staying at the expensive and luxurious Hotel d'Angleterre in the winter of 1898-99, in the five subsequent winters his name appears on the guest list of the smaller and cheaper, English-style boarding house, Pension Villa Freitag. In 1901 Lawrence did not get out to Davos until after Christmas, although the reason, whether he was working, short of money or whatever else, is unknown. (14) A snippet of information which appeared in the St Moritz English newspaper *The Alpine Post and Engadin Express*, illustrates that Lawrence was popular and regarded in Davos and beyond, as part of the regular winter sporting scene and community by other visitors. It also shows that he was probably a member of the teams of tobogganers, skaters and bobsleighers from Davos who regularly went over to St Moritz to compete. In 1906 he again stayed at the Hotel d'Angleterre, perhaps reflecting changes in his circumstances. Most winters, for around a decade, he arrived in Davos in November and remained until the following April.

At home in England, Lawrence was at this time living in a terraced villa at 22 Upper King Street, Leicester, a relatively modest home by the standards of most visitors to Davos. The 1891 census records him living there with his parents - his father William listed as a retired farmer, and his mother Ann, both of whom had been born in Northamptonshire. Also living in the house were two of his sisters, Susan and Mary. The census indicates that at the age of 32 Susan was still single, her occupation being stated as a 'Morning Governess', although the enumerator added the note 'school' in brackets beside the entry. Perhaps the use of the title 'governess', rather than teacher, is evidence of the Linnell family's wish to maintain pretensions of their social status. Mary, aged 29, was also single but had no occupation recorded, although we know from the register of Leicester School of Art that she was a teacher and part time student. Two of Lawrence's brothers are also shown as living in the house - John who was 26 and a manager in a stay factory, and 17 year old Bernard who was a shoe clicker, a semi-skilled, manual occupation in a footwear factory. Lawrence himself was twenty at the time and was listed as a lithographic artist, a maker of illustration plates for printing.

The family had just one general live-in domestic servant at this point, so it is likely that the women of the family would have had to do some of the domestic tasks themselves.

The Linnell family were clearly artistic and creative. Three of Lawrence's siblings had studied at Leicester School of Art. Shortly after arriving in Leicester, Margaret, Mary and John had all enrolled there in the October of 1881, with Margaret, then aged 21 and Mary aged 19 both described as teachers, while 16 year old John was working as a warehouseman at that time, before rising during the next decade to a managerial position. (15) Margaret did particularly well in the School of Art and gained a Government Art Prize of the Third Grade in 1888 for Design in Outline. She also gained awards for studies in Perspective, monochrome painting, designs for tile borders, and painting flowers and designs to fill given spaces. (16) After some seven years of study, Margaret became an art teacher herself. By 1911 she was independent and working as a teacher of drawing and painting in Hampstead, where she lived in a house shared with two other, financially independent, single women. Sisters Mary and Susan remained single too, and lived with their widowed mother at 60 St Stephens Road in Leicester.

Although Lawrence went on to earn his living as a professional artist, his name does not appear on the registers of Leicester School of Art. Perhaps he learnt his trade of lithographic artist as an apprentice with a local printer, whilst being helped to develop as a landscape painter under the guidance of his sister Margaret.



Alpine landscape painting by Lawrence G. Linnell. (Acknowledgement to Wilkinson's Auctioneers, Doncaster, South Yorkshire).

This family background is not what would be expected of a typical Davos visitor. The Linnell family seem to have straddled the lower-middle and working classes, not the sort of people who would normally have been able to afford to send an adult son, who does not appear to have been ill, to

stay in Switzerland for five months every year and contribute nothing to the family budget while daughters had to go out to work. As Dinah Freer, notes in her paper on prominent Leicester families in the Victorian era, 'No patriarch of any standing within elite circles allowed his women folk to earn their own living'. (17) As an artist Lawrence possibly maintained himself in Davos by painting and selling landscapes of local alpine scenes to other visitors. Mountain landscapes by Linnell appear occasionally in art auction catalogues. This may explain how he financed his trips. Lawrence's work was frequently exhibited locally, including the Leicester Society of Artists Annual exhibition in 1900, and in London. In 1904 Linnell had an exhibition with Elizabeth Chettle at the Modern Gallery, Bond Street, London. This was visited by the Princess of Wales who purchased one work from each artist. In 1921 he had a solo exhibition called *Winter in Switzerland* at Thomas McClean's Galleries in London, and in 1930, his work was included in the Foyle Gallery's exhibition 'Works by Contemporary British Artists. The variety of locations indicates that Lawrence travelled widely within Switzerland.

