



# Leicestershire VCH News

Issue 13

Summer 2022

## Inside this issue

Some Lutterworth Inns	2
Summary of the Year	3
Loughborough: Educational Pathfinders	3-4
200 Club Winners	5
Out and About	5
Brooksby	6
Providing Loughborough's Cemetery	6-7
Help us when you Shop Online	7
Coston: Church and Village	7
Our Paperback Histories	8

## Lutterworth Book Launch

We promised last year that we would let our supporters know when our Lutterworth book was published. The final stages of turning our text and illustrations into a paperback book have taken longer than expected, but copies are now being printed.

**This new book, by Pamela Fisher and Andrew Watkins, will be launched at an event in the Greyhound Inn, Market Place, Lutterworth on Wednesday 26 October 2022, at 6.30pm for 7pm.**

Anyone is welcome to attend, but places are limited and **must be booked** in advance, either by email to [pjf7@leicester.ac.uk](mailto:pjf7@leicester.ac.uk) or by telephoning 0116 252 5722. The Greyhound, one of the town's historic coaching inns, is well signposted. There are several public car parks in the town which are free after 6pm.



The Greyhound Inn

Copies of the book will be available to purchase on the night (cash or cheque only) at the special price of £10.

We recognise that some people who wish to buy a copy may be unable to attend this event. We will continue to sell copies at £10 until 31 December 2022, if ordered direct from ourselves (plus £2.50 for postage and packing to a UK address). For those who live in or near Lutterworth, copies will also be available after 26 October from Lutterworth Museum, which will then have reopened (Thursdays to Sundays, 10-3) in new premises on Market Street (please check times before travelling).

The book includes extensive new research into the history of the town from earliest times to the 21st century. John Wyclif (or Wycliffe) and Sir Frank Whittle are included, as are many other aspects of the town's history that are less well known. Whether you want to know more about the landscape, the market, the role of transport in shaping the town, its schools, churches, community or social life through the ages, you will find much to interest you within these pages.

From 1 January 2023 the price will increase to £12 (plus P&P if applicable) if ordered from ourselves. We cannot take card payments, but will accept cheques or bank transfers (details available on request). Our contact details appear on the back page of this Newsletter.

We are very grateful to our funders, our volunteer researchers and everyone who has supported this publication in any way.

# Some Lutterworth Inns

Lutterworth's inns provided food and drink to visitors and residents, a place to socialise, sometimes to trade or to stay overnight.

A survey of 1509 identifies five inns, the Crown and the Swan on High Street and the Bull, the Pannier and the Saracen's Head on Woodmarket, suggesting Woodmarket was a busy street of some importance, confirming the impression left by the width of this road.

Records from the 1560s give a flavour of social life in the town. Customers of the inns were found to be playing 'shovelboard' (a game similar to 'shove ha'penny', where players try to make coins move up a board to land within a square). Money was bet on how many coins fell wholly within a square, and gambling was illegal. The probate inventory listing the assets of innkeeper Isaac Billington in 1676 shows that his inn had a 'Shoveboard chamber' which contained just one piece of furniture—a table.

Another survey of 1607 only specifically identifies one inn, the Crown. This was a large building of six bays with a separate malthouse of 7 bays. Two properties on Woodmarket also appear to have been large inns: both were houses of 5 bays, one with a malthouse of 6 bays. Malt would have been made for brewing, with some probably sold to other brewers who lacked the large space needed to make their own.

In 1686 the War Office completed a survey of available beds and stables at inns, where soldiers could be billeted if necessary. Only the totals for each place survive, and identify 94 beds and stables for 302 horses in Lutterworth. This ratio of more than 3 stables for each bed exceeds that seen in other Leicestershire towns. It is too early for the coaching trade, but Lutterworth had a horse fair from 1607, which was presumably once so successful that innkeepers had invested in building additional stables for this trade.



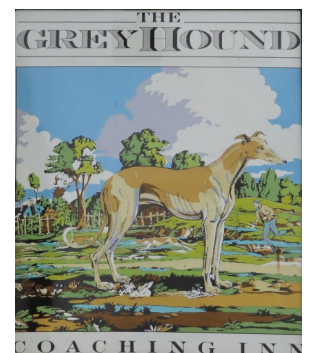
The Former Denbigh Arms, on High Street

The coach trade arrived a century later. Although Lutterworth never benefitted from being an overnight stop, the travellers on many of the coaches 'supped' in the town. Five routes passed through Lutterworth: three linked London to Manchester, Chester and Liverpool, and two were cross-country routes—Cambridge to Birmingham and Leicester to Oxford. William Mash, the innkeeper at the Denbigh Arms in the 1780s, was the part-owner of two coaching businesses. The London to Chester coach was a mailcoach, and William Mash was also the postmaster. His son Stephen succeeded him as tenant at the Denbigh Arms and also as postmaster.

