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We1c0me

Welcome back to East Midlands History and Heritage, the magazine that uniquely caters for local history societies, schools and colleges, heritage practitioners and history professionals across the region, putting them in contact with you and you with them.

We'd like to draw your attention particularly to our first Annual Conference, which will focus on the impact that the Reformation had on the East Midlands. The Conference will be held in September 2017 at De Montford University. For further information please contact Liz Tingle (see page 31 for details).

We'd also encourage you to submit work to us for publication. You can pick any topic from any period, just so long as it has a strong East Midlands connection. Articles are normally between 1500-2000 words long. Keep a look out, too, for matching images that will help illustrate your work (the higher the number of pixels, the larger we can make the image). So if you are currently working on a community project, or a private piece of research, and would like to take your findings to a large audience, why don't you email us with the details at: emhist@virginmedia.com.

Nick Hayes (Editor)

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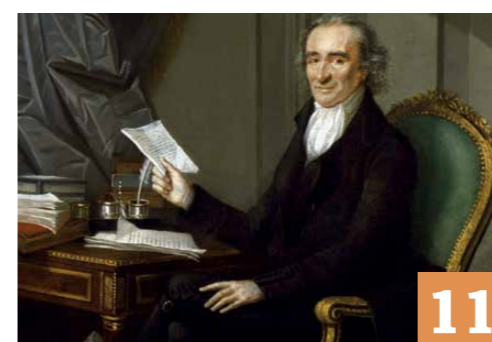
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Thomas Hemsworth and Ashbourne Malt

BY PETER COLLINGE

HEMSWORTH'S MALTHOUSE



Used primarily as an ingredient in ale, beer, and porter, the conversion of grain, usually barley, into malt has a long history in Ashbourne. Its production formed an important aspect of the town's commercial sphere in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, especially between 1750 and 1850. Malting coincided with the town operating as a stopping point on the London to Manchester coaching route where, in 1781, visitors could be accommodated in 37 inns. Little physical evidence now remains of this once thriving industry, unless you know where to look.

Nikolaus Pevsner described Ashbourne's Church Street as one of the finest streets in Derbyshire, but gave little consideration as to where the money came from to finance and maintain such grand townhouses. However, behind the façades, hidden from view, there are some surprising survivals hinting at the source of that wealth. The most impressive of these is a crumbling eighteenth-century malthouse to the rear of no. 23.

Malt production was so widespread in eighteenth-century England that most towns could boast at least one malthouse. In some places, like Ware, Hertfordshire, it was a mainstay of the local economy. Elsewhere, as in Ashbourne, malting was just one amongst many trades. Here there is evidence for twelve such malthouses, although they did not all exist at the same time: one on Dig Street was converted into houses as early as 1737; a private chapel in the grounds of Ashbourne Hall long used as a malthouse was dismantled by the hall's owner, Sir Brooke Boothby, around 1785; and a purpose built malthouse on Derby Road operated only c.1815 to c.1830. Within urban contexts, surviving malthouses have often been converted to other uses, or incorporated into later developments, making the largely unaltered Ashbourne malthouse something of a rarity.

In the later eighteenth century Thomas Hemsworth (1741–1814), a farmer and innkeeper, bought 23 Church Street together with the long, narrow stretch of land behind the property known as a burgage plot. The house and shop fronting the road were let out to a series of tenants. Behind these, in the 1780s, Hemsworth constructed two malthouses (one since demolished) with access through an arched carriage way at the front. The malthouses continued to be owned by the Hemsworth family until at least the 1850s.

Malting was a profitable trade, but it could also be precarious. Between 1808 and 1811 several attempts were made by Thomas Hemsworth



CHURCH STREET ASHBOURNE

to lease the malthouses, without success. These attempts may have been occasioned by the death of Hemsworth's son, also called Thomas, in 1808 aged 27, who bequeathed to his wife, Elizabeth, "all that malt now in my father's malthouse". An advert in 1811 indicated that Thomas Hemsworth the elder was in some difficulty. He was "declining business immediately", and selling off a large quantity of good malt without reserve. Furthermore, in a terse statement he declared that "All persons who stood indebted to [him] two years previous to the date hereof, are desired to discharge the same immediately or, they will be sued". Thomas the elder outlived his son Thomas by six years, dying in 1814. He also outlived his daughter Frances. The bulk of his estate, therefore, was left to his surviving sons John and William. His second wife Ann was to receive an annual sum of £50 in accordance with the settlement drawn up at the time of their marriage.

Almost by default, the wealth generated by malting meant that maltsters gained status within their communities. The Hemsworths were no exception. They secured their position through

Almost by default, the wealth generated by malting meant that maltsters gained status within their communities.

a combination of farming, malting, brewing, innkeeping and property transactions; through advantageous marriages; and by taking up civic responsibilities. In addition to the malthouses, the Hemsworths were the proprietors of the Old Bear, the Rose and Crown (run by Thomas the elder), and the White Hart, all on Church Street. At a time when many inns brewed their own beer the move into malt production was astute as it linked their farming and innkeeping activities. It was reinforced by dynastic alliances. Through Thomas the elder's second marriage to widow

Ann Marshall in 1806 the Hemsworths extended their innkeeping to the Marquis of Granby in St John Street. His son John married Ann Tomlinson whose sister Prudence had married William Bass, son of the founder of the Bass Brewery at Burton-upon-Trent. This may have provided a market for Hemsworth malt, but may arguably have been more important as a means of transporting it as William Bass ran a haulage business from Ashbourne. And as for civic duty, Thomas the elder served as the parish overseer in 1781 and in 1790 served on the jury at the county assizes. Similarly, his son John was a jury member at the trial for high treason of Isaac Ludlum in Derby in 1817.

Malt Production

Although two side extensions visible on the 1846 Ashbourne tithe map are now lost, the surviving long, narrow, three-storey malthouse is typical of those built on burgage plots in the eighteenth century. Measuring 60 by 18 feet (18.2 by 5.5 metres) the malthouse was capable of producing eight quarters of malt (a quarter equalled 28

pounds or 12.7kg) and contained two cisterns, one kiln and a pump. Next to it was a second six storey malthouse measuring 30 by 18 feet (9.1 by 5.5 metres), capable of producing six quarters and similarly equipped with two cisterns, a kiln and a pump.

The malthouse is awaiting a full architectural survey, so to some extent the way in which it functioned is conjectural. However, it tallies generally with research conducted by Amber Patrick regarding the layouts and working practices of other similar floor-malting structures, known as the 'Newark pattern', and from surviving external and internal elements. The ground floor, with its restricted head height and brick flooring, and the top floor, consisting of a screed surface over lath and plaster, would have been used for germinating the malt. The middle floor with wooden floorboards was a storage area for grain, and for the malt itself. Whilst this was the general layout in a Newark-pattern malthouse, Hemsworth's malthouse has a number of features that indicate a slightly different configuration. The external door on the top floor of the south elevation suggests that the barley was hoisted initially up to this level.

