

## Recent Publications

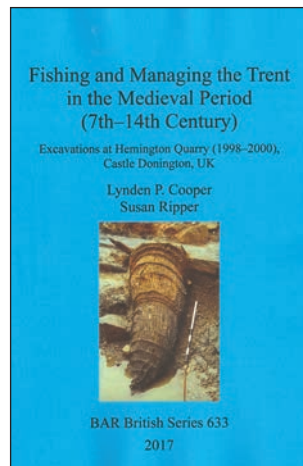
### Edited by Cynthia Brown

#### LEICESTERSHIRE AND RUTLAND

#### **FISHING AND MANAGING THE TRENT IN THE MEDIEVAL PERIOD (7TH – 14TH CENTURY): EXCAVATIONS AT HEMINGTON QUARRY (1998 – 2000), CASTLE DONINGTON, UK – BAR BRITISH SERIES 633**

Lynden P. Cooper, Susan Ripper and other contributors  
BAR Publishing, 2017, 84pp, illus., ISBN 9781407316178, £20

The British Archaeological Reports series is an excellent way of enabling readers to explore archaeological results without having to devour the full, formal and technical reports of excavations. This particular volume focuses on ancient channels of the River Trent where movements of the channels caused structures relating to inland fishery, especially of eels, to be preserved. It has chapters on fish weirs, the early twelfth century stone weir and jetties, with appendices on mill paddles, animal bones and waterlogged wood and plants. It is richly illustrated with diagrams, tables and images. The life cycle of eels, with predictable migration, meant that they offered a valuable resource based on installation of fish weirs which could be used to catch the eels in quantity. Anglo-Saxon fish weirs or traps, which were lines of posts with wattle fences, caught silver eels as they migrated downstream to the sea in the autumn. Another type of weir restricted water flow and caught the less mature yellow eels in basket traps. The later medieval sites were parts of the manorial river fishery of Castle Donington. In the twelfth century a mill dam, using a stone and timber weir in conjunction with huge eel baskets was utilised. Weir fisheries were in fact barriers to navigation and they were eventually banned by national and local laws affecting Britain's great rivers. By the fourteenth century the manorial fishery had become a net fishery, and bankside, stone-filled wooden cribs created eddies to attract salmonids.



This report therefore offers a rare opportunity to glimpse how medieval people made the most of natural resources. The images are especially interesting as they show rare structures, basketry and wooden artefacts relating to the practicalities of exploiting the fish in the Trent, for instance,

a wicker eel basket with an anchor stone woven into its lower end shows how natural materials could be used in sophisticated ways. Also illustrated is a watermill from the *Luttrell Psalter* showing wicker eel baskets in head race waters. Although there are many documentary references to fisheries, this survival of archaeological remains and evidence for relationships with bridges, mills and the riverine landscape of the Trent is exceptional, and potentially of interest to people who fish as well as archaeologists.

Yolanda Courtney

#### **THE GREEN BICYCLE MYSTERY: THE CURIOUS DEATH OF BELLA WRIGHT**

Anthony M. Brown

Mirror Books, 2017, 272pp, illus., ISBN 9781907324697, £7.99

A great deal has been written over the years about the death of Bella Wright in 1919, and the trial of Ronald Light – allegedly the man on the green bicycle with whom she was seen hours before – for her murder. His acquittal did not put an end to speculation about his guilt, and the mysteries, inconsistencies and evidential issues that still surround her death will no doubt continue to exert their fascination in the future. This particular account is part of a 'Cold Case Jury' series in which readers are invited to deliver their own verdict and share their own theories by way of a website, [www.coldcasejury.com](http://www.coldcasejury.com). As such, although it is based on a re-examination of the available evidence, it does not claim to be a conventional historical account. It is rather a 'reconstruction' of the events up to and following her death, conveyed in great part through imagined conversations and feelings attributed to those involved. This semi-fictionalised account is interspersed with evidence addressed directly to members of the Cold Case Jury, while Part 2 considers this evidence in more detail through 'Exhibits' including maps, a diagram examining the theory that Bella was accidentally shot by someone hunting crows, autopsy findings, and inquest statements. It concludes with an overview of previous publications on the subject - after the author has delivered his own judgement, which is currently at odds with the majority verdict of those who have voted on the website. Overall this is an interesting and very readable account, by no means as devoid of sound historical content as the author's use of 'speculative narrative' (his own description) might suggest.

Cynthia Brown

### THE LITTLE BOOK OF LEICESTERSHIRE

Natasha Sheldon

The History Press, 2017, 192pp, illus., ISBN 9780750967341, £9.99

This is an interesting book full of snippets of interesting facts about Leicestershire. It claims to be a 'compendium full of information that will make you say "I never knew that"...', and in many cases this will be true. The book is separated into chapters that look at various aspects of life in Leicestershire from working life to crime and punishment. As you might imagine from a 'little' book, no topic is considered in depth. In some publications this may be considered frustrating, but not so here as it does not claim to be anything other than a collection of interesting facts which are worthy of mention in themselves. The book is enjoyable to be able to dip in and out of it. Overall it would be an interesting addition to a reader's existing collection of books on Leicestershire.

Lois Edwards

### RUTLAND RECORD: JOURNAL OF THE RUTLAND LOCAL HISTORY AND RECORD SOCIETY NO. 37

Various authors

Rutland Local History and Record Society, 2017, 49pp, illus., ISBN 9780907464570, £5



The cover of this edition features a striking poster advertising *Lightning Bryce* by the Arrow Film Corporation, billed as 'The Greatest Serial Ever Made'. The connection with Rutland is by no means obvious but becomes clear in Sheila Sleath's article 'What's in a hut? A WWI prisoner of war hut surviving as an indoor bowls club in Uppingham'.

The hut, located in North Street East, started life as part of a German Prisoner of War camp on the outskirts of Uppingham, from where the prisoners were employed in local ironstone pits. The camp huts, with fittings including kitchen ranges, boilers, sinks, tanks and stores, were put up for sale in 1919. One was purchased by the Uppingham Branch of the National Federation of Discharged and Demobilised Sailors and Soldiers, and erected on part of Tod's Piece in Uppingham for use as a social club. Open to the public as well as veterans, this provided dances, games rooms, reading rooms, hot and cold showers, and a sponge bath. It also became the first permanent venue for film shows in Uppingham, with rows of wooden forms and a sheet stretched across the stage for a screen – hence the link with *Lightning Bryce*, a 15-part American Western serial

released in 1919. These and other activities during the hut's 100 years, through to its current use by the Uppingham Indoor Bowls club are covered in an entertaining and informative way, based on local memories as well as documentary sources.

Two other substantial articles are featured in the journal, the first by Brian Needham on the hereditary trustees of the Archdeacon Johnson Foundation. In 1584 Archdeacon Robert Johnson founded schools in Oakham and Uppingham, along with almshouses in each of the two towns. With the aid of a useful family tree, the author traces the male heirs who fulfilled the role of Patrons or Hereditary Trustees of this Foundation, from Abraham Johnson, the only child of his three marriages, who took on the role when Robert died in 1625, through to the current Hereditary Trustee, William Francis Blois Johnson. There are many interesting characters along the way, including Lieutenant General William Augustus Johnson, a veteran of the Peninsula War, who in 1856 resisted a proposed new management scheme that would in his view 'make Oakham a first-class school and Uppingham a second-class or minor one', referring to the 'very strong local feeling... of the two towns of Oakham and Uppingham and of the jealousy which has always existed between them'. The focus of Alan Crosby's article is the Lowther family, the Earls of Lonsdale who owned Barleythorpe Hall and lived there from 1825, until long-standing financial difficulties, combined with the 'profligacy' of the 5th Earl, led to its sale in the late 1920s. The journal concludes with a survey of Rutland archaeology in 2016; and mention should also be made of the interesting editorial reflection on archaeological and historical sources and the argument in favour of their 'selective retention'.

Cynthia Brown

### Other recent publications

100 STORIES IN 100 WORDS: POLISH DIASPORA IN LEICESTERSHIRE, PART ONE

Project Polska

The Authors, 2018

A HISTORY OF THE GAMBLE AND PLOWRIGHT FAMILIES

Arthur J. Gamble

The Author, 2017

THE LEICESTERSHIRE ROUND

Leicestershire Footpath Association

The Authors, 2017 edn.