The coaching trade came to an end when railways opened, but with no station in Lutterworth until 1899 there was still good business for innkeepers to make by combining their offer for overnight accommodation in the town with omnibus travel between their inn and the station at Ullesthorpe, which opened in 1840. At different times William Veers of the Denbigh Arms and Edward Voss of the Fox both offered services to the station.

Inns were sociable places to meet, and the larger inns had function rooms that could be hired. These were regularly used for holding auctions, inquests on those who had died suddenly, dances and sometimes plays.

The Greyhound, where we are holding our book launch (see front page) is first mentioned by name in 1772, when the proprietor was John Corn. He was moving and selling his furniture and other items at auction, including oak four-poster beds, chests of drawers, goose-feather mattresses, kitchen ware and mirrors, many of which may have been purchased by whoever was taking over the business.



Could the inn then have been substantially rebuilt? The Greyhound as we know it today may be the 'strong, new, well-built commodious INN, situate in the Beast-Market' that was available to let in 1773. This inn had a cellar, wine vault, front parlour, back parlour, front dining room, kitchen, scullery, chambers, brewhouse, coal-house and stabling for 15 horses. The stables had not been rebuilt, and the advertisement reveals they had two rooms above them 'which have often been used for a Play-House and Dressing-Room'.

# Summary of the Year, 2021/22

It has been a difficult year for the Trust financially, as the number of regular donors (our Friends scheme and 200 Club) has declined and events have not returned to pre-pandemic levels. Fundraising will be of vital importance in the year ahead.

Last autumn we were sorry to lose the services of Professor Andrew Hopper as a member of our Executive Committee, following his appointment as Professor in Local and Social History at the University of Oxford. We wish him well in his new role.

We have welcomed as a new trustee Dr Richard Jones, Associate Professor of Landscape History in the Centre for English Local History, University of Leicester, cementing the connections and relationship between the Trust and the University of Leicester. Richard's prime interests span history and archaeology across the whole of the Middle Ages.

We are proud to have completed our paperback history of Lutterworth (see page 1). This is the first VCH history of a Leicestershire market town since the publication of

the history of Market Harborough in volume IV of the Leicestershire 'big red books' in 1964.

The major part of our work this year has been research towards a social, cultural and religious history of Loughborough since 1750. This has focused on collecting information about the histories of the many (past and present) places of worship in the town and also drawing up a skeleton history of the various schools that have been in Loughborough since 1750 (see pages 3-4 for a taster). We aim to add further research with the help of volunteers in 2022/3. Dr Andrew Watkins has also begun research on medieval Loughborough.

Dr Alan Fox has completed a full draft of a history of Brooksby for the VCH and this has been placed online (see page 6).

Dr Pam Fisher has completed two forms of guide to the history of St Andrew's church in Coston, and has also set out the results of this research in the form of partial VCH parish history sections, which are now also online (see page 7).

## Loughborough: Educational Pathfinders

The history of Loughborough's schools is complex, partly because there have been so many of them, but also because they are so varied, in terms of their ownership/management structure, the nature of the education they offered and the type of building they occupied.

Within the town there are, or have been, private fee-paying schools, endowed schools (such as the Grammar and Girls' High School), 'voluntary' or 'non-provided' schools (linked to the Church of England and the Roman Catholic Church), Board Schools (managed by an elected board and funded by the rates), council schools (managed by the Town or County Council), infant, junior, senior and 'all age' schools, boys' schools and girls' schools, selective and comprehensive schools, etc.

Among these, three schools stand out as pathfinders. A plaque on Chesterton House in Rectory Place (right) records that the school that opened here on 11 March 1850 was 'the first girls' grammar school in England'.



Some of the history of this school has been told in books about the grammar or endowed schools of the town, intertwined with the histories of the other endowed schools. Whether it was actually the first grammar school for girls could be debated, and we are still teasing that out, but it was almost certainly the first or second in the country of any significant size. Research is ongoing.

Also notable, for different reasons, is Rosebery Street school, built by Loughborough school board in 1897. This was an era when schools for more than 250 pupils were generally divided into girls' and boys' departments, each on separate floors with its own head-teacher, as built by the board in Cobden Street (1880, rebuilt 1904) and Shakespeare Street (1887). Rosebery Street opened as a single-storey mixed school for 540 boys and girls, with an infant department for 120 children.