Information contained in the census surveys of the nineteenth century help to build up a picture of Lawrence's earlier background, and shows the changes in circumstances of the Linnell family. Taking 1861 as a starting point, this shows an affluent household doing well in Northamptonshire in the mid-Victorian age of high farming. At this time, Lawrence's father William was actively farming 330 acres at Arthingworth Farm Lodge, where he employed six men and five boys. As well as the farm workers there were four household servants. William's fortunes prospered over the next decade and the size of his farm doubled. In the 1871 census he is recorded as farming 700 acres, employing fourteen men and seven boys. There were eight children at home - Frances, Susan, Mary, Annie, Margaret, John, Joseph and baby Lawrence, with a resident governess, a cook, a housemaid, a nursemaid and a groom. The eldest son, William, born in 1856, was away from home at school.

However, during the Great Depression in agriculture of the 1870s, this well-off family's fortunes declined more rapidly than they had risen, and by the time of the 1881 census, William Linnell senior, although still living at the farm, was now described as unemployed. Contemporary newspapers in the late 1870s carry reports of William Linnell, the once prosperous farmer, being fined for keeping a dog without a licence, of having a bankruptcy petition filed against him, and of being convicted for killing game without a licence. By 1881, William Linnell was sharing his house with farm waggoner George Wilford aged twenty-nine, George's wife Emma, who was a servant, and their three young children. There was a visitor too, Ann Wilford, possibly George's

younger sister. It appears that the Linnell family were losing not just land and wealth, but status and family life too, although they were still able to afford private education for their offspring, with ten year old Lawrence being away at a small boarding school for nine boys in Handsworth, Staffordshire. It was soon after this that the family took the drastic step of moving to Upper King Street in Leicester, where William could style himself as a retired farmer rather than unemployed. Perhaps he had sold up what was left of his farm (assuming it was not heavily mortgaged), to provide himself with something to live on in his retirement. His now-adult children helped maintain the household by entering trades in the town. The education they had received at boarding schools during the time of plenty in the 1860s and early 1870s stood them in good stead, and the younger William, Lawrence's older brother, became manager at Faire Brothers, one of Leicester's largest and most prestigious factories, that made elastic and shoe laces.

The Linnell's became involved in the social life of the town they had made their home. William and Bernard were stalwarts of Leicester Rowing Club. The family supported the Gallowtree Gate Chapel at social and fund raising events. Lawrence and older brother William were also musical, Lawrence especially was in demand as a soloist, singing bass, in concerts around Leicester for both the Rowing Club and the Chapel. He was a soloist in *The Messiah* at the Gallowtree Gate Chapel in 1892. A couple of months later, he sang at a 'gentlemen's evening' to which ladies were invited at the Chapel's Young People's Association.

The rise and decline in the fortunes of the Linnell family could indicate that Lawrence may not have felt comfortable living on the edge of working-class life in industrial Leicester. He was well-educated and had spent his early years in the country in a household with servants, a nursemaid and governess. In Davos, if he had a middle or upper class accent and education, he may have fitted in more easily than he would in Leicester. Few people in Davos would have been aware that he lived in a modest terraced villa with sisters that went out to work outside the home, and brothers who were employed in factories. By styling himself an artist he could cross class barriers by appearing as bohemian rather than poor.

Back in England, by the time of the 1911 Census, Linnell was recorded as an artist, and was boarding at the Plough Hotel in Edgbaston rather than living in Leicester. Shortly afterwards, he can be seen to have consolidated his social position by marrying Marjorie Scruton, the daughter of a Staffordshire tailor and textile merchant in 1912. Their son Charles attended public school and became a clergyman in Norfolk, whilst also achieving some fame himself as the author of the *Shell Guide to Norfolk*.

Leicestershire Historian 2012

Lawrence passed away in Leicester Royal Infirmary, aged 87, on 2nd August 1957. His requiem was held five days later at Letheringsett Church in Norfolk where his son Charles was rector, and where a stained glass window was erected in his memory.

Investigating Lawrence Linnell's story revealed another interesting feature of the Davos community members who were from Leicester. Those identified all lived in a small area of the town, within about a quarter of a mile radius, and so probably knew each other. This leads to the conclusion that perhaps many of those who went to Switzerland learnt of its charms through word of mouth and personal recommendations. In the winter of 1902 to 1903 we find a Mr and Mrs J D Johnson of Leicester were staying at the Hotel d'Angleterre at the same time as Lawrence. Johnson was an estate agent of H Johnson & Son of Leicester, his family business, and in *Wright's Directory of Leicester* for 1906, he is listed as living on St Peter's Road, which is just around the corner from St Stephen's Road where Linnell's by now widowed mother had just moved to. (18) Another near neighbour of the Linnells at their earlier address on Upper King Street was John Adam Morton who was staying in Davos at the luxurious Belvedere Hotel in 1906 while Linnell was nearby at the Hotel d'Angleterre. He was a leather merchant whose business was around the corner on Welford Place although Morton's home was a mile away on Clarendon Park Road. Another Davos guest living in the same area of Leicester was Dr Charles Coles, a physician, who lived on Saint James Road. (19) He and his wife were staying at the Hotel d'Angleterre at the same time as Linnell in 1898 when Charles was aged about thirty. These addresses show that these 'Davosers' lived in terraced villas, houses implying a lower-middle class lifestyle rather than wealth and privilege.