WANDERINGS ON THE WILD SIDE: A NATURAL HISTORY DIARY (LEICESTERSHIRE AUTHOR)

Jane Harris

Matador, 2017

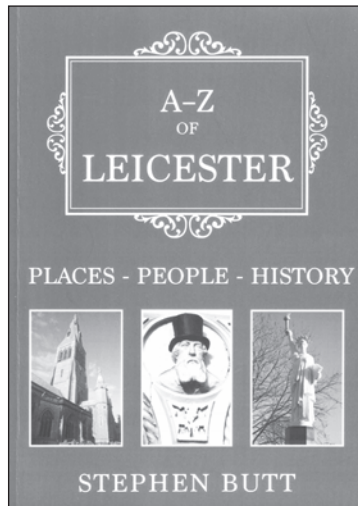
**LEICESTER**

**A-Z OF LEICESTER: PLACES-PEOPLE-HISTORY**

Stephen Butt

Amberley Publishing, 2017, 96pp, illus., ISBN 9781445664781, £14.99

The places and people presented in this guide range far and wide, demonstrating the truth that Leicester's history 'can be found everywhere', from Victorian textile mills to markets, streets, parks and even alleyways, as well as through its people themselves. Many names among the latter will be very familiar, including Simon De Montfort, Richard III, Nathaniel Corah and William Carey; others, like Parminder Kaur Nagra, star of *Bend it Like Beckham*, and the Tudor composer Hugh Aston perhaps a little less so. Entries such as that for William Wheeler Kendall, umbrella maker and seller, add some interesting detail: during World War II the company also supplied parachutes and mackintoshes for British troops, and provided five umbrellas for the expedition that conquered Everest in 1952.



A short section on the Il Rondo in Silver Street may bring back memories from the 1960s and '70s. Once the 'epicentre of Leicester's music scene and pop culture', The Who played there on the same day they entered the charts in February 1965, to an audience that paid just 2s 6d (12.5p) each to get in. The ups and downs of speedway in Leicester are also featured, along with buildings and other structures such as the Rechabite Chapel in Dover Street, now the Little Theatre, and the Tycho Brae mosaics, inspired by the life of the Danish astronomer of the same name, and designed for the Newarke subways in the 1960s by Sue Ridge. The images accompanying this and other entries add greatly to the interest of the text.

Cynthia Brown

**ADVENTURES OF A YOUNG NATURALIST: THE ZOO QUEST EXPEDITIONS**

David Attenborough

Two Roads, 2017, 416pp, illus., ISBN 9781473664968, £8.99

When David Attenborough began his career with BBC television as a trainee producer in 1952, almost every programme was broadcast live, including those featuring animals. These were presented by George Cansdale,

Superintendent of London Zoo, who brought 'some of the more reasonably sized and amenable of his charges' into the studio, where they lay 'blinking in the intense light of the studio' on a doormat placed on a table, or occasionally made their escape – like a squirrel which took up residence in the ventilation system, making 'occasional appearances' in other programmes broadcast from the studio. The very popular *Zoo Quest* programmes combined this approach with that of Armand and Michaela Denis and their filmed African safaris. First broadcast in 1954, they took the form of a joint animal-collecting expedition between the BBC and London Zoo on which Attenborough was accompanied by Jack Lester, the Zoo's curator of reptiles, filmed both on location and in the studio. This highly entertaining and informative book brings together three accounts written soon after the original expeditions to British Guiana (now Guyana), Indonesia and South America, highlighting the technical challenges of filming at that time, as well as those of catching the animals themselves, and encounters with humans along the way. Among many wonderful accounts is one of his attempts to dislodge a sloth hanging upside down from its vine with an expression of 'ineffable sadness on its furry face'; and that of Tiny and Connie McTurk, who had a boa constrictor living in the passage of their house in Guyana to keep down the rats – until it 'once frightened one of the guests' and was evicted.

Cynthia Brown

**THE ARCHITECTURE OF THE UNIVERSITIES OF LEICESTER**

Arthur Lyons

Anchor Print, 3rd ed., 2017, 194pp, illus., ISBN 9781910181379, £29.99

Some people might be surprised to see a third edition of *The Architecture of the Universities of Leicester* only five years after the second; but given the pace of change in higher education, and the importance placed by those running universities on bricks and mortar, most especially new flagship buildings, this update is to be welcomed. Even if individuals might not wish to replace a previous edition, it is good that the text is not allowed to become out-of-date – and it seems inevitable that a fourth edition will be needed within a few years. Some readers might be encouraged to go exploring, book in hand. Just as expansions to the Leicester University College campus supported claims towards university status in the mid-twentieth century, so DMU's developments reflect ambitions towards its international reputation. Some visitors might even ask 'who pays?' After all, such impressive spaces do not come cheaply. In DMU's case, much of this capital investment was funded by a £110m bond raised in 2012; and if this level of expenditure may be unsustainable, then we are fortunate that it is being



documented. The book is generously illustrated, largely in colour, and archival images are also included, adding to its interest to historians.

Malcolm Noble

**DIAMOND-TIPPED: CONSERVATION AT THE ENGINEERING BUILDING, UNIVERSITY OF LEICESTER**

Thomas Pearson

University of Leicester, 2017, 128pp, illus., ISBN 9780993338069, £20

The Grade II\* listed Engineering Building at the University of Leicester was created by James Stirling and James Gown in 1963, and is one of the most influential post-modern buildings in the country. In 2015 the University of Leicester announced a £19.5million project to replace the roof and each of the 2500 glass panels of the innovative 45-degree, patent-glazed, diamond-shaped roof. The form of the glass panels had to be respected while the problems of the original design had to be addressed if the building was to be fit for the twenty-first century. This book tells the story of how this work was done. *Diamond-Tipped* is beautifully produced with many high quality photos, diagrams, and illustrations that clearly demonstrate the character of the building and the complexity of the task the restorers faced. The text is clear and informative without being too specialist. The story moves from background information about the building – although this has been covered in much greater detail elsewhere – to a consideration of the practical, political, and aesthetic issues raised by the project. The quality of the text and the well-chosen images stand as a fitting tribute to a remarkable project that has conserved an important and fascinating building.

Colin Hyde

**HIGH FLYING AROUND: MEMORIES OF THE 1960s LEICESTER MUSIC SCENE**

Shaun Knapp

DB Publishing, 2017, 208pp, illus., ISBN 9781780915500, £14.99

This is Shaun Knapp's first book, inspired by the collective memory of the 1960s music scene and his own memories of following local bands in the 1980s. The central focus of the book is the story of a local band called 'Legay' which featured the author's older brother John as a member. Using a range of interviews with band members, fans and friends, personal photographs and memorabilia, as well as extracts from the local press, the book follows the band's progress from its first gigs in 1966 through to its metamorphosis into a 'West Coast' rock group called 'Gypsy'. The second half of the book takes a broader look at Leicester's music scene of the 1960s, with brief chapters on some other local groups



such as 'Pesky Gee!' and 'The Farinas' (who later morphed into 'Family'). Local venues such as the Nite Owl, The White Cat café and Il Rondo are remembered by former staff, and their recollections resonate with deep affection, both for that particular time and space. There are many books published on the national music scene or particular stars from various ages, but it

is much harder to find a book covering in depth the local music scene of one particular era. If you are interested in the 1960s subcultures of mods and rockers, and the trip by way of psychedelia from the East Midlands to the West Coast, then you will find plenty to engage you here. As the author writes, 'the story of Legay is one that I'm sure can be told in every town and city across the country', and for anyone who has known an aspirant local band (myself included), even if in a different time and place, there will be many scenarios that are familiar.

