

Editorial

For six months, from the late summer in 2012 and over the winter, many people in Leicester and elsewhere held their breath as the results from the archaeological excavations at the Grey Friars friary in Leicester were keenly awaited. Then on the 4th February 2013, the news was broken to the world that the battle-scarred remains of King Richard III had indeed been found. Amongst the first detailed accounts of this outstanding historic discovery are those in *Antiquity* 2013 (vol. 87, no. 336), and in the *Transactions of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society* 2013.

A fascinating picture of the topographical features and people of the central area of Leicester some 300 years later was delivered by William Gardiner to the Leicester Literary and Philosophical Society in 1844, highlights from which appear in print for the first time here, enhanced by a commentary from J. D. Bennett.

Three miles north of the centre of Leicester is Belgrave Hall. Today, whilst many will be familiar with the house, gardens, and park opposite, few will probably have paid much attention to the four life-sized outdoor statues there. These were once part of a larger collection of sixteen 'Terms', the missing twelve of which Erica Statham sets out to trace, following the trail to Enderby and beyond.

The laundry room at Belgrave Hall was one of the more unusual places where an adult school group was set up in Leicestershire in the nineteenth century, as Enid Harrison describes in her informative article on the origins and development of the Leicestershire Adult School Union.

In the late 1860's, Markfield became the location for a new form of transport known as a 'wire tramway', the first of its kind in the world. Andrew Moore examines why Markfield was chosen for this unexpected pioneering experiment, what it involved, and what became of it.

Also little-known about until very recently, is the intriguing story behind an unprepossessing brick structure in a field close to Mount St Bernard Abbey. Maureen Havers and Terry Sheppard describe the work done by Charley Heritage Group to reveal this former blast shelter, and its associated RAF Outstation which played a key role in the 'Battle of the Beams' during World War Two.

Leicestershire soldier Everard Aloysius Lisle Phillipps posthumously received the VC for his action in the Indian Mutiny. David Howell presents the conflict from a contemporary nineteenth century British perspective through the letters of this young British officer.

Documents in the Herrick and Nichols archives form an important part of the material used by Caroline Wessel to uncover the hitherto little-known artistic talents and extraordinary charitable work of Mary Ann Herrick.

It was extremely difficult for a woman to become established as a serious career artist in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, but as Shirley Aucott admirably shows, Leicester born Mary Annie Sloane, who was to play a major role in the arts and crafts movement nationally, was one of the exceptions to this.

Celia Cotton provides a well-researched case study of late eighteenth century enclosure in Thrussington, discussing its inevitability, and the impact on the parish and its inhabitants.

To help counter unemployment in the 1930s, the Borough Council of Leicester adopted a scheme to provide 'homesteads' for unemployed men and their families. The poignant tale of this social experiment set up on land between Beaumont Leys and Birstall is brought to life by Cynthia Brown.

Cynthia Brown and her team of reviewers again provide excellent coverage and reviews of recently published books, journals and other items which go together to form this invaluable part of the *Leicestershire Historian*.

The *Leicestershire Historian* aims to promote the study of the county's history by providing a platform for established and new authors, and through encouraging the pursuit of research and project work. It also aims to publicise the work of local groups and organisations, and seeks to raise the awareness of research sources.

Contributions for future editions are welcome from individuals, local groups, museums and other organisations and should be sent to the Editor for consideration. Articles can be short items or longer in-depth pieces, and can be submitted at any time. If you would like to discuss an idea in advance, please contact the Editor.

Joyce Lee, Editor