



## VCH Leicestershire

### *Loughborough Since 1750: A Social and Cultural History*

## Social History

### Social Character

The lord of Loughborough manor in 1735 was Theophilus Hastings, the 9th earl of Huntingdon, who commissioned a survey and plan of his estate that year. This shows that he owned most of the properties on most of the streets in the town centre (Map 5).<sup>1</sup> On his death in 1746 the manor and this extensive landholding passed to his son Francis Hastings, the 10th earl (d. 1789). The family home was at Donington Hall in Castle Donington, and the 'very indifferent' appearance of Loughborough in 1770 suggests he had little interest in improving the town.<sup>2</sup>

The 9th earl had married Selina Shirley, daughter of Earl Ferrers of Staunton Harold. She began to explore Methodism, before turning to Calvinism. She established a college for training ministers and funded four chapels before her connexion formally seceded from the Anglican church in 1783. . By her death in 1791 more than 60 chapels were associated with the Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion,<sup>3</sup> none in Leicestershire.

Her son Francis, the 10th earl, did not share her beliefs, but was tolerant of departure from orthodoxy. General Baptists, Wesleyans and Quakers bought land and opened meeting houses in Loughborough in his lifetime.<sup>4</sup> With no legitimate children to inherit, the 10th earl conveyed the manor in 1788 to his nephew, Francis Rawdon, son of the 10th earl's sister, Lady Elizabeth Hastings.<sup>5</sup> Rawdon, who was also given Donington Hall and took the Hastings name, was an active army officer and would have had little time for Loughborough affairs. He succeeded his father as earl of Moira in 1793.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> ROLLR, DE4614; DG30/Ma/207/1, 2.

<sup>2</sup> T. Pochin, 'Historical Description' of Loughborough (1770), printed in J. Nichols, *Bibliotheca Topographica Britannica* (1780–90), VIII, 876; P.J. Fisher and J.M. Lee, *The Victoria History of Leicestershire: Castle Donington* (2016), 34–5; Above, Town, Parish and Borough: Settlement and Built Environment.

<sup>3</sup> ODNB, s.v. 'Hastings [née Shirley], Selina, countess of Huntingdon (1707–91), founder of the Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion' (accessed 17 Nov. 2023).

<sup>4</sup> Below, Religious History.

<sup>5</sup> ROLLR, DE421/2/75; Nichols, History, III, 886.

<sup>6</sup> ODNB, s.v. 'Hastings, Francis Rawdon, first marquess of Hastings and second earl of Moira' (accessed 27 Feb. 2025).

*Map 5: Plan of Loughborough Town Centre, 1735. The properties shaded in red were owned by the 9th earl of Huntingdon*

*Map 6: Extract from a plan of the town centre properties of the Burton estate, c.1793. The properties circled are the school (built in 1745 on the edge of the churchyard) and the parish workhouse (built in 1749 on Sparrow Hill).*

Other freeholders who owned land or properties in the blank spaces on the plan include the Burton charity, which owned many of the properties on the east side of Churchgate and some elsewhere (Map 6). The charity's town centre properties were described as 'very much out of repair' in 1841.<sup>7</sup>

Despite its tired appearance, the town was not devoid of wealth in 1750. The parish church had recently added new box pews and a pulpit, partly from a bequest, and galleries were added as the population grew.<sup>8</sup> Polite entertainments developed. There were race meetings, assemblies and plays, seasonal events possibly organised by the town's innkeepers to boost their trade, that brought in custom from outside the town. Named promoters of theatrical productions in the 18th century included Mr and Mrs Philipps of Garendon and 'the Neighbourhood of Sheephead' (Shepshed).<sup>9</sup>

There was no dominant landowner in the rural part of the parish. Almost half the area of the parish was former medieval parkland that had been divided into enclosed farms and sold to several owners well before 1750.<sup>10</sup> The earl of Moira owned 1,091 a. in Loughborough in 1808,<sup>11</sup> probably the largest landholding, but that includes his town-centre properties. The second largest landholding was probably the residual part of the medieval Burleigh Park, held by the Tate family.<sup>12</sup> In 1750 Burleigh House and its land was owned by Mary Herbert, née Butler, a widow and the granddaughter of Anthony Tate.<sup>13</sup> Burleigh estate contained 685 a. when it was sold in 1918 (including 150 a. outside the former Burleigh Park).<sup>14</sup> William Herrick owned almost all the land in Woodthorpe,<sup>15</sup> but his main landholding was just beyond the parish boundary at Beaumanor. The Beaumanor Estate was broken up in 1946.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> TNA, C 13/3066/7.

<sup>8</sup> Below, Religious Life.

<sup>9</sup> *Leic. Jnl*, 24 Dec. 1768; 16 Nov. 1771.

<sup>10</sup> A.E. Squires and W. Humphrey, *The Medieval Parks of Charnwood Forest* (Wymondham, 1986), 27–33, 37–8, 40–2, 44–6, 48–50.

<sup>11</sup> ROLLR, DE421/2/75.

<sup>12</sup> ROLLR, DE884.

<sup>13</sup> TNA, PROB 11/588/390; PROB 11/591/485; PROB 11/674/336; PROB 11/696/104; PROB 11/742/486; ROLLR, Wills 1722/20.

<sup>14</sup> ROLLR, L333, Sales Particulars.

<sup>15</sup> Nichols, *History*, III, 911.

<sup>16</sup> *Leic. Eve. Mail*, 21 Dec. 1946.

There were 308 households with common rights in Loughborough's open fields in 1744,<sup>17</sup> among perhaps 550 households in the town.<sup>18</sup> The enclosure of the fields by an Act of Parliament of 1759 and award of 1762 therefore affected more than half of the inhabitants.<sup>19</sup> Of the 2,413 a. enclosed, the 10th earl was allotted 1,011 a., the rector received 336 a. for his glebe and tithes, Mary Herbert of Burleigh Hall was allotted 130 a. for her unenclosed land, the Burton charity was awarded 170 a. and 75 a. were distributed between other charity trustees and the town's surveyor of highways. The remaining 691 a. was shared between 77 people in allotments ranging from 76 a. to less than one rood, with 57 people allotted less than 10 acres.<sup>20</sup>

Common waste belonging to Loughborough manor to the south of 'Forest Gate' on Forest Road (near Burleigh Farm) lay within the area known as Charnwood Forest, an upland, rocky area with thin acid soils, and few trees at this date, and was not enclosed until 1829.<sup>21</sup> Some of those disadvantaged by Loughborough's enclosure award may have turned to those resources. Action began to be taken to remove 'numerous' encroachments in the northern part of Charnwood Forest in 1799, prior to enclosure.<sup>22</sup> Others may have found work on the enclosed farms or in the town.

In many towns the funds and functions of their medieval guilds and fraternities were redirected to secular ends at the Reformation, often through the establishment of a charity, sometimes known as the 'town estate'.<sup>23</sup> One of Loughborough's most important landowners in the 18th and early 19th century was the Burton charity, and it is likely that at least some of its endowment came from the town's medieval guilds. Until the 1840s, the charity's primary purposes were the maintenance of the town's bridges and the provision of a free school, with any surplus income directed towards the poor.<sup>24</sup>

It is not clear how the Burton charity's feoffees were chosen. The bridgemaster (the officer who made the day-to-day decisions, subject to the guidance of the feoffees) was chosen by the feoffees in one year and in another year by the town's ratepayers, providing the town with an element of democratic self-governance.<sup>25</sup> These people probably comprised the main elite group in the town. The occupations of 27 of the men who served between 1780 and 1840 whose occupations can be discerned comprised four farmers, three hosiers, three maltsters, three linen drapers, three

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<sup>17</sup> Huntington Libr., HAM Box 30 (23).

<sup>18</sup> Above, Population.

<sup>19</sup> *VCH Leics.* II, 262.

<sup>20</sup> ROLLR, EN/A/207/1.

<sup>21</sup> ROLLR, QS47/2/4; OS Map, 25", Leics. XVII.11 (1884 edn).

<sup>22</sup> V. Davis, 'Charnwood Forest: population, landownership and environmental perception, c.1775–1914' (unpub. Univ. Leicester PhD thesis, 2004), 45–6, citing ROLLR, DG9/2033–48.

<sup>23</sup> C. Dyer, 'Small towns, 1270–1540, in D.M. Palliser, *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain*, I (Cambridge, 2018), 529–9.

<sup>24</sup> *Rpt of Charity Commissioners* (Parl. Papers 1839 [163], xv), pp. 388–95.

<sup>25</sup> *Rpt of Charity Comms*, p. 388.

graziers, two liquor merchants, two yeomen, a cutler, an ironmonger, an innkeeper and a brewer, a broad mix that reflects the diversity of Loughborough's economy.<sup>26</sup>

How the feoffees and the bridgemaster interpreted their remit, managed their investments and utilised their surplus income shaped the lives of many residents and the social character of the town. The overseers' responsibilities were towards the destitute, but many more people were reliant on a steady income from employment that could reduce or disappear through sickness, bereavement, bad weather or economic change. In 1811, 24 per cent of households were headed by a labourer and 20 per cent by a framework knitter,<sup>27</sup> both precarious occupations. Until 1808, the Burton charity helped those in need but who were not so destitute to be in receipt of poor relief, ensuring that the respective roles of parish and charity were clear cut.<sup>28</sup> Maintaining the town's bridges was vital for the commercial success of the town, but the sum spent on maintenance, and especially the timing of this work, was largely discretionary, enabling the charity to provide labouring work when it was most needed. Their management of the school extended beyond their legal obligations. The feoffees created a 'reading school' in 1800 to teach 120 boys and added a school for girls after the school moved to new premises on Churchgate in 1825.<sup>29</sup>

The feoffees balanced their tenancies to provide a sound reliable income and the achievement of social ends. Loughborough's enclosure award included 30 a. on Forest Lane (Forest Road) 'entirely covered with furze' that was allotted to the feoffees 'in lieu of the right which the inhabitants of Loughborough possessed to depasture their cattle on certain waste grounds'.<sup>30</sup> This was the compensation to the 328 households who held rights in the open fields but were not mentioned in the enclosure award. All could not benefit, but the charity cleared the land and by 1839 had let 18 a. to 74 poor persons for gardens and laid down 10 a. to pasture for 'the cows of widows and other poor persons'. The charity's properties in the town were partly let to good tenants but also included the workhouse and 20 tenements let to the parish authorities to house the poor.<sup>31</sup>

The 'middling sort' felt a strong sense of community. During a cold winter in 1783–4 when there was no outdoor work for eight weeks a voluntary subscription raised £123 4s. which was distributed in weekly bread and coals to 380 families who were not in receipt of poor relief.<sup>32</sup> In the 1830s and 1840s Mary Tate of Burleigh Hall (1775–1849) provided Emmanuel girls' school,

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<sup>26</sup> P. Clark, 'Elite networking and the formation of an industrial small town: Loughborough 1700–1840', in J. Stobart and N. Raven (eds), *Towns, Regions and Industries: Urban and Industrial Change in the Midlands, c.1700–1840* (Manchester, 2005), 170–1. Bridgemasters from 1765 to 1846 are listed in ROLLR, DE641/7. A more complete list is given in A. White, *A History of Loughborough Endowed Schools* (Lboro., 1969), 336–9.

<sup>27</sup> Clark, 'Elite networking', 169, data from ROLLR, DE667/188.

<sup>28</sup> Below, Charities for the Poor, Poor Relief and Medical Care.

<sup>29</sup> Below, Education.

<sup>30</sup> *Rpt of Charity Comms*, pp. 390–1.

<sup>31</sup> *Rpt of Charity Comms*, pp. 390–1.

<sup>32</sup> ROLLR, DE667/4.

endowments for Emmanuel girls' and boys' schools and infant schools that took children as young as 18 months, enabling their mothers to take employment.<sup>33</sup>

The opening of the Loughborough and Leicester canals in 1778 and 1794 began to transform Loughborough's economy and change the distribution of wealth and influence within the town. The investors included 20 Loughborough people who together contributed £3,900 of the £7,000 raised. Two were 'esquires', ten were 'gentlemen', there were two innholders, a clerk, a surgeon, a carpenter, a tallow chandler, an excise officer and a widow (of a hosiery manufacturer).<sup>34</sup> It proved a sound investment. In 1804 the market value of a share that had originally cost £125 had risen to £1,800, with each share receiving an annual dividend of £95.<sup>35</sup>

The Warner family provides an example of how fortunes could be made by investors. Edward Warner (1750–1805) was a shoemaker, as his father had been, and does not appear to have been especially wealthy.<sup>36</sup> Edward's only son Thomas (1776–1844) became a partner in hosiery manufacturers Cartwright and Warner, who built a factory alongside the Leicester canal in 1794. When he died in 1844 Thomas owned a large house and grounds in Loughborough (The Elms, off Leicester Road), a country cottage in Nanpantan, 366 a. of land in the south of the parish (mostly Loughborough Parks Farm), three factories, two warehouses, plant and machinery including a steam engine, two brick kilns and a number of cottages and shops.<sup>37</sup> Thomas's son Edward (1804–94) became a major benefactor to the town in life, providing Warner school and giving the sites for Holy Trinity and Nanpantan churches,<sup>38</sup> on his death his remaining estate was valued at £32,221.<sup>39</sup>

Just as far-reaching as the canal in its impact, and also of greatest benefit to those with capital to invest, was the sale in small lots by the heavily indebted earl of Moira of all his land and property in the parish in 1809 and 1810.<sup>40</sup> This enabled many business owners to buy, and then to improve, their premises. Others purchased lots as investments: some of Thomas Warner's properties were purchased in this sale.<sup>41</sup>

Annual manor courts continued until at least 1828,<sup>42</sup> but had little control over factory owners who polluted the Woodbrook, or over the freeholders of empty plots who wished to fill them

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<sup>33</sup> Below, Education; P.J. Fisher, 'Mary Tate' at <https://lynneaboutloughborough.blogspot.com/2023/08/mary-tate.html> (accessed 28 Feb. 2025).

<sup>34</sup> TNA, RAIL 849/1; Clark, 'Elite networking', 162.

<sup>35</sup> Nichols, *History and Antiquities*, III, 890.

<sup>36</sup> ROLLR, DE667/4–5; TNA, PROB 11/1427/230.

<sup>37</sup> ROLLR, DE667/4; TNA, PROB 11/2002/366; *Nottm and Newark Merc.*, 13 Dec. 1836; *Leic. Chron.*, 10 Oct. 1840.

<sup>38</sup> Below, Social History, Education, Religious History.

<sup>39</sup> Principal Probate Registry, probate calendar 1894.

<sup>40</sup> ROLLR, DE2857/121/1, 3; above, Town, Parish and Borough: Settlement and the Built Environment.

<sup>41</sup> TNA, PROB 11/2002/366.

<sup>42</sup> ROLLR, DE1834/132.

with low-quality houses and tenements. Change had to await the formation of a Board of Health in 1850, when the death rate in the town had reached 28 per 1,000.<sup>43</sup> This was well above the 23 per 1,000 that would trigger a public health inspection and the mandatory election of a board.<sup>44</sup> A petition seeking an inspection was signed by 285 people,<sup>45</sup> but others saw no need, and some tried to nullify the impact of the legislation by trying to elect a board of men who would 'do nothing'.<sup>46</sup> Their concern was the cost. All the Burton charity income had recently been earmarked for new schools so the poor rate paid by those with land or property was no longer held down through the transfer of 'surplus' charity income to the poor law authorities.

The choices made within a space of six years of a new board of governors for the Burton schools in 1849,<sup>47</sup> the selection of a Board of Health in 1850 at a 'very harmonious' meeting of some ratepayers,<sup>48</sup> the expressed choice of a wider body of ratepayers at the poll taken to confirm or to supplant that selection,<sup>49</sup> and the appointment of a burial board by the town's select vestry in 1855,<sup>50</sup> demonstrates that only a small group of people were chosen for such roles. That may partly be due to the onerous nature of the duties and the amount of time they could consume. Among a population of over 11,000 people, only 31 men were chosen, including four men who appear in two lists and six men who appear three times. Six men appeared on three of these lists, two drapers, one hosier, a miller, a banker and the Revd Henry Fearon, rector of Loughborough. Fearon had only been in the town since 1848. Aged just 46 he had a genuine concern for the poor of the parish and the energy to become involved with many town bodies.<sup>51</sup> Some of these men also played a role in the town's social and cultural activities, giving some of these societies a prominence through their presidency or chairmanship. Governance through a series of boards with different territories and responsibilities that did not always interlock was far from ideal, but the presence of board members with concurrent working knowledge of the deliberations of another board would have been helpful. These issues were resolved on the incorporation of the borough in 1888.

The main political tensions within the town both before and after 1888 concerned the 'fair' representation of Anglicans and Nonconformists on these official bodies. When the Burton trustees sought to fill vacancies in their board in 1860, they took care to represent the leading denominations of religion in the town.<sup>52</sup> The information within the 1851 religious census needs to be interpreted with caution, but the total of 2,132 Nonconformists at their best attended services in the town

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<sup>43</sup> Lee, *Rpt*, p. 19.

<sup>44</sup> Public Health Act, 1848, 11 & 12 Vict., c. 63.

<sup>45</sup> TNA, MH 13/118.

<sup>46</sup> *Leics. Merc.*, 16 Mar. 1850.

<sup>47</sup> *Notts. Guardian*, 15 Aug. 1850; names engraved on stone at school.

<sup>48</sup> *Leics. Merc.*, 9 Mar. 1850.

<sup>49</sup> *Leics. Merc.*, 30 Mar. 1850.

<sup>50</sup> *Leic. Jnl*, 12 Oct. 1855.

<sup>51</sup> W. Humphrey, *Henry Fearon: A Maker of Modern Loughborough* (Lboro., 1985).

<sup>52</sup> ROLLR, DE641/1, min. 13 Mar. 1860.

dwarfs the 900 total at the two Anglican churches.<sup>53</sup> The strength of religious Nonconformity helped to drive the early provision of schools, with the Anglicans, Baptists and Wesleyans all funding their own day schools in the 1850s. A school board was inevitable as they all struggled to finance additional places and better-quality buildings. Positions on elected boards were usually filled without a poll, saving costs but also perhaps in recognition that the results of a poll could not be controlled. The influence of religion becomes most visible in the choice of members for the school board, where there were usually equal numbers of Anglicans and Nonconformists and where the town's Roman Catholics also achieved ongoing representation.<sup>54</sup>

As the town grew and as the number of organisations and activities available expanded, a series of overlapping communities developed, based on where residents lived, worked and worshipped. Some churches had grass-roots football teams, but players might also have the option to play for a works team or, a team based in their part of the town. In the late 19th and early 20th century many social activities revolved around the churches and chapels. Celebrations for events that could bring the town together, such as royal jubilees and coronations, included processions of children walking under denominational banners (Figure 12). Little is known about the composition of any organising committees, but occasionally tensions came to the fore, as in 1911 when the Revd Robert Sturdee, vicar of St Peter's church, declined to allow his Sunday school to join the procession celebrating the coronation of George V because the Sunday school of Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, which he did not recognise, was included.<sup>55</sup>

*Figure 12: Part of the Sunday School procession passing through Market Place behind their banners as part of the celebrations for the coronation of King George V. All Saint's church can be seen in the background. The tall building on the right was built in 1893 for Leicestershire Banking Co. It was badly damaged by fire in 2023.*

## Migration

Periods of rapid population growth, for example between 1790 and 1831 and from 1871 to 1901, are indicative of strong inward migration. In 1891 two-thirds of 265 heads of household on the Paget Estate (built in the west of the town from the 1880s) had been born outside Loughborough.<sup>56</sup>

Until the 20th century most newcomers to the town had come from other places in Leicestershire or the surrounding counties, the exception being a small number of Irish people. When Francis Rawdon Hastings succeeded his father as earl of Moira in 1793, he inherited the family estate with its seat in Ballynahinch (Co. Down). During the Irish uprising in 1798 many houses in Ballynahinch were burnt

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<sup>53</sup> Below, Religious History.

<sup>54</sup> Below, Education.

<sup>55</sup> Below, Religious History.

<sup>56</sup> Postles, 'Building, 1861–1900', 44.

to the ground and Irish rebels were slain by British troops.<sup>57</sup> No evidence has been found of Moira encouraging any of his Irish tenants to move to his manor of Loughborough, but it is possible that some chose to move to Loughborough at that time or in the years that followed.