Philip R. French

**IN PLAIN SIGHT: BASED ON THE TRUE STORY OF LEICESTER'S JESUIT MARTYR**

Kate Myers

Matador, 2017, 209pp, illus., ISBN 9781788038812, £9.99

It is unusual to review works of fiction in the *Leicestershire Historian*, but an exception is more than justified in this case by the light it sheds on its little-known subject, the Jesuit priest Father William Bentney, and his association with Belgrave when Roman Catholic priests and those who harboured them were subject to imprisonment and possible execution. He was born in Cheshire in 1609 and entered the Society of Jesus in 1630. Ten years later he was sent to the English missions, and from 1652 he served as chaplain to the family of William Byers, a Catholic wool merchant of Old Belgrave Hall, and tutor to his children. He was arrested in 1682 at the instigation of a man to whose sisters he was administering the sacraments, and was imprisoned in Leicester. No one could be found locally to bear witness against him, despite his priestly activities being apparently well known. 'It seemed he was quite a favourite with the Church of England people in Leicester', as the author puts it: 'and the various Dissenters and Quakers were not about to turn against an "enemy of the state" as that was what the

state thought they were too'. His trial took place in Derby, where he was sentenced to death at the Spring Assizes. The 'scant clues' of his known life are interwoven here with 'imaginary characters' to tell his story, but remain firmly grounded in the wider religious and political history of the second half of the seventeenth century.

Cynthia Brown

### **LETTERS TO MERCURY: THE SOCIALIST FIGHTBACK IN LEICESTER**

Michael Barker

Hextall Press, 2015, 401pp, ISBN 9781517764463, £10

This very unusual book was published in 2015, but has only recently come to light. Disillusioned with the Labour Party in general, and one sitting Leicester MP in particular, the author stood as parliamentary candidate for the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition for the Leicester East constituency in the 2015 general election. Between March and November 2015 he sent a large number of press releases and letters to the *Leicester Mercury* which are collected together here. Some were published, although the majority were not; but they cover a wide range of subjects from arguments against zero hours contracts and the privatisation of prisons, and support for British Rail, to education, social care, student accommodation, personal debt and corporate profits from gambling. Others are directed against UKIP for its 'negative policies' against trade unions, while the release of the film *Suffragette* is welcomed, 'but not uncritically so' for its perceived failure to challenge 'long-standing stereotypes'. On the back cover of the book the author is happy to quote some responses to his letters on the *Mercury* website, one of which denounces them as 'a load of utter loony left nonsense', and another that thanks him for 'confirming I was right to vote Conservative'. He describes the letters himself as nothing more than 'an imperfect potted history of the reflections of one middle aged male socialist' – but therein lies their interest and their value as part of the historical record.

Cynthia Brown

### **LOST LEGENDS: 30 YEARS 30 VOICES**

Pawlet Brookes ed.

Serendipity Artists Movement, 2017, 150pp, illus., ISBN 9780992631949, £10

Black History Month has been part of the cultural calendar for thirty years. How it developed, what it means to people, and how relevant or successful it has been are discussed in a series of short articles featuring the voices of activists, community members, cultural practitioners and contemporary voices. One of the many good things about

this book is that it gives space to a variety of opinions, eloquently expressed. Some are celebratory of the achievements of Black History Month, others are more cautious, and some negative. Suzanne Overton-Edwards entitles her piece 'Yes, We Can', and we have Pamela Campbell-Morris asking for 'Black History Month 365 days a Year' alongside Brian Simmonds talking of 'The Death of Black History Month'. The book gives an insight into how Black History Month was first produced in Leicester, who were the key figures in its development, and how subsequent generations viewed the project. This is complemented by a timeline of milestones in national and local Black history, and biographies of those thirty who gave their 'voices'. It is illustrated throughout with superb photographs from a range of professional and personal sources. It is perhaps unfair to give the last word to one person, but the honour here goes to Julie D. Smith, who came to Leicester as a student in 1991 and has since had a long involvement in the arts. 'I am proud to live in a city that does celebrate the achievements that Black people have made and still make to the UK, and if it wasn't for Black History Month, I wouldn't know about my history. Thank you Leicester'.

Philip R. French

### **MARY ANNIE SLOANE, ARE, 1867 – 1961: A PORTRAIT OF THE ARTIST**

Shirley Aucott and Simon Lake

Leicester Arts and Museums Service, 2016, 32pp, illus., ISBN 9780956922113

This book was published to coincide with the exhibition *Mary Sloane: a portrait of the artist* at New Walk Museum, Leicester in 2016. The book is very informative, beginning with a detailed biography of Mary Sloane by Shirley Aucott, from the artist's early life in Enderby to her attendance at the 'progressive and innovative' Belmont House School for young ladies in New Walk, Leicester, where she was taught by the artist Edith Gittins. It covers her subsequent artistic education, the inspiration she drew from her travels and her friendships, including that with the textile designer May Morris, daughter of William Morris, 'father' of the Arts and Crafts movement. Shirley Aucott also provides a timeline through to Mary Sloane's death in 1961 at the age of 93. The remainder of the publication focuses on her 'Key Works', which are beautifully reproduced, and include a 1912 watercolour of May Morris herself in the Tapestry Room at Kelmescott Manor. This judicious combination of biography and images makes the booklet a pleasure to read and to browse.

Cynthia Brown

## MEMORIES OF LEICESTER 1930 TO 1970

Tony Lax

True North Books, 2017, 80pp, illus., ISBN 97811062318, £5.99

This small format picture book is described as 'part of the 'Memories' compact series based on the original *Memories of Leicester* publication' some years ago, and it appears to have been reissued without any significant updating. The main gain is size if you want a book of Leicester images you can slip into your pocket. Its stated aim is 'to bring to life a half-century of Leicester's history through images, acting as a prompt to readers' own memories. It makes no claim to be a history book but rather 'a pictorial meander through the streets of our great city'. There are eight sections to it: 'around the city centre'; 'wartime'; 'events and occasions'; 'bird's eye view'; 'on the home front'; 'shopping'; and 'at work'. The small size of the publication may be found visually challenging because of the reduced font size of the captions. This reviewer has some favourite photos in the collection, among them a traffic jam on Belgrave Road in 1954 during resurfacing, and boys trying to overturn a rubber bollard at the end of Charles Street in 1933 – a failure of new technology in street architecture! Others include the crocodile of children from a local nursery crossing a road, holding on to a rope (ratio two staff to 18 children!); the Foresters' Hall party in Rosebery Avenue in 1953, with extraordinary fancy dress costumes; and the rather fearsome ladies viewing plants on a market stall.

Margaret Bonney

## RICHARD III: BROTHER, PROTECTOR, KING

Chris Skidmore

Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 2017, 464pp, illus., ISBN 9781780226415, £10.99

Chris Skidmore's biography of Richard III is a scholarly but immensely readable account of the King's life. As the title suggests, the book is divided into three sections that cover the three main phases of Richard III's career: first, his role as trusted supporter of his brother Edward IV against the backdrop of civil war and political intrigue; secondly, his brief period as Protector to the young, ill-fated, Prince Edward; and finally, his seizure of the throne and short reign that led to his death on the battlefield in 1485. It is written as a straightforward, historical narrative, based on critically used contemporary sources. These include the accounts of observers, chronicles and antiquaries as well as Richard's own letters and accounts. The author uses detail from these sources in a most enlivening way, and there are some lengthy and really memorable descriptions, including one of Richard's coronation which leaves the reader with an almost cinematic vision of events. Skidmore sees the polarised debate of the 'evil' versus the 'good' Richard as sterile, and

prefers to seek a more balanced approach. He does this by encouraging us to look at Richard's life in the round, so that we see him in the brutal political context of the time, and also judge him on his earlier career and his full range of abilities, rather than just his more dubious actions as Protector and King. In the author's view, he may or may not have been responsible for the murder of the young princes, but either way it limits our insight to caricature him either as a monster or a misjudged paragon of virtue. He was a complex character, and in addressing that complexity Skidmore brings a refreshing perspective to the subject.