Other neighbours from Leicester stayed in Davos too. In 1903 these included Louise and Gussie Britten who were staying at the Belvedere Hotel with their eight year old niece, Miss Beatrice Broadbent. A likely explanation for Beatrice's trip to Davos was that she was ill, but whatever the reason, it did not adversely affect her longevity – she married, had at least one daughter of her own, and lived to be ninety. (20) Louise and Gussie appear to have been the daughters of Mrs Jane Britten, a deaf widow, living on her own means on New Walk in Leicester in 1891. Beatrice's father, Stanley, was the proprietor of the well-known Leicester slate, tiling and chimney merchants which had been established by his father in 1840. With the urban expansion in Leicester, this business prospered, enabling Broadbent to move firstly from his parents' villa on Hinckley Road to the smart New Walk, and then to a large house in the country at Whetstone. The 1901 census provides a connection between the Brittens and Broadbents - living with the young Beatrice Broadbent and her parents

and younger sister, was Charles Britten, then aged thirty-one – Charles being the brother-in-law of the head of the household.

These were not the only people living on or around New Walk who went to Davos at this time. The Viccars family lived around there too. (21) A prosperous Leicester business family in the woollen trade, their relatives, John E. Viccars and Miss Viccars, stayed at the Fluela Post and the Sport Hotel in 1906. The Sport Hotel was so-called to distance itself from the sanatoria and hotels where health seekers, many of whom may have been suffering from tuberculosis, stayed. This was to reassure guests afraid of contagion, that there was no danger of catching the disease, the hotel being open only to those who were there for pleasure and sport. Twenty year old John Ellis Viccars moved with his father to Anstey Pastures but with growing wealth and his financial independence soon moved to Ingarsby Hall in the east Leicestershire countryside. His grandfather, Samuel Viccars, lived on Cross Walk (now West Walk), leading on to New Walk.

Mr and Miss Anderson who were Linnell's companions at the Villa Freitag in 1903 were from Leicester too. Although no positive identification can be made, it seems highly likely that Mr Anderson was John Stafford Anderson whose family home was on West Walk at the time, close neighbours of the Viccars and not far from the Linnells' house. John's father was Scottish-born Alderman George Anderson, a former mayor and a hosiery manufacturer, a business in which John too was employed. At the time he was in Switzerland with Linnell, Anderson was married and living on Knighton Drive. He moved to Morland Avenue in Stoneygate in 1910. Surprisingly though for a Leicester man, Anderson was a prominent mountaineer who together with climbing partner George Percival Baker, also in the textile industry, and Swiss guides Ulrich Almer and Alois Pollinger had made some remarkable climbs twenty years earlier. On 11th August 1882, the team had made the first ascent via a route on the west ridge of the Dent Blanche in Valais. (22) They arrived at the summit after a gruelling twelve hour climb on a dangerous ridge overlooking the north face. The ridge they climbed up by became known as the 'Arête des Quatre Ânes' or 'Viereselsgrat' or 'Ridge of the Four Asses' due to the joking remark, reflecting the fool-hardiness of their adventure, made by Almer the guide when they finally reached the summit, "We are four asses". A year later on 7th August 1883, the same team of John Stafford Anderson, P. G. Baker and guides Almer and Pollinger, made the first ascent by the north-west ridge of the Schreckhorn in the Bernese Oberland, near Grindelwald. (23) This time the ridge they climbed was named the Andersongrat, in honour of John Stafford Anderson. Anderson was a member of the Alpine Club from 1881 until his death in 1931. (24) In 1890 Anderson married Baker's sister, Amelia, born in

Constantinople like her brother, and the couple set up home back in Leicester. (25)

It is important to emphasise that the group of individuals under discussion were apparently the only Leicester people staying in Davos. With a prominent alpinist like John Stafford Anderson in the community, this might have encouraged friends and acquaintances to go to Switzerland too, especially once they heard about Lawrence Linnell's success in winter sports and perhaps saw some of his paintings. Anderson also exhibited some views of the Alps at the Museum Lecture Hall on New Walk for the Literary and Philosophical Society. This would also have helped disseminate knowledge of Switzerland in Leicester, particularly among those who lived nearby and were likely to have been frequent visitors to the museum. Such factors may help explain why there was a cluster of Davos visitors whose home addresses were fairly close to each other. Their presence in Switzerland was probably no coincidence.