Loughborough's Roman Catholic church of St Mary of the Annunciation, completed in 1834, was built through the efforts of a priest called to the town to baptise the child of an Irish family.<sup>58</sup> The early baptismal registers of this church include many children with names suggesting they were of Irish heritage, although the birthplace of the parents was not recorded.<sup>59</sup> The church was passed to the care of the Institute of Charity (Rosminians), an Italian order, in 1841. Two years later a Roman Catholic convent was founded in Loughborough by Lady Mary Arundell for the Sisters of Providence of the Institute of Charity, and the first two nuns arrived from Italy that year.<sup>60</sup> The 1851 census recorded 179 residents born in Ireland, mostly clustered on Bridge Street (63 people) and The Rushes (44 people, including 15 in a single lodging house), with nine in the army barracks and four at the convent. The nineteen residents at the convent also included three who had been born in Italy, one born in Trinidad (a visitor) and one born in America (a scholar, presumably at the convent school).<sup>61</sup>

The convent was not an enclosed order, with any work of charity being acceptable, and several different foreign accents may have been heard in the town. Emily Cachard, the Trinidadian visitor in 1851, was a schoolmistress at the convent in 1871 and principal in 1881. There were 59 residents in 1871, including seven born in Ireland, three in Italy, two in Trinidad, one in France, one in Switzerland, one in India and one in Australia. There were 15 teachers among their number, 11 others were employed in domestic duties and there were 27 scholars aged between 6 and 17.<sup>62</sup> In 1881, 12 of the 44 residents were Irish, with three from Italy, two from Trinidad and one from each of Holland, Germany and Switzerland. The number of scholars had reduced to ten.<sup>63</sup>

Loughborough College actively recruited overseas students from the 1920s. In 1923 students from the Arabian Peninsula, Australia, France, India, Palestine, Portugal, Russia, Siam (Thailand), South Africa, Spain and Switzerland joined engineering courses.<sup>64</sup> Recognising the demand for engineers in many countries, parts of the College calendar for 1925 were printed in 17 different languages,<sup>65</sup> and a lavishly illustrated prospectus was published in Spanish c.1933 for the South

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<sup>57</sup> ODNB, 'Hastings, Francis Rawdon, first marquess of Hastings and second earl of Moira' (accessed 27 Feb. 2025); J. Patterson, *In the Wake of the Great Rebellion: Republicanism, Agrarianism and Banditry in Ireland after 1798* (Manchester), 22; A.T.Q. Stewart, '1798 in the North', *History Ireland* 6:2 (1998), 37–8.

<sup>58</sup> Below, Religious Life.

<sup>59</sup> Held by Nottm Catholic Diocesan Archives, with microfiche copy at ROLLR.

<sup>60</sup> Below, Religious History.

<sup>61</sup> 1851 census enumerators' books, convent at HO 107/2085/21/23–4.

<sup>62</sup> TNA, RG 10/3254/25/31–4.

<sup>63</sup> TNA, RG 11/3144/18/19.

<sup>64</sup> *Nottm Eve. Post*, 9 Mar. 1923.

<sup>65</sup> L.M. Cantor and G.F. Matthews, *Loughborough: From College to University* (Lboro., 1977), 64.



American market (Figure 13).<sup>66</sup> Students at the College c.1950 were drawn from 50 different nations.<sup>67</sup> Loughborough College School also received applications from abroad including, in 1949, from Bolivia, Sierra Leone, Baghdad and Kenya.<sup>68</sup>

*Figure 13: The stained glass windows in the College accommodation blocks were made by students. An illustration of a window in one of the stairways in Rutland Hall, "The Natural History of the County of Leicester", appeared in a prospectus of the 1930s for Spanish-speaking countries in South America.*

A new age of migration began after the Second World War, with the arrival of greater numbers of people from a single country. The creation of social spaces where people could mix with others who shared their language and culture received support from borough and county councils, and volunteer groups came into being to help the new arrivals with practical matters.

There were c.100 Polish families living in a resettlement camp on the former Wymeswold airfield in 1950 whose homeland was under Russian occupation.<sup>69</sup> An Anglo-Polish Society, with Sir Robert Martin (chairman of Leicestershire County Council) as President and Herbert Schofield as Vice President, organised social activities. The site closed c.1960 with families rehoused in local villages.<sup>70</sup> When the Elim church moved from their hut on True Lovers Walk in 1964 it was purchased by the Polish community for a place to meet.<sup>71</sup> By 1970 they had donated many hours of time and built a community centre.<sup>72</sup> The number of Polish people in the town increased after Poland's accession to the European Union in 2004. A Polish school began to be held at St Mary's church in 2009 to teach Polish children about the history, geography, culture and language of Poland.<sup>73</sup>

Sikhs and Hindus arrived from the Punjab from the 1950s. In the 1970s the Revd David Patterson of St Peter's church let them use the St Peter's Community Centre (former Sunday schools) for meetings or religious worship. By 1980 the Sikhs had created their own community centre and Gurdwara, with the Punjabi Hindus providing a community centre and temple in 1983 (Figure 14).<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> Lboro. Univ. Arch., LC/P/P1/2.

<sup>67</sup> Lboro. Univ. Arch., LC/P/P5.

<sup>68</sup> ROLLR, DE1580/3, min. 20 July 1949.

<sup>69</sup> Z.M. Biegus, [polishresettlementcampsintheuk.co.uk/burtononthewolds.htm](http://polishresettlementcampsintheuk.co.uk/burtononthewolds.htm); <http://www.burtoncotesprestwoldparishcouncil.org.uk/the-polish-camp-at-burton-on-the> (both accessed 6 Mar. 2025).

<sup>70</sup> <http://www.burtoncotesprestwoldparishcouncil.org.uk/the-polish-camp-at-burton-on-the> (both accessed 6 Mar. 2025).

<sup>71</sup> *Nottm Guardian*, 16 July 1964.

<sup>72</sup> *Leic. Daily Merc.*, 29 Apr., 23 Dec. 1971.

<sup>73</sup> *St Mary's Parish Voice* (Summer, 2011).

<sup>74</sup> Memories of Ram Chhabra and Ramesh Chander (Punjabi Hindus) and GurBakhsh Singh Liddar (Punjabi Sikh), Lboro. Reminiscences Group, 'Memories of Asian Residents' (DVD, 2014); below, Religious Life.

*Figure 14: Geeta Bhawan Centre on Lemyngton Road occupies the former Churchgate infant school of 1895. The tower of All Saints' church can be seen behind this building.*

The first Muslims from East Bengal arrived c.1944.<sup>75</sup> Many more of Bengali heritage, mostly from the district of Sylhet, arrived following the Liberation War of 1971 (which resulted in the independence of Bangladesh). Often men came to England first, many living in Victorian housing close to the former Central station, with women and families following later.<sup>76</sup> A Bangladeshi Social Association was formed in 1971, and remained active in 2025, based on Ferryman Road in north-east Loughborough, near the Grand Union canal.<sup>77</sup> The Islamic Cultural Association was formed in 1977, when an opportunity arose to purchase a site for a mosque and social centre on King Street, and an Iman taught Bengali and Arabic at evenings, weekends and school holidays.<sup>78</sup> The area in east Loughborough between the A6 road and the Grand Union (from King Street to Rendell Street) and also an area to the east of the canal around Meadow Lane and Bottle Acre Lane continued to have a strong Muslim presence in 2021.<sup>79</sup>

When Idi Amin gave notice in 1972 that Asians living in Uganda would be expelled, Leicester City Council inserted an advertisement in the Ugandan *Argus* newspaper urging people not to go to Leicester, claiming the city lacked sufficient houses, school places and health facilities.<sup>80</sup> In contrast and controversially, Loughborough B.C. Housing Committee decided to offer emergency accommodation in condemned houses awaiting demolition.<sup>81</sup> Most of the arrivals were Hindus of Gujarati heritage. The Shree Ram Temple and Community Centre was opened in a former industrial building on Rendell Street in 1980 by Gujarati-speaking Hindus.<sup>82</sup>

Charnwood Community Relations Council (later renamed Equality Action) was established in 1969 and worked to promote good relations between the different racial groups. They supported youth, women's and girls' clubs, an English language programme and a horticultural project employing elderly Asian farmers from Uganda to grow Asian vegetables.<sup>83</sup> The structural discrimination faced at work by Asian employees came to wider attention in 1972 when several

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<sup>75</sup> Charnwood Arts, *Our Home is Lboro., The Stories and reflections of the First Bangladeshi Settlers in Charnwood* (Lboro., 1999), 12.

<sup>76</sup> L. Khan, *Bangladeshis in Loughborough* (Loughborough, 1983), 19–20; Memories of Faruque Choudhury, Khorshed Ali and Sundar Ali (Bangladeshi Muslims), Lboro. Reminiscences Group, 'Memories of Asian Residents' (DVD, 2014); Charnwood Arts, *Our Home*, 20–33.

<sup>77</sup> [https://www.facebook.com/p/Bangladesh-Social-Association-Loughborough-100070542261496/?locale=en\\_GB](https://www.facebook.com/p/Bangladesh-Social-Association-Loughborough-100070542261496/?locale=en_GB) (accessed 30 June 2025).

<sup>78</sup> Khan, *Bangladeshis*, 27; see also below, Religious History, Islam.

<sup>79</sup> 2021 census,

<sup>80</sup> *Changing Spaces, Trading Places: Stories of Migration, Displacement and New Beginnings* (Lboro, 2014), 7.

<sup>81</sup> *Leic. Daily Merc.*, 21 Sept. 1972.

<sup>82</sup> Below, Religious Life.

<sup>83</sup> Equality Action, *Equality Action 1969–2019: Celebrating 50 Years of Service to the Communities of Loughborough and Charnwood* (Lboro, 2019), 6–7; Lboro. Loc. Std. Libr., 'Final Report of the Asian Vegetable Project Lboro., 1979–84', 1, 4–36.

hundred Asian workers at Mansfield Hosiery Mills on Trinity Street went on strike.<sup>84</sup> The efforts of Charnwood B.C., Equality Action, Loughborough Council of Faiths and the Revd David Patterson (rector of St Peter's church) all helped to ease tensions and foster integration and understanding in that early period.<sup>85</sup> Loughborough schools also played a part, with children learning about the festivals of different faiths and being introduced to Asian foods.<sup>86</sup>

Loughborough welcomed those fleeing persecution in Iran in 1979 and migrants from Hong Kong when the UK government created a new visa route into the UK in 2021.<sup>87</sup> The UK Border Agency's Reporting Centre for the East Midlands is in Loughborough, and a group of volunteers established a charity in 2014 for the town to become a Town of Sanctuary (similar to the Cities of Sanctuary initiative), providing support, advice and practical assistance to asylum seekers and refugees.<sup>88</sup>

Migration from more distant places could introduce new ideas and cultures. Two hundred Scottish people celebrated Hogmanay with a traditional piper at the King's Head in 1935/6.<sup>89</sup> In the 21st century Charnwood B.C. has put up lights in the town centre each year to mark the Hindu festival of Diwali with food, music and dance performances on the evening they were lit.<sup>90</sup> An annual Mela, organised by Equality Action and Charnwood Arts from 2006, has also helped to bring people together. The word Mela comes from a Hindu religious festival, but here it is used to mean a festival celebrating different cultures. From the 2020s the whole-day event occupied a stage and a floor area on Market Place and included different Indian music and dance styles, including *garba* and *dandiya raas* (Gujarati dance forms) Bollywood routines, Punjabi Bhangra (dance) and Dhol drums, Bengali music and a Rajasthani (north west Indian) band, with some of the dance routines inviting audience participation. Other cultures are encouraged to take part and displays of Somalian dance and Ukrainian music – following the invasion of the latter country by Russia – have been included in the 2020s.<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> M. Collinson, 'The Loughborough 'Mansfield Hosiery' strike, 1972: deindustrialisation, post-war immigration, and press interpretation', *Midland History*, 47 (2022), 77–95; P. Kirkham, 'Asian women on strike', *Women's Voice*, 4 (1973), 11–12.

<sup>85</sup> Below, Religious Life.

<sup>86</sup> *Lboro. Echo*, 7 Nov. 1986.

<sup>87</sup> Below, Religious Life.

<sup>88</sup> *Lboro. Echo*, 13 Dec. 2014; 11 Sept. 2015.

<sup>89</sup> *Leic. Eve. Mail*, 1 Jan. 1936.

<sup>90</sup> *Lboro. Echo*, 20 Oct. 2016; C. Clini, J. Hornabrook and E. Keightley, 'Migration, arts and the negotiation of belonging: an analysis of creative practices within British Asian communities in London and Loughborough', *AmeriQuests*, 16 (2020), 10.

<sup>91</sup> Programmes, 2006, 2023 and 2024; Clini, Hornabrook and Keightley, 'Migration', 7–11.

## *Political Activity*

### Popular Politics

A Hampden Club (a radical campaigning society) had been formed in the town by 1817,<sup>92</sup> and representatives from Loughborough attended a meeting in London calling for parliamentary reform.<sup>93</sup> Following news of the rejection of the Reform Bill by the House of Lords in 1831 a mob assembled in Market Place. Windows were broken and there was looting, but peace was restored the following day, with seven people sentenced to hard labour.<sup>94</sup>

A branch of the Chartist movement was formed in the town in 1838,<sup>95</sup> and a rally with a parade through the town attracted c.3,000 people.<sup>96</sup> John Skevington, a former Primitive Methodist preacher in the town, was a delegate to the Chartist's first National Convention in 1839.<sup>97</sup> Troops were requested when rumours circulated in 1839 that the Chartists were manufacturing weapons in Loughborough and buying firearms,<sup>98</sup> and townspeople agreed to convert the former parish workhouse to accommodate soldiers and horses.<sup>99</sup> The Home Office also agreed a request to send muskets, bayonets, pistols and cutlasses to the town, but no serious violence was seen.<sup>100</sup>

Jane Ronniger of the National Society for Women's Suffrage addressed a meeting in the Town Hall in 1875,<sup>101</sup> and this was followed by a petition from the town to parliament in favour of this cause.<sup>102</sup> A Loughborough Society for the Furtherance of the Women's Franchise was formed in 1908 and invited Gladice Keevil, from the Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU) to speak in 1909.<sup>103</sup> A branch of the WSPU was formed and prominent members visited, spoke and supported an attempt to unseat Liberal MP Maurice Levy, who favoured a universal franchise rather than an extension that would only benefit 'rich women'.<sup>104</sup> Contingents from Loughborough joined some of the major WSPU rallies in London, and Kathleen Corcoran, the daughter of Loughborough's Medical Officer of Health, was arrested at a rally in November 1910; all charges were dropped the following day.<sup>105</sup> By 1913 it

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<sup>92</sup> A.T. Patterson, 'Luddism, Hampden Clubs, and trade unionism in Leicestershire, 1816–7', *English Historical Review* 63 (1948), 180, citing TNA, HO 40/3.

<sup>93</sup> *Leic. Chron.*, 1 Feb. 1817.

<sup>94</sup> ROLLR, DE667/189; *Leic. Chron.*, 22 Oct. 1831; *VCH Leics* II, 129.

<sup>95</sup> *Leics. Merc.*, 1 Sept. 1838.

<sup>96</sup> *Leics. Merc.*, 10 Nov. 1838.

<sup>97</sup> For a summary of Skevington's religious and political activities see

[https://www.myprimitivemethodists.org.uk/content/people-2/primitive\\_methodist\\_ministers/s-2/skevington-john-1801-1850](https://www.myprimitivemethodists.org.uk/content/people-2/primitive_methodist_ministers/s-2/skevington-john-1801-1850) (accessed 15 Sept. 2024).

<sup>98</sup> TNA, HO 40/44, ff. 235–7, 251–2, 259–61; *VCH Leics* II, 131.

<sup>99</sup> TNA, HO 40/44, ff.; ROLLR, DE2857/177/1, vol. 2, f. 87; *Leic. Chron.*, 27 July 1839; *Leic. Jnl*, 16 Aug. 1839.

<sup>100</sup> TNA, HO 40/44, ff. 251–2, 259–61, 267, 271–2, 333–4, 361–3, 373–4.

<sup>101</sup> M. Shuker, *Suffragettes in Loughborough* (Lboro., 2018), 7, citing *Lboro. Advertiser*, 1 Apr. 1875.

<sup>102</sup> *Leic. Chron.*, 17 Apr. 1875.

<sup>103</sup> *Melton Mowbray Merc.*, 28 Jan. 1909; Shuker, *Suffragettes*, 11–12.

<sup>104</sup> *Votes for Women*, 7, 14 and 21 Jan. 1910; *Leic. Eve. Mail*, 20 Jan. 1910; Shuker, *Suffragettes*, 9–10.

<sup>105</sup> *Nottm Eve. Post*, 19 Nov. 1910; <https://www.suffrageresources.org.uk/resource/3231/suffrage-societies-database-guide> (accessed 1 Sept. 2024); Shuker, *Suffragettes*, 26–7.

was evident from a rowdy meeting at the Town Hall that there was strong opposition to militant suffragette activity.<sup>106</sup> Later that year an unknown person broke into the Red House on Burton Walks and set fire to a staircase leaving paraffin, matches and suffragette literature.<sup>107</sup> The perpetrator was never discovered.

### Parliamentary Elections and Party Politics

The two-seat county constituency was divided into two divisions in 1832. Loughborough fell within the north Leicestershire division, which returned two members. The county parliamentary division of Loughborough was created in 1885 and elected a single member for a large swathe of north Leicestershire.<sup>108</sup> There have been many subsequent boundary changes.<sup>109</sup> In 2024 Loughborough constituency comprised ten Loughborough electoral wards, two Soar valley wards, Shepshed and the Wolds.<sup>110</sup>

A Conservative Society was founded in 1835,<sup>111</sup> but faded from the 1840s, a period when there would have been few voters in the town. Loughborough and District Conservative Association was formed in 1884, soon gathering 300 members, and took rooms in Mill Street (later Market Street).<sup>112</sup> A Liberal Club was established in 1886, and purchased premises for a club headquarters in Baxtergate that could accommodate meetings of up to 2,000 people.<sup>113</sup> Within three months the club claimed it had over 900 members.<sup>114</sup>

Local trade unions formed the Loughborough Trades Council in 1874.<sup>115</sup> Their candidate for a seat on the town council in 1898 was defeated.<sup>116</sup> A Loughborough branch of the Independent Labour Party was formed in 1917.<sup>117</sup> The Trades Council agreed in 1918 to affiliate to the national Labour Party,<sup>118</sup> and two Labour candidates were elected to the town council that year.<sup>119</sup>

From 1885 the division, and later constituency, voted Liberal at ten elections and Conservative at only two before electing its first Labour MP in 1929. The constituency was won by

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<sup>106</sup> *Lboro. Echo*, 14 Mar. 1913.

<sup>107</sup> *Lboro. Echo*, 24 Oct. 1913; Shuker, *Suffragettes*, 23–4.

<sup>108</sup> UK Parliamentary Constituencies, <https://www.parlconst.org/constituency-maps/england/1885> (accessed 23 Sept. 2024).

<sup>109</sup> UK Parliamentary Constituencies, <https://www.parlconst.org/constituency-maps/england>.

<sup>110</sup> Parliamentary Constituencies Order 2023, SI 2023, no. 1230, at <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukSI/2023/1230/schedule/1/made> (accessed 23 Sept. 2024).

<sup>111</sup> *Leic. Jnl*, 13 Nov. 1835.

<sup>112</sup> *Leic. Daily Merc.*, 10 Jan. 1884; *Lboro. Herald*, 4 Sept. 1884.

<sup>113</sup> *Lboro. Herald*, 8 July 1886.

<sup>114</sup> *Lboro. Herald*, 30 Sept. 1886.

<sup>115</sup> *Bee-Hive*, 12 Aug. 1876.

<sup>116</sup> *Nottm Jnl*, 20 Oct. 1898; *Leic. Daily Merc.*, 2 Nov. 1898.

<sup>117</sup> *Lboro. Echo*, 27 July, 17 Aug. 1917.

<sup>118</sup> *Lboro. Echo*, 12 Feb. 1915; M. Shuker, 'The formation of Loughborough Labour Party', *Leicestershire Labour History Society Jnl*, 1 (2018), 6.

<sup>119</sup> Shuker, 'Lboro. Labour Party', 16.

the Conservatives in 1931 and 1935.<sup>120</sup> Labour won in 1945 and new MP, Mont Follick, purchased the former Medical Aid Association premises on Fennel Street and presented it to the Loughborough Labour Party for use as a party headquarters (Figure 16).<sup>121</sup> The constituency voted Labour between 1945 and 1975.<sup>122</sup> It became a 'bellwether' constituency in 1979, returning an MP from the party that formed the government at each subsequent election up to and including 2024.

## Charities for the Poor, Poor Relief and Medical Care

### *Charities for the Poor*

#### The Burton Charity

The Burton charity was endowed with land and properties in Leicestershire and Nottinghamshire. It was governed by a decree issued by the Commissioners for Charitable Uses in 1652 that required the income to be used to repair bridges and maintain a free school, with any surplus given to the churchwardens and overseers of the poor.<sup>123</sup> Contrary to this decree, from at least the 1730s the charity provided direct cash support to residents who were not in receipt of poor relief, for example by covering their rent or providing a spinning wheel for a daughter or a shovel for a labourer.<sup>124</sup> In 1807 the feoffees were reminded that such payments were in breach of the decree.<sup>125</sup> Payments to individuals ceased in 1808, but with annual surpluses between £282 and £929 paid to the overseers concerns were raised that the charitable income was benefitting the wealthy through lower poor rates.<sup>126</sup>

The establishment of the parish workhouse in 1749 (Map 6 and Figure 15) demonstrates how well the parish vestry and the feoffees worked together. The proposal to provide a workhouse originated with the parish vestry, who approached the charity; the feoffees chose the most appropriate property in their portfolio, moved the tenant and covered the cost of alterations; the vestry agreed to pay the 'usual' rent and set the rules for managing the workhouse, with the charity passing the rent back to the overseers.<sup>127</sup>

In addition to the workhouse, the charity also owned a row of 12 tenements on Bedford Street (Southfield Road) and eight in workhouse close, all let to the parish officers to house the poor.<sup>128</sup> After the parish workhouse closed in 1839 it was let to the army for barracks.<sup>129</sup> The Bedford

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<sup>120</sup> F.W.S. Craig (ed.), *British Electoral Facts 1885–1975* (1976), 114, 130.