Siobhan Begley

## Other recent publications

66 YEARS OF PANJABIS IN LEICESTER: A SOCIO-ANALYTICAL STUDY

Shingara Singh Dhillon

Panjabi Arts and Literary Academy UK, 2017

## TOWNS AND VILLAGES

ASHBY-DE-LA-ZOUCH PAST AND PRESENT: JOURNAL OF ASHBY-DE-LA-ZOUCH MUSEUM, NO. 19

Various authors

Ashby-de-la-Zouch Museum, June 2017, 52pp, illus., £4

The journal offers the interesting range of articles that we have come to expect. John Louch gives an account of Louch's Commercial School, which was established by his grandfather Frederick William Louch to teach shorthand, typing and book-keeping. Willie, as he was known to the family, served in the Royal Artillery in World War I and registered the school as a private school in 1919, taking classes in the back room of his house while working part-time as the manager of the Ministry of Labour Branch Employment Office. The school flourished despite some animosity during World War II from Miss Champion, Headmistress of Ashby Girls' Grammar School, who felt that her girls should 'cut out every other activity' and focus on their academic work. It was forced to close in 1947 when Louch became ill and died later that year, but was revived in 1952 by his son Frederick William Junior. It was credited throughout its existence with providing many Ashby women with the qualifications and skills to gain work with local employers – observed at one time by Bertie, a green Australian parrot, with whom they shared a room. Paul Monk writes about Rev. W. H. Coleman, who moved to Ashby in 1847 to become Assistant Master at the Grammar School. Here he continued to pursue his interest in geology and botany, discovering a new species of bramble in a hedgerow near Packington, which was named after him. He



was 'one of a generation of clergy from around that period who had the time, education and inclination to become minor experts in the natural history of their local areas'. His work was acknowledged in several publications, but his public lectures attracted less enthusiasm due to their 'marathon' nature – one lasting 'upwards of three hours'! Anthony Yates, five times great-grandson of the Ashby medical pioneer Dr Thomas Kirkland, turns his attention to the 'solidly Derbyshire' family of Kirkland's wife Dorothy Bate – one of whom, Rev Thomas Bate, was chaplain to Sir John and Lady Catherine Harpur of Calke Abbey in the early eighteenth century. Rev Bate's will established a trust to manage his library, housed after his death in a building in the corner of St Helen's churchyard and consisting of some 1200 books. The library had been dispersed by 1831, but the author also explains how he tracked down some of its volumes. Other articles include John MacDonald's account of unravelling the mystery of how two Australians, Private Frederick William and Private Francis Briggs, came to be commemorated on the First World War memorial at Coleorton. Christina Smith completes her story of the Smith family of Packington and Norris Hill (the first instalment was published in the journal in 2003), with a focus on the insolvency of Henry Smith in 1822 with debts of £50,000 – a scandal that encouraged subsequent generations to 'count every penny'. The journal concludes with reviews of recent books on Ravenstone, one on its Hospital and the other on Ann Ayre Healy, a Crimean War nurse from the village.

Cynthia Brown

### **ASPECTS OF LITTLE BOWDEN**

Members and friends of Little Bowden Society

Matador, 2017, 111pp, illus., ISBN 9781788038799, £10

Many people have contributed to this publication which took three years to produce and is the largest project to be completed so far by members and friends of the Little Bowden Society. It covers the period from the Domesday survey of the village through to Little Bowden's present position as 'very much a suburb of Market Harborough'. Some of the complexities of its medieval landholdings and boundaries are explained in the early chapters, before it takes a thematic approach, covering education, transport, business and commerce, and recreation and leisure. It is interesting to note that by the 1890s the population had grown to the extent that a second Anglican church was built, that of St Hugh of Lincoln. This was originally an 'Iron Church' or 'Tin Tabernacle', and was not replaced with a new brick-built church until 1940. Brick- and tile-making was the main industry in Little Bowden in the mid nineteenth century, but as the range of occupations expanded four builders were listed in directories by 1895, and three grocers and ten shopkeepers selling food and household

goods by 1912. The village schools are covered in some detail, along with the Institute established in the 1870s by Canon Thomas Jerwood in a brick barn in a corner of an orchard. Members paid a subscription and ran the Institute themselves, its facilities including newspapers, games, and a gymnasium. There are separate chapters on 'prestigious properties' and 'people of interest'. Two women feature among the people of interest: Jane West, one of the most popular authors of her time, whose modest gravestone in St Nicholas churchyard is simply inscribed 'J.W. 1852'; and Julie Vials, who grew up in Little Bowden and was a youth leader there in the 1970s before emigrating to Canada and becoming the first female fire-fighter at the International Airport in Halifax, Nova Scotia. This very interesting book concludes with a selection of photographs of village life, reproduced to a very high standard, with informative captions.

Cynthia Brown

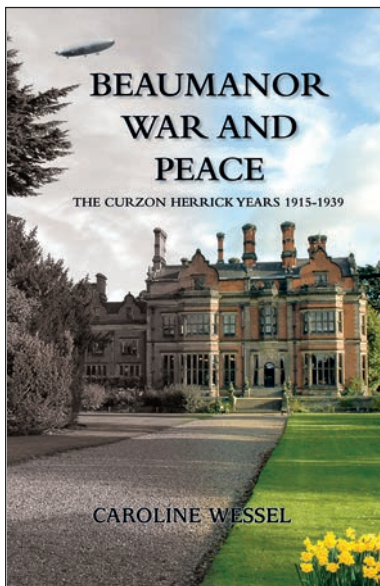
### **BEAUMANOR WAR AND PEACE: THE CURZON HERRICK YEARS 1915 – 1939**

Caroline Wessel

The author, 288pp, illus., £9

Some aspects of the history of Beaumanor Hall are of course well known. The Grade II\* Hall close to Woodhouse Eaves was built by the architect William Railton for W. Perry Herrick between 1842 and 1853, and remained in the possession of the Herrick family until World War II. It was then requisitioned by the War Office for use as a secret listening station where encrypted enemy signals were intercepted and sent to Station X at Bletchley Park for decoding. Since 1974 it has been owned by Leicestershire County Council and used as an education and conference centre. This new publication fills a significant gap in the history of Beaumanor Hall from the early stages of World War I through to 1939. As the author notes, very little was previously known about this period, but her own extensive research, along with 'unexpected access to revealing private correspondence, contact with present-day relatives, and the discovery of a huge hoard of hitherto uncatalogued documents', have been brought together in a fascinating and extremely entertaining account.

The First World War period is explored in some detail, both in terms of military combat and the Home Front around Beaumanor, beginning in 1915 with the death of Mrs Perry Herrick. The family estates were inherited by William Montagu Curzon, William Perry Herrick's 'favourite godson' and grandson of the 1st Earl Howe. Only 24 years old at the time, he is described as 'a shy and melancholy young man', but his life at Beaumanor, and those of his wife, friends and local families, make absorbing reading. Lavish post-war parties are recreated with the help of



Fortnum and Mason menus for the hampers sent up to Beaumanor by train; and the 1920s Visitors' Book, with over 750 signatures reflecting a cross section of the famous of the time - among them the film star Gladys Cooper, the future actor and film star David Niven, and writers Barbara Cartland and Alec Waugh. The promise of the story of

'Leicestershire's own Downton Abbey and some extraordinary and almost unbelievable stories' is amply fulfilled; but readers should be left to discover and enjoy these for themselves. *Beaumanor War and Peace* is a compelling read, and is thoroughly recommended.

Cynthia Brown

### **BUCKMINSTER AND SEWSTERN: VICTORIA COUNTY HISTORY OF LEICESTERSHIRE**

Pamela J. Fisher

Victoria County History, 2017, 127pp, illus., ISBN 9781909646698, £12

The parish of Buckminster embraces the village of Buckminster itself and that of Sewstern – two settlements established before 1086, but with quite distinctive characters. How and why they developed so differently over the centuries is explored in depth in this volume, the second 'Short' from VCH Leicestershire following the publication of *Castle Donington* in 2017. Each is considered within the standard VCH format, based on years of scholarly research by the author and an extensive team of volunteers. The Introduction covers boundaries and the extent of the parish, the physical characteristics of both villages, communication, settlement and population. Changes in transport and landownership were clearly of particular significance. For instance, the transport of livestock by rail from the 1840s had an adverse effect on the droving trade along Sewstern Lane, turning the village into a 'rural backwater'. The built environment of Buckminster was significantly changed from the 1790s following the move of William Manners to the village, the building of his new country house, Buckminster Hall, and the 'common stylistic features' that identified buildings as estate properties. Sir William and his descendants also owned farmland and houses in Sewstern,

but allowed the village to develop organically, and properties to reflect the individuality of different freeholders.