**Rosebery Street school , built in 1897**

Loughborough was also at the forefront of the development of secondary education. As a borough with a population exceeding 10,000, Loughborough Town Council became a separate education authority under the Education Act of 1902. Across the remainder of the county, education became the responsibility of Leicestershire county council.

The school leaving age increased from 12 to 14 in 1918, effective from 1921. Loughborough Education Committee began discussing with HM Inspector of Schools in 1920 how best to introduce a broader education for older children. The Director of Education for Leicestershire also attended, and perhaps viewed Loughborough, with 4,000 school children, including c.1,200 over the age of 11, as an ideal pilot for a county scheme.

It would not be economic to adapt every school in the town, and neither was it possible to build a new school for 1,200 'senior' children so soon after the First World War, but the older children could be grouped together in two or three of the town's existing schools, where classrooms could be adapted for practical lessons.

The changes took place on a single day: 9 April 1923. All children under 11 years attending Churchgate school moved to other council schools. Children aged over 11 in Cobden and Shakespeare Street schools were

transferred to Churchgate to join the older Churchgate children. Children over 11 years in Rendell Street school transferred to Rosebery Street school, which continued to cater for all ages.

The two Church of England schools in the town also joined the scheme, with all children over 11 years at Emmanuel school transferring to the Warner school, and children between 5 and 11 years at Warner school moving to Emmanuel. The Roman Catholic schools were invited to send their 'senior' children to one of the 'senior' schools, but declined and continued to teach all ages. Children attending the Grammar School or the Girls' High School were not affected.

The Education Committee may have had no inkling that Churchgate school (built in 1825) would soon lose its registration, but in 1924 its premises were effectively condemned by the central Board of Education, which described them as 'unsuitable' and 'incapable of improvement'. A new senior school had to be built.

The council purchased a house ('Limehurst') with nearly 6 acres of land on Bridge Street in 1925 as a site for a new senior school. The Education Committee visited new senior schools in Mansfield and Leeds to gather ideas, and appear to have favoured the latter, designed by the Leeds borough architect, Fred Broadbent.

Architects were invited to submit designs for Limehurst school in competition, with Broadbent agreeing to be the assessor. The winning design was by Frank Tranmer of Harrogate, featuring two single-storey blocks for 400 girls and 400 boys on the 'semi-open-air principle' (floor to ceiling windows for maximum ventilation). In addition to classrooms and a cinema to show educational films, the boys' block would have rooms for woodwork, metalwork and science, while the girls would have handicraft and cookery rooms, and a flat would be laid out in the house for them to learn laundry and housewifery. The building cost £30,000.

Limehurst school opened in 1931, and offered an academic, commercial or practical curriculum (although those children whose parents wanted them to receive an academic education, and who could afford the fees, would have been attending the Grammar or Girls' High school). Limehurst was described in a Somerset newspaper in May 1931 as 'England's most modern school'.



**Limehurst School in 2022**

# 200 Club Winners

For an annual subscription of £50 (which can be paid in quarterly instalments) members of our 200 Club are entered into a quarterly draw for a chance to win a cash prize. We hoped we could attract 200 members, but there are currently just 54, and numbers are declining.

After paying the prizes, the 200 Club, together with our Friends scheme, currently provides £2,500 annually towards our costs. **This income is crucial to us.**

**Almost all our other income comprises grants towards specific projects, but grant funders rarely cover all projected costs**, and we also have to cover preparatory work towards grant applications, outreach, marketing and publicity, maintenance of websites and other general administration. We run a tight ship, which has become exceptionally tight at present.

If you are not already a 'Friend' or a 200 Club member, would you be willing to join? Do you know anyone else who might be willing to become a regular supporter? Do you have any ideas about how we can tell more potential donors about our work? We have achieved many things since the Trust was formed in 2008, but unfortunately **we cannot sustain our present level of**

**activity without increasing our sources of funds.** See the back page for how to join.

Our 200 Club winners since the last Newsletter are as follows:

September 2021 (56 tickets in the draw):  
1st, no. 52, £140.00 name withheld  
2nd, no. 33, £93.33 name withheld  
3rd, no. 5, £46.67 name withheld

December 2021 (55 tickets in the draw):  
1st, no. 50, £137.50 name withheld  
2nd, no. 6, £91.67 Chris Dyer  
3rd, no.41, £45.83 Chris Saul

March 2022 (54 tickets in the draw):  
1st, no. 31, £135.00 David Beeson  
2nd, no.16, £90.00 Derek Deadman  
3rd, no. 32, £45.00 Carol Cambers

June 2022 (54 tickets in the draw):  
1st, no. 22, £135.00 name withheld  
2nd, no. 37, £90.00 name withheld  
3rd, no.11, £45.00 Eric Whelan

A big thank you to all members for your support.