The limited number of small windows, constructed so as to help control the moisture content of the grain, indicates that this floor was also used for storage.

Malt production traditionally occupied the autumn, winter and spring months. The first processes were to clean the barley and to reduce its moisture content to prevent early germination. The next stage was to soak or steep the barley in cisterns. These were usually located on the ground floor near to the kiln and immediately below the storage area. Grain was tipped into the cisterns through trap doors, or via a chute. Although the cisterns at Hemsworth's malthouse no longer survive, they are likely to have been constructed of stone slabs similar to those at a now demolished malthouse in Thorney, West Yorkshire. Cisterns required a lot of water so the presence of water pumps on the premises was advantageous.

Steeping took about three days, but as experienced maltsters knew, it could be longer or shorter as it was affected by the quality and temperature of the water, the variety and quality of the grain used, and upon the prevailing air



HEMSWORTH'S MALTHOUSE

Although time-consuming, malt production was lucrative. Inevitably, it caught the attention of successive governments, who, keen to raise finance, taxed the industry heavily.



HEMSWORTH'S MALTHOUSE, GROUND LEVEL GERMINATING FLOOR

temperature. After steeping, the barley was placed into wooden couching frames to gain heat. The soaked and heated grain then began the germination process. This was achieved by spreading the grain across the ground floor, and moving it gradually along the length of the building. During the germination process the grain was lifted up to the top floor by the winding gear (which survives on the north gable end). It was then spread out again and shovelled back along the length of the floor in the direction of the kiln. Germination of what was now called 'green malt' then needed to be halted through kiln drying. The green malt was moved once more and spread out over a floor of perforated tiles (some of which survive) through which hot air flowed heated by a furnace. The amount of heat generated, the length of the drying process and the type of fuel used (coke was favoured because it had less chance of tainting the malt) dictated the colour and flavour of the malt. The malt was then cleaned and stored until required.

Although time-consuming, malt production was lucrative. Inevitably, it caught the attention of successive governments, who, keen to raise finance, taxed the industry heavily. In 1787–88 the duty on malt raised £1.3 million. In addition, each maltster had to take out an annual licence costing five shillings. Such was the importance of the malt tax that excise officers were issued with instructions about how to detect fraudulent practices designed to reduce the amount of duty payable and were ordered to inspect malthouses every week.

Malting continued in Ashbourne into the second half of the nineteenth century, but by the 1850s change was already apparent. The malt tax, increased in 1830, was increased again in 1854. In the same year that the railway reached Ashbourne in 1852, four of the town's malthouses including those behind 23 Church Street were put up for auction. The railway made it easier to transport barley to major beer producing centres such as Burton. Here, as the brewing industry expanded, companies such as Bass wanted greater control over the malt that went into their beverages. Smaller malthouses could neither compete in scale with the vast complexes being developed at Burton (especially after the repeal of the malt tax in 1880), nor guarantee a consistent quality in their malt. The establishment of tied houses owned by the major breweries resulted in a decline in the number of inns producing their own beer. This limited the number of opportunities for individual maltsters to supply local inns with malt. It was compounded by the rise of the temperance movement.

Inevitably, as Ashbourne's malt industry declined so too did its malthouses. Hemsworth's malthouse survives, but only just. A recently-formed trust is exploring how best to preserve this fragile building. 🏠

Further Reading: Peter Collinge, 'A Genteel Hand in the Malt Business: Barbara Ford (1755–1840) of Ashbourne', *Midland History*, 39:1 (Spring 2014), pp.110–32. Colin Owen, *The Greatest Brewery in the World: A History of Bass, Ratcliff and Gretton* (Derbyshire Record Society, XIX; Chesterfield, 1992). Amber Patrick, *Maltings in England: Strategy for the Historical Industrial Environment Report No. 1* (Swindon: English Heritage, July 2004). Amber Patrick, 'Establishing a Typology for the Buildings of the Floor Malting Industry', *Industrial Archaeology Review*, 18 (Spring 1996), pp.180–200.

Peter Collinge

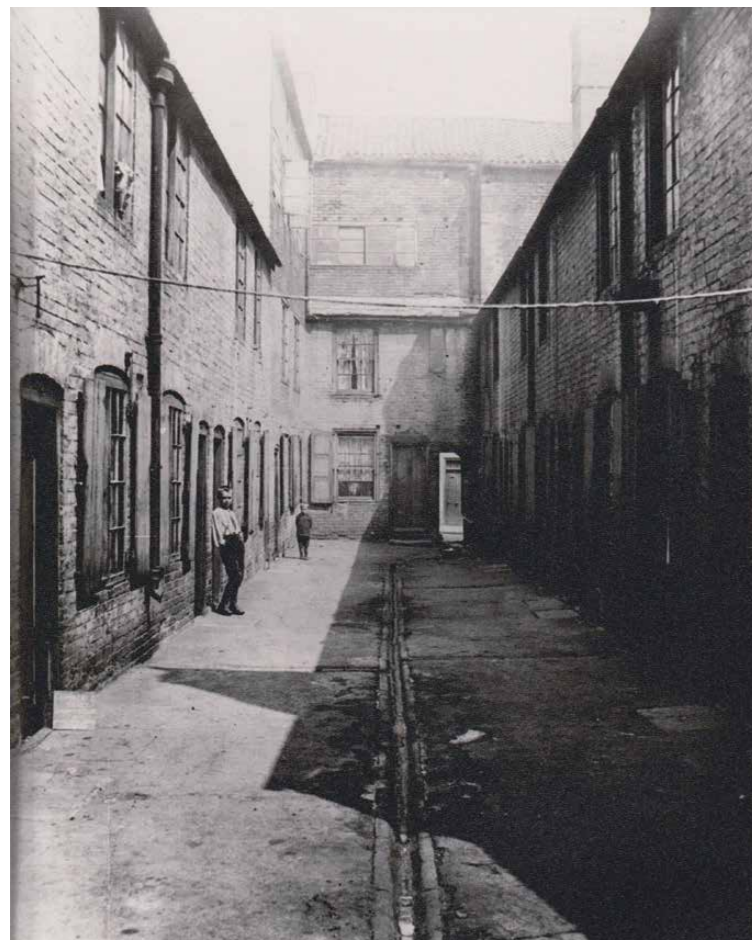
About the author

Dr Peter Collinge is a post-doctoral researcher on the Staffordshire Poor Law Biography Project at Keele University.