What this discussion of Leicester visitors to Davos in the first years of the twentieth century has also hoped to highlight, is that they were probably known to each other before they went to Switzerland, and personal recommendation could have been a factor in their decision to go to Davos. All of them were in trade or minor professions, rather than gentlemen with no given occupation for themselves or their families, unlike many of the other members of more elite public school educated groups who went to Switzerland at the turn of the century.

What the Leicester group have in common, apart perhaps from Linnell, is they were children of prominent businessmen in the growing economy of the expanding town of Leicester in the late nineteenth century. The self-reliance and determination of the Linnell family though is evident from the records. In the previous generation their fathers had worked hard to establish their businesses and their sustained effort generated increasing wealth. This prosperity supported a financially secure younger generation who were able to spend more time in leisure activities and pursuing their own interests than their fathers had done. They wanted to enjoy a similar lifestyle to the sons of gentlemen and this could include participation in amateur sport and travel. Their own children might be sent to public school bringing about a merging of the wealthy middle class with the social elites of the old gentry and aristocracy. The proximity of the homes of this group of Davos visitors can be seen as less of a surprise when it is taken into account that the Southfields area of housing was part of the first stage of migration by the middle class from the centre of the old town of Leicester into the suburbs. It demonstrates their aspiration in status reflected in housing. Living on or around New Walk was in itself a reflection of social aspiration. Until the middle of the nineteenth century about three-quarters of all heads of

households on New Walk were of independent means, or were professional men or owners of businesses. Later in the century there was a steady increase in the number of professionals and tradesmen at the expense of the more exclusive social groups. (26) The Davos visitors mostly grew up around this area, and were representative of this growth in the numbers of men of trade there, but in the following decades they moved to the new suburbs to the south of the town and perhaps later into the countryside, reflected in the successive changes of address. Consecutive census from 1871 and *Wrights Directories*, show that as a young child John Stafford Anderson had lived on Rutland Street and Humberstone Road, handy for the family business. As a youth he moved with his parents to Cross Walk, shortly before it was renamed West Walk. He was living there at the time of his alpine adventures. After following his father into the hosiery business he set up home on Knighton Drive in 1896, and then out to the affluent suburb of Stoneygate. For him the social transformation was complete when at the end of his life in 1931, John Stafford Anderson styled himself 'gentleman' in his will with no mention of his business in the hosiery trade.

The backgrounds of the Leicester visitors indicate their rapid mobility up or, in the case of Linnell, temporarily down the social scale. This was a community which could have been influenced to visit the Alps by social networks within their neighbourhood, especially after Davos became more easily accessible by rail after 1890. Travelling to Switzerland, with its associations with wealth and privilege, could also be evidence of their social aspirations. Further research on visitors to Davos and St Moritz from the same home town in Britain may reveal similar groups living in the same parish, neighbourhood or with other social or business connections.

Apart from Linnell, there is no evidence of what these other Leicester visitors to Davos did during their time there. Some of them may have been health seekers, and maybe Dr Coles was their physician. Even if they did not take part in competition, they are likely to either have had a go at ice skating, tobogganing or curling for fun, or spent time watching others do so. They might even have had a go at the new sport of skiing which was just becoming popularised in Davos, this being partly due to the Richardson brothers, Edward and Charles, who had been introduced to cross-country skiing in Norway, and had written an article for *The Davos Courier* in 1902 with the now clichéd title of *Davos – a Skiers' Paradise*. (27) In it, they extolled skiing as a sport for the independent, its participants not being confined to a rink or run, but instead being free to choose their own path across unbroken tracts of snow. The following year, the Richardson brothers went on to found the Davos English Ski Club, this preceding the local Swiss Ski Club Davos by a few months. They also founded the Ski Club of Great Britain in 1904. As well as being keen to try the new sport of

Leicestershire Historian 2012

bobsleighting, perhaps Linnell, and maybe some of the more adventurous visitors from Leicester, were pioneer skiers too!

As John Stafford Anderson had been for mountaineering twenty years or so before, Lawrence Linnell too was a pioneer of not just a new sport, bobsleighting, but he was an example of a new kind of sportsman or woman. One for whom skill, speed and exhilaration were more important than physical prowess. He was also an enthusiastic and talented exponent of the more established winter sports of ice skating and tobogganing. His artwork also left a legacy for others who had his landscape paintings to remind them of the majestic mountain winter scenery. People from Leicester were among a new kind of winter tourist as winter sports began to become available not just to an elite but to an upwardly mobile middle class.

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Skiers in front of the Hotel d'Angleterre, Davos, c1905. (Reproduced by permission of the Dokumentations Bibliotek Davos.)