Subsequent chapters deal in more detail with landownership, and the economic, social and religious history of the two villages, along with their local government. Buckminster was purely an agricultural village until the late eighteenth century, while Sewstern was better placed to attract business from travellers along Nottingham Road and had a wider range of occupations, including a tannery. Ironstone quarrying took place in both, and both came under the new Melton Poor Law Union in 1836; but an earlier arrangement for a joint workhouse lasted only nine years, and a strong sense of individual identity was reflected in separate Friendly Societies and charities for the poor of each village. There were successful joint activities, however, such as the Buckminster and Sewstern Pig Club. Founded in 1887, this was part of a national movement to encourage working class families to keep one or two pigs by insuring them against sudden death in exchange for a joining fee and small regular subscription. The sections on community activities and social welfare are particularly interesting in conveying the texture of life in each village, from their traditional feasts to the 'improving' nature of the Buckminster reading room and the Sewstern Institute – and the separate meetings held in 1909 about establishing separate football clubs. As one would expect from a VCH publication, there is an extensive index, along with detailed references, notes on sources, a list of abbreviations, and a glossary of 'technical' terms. The images and the paper on which the book is printed are also of a very high quality, and do full justice to an intriguing account of the two villages over more than 1000 years of shared history.

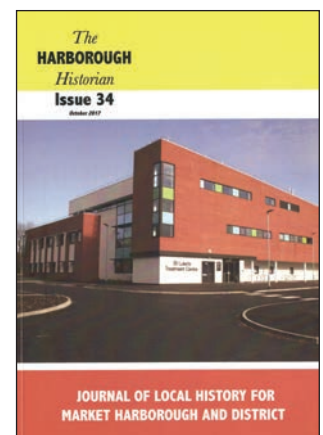
Cynthia Brown

### **HARBOROUGH HISTORIAN, NO. 34**

Various Authors

Market Harborough Historical Society, 2017, 57pp, illus., £5.50

In the first of two articles on Harborough in World War I, Pat Perkins focuses on the 'mothers, wives, daughters left at home to cope with the lack of resources, money, food and shortage of coal', some of whom organised fundraising activities or helped with the War Hospital Supply Depot in High Street. In a separate article Bob Hakewill provides more detail about the Depot, which was opened in September 1915 under the auspices of Queen





Mary's Needlework Guild and overseen by the Red Cross. Surgical dressings, splints, dressing jackets and 'frostbite stockings' were among the thousands of articles produced there by volunteers, and supplied to hospitals in Northamptonshire, Rutland, Leicester and beyond, including the British Expeditionary Force No. 8 Red Cross Hospital. David Holmes provides an overview of public health in Harborough from the early nineteenth century to the opening of the new St Luke's Treatment Centre in Market Harborough. In 'A happy eternity' Rosalind Willatts explores some of the headstones remaining in the graveyard of the ruined church of St Mary in Arden, most of them of Swithland slate with 'diverse lettering, ornate capitals and wonderful flourishes' as shown in the accompanying images. Urns, skulls and cupids abound, but the most unusual must be that of Samuel Turner, who produced the first map of Harborough in 1776 and engraved the elaborate stone himself, 'leaving others to finish the date'. A hundred years of Harborough weather records are analysed by Douglas Wooldridge, based mainly on observations made by his father from 1931 after concluding that earlier records were unreliable, and continued by Douglas after his father's death in 1965. These demonstrate that, amid the great variety of the British climate, rainfall in Harborough is amongst the lowest in the country, and it 'frequently escapes severe conditions experienced elsewhere'. Janice Morris contributes two articles, one on the link between the naturalist Denys Watkins Pitchford, Lamport and the nearby village of Faxton, and the second on the Northamptonshire poet John Clare and the environmental 'messages' to be drawn from his 'Lament of Swordy Well' in the twenty-first century. Other articles include Len Holden on the rise and decline of the coaching trade in Harborough; Edmund Brown on the estate maps of Poyntz Owsley Adams as they relate to the site of the Francis Hammond Arboretum in Harborough; and Stephen Butt on the conservation of the 'mud wall' at 70 High Street in Kibworth Beauchamp, the listed former front wall of an eighteenth century cottage. 'Tunnelling through the past' by Ian Howden and Des Brock outlines a project at Kelmarsh Hall to understand how the basement rooms have evolved over 300 years, while an article on employment trends in East Farndon from 1777 – 1911 by Alan Langley reveals a surprising range of occupations – 52 in 1911 among a population of only 193. The usual reports cover Harborough Museum, Society activities and Record Office acquisitions in 2016 relating to the Harborough district, but there is a new addition this year in the form of 'History's Odd Shorts' interspersed throughout the journal. As we have come to expect of the *Harborough Historian*, this all adds up to an absorbing, entertaining and informative read.

Cynthia Brown

**THE HINCKLEY HISTORIAN: MAGAZINE OF HINCKLEY AND DISTRICT MUSEUM, NO. 79, SUMMER 2017; No. 80, WINTER 2017**

Various authors

Hinckley and District Museum, 2017, 45pp (Summer), 40pp (Winter), illus., £1.50

A substantial article by Ian Phillpott traces the family of Inchle Knight, a chemist and druggist who traded in Hinckley for many years from the 1840s after moving from Nuneaton. Using newspapers and directories as well as Census records, he builds a picture of a 'stalwart worker' and 'self-made man' who also contributed significantly to Hinckley as a director of a building society, a member of the Ratepayers' Association Committee, a Waywarden (elected to supervise the highways), and a Poor Law Guardian – albeit one slightly moderated by a report of an assault on the landlord of a local pub. A shorter article by Alan Briggs covers the Hinckley branch of the Ashby and Nuneaton Railway and its origins in relation to the movement of coal from the North West Leicestershire and South Derbyshire coalfield. Although short-lived, the local lore that 'no trains ever ran along the line' is thoroughly debunked! This edition also includes an account of Hinckley UDC's pioneering Council housing scheme to 'provide good housing to working class people' before the First World War, and before it had any obligation to do so. A historical sketch of the Hinckley Corps of the Salvation Army, taken from a fiftieth anniversary publication in 1931, is continued in the Winter edition, and both editions have extracts from *Pigot's Directories* (1828-29 and 1831) offering insights into late Georgian Hinckley. The main feature of the Winter 2017 edition is a walk around seventeenth century Hinckley.

Cynthia Brown

**HINCKLEY'S MEDIEVAL PRIORY, PARTS ONE AND TWO**

Anthony G. Wallis

Hinckley Archaeological Society, Part one, 2010; Part two, 2016

These two slim volumes collect together all the published and unpublished source material the author has discovered relating to the history of Hinckley's Benedictine Priory. The motivation for this work was partly to clarify the chronology of developments when excavations were taking place in the early years of the twenty-first century, but also to prove that Hinckley was not a backwater in terms of the religious history of the area. Previous writing about the Priory had suggested that Hinckley was of little importance, 'being a small cell with two monks present only to collect and return any income' from its landholdings to its parent, the Abbey of Lyre in Normandy. The author, with a strong sense of local pride in the history of the Priory, has used the limited

documentation, to show that its significance was greater than previously thought.

The early history and origins of Hinckley Priory are traced in volume 1, as is the question of how much land belonged to the Priory in its heyday of the thirteenth to fourteenth centuries, and its decline into financial difficulties during the fifteenth century. Volume 2 continues the story into the modern era, for although there are no signs of the buildings left above ground today, Priory House, which survived into the eighteenth century, was part of the original building, and the University of Leicester's archaeological survey of the site of the demolished vicarage in 2015 found masonry possibly from this Priory House.

In trying to trace the history of this Priory the author has had to piece together some fragmentary evidence, helped by the relatively recent discovery of documents in King's College, Cambridge. But there are still a lot of 'probably', 'possibly' and 'it seems to be' qualifications in the evidence available, and it is unlikely, given his comprehensive survey of a limited body of documentation, that we will ever know much more. The volumes are well illustrated in both black and white and colour illustrations throughout, with helpful captions. Overall this is an impressive and thorough piece of research. It will be of interest to historians wishing to know more about the religious history of Leicestershire and the development of 'alien' priories in England, and to archaeologists trying to reconstruct a religious site from very little physical evidence.