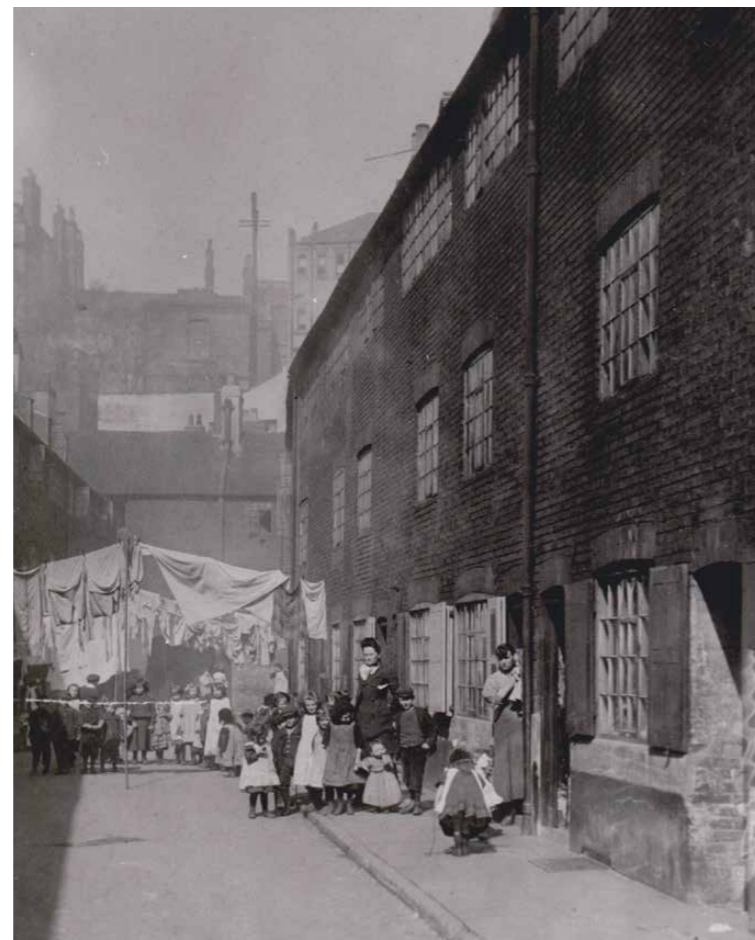
‘It is on the lives of infants that unhealthy influences have their deadliest effects’:

Combating infant mortality in Nottingham and Leicester, 1890-1910

BY DENISE AMOS



COMMERCE PLACE, BARKER GATE



CROSSLAND STREET, NARROW MARSH

The high rate of infant mortality – those under one year old – was a long-established problem affecting the poor, during the nineteenth century, but was mainly regarded as a problem of the poverty that the child was born into.

Rates of infant mortality remained stubbornly high, even though the general health of the population had improved through developments in science and preventative medicine. Little was done to investigate the problem of infant mortality until the turn of the century. Several events caused this change. The shocking evidence of the high numbers of recruits who were rejected as unfit to serve in the army during the Boer War (1899-1902) indicated a broader unhealthiness amongst the population. Birth rate, too, was falling, prompting concerns of population decline. At a time of nascent interest in social intervention, epitomised by the work of the Rowntrees and Charles Booth, there was a growing government concern as to why the death rate for the population as a whole was falling whilst the death rate for infants was not. Child mortality is a good indicator of the state of the environmental conditions – both public and private – social facilities and health of a given area. Edward Seaton, Nottingham's first Medical Officer of Health (1873-83) commented, *‘It is on the lives of infants that unhealthy influences have their deadliest effects.’* C. Killick Millard, MoH for Leicester in 1901, made a similar comment: *‘Infant mortality is rightly regarded as an important index of sanitary conditions of a locality’.* Sir George Newman, England's first Chief Medical Officer of Health, thought that many infant deaths must be preventable and, consequently, *‘to discover the means whereby the heavy annual tribute of infant life can be reduced ... is one of the great sanitary desiderata of the age’.*

Many studies of infant mortality focus on single causes: for example, poverty and wealth, working-class mothers and their employment; the prevalence of breast-feeding; illegitimacy; socio-economic conditions. This article takes a comparative approach to the problem. Although Nottingham and Leicester had poor living conditions each town (Nottingham achieved city status in 1897, Leicester not until 1919) was different from its neighbour. Consequently, a variety of reasons – rather than a single defining cause – helps to explain the high rates of infant mortality.

Both towns were comparable in terms of population size and density, as well as poor housing and poverty. In 1895, both towns had high rates of infant deaths which corresponded to those in urban England and Wales. There was a decline in 1896, followed by a substantial rise in 1897 and then a gradual decline, but whereas Leicester showed a dramatic subsequent decline, in Nottingham the decline was delayed. Post-natal childhood killers of the time were epidemic diarrhoea and enteritis, often accentuated by respiratory diseases such as pneumonia and bronchitis. Diarrhoea is caused by eating inappropriate food and infection in the gut through a lack of personal hygiene. Respiratory diseases as well as measles and whooping cough are affected by poor diet, overcrowding and poor housing conditions.

Mother's Ruin?

Contemporaries believed that one of the most influential factors on infant deaths was the mother. She was blamed for going out to work, leaving the child with unsuitable child-minders, failing to provide a home life suitable for a young child, for not suckling her baby and for not providing decent living conditions for the child to grow. Newman had stressed that infant mortality

was *‘mainly a question of motherhood’* and that *‘the environment of the infant is its mother’*. Was this true?

Both Nottingham and Leicester were notable for the high proportion of female labour in textiles and leather-good manufactures. Both unmarried and married women worked. In Nottingham, many women worked at home as lace-finishers. The employment of women with babies, however, was heavily criticised. In Leicester, despite the high demand for labour, its MoH, H.G.H. Monk, was surprised to find the number of mothers going out to work was quite small. Indeed, there is little evidence to suggest that a working mother's child was more likely to die than those whose mother who did not work and stayed at home.

Given the inadequate domestic conditions for many women living in poverty, such as a lack of cooking facilities and nutritional knowledge, a campaign was launched by welfare workers to raise the standard of ‘mother craft’ through education. They did this in a variety of ways but concentrated on first getting women to be seen by Lady Health Visitors or at clinics. The MoHs of Nottingham and Leicester set up child welfare schemes. At the beginning of the 1900s, Philip Boobbyer, MoH for Nottingham, conducted a survey to see how prevalent breast-feeding was in the city. Over half of those interviewed promised or professed to breast-feed their infants. The figures are speculative but, even if it was for a short time, the child gained some immunity from diseases. Through Boobbyer, Nottingham set up the Mothers and Babies Welcomes in 1908. In Leicester, most of the infant deaths from diarrhoea were amongst those that were bottle-fed and efforts were made to encourage breast-feeding through visits from health visitors.