<sup>121</sup> Deeds in private hands; image below, Friendly Societies.

<sup>122</sup> Craig (ed.), *British Electoral Facts*, 130, 145, 156.

<sup>123</sup> *Rpt of Charity Comms*, p. 388.

<sup>124</sup> ROLLR, DE664/34–6; DE664/41b; TNA, C 13/3066/7; White, *Endowed Schools*, 135–6.

<sup>125</sup> *Rpt of Charity Comms*, p. 391.

<sup>126</sup> ROLLR, DE664/36; *Leics. Merc.*, 1 Dec. 1838; below, Education.

<sup>127</sup> ROLLR, DE667/177, mins 23, 27 Jan., 6 Feb., 13 Mar., 4 Sept. 1749; DE664/31, mins. 1 Feb., 4 Apr. 1749; DE664/34, accts 1748–50; DE664/41a orders and regulations for the workhouse.

<sup>128</sup> ROLLR, DE664/65; *Rpt of Charity Comms*, 390.

<sup>129</sup> *Leic. Jnl*, 9 Aug. 1839; above, Popular Politics.

Street tenements became known as 'The Alms Houses'. They were offered for sale in 1866 with the vacant barracks.<sup>130</sup>

### John Storer's Charity

John Storer transferred land and properties in Loughborough to trustees in 1713, with the income after his death to be used to provide bread for the poor and clothing for poor children. Annual income of £173 in 1837 increased substantially after the investment of the proceeds of c.£4,900 from the sale of land for housing in 1884 and 1888.<sup>131</sup> A Charity Commission scheme of 1891 set out that half the income should be used for the general benefit of the poor and half for the education of children resident in Loughborough.<sup>132</sup>

Following further land sales and the investment of those proceeds, annual income increased from c.£500 in 1959 to £1,850 in 1963.<sup>133</sup> The trustees invited suggestions from the town, and it was agreed to provide a building containing rooms for a day centre for the elderly, welfare services, meeting rooms and a kitchen to prepare meals for the elderly.<sup>134</sup> The cost was estimated at £40,000. Charnwood B.C. provided £5,000 and the site of the former Emmanuel boys' school and the county council agreed to contribute £10,000.<sup>135</sup> A bequest to the Council of Social Service in 1965 was also directed to this end.<sup>136</sup> John Storer House opened in 1966. It was later extended with the help of Loughborough Rotary Club and Round Table to provide facilities for a playgroup, and for the disabled.<sup>137</sup> The Centre was well used by a wide range of organisations in 2024.<sup>138</sup>

### Loughborough Welfare Trusts

Inflation gradually eroded the value of gifts from Nicholas Wollands (1585, 13s. 4d. annually), John Dawson (1677, £5 4s. annually), William Hawley (1690, £1 annually for poor widows) and William Mansfield (1715, £2 annually between 20 poor widowers).<sup>139</sup> These were combined in 1865 for administrative purposes, becoming the 'Small Gifts Charities', although separate accounts continued

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<sup>130</sup> *Leics. Merc.*, 8 July 1854; *Derbs. Advertiser*, 6 Apr. 1855; *Leic. Jnl*, 27 July 1866.

<sup>131</sup> *Rpt of Charity Comms*, pp. 401–2; *Lboro. Herald*, 29 May 1884; 19 July 1888; D.F. Postles, 'Building for a borough: housing the people of Loughborough, 1861–1900', 54–5, online at <https://davelinux.info/BOOKS/building.pdf> (accessed 28 Nov. 2024); above, Town, Parish and Borough.

<sup>132</sup> Anon, *John Storer's Charity and Educational Foundation, 250th Anniversary Celebrations* (Lboro, 1963), 1, 3, 4, 11, 12; below, Education.

<sup>133</sup> Anon, *John Storer's Charity and Educational Foundation, 250th Anniversary Celebrations* (Lboro, 1963), 4.

<sup>134</sup> 'The story of John Storer House' (from brochure produced for opening ceremony).

<sup>135</sup> O. Brown, *John Storer House: A Short History* (Lboro, 1991), 1–4.

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid*; *Leic. Merc.*, 27 Jan. 1966.

<sup>137</sup> O. Brown, *John Storer House: A Short History* (Lboro, 1991), 5–8.

<sup>138</sup> <https://johnstorercharnwood.org.uk/> (accessed 12 June 2024).

<sup>139</sup> *Rpt of Charity Comms*, pp. 398–400; *Abstract of Returns of Charitable Donations 1786–88* (Parl. Papers 1816 (511) xvi), pp. 654–5.



to be maintained for each.<sup>140</sup> Thomas Palmer's charity (1676, £2 annually between 40 widows) remained separate as it also benefitted the poor of Shepshed.

Further restructuring in 1888 merged the Small Gifts Charities with four others created in the 17th century to provide apprenticeships to poor children (John Hickling, 1677; Joseph Dawson, 1678; John Somerville, 1680 and John Fowler, 1680).<sup>141</sup> The investments returned a total of £85 annually in 1891.<sup>142</sup> These were brought together under a single board of trustees in 1972 with other charities operating within the borough of Loughborough, as The Loughborough Welfare Trusts.<sup>143</sup>

### *Poor relief, 1750–1834*

The townships of Knightthorpe and Woodthorpe were rated separately and appointed their own overseers. In 1777, Knightthorpe spent £22 on poor relief and Woodthorpe spent £3.<sup>144</sup> Relief was paid to just three people in each of these townships in 1803.<sup>145</sup>

Four overseers were elected annually for Loughborough. Each was responsible for three months' expenditure, with their accounts presented to a quarterly vestry meeting. It was a responsible and demanding role: in the first quarter of 1796–7, for example, overseer Richard Cartwright made weekly cash payments to 90 people and 336 other payments mostly to those needing occasional relief.<sup>146</sup>

The workhouse built on Sparrow Hill in 1749–51 was intended to house those likely to be a 'continuous' charge on the rates with the aim of reducing the cost of poor relief.<sup>147</sup> The Burton feoffees paid £214 to provide a three-storey property to house 70 paupers (Figure 15);<sup>148</sup> the running costs were paid by the overseers.<sup>149</sup> Those capable of work were required to knit or spin to provide clothing for workhouse residents, or could work outside the house, 'charring' or as day labourers; children were taught to knit or spin.<sup>150</sup> By 1796 the overseers had ceased to buy materials for spinning or knitting and the workhouse may have been used only for the elderly and disabled.<sup>151</sup>

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<sup>140</sup> ROLLR, DE667/118 (Small gifts charity: accounts); *Leic. Jnl*, 6 Oct. 1865; *Lboro. Herald*, 10 Nov. 1887; Charnwood Roots Databank <https://archive.charnwoodroots.org/report/3775/> (accessed 12 June 2024).

<sup>141</sup> *Rpt of Charity Comms*, pp. 397–401.

<sup>142</sup> *Kelly's Dir. of Leics. and Rutl.* (1891), 734.

<sup>143</sup> ROLLR, DE9595/5/40; The Lboro. Welfare Trusts Rpt and Accts (2022), registered charity 214654, <https://register-of-charities.charitycommission.gov.uk/charity-search/-/charity-details/214654/accounts-and-annual-returns> (accessed 8 Nov. 2023).

<sup>144</sup> *Rpt from Committee appointed to inspect Overseers' Returns* (Parl. Papers 1776–7, ix), pp. 383–4.

<sup>145</sup> *Poor Rate Rtns* (Parl. Papers 1803–4, (175), xiii), pp. 262–3.

<sup>146</sup> ROLLR, DE667/178b.

<sup>147</sup> ROLLR, DE667/177; DE664/31; DE664/41a. This part of Sparrow Hill later became Nottingham Road.

<sup>148</sup> ROLLR, DE664/34; *Rpt from Cttee on Overseers' Rtns* (Parl. Papers 1776–7, ix), pp. 383–4; *Nottm Jnl*, 27 Apr. 1855.

<sup>149</sup> ROLLR, DE664/34; DE667/178a.

<sup>150</sup> ROLLR, DE664/41a.

<sup>151</sup> ROLLR, DE667/178b.



*Figure 15: The former parish workhouse, shortly before demolition in the early 1960s.*

The amount spent on poor relief rose from £168 in 1745–6 to £236 in 1753–4,<sup>152</sup> and £1,713 in 1803, when the parish supported 60 people in the workhouse, provided ‘permanent’ help to 54 paupers outside the workhouse and occasional assistance to 52 other inhabitants.<sup>153</sup> From 1808 there were large fluctuations in the annual amount borne by ratepayers, as the Burton feoffees began to pay their annual surplus to the overseers.<sup>154</sup>

### **Loughborough Poor Law Union**

Loughborough Poor Law Union was formed in 1837 and comprised 14 parishes and townships in north Leicestershire and ten in south Nottinghamshire. Twenty-eight guardians were elected, four for Loughborough, one for Knightthorpe, one for Woodthorpe, two for Shepshed and one for each of the other 20 parishes.<sup>155</sup> Land near Regent Street was purchased for £550 as a site for a workhouse for 350 paupers.<sup>156</sup> G. Gilbert Scott and W. Bonython Moffatt of London were appointed as architects.<sup>157</sup> The construction contract, for £5,647, was placed with George Myers and Richard Wilson of Hull.<sup>158</sup> The main entrance, facing Derby Road, was flanked by the board room (to the south) and a chapel (to the north). The accommodation block, in the central range, was of three storeys.<sup>159</sup> The union workhouse opened in 1839 and the parish workhouse closed. A vagrants’ ward was added later that year, where temporary relief could be given.<sup>160</sup> This was replaced by a vagrants’ block of separate sleeping cells, designed by George Hodson of Loughborough in 1874.<sup>161</sup>

Two women, Mrs Jones (Liberal) and Mrs Clifford (Conservative), were elected to the Board of Guardians in 1906.<sup>162</sup> The Board was disbanded in 1930 and the premises were transferred to Loughborough Town Council as a public assistance institution.

<sup>152</sup> ROLLR, DE667/177.

<sup>153</sup> *Poor Rate Rtns* (Parl. Papers 1803–4, (175) xiii), pp. 262–3.

<sup>154</sup> ROLLR, DE664/36; below.

<sup>155</sup> ROLLR, G/7/8a/1, p. 1.

<sup>156</sup> ROLLR, G/7/8a/1, pp. 3, 16.

<sup>157</sup> ROLLR, G/7/8a/1, p. 173; *Poor Law Commissioners, First Annual Report* (Parl. Papers 1835 (500) xxxv), Appendix A.

<sup>158</sup> ROLLR, G/7/8a/1, p. 296; G/7/8c/1; P. Spencer-Silver, ‘George Myers, 1803–75, stonemason, builder, contractor’, *Construction History*, 5 (1989), 53.

<sup>159</sup> <https://www.workhouses.org.uk/Loughborough/> (accessed 19 June 2024).

<sup>160</sup> *Leic. Chron.*, 31 Aug. 1839.

<sup>161</sup> <https://www.workhouses.org.uk/Loughborough/> (accessed 19 June 2024).

<sup>162</sup> Shuker, *Suffragettes*, 9.

## *Medical Services*

### Private Medicine to 1948

Only one medical practitioner was listed in Loughborough in 1783.<sup>163</sup> There were five surgeons in 1791,<sup>164</sup> and two physicians and seven surgeons in 1822.<sup>165</sup> There were five surgeons in 1862.<sup>166</sup> In 1941 there were three multi-doctor practices, Blackham, Morton and Cooper on Victoria Street, MacLeod and Symons on Baxtergate and McQuat, Brummitt and Goode on Leicester Road, Dr Holderness was a sole practitioner on Ashby Road and Dr Lapper attended the workhouse. There were also five dental practices.<sup>167</sup>

### Poor Law Medical Services

Until 1807 the Burton charity regularly paid for medical care for the poor, for example paying 9 guineas to Mr Holebrook for 18 months' 'Physick and surgery' in 1753–4,<sup>168</sup> 12 guineas to Mr Douglass for attendance and medicine at the workhouse in 1770 with a further 12 guineas for attending and treating those outside the workhouse who had been recommended as 'objects of charity' by the overseers or churchwardens,<sup>169</sup> and 15 guineas to Mr Eddowes for attendance and medicine in 1802–3.<sup>170</sup>

The new Poor Law Union was divided into two districts for medical care in 1837.<sup>171</sup> The 12 'sick wards' in the workhouse formed part of a national inspection in 1867, with patients found to have access to easy chairs, armchairs, rocking chairs, a library and periodicals.<sup>172</sup>

### Loughborough Dispensary and Infirmary, 1819 to 1948

A public meeting in 1819 agreed to establish a dispensary to provide free medical and surgical assistance to working people of limited means. A management committee of 16 was elected and invited Robert Shirley, 7th earl Ferrers, of Staunton Harold to be president.<sup>173</sup> The dispensary opened in rented premises on Mill Street (later Market Street) with treatment provided upon the recommendation of a donor or subscriber.<sup>174</sup> One of their main sources of fundraising was the annual ball.<sup>175</sup>

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<sup>163</sup> *Medical Register for the Year 1783*, 20.

<sup>164</sup> *Universal British Dir.* (1791), 577.

<sup>165</sup> *Pigot's Dir. of Leics.* (1822), 224–5.

<sup>166</sup> *Slater's Dir. of Leics.* (1862), 77, 80.

<sup>167</sup> *Kelly's Dir. of Leics. and Rutl.* (1941), 1009–1019.

<sup>168</sup> ROLLR, DE664/34.

<sup>169</sup> ROLLR, DE664/41a.

<sup>170</sup> ROLLR, DE664/36.

<sup>171</sup> ROLLR, G/7/8a/1, pp. 2–3.

<sup>172</sup> *Provincial Workhouses, Rpt of Dr Edward Smith* (Parl. Papers 1867–8 (4) lx), pp. 441–4.

<sup>173</sup> *Leic. Jnl*, 29 Jan., 19 Feb. 1819; J. Brownlow, T. Keil, I. Keil, G. Lowe, J. Slatter and D. Wix, *The Story of Loughborough Dispensary and Hospital, 1819–2003* (Loughborough, 2006), 29–37.

<sup>174</sup> *Leic. Jnl*, 5 Jan, 1821.

<sup>175</sup> Below, Assemblies and Balls.

The dispensary moved in 1823 to larger premises on the north side of Baxtergate owned by the Burton charity, which agreed to provide £50 towards alterations costing over £110. Mr Dewberry's estimate of £167 for alterations was accepted in 1830.<sup>176</sup> In 1838 the dispensary treated 1,237 patients, including 31 people requiring operations after accidents, and attended 21 midwifery cases in their own homes. An extension added that year had provided accommodation for 11 in-patients, and was partly funded by Miss Tate of Burleigh Hall.<sup>177</sup>

In 1861 the dispensary treated 1,353 medical and surgical cases, 149 midwifery cases and 46 cases where the patient needed to be admitted.<sup>178</sup> With little room to expand, William Perry Herrick of Beaumanor and his sister Mary Ann Herrick provided a new site on the opposite side of Baxtergate in 1862 and built a two-storey hospital to accommodate 20 in-patients (Figure 7).<sup>179</sup> A furnished apartment was provided for a house surgeon and a resident matron was also recruited.<sup>180</sup> At any one time during the 1860s and 1870s there were generally over 400 patients on the books, mostly receiving courses of treatment as out-patients.<sup>181</sup> A visiting committee toured the in-patient beds each week, noting in 1870 the 'Many cases of fractured limbs and other serious cases of suffering', with the wards developing 'more and more the character of an Infirmary'.<sup>182</sup> The building was renamed Loughborough Hospital and Dispensary in 1881.<sup>183</sup> The word Dispensary was dropped from the name in 1935.<sup>184</sup> A two-storey extension was added to the building in 1896 to become the out-patients department.<sup>185</sup> A children's ward was built in 1911 through a gift from William Byerley Paget and endowed and equipped by public subscription with the whole project dedicated as a memorial to King Edward VII.<sup>186</sup>

The hospital was required to provide 80 beds for wounded soldiers during the First World War, 40 in the hospital and 40 elsewhere, with resultant staff pressures eased by 50 nurses from the Voluntary Aid Detachment scheme. Entertainments for the soldiers included visiting bands and gramophone music.<sup>187</sup>

A nurses' home was built next to the hospital and opened in 1924. An ambitious scheme to raise £40,000 to add two upper storeys was launched in 1928. A 'Saturday Fund' of workers'

<sup>176</sup> ROLLR, DE 2857/177/1 pt. 2, ff. 80, 84; Brownlow and others, *Loughborough Dispensary*, 41.

<sup>177</sup> ROLLR, DE2857/177/1, pt. 2, f. 86; *Leic. Chron.*, 23 March 1839; Brownlow and others, *Loughborough Dispensary*, 53.

<sup>178</sup> *Leics. Merc.*, 12 Oct. 1861.

<sup>179</sup> *Leic. Jnl.*, 1 Aug. 1860; Brownlow and others, *Loughborough Dispensary*, 60; image above, Town, Parish and Borough, Settlement and the Built Environment.

<sup>180</sup> *Leic. Jnl.*, 23 Jan. 1863; *Lboro. Monitor*, 28 Aug. 1862.

<sup>181</sup> Brownlow and others, *Loughborough Dispensary*, 64–5.

<sup>182</sup> Brownlow and others, *Loughborough Dispensary*, 63.

<sup>183</sup> *Leic. Chron.*, 24 Oct. 1896.

<sup>184</sup> Brownlow and others, *Loughborough Dispensary*, 149.

<sup>185</sup> *Leic. Jnl.*, 16 Oct. 1896; *Leic. Chron.*, 24 Oct. 1896.

<sup>186</sup> Wall plaque later moved to new hospital buildings, extant 2023; *Melton Mowbray Merc.*, 26 Oct. 1911.

<sup>187</sup> Brownlow and others, *Loughborough Dispensary*, 101–4.

contributions raised £22,000 towards this aim. The work was completed in 1938, adding 35 patient beds (increasing the total to 81) and a further 27 beds for staff (total 51).<sup>188</sup>

### Isolation Hospital

The dispensary did not admit cases of infectious disease.<sup>189</sup> A property in Nanpantan was used by the borough as a 'cottage hospital' in the 1880s for cases of infectious disease.<sup>190</sup> Needing larger premises, a small piece of land and a building off Park Lane (Beacon Road) were leased from Edward Warner where a 'fever hospital' was built.<sup>191</sup> In 1894 representatives from the town council and the board of guardians agreed that it would be preferable for the urban and rural sanitary districts to share a single isolation hospital and a search began for a site.<sup>192</sup> A cottage and land on Ling Lane were purchased by the town council in 1907 and a new isolation hospital opened in 1908.<sup>193</sup> It was sold to the county council in 1925 for use in a county-wide scheme,<sup>194</sup> and closed in 1932 when a new county isolation hospital opened at Markfield.<sup>195</sup>

### Hospitals since 1948

The infirmary and the former Union workhouse became NHS hospitals.<sup>196</sup> The latter was renamed Regent Hospital in 1981.<sup>197</sup> A new outpatients and rehabilitation unit opened at the infirmary in 1956, and nursing accommodation was provided on Park Road in 1962.<sup>198</sup>

The first phase of a new hospital, costing £7.6 million, opened on Epinal Way (ring road) in 1992 and received patients from Regent Hospital, which then closed and was demolished.<sup>199</sup> The second phase was completed in 2003 for £10 million, and Baxtergate infirmary closed.<sup>200</sup> In 2025 there were two wards for in-patients and an urgent care (formerly 'walk-in') centre, although emergency treatment is centralised in Leicester.<sup>201</sup>

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<sup>188</sup> ROLLR, DE7187/2; *Lboro. Echo*, 26 Oct 1928; Brownlow and others, *Loughborough Dispensary*, 123–5; wall plaque later moved to new hospital buildings, extant 2023.

<sup>189</sup> Brownlow and others, *Loughborough Dispensary*, 65.

<sup>190</sup> *Leic. Advertiser*, 7 Dec. 1889.

<sup>191</sup> *Leic. Chron.*, 12 July 1890; *Melton Mowbray Merc.*, 2 Aug. 1906; OS map, 25", Leics. XVII.12 (1901 edn).

<sup>192</sup> *Leic. Chron.*, 17 Mar. 1894.