Margaret Bonney

### **MEMORIES OF A GENERATION**

Oadby and Wigston Age UK

The Authors, 2017, 172pp, illus., ISBN 9781527212114, £10

This fascinating insight into the lives of 34 interviewees reveals much not just about Oadby and Wigston in the twentieth century, but also of the wider world, society and culture of the time. The birth dates of those interviewed range from 1918 to 1940, and so their experiences cover the pre-World War II period and the austerity years of the late 1940s and early 1950s, right through to increased leisure time, Teddy boys, popular music, dancing, going to the cinemas and foreign holidays. The stories are, in some cases, very detailed and vivid, and run to several pages. Others are only fragments. They are arranged in alphabetical surname order and are accompanied by family photos where possible, which gives a family album feel to the whole publication. Most of the interviewees lived unremarkable lives, in the sense that nothing they did 'hit the headlines' – but in each one there is something of interest or which sparks a memory. There is also humour throughout these interviews, and humanity. All the participants have been involved with

Oadby & Wigston's Age UK centre in Paddock Street, and many have contributed greatly as volunteers to make the centre a success. This book values and acknowledges their contributions, but it does more than this. One appendix details the history of the charity and its centre, and the other consists of very revealing comments by local students who were involved in the interviewing project. This project will have a legacy – not only by demonstrating the value of oral history interviewing, but also by showing that it can be a bridge between generations, a means of breaking down barriers and providing insights into lived-in history.

Margaret Bonney

### **THE HISTORY OF RATBY LOCAL HISTORY GROUP JOURNAL, NO. 5**

Doug Harwood, ed.

Ratby Local History group, 2017, 175pp, illus.

As the title suggests this is the fifth in a series of books looking at the history of the village of Ratby. It has four main articles on diverse subjects relating to the village, the first of which looks at the life of William Astill, who played cricket for Leicestershire and England. The second article is part two of a study of how the poor of Ratby were looked after by the village and the workhouse system from 1830 to 1911, while Old Hayes farm and Sills Yard and its occupants over the years are the subjects of the third and fourth articles. There are also some shorter items which fall under the heading of 'Ratby Shorts and Updates'. All the articles are well written and researched, and make interesting reading. The illustrations are all very clear and relevant to the subject matter. Though the main target audience for this book is clearly those with an interest in the village of Ratby, its history and its people, for anyone who wishes to explore the topics it covers more widely, it would certainly be worth a read.

Lois Edwards

### **ROTHLEY SOKE: LANDSCAPE AND PEOPLE**

Vanessa McLoughlin

Cloister House Press, 2017, 315pp, illus., ISBN 9781909465640, £20

The origins and function of medieval Rothley, its soke and its parish are explored here in depth, based on research carried out by the author for her PhD thesis in the Department of English Local History at the University of Leicester. Its manorial lords, the Knights Templar who acquired the estate in the thirteenth century, and the Knights Hospitaller who succeeded them after the suppression of the order in the early fourteenth century, are considered in some detail in the context of their wider religious obligations in the Middle East, including the need to raise money to fulfil

them. One source of this was the rents of their tenants; another, less profitable, the grant of a market and fair in the early fourteenth century. Much information about these and other aspects of the relationship between the manorial lords is drawn from the Rothley custumal, a written account of the customs of the manor, of which a sixteenth century copy survives. This covers, amongst many other aspects, the services performed by the tenants in exchange for their tenements, as well as the rights granted to the Templars by the King in 1234.

Other surviving records demonstrate the extent of conflict arising during the medieval period, from the definition of degrees of freedom and unfreedom – partly related to the rights of peasants to use the king's courts – along with disputes over taxation and tenants' rights. As the author notes, the 'real interest' of her research lies not only in the ability of the 'ordinary' people of Rothley and its soke to influence the formation of its landscape, but the control they were able to obtain over their lives through collective action. The agrarian organisation of the soke is also considered, along with its holdings in other medieval parishes, and there are extensive appendices exploring a reference to a vill called Menton in the custumal, the use of inquisitions as evidence for peasant wealth, and images of land and buildings in Rothley. Detailed references and a comprehensive index and bibliography complete this very comprehensive analysis of a formative period in the history of Rothley.

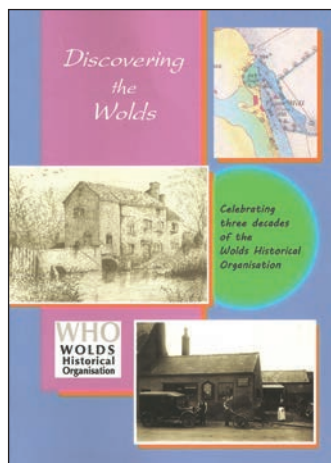
Cynthia Brown

### **DISCOVERING THE WOLDS: CELEBRATING THREE DECADES OF THE WOLDS HISTORICAL ORGANISATION**

Bob Trubshaw, ed.

Wolds Historical Organisation, 2017, 100pp, illus., ISBN 9781951734343, £9.95

Around 1500 years of the history of the western Leicestershire Wolds are covered in this publication, concluding with an overview of the Wolds Historical Organisation itself in the 30 years since its formation in 1987. It begins with an exploration of Anglo-Saxon boundary shrines in the county by Bob Trubshaw, based mainly on the evidence of place names. In another substantial contribution, Philip Thorpe gives an account of his research into the Loseby family,



prompted by a wedding photograph taken in 1901 at Underhill Farm, Stanford on Soar. Joan and Peter Shaw contribute chapters on John Noon of Burton Hall, the Burton parish constable 1810 – 36 and the Red Lion Inn at Prestwold. Some of the 24 chapters are just a page or two long, but they are no less interesting for that. One features the lid of a jar of Holworthy's Imperial Anodyne Ointment 'for the cure of scrofulous and scorbutic humours and inveterate ulcers', sold by the proprietor in Wymeswold, dug up there and 'considered to be a rarity by collectors'. Another points to the journal of prescriptions kept by the local pharmacist Marshall Brown from 1869 – 86, with a plea for help in transcribing the entries. Other topics, too numerous to list in their entirety, range from the 'kiss of peace' at Zouch Bridge between Edward II and Thomas of Lancaster in 1318, Gothic Revival carvings at Walton on the Wolds, a diary started in World War I by 12 year old Lily Brown of Wymeswold, and the early years of Wymeswold bowls club. One of the most intriguing examines the 'myth' of Lymeswold cheese, launched in 1982, the first new British cheese for 200 years. Was it originally meant to be called Wymeswold; and was its original label inspired by the Stockwell in Wymeswold – or is this just 'a good story'? This publication plays its part in preserving the legacy of the past, as well as being a very fitting way to mark an important anniversary.

Cynthia Brown

### ***Other recent publications***

#### **A COUNTRY CHURCHYARD: A STUDY OF THE GRAVESTONES AND MEMORIALS IN BITTESWELL**

Vivien Weller

Unpublished thesis, 2017, deposited with Leicestershire and Rutland Family History Society

#### **THE LOUGHBOROUGH NATURALISTS' CLUB 50TH ANNIVERSARY, GOLDEN JUBILEE PUBLICATION (PLUS CD ROM SCANS OF BIOLOGICAL RECORDS 1961 – 2010)**

Loughborough Naturalists' Club

Anchor Print, 2017

#### **THURNBY AND BUSHBY HERITAGE TRAIL**

Thurnby and Bushby Society

The Authors, 2017

#### **A NEW LIFE IN THE COUNTRY AT WISTOW, LEICESTERSHIRE, INCLUDING THE BUILDING OF WISTAN LE DALE MODEL VILLAGE**

A. Simpson

Anchor Print 2017



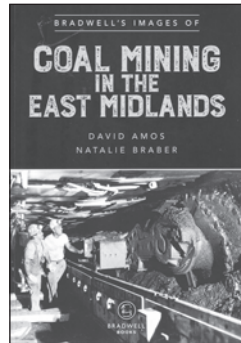
## INDUSTRY AND TRANSPORT

### BRADWELL'S IMAGES OF COAL MINING IN THE EAST MIDLANDS

David Amos and Natalie Braber

Bradwell Books, 2017, 128pp, illus., ISBN 9781910551875, £9.99

This pictorial history of coal mining in the East Midlands embraces the North and South Nottinghamshire and North Derbyshire coalfields along with that of Leicestershire and South Derbyshire, with a focus on the last collieries operating in each region, mainly into the 1990s. The Leicestershire and South Derbyshire section accounts for around a third of the whole, and covers Snibston, Ellistown, Bagworth, South Leicester and Whitwick collieries, along with Asfordby mine, Cadley Hill colliery and the Donisthorpe/Rawdon complex – the closure of the latter in 1991 marking the end of deep coal mining in this part of the region. It is rich in high quality photographs of the men who worked in the mines, as well as those of the buildings that have now largely disappeared, including the Rawdon headstock which is shown crashing to the ground during the demolition of the site in 1991. One of the most striking images is that of pit ponies in the 1960s being brought out for their annual 'short taste of freedom' before going back underground. A brief history of each mine places the images into their wider context, as does a section on suggested further reading. The remaining sections, while not directly related to Leicestershire, offer interesting comparisons and a more rounded picture of coal mining in the East Midlands. There is also a list of some East Midlands digital heritage projects between 2010 and 2016, and another of coal mining heritage groups in the region.