For many women, breast-feeding was not an option, yet not breast-feeding was seen as a failing on the mother's part. The alternative was to hand-feed with cow's milk or milk substitutes but this was fraught with dangers. Cow's milk was one of the most adulterated foods and the feeding vessels were frequently unhygienic. Other liquid pulps were indigestible for an infant because, as well as irritating their gut, they introduced contaminants and pathogens into the baby's body. A far greater danger was the use of condensed milk, a product which was in general use in the household but was totally unsuitable for infants. The most popular weaning foods were a mixture of arrowroot, oatmeal and sago, and a mixture known as ‘pap’ made from bread and water. One two-month old baby was reportedly fed on bread, chips and bloaters (a type of fish), and condensed milk.

Leicester's MoH, Killick Millard, made the connection between hand-fed babies and the high rate of infant deaths. Female sanitary inspectors were employed to visit the homes of the poor on a regular basis, each making upwards of twenty visits to one household to advise new mothers on how to feed their infant. The introduction of the Leicester milk sterilizing depot in 1900, in the centre of the town, also proved invaluable in 1906 when the town experienced an exceptionally hot and dry summer and autumn.

Closely linked to breast-feeding was the high mortality rate of illegitimate children. According to Medical Officers, mothers of illegitimate children were often guilty of neglecting their child. However, given the proportion of illegitimate births to legitimate ones in both towns, they accounted for only a small proportion of infant deaths. In Nottingham, more illegitimate ▶

About the author

Denise Amos is the co-ordinator of the Nottinghamshire Heritage Gateway (www.nottsheritagegateway.org.uk). Her PhD thesis, completed at the University of Nottingham in 2000, is entitled ‘Working-Class Diet and Health in Nottingham, 1850-1939’.



NOTTINGHAM LACE WORKERS. COURTESY OF NOTT'M LOCAL STUDIES LIBRARY.

Nottingham was slower in getting to grips with the problem of infant mortality – the introduction of baby clinics did not begin until 1908, while the removal of pail closets only began in 1920.

babies died from diseases attributed to their poor feeding (such as diarrhoea, atrophy and debility) than from any other causes. Nonetheless, local statistics recorded that death rates among illegitimate child could be more than three times higher.

Nurture not Nature?


Other factors which influenced infant mortality rates were the domestic and municipal sanitation of a given area and general living conditions. In Nottingham, there was an established link between poor housing – including overcrowding, cramped conditions and poor sanitation – and infant mortality. The highest rates of infant mortality occurred in densely populated wards such as St Mary's, Byron, St Ann's and Exchange, which were also the ones that continued to use pail closets. In Leicester Killick Millard suggested that the poorer areas of Leicester were 'diarrhoea areas' and it was rife in the thickly-populated areas of old and poorer-class properties. Wards such as Newton, Wyggeston, St Margaret's and The Abbey had the highest infant rates deaths.

Excrement removal procedures in the two towns was also an important factor behind the incident of infant deaths. Nottingham had an abysmal record in this respect, retaining the pail-system until forced into changing to water closets in 1920. Leicester, on the other hand, begun to adopt the water closet as early as the 1890s. Nottingham continued to have an excessive incidence of diarrhoea, whereas Leicester showed a reduction in diarrhoeal deaths. This contrast in the experience of the two towns is especially telling.

The management of sewage removal was further exacerbated by seasonal and climatic conditions. Seasonal effects operated in two ways: firstly, in disproportionately affecting areas lacking in sanitary facilities regardless of socio-economic status and, secondly, in affecting infants who were the most vulnerable to diarrhoeal disease. Added to seasonal effects were climatic ones. The prevalence of diarrhoea was more noticeable during the summer and early autumn when it was hot and dry. Piles of rotting waste and animal manure were all breeding grounds for flies. There was a clear positive correlation between the number of hot days and the number of infant deaths from diarrhoea in Nottingham, during the period 1905-1916, when pail closets were still used. However, by 1926, when the conversion to water closets had been made,

there was no such correlation. The summers of 1893, 1895, 1897 and 1901 were all hot dry summers and the death rate from diarrhoea rose considerably, whereas in 1902 the cooler, wetter summer saw a decline in the number of deaths.

This brief examination of the situation in Nottingham and Leicester reveals how specific factors had significant bearing on infant mortality rates. For example, by 1901, Leicester had introduced health visitors, but there had already been a reduction in infant mortality before this date largely due to the substitution of pail closets with water closets. Nottingham was slower in getting to grips with the problem of infant mortality – the introduction of baby clinics did not begin until 1908, while the removal of pail closets only began in 1920.

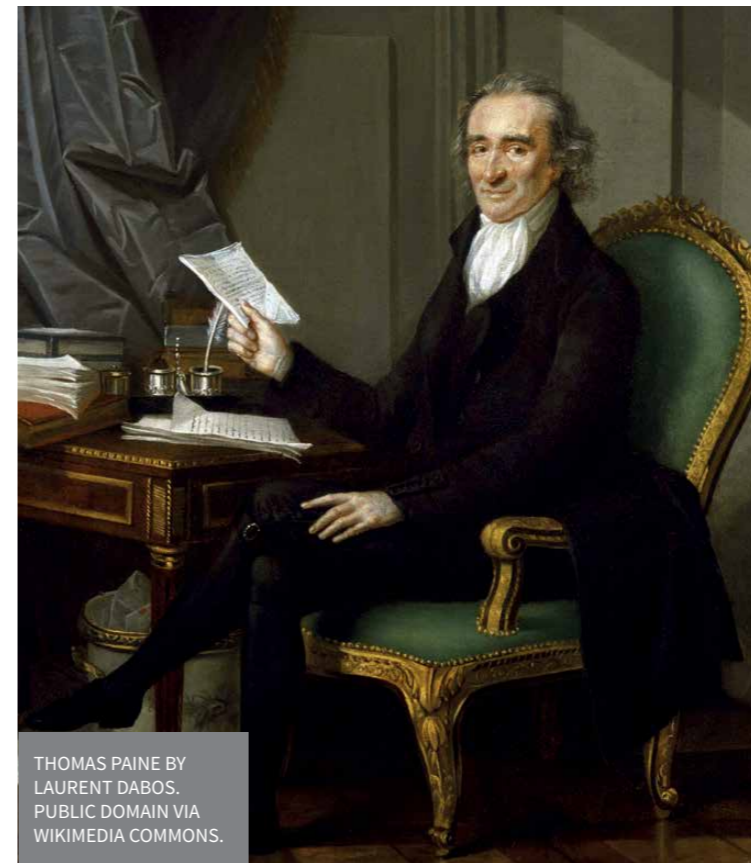
By the end of the nineteenth century, contemporaries began to recognize the problem of infant mortality but their understanding of this anomaly was focused principally on the role of the mother and how she raised her infant. This thinking fitted into the period, where many problems were assumed to lie with the individual rather than the physical environment. However, this distinction between factors relating to the physical environment and those involving the mother was arbitrary, as both sets of influences had some bearing on the problem. The growth of social intervention – in terms of better sanitary conditions, improved milk supply, legislation such as the Notification of Births Act (1906) and Midwives Act (1902) and the introduction of health departments – all assisted the MoH to better understand the causes and suggest solutions for improving the lives of infants. 