<sup>193</sup> *Melton Mowbray Merc.*, 2 Aug. 1906, 20 Dec. 1906; Brownlow and others, *Loughborough Dispensary*, 156.

<sup>194</sup> Brownlow and others, *Loughborough Dispensary*, 157.

<sup>195</sup> *Leic. Daily Merc.*, 20 Sept. 1932.

<sup>196</sup> Brownlow and others, *Loughborough Dispensary*, 169; <https://www.workhouses.org.uk/Loughborough/> (accessed 19 June 2024).

<sup>197</sup> *Leic. Daily Merc.*, 23 June 1980.

<sup>198</sup> Brownlow and others, *Loughborough Dispensary*, 175, 178.

<sup>199</sup> *Lboro. Mail*, 16 Oct. 1985; *Leic. Daily Merc.*, 9 Sept. 1992; 29 Jan. 1994; Brownlow and others, *Loughborough Dispensary*, 239–41.

<sup>200</sup> Brownlow and others, *Loughborough Dispensary*, 239–41.

<sup>201</sup> <https://www.leicspart.nhs.uk/base/loughborough-hospital/>; <https://www.nhs.uk/services/clinic/loughborough-urgent-care-centre/X141307> (both accessed 5 Aug. 2025).

### Ambulance Services

No emergency department was provided, but there was an ambulance station on the opposite side of Epinal Way.

### *Friendly Societies*

Ten Friendly Societies in 1803 had a combined membership of 646.<sup>202</sup> In exchange for a small weekly subscription, members could receive payment from the society's funds in the event of sickness, and perhaps medical care and payment of funeral costs. These early societies do not seem to have endured, probably through a combination of low membership levels, poor risk assessment and insecure local employment. Many of the later societies that replaced them were affiliated to large national bodies, spreading the risks and costs between more people. The Good Samaritan Lodge of the Independent Order of Odd Fellows, Manchester Unity was established in 1854,<sup>203</sup> and purchased the former theatre on Sparrow Hill in 1855 for a meeting hall.<sup>204</sup> Their 190 members in 1868 included 'many of the most respectable tradesmen in the town'.<sup>205</sup> Four further societies were formed between 1860 and 1870: a lodge of the Independent Order of United Brothers named Loughborough Unity (1867), and three courts of the Ancient Order of Foresters (Court Standard, 1860; Court Flower of the Forest, 1869 and Court Spring of Love, 1870). Their respective memberships in 1876 were 187, 173, 80 and 56.<sup>206</sup> Unity Lodge later became known as the Prince of Wales Lodge.<sup>207</sup> The societies mostly met in local public houses and enjoyed an annual dinner.<sup>208</sup> In 1883 these five societies together with three others, the Ancient Order of Druids, Nottingham Imperial Order of Oddfellows Hand and Heart Lodge, and Manchester Unity of Oddfellows Sovereign Lodge, established the Medical Aid Association.<sup>209</sup> They also introduced an annual sports day.<sup>210</sup>

### Loughborough Medical Aid Association

The Medical Aid Association was formed to share the costs of employing a doctor and a dispenser to provide advice and treatment to friendly society members.<sup>211</sup> Premises on Fennel Street provided waiting and consultation rooms and a dispensary service.<sup>212</sup> Local doctors responded by refusing to work with any medical man the association might employ.<sup>213</sup> The association appointed Thomas Corcoran of Darwen (Lancs.) as its doctor, who moved to Loughborough.<sup>214</sup>

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<sup>202</sup> *Poor Rate Rtns*, (Parl. Papers 1803–4 (175), xiii), 262–3.

<sup>203</sup> *Reports of the Chief Registrar of Friendly Societies 1876* (Parl. Papers 1877 (429), lxix), p. 386.

<sup>204</sup> *Notts. Guardian*, 1 Mar. 1855; *Leics. Merc.*, 17 Mar. 1855; *Leic. Jnl*, 13 Feb. 1857.

<sup>205</sup> *Leic. Jnl*, 21 Aug. 1868.

<sup>206</sup> *Rpts Reg. Friendly Societies 1876*, p. 386.

<sup>207</sup> *Lboro. Herald*, 5 Dec. 1889.

<sup>208</sup> For example, *Leic. Jnl*, 21 May 1869.

<sup>209</sup> *Lboro. Herald*, 22 Mar. 1883; 21 May 1885; Below, Medical Services.

<sup>210</sup> For example, *Leic. Jnl*, 22 May 1896.

<sup>211</sup> *Lboro. Herald*, 7 and 28 Dec. 1882; 9 June 1887.

<sup>212</sup> *Lboro. Herald*, 17 May 1883.

<sup>213</sup> *Lboro. Herald*, 22 and 29 Mar. 1883.

<sup>214</sup> *Lboro. Herald*, 5 Dec. 1889.

By 1886 membership had grown to 5,000 and the association provided 14,195 consultations and 12,127 home visits.<sup>215</sup> A further site on Fennel Street was purchased to provide larger premises. William Hampton of Loughborough was employed as architect and Arthur Faulkes of Loughborough as contractor for c.£1,000. The new building opened in 1889 (Figure 16).<sup>216</sup> The Association had 3,046 members from ten friendly societies in 1912 and became an approved provider of medical services under the 1911 National Insurance Act. It closed in 1944 following the resignation of the medical officer and the association's inability to find a replacement.<sup>217</sup>

*Figure 16: Loughborough Medical Aid Association premises (1889), which became the headquarters of Loughborough Labour Party in 1945*

## Social and Cultural Life

### *Inns and Public Houses*

The Bull's Head, the Anchor (both on High Gate) and the George and Dragon (Market Place) were described as the principal inns in 1793, among a total of 43 licensed premises.<sup>218</sup> There were 45 licensed premises in 1821 and in 1827.<sup>219</sup> By 1846 the number had increased to 55.<sup>220</sup> There were 88 in 1884,<sup>221</sup> and the magistrates were keen to limit this number by only issuing licences where a need could be demonstrated and against the surrender of a licence elsewhere in the town. The licence for a hotel by the recently opened station on Derby Road was agreed in 1885 against the surrender of the licence for the Angel in Baxtergate, and in 1889 a licence was agreed for the Paget Arms on the new Paget Estate against the surrender of the licence for the New Inn, also on Baxtergate.<sup>222</sup> One effect on this change was to encourage the development of tied chains, as an individual would not have a licence to surrender.

Lord Moira owned 31 of the inns and public houses in Loughborough in 1809, the Bull's Head ('the principal Inn') and the Anchor (inn and post house) among their number.<sup>223</sup> The Anchor was bought by its tenant (Robert Wykes) for £800 in 1809, but was placed on the market again in 1814.<sup>224</sup> It was combined c.1817 with the neighbouring Bull's Head (hammer price £3,200 in 1810), to become the Bull's Head and Anchor (later just the Bull's Head).<sup>225</sup>

<sup>215</sup> *Lboro. Herald*, 21 May 1885; 9 June 1887.

<sup>216</sup> *Lboro. Herald*, 5 Dec. 1889.

<sup>217</sup> TNA, MH 81/59.

<sup>218</sup> *Universal British Directory* (1793), 577.

<sup>219</sup> ROLLR, QS36/2/10.

<sup>220</sup> W. White, *Hist. Gaz. and Dir. of Leics. and Rutl.* (Sheffield, 1846), 288–9.

<sup>221</sup> *Lboro. Herald*, 28 Aug. 1884.

<sup>222</sup> *Hinckley News*, 3 Oct. 1885; *Leic. Daily Merc.*, 3 Apr. 1889.

<sup>223</sup> ROLLR, DE2857/121/1, 3.

<sup>224</sup> ROLLR, DE2857/121/1; *Leic. Jnl*, 4 Mar. 1814.

<sup>225</sup> *Aris's Birmingham Gazette*, 7 Apr. 1817.

The inns and larger public houses were the arrival and departure points for coaches and carriers; some had horses and chaises for hire and some were posting houses.<sup>226</sup> They also provided spaces for meetings and other events where many people would be present. These included coroner's inquests, where a second room or outbuilding might also be required for the body, which the members of the jury were obliged to view,<sup>227</sup> meetings of creditors (of bankrupts or of those recently deceased),<sup>228</sup> auctions, including on at least one occasion when the estate being sold was 18 miles away, at Burrough on the Hill,<sup>229</sup> political meetings and meetings of friendly societies.<sup>230</sup> In the 1820s Loughborough's manor court usually met in either the Bulls Head and Anchor or the King's Head, also on High Gate.<sup>231</sup> The enclosure commissioners for Shepshed, Hathern, Charnwood Forest and Rothley Plain met at the Anchor to hear claims,<sup>232</sup> and the public health enquiry by William Lee of the General Board of Health was held in 1849 at the Plough on Market Place.<sup>233</sup> Medical consultations could be arranged at inns on market days,<sup>234</sup> and mares could be covered by stallions of named parentage.<sup>235</sup>

Inns were also places for recreation. Assemblies and balls were held and plays were staged.<sup>236</sup> The Bull's Head had 'a large cover'd Cockpit' in 1753.<sup>237</sup> A bowling alley at the Royal George in 1839 suggests indoor skittles and the King's Head had a billiard table in 1877.<sup>238</sup> By 1925 skittles, darts and other games were played in 63 public houses in the Loughborough Licensing District.<sup>239</sup> John Bennett, the licensee at the Longcliffe Hotel in Nanpantan from 1883, structured his business to appeal to day-trippers to Charnwood Forest, including work's parties. He built two long dining rooms at the rear to seat 500 people and hired bands to play.<sup>240</sup> He also hired a field opposite the hotel (in reality an inn) where parties could enjoy sports and outdoor games.<sup>241</sup> He faced competition from 1896, when a temperance hotel opened c.100 yds away with 'Grand Pavilion Accommodation for 400

<sup>226</sup> W. White, *Hist. Gaz. and Dir. of Leics. and Rutl.* (Sheffield, 1846), 288–9, 291–2; *Northampton Merc.*, 3 June 1797.

<sup>227</sup> P.J. Fisher, *An Object of Ambition? The Office of Coroner in Two Midland Counties, 1751–1888* (Leicester, 2003), 11–13.

<sup>228</sup> For example, *Leic. Jnl*, 10 May 1777; 31 July 1812.

<sup>229</sup> *Leic. Jnl*, 21 Sept. 1771.

<sup>230</sup> *Rpts Reg. Friendly Soc.* 1876, p. 386; *Leic. Jnl*, 8 June 1832; 13 Nov. 1835.

<sup>231</sup> ROLLR, DE1834/132.

<sup>232</sup> *Leic. Jnl*, 12 Apr. 1777, 12 Feb. 1813.

<sup>233</sup> *Leics. Merc.*, 16 June 1849.

<sup>234</sup> *Leic. Jnl*, 15 Dec. 1764.

<sup>235</sup> *Leic. Jnl*, 4 Apr. 1767.

<sup>236</sup> Below.

<sup>237</sup> *Derby Merc.*, 9 Feb. 1753.

<sup>238</sup> W. White, *Hist. Gaz. and Dir. of Leics. and Rutl.* (Sheffield, 1877), 513.

<sup>239</sup> *Nottm Eve. Post*, 3 Mar. 1925.

<sup>240</sup> *Leicester Daily Merc.*, 23 Aug. 1883; *Hinckley News*, 25 Aug. 1883; *Lboro. Herald*, 13 Aug. 1885; *Leicester Daily Merc.*, 7 May 1891; *Melton Mowbray Merc.*, 31 Aug 1893; *Nottm Eve. Post*, 11 Sept. 1893; *Derbs. Advertiser*, 12 Nov. 1897.

<sup>241</sup> ROLLR, DE 2072/51; Inland Revenue map, Leics. XVII.11; *Leic. Chron.*, 28 Aug. 1897.

Persons',<sup>242</sup> but both businesses appear to have thrived until 1914, when the temperance Hotel closed.<sup>243</sup> Live music and karaoke became common in public houses in Loughborough from the late 20th century and major sports matches could be watched on a 'big screen'.<sup>244</sup>

### *Assemblies and Balls*

Assemblies were advertised in the late 18th century, but little is known about their venues or frequency.<sup>245</sup> A concert followed by a ball was held in the assembly room at the George Inn in 1793.<sup>246</sup> A former assembly room on Baxtergate is recorded in 1807.<sup>247</sup> An annual fundraising ball at the Bull's Head and Anchor was held in aid of the town's dispensary from the 1820s.<sup>248</sup> This moved to the Town Hall when it opened in 1855.<sup>249</sup> From the outset this was strongly supported by the county's gentry, parliamentary representatives and clergy.<sup>250</sup> No MPs appear to have been present in 1881, but the two local nobles, Earl Ferrers (Staunton Harold) and the Earl of Lanesborough (Swithland Hall), were present with a strong showing from the gentry.<sup>251</sup>

### *Theatre and Cinema*

The 'Gentlemen of the Loughbro' Hunt' sponsored a theatrical production in the town in 1768.<sup>252</sup> Plays were staged at the 'town hall' (presumably the court leet building) in the 1760s, with seats in the 'pit' and the 'gallery', and from 1771 in the 'new theatre', probably at an inn.<sup>253</sup> These appear to be amateur productions with Mr and Mrs Stanton of the Boot Inn and Mr and Mrs Keys of Churchgate regularly among the players. Touring companies also visited, including in 1777 the 'Leicester Company of Comedians', 'Mr Astley's Company' and 'Performers from Saddlers Wells'.<sup>254</sup>

A company of shareholders built a theatre on Sparrow Hill in 1823 at a cost of £700 and appointed Mr Bennett of the Theatre Royal, Worcester as manager. A 'crowded' audience attended the opening night of two plays, but support later dwindled.<sup>255</sup> Master B. Grossmith of Reading, reputedly just seven years old, appeared for one night in 1836 in a three-part drama in which he

<sup>242</sup> *Leicester Daily Merc.*, 4 Aug. 1896; *Will's Directory* (Loughborough, 1901).

<sup>243</sup> *Melton Mowbray Merc.*, 3 Dec. 1914.

<sup>244</sup> L. Dyer, *Loughborough Pubs* (Stroud, 2023), 57, 89.

<sup>245</sup> *Leic. Jnl*, 10 Sept. 1768; 4 Feb. 1775.

<sup>246</sup> *Leic. Jnl*, 29 Mar. 1793.

<sup>247</sup> Notts. Archives, NC/Q/251/21.

<sup>248</sup> *Leic. Chron.*, 20 Jan. 1821; 9 Feb. 1822; 1 Feb. 1823.

<sup>249</sup> *Leic. Jnl*, 28 Nov. 1856; *Leics. Merc.*, 30 Apr. 1859; *Leic. Advertiser*, 19 Jan. 1889.

<sup>250</sup> *Leic. Jnl*, 5 Jan. 1821.

<sup>251</sup> *Leic. Daily Merc.*, 17 Jan. 1881.

<sup>252</sup> *Leic. Jnl*, 17 Dec. 1768.

<sup>253</sup> *Leic. Jnl*, 17 Dec., 24 Dec. 1768; 16 Nov. 1771.

<sup>254</sup> *Leic. Jnl*, 13 Dec. 1777.

<sup>255</sup> *Leic. Chron.*, 14 Sept. 1822; *Leic. Jnl*, 6 June 1823; M. Gould, *Loughborough's Stage and Screen* (Wakefield, 1994), 3–6; H. and R. Leacroft, *The Theatre in Leicestershire: A History of Entertainment in the County from the 15th century to the 1960s* (Leicester, 1986), 27–8.



played ‘above thirty characters’.<sup>256</sup> The theatre had been closed ‘for several years’ when it reopened in 1839 under new management, but with no greater success.<sup>257</sup> It was also booked for public lectures on scientific subjects, political talks and, in 1840, a performance including lions, tigers and leopards.<sup>258</sup> Gas lighting was installed in 1845 and the theatre was refurbished in 1848.<sup>259</sup> It was sold to the Sovereign Lodge of Oddfellows for £205 in 1856 for use as a meeting hall, and they added their crest to the front of the building (Figure 17).<sup>260</sup> The building was also used as a Nonconformist place of worship in 1828, 1850 and between 1862 and 1870.<sup>261</sup> It is locally listed.<sup>262</sup>

*Figure 17: The former theatre on Sparrow Hill (1823) bears the Oddfellows crest from its later use as a meeting hall. It has also been a place of worship, an auction hall and a shop*

A travelling theatre visited Loughborough in 1882.<sup>263</sup> There were also occasional amateur dramatic performances at the Town Hall and at the Philharmonic Hall on Southfield Road, in addition to concerts, after it opened in 1889.<sup>264</sup> A new theatre, ‘substantially built of wood and corrugated iron’ opened on Ashby Road in 1896, with prices from 4d. It burnt down in 1901 on the first day of a new season.<sup>265</sup> Following that loss, W. Payne Seddon of Burton-on-Trent staged productions at the town hall from 1901 to 1905.<sup>266</sup> In 1905 Seddon and George Robertson opened the Theatre Royal on Mill Street (later Market Street), designed by Albert E. King to seat 800 and built by Arthur Faulks. A photograph of the opening night shows empty rows of seats.<sup>267</sup> Seddon moved back to the town hall in 1910 to stage occasional plays and leased the Theatre Royal to Leon Vint, who showed films and staged occasional variety productions.<sup>268</sup>

Cinema proved very popular and affordable: the cheapest seats at Vint’s ‘Electric Hippodrome’ were just 2d. He was competing with the Weisker Brothers, who leased the Temperance Hall in 1909 and opened nightly. They ran a new film every week and were soon adding additional showings to meet demand.<sup>269</sup> The Weiskers continued until 1917, when the building was

<sup>256</sup> Leacroft, *The Theatre*; copy of playbill in Lboro. Libr. Local Studies. A playbill from 1833 claimed he was then aged six: [https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/P\\_1994-0619-6](https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/P_1994-0619-6) (accessed 26 Apr. 2025).

<sup>257</sup> *Leic. Chron.* 16 Nov. 1839; Leacroft, *The Theatre*, 27.

<sup>258</sup> *Leic. Chron.*, 7 Jan. 1837; 24 Sept. 1842; *Leic. Jnl*, 17 Mar. 1843; *Leics. Merc.*, 15 Feb. 1840.

<sup>259</sup> *Leics. Merc.*, 15 Feb. 1845; 29 Jan. 1848.

<sup>260</sup> *Notts. Guardian*, 1 Mar. 1855; *Leics. Merc.*, 17 Mar. 1855; *Leic. Jnl*, 13 Feb. 1857; Leacroft, *The Theatre*, 29.

<sup>261</sup> Below, Religious Life, Protestant Nonconformity.

<sup>262</sup> [https://www.charnwood.gov.uk/listed\\_buildings/no52\\_sparrow\\_hill\\_loughborough](https://www.charnwood.gov.uk/listed_buildings/no52_sparrow_hill_loughborough) (accessed 21 Mar. 2025).

<sup>263</sup> Leacroft, *The Theatre*, 107

<sup>264</sup> Gould, *Loughborough’s Stage*, 13.

<sup>265</sup> *Leic. Jnl*, 11 Sept. 1896; *Hinckley Times*, 3 Aug. 1901; Gould, *Loughborough’s Stage*, 17–8.

<sup>266</sup> *Stage*, 8 Aug. 1901.

<sup>267</sup> *Melton Mowbray Merc.*, 2 Feb. 1905; Gould, *Loughborough’s Stage*, 27–8; Leacroft, *The Theatre*, 108–9.

<sup>268</sup> *Era*, 12 Feb. 1910; 2 Sept. 1911; Gould, *Loughborough’s Stage*, 29–30.

<sup>269</sup> *Bioscope*, 23 Sept., 21 Oct. 1909.

sold to the YMCA.<sup>270</sup> A new building on the site of the former Ashby Road theatre began as a roller-skating rink, but that closed in 1911 and the building became Picture Playhouse, offering films and variety.<sup>271</sup>

The Empire was built on Cattle Market by a newly-formed company and opened in 1914 offering films and variety performances, with cinema tickets from 3d.<sup>272</sup> It was purchased in 1919 by The Universal Car Co. Ltd, whose managing director, Percy Oswin, was a car dealer from Leicester.<sup>273</sup> The same company built The Victory on Biggin Street, which cost £30,000 and opened in 1921 with seating for 1,000. Its auditorium was the first in Loughborough to be built without a full stage, and it generated its own electricity from a gas engine. The architect was Albert E. Bullock of London, and the contractors were William Moss and Sons Ltd.<sup>274</sup> There may not have been enough business in Loughborough to sustain three cinemas, as the company purchased the Picture Playhouse in 1927 and converted it to become Premier Dance Hall, to provide a different type of night out.<sup>275</sup> In 1929 the Victory became the first Loughborough venue to install a permanent sound-on-film system.<sup>276</sup> Building alterations at the Empire that year included a new foyer and façade.<sup>277</sup> ‘Talkies’ were introduced at the Empire in 1930.<sup>278</sup>

By 1914 Vint was no longer at the Theatre Royal, which was staging ‘musical plays’ and revues and was a popular venue for amateur productions.<sup>279</sup> A fire destroyed the stage area in 1931.<sup>280</sup> The Universal Car Co. Ltd purchased the property, rebuilt the fire-damaged portion, reconfigured the remainder and reopened it as the Theatre Royal, with alternative weeks of film and variety.<sup>281</sup>

Charles Deeming, who owned several cinemas in the Midlands, purchased the Universal Car Co. Ltd in 1933.<sup>282</sup> He completely rebuilt the Empire in 1935–6 by building a new auditorium for 1,663 people to the rear of the building, where four cottages had stood, and converted the old auditorium into a restaurant and ballroom with a fine Art Deco façade and a tower to house a water tank (figure 18).<sup>283</sup> This was partially financed by the sale of the Premier Dance Hall to Leicestershire

<sup>270</sup> *Bioscope*, 16 June 1927.