Cynthia Brown

### LEICESTER'S STATIONS: A SHORT HISTORY

Paul Banbury (PaulMedia)

Leicestershire Industrial History Society, 2017, 28pp, illus., £5

Nine of Leicester's stations feature in this booklet, some of them 'subsidiaries' of the four main lines built between 1832 and 1899. The first, the Leicester and Swannington Railway, was designed specifically to carry freight, and it took some time for accommodation to be provided for the passengers that it also carried. The Campbell Street station of the Midland Railway, opened in 1840, was the first to be built with platforms, followed in the later nineteenth century by the Great Northern terminal on Belgrave Road – the starting point for travel to east coast resorts – and the Great Central in 1899. Brief histories of all these stations are supported by

high quality images and maps, along with those of smaller stations along their lines. One of the least known is probably that on the Midland line at Welford Road to serve the Cattle Market opened in 1872 on Aylestone Road. The booklet concludes with an outline of the proposal for a major new railway museum alongside the Leicester North station of the Great Central railway. This project is currently on hold, but this brief account will in itself be a valuable piece of Leicester's railway history.

Cynthia Brown

### MIDLAND RED IN LEICESTER: THE EARLY YEARS AND RELATED ANNIVERSARIES CELEBRATED IN 2017

Mike Greenwood Publishing, 2017, 39pp, illus., ISBN 9781999820909, £8.95

Significant anniversaries of four garages associated with the Leicestershire operations of the Midland Red bus company have prompted this publication: Frog Island, the first to open in 1922; Southgate Street (1927); Sandacre Street (1937); and Wigston (1957). It also marks the twentieth anniversary of the national launch of Arriva plc in 1997, successor in the form of Arriva Fox County to the original Midland Red company and its own successors, Midland Red East and Midland Fox. The first section provides a comprehensive history of routes in Leicester and Leicestershire under individual service numbers, identifying changes and new additions over time. The general reader should not be put off by this level of detail, accompanied as it is by very interesting images of timetables and guides to services, rules and regulations, a colour-tinted photo of a 1920s 'Q' for Queen bus approaching the war memorial in Syston, and a newspaper memoir of one of the company's drivers. Subsequent sections deal with each garage in turn, and are also well illustrated with a range of high quality images. The final chapter explains how the change from Midland Red to Arriva came about, including the impact of the Transport Acts in 1980 and 1985. The authors are planning a full history of the Midland Red in Leicester for its centenary in 2022. In the meantime, this very informative publication will evoke many memories of local bus travel in the recent past, as well as more distant times.

Cynthia Brown

### PIT TALK: COAL MINERS' DIALECT OF THE EAST MIDLANDS

Natalie Braber, Claire Ashmore and Suzy Harrison

Bradwell Books, 2017, 80pp, illus., ISBN 9781910551806, £3.99

This book brings together some of the findings of recent projects to explore the language of miners in the East Midlands, which was seen as 'endangered' due to the

closure of the coalfields in the region. In the process of interviewing miners and their families, it became clear that there were significant variations in 'pit talk' within the region, with ample scope for different views on descriptions of the same terms. Some of these are indicated in the 'Dictionary' that constitutes most of the book. For instance, the term 'corporal' could be used instead of 'manager', as in 'senior haulage corporal', but was commonly used in Leicestershire to describe the man who laid the rails and sleepers, and in Derbyshire to describe the rail on which tubs would run. Such variations could lead to some confusion, even when pits were geographically quite close to each other. As one of the interviewees said: 'When I first moved from Rawdon to Whitwick I found some of their terminology quite alien because I couldn't understand what they were saying'. 'Ragarms', a nickname for a lazy workers, seems to be confined to Derbyshire, but other terms, particularly 'snap' to describe food and those referring to tools and machinery, were more widely applicable. A short section at the end of the book draws together some reflections on the influence of the language of 'outsiders', in the sense of migrants to the coalfields from other parts of Britain, and summarises other aspects of the industry, including its working conditions and dangers, and the impact of mechanisation. Along with a poem written by one interviewee and a useful select bibliography, it will no doubt evoke more memories as well as preserving an important aspect of the heritage of Leicestershire and the East Midlands more widely.

Cynthia Brown

**WEST BRIDGE WHARF AND STATION: THE STORY OF THE FIRST RAILWAY HEADQUARTERS IN THE MIDLANDS**

Leicestershire Industrial History Society  
The Authors, 2017

What is now Rally Park in Leicester was once part of the 24 acre West Bridge wharf and station railway complex of the Leicester and Swannington Railway, easily the largest in the Midlands. Just how large it was can be seen at a glimpse from the double page map in the centre of this booklet, another welcome addition to the LIHS series about the railway. It traces its development from the original plans of 1830, through the acquisition of a 'huge' parcel of land west of the canal, and the many obstacles and challenges that attended its building. The booklet is generously illustrated with images of tracks and platforms, loco sheds, tanks and bridges, and also reproduces a 1997 article by Tony Brooks about his experiences as a driver on the railway. He recalls that: 'the shunting in the really old parts of the wharf was done by two very large horses, 'like Shires. They had a special harness and a long chain which hooked onto the

wagon. They were very crafty: they could pull two loaded coal wagons but would only pull one if they had anything to do with it'.

Cynthia Brown

***Other recent publications***

**THE GREAT CENTRAL RAILWAY (HERITAGE RAILWAY GUIDE)**

Michael A. Vanns  
Pen & Sword Transport, 2017

**MIDLAND MAIN LINES: COVENTRY TO LEICESTER VIA NUNEATON AND SOUTH TO RUGBY**

Vic Mitchell and Keith Smith  
Middleton Press, 2017

**MIDLAND MAIN LINES: LEICESTER TO NOTTINGHAM, ALSO SYSTON TO MELTON MOWBRAY**

Vic Mitchell and Keith Smith  
Middleton Press, 2018

**MIDLAND RETROSPECTIVE**

John Earl and Steve Huson  
Midland Railway Society, 2017

**STEAM IN THE EAST MIDLANDS AND EAST ANGLIA: THE RAILWAY PHOTOGRAPHS OF R. J. (RON) BUCKLEY**

Brian J. Dixon (compiler)  
The History Press, 2018

***MILITARY AND WAR***

**ANN AYRE HELY: A CRIMEAN WAR NURSE FROM RAVENSTONE, LEICESTERSHIRE**

Wendy Freer  
Pudding Bag Productions, 2016, 68pp, illus., ISBN 9781326888404, £6.99

When we think of nurses in the Crimean War images of Florence Nightingale spring to mind, possibly even of Mary Seacole, but this book introduces us to a local woman who went to serve as a nurse in the war. Ann Ayre Hely was born in Ravenstone in 1819 and went on to have an extraordinary life, especially for a woman born in the early nineteenth century. The author describes her life and also provides a background to the war and women's lives at the time. The hospitals and conditions that Ann would have worked in are described and put into context. Ann was clearly highly regarded as a nurse, and in 1897, at the age of 78, she was awarded the Royal Red Cross medal for exceptional services in military nursing. She died in 1902 in the Almshouses at

Ravenstone. The book is very well researched and illustrated, and the style of writing makes the information very accessible. It introduces the reader to a woman whose life and work had been largely forgotten, and will be of interest to readers with an interest in the history of women, of nursing, the Crimean War, and the village of Ravenstone itself.