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Nottinghamshire Heritage Gateway

Supporting king and constitution: expressions of loyalism in Leicestershire, 1792-3

BY PAMELA J FISHER




THOMAS PAINE BY LAURENT DABOS. PUBLIC DOMAIN VIA WIKIMEDIA COMMONS.

The people of Castle Donington, in north-west Leicestershire, had ambitious plans for 5th November 1792. An effigy of Thomas Paine had been made, and while being held "in confinement" the previous evening, someone filled its head with gunpowder before re-attaching it to the body. On the 5th, the effigy was placed in a cart and drawn through the principal streets behind a band playing "God save the King", as a single bell solemnly tolled. The procession was attended by a "party of gentlemen", who fired several volleys over the effigy, "as a triumph of reason and unanimity over discord and malice". When the procession halted, a "trial" was held. Those defending Paine were soon persuaded of his guilt, and sentence was passed. The effigy was taken to "the place of execution", where it was hung over a signpost, and burnt, following which the church bells rang "a merry peal" in "joy".

Thomas Paine was one of the most influential writers of the late 18th century. Born in Norfolk in 1737, he set sail for the American colonies in 1774, where he wrote *Common Sense* (1776), a pamphlet setting out the case for American Independence, which quickly sold over 150,000 copies. Failing to find a meaningful role within the new republic, he left for France in 1787, before returning to England. Paine answered Edmund Burke's denunciatory *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1790) with *The Rights of Man* (1791), which asserted that the British people had not submitted themselves to the crown forever. A second part, published in February 1792, promoted the reform of parliament and taxation. Paine was summoned before the courts in June 1792, but his trial on a charge of sedition was postponed until December.

The "execution" at Castle Donington had clearly been carefully planned, with the knowledge and support of many inhabitants, including some gentlemen and the vicar or churchwardens. The timing was apposite for a political message in support of the constitution, being the anniversary of both the discovery of the gunpowder plot in 1605 and the arrival of William III in Devon in 1688. It also came at a time when the revolution in France was becoming more violent. George III had issued a proclamation in May 1792 warning people to guard against attempts to subvert the government, and ordering county magistrates to seek out the authors, printers and distributors of seditious writings. As yet there had been little response. The flames from Castle Donington's bonfire would have seared a warning into the minds of any spectators seeking to upset the social order, while the volleys, bells and the addition of gunpowder would have broadcast the event to a wider audience, creating a topic of conversation for the days which followed. Keen to avoid any dilution of their political message, the organisers informed the *Leicester Journal* that Paine was executed for "disturbing the peace of a people, who are happier... under our present auspicious Government... than they can possibly be under any other form which this deluded man, or his votaries, can devise".

It was the first of over 400 recorded burnings of Tom Paine in effigy in towns and villages across Britain. It foreshadowed a shift in public sentiment, mostly expressed by a wave of loyalist declarations between late November 1792 and early March 1793. The *Leicester Journal* reported on 11th January 1793 that there was "scarce a town 

or village within the circulation of this paper” that had not shown its support for the constitution. Loyal addresses were not a new phenomenon, and the movement was self-propelling, with people keen to prevent any inference being drawn from silence. Of greatest interest are the towns and villages which felt it necessary to pay to advertise their declarations and resolutions in a newspaper: those whose resolutions took the strongest line against treachery and sedition, and the possible motivations which lay behind these actions and the burning in effigy of a revolutionary.

The first to act after the events at Castle Donington was an anonymous old soldier calling himself Nobody. Citing the proverb “*what is everybody’s business is nobody’s business*”, Nobody paid for an insertion in the *Leicester Journal* on 30th November 1792. It reported on a meeting at the Crown and Anchor tavern in London on 20th November, where an association had been formed “*For preserving Liberty and Property against Republicans and Levellers*”. The meeting had passed resolutions to discourage and suppress seditious publications, and to recommend that others formed similar associations “*in their different neighbourhoods*”. Historians have disagreed over whether the association was formed with the encouragement of Pitt’s government, but its resolutions suited the government’s needs.

The first two loyalist meetings recorded in Leicestershire took place on 17th December, in Leicester and Market Harborough, but their resolutions differed from those passed at the Crown and Anchor. The mayor called and chaired the Leicester meeting. His advertisement promised a resolution to detect and punish anyone responsible for circulating seditious publications, but those present unanimously resolved no more than to support the constitution, to use their “*utmost efforts to repress riots and unlawful assemblies*” and to accept the signatures of supporters of these resolutions. As signatures were only accepted in working hours, this would have excluded most except gentlemen and the professional classes. The existence of a constitutional society in Leicester, which wished to see annual elections to a reformed parliament, may have made it impossible to obtain unanimity to any stronger resolutions. At Market Harborough, the unanimous resolutions of 198 people meeting under the chairmanship of Reverend Farrer also went no further than supporting the constitution and vowing to prevent riots. Nonetheless, it publicly thanked the victuallers in the town, “*who have voluntarily stepped forward*” to declare that they would not countenance any seditious meeting or “*reasonable conversation*” on their premises.

Advertisements record the resolutions passed over the next two months at meetings held in Ashby de la Zouch, Hinckley, Loughborough,

Lutterworth, Market Harborough (a second meeting), Melton Mowbray, Ashby Magna, Barrow upon Soar, Claybrooke, Great Bowden, Great Dalby, Kegworth, Kibworth, Mountsorrel, Peatling Parva and Wigston Magna. Some included the inhabitants of neighbouring villages: for example, the people of Castle Donington joined the Kegworth meeting. The second meeting at Market Harborough was attended by the inhabitants of at least 17 villages in Leicestershire and Northamptonshire, and a meeting in Melton Mowbray included residents from at least 13 villages.

Although the published resolutions were similar in tone, they varied widely in breadth and wording. The chairmen, generally magistrates, and prominent members of the local gentry or clergymen, were clearly determined to achieve unanimity, and compromises presumably had to be made. Each set of resolutions can therefore be seen not only as a broader reflection of the views of those present, but perhaps also as a reluctance of some to become personally involved. Some, including the meeting at Mountsorrel, saw the licensed trade as their first line of defence, and the publicans and innkeepers of Leicester and Hinckley joined those of Market Harborough in rising to the challenge.