# Out and About

We hope one day that the history of every place in Leicestershire will be included in the Victoria County History series.

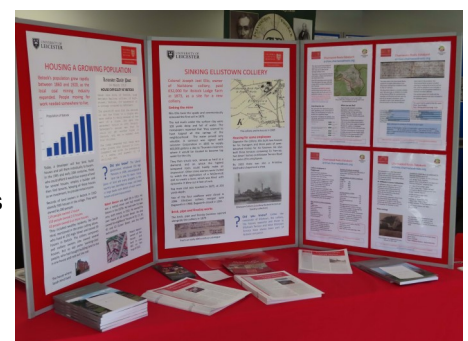
Progress is slow because fundraising is difficult (see above: our 200 Club has only 54 members, yet over one million people live in the county), but our presence at events raises awareness of what we are doing, which is essential if we are to attract further donations and win grants.

Compared with the years before the pandemic, there were fewer opportunities to show our work to the public in 2021/22. A further barrier is our present reliance on a very small number of people to give talks or take displays around the county.

The Global Leicester History Festival at De Montfort University in April enabled us to hear some interesting talks and display some of the initial research we have

been doing (and which continues) on migration into Loughborough from other countries. Our focus for the display was on the religious and cultural diversity of the town.

We were also pleased to have display stands at Snibston Colliery for a Heritage Open Day and at an Ibstock Historical Society event at the David Taylor Memorial Hall in Heather. Dr Pamela Fisher also delivered a talk about Ibstock's history (our last publication) to Evington History and Heritage Group.



Our Stand at Snibston Colliery Open Day

# Brooksby

Brooksby parish lies immediately south of the River Wreake and is bisected by the road between Leicester and Melton Mowbray. It is perhaps best known today for its agricultural college, now part of Brooksby Melton College, which began life in 1945 as a farm training centre for ex-servicemen. At one point the College occupied the whole parish, with three farms (totalling 485 acres) run commercially but providing hands-on training to students in both arable and livestock farming (sheep, dairy, pigs and poultry).



**Brooksby Hall dates from the late 16th century**

Dr Alan Fox has researched the history of Brooksby for the Victoria County History, and his draft text is now online at <https://www.history.ac.uk/research/victoria-county-history/county-histories-progress/leicestershire/brooksby>

Brooksby manor was held by the Villiers family from the 13th century, and their manor house became Brooksby

Hall. It was the birthplace of George Villiers in 1592, who entered court circles and became the 1st duke of Buckingham in 1623.

The village was never large, but the departure of 24 families in 1492, when Sir John Villiers converted 160 acres of open field land to private pasture, marked the end of the village community. By 1524 it appears that only the Villiers household lived in the parish.

The estate was sold by Sir William Villiers in 1708. The Hall and land were let to tenants until 1911, when the Hall and Home Farm were purchased by David Beatty (later Admiral and 1st Earl Beatty).

The parish church of St Michael and All Angels stands less than 50 metres to the south of the Hall and dates from the early 14th century. The church contains a fine monument to Sir William Villiers (d. 1711) and his wife Ann, a bronze bust of Earl Beatty and a large stone mural monument erected by Earl Beatty to the officers (named) and men (unnamed) who were killed in the Battle of Jutland, 31 May 1916.



**Monument in Brooksby church to Admiral Lord Beatty**

## Providing Loughborough's Cemetery

Concerns were growing in the 1850s that there could be public health risks if graveyards were too close to houses. The Burial Act of 1855 prevented any new burial ground being opened within 100 yards of any residential property. Although the Act did not apply to existing graveyards, the General Board of Health sent an inspector to Loughborough in 1855, who declared that they were all too close to houses.

An order was sealed by the Queen in Council in 1855 prohibiting any burials after September 1856 in the burial grounds and graveyards belonging to All Saints' church, the General Baptist church on Woodgate, the Particular Baptist Church on Sparrow Hill, the Independent chapel

and the Roman Catholic church. Burials could continue in Emmanuel churchyard.

The town swiftly formed a burial board to buy land and lay out a cemetery. After inviting tenders for a site of between 8 and 12 acres, the board agreed to purchase from the Revd Thomas Thorp of Wilford (Notts.) a field of just under 7 acres on Leicester Road at £190 per acre. This was adjacent to land owned by Edward Warner, a member of the burial board, who agreed to sell a small piece of that land to the board that would bring the total up to 7 acres.