<sup>271</sup> *Era*, 15 Apr. 1911; 6 Jan. 1912.

<sup>272</sup> *Kinematograph Weekly*, 24 Sept. 1914; *Lboro. Echo*, 11 Sept. 1914; Gould, *Loughborough's Stage*, 39.

<sup>273</sup> *Lboro. Echo*, 5 Dec. 1919.

<sup>274</sup> Gould, *Loughborough's Stage*, 47; *Nottm Eve. Post*, 17 Sept. 1921.

<sup>275</sup> Gould, *Loughborough's Stage*, 21; *Bioscope*, 16 June 1927.

<sup>276</sup> Gould, *Loughborough's Stage*, 49, citing *Lboro. Echo*, 22 Nov. 1929.

<sup>277</sup> Gould, *Loughborough's Stage*, 41–3.

<sup>278</sup> Gould, *Loughborough's Stage*, 44; *Kinematograph Weekly*, 20 Nov. 1930.

<sup>279</sup> For example, *Lboro. Echo*, 11 Dec. 1914; *Leic. Chron.*, 18 Mar. 1922; *Leic. Daily Merc.*, 15 Sept. 1928.

<sup>280</sup> *Leic. Eve. Mail*, 13 May 1931.

<sup>281</sup> *Kinematograph Weekly*, 26 Nov. 1931; Gould, *Loughborough's Stage*, 30–4.

<sup>282</sup> Gould, *Loughborough's Stage*, 44–5, 87–98; *Kinematograph Weekly*, 20 July 1933.

<sup>283</sup> Gould, *Loughborough's Stage*, 45, 53–7; *Leic. Eve. Mail*, 15 Jan., 11 Sept. 1935

Education Committee for £4,500 to become Loughborough College's aeronautical department.<sup>284</sup> Deeming sold the Empire and Victory cinemas in 1953 to Essoldo, a Newcastle-upon-Tyne chain.<sup>285</sup> Live music in the ballroom at the Empire was limited to Saturday nights and a juke box was introduced.<sup>286</sup> The Victory closed in 1967 and was demolished.<sup>287</sup>

Oscar Deutsch, a Birmingham businessman who owned the Odeon chain of cinemas, built Loughborough's Odeon on the former post office site on Baxtergate, which also opened in 1936; it had 1,625 seats and cost £50,000 (figure 19). A construction worker on the Odeon recalled that 'a brick-by-brick race appeared to be on to see which would open first'.<sup>288</sup> Although both cinemas adopted the Art Deco style, the 'Moderne' flavour of the Odeon stands in contrast to the more angular Empire. Neither the Odeon nor the new Empire had the deep stage and dressing rooms needed to stage theatrical or variety shows, although bands and concerts could be accommodated.<sup>289</sup> The Odeon became part of the Rank Organisation after the death of Deutsch in 1941, and was one of over 40 cinemas sold to the Classic Cinema chain in 1967, taking the name Classic.<sup>290</sup> It was sold to Mecca and became Beacon Bingo in 1977.<sup>291</sup> It closed in 2021, but was under restoration by Junction Church in 2024.<sup>292</sup>

*Figure 18: The Empire Cinema (1936), which has traded under several subsequent names, remains a cinema in 2025. In addition to the coloured tiles just below the roof line and cream faience cladding, the cinema still retains its Art Deco windows and interior fittings.*

*Figure 19: The original Odeon cinema (1936). The building became Beacon Bingo in 1977; in 2025 it was being renovated by Junction church (see below, Religious History).*

The Essoldo (former Empire) cinema also became part of the Classic chain in 1972 and was renamed the Curzon.<sup>293</sup> It was divided into smaller auditoria in several stages from 1973,<sup>294</sup> and had several changes of name and ownership before 2001, when it was purchased by Loughborough businessman Kailash Suri, founder of Reel Cinemas, a small chain.<sup>295</sup> It was renamed the Odeon in

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<sup>284</sup> Gould, *Loughborough's Stage*, 22; *Leic. Eve. Mail*, 24 Apr. 1936.

<sup>285</sup> Gould, *Loughborough's Stage*, 51–2; *Lboro. Echo*, 27 Feb. 1953.

<sup>286</sup> M. Gould (ed.), *Memories of a Cinema: Sixty Years of the Curzon, Loughborough* (Lboro., 1995), 15.

<sup>287</sup> Gould, *Loughborough's Stage*, 51–2.

<sup>288</sup> J. Carswell (ed.), *Loughborough as I Remember It* (Leicester, 1989), unpaginated.

<sup>289</sup> Gould, *Loughborough's Stage*, 63–72; *Leic. Daily Merc.*, 11 Sept. 1936; above, Introduction.

<sup>290</sup> Gould, *Loughborough's Stage*, 70–1.

<sup>291</sup> Gould, *Loughborough's Stage*, 63, 72.

<sup>292</sup> *Leic. Merc.*, 26 Mar. 2021; above, Town, Parish and Borough, Settlement and the Built Environment.

<sup>293</sup> Gould, *Loughborough's Stage*, 53, 60.

<sup>294</sup> Gould, *Loughborough's Stage*, 60–2; <https://www.odeon.co.uk/cinemas/loughborough/> (accessed 12 Dec. 2023).

<sup>295</sup> Gould (ed.), *Memories*, 18–9; *Lboro. Echo*, 17 Apr. 2024.

2011.<sup>296</sup> It remained a cinema in 2024 with six screens, still retaining many of the Art Deco features both internally and externally. Cineworld, part of an international chain of cinemas, opened an eight-screen cinema in Baxtergate in 2016.<sup>297</sup> It closed in 2024 following financial difficulties at the American parent company.<sup>298</sup>

The Theatre Royal continued to stage variety, the productions of small repertory companies and local amateur groups until the 1950s, but struggled to attract professional shows.<sup>299</sup> It closed in 1953,<sup>300</sup> and was demolished in 1972.<sup>301</sup> The principal entertainment venue in the 2020s is the Town Hall, which runs a full annual programme of shows, plays, tribute bands, touring comedians, pantomime and theatre workshops.<sup>302</sup>

### *Libraries, Museums and Galleries*

A subscription library opened on Baxtergate in 1826, and there was a subscription newsroom at the Plough Inn.<sup>303</sup> Both moved to the town hall in 1856.<sup>304</sup> The library had 4,000 volumes in 1860, when the librarian was John Gray, proprietor of the *Loughborough Monitor* newspaper,<sup>305</sup> but it struggled financially and closed in 1867.<sup>306</sup> The newsroom continued.<sup>307</sup> A subscription for a new library in 1885 included contributions from factory employees. A site adjacent to the town offices on Ashby Road was acquired from the Local Board. The 'Free Library', designed by Hodson, Price and Hodson, opened in 1886.<sup>308</sup> There was a children's section by 1896.<sup>309</sup>

A larger library opened on Granby Street in 1905 with funding from Andrew Carnegie (Figure 9).<sup>310</sup> In 1939 councillor, and former mayor, Alan Moss purchased Island House and its grounds, adjacent to the library, and gave these to the corporation for a future library extension. A CLASP (Consortium of Local Authorities Special Programme) modular panel extension was added on this land in 1965.<sup>311</sup> In 2024 the library staff were employed by Leicestershire County Council and were

<sup>296</sup> B. Hornsey, *Loughborough Entertainments* (Stamford, 2012), 12.

<sup>297</sup> <https://www.cineworld.co.uk/static/en/uk/blog/cineworld-loughborough-opening> (accessed 18 Feb. 2025).

<sup>298</sup> <https://www.itv.com/news/2023-06-26/cineworld-to-file-for-administration-but-screens-will-remain-open> (accessed 12 Dec. 2023); *Leic. Merc.*, 2 Oct. 2024.

<sup>299</sup> Gould, *Loughborough's Stage*, 34–6; Loughborough Local Studies Library has a large collection of programmes.

<sup>300</sup> Gould, *Loughborough's Stage*, 36–7.

<sup>301</sup> Gould, *Loughborough's Stage*, 25, 37.

<sup>302</sup> <https://www.loughboroughtownhall.co.uk/> (accessed 18 Feb. 2025).

<sup>303</sup> *Leic. Herald*, 12 Mar. 1828; W. White, *Hist. Gaz. and Dir. of Leics. and Rutl.* (Sheffield, 1846), 277.

<sup>304</sup> *Leic. Jnl*, 21 Mar. 1856; W. White, *Hist. Gaz. and Dir. of Leics. and Rutl.* (Sheffield, 1863), 398.

<sup>305</sup> *Lboro. Monitor*, 5 Apr. 1860; D.F. Postles, 'Becoming a Borough: Loughborough 1851–1897' (2025, online at <https://davelinux.info/BOOKS/becoming.pdf>), 12, 40–1.

<sup>306</sup> *Leics. Merc.*, 17 Mar. 1855; *Lboro. Monitor*, 30 May 1867.

<sup>307</sup> W. White, *Hist. Gaz. and Dir. of Leics. and Rutl.* (Sheffield, 1877), 505–6.

<sup>308</sup> *Lboro. Herald*, 14 Jan. 1886.

<sup>309</sup> *Leic. Jnl*, 4 Sept. 1896.

<sup>310</sup> Above, Town, Parish and Borough, Settlement and the Built Environment.

<sup>311</sup> *Lboro. Echo*, 24 May 1940; 10 Sept. 1965; J. Angrave (ed.), *Loughborough Public Library Centenary, 1905–2005* (Lboro., 2005), 3, 61–4.

assisted by a team of volunteers from the Loughborough Library Local Studies Volunteer Group (formed in 2000) who deal with local and family history enquiries and organise a changing programme of local history displays.<sup>312</sup>

Three branch libraries opened in 1940, in Herbert Street, Shelthorpe and Knightthorpe.<sup>313</sup> These were replaced by a mobile library in 1960.<sup>314</sup> In 2024 this called at nine locations around Loughborough at approximately three-weekly intervals.<sup>315</sup> A branch library opened in Hathern shortly after that parish became part of the borough in 1936.<sup>316</sup> It was replaced by a larger building in 1954,<sup>317</sup> and became a community library in 2016, run by volunteers.<sup>318</sup>

A 'tolerably extensive' collection of fossils and minerals was presented to the subscription library in 1828 for the use of its members.<sup>319</sup> These were sold when the library closed in 1867.<sup>320</sup> Natural history and other specimens were given to the new library in 1905 and displayed in a gallery above the lending library. The gallery closed in 1950.<sup>321</sup>

Following building alterations costing £1 million, Charnwood Museum opened in the former swimming baths on the edge of Queen's Park in 1999. Leicestershire County Council provided professional and curatorial services, with other costs funded by Loughborough B.C.<sup>322</sup> The museum tells the story of Loughborough and the wider Charnwood area through a mixture of permanent displays and temporary exhibitions.

Four smaller museums are run by volunteers. Three former servicemen collected and added items relating to the Second World War to an existing collection of First World War material held inside the carillon war memorial. A trust was set up in 1989 to preserve and manage the exhibits, with trustees from the borough council and interested local people.<sup>323</sup> Displays occupy the ground floor of the carillon in 2025.<sup>324</sup>

The Old Rectory Museum opened in 1968 in the remains of Loughborough's medieval rectory house.<sup>325</sup> Exhibits include archaeology from Garendon Abbey and information about historic

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<sup>312</sup> Ex. Inf. Kathy Phillips, Loughborough Library Local Studies Volunteer Group.

<sup>313</sup> *Leic. Chron.*, 26 Oct. 1940; Angrave (ed.), *Loughborough Public Library*, 22.

<sup>314</sup> Angrave (ed.), *Loughborough Public Library*, 3.

<sup>315</sup> [https://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2024-05/mobile-libraries-timetables\\_0.pdf](https://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2024-05/mobile-libraries-timetables_0.pdf) (accessed 13 June 2024).

<sup>316</sup> *Leic. Daily Merc.*, 8 Apr. 1936.

<sup>317</sup> Angrave (ed.), *Loughborough Public Library*, 2.

<sup>318</sup> *Hathern Herald*, Spring 2022.

<sup>319</sup> *Nottm Review*, 1 Feb. 1828.

<sup>320</sup> *Leic. Jnl*, 12 Apr. 1867.

<sup>321</sup> *Leic. Daily Post*, 22 June 1905; *Lboro. Monitor*, 27 Oct. 1950.

<sup>322</sup> *Lboro. Echo*, 23 Apr. 1999.

<sup>323</sup> *Leic. Eve. Mail*, 25 Apr. 1950; *Lboro. Echo*, 3 Feb. 1989.

<sup>324</sup> <https://carillontower.org.uk/> (accessed 14 Sept. 2025).

<sup>325</sup> *Lboro. Echo*, 15 Jan. 1988; below, Religious Life.

Loughborough buildings; there are also occasional art exhibitions and creative workshops. The museum is run by volunteers from Loughborough Archaeological and Historical Society.<sup>326</sup>

Loughborough Central station closed in 1969. Part of the line reopened as a heritage railway in 1973,<sup>327</sup> and a museum was opened in 1974 at platform level, displaying plans and items that tell the story of the railway and this station.<sup>328</sup>

Taylor's bell foundry has cast over 25,000 bells for cathedrals, churches and public buildings in more than 100 countries. The bell foundry museum opened within the complex of foundry buildings in 1986 with displays about the history of bells and of the foundry.<sup>329</sup> The museum collections and the foundry archive were transferred to a Charitable Incorporated Organisation in 2016, and after a short period of closure a revitalised museum and visitor centre opened in 2024.<sup>330</sup>

The Sock Gallery at the Town Hall hosts a range of art exhibitions.<sup>331</sup> In 2024 the former Loughborough College generator building on Packe Street was being renovated and converted to become a centre for the arts.<sup>332</sup>

### *Social Activities of Religious Organisations*

Most of the town's churches had Sunday schools, and most of the town's children in the late 19th and early 20th century probably attended. The annual Sunday school treat might comprise tea and plum cake with games in a field, or in later years a trip to Burleigh Brook Park.<sup>333</sup> By the late 19th century Sunday schools included older teenagers and young adults (Figure 20).

Other church groups could also become a regular part of the social life of many young people.<sup>334</sup> The Salvation Army had a fortnightly CAMEO club – an acronym for 'come and meet each other'.<sup>335</sup> The Wesleyan Methodists on Leicester Road had a girls' league from the 1920s,<sup>336</sup> and there were youth groups at Nottingham Road, Ashby Road and Leicester Road Methodist churches.<sup>337</sup> A large room for a youth group was included within the building plans for Trinity Methodist Church in the 1960s.<sup>338</sup>

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<sup>326</sup> <https://www.loughboroughpastandpresent.org/index.htm> (accessed 4 Jan. 2025).

<sup>327</sup> *Main Line Steam: A Guide to the Great Central Railway* (Lboro., 1978).

<sup>328</sup> *Nottm Eve. Post*, 5 Mar. 1974.

<sup>329</sup> *Lboro. Mail*, 11 June 1986.

<sup>330</sup> <https://belltrust.co.uk/about-us/> (accessed 28 February 2025).

<sup>331</sup> <https://www.loughboroughtownhall.co.uk/sock-gallery/> (accessed 4 Jan. 2025).

<sup>332</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/generatorlboro/> (accessed 4 Jan. 2025).

<sup>333</sup> *Leics. Merc.*, 18 July 1857; 10 July 1858; *Lboro. Echo*, 30 June 1916.

<sup>334</sup> *Memories of Marjorie Jones, Dave Jamieson and Richard Mee, 'Loughborough Reminiscences, King Street Baptist Church'* (two DVDs, 2012).

<sup>335</sup> *Lboro. Echo*, 1 June 1990.

<sup>336</sup> ROLLR, N/M/207/82.

<sup>337</sup> ROLLR, N/M/207/409–10, 449, 470.

<sup>338</sup> ROLLR, N/M/207/435, /482, /486/2; below, Religious History, Church Architecture.



*Figure 20: Sparrow Hill United Methodist Free Church gathered outside Sparrow Hill Church ahead of their annual Sunday School Treat. The building was originally a Particular Baptist chapel.*

Rather than separate parish magazines, the Anglican churches in Loughborough Deanery contributed their news each month to a joint magazine. These identify many social and sports clubs that were connected to the Anglican church, and there were probably others. All Saints formed two troops of scouts for different age groups in 1909 and Nanpantan had a troop of scouts by 1912.<sup>339</sup> St Peter's church formed a company of girl guides and one of rangers for older girls in 1932 and Emmanuel formed their own troops of scouts and guides in 1932.<sup>340</sup> Holy Trinity had a cricket club in the 1880s,<sup>341</sup> and acquired a sports field in 1922.<sup>342</sup> A church tennis tournament was held at Thorpe Acre in 1931. In 1931 and 1932 mention is made of St Peter's and Emmanuel football clubs, a bowls club at All Saints and clubs for badminton and tennis attached to Holy Trinity church.<sup>343</sup> There was a United Methodist cricket team in 1914,<sup>344</sup> and Baxtergate Baptists had a football team in the 1930s.<sup>345</sup>

Baxtergate Baptist ladies' choir began the tradition of a choir weekend in 1960. By 1988 this was attracting singers who did not attend services at Baxtergate, and the church asked the choir to disaffiliate itself and become a secular organisation. A constitution was drawn up and they became Loughborough Ladies Choir.<sup>346</sup> Choirs could also help to bring people from different churches together. Loughborough Male Voice Choir was formed in the early 1960s with men from Woodgate Baptist Church and the Methodist churches on Nottingham Road, Swan Street and at Barrow upon Soar.<sup>347</sup> The Three Churches Choir comprises singers from Loughborough Baptists and United Reformed Churches and Trinity Methodist Church.<sup>348</sup>

### *Community Organisations*

This section can only give a flavour of the wide range of clubs and societies that met in the town. Many secular groups met in the various Sunday school buildings of the churches and chapels, and as Sunday school attendances fell from the late 20th century these groups breathed new life into

<sup>339</sup> ROLLR, DE4162/26.

<sup>340</sup> ROLLR, DE6642 Box 71.

<sup>341</sup> *Hinckley News*, 1 May 1886.

<sup>342</sup> *Parish Church of Holy Trinity Loughborough Centenary 1878 1978* (Lboro., 1978) (copy at ROLLR, DE3937/15).

<sup>343</sup> ROLLR, DE6642 Box 71.

<sup>344</sup> *Leic. Eve. Mail*, 2 May 1914.

<sup>345</sup> *Leic. Eve. Mail*, 20 Oct. 1934.

<sup>346</sup> E. Grimley, *Fifty Years of the Loughborough Ladies Choir* (Lboro., 2019).

<sup>347</sup> *The Life and Times of George Towers 1914–2008* (Lboro., n.d.).

<sup>348</sup> [https://loughboroughmethodist.co.uk/church/trinity-methodist-church/?fbclid=IwAR00\\_7vbtZQqwBarOlfbNydPnWkl6dS-cqO5chiwU4dl9z1rB9iV2hNEsps](https://loughboroughmethodist.co.uk/church/trinity-methodist-church/?fbclid=IwAR00_7vbtZQqwBarOlfbNydPnWkl6dS-cqO5chiwU4dl9z1rB9iV2hNEsps) (accessed 3 May 2023).

several buildings. St Peter's Sunday school buildings in Storer Road, for example, were designed in 1896 to accommodate 800 children and young people in a large central hall, a smaller 'infants' room' of 54 ft by 19 ft and six classrooms.<sup>349</sup> By the early 20th century the Sunday school had outgrown the building, and when the permanent stone church was consecrated in 1912 the original iron mission room was retained as additional accommodation for the growing Sunday school (Figure 21).<sup>350</sup> As Sunday school attendances declined the rooms found new mid-week uses. The two buildings became a community centre in 1966 and were used by, for example, the Chrysanthemum club, folk groups, fitness classes, drama groups and bridge clubs.<sup>351</sup> On a single evening in June 1997 the brick building was booked for a judo class and the iron room for a juggling group.<sup>352</sup>

*Figure 21: St Peter's brick Sunday School and the former Iron Mission Room in 2025.*

### Learned and 'Improvement' Societies

Loughborough Literary and Philosophical Society first met in 1853 to hear eight 'miniature lectures' and view an impressive variety of artefacts, specimens and prints brought by those present. Charles Packe MP was invited to be President; the first vice-presidents were the Rev. Henry Fearon, the Revd Henry Alford (vicar of Wymeswold) and John Cartwright (hosiery manufacturer).<sup>353</sup> Meetings were held in the town hall from 1856.<sup>354</sup> There were 300 members in 1886.<sup>355</sup> The society continued into the 1960s.<sup>356</sup> The Loughborough and District Archaeological Society (later Archaeological and Historical Society) was formed in 1955. Members undertook a detailed examination of the old rectory then it was purchased by the corporation in 1958 and their work was instrumental in saving it from demolition and opening it as a museum.<sup>357</sup> The society continued to hold an annual programme of lectures and events in 2024.<sup>358</sup>

A Mechanics' Institute was formed in 1835.<sup>359</sup> By 1837 it was claimed that the main activity was 'the perusal of newspapers'.<sup>360</sup> A Working Men's Improvement Society was established in 1850, with a reading room in Baxtergate and occasional lectures.<sup>361</sup>

<sup>349</sup> *Notts. Guardian*, 15 Feb. 1896.