Many of the meetings were held on weekday mornings. Those present would have been largely business and property owners, and here a determination to assist magistrates in preventing riots was almost universal. Meetings at Ashby de la Zouch, Great Bowden, Great Dalby, Lutterworth and Wigston Magna resolved to assist magistrates in suppressing seditious publications, and at Barrow upon Soar those present also agreed to take before the magistrates anyone “*speaking rebellious discourse*” against the government. The strongest resolutions were passed at Loughborough, under the chairmanship of William Herrick of Beaumanor, at a meeting which included inhabitants of neighbouring villages. An association was formed whose members would ensure that those publishing or distributing seditious literature or uttering seditious words would be punished.

They recommended that publicans not allow their premises to be used for the circulation of seditious literature or meetings of unlawful combinations (a far wider scope than sedition), or those seeking constitutional change. They threatened to apply to the magistrates to remove the licence of any publican disregarding that recommendation. They also promised to take action against anyone caught posting handbills or graffiti which could disturb the peace, adding that the association would defray the cost of any

prosecutions arising from these resolutions.

Not all took this hard line. Despite their chosen lengthy title, after expressing their abhorrence of recent pamphlets, the “*Kegworth and Castle Donington Association for Promoting His Majesty’s late Proclamation, and for Defending the Constitution against All Innovations Whatsoever*” failed to resolve to suppress seditious literature, but did agree to raise a subscription to purchase “*proper books*” to be distributed to counter the effects of seditious writings. Similarly, although a strong line in respect of seditious literature was suggested in the advertisement for a meeting at Melton Mowbray, those present only resolved to “*plainly point out to our Workmen, Apprentices, Servants, Labourers and others, the Fallacy of those detestable Doctrines*”.

In Kibworth and Lutterworth, “*Protestant Dissenters*” held meetings ahead of other inhabitants. Freedom of worship had been provided for most by the *Act of Toleration* (1689), but some civil restrictions still applied. Just one year after the Priestley riots in Birmingham, many nonconformists felt it expedient to proclaim publicly their loyalty to king and constitution to counter any possible accusation that they sought a new form of government which would overturn the link between church and state. It is notable that many of the other well-publicised meetings were in places where religious nonconformity was strong, likely at the behest of nonconformists.

Two people suffered personally in this more febrile atmosphere by suspicions levied against them. A claim that baker William Mitchell of Kibworth uttered seditious words was publicly contradicted by three others, but not before he had lost business as local opinion turned against him. In Castle Donington, the words “*George the Third shall not reign next March*”, allegedly uttered by clockmaker Thomas Erpe on 17th November 1792, led to his trial at the assizes in 1794. He was found “*guilty of speaking the words, but not with a seditious intent*”.

Other burnings of Thomas Paine in effigy took place in many other villages in the county, three of which were reported in detail. In Kibworth, the effigy “*underwent almost an incessant flagellation*” when being drawn through the streets in a cart, while a parade of music played “*God save the King*”. It was then consigned to a bonfire. In Lutterworth, an effigy of Paine inscribed with the words “*Behold the Villain that would dethrone the King, Adorns the Gibbet, and well becomes the String!*”, was drawn round the streets in a cart before being hanged in the market place on a gallows 10 feet high. Here it was shot and “*attended with repeated huzzas*”. A fire was then lit, and the effigy turned to ashes. In the evening, an unnamed person was chaired around the town, attended with lighted torches and a band of music, in the manner of an election celebration, while the bells rang and people sang and played “*God Save the King*”.

“An association was formed whose members would ensure that those publishing or distributing seditious literature or uttering seditious words would be punished.”

FASHION BEFORE EASE BY JAMES GILLRAY. PUBLIC DOMAIN VIA WIKIMEDIA COMMONS.



THE CONTRAST 1792 WHICH IS BEST BY THOMAS ROWLANDSON. PUBLIC DOMAIN VIA WIKIMEDIA COMMONS.

Shepshed residents walked in procession to Charnwood Forest with a band of music and their effigy, where “*Paine*” was burnt. Proceedings closed with a dinner at the Queen’s Head.

Displays such as these fitted well with the popular culture of the period, and combined an evening’s entertainment with a more serious political message. The meetings and burnings ceased in mid-February, as suddenly as they had begun. Loyalty had been proclaimed across the county, and the people were united as the revolutionary government in France declared war on Britain. A more sombre mood returned, leaving the nuances of the resolutions neatly recorded for later historians to unpick. ■

About the author

Dr Pamela Fisher is the Volunteer Programme Manager for Leicestershire Victoria County History Trust, and has just completed a parish history of Castle Donington.

Pamela J Fisher
Leicestershire Victoria County History Trust

Further reading:
F. O’Gorman, ‘The Paine burnings of 1792-93’, *Past and Present*, 193 (2006), 111-55.
A. Mitchell, ‘The association movement of 1792-3’, *The Historical Journal*, 4 (1961), 56-77.
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1916:

The perspectives of a Lincolnshire home front poet



BERNARD SAMUEL GILBERT, UNDATED. © COPYRIGHT AND COURTESY OF LINCOLN CENTRAL LIBRARY, REF. PORTRAIT 481.

BY ANDREW JACKSON

In 1916 the Lincolnshire-born author, Bernard Samuel Gilbert (1882-1927), published his second collection of war poetry, *War Workers and Other Verses*. Gilbert had turned to writing as a career a few years before the outbreak of the First World War. Alongside poetry, his publications included play scripts, novels, political pamphlets, and newspaper articles. He was from a farming background, and the countryside, agriculture, and life and work on the land are prominent themes in his literature. In 1915 he had produced a collection of poetry, *Gone to the War and other Poems in the Lincolnshire Dialect*, featuring three poems explicitly about the nature of the conflict. However, his 1916 publication contains a far greater number of representations of wartime.

During the war Gilbert worked in the Ministry of Munitions in London. Indeed, he dedicated *War Workers* to his fellow employees. Some of his poetry evokes the adversity, horror, sadness and other themes that we typically associate with the writing of the more famous soldier poets. The more interesting of Gilbert's poems, however, relate to the Home Front, and country life and work. Some of these poems are tragic and very moving, while others are comic. He also captures particularly well the perspectives of different types of women, including farmers' wives left to work the land, anxious mothers, 'land girls', and the widowed. In addition his verses convey the voices of working people, written in the sound and rhythm of local rural speech.

A particular trio of poems reflect well some key themes that characteristically attracted Gilbert. The first poem, like the collection as a whole, is also called 'War Workers'. This describes the visit of a rather concerned farmer to the local labour exchange. The poem opens with what was on offer by way of a replacement workforce from the "feller what run it":

*We've boys and we've men, of all sizes and ages
What's ready to come for the smallest of wages;
We've doctors and lawyers, their daughters and wives,
All going to wok, the fust time in their lives;
You've nothing to do but to hold out your hand,
'Ere's thousands awaitin' to wok on the land.*

The farmer, however, is left seriously doubting the suitability of what the war had left in terms of labour, replying:

*I doant want no doctors to tap on me chest,
Nor lawyers, nor parsons, nor noan o' the rest;
I aint got a school to lam women to plough,
Nor 'ow to distinguish a hoss from a cow;
Your women and childer, your gels and your boys,
May stop in their nurseries and play wi' their toys.*

In the first two years of the war little attention had been paid to domestic agriculture. It was simply assumed that food imports would continue uninterrupted. The onset of the submarine war in the

Atlantic changed this. From 1916 until the war's end three million extra acres were ploughed. The demands of industry and agriculture, in addition to losses on the Western Front, led to the acute labour shortages alluded to above. Towards the close of the war, soldiers, prisoners of war, and a Women's Land Army were all being utilised to address shortfalls in food production and supply.

The more interesting of Gilbert's poems, however, relate to the Home Front, and country life and work.

Yet resistance to employing women on the land remained strong. Farmers doubted the physical capabilities of women, and there was a concern that the employment of female labour might lead to higher rates of pay. At the time when Gilbert was writing this poem, a Women's National Land Service Corps was endeavouring to recruit workers, if mainly middle class and town and city dwelling in origins, while the Women's Institute movement was aiming to develop the productivity of women already living in the countryside. Further anxieties surrounding food shortages would eventually bring government around to the need to establish a Women's Land Army.



THE WOMEN'S LAND ARMY IN BRITAIN, 1915-1918, PHOTOGRAPHER HORACE NICHOLS, IWM. PUBLIC DOMAIN, VIA WIKIMEDIA COMMONS.

A second poem expresses these prevailing concerns about the adequacy of farm management and staffing during the wartime, if again in rather comic terms. In "Farm Ladies", Gilbert writes in a very different accent, adopting the voice of more genteel "land girls", speculating about what it will be like to work on a farm:

*We'll rough it with the best of folk
And live on roast potatoes,
Or curried rice and lemonade:
The pound a week—or what
we're paid
Can go to tip the waiters.*

For these workers, with their domestic servants still near at hand, all will be well labouring on the farms:

*Although we may not work so hard
As common vulgar men;
Our footmen will be useful there
And we shall grace the whole affair:
The land will smile again.*

A third poem is quite unusual. Here the realities of war are brought far nearer to home, with a Zeppelin raid. There were some 50 Zeppelin raids over Britain during the war, causing 1,913 casualties, around

30 percent of which were fatal. The deliberate targeting of civilians by Zeppelins, as well as by German warships, caused outrage, indignation, and considerable alarm in a country used to fighting its wars overseas. However, in this poem Gilbert turns the horrors of war into comedy. In "Zeps" he describes a farmer, tending to his cows, startled by the passing overhead of a Zeppelin:

*I wor milkin' the cow,
Omost lost in a dream,
When a noise like a plough
Over-driven by steam,
Made Crunkle—the cow—kick her bucket
And smother my waistcoat wi' cream.*

His wife, though, appears more irritated by the weak actions of her husband than the enemy in the skies above. Indeed she uses the dialect word "bloor", to blare or to bellow, to, describe her husband's rather futile protest:

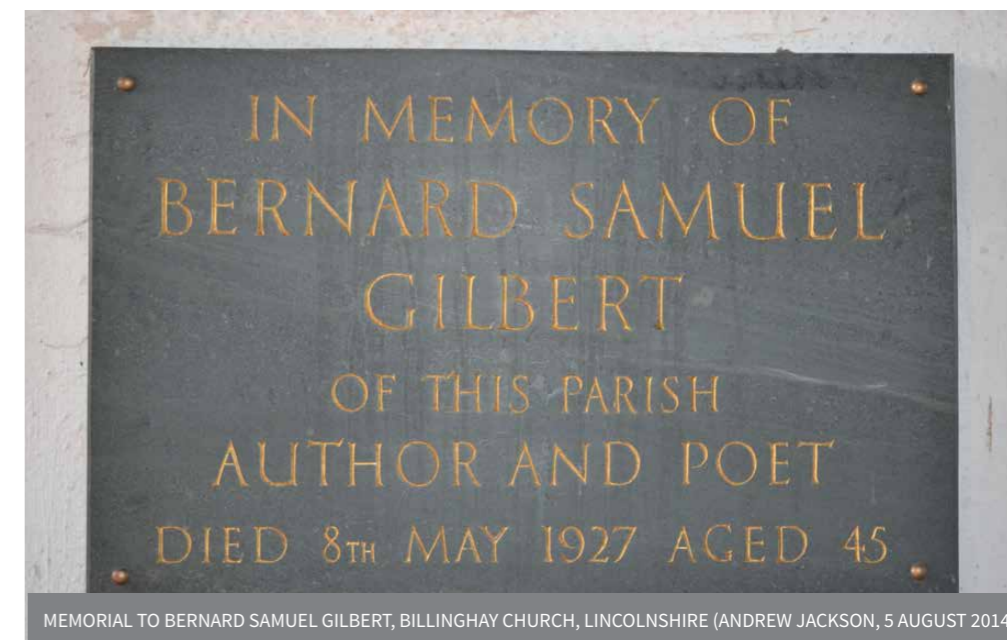
*The Missis stood by
Lookin' out of the door,
'The Devil? My eye!
Doant mek sich a bloor,
Its nobbut them Zeps passin' over;
Them Jarmins!—they've done it afore."*

Gilbert would go on to publish a final collection of verse featuring perspectives on the First World War in 1918, *Rebel Verses*. Understandably, it contains a relatively darker selection of poems.

The work of Gilbert and the 1914-1918 centenary years have been brought together and marked. In 2015, one hundred years from the publication of *Gone to the War*, a selection of poems were read at the Drill Hall Theatre, Lincoln. Poems by Gilbert were also aired at the BBC Radio Lincolnshire Armistice Day live broadcast in November 2015. In addition, poems from *War Workers*, in the anniversary year of its publication, were read at the 'Lincoln16' event, in the city's castle, in July. These readings, appropriately, have all been performed by local folklorist and Lincolnshire dialect poet, Maureen Sutton. 📖

Andrew Jackson
Bishop Grosseteste University

Further reading: Kate Adie, *Fighting on the Home Front: The Legacy of Women in World War One* (Hodder, 2014); Gerard De Groot, *Blighty* (Longman, 1996); Adrian Gregory, *The Last Great War* (Cambridge, 2008); Bernard Gilbert, *Gone to the War and Other Verses in the Lincolnshire Dialect* (Ruddock & Sons, 1915); Bernard Gilbert, *War Workers and Other Verses* (MacDonald, 1916); Bernard Gilbert, *Rebel Verses* (Blackwell, 1918).



Cavendish Bridge

The 70th anniversary of a 20th-century disaster

BY JENNI DOBSON



CAVENDISH BRIDGE DESTROYED AFTER FLOODING. COURTESY MANUSCRIPTS AND SPECIAL COLLECTIONS, THE UNIVERSITY OF NOTTINGHAM.

The winter of 1947 was one of the severest on record nationally, and the coldest in living memory. Road and rail services closed as heavy snow fell across Britain, bringing the country to a virtual standstill. Deliveries of food and fuel fell short, and coal stocks at power stations and gas works were reduced to perilously low levels.

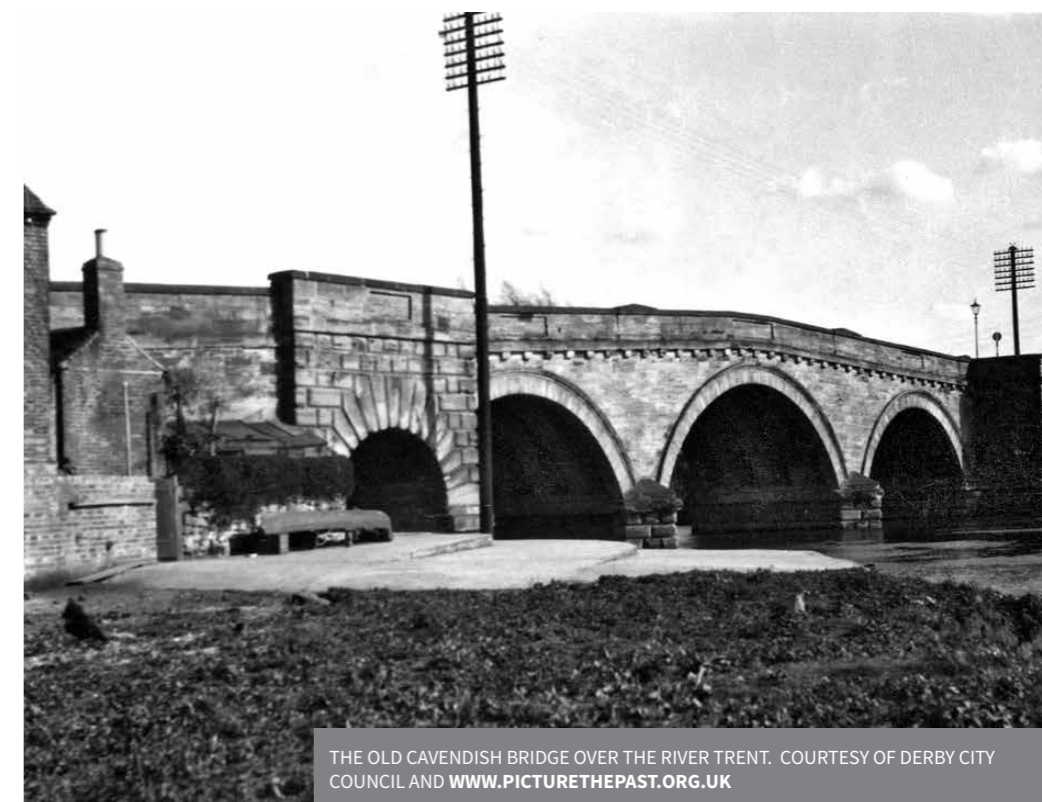
In February in parts of the country, including the Midlands, electricity supplies to industry were suspended and, across the country, household supplies were cut to five hours per day. Factories closed, or went to short-time working. It was then that on 21 March 1947 Cavendish Bridge, which carried the main London/Carlisle trunk road (otherwise known as the A6) over the River Trent, collapsed when one of its piers sank into the river bed. Of all the problems during that record-breaking winter, this was the most disruptive to the East Midlands region.

Cavendish Bridge, on the edge of the village of Shardlow, Derbyshire, was so-named because William Cavendish, 4th Duke of Devonshire, was the chief patron of the plan to replace the Wilden ferry across the Trent. The ferry was inconvenient, causing delays on an increasingly busy turnpike road, yet the ferry itself had replaced earlier mediaeval wooden bridges that had also been swept away by flooding. The new bridge, opened in 1760 and designed by James Paine, was a five arch masonry structure, built using locally quarried stone.

The New Year began with little warning of what was to come. The weather forecast locally was “fair, with considerable bright periods. Very cold with hard frosts.” Yet by Monday 6 January, storms were dislocating traffic and snow was falling heavily in Nottingham and other parts of Britain. The next day, four inches of snow had fallen, the heaviest for two years. As January passed, conditions remained extremely cold, falling to 26 degrees F below freezing point (-14.4 °C). It is worth pointing out that these conditions, dubbed “Arctic” by the press, were being endured by a population for whom coal and coke remained subject to wartime rationing.

Reports through February suggest that, although conditions varied, snow continued to lie on the ground. Then things suddenly got worse. As the *Nottingham Evening Post (NEP)* noted on Wednesday 5 March: “Following in the wake of a blinding blizzard which continued unabated throughout the night, Nottingham today faced its worst road and rail hold-up of the winter. Five inches of snow fell in the 13 hours up to 9 a.m., making the seasonal total one of 44in., the highest figure ever recorded.”

On Friday 7 March Nottingham had its coldest night ever. Then the temperature ‘soared’ to 42 °F (5.5 °C), the “highest figure recorded for six weeks”. On Monday 10 March, the *NEP* recorded that, while there was no immediate danger of flooding, the Trent had risen by 13 inches in 22 hours. An official of the River Trent Catchment Board was reassuring, noting that “The river is [still] very low”. The next few days included a return of frosty conditions followed by, on Thursday 13 March, the “heaviest rain for 58 years”. On Monday the headline read: “Gale’s trail ▶



THE OLD CAVENDISH BRIDGE OVER THE RIVER TRENT. COURTESY OF DERBY CITY COUNCIL AND WWW.PICTURETHEPAST.ORG.UK

of death and havoc”, adding that, “Reports from upper reaches of the Trent are not reassuring”. The Trent continued to rise an inch every hour. Tuesday’s report grimly summarised the situation: “Following an exceptionally heavy overnight rainfall, and with thousands of acres of deep snow melting quickly in relatively high temperatures, people living in the low-lying areas of the Trent valley face a grave situation today.”

Soon, the “worst floods in memory”, had caused a “catastrophic situation in the Trent valley”. The NEP recorded miners marooned at Clifton colliery, thousands of Long Eaton residents living in upstairs rooms because a third of the town was flooded, and the rescue by three Nottingham City police officers of an elderly Dunkirk couple as water lapped against their bed on which they had taken refuge in their bungalow.

More heavy rain was to follow, and on 21 March reports circulated of the partial collapse of Cavendish Bridge. It had been closed for several days and had only been re-opened the day before. The bridge had three spans across the river, which was about 100ft (30.5ms) wide at that point. Each span was about 30 ft (9.1ms) wide, supported by large piers. Castle Donington police had first been alerted when cracks appeared in the tarmac at