Lois Edwards

**COME ON THE TIGERS: THE STORY OF PHILIP E. BENT VC, DSO**

Kenneth Hillier

Ashby-de-la-Zouch Museum, 2016, 66pp, illus., ISBN 9780957464063, £8.50

Lieutenant Philip Bent of the Leicestershire Regiment was awarded a posthumous Victoria Cross for his 'conspicuous bravery' in leading a successful counter-attack at Polygon Wood in Belgium in October 1917. Born in Halifax, Nova Scotia in 1891, he came to Britain with his mother Sophia around 1901, and from 1904-07 was a pupil at Ashby Grammar School. The time he spent in the town prompted this biography, which seeks to deal with some of the 'mysteries' of his life as well as a more recent controversy over the commemoration of his VC. While little is known of his personal experience, the section on the Grammar School gives a very good sense of its curriculum at that time, the nature of the teaching, and the physical condition of the buildings: an Inspector's Report in 1905 described the latter as gravely deficient, with 'depressing and irksome conditions' including small rooms and poor ventilation. Philip Bent dropped from sight for around 18 months after leaving the school, but reappeared in January 1909 as a cadet on HMS Conway, a training ship for potential merchant navy officers. He went on to serve an apprenticeship with the shipping company of J. Hardie and Co of Glasgow, gaining a Certificate of Competency as Second Mate of a Foreign-going Ship in 1914. In October that year he enlisted in the British Army at Edinburgh. Then in November 1914 he was granted a temporary commission in the 7th Leicestershire Regiment, and his subsequent military career, including the gallantry that earned him the VC, is described in detail in the remainder of the book. This may already be familiar to some readers, but gains considerably from being placed in the wider context of his earlier life, his family, and his commemoration. This includes the controversial decision in 2013 to deny him one of the paving stones installed in the home towns of British VC winners, on the grounds of his Canadian birth, and despite him having an English mother. Ashby Museum was among the organisations to protest until 'good sense prevailed', and in addition to having his name inscribed on the VC memorial at the National Memorial Arboretum,

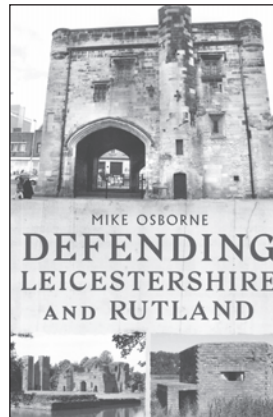
Philip Bent now has a commemorative paving stone in the town's memorial Garden, which was unveiled in 2017.

Cynthia Brown

**DEFENDING LEICESTERSHIRE AND RUTLAND**

Mike Osborne

Fonthill Media Limited, 2017 208 pp illus., ISBN 9781781555781, £16.99



This publication is in many ways built upon the work the author did with the Defence of Britain project undertaken in the 1990s, and adds to his other works on mainly nineteenth and twentieth century military buildings and defence systems. In this latest work he takes a broader view of 'defensive' structures, beginning with prehistoric camps and going right up to date with the

Cold War and its aftermath. As he points out, one would not immediately envisage Leicestershire and Rutland as counties with much of an imprint of war, being far from the coast and not the subject of major bombing campaigns. But it is precisely Leicester's Midland geography with its intersection of main roads that has seen it witness major battles such as Bosworth Field, and similarly just over the Northamptonshire border at Naseby.

The book is divided into chapters by chronology and takes an in-depth look at the wide ranging assortment of military and defensive works. Camps, forts and castles are covered in the early chapters, and their methods of construction and the purpose of their layout is explained. For the eighteenth to twentieth centuries, the growth of drill halls and barracks is explored, including examples of buildings that were converted from, and to other uses. The archaeology of air defence is also well covered. The book is very well researched and gives a lot of background information to provide context. It is well illustrated, with many black and white photographs, diagrams and occasional maps. Appendices give lists of buildings by type with full names and map references. Readers looking into the military landscape of the area will find this book packed with information. Perhaps most importantly, it provides a record of the vanishing evidence of temporary defence structures put up in the twentieth century.

Philip R. French

**FOR THE FALLEN: 'WE SHALL REMEMBER THEM'**

Charnwood Great War Centenary Project  
Charnwood Arts, 2017



This beautifully produced book forms part of the Charnwood Great War Centenary Project, which was completed in 2017. The project had its origins in a plan to restore and reposition the First World War memorials in All Saints with Holy Trinity Church in Loughborough. As part of the process, the names of those commemorated on the memorials were extensively researched to produce a *Book of Remembrance* which is displayed alongside the memorials. *For the Fallen* incorporates and expands upon material from this volume. Many of the biographies of the fallen are illustrated here with a personal photograph, making them all the more poignant, and the book is so arranged that their lives are very effectively linked with contextual information about events, individuals and local organisations relating to Loughborough and the Borough of Charnwood, as well as different campaigns of the war itself. The text is complemented by many high quality photographs and other images, and includes sections on local industries such as Brush, Morris Cranes, and the Taylor Bell Foundry family, four of whose sons died in the conflict. One of them, Pte John William Taylor, had earlier emigrated to Canada and was serving with the Canadian Expeditionary Force when he was killed in action in France in 1916. His sister Josephine served as a Red Cross nurse in France, but the role of women on the Home Front is also explored – not only in terms of war work itself but the loss of income and other practical issues with which they had to deal in the absence of their men. Other aspects include the impact of the war on local schools and the Loughborough Technical Institute, the role of sport in Loughborough, and Charnwood's own warhorse 'Songster'. There is also a detailed account of the Zeppelin raid on Loughborough in 1916, in which ten people were killed and twelve injured. This is an exceptional memorial to those who died in World War I, as well as an absorbing and informative contribution to the wider history of Loughborough and Charnwood.

Cynthia Brown

***Other recent publications***

**AIR RAID SHELTER STORIES: GRANBY PRIMARY SCHOOL DOES WORLD WAR II**  
Granby Primary School, Leicester  
The Authors, 2017

**ARNHEM: WALKING IN THEIR FOOTSTEPS – 156 PARACHUTE BTN & 4TH PARACHUTE BDE**  
John O'Reilly  
Thoroton Publishing, 2017

**FORGET ME NOT: WHAT OUR ANCESTORS DID IN THE FIRST WORLD WAR**  
Hoby and District Local History Society  
The authors, 2017

**HOBY ENTERTAINS AGAIN (DVD)**  
Hoby and District Local History Society  
The authors, 2017

**OPS IN A WIMPY: MEMOIRS OF A SUB-HUNTING PILOT**  
Graham Harrison  
CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2017

**RESOLUTION: TWO BROTHERS. A NATION IN CRISIS. A WORLD AT WAR (18TH CENTURY) (CHARLES AND ROBERT MANNERS)**  
David Rutland and Emma Ellis  
Head of Zeus, 2017

**A SCHOOL IN ARMS: UPPINGHAM AND THE GREAT WAR**  
Timothy Halstead  
Helion and Company, 2017

**THE WALDENS OF WIGSTON AT WAR**  
John Walden  
The Author, 2017

***RELIGION AND CHURCHES***

**THE ROYAL MAUNDY: THE VISIT OF HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN TO LEICESTER CATHEDRAL THURSDAY 13TH APRIL 2017**  
The Royal Maundy  
The Author, 2017, 35pp, illus., ISBN 9786000009618, £5

This limited edition souvenir is primarily a pictorial record of the Queen's visit through from preparations to the event to the lunch that followed the service at the Cathedral. It also provides a brief history of Royal Maundy and the annual Service – the only occasion when the monarch goes to the recipients of a gift or award. The images are beautifully reproduced, but the captions, in pale pink type, can be difficult to read. A list of the recipients will undoubtedly prove valuable for future reference, and photographs of some of them, although not identified by name, give a good sense of the range of backgrounds from which they were drawn.

Cynthia Brown

**AUTHORS AND PUBLISHERS**

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