<sup>350</sup> '59th Annual Report', *Trans. LAHS* 11 (1912–3), 20.

<sup>351</sup> Lynne About Loughborough, 'St Peter's church and community centre' (accessed 3 Apr. 2025).

<sup>352</sup> *Lboro. Echo*, 30 May 1997.

<sup>353</sup> *Leic. Jnl*, 7 Jan. 1853.

<sup>354</sup> W. White, *Hist. Gaz. and Dir. of Leics. and Rutl.* (Sheffield, 1877), 506.

<sup>355</sup> *Leic. Jnl*, 5 Nov. 1886.

<sup>356</sup> ROLLR, DE4710.

<sup>357</sup> Lboro. And Dist. Archaeological Soc., *The Old Rectory, Loughborough* (Lboro., 1983).

<sup>358</sup> [https://www.loughboroughpastandpresent.org/about\\_lahs.htm](https://www.loughboroughpastandpresent.org/about_lahs.htm) (accessed 15 May 2024).

<sup>359</sup> *Leic. Chron.*, 17 Oct., 7 Nov., 12 Dec. 1835; *VCH Leics.* III, 253.

<sup>360</sup> *Leic. Chron.*, 5 Nov. 1836; *Leics. Merc.*, 25 Nov. 1837.

<sup>361</sup> *Leic. Jnl*, 19 Dec. 1851; *Leics. Merc.*, 15 Jan 1853; *VCH Leics.* III, 254.



### Business and Philanthropic

Loughborough Association for the Prosecution of Felons was founded in 1783 to bring private prosecutions for alleged crimes.<sup>362</sup> Its 150 members in 1822 included 110 from Loughborough and 40 from 18 local villages in north Leicestershire and south Nottinghamshire.<sup>363</sup> Their last prosecution was in 1911, but although it had lost its original purpose the association continued with an annual dinner and had 300 members in 1969.<sup>364</sup>

Rancliffe Lodge of Freemasons was consecrated in 1835 but became defunct in 1839 and surrendered its warrant in 1853. The Howe and Charnwood Lodge was consecrated in 1864. They had 36 members in 1872, 19 of whom were from Loughborough, with 17 from Leicester, Shepshed and villages in the Soar valley, the wolds and in south Nottinghamshire. A wide range of occupations were represented, including inn keepers, surgeons, manufacturers, shopkeepers, lawyers, surveyors and farmers.<sup>365</sup> Beacon Lodge was consecrated in 1930 and Thomas Burton Lodge was formed in 1950. The three lodges are shareholders in Loughborough Masonic Hall Ltd, which purchased the former independent Chapel on Ashby Square in 1963 for conversion to a masonic hall.<sup>366</sup> Holywell Lodge had recently formed in 1963.<sup>367</sup> The Howe and Charnwood Lodge sponsored the Loughborough Lodge of Installed Masters in 1970 and the Showmen's Lodge in 2006, the latter with members throughout the UK but holding lodge meetings in Loughborough.<sup>368</sup>

Herbert Schofield, principal of Loughborough College, was instrumental in founding Loughborough Rotary Club, which received its charter in 1924, and became its first chairman.<sup>369</sup> He was elected President of Rotary International of Great Britain and Ireland for 1931–2.<sup>370</sup> Loughborough Beacon Rotary received its charter in 1984.<sup>371</sup> Members come from many different backgrounds and meet regularly. Each club is independent and supports charities and communities locally and overseas through voluntary work and fundraising events.

The Loughborough branch of the Royal British Legion was formed in 1922.<sup>372</sup> It disbanded in the 2020s.

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<sup>362</sup> ROLLR, M1097/9.

<sup>363</sup> ROLLR, M1097/11.

<sup>364</sup> *Leic. Chron.*, 12 Sept. 1969.

<sup>365</sup> ROLLR, QS52/3.

<sup>366</sup> <http://www.beaconlodge5208.com/lodge-history.html>;  
<https://www.howecharnwoodlodge1007.org.uk/history/> (both accessed 18 Feb. 2025).

<sup>367</sup> ROLLR, QS52/276 (catalogued, records closed to public).

<sup>368</sup> <https://www.howecharnwoodlodge1007.org.uk/history/> (accessed 18 Feb. 2025).

<sup>369</sup> *Leic. Eve. Mail*, 1 Dec. 1925; <https://www.rotary-ribi.org/clubs/homepage.php?ClubID=424> (accessed 18 Feb. 2025).

<sup>370</sup> Cantor and Matthews, *Loughborough*, 65.

<sup>371</sup> [https://www.facebook.com/LoughboroughBeaconRotary/?locale=en\\_GB](https://www.facebook.com/LoughboroughBeaconRotary/?locale=en_GB) (accessed 18 Feb. 2025).

<sup>372</sup> <https://branches.britishlegion.org.uk/branches/loughborough/branch-information/history/> (accessed 18 Feb. 2025).

### Agricultural and Horticultural

Loughborough Agricultural Association was established in 1838. Charles Packe MP (of Prestwold) and Edward Basil Farnham MP (of Quorn), became the first president and vice-president.<sup>373</sup> Other major landowners attending the annual meeting in 1848 included the Marquess of Granby MP (the future 6th duke of Rutland), William Herrick (of Beaumanor), George Beaumont (of Coleorton), William Pochin (of Barkby) and Samuel Wild (of Costock, Notts.). The Association provided quarterly lectures and discussions, and in 1845 produced draft agreements for agricultural tenancies.<sup>374</sup> An annual show originally awarded prizes for ploughing, for the best livestock and fodder crops (ox cabbage, Swedish turnips, carrots and mangelwurzel) and to labourers for long service and successfully supporting a large family.<sup>375</sup>

The annual show was held in the grounds of the Paget family home at Southfield (on the edge of the town) for nearly 50 years from the 1870s.<sup>376</sup> In 1923 there were over 1,000 entries for the various show classes, but the local flavour was starting to be diluted, with entries from Melton Mowbray and Newton Harcourt (south east Leicestershire).<sup>377</sup> It failed to compete with large 'county' shows, for example at Melton and Oakham, and ceased in the 1950s.<sup>378</sup> Loughborough Agricultural Discussion Group held an annual programme of talks in the 1970s and 1980s.<sup>379</sup>

As early as 1849 Loughborough Agricultural Association offered prizes of up to £1 for 'the best spade-cultivated cottager's allotment or garden'.<sup>380</sup> Little is known about allotments in Loughborough in this period other than those provided by the Burton charity, as mentioned above. There appear to have been no public allotments in Loughborough in 1886, but some may have been provided privately by landowners.<sup>381</sup> The situation changed rapidly following the incorporation of the municipal borough in 1888. In 1890 there were 955 allotments in the parish, 949 of which were under one rood.<sup>382</sup> The council provided allotments in ten separate areas in 1901: east and west of Limehurst, east of Regent Wharf, east and west of William Street, between Beacon Road and Forest Road, to the north of the London and North Western railway line, north of Ashby Road, to the south of the sewage farm, off Meadow Lane, between the canals and along what would become Knightthorpe Road.<sup>383</sup> By 1921 some of these areas had been developed or encroached upon for housing, but other land had been laid out with new allotment areas created on both sides of Beacon

<sup>373</sup> *Leic. Jnl*, 11 Oct. 1839.

<sup>374</sup> *Leics. Merc.*, 21 Oct. 1843; *Leic. Jnl*, 24 Jan. 1845.

<sup>375</sup> For example, *Leic. Jnl*, 26 Oct. 1849.

<sup>376</sup> *Hinckley News*, 7 Sept. 1878; *Melton Mowbray Times*, 24 Sept. 1926.

<sup>377</sup> *Nottm Eve. Post*, 12 Sept. 1923.

<sup>378</sup> *Leic. Eve. Mail*, 7 June 1954.

<sup>379</sup> *ROLLR*, 630 Ephemera; *Leic. Advertiser*, 13 Sept. 1984.

<sup>380</sup> *Leic. Jnl*, 26 Oct. 1849.

<sup>381</sup> OS Map 25", Leics. XVII.8; XVII.4; XVII.12; XVIII.5.

<sup>382</sup> *Rtn of Allotments and Smallholdings* (Parl. Papers 1890 (C.6144), lvii), 556.

<sup>383</sup> OS Map 25", Leics. XVII.4 (1899 edn); XVII.8; XVII.12; XVIII.5 (all 1901 edn).

Road, in the area near the Great Central Railway and Little Moor Lane and to the east of Leicester Road.<sup>384</sup>

Loughborough Horticultural Society was formed by 'a few garden allottees'. John Cartwright was president when the first show was held in 1857, and this received support from many gentlemen from across the district including William Herrick, the Warners and Farnhams of Quorn and the Pagets of Sutton Bonnington (Notts.).<sup>385</sup> The show became a major event in the life of the town. In 1877 it was held in the grounds of Edward Warner's house, Elms Park, when over 600 prizes were available, including a class for flowers and vegetables grown by 'cottagers and artisans' and another open to Loughborough's schoolchildren for the 'best bouquet of wild flowers'. The town band and the band of the 15th Regiment of Foot (East Yorkshire Regiment) were engaged, and in the evening there was dancing and a balloon ascent by Mr E. Jackson of Derby.<sup>386</sup> Most of the local works closed for at least part of the day and special trains brought visitors from Leicester, Nottingham and Derby.<sup>387</sup>

The society merged in 1896 with Loughborough Chrysanthemum and Fruit Society, which had formed c.1874.<sup>388</sup> The society ceased to exist in the early 1900s, but its name was taken in 1906 by the Garden Holders' Association.<sup>389</sup> Shows ceased during the First World War and by 1930 the society was combining its show with those of the onion and celery clubs.<sup>390</sup> From 1931 the show was no longer an annual event.<sup>391</sup>

### Musical

Vocal groups with clear origins in church choirs have been mentioned above. An Amateur Vocal Society had 80 members in 1877.<sup>392</sup> This may have become Loughborough Amateur Operatic Society, which celebrated its 'centenary' in 1999, although records show that a society with that named formed c.1893.<sup>393</sup> Their early productions were of light opera, but as tastes changed they included musicals in their repertoire and shortened their name to LAOS. They staged two musicals annually in the 2020s.<sup>394</sup>

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<sup>384</sup> OS Map 25", Leics. XVII.8; XVII.4; XVII.12; XVIII.5 ; XVIII.9 (all 1919 edn.).

<sup>385</sup> *Leic. Guardian*, 1 Aug. 1857.

<sup>386</sup> *Notts. Guardian*, 27 July 1877.

<sup>387</sup> A.E. Shepherd (ed. J. Cross and M. Staple), *Memoirs of a Loughborough Man: A.E. Shepherd, 1872–1962* (Nottm, 1994), 17.

<sup>388</sup> *Leic. Jnl*, 24 July 1896; 12 Nov. 1897; *Leic. Advertiser*, 28 Nov. 1878.

<sup>389</sup> *Leic. Daily Post*. 21 Dec. 1906.

<sup>390</sup> *Leic. Daily Merc.*, 25 Aug. 1930.

<sup>391</sup> *Leic. Daily Merc.*, 2 Nov. 1931; *Leic. Eve. Mail*, 23 Sept. 1946.

<sup>392</sup> W. White, *Hist. Gaz. and Dir. of Leics. and Rutl.* (Sheffield, 1877), 506.

<sup>393</sup> *Lboro. Echo*, 12 Mar. 1999; *Leic. Jnl*, 26 Feb. 1897; *Leic. Eve. Mail*, 24 Feb. 1936.

<sup>394</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/LAOS.Productions/> (accessed 12 Feb. 2025).

Brass and silver bands have been a feature of Loughborough's musical life over many decades. Loughborough Volunteer Band had formed by 1861,<sup>395</sup> and there was also a drum and fife band in 1866.<sup>396</sup> The Volunteer Band continued until 1918,<sup>397</sup> and may have become the Borough Silver Prize Band, which is recorded in 1919 and continued at least into the 1960s.<sup>398</sup> The junior section of Loughborough band came 4th in a national competition held in London in 1974.<sup>399</sup> Loughborough Borough Band headquarters was at Derby Road playing fields in 1989.<sup>400</sup> Loughborough Concert Band was founded in 2000 and played at the annual remembrance service in Queen's Park in 2024.<sup>401</sup>

### *Outdoor Recreational Space*

Horse racing on the meadows continued after legislation of 1740 introduced a requirement for all prizes to be at least £50.<sup>402</sup> Two-day race meetings in the early 1750s offered a 'gentleman's purse' of £50 and a 'town purse' arising from a subscription. Those entering horses for the 'gentleman's' prize included John Leveson-Gower, 1st earl Gower in 1752 and Charles Colyear, 2nd earl of Portmore in 1753.<sup>403</sup> The town may have struggled to sustain the meetings when larger towns were offered greater prizes as no reports appear for many years after 1756.<sup>404</sup>

Races 'in the Meadows' were reintroduced in the 1850s together with a foot race and a donkey race, with booths selling drinks.<sup>405</sup> These meetings appear to be short-lived, but were revived by the 1880s in the form of steeplechases, through the growing popularity of fox-hunting.<sup>406</sup> These meetings were held in spring, and spectators could watch from a stand next to Swing Bridge.<sup>407</sup>

Market Place was the focus of many town celebrations and festivities. It was laid out with tables for 4,500 people to feast on roast beef and plum pudding to mark Queen Victoria's coronation.<sup>408</sup> The annual pleasure fair was also held there (Figure 1).<sup>409</sup> The fair was 'much larger than usual' in 1851, when the chief attraction was 'Clapton's mechanical exhibition of the Crystal

<sup>395</sup> *Leics. Merc.* 5 Oct. 1861.

<sup>396</sup> *Leic. Jnl*, 20 July 1866.

<sup>397</sup> *Lboro. Echo*, 8 Feb. 1918.

<sup>398</sup> *Wills's Lboro. Almanac* (1919); *Leic. Eve. Mail*, 1 May 1961.

<sup>399</sup> *Melton Mowbray Times*, 25 Oct. 1974.

<sup>400</sup> *Lboro. Echo*, 17 Nov. 1989.

<sup>401</sup> <https://loughboroughconcertband.co.uk/about.php> (accessed 12 Feb. 2025).

<sup>402</sup> 13 Geo. II, c. 19.

<sup>403</sup> *Derby Merc.*, 31 July 1752; 10 Aug. 1753.

<sup>404</sup> *Derby Merc.*, 9 July 1756; R. Sweet, *The English Town 1680–1840: Government, Society and Culture* (Harlow, 1999), 241; M. Huggins, 'Urbs in rure: race-grounds, grandstands and the commercialized consumption of urban leisure, 1750–1805', *Urban History*, 49 (2022), 44–60.

<sup>405</sup> *Leics. Merc.*, 23 Nov. 1850; 19 Nov. 1853.

<sup>406</sup> Below, Hunting.

<sup>407</sup> *Leic. Chron.*, 20 Mar. 1880; OS map 25", Leics. VII.4 (1885).

<sup>408</sup> *Leics. Merc.*, 30 June. 1838.

<sup>409</sup> Above, Introduction.

Palace'.<sup>410</sup> The first steam-driven ride was noted in 1865, when stalls and live entertainments extended from Market Place to Wards End.<sup>411</sup> By the 1960s the fair covered the whole of Market Place and part of Market Street and New Street, with further expansion westwards in subsequent decades. In 2019 there were 29 large rides, eight 'fun houses', many food stalls and several smaller rides.<sup>412</sup> It remained well supported in 2024.

Burton Walks was laid out in 1850 to the south of the grammar school on land owned by the Burton charity, following efforts by solicitor Alfred Hucknall, who had gathered the signatures of 144 'principal inhabitants' seeking the inclusion of public walks within the new scheme for the schools. Carriageways lined by elm, chestnut and lime trees led to an ornamental park of c.5 a. hedged with laurel, privet and holly, with gravel paths and a lake fed by a small stream (Figure 22).<sup>413</sup> Two of the carriageways remained public streets in 2024, but the park area had been absorbed into the school grounds, with a sports hall opening on that land in 1981.<sup>414</sup>

*Figure 22: Burton Walks, Loughborough's first public park.*

An appeal committee appointed by a town meeting decided to mark Queen Victoria's diamond jubilee by building a drill hall and administrative buildings, organising festivities and, if funds were sufficient, purchase land for a public park.<sup>415</sup> Queen's Park was designed by the mayor, Hiram Coltman, on 3 a. of land and included a pond and rustic bridge in addition to trees and flower beds.<sup>416</sup> It opened in 1899 (Figure 9),<sup>417</sup> and a bandstand was added in 1902.<sup>418</sup> The park was extended by 6.5 a. in 1907 when the borough council purchased land from Clarke's dyeworks for £3,450.<sup>419</sup> An aviary opened in 1955, with a selection of birds donated by members of Loughborough Budgerigar and Foreign Bird Society.<sup>420</sup>

A feature of Queen's Park since 1923 has been the 140 ft carillon tower containing four chromatic octaves of bells (Figure 23). Carillons, large sets of bells tuned to produce melodies, became part of the soundscape of the Low Countries in the 16th century. Following late 19th-century changes to their mechanisms devised by Jef Denijn, the municipal carillonneur of Mechelen/Malines

<sup>410</sup> *Leics. Merc.*, 22 Nov. 1851.

<sup>411</sup> K. Scrivens and S. Smith, *An Illustrated History of Loughborough Fair, 800th Anniversary, 1221–2021* (Newcastle under Lyme, 2021), 8.

<sup>412</sup> Scrivens and Smith, *Illustrated History*, notes by G. North inside front cover.

<sup>413</sup> *Leics. Merc.*, 14 Sept. 1850; White, *Endowed Schools*, 187; ROLLR, DE641/10.

<sup>414</sup> OS Map, 1:10,000, SK51NW (1974), (1986); LGS Digital Arch, *Loughburian* 226 (1981), 16.

<sup>415</sup> *Leic. Chron.*, 26 June 1897.

<sup>416</sup> *Leic. Chron.*, 10 June 1899.

<sup>417</sup> *Leic. Chron.*, 10 June 1899; image above, Town, Parish and Borough.

<sup>418</sup> *Nottm Jnl*, 8 Sept. 1902.

<sup>419</sup> *Nottm Jnl*, 25 July 1907.

<sup>420</sup> *Leic. Eve. Mail*, 13 Aug. 1955.

(Belgium), and improvements in tuning developed in Loughborough, carillons became increasingly popular in Flanders and the Netherlands.<sup>421</sup> A parish poll decided that a carillon would be a particularly appropriate memorial to Loughborough's fallen of the First World War.<sup>422</sup> Walter Tapper, consulting architect to York Minster, was appointed architect and based his design on the Jacquemart tower at Moulins (France).<sup>423</sup> The building contract was awarded to William Moss & Sons Ltd.<sup>424</sup> The bells, the largest weighing 4,267 kg (4 tons 4 cwt), are played from a clavier (keyboard). They were donated by individuals, local businesses, schools and other organisations and cast with individual inscriptions by Loughborough bellfounders John Taylor and Co.<sup>425</sup> The total cost was £19,000.<sup>426</sup> Jef Denijn accepted an invitation to play a recital at the opening ceremony, which included a piece composed for the occasion by Sir Edward Elgar.<sup>427</sup> Loughborough's rolls of honour from the two World Wars and later conflicts are inscribed on bronze plaques around the base of the tower.

*Figure 23: The Carillon War Memorial in Queen's Park, and the bandstand*

The Hope Bell, under installation in Queen's Park in 2025, will comprise four steel pillars 7.5 metres tall supporting quarterly clock chimes and an hour bell, and is a tribute to key workers and communities who supported others during the COVID-19 pandemic.<sup>428</sup>

Following the incorporation of the borough in 1888 the new council was keen to provide recreation grounds close to people's homes. By 1899 they had secured sites on the south, north and western sides of the town at Beacon Road (8½ a.), Nottingham Road (8½ a.) and Ashby Road (4 a.), and were purchasing land for what became Radmoor Road Park.<sup>429</sup> The purchase of 3½ a. off Moor Lane in 1906 served the east of the town.<sup>430</sup> Many subsequent housing developments also included recreation areas.

Southfields Park was originally the garden of Southfield, a 25-room house on the south side of Leicester Road owned by William Byerley Paget.<sup>431</sup> At his invitation, the park was the venue for the

<sup>421</sup> A. Lehr, W. Truyen and G. Huybens, *The Art of the Carillon in the Low Countries* (Tielt, Belgium, 1991), 100, 110, 191, 222–39.

<sup>422</sup> *Lboro. Echo*, 7 Nov. 1919.

<sup>423</sup> *Leic. Jnl*, 12 Mar. 1920; M. Cleeve (ed.), *Loughborough Carillon Tower and War Memorial Museum* (Loughborough, 2014), 10.

<sup>424</sup> *Leic. Daily Merc.*, 16 July 1921; *Leic. Eve. Mail*, 21 Jan. 1922.

<sup>425</sup> Cleeve (ed.), *Loughborough Carillon*, 25–7.

<sup>426</sup> *Leic. Eve. Mail*, 23 July 1923.

<sup>427</sup> *Leic. Eve. Mail*, 23 July 1923; M.I. Bray, *Bells of Memory: A History of Loughborough Carillon* (Lboro., 1981).

<sup>428</sup> <https://www.loughboroughtowndeal.co.uk/news/2024/09/main-structure-of-hope-bell-is-installed> (accessed 30 Apr. 2025).

<sup>429</sup> *Melton Mowbray Merc.*, 4 Oct. 1894; *Nottm Jnl*, 25 Aug. 1899.

<sup>430</sup> *Nottm Jnl*, 22 Nov. 1906.

<sup>431</sup> TNA, RG 14/19118.

annual agricultural show, various Sunday school treats and the 1911 coronation festivities,<sup>432</sup> and his widow continued the tradition.<sup>433</sup> Their granddaughter, Joan Frances Paget, sold the house and grounds to the borough council in 1947. The house became the administrative headquarters of the council, and the grounds became a public recreation ground.<sup>434</sup>

Burleigh Brook Park, on Ashby Road, was laid out in 1898–9 by the owner, George Adcock, as a commercial pleasure park with an admission fee of 3d.<sup>435</sup> It offered roundabouts, swings, toboggans, swan-boats and facilities for cricket, football, tennis and croquet.<sup>436</sup> A roller skating rink was added in 1910.<sup>437</sup> Performers engaged for the Easter and Whitsun holidays included conjurors, Punch and Judy and ‘Living Marionettes’, and bands played in the afternoon and for evening dances.<sup>438</sup> The park was sold to Loughborough YMCA for £1,850 in 1918.<sup>439</sup> They sold it in 1927 and the land became allotments,<sup>440</sup> before being sold for housing in 1956.<sup>441</sup>

Mr and Mrs Alan Moss, a former mayor and mayoress of Loughborough, gave c.46 a. of woodland in Nanpantan known as the Outwoods to the town in 1946.<sup>442</sup> The same year the neighbouring Bluebell Wood, c.54 a., was purchased privately by Alderman and Mrs George Bowler, also a former mayor and mayoress, and given to the town.<sup>443</sup> A further 10 a. of woodland linking the two gifts was purchased by the borough council in 1949, with the whole collectively known as the Outwoods in 2025.<sup>444</sup> Woodland between Loughborough and the Outwoods was given to Leicestershire County Council in 1977 in memory of Mr & Mrs Alan Moss by their daughter Mrs A.I. Cope and grand-daughter Miss H.J. Cope, and named Jubilee Wood in honour of the silver jubilee of Queen Elizabeth II.<sup>445</sup> These woods were all designated part of The National Forest in 1991.<sup>446</sup>

## Sport

Loughborough has a strong tradition of grass-roots sport. In addition to ‘town’ teams, several church and work’s teams were established in the 20th century. Although these later faded as church-going and large-scale industry both separately declined, it is perhaps surprising that professional sport

<sup>432</sup> *Lboro. Herald*, 16 Sept. 1880; *Leic. Jnl*, 22 Aug. 1873; *Leic. Daily Post*, 15 June 1911.

<sup>433</sup> *Leic. Chron.*, 11 Sept. 1926.

<sup>434</sup> Sale Agreement, 18 July 1947, on display at Lboro. Loc. Stud. Libr. July 2024, lent by Joanna Herbert-Stepney (great-grand-daughter of William Byerley Paget).

<sup>435</sup> *Melton Mowbray Merc.*, 30 Mar. 1899; *Nottm Jnl*, 23 Jan. 1923.

<sup>436</sup> ROLLR, DE4162/26, *East Akeley Magazine*, May 1911.

<sup>437</sup> *Nottm Eve. Post*, 1 June 1910.

<sup>438</sup> For example, *Lboro. Echo*, 5 June 1914.

<sup>439</sup> *Lboro. Echo*, 29 Aug. 1919.

<sup>440</sup> *Lboro. Echo*, 25 Nov. 1927.

<sup>441</sup> *Nottm Eve. Post*, 14 Sept. 1956.

<sup>442</sup> *Leic. Eve. Mail*, 3 Jan. 1946.

<sup>443</sup> *Leic. Eve. Mail*, 19 Dec. 1946.

<sup>444</sup> *Leic. Eve. Mail*, 26 July 1949.

<sup>445</sup> Plaque in wood, extant 2024.

<sup>446</sup> <https://www.nationalforest.org/about/our-history> (accessed 3 Sept. 2024).



failed to develop in the town. Loughborough Football Club (soccer) was elected to the league in 1895, playing teams that remained in the top flight in the 2020s, such as Liverpool, Newton Heath (became Manchester United) and Woolwich Arsenal, and also local rivals Leicester Fosse and Notts County. The club carried debt of £500 in 1896 and found it ‘absolutely impossible to command gates in Loughborough such as were obtainable in neighbouring towns with larger populations’, making it impossible to sustain the costs of a professional side.<sup>447</sup> Rugby union was never as popular in Loughborough as soccer.

At the individual level, many distinguished sportspeople have passed through Loughborough University. They include Lord Coe and Paula Radcliffe (athletics), Donna Kellogg (badminton), Bob Wilson (football), Laura Unsworth (hockey), Doug Scott (mountaineering), Sir Clive Woodward (rugby) and Baroness Grey-Thompson (wheelchair racing).<sup>448</sup> Students of all abilities can choose from a range of 65 sports clubs in 2025, from the traditional to the less familiar, such as padel (a racket sport) and korfbal (similar to netball).<sup>449</sup> The university’s first teams compete at a high level in several sports.<sup>450</sup>

There is a good relationship between the university and the town, and local teams and members of the public can book to use many of the world-class facilities at the university, including the Olympic-sized swimming pool.<sup>451</sup> The facilities are also attractive to the organisers of tournaments, and the university hosted, for example, the three-day inaugural UK Sikh Games in 2024, with sports including football, hockey, kabaddi (a traditional south Asian contact team sport), athletics, power-lifting and cricket, with spectators also given the opportunity to try 20 different sports.<sup>452</sup>

Loughborough’s first sports arena was the Athletic Grounds, off Nottingham Road, which opened in 1861 and hosted cricket, football, athletics and cycling. The ground was attached to the Greyhound Hotel and was originally known by the surname of the licensee, Brookes (1861–5), Bromhead (1865–82) and Hubbard (from 1882), with the name ‘Athletic Ground’ being adopted during Hubbard’s tenure. Floodlights were installed in 1878. The ground was sold for housing in 1908.<sup>453</sup>

<sup>447</sup> *Leic. Daily. Merc.*, 18 Dec. 1896; S. Dudley, ‘Forgotten Clubs: Loughborough F.C.’, <https://forgottenclubs.wordpress.com/2022/08/21/forgotten-clubs-foreign-edition-loughborough-fc/> (accessed 22 Aug 2022).

<sup>448</sup> <https://www.lboro.ac.uk/sport/loughborough-sport/hall-of-fame/> (accessed 21 Dec. 2024).

<sup>449</sup> <https://lsu.co.uk/athleticunion> (accessed 10 Sept. 2025).

<sup>450</sup> <https://www.lboro.ac.uk/sport/news/2025/> (accessed 9 Sept. 2025); and below.

<sup>451</sup> <https://www.lboro.ac.uk/sport/memberships-prices/pay-as-you-go-prices/> (accessed 10 Sept. 2025).

<sup>452</sup> <https://www.lboro.ac.uk/media-centre/press-releases/2024/june/lboro-uni-to-host-sikh-games/> (accessed 10 Aug. 2025).

<sup>453</sup> *Leics. Merc.*, 14 Sept. 1861; B. Wilford, *The ‘Athletic Grounds’ of Loughborough* (Lboro., 2024), 1–8.



Several of Loughborough's major employers had sports and social clubs, often with their own private grounds. In 1967 these included Brush (electrical engineering), Fisons (pharmaceuticals), Morris (heavy engineering), Riker Laboratories (pharmaceuticals), William Cotton (engineering), William Moss & Sons (builders) and Wills and Hepworth (printing/publishing).<sup>454</sup> The largest of these were Brush, who offered bowls, cricket, football, hockey, netball, table tennis and tennis,<sup>455</sup> and Fisons, whose sports and social club offered football, badminton, cricket, bowls, netball, squash, tennis and table tennis in 1967.<sup>456</sup> Fisons and Riker both entered teams in a 50-mile ultra-marathon race in 1967.<sup>457</sup>

Brush owned a sports ground of 19 a. off Forest Road.<sup>458</sup> This was sold to the county council in 1967 for £195,000 to provide a sports ground for the Technical and Arts Colleges.<sup>459</sup> Brush purchased Brook Farm in Nanpantan (57 a.) and turned the land into a replacement ground and car parking.<sup>460</sup> This was sold to Charnwood B.C. c.1980 and became known as Nanpantan sports ground.<sup>461</sup> Brush bowls club remained there in 2025, alongside football and cricket pitches and tennis courts.<sup>462</sup> Fisons had a ground between Forest Road and Beacon Road. This land was bought privately in 1995 and became Greenfields sports complex, which in 2025 offers bowls, cricket, squash and tennis.<sup>463</sup>

The council owned two other sports grounds in Loughborough: Park Road (bowls, netball and tennis) was acquired by the council in 1936 and the former airfield site on Derby Road (football and cricket), was laid out in the 1960s.<sup>464</sup> Loughborough Sports Council was formed in 1966 to promote sporting activities, and provided grants to organisations within the borough.<sup>465</sup> Following the local government changes of 1974 this became Charnwood Sports and Physical Recreation Council.<sup>466</sup>

<sup>454</sup> *Loughborough Sports Council, 1967* (copy at ROLLR, L792).

<sup>455</sup> Advertisement within *Charnwood Sports Directory* (1980–1).

<sup>456</sup> *Loughborough Sports Council, 1967*.

<sup>457</sup> *Nottingham Eve. Post*, 1 May 1967.

<sup>458</sup> <https://clubspark.lta.org.uk/charnwoodtennisclub/Information/History> (accessed 4 Jan. 2025).

<sup>459</sup> Below, Education; *Leic. Daily Merc.*, 7 Apr. 1967.

<sup>460</sup> *Leic. Daily Merc.*, 7 Apr. 1967.

<sup>461</sup> *Lboro. Mail*, 24 June 1987; [https://www.charnwood.gov.uk/pages/nanpantan\\_sports\\_ground](https://www.charnwood.gov.uk/pages/nanpantan_sports_ground) (accessed 3 Jan. 2025).

<sup>462</sup> [https://www.charnwood.gov.uk/pages/nanpantan\\_sports\\_ground](https://www.charnwood.gov.uk/pages/nanpantan_sports_ground)

<sup>463</sup> <http://www.greenfieldsclub.co.uk/>; <https://brushbowlsclub.co.uk/our-history> (accessed 3 Jan. 2025).

<sup>464</sup> [https://www.charnwood.gov.uk/pages/derby\\_road\\_playing\\_fields](https://www.charnwood.gov.uk/pages/derby_road_playing_fields); *Lboro. B.C., Official Guide to Loughborough* (Lboro, c.1963), 38; [https://www.charnwood.gov.uk/pages/park\\_road\\_sports\\_ground](https://www.charnwood.gov.uk/pages/park_road_sports_ground) (all accessed 3 Jan. 2025); *Lboro. Echo*, 21 Feb. 1936.

<sup>465</sup> *Loughborough Sports Council, 1967* (copy at ROLLR, L792).

<sup>466</sup> *Charnwood Sports Directory* (1980).

Almost every sport has been played in Loughborough, and the more popular sports have had many teams, some continuing for more than a century, others of shorter duration. Not all of these can be mentioned in a book of this size, but a flavour is provided below.

### Athletics and Cycling

Track racing and hurdles were very popular in the late 19th century, with athletic club meetings (principally flat races and hurdles) held at Whitsun either at Elms Park or Southfields Park in the 1860s, moving to Bromhead's athletic ground from 1876. The town's friendly societies also held a joint annual athletics competition for their members.<sup>467</sup> Many athletics meetings in the late 19th century included races for cyclists.<sup>468</sup>

Loughborough College had a first-class running track from 1937.<sup>469</sup> Loughborough and District Athletics Club was formed in 1966 and offered track and field events, cross-country running and road walking.<sup>470</sup> It became Charnwood Athletic Club, which in 2025 met at the Paula Radcliffe Stadium at Loughborough University.<sup>471</sup> Loughborough University's Athletic Union Club could boast in 2025 that it had won 60 of the previous 65 outdoor men's and women's British Universities and Colleges Sport (BUCS) championships, and its students and former students have had notable success in Olympic and Paralympic competitions.<sup>472</sup>

### Bowls

A bowling green was connected to the Gimcrack Inn in 1829.<sup>473</sup> This may be the green that was on Sparrow Hill.<sup>474</sup> A team from the Station Hotel played matches in 1891 and another from the Duke of York played in 1901.<sup>475</sup> There was a green at Queen's Park, which Loughborough B.C. agreed to improve in 1910 for a new club.<sup>476</sup> A works team was formed by Brush in 1916.<sup>477</sup> By the 1930s clubs included Loughborough Ladies, Brush, Duke of York, Granby, Queen's Park, Shelthorpe and Station Hotel.<sup>478</sup> A team from Genatosan (part of the Fisons group of companies) had been formed by the 1960s.<sup>479</sup> Phoenix Bowls Club was formed in 2015 through a merger between Loughborough Bowls

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<sup>467</sup> Wilford, 'Athletic Grounds', 15.

<sup>468</sup> Wilford, *The 'Athletic Grounds'*, 10–15.

<sup>469</sup> L.M. Cantor and G.F. Matthews, *Loughborough from College to University: A History of Higher Education at Loughborough, 1909–1966* (Lboro., 1977), 67–8.

<sup>470</sup> *Loughborough Sports Council, 1967*.

<sup>471</sup> <https://www.charnwoodac.co.uk/> (accessed 1 Sept. 2025).

<sup>472</sup> <https://www.lboro.ac.uk/sport/sports/athletics/> (accessed 5 Sept. 2025).

<sup>473</sup> *Nottm Review*, 21 Aug. 1829.

<sup>474</sup> Lboro. Loc. Stud. Libr., Plan of Loughborough, 1837.

<sup>475</sup> *Hinckley News*, 11 July 1891; *Melton Mowbray Merc.*, 25 July 1901.

<sup>476</sup> *Melton Mowbray Merc.*, 7 July 1910.

<sup>477</sup> <https://brushbowlsclub.co.uk/our-history> (accessed 3 Jan. 2025).

<sup>478</sup> Lboro. B.C., *Official Guide to Loughborough* (Lboro, early 1930s), 39.

<sup>479</sup> Lboro. B.C., *Official Guide to Loughborough* (Lboro, c.1963), 38.

Club (formed 1946) and Granby Bowls Club (formed 1899), and played at Park Road.<sup>480</sup> Brush, Greenfields, Phoenix and Queen's Park had active clubs in 2024.<sup>481</sup>

### Cricket

In a match at St Margaret's Pastures, Leicester in 1780, 11 men from Loughborough beat 11 from Leicester 'by more than 50 notches'.<sup>482</sup> Two matches played at Loughborough in 1789 between the towns of Leicester and Nottingham might be the first 'inter-county' contests played in Leicestershire.<sup>483</sup> Over many years between 1913 and 1952 Leicestershire CCC played one of their first-class matches at Park Road as part of their annual calendar, played a one-day match there in 1970 and have also played occasional 'home' games at Loughborough College ground and the Brush sports ground in Nanpantan.<sup>484</sup>

A regional team playing under the name Loughborough Lightning trained and played home matches in the Women's Cricket Super League at Loughborough University between 2016 and 2020.<sup>485</sup> Women's cricket was restructured in 2020, with subsequent tournaments between groups of counties played at traditional county grounds.

Teams from Loughborough played cricket matches in the early 19th century for purses of up to 150 guineas, and a junior side is also recorded in 1802.<sup>486</sup> Three clubs were formed in 1840, a Gentleman's Club, a Morning Club and a Tradesmen's Club.<sup>487</sup> Matches were played at a ground between Midland station and the river Soar belonging to Mr Tyler of the White Lion.<sup>488</sup> The proximity of Tyler's Ground to Midland Station made it an attractive venue for 'All England' and 'South of England' touring sides from the 1850s.<sup>489</sup> 'Brookes's New Cricket Ground', later known as the Athletic, opened in 1861 off North Street (Nottingham Road).<sup>490</sup> In 1875 W.G. Grace played for a South of England XI in 1875 against a Loughborough and District XXII at the Athletic Ground and captained the United South of England XI against the North at Tyler's Ground, both over three-days.<sup>491</sup>

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<sup>480</sup> <https://www.phoenixbowlsclub.org.uk/community/loughborough-phoenix-bowls-club-16630/about-us/> (accessed 3 Jan. 2025).

<sup>481</sup> <https://brushbowlsclub.co.uk/about-us-2>; <http://www.greenfieldsclub.co.uk/sports/bowls/>; <https://www.phoenixbowlsclub.org.uk/community/loughborough-phoenix-bowls-club-16630/home/>; <https://www.bowlsengland.com/club/loughborough-queens-park/> (all accessed 3 Jan. 2025).

<sup>482</sup> E.E. Snow, *A History of Leicestershire Cricket* (Leicester, 1949), 4; *Leic. Jnl*, 26 Aug. 1780.

<sup>483</sup> *VCH Leics.* III, 282.

<sup>484</sup> Snow, *History*, 233, 241, 278, 280, 294, 298, 303; E.E. Snow, *Leicestershire Cricket 1949 to 1977* (1977), 12, 17, 23, 26, 32, 33, 37, 42, 46, 50, 54, 59, 64, 67, 69, 88, 122.

<sup>485</sup> *The Times*, 29 July 2016.

<sup>486</sup> Snow, *History*, 23–4, 26, 29, 30.

<sup>487</sup> *Leic. Jnl*, 2 Oct. 1840; *Leics. Merc.*, 8 Oct 1842.

<sup>488</sup> Snow, *History*, 55; *Leic. Chron.*, 18 June 1842; Wikipedia, 'Tyler's Ground', citing Cricket Archive, 'Ground Profile: Tyler's Ground, Loughborough' (accessed 2 Jan. 2024).

<sup>489</sup> Lboro. Cricket Club, *100 Years of Lboro. Cricket Club* (Lboro., 1996), 2; Snow, *History*, 67, 68, 79; *Leic. Jnl*, 29 July 1870.

<sup>490</sup> *Leics. Merc.*, 14 Sept. 1861; B. Wilford, *The 'Athletic Grounds' of Loughborough* (Lboro., 2024), 1, 4.

<sup>491</sup> Lboro. CC, *100 Years*, 3; Snow, *History*, 87–8; *Leic. Jnl*, 28 May, 10 Sept. 1875.

The clubs of the 1840s had fragmented by the 1880s as Loughborough's workplaces (including Cartwright and Warner and the Nottingham Manufacturing Co.) and churches (including Baxtergate Baptists and the Wesleyans) established teams.<sup>492</sup> Calls were made for a town team to be formed that could 'hold its own' against local village teams.<sup>493</sup> This was achieved in 1886, but it folded in 1891. Loughborough Town CC was formed in 1896 and played on a field at Park Road, obtaining a 21-year lease of the ground in 1930.<sup>494</sup> There was also a cricket team in Nanpantan before the First World War.<sup>495</sup> This merged with a College side to become Loughborough Outwoods CC.<sup>496</sup>

Many migrants arriving from south Asia from the 1970s brought a love of the game with them. Match reports show that several Loughborough teams included players with Asian names in the 1980s and there were also wholly Asian teams and clubs, including Navyug and Bal Gopal Mandal. The first team of the latter club, who played at the Derby Road playing fields, won rapid promotions from division VII of the North Leicestershire League in 1976 to winning the division I title in 1983.<sup>497</sup> Despite their league and also cup success they were unable to join a higher league as they had no ground of their own.<sup>498</sup> Six Loughborough teams played in the Leicestershire and Rutland League in 2025: Loughborough Town, Carillon, Greenfields, Mangela Boys, Outwoods and Charnwood Old Boys.<sup>499</sup>

### Football

Loughborough F.C. was formed in 1886 through a merger between Loughborough Victoria and Loughborough Athletic, and played at the Athletic Grounds. After winning the Midland League title in 1894–5 they were elected to the second division of the Football League,<sup>500</sup> and became the first professional side in Leicestershire.<sup>501</sup> Their 'most sensational performance' was on their home ground in 1896, when they beat Woolwich Arsenal 8–0.<sup>502</sup> After winning just one game in the 1899–1900 season the club failed to get re-elected to the league for the following season, and folded.<sup>503</sup>

<sup>492</sup> *Lboro. Herald*, 20 May, 27 May 1886; *Leic. Chron.*, 22 May 1886.