Architects were invited to submit plans for a burial ground with two cemetery chapels that would cost no more than

£1,500. Twenty-six architects sent plans, some sending more than one, and these were displayed in the Town Hall for the public to view. A plan by Pearson Bellamy and John Spence Hardy of Lincoln was chosen. This included a pair of chapels linked by a loggia with three arches, surmounted by a spire. Each chapel had its own octagonal mortuary. Blue Claypole stone was chosen, with Bath stone dressings. The construction contract was awarded to John Sudbury of Loughborough.

The foundation stone was laid in July 1856 and the Anglican portion of the site was consecrated by the Bishop of Peterborough in August 1857 (the date for closing existing graveyards having been extended). The cemetery opened for burials in September 1857.



## Help us when you Shop Online

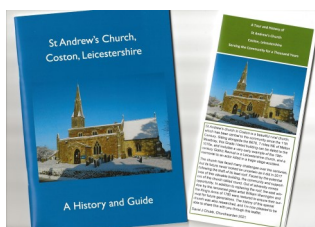
Some people never shop online. Others do, but only use certain websites. If you shop through Amazon, did you know that you can help Leicestershire Victoria County History Trust every time you shop through their site?

Amazon helps the charities its customers support. Instead of entering their web address as amazon.co.uk, if you type <https://smile.amazon.co.uk/> you can search for a charity you wish to support. If you select Leicestershire Victoria County History Trust you will find the same

goods at the same prices on the website, but Amazon will make a donation to ourselves each time you use this site. It costs you no more, but the Trust and its research will benefit.

If you enter 'smile' before 'amazon' each time you use their site you will find it's remembered the charity and we will benefit again. We know people are struggling this autumn as the cost of living increases, but this is a way you can help us financially at no cost to yourself.

## Coston: Church and Village



We completed our project on the history of St Andrew's church in Coston at the end of 2021 with the publication of a fold-out A3 guide to the church and an A5 guide book.

The latter also includes a potted history of the village, which was depopulated between 1578 and 1607 following the conversion by Henry Berkeley of 150 acres of open-field land into private pasture. The 'humps and bumps' of former house platforms and a roadway can be seen in the field almost opposite the church.

Copies of these guides can be purchased from the churchwardens, and reference copies have been deposited with the Record Office for Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland and with the library of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society.

The research has also been written up in the format used in Victoria County History volumes, and these pieces have been placed on our website at <https://www.history.ac.uk/research/victoria-county-history/county-histories-progress/leicestershire/coston>. They are not full VCH chapters, as not all of the topics that would appear in a VCH parish history have been researched.

# Our Paperback Histories

We still have copies of our first three paperbacks for sale: *Castle Donington*, *Buckminster and Sewstern*, and *Ibstock*. They cost £10 each plus £2.50 UK P&P if purchased direct from ourselves (contact us for the P&P cost for multiple copies). You can either send a cheque to our treasurer at the address below or send us an email for the details if you wish to pay by bank transfer. Every copy bought from ourselves helps our funds.

**Castle Donington** is known for its airport and for the music festivals and racing held at Donington Park, but few people visit the village. A castle was built in the 1150s and several features of a town soon developed, including a market, fair and hospital. Osiers grew alongside the Trent, and basket-making became an important local industry. King's Mills and Cavendish Bridge grew as settlements near the river, and their history is also included within this book.

**Buckminster and Sewstern** are small villages in the north east of the county, adjacent to the border with

Lincolnshire. Sir William Manners employed Humphry Repton to advise on enlarging a small park and building a mansion in Buckminster in the 1790s, and began to create an estate village. Many of the houses were built for estate employees by his great-grandson, the 9th earl of Dysart, between 1878 and 1935. Ironstone was quarried in both villages in the 20th century, with the land reinstated for farming.

**Ibstock** is a large village in north-west Leicestershire where Garendon Abbey once had a large sheep farm. Framework-knitting had become important by 1811, but the local landscape and economy changed more dramatically when the coal deposits beneath the village began to be exploited from 1825.



Leicestershire

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Leicestershire Victoria County History Trust was launched in May 2009 to support and promote the Victoria County History project in Leicestershire. The Trust works with volunteers across the county to research and publish the history of Leicestershire towns and villages. Training and support is provided free of charge

The Trust relies on charitable donations to support this work. Please consider joining our 200 Club, becoming a Friend of the Trust or making a donation to support ongoing work in Leicestershire. More information is available on our website, at [www.victoriacountyhistory.ac.uk/leicestershire](http://www.victoriacountyhistory.ac.uk/leicestershire), or you can contact us at the address shown in the panel to the left.

**Leicestershire Victoria County History Trust is a registered charity (No. 1128575) and a registered company (No. 6683052).**