<sup>493</sup> *Lboro. Herald*, 7 Oct. 1886.

<sup>494</sup> *Lboro. CC, 100 Years*, 2–4.

<sup>495</sup> *Melton Mowbray Merc.*, 22 May 1913.

<sup>496</sup> Facebook, Loughborough Outwoods CC, post By Alex Easton, 6 June 2021.

<sup>497</sup> *Leic. Merc.*, 24 Aug. 1976; 10 May 1983.

<sup>498</sup> *Leic. Merc.*, 10 May 1983.

<sup>499</sup> <https://leicestershirescl.play-cricket.com/Competitions> (accessed 5 Feb. 2025).

<sup>500</sup> S. Dudley, 'Loughborough's lost football league club', <https://forgottenclubs.wordpress.com/2022/08/21/forgotten-clubs-foreign-edition-loughborough-fc/> (accessed 22 Aug 2022).

<sup>501</sup> *VCH Leics.* III, 288.

<sup>502</sup> *Leic. Jnl*, 18 Dec. 1896.

<sup>503</sup> Wilford, *The 'Athletic Grounds'*, 27–32, 37–45; Dudley, 'Loughborough's lost'; *Leic. Chron.*, 20 Jan., 7 July 1900.

Loughborough Corinthians formed c.1896.<sup>504</sup> They joined the Midland League in 1925,<sup>505</sup> but suffered financial failure in 1934.<sup>506</sup> Loughborough United gained promotion from the Central Alliance to the Midland League in 1961 and won the Midland League Championship in 1962–3. By the early 1970s they were struggling financially with few spectators at their home games at Browns Lane, and folded in 1972.<sup>507</sup>

Eighteen clubs played in the town in 1967, including work's teams for Brush, William Cotton, Fisons, Morris Sports, Moss Sports, Rexall-Riker and Wills and Hepworth.<sup>508</sup> The most successful of the town's clubs has been Loughborough Dynamo. The club was formed in 1955 by pupils from Loughborough Grammar School and joined division 3 of the Loughborough Alliance in 1957.<sup>509</sup> They joined the Leicestershire Senior League in 1989–90 and gradually moved up to the Midland Alliance and then the Northern Premier League (tier 7), playing at the Nanpantan sports ground and finishing the 2023–4 season in 6th place, their highest ever position.<sup>510</sup> The club then announced that they had taken voluntary relegation back to grassroots level to join the Leicestershire Senior League, resulting in the resignation of the team manager and assistant.<sup>511</sup> A Loughborough University team accepted promotion to the Northern Premier League for the 2024–25 season;<sup>512</sup> their women's first team (Loughborough Lightning) won the Division 1 Midlands title in the FA Women's National League and were promoted to tier 3.<sup>513</sup>

### Golf

Longcliffe Golf Club at Nanpantan was formed in 1905 and agreed terms that year with Everard March Philipps de Lisle, who provided the land and agreed to lay out 18 holes, erect a clubhouse and provide a professional. The course was fully open in 1907. The club bought the land in 1959. A small amount was lost to the M1 motorway in 1964.<sup>514</sup> The wooded par-72 course, with two fairways that cross the bed of the former Charnwood Forest canal, has been described as 'one of the best in the East Midlands'.<sup>515</sup>

A municipal sports ground off the Shelthorpe Estate was opened in 1929 and was intended to provide facilities for tennis, bowls and golf.<sup>516</sup> The golf element was not developed until 1971, with

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<sup>504</sup> *Leic. Daily Merc.*, 12 Nov. 1896.

<sup>505</sup> <https://fchd.info/LOUHCOR.HTM> (accessed 28 Feb. 2025).

<sup>506</sup> *Leic. Eve. Mail*, 31 Dec. 1934.

<sup>507</sup> *Nottm Guardian*, 21 July 1961; *Leic. Daily Merc.*, 9 Mar. 1972.

<sup>508</sup> *Loughborough Sports Council*, 1967.

<sup>509</sup> [https://www.wikiwand.com/en/articles/Loughborough\\_Dynamo\\_F.C.](https://www.wikiwand.com/en/articles/Loughborough_Dynamo_F.C.) (accessed 14 Sept. 2025).

<sup>510</sup> Football Club History Database, <https://fchd.info/LOUHBOD.HTM> (accessed 28 Feb. 2025).

<sup>511</sup> *Lboro. Echo*, 1 May 2024.

<sup>512</sup> Football Club History Database, <https://fchd.info/LOUHBOS.HTM> (accessed 28 Feb. 2025).

<sup>513</sup> <https://www.lboro.ac.uk/sport/news/2025/> (accessed 9 Sept. 2025).

<sup>514</sup> E. Hancock, D. Walker and A. Plater, *Longcliffe Golf Club: The First Hundred Years* (Lboro., 2006), 10–12, 38.

<sup>515</sup> *Golf Monthly*, <https://www.golfmonthly.com/courses/uk-and-ireland/longcliffe-golf-club-course-review> (accessed 2 Jan. 2025).

<sup>516</sup> *Lboro. Eve. Mail*, 3 June 1929.

nine holes opened that year and a further nine in 1972. Players paid 40p for an 18-hole round.<sup>517</sup> Described as a 'rather featureless pitch and putt course' it was threatened with closure in 1988,<sup>518</sup> but failure to agree an alternative site resulted in an agreement in 1995 that the course could remain, with housing plans scaled back accordingly.<sup>519</sup> It remained open as a pitch and putt course in 2025.<sup>520</sup>

### Hockey

The England Hockey League is the top tier of club hockey in 2025, with eight regional leagues beneath it. Loughborough Town Hockey Club was formed in 1897.<sup>521</sup> By the 1930s its teams played at the cricket club's Park Road ground.<sup>522</sup> They moved to Derby Road c.1960, then moved again in the 1980s to an artificial turf pitch on the University campus. The club's first women's team was formed in 2004.<sup>523</sup> In 2024 the club had four men's, four women's and ten junior teams. The first teams play in the Midlands regional league, the men's team in division 1 and the women's team in the women's premier division.<sup>524</sup>

In 2025 Loughborough University's first XI teams compete in the England Hockey League, the men in the National League division 1 in both the outdoor and indoor games and the women's first XI (Loughborough Lightning) in the England Hockey Premier League (comprising the top 12 teams in the country). The University teams also compete in the BUCS National League.<sup>525</sup>

In the late 1960s there was also a ladies' hockey team at Shelthorpe and two workplace teams, Brush Ladies and a mixed side from Morris's.<sup>526</sup> There was also a team of Pakistani hockey players based at Loughborough College in the 1950s, all members of the Pakistani army, attending two- or four-year courses.<sup>527</sup>

### Hunting

Hugo Meynell, generally regarded as the founder of the Quorn hunt, settled at Quorn in 1753 and its followers filled 'the inns of Loughborough' in the late 18th century.<sup>528</sup> William Byerley Paget of Southfield was joint master of the Quorn hounds between 1890 and 1892 with William Pochin

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<sup>517</sup> *Leic. Daily Merc.*, 9 June 1971.

<sup>518</sup> *Lboro. Mail*, 21 Oct. 1987; 15 Dec. 1988.

<sup>519</sup> *Lboro. Echo*, 15 Sept. 1995.

<sup>520</sup> <https://www.charnwood.gov.uk/pages/shelthorpegolfcourse1> (accessed 1 Sept. 2025).

<sup>521</sup> <https://www.loughboroughtownhc.co.uk/club-history/> (accessed 2 Jan. 2025).

<sup>522</sup> *Lboro. CC, 100 Years*, 6.

<sup>523</sup> <https://www.loughboroughtownhc.co.uk/club-history/> (accessed 2 Jan. 2025); *Leic. Merc.*, 30 June 1959.

<sup>524</sup> <https://www.loughboroughtownhc.co.uk/2024/08/14/senior-fixtures-released-for-the-2024-2025-season/> (accessed 2 Jan. 2025).

<sup>525</sup> <https://www.lboro.ac.uk/sport/sports/hockey/mens/>;  
<https://www.lboro.ac.uk/sport/sports/hockey/womens/> (both accessed 12 Sept. 2025).

<sup>526</sup> *Lboro. B.C., Official Guide to Loughborough* (Lboro, c.1966), 36.

<sup>527</sup> *Leic. Eve. Mail*, 22 Jan. 1953.

<sup>528</sup> *VCH Leics.* III, 270.



Warner.<sup>529</sup> Paget's son William Edmund Paget, of Nanpantan Hall, was appointed joint master (with Major A.E. Burnaby of Baggrave Hall) in 1919 and they remained joint masters until Paget's death in the field in 1928.<sup>530</sup> The hunt met regularly at Nanpantan.<sup>531</sup> A tradition to meet on Boxing Day in Loughborough marketplace began in 1894.<sup>532</sup> The meet could attract several thousand spectators,<sup>533</sup> but protests from 1952 gradually changed attitudes, and the marketplace was booked for an alternative event in 1991.<sup>534</sup>

### Netball

Brush, Fisons and Riker all had work's teams in 1980, and Fisons won the Napier cup of the Loughborough Ladies' Netball League that year, when there were also three other clubs in the town, Burleigh Falcons and the Jets, both playing home games on the Burleigh College courts, and Thistle.<sup>535</sup>

England Netball has its base at Loughborough University in 2025. Loughborough Lightning, based at the university, was one of the eight teams in the Netball Superleague in 2025, the top level of netball in the UK. The university's BUCS netball team played at the highest level of BUCS netball.<sup>536</sup>

Membership of the Lightning netball teams is not confined to students at the university, with teams for Under 17's, Under 19's and Under 21's. The latter two teams won National Performance League trophies in 2025.<sup>537</sup>

### Rowing

Loughborough Boat Club was founded in 1881 to 'afford regular crew exercise and facilities for the private use of boats'.<sup>538</sup> Despite the name, their regatta was held in the 1880s at Normanton-on-Soar,<sup>539</sup> and by the 1930s they were training from Zouch.<sup>540</sup>

### Rugby

Loughborough Rangers was formed in 1882 to play rugby football on a field at Moor Lane.<sup>541</sup> It may have folded, to be replaced by Loughborough Rugby Football Club in 1891, which also played at

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<sup>529</sup> TNA, RG 4/78, entry 9 Jan. 1836; *Leic. Eve. Mail*, 22 Aug. 1911, 19 Apr. 1919.

<sup>530</sup> *Leic. Daily Merc.*, 24 Jan. 1919, 28 Mar. 1928; *Leics. VCH* III, 273.

<sup>531</sup> For example, *Lboro. Herald*, 8 Dec. 1887; *Melton Mowbray Times*, 24 Nov. 1899; 7 Oct. 1904; 3 Mar. 1910; 16 Nov. 1923.

<sup>532</sup> *Melton Mowbray Merc.*, 27 Dec. 1894.

<sup>533</sup> *Leic. Eve. Mail*, 27 Dec. 1934, 23 Dec. 1952.

<sup>534</sup> *Lboro. Echo*, 26 Dec. 1952; *Lboro. Mail*, 9 Jan. 1952.

<sup>535</sup> *Charnwood Sports Directory* (1980); (1980–1).

<sup>536</sup> <https://www.lboro.ac.uk/sport/sports/netball/> (accessed 9 Sept. 2025).

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<https://www.lboro.ac.uk/sport/news/2024/july/loughboroughlightningnplteamtriumph2024summertourname> nt/ (accessed 10 Sept. 2025).

<sup>538</sup> *Wills's Lboro. Almanac* (1883), 181.

<sup>539</sup> *Leic. Daily Merc.*, 20 Sept. 1886.

<sup>540</sup> *Leic. Eve. Mail*, 5 May 1932; *Lboro. B.C., Official Guide to Lboro.* (1955–6), 34.

<sup>541</sup> *Wills's Lboro. Almanac* (1883), 178.

Moor Lane.<sup>542</sup> This club failed, but reformed in 1929, and played to rugby union rules.<sup>543</sup> They shared the Loughborough Corinthians football pitch at Brown's Lane, but there were difficulties in obtaining a tenancy in 1935 following the purchase of the land by Loughborough B.C.<sup>544</sup> The club moved to Park Road to share the cricket ground off-season with the hockey club,<sup>545</sup> and moved again in the 1960s to Derby Road.

A rugby match was played by the grammar school in 1922, but regular matches do not appear to have been played by the school until 1948.<sup>546</sup> There were two other rugby union clubs in the town in the late 1960s, a team from Brush and the Old Loughburians (a team of former grammar school pupils).<sup>547</sup>

In 2024 Loughborough R.F.C. met at Derby Road playing fields, and had three senior men's sides, a women's team, four boys' and three girls' junior teams and seven mini-rugby sides for children up to 12 years.<sup>548</sup> The men's first XV in played in the Counties 1 Midlands East (North) league (level 7 of the rugby union league).<sup>549</sup>

Loughborough University in 2025 has ten rugby union teams competing in the men's and women's game, the men's first XV in the Rugby Football Union (RFU) National League 2 West (tier 4) and the women's first XV (Loughborough Lightning) in the Allianz Premiership (the top tier in the women's game). There are also men's and women's teams in respective top tiers of the BUCS leagues.<sup>550</sup> The university also provides rugby coaching to Year 10 boys at Loughborough Grammar School.<sup>551</sup>

There were also men's and women's teams at Loughborough University playing rugby league in 2025, competing in BUCS competitions.<sup>552</sup> The men's team played in the six-team National League (the top tier for university rugby league).<sup>553</sup>

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<sup>542</sup> VCH Leics III, 287; *Nottm Eve. Post*, 19 Sept. 1891.

<sup>543</sup> *Leic. Eve. Mail*, 25 Sept. 1930.

<sup>544</sup> *Leic. Eve. Mail*, 25 Oct. 1934, 21 Mar. 1935.

<sup>545</sup> Lboro. CC, *100 Years*, 6.

<sup>546</sup> LGS Dig. Arch., *Loughburian*, 160 (1950), 20; <https://lsf.org/grammar/centenary-celebrations-for-100-years-of-rugby-at-loughborough-grammar/> (accessed 20 Aug. 2025).

<sup>547</sup> Lboro. B.C., *Official Guide to Loughborough* (Lboro, c.1966), 36.

<sup>548</sup> <https://www.pitchero.com/clubs/loughborough> (accessed 2 Jan. 2025).

<sup>549</sup> <https://www.pitchero.com/clubs/loughborough/teams/13376> (accessed 20 Aug. 2025).

<sup>550</sup> <https://www.lboro.ac.uk/sport/sports/rugby-union/mens/play/>;  
<https://www.lboro.ac.uk/sport/sports/rugby-union/womens/> (accessed 1 Sept. 2025).

<sup>551</sup> <https://lsf.org/grammar/centenary-celebrations-for-100-years-of-rugby-at-loughborough-grammar/> (accessed 20 Aug. 2025).

<sup>552</sup> <https://www.lboro.ac.uk/sport/sports/rugby-league/> (accessed 10 Sept. 2025).

<sup>553</sup> <https://www.bucs.org.uk/sports-subpage/rugby-league/rugby-league-national-league.html> (accessed 10 Sept. 2025).



### Swimming

The Board of Health provided an open-air swimming pool measuring 120 ft by 40 ft and a corrugated iron changing hut in 1886, between Empress Road and the canal bridge on Little Moor Lane. The canal company had complained about the nuisance caused by young men and boys bathing in the canal and agreed to make no charge for the water supply, which drained into Hermitage brook, creating a continuous flow. Admission was free except on Wednesdays and Fridays, when 1d. was charged.<sup>554</sup> The town water supply was extended to reach the pool in 1888.<sup>555</sup>

Water shortages caused the pool to be closed in the early 20th century. These were resolved by the opening of the Blackbrook reservoir in 1906, but it was found that the pool had badly deteriorated. The council decided not to reopen it, as they had committed to purchasing a new recreation ground on Moor Lane, and would then consider building a new open-air pool there.<sup>556</sup>

The Memorial Baths opened in 1898 adjacent to Queen's Park and provided a swimming pool measuring 80 ft by 30 ft with a gallery to accommodate 150 spectators.<sup>557</sup> This closed in 1975 when Loughborough Leisure Centre opened on Browns Lane, on a site previously occupied by Loughborough United Football Club.<sup>558</sup>

A swimming club was formed at Moor Lane in 1896.<sup>559</sup> The club has not had a continuous existence, but has reformed on several occasions.<sup>560</sup> Clubs were also formed in the late 19th and early 20th century by the employees of some large firms, including the Empress works, Nottingham Manufacturing Co. and Brush.<sup>561</sup> In 2024 Loughborough Town Swimming Club offered training to competitive swimmers six days each week in the pool at Loughborough Leisure Centre on Browns Lane.<sup>562</sup>

Loughborough University has a 50m indoor pool, and its coaches in 2025 had experience at coaching to world championship and Olympic level. In addition to a performance programme for students swimming at the highest levels, there were opportunities for club-level swimmers and those who swim for recreation.<sup>563</sup> The public could also book time in swimming pool.<sup>564</sup>

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<sup>554</sup> *Lboro. Herald*, 3 June 1886.

<sup>555</sup> *Hinckley News*, 4 Aug. 1888.

<sup>556</sup> *Nottm Jnl*, 22 Mar., 5 Apr. 1906.

<sup>557</sup> *Leic. Jnl*, 16 Apr. 1897; 12 Aug. 1898; above, Town, Parish and Borough: Settlement and the Built Environment.

<sup>558</sup> *Leic. Daily Merc.*, 7 Sept. 1971; 8 Sept. 1975.

<sup>559</sup> *Leic. Jnl*, 12 June, 14 Aug. 1896.

<sup>560</sup> *Lboro. Echo*, 1 Dec. 1989.

<sup>561</sup> *Leic. Chron.*, 5 Aug. 1899; *Melton Mowbray Merc.*, 10 Mar. 1904; *Lboro. Monitor*, 9 May 1918.

<sup>562</sup> <https://www.ltsc.org.uk/page/an-introduction/278> (accessed 5 Jan. 2025).

<sup>563</sup> <https://www.lboro.ac.uk/sport/sports/swimming/> (accessed 12 Sept. 2025).

<sup>564</sup> <https://www.lboro.ac.uk/sport/facilities/sports-facilities/swimming-pool/public-sessions/> (accessed 12 Feb. 2025).

## Tennis

A meeting at the Bull's Head in 1889 led to the formation of Loughborough Lawn Tennis Club. The club initially played on two rented grass courts at Ingle Pingle, near Emmanuel church. Loughborough Sports Club Ltd was incorporated in 1920 to purchase the land and take over the assets and liabilities of the club.<sup>565</sup> The club remained at Ingle Pingle in 2024, with four hard courts, three clay courts, a clubhouse, floodlights and an all-weather winter dome over two of the courts, enabling the game to be played throughout the year.<sup>566</sup>

Despite the game's popularity, no club was willing to take a lease on two courts at Queen's Park in 1910.<sup>567</sup> Beacon Tennis Club was formed in 1952 and played on courts at Park Road.<sup>568</sup> Charnwood Lawn Tennis Club was originally the tennis section of the Brush sports and social organisation, playing on the Brush sports ground off Forest Road, where there were three grass and three hard courts. They moved to the new Brush sports ground at Nanpantan in the early 1970s, and became Charnwood Lawn Tennis Club.<sup>569</sup> The club continued to play on the eight courts there in 2024.<sup>570</sup>

Loughborough University National Tennis Academy offers elite tennis coaching to players under the age of 18. Loughborough University teams have won BUCS league and cup championships.<sup>571</sup>

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<sup>565</sup> V. Lord, *A History of Loughborough Lawn Tennis Club* (Lboro., c.2014), 6–8; *Leic. Daily Post*, 3 Jan. 1921.

<sup>566</sup> <https://clubspark.lta.org.uk/loughboroughlawntennisclub> (accessed 2 Jan. 2025).

<sup>567</sup> *Melton Mowbray Merc.*, 24 Feb., 7 July 1910.

<sup>568</sup> *Lboro. Echo*, 16 May 1952.

<sup>569</sup> <https://clubspark.lta.org.uk/charnwoodtennisclub/Information/History> (accessed 4 Jan. 2025).

<sup>570</sup> <https://clubspark.lta.org.uk/charnwoodtennisclub/Information/Facilities> (accessed 4 Jan. 2025).

<sup>571</sup> <https://www.lboro.ac.uk/sport/sports/tennis/performance/> (accessed 10 Sept. 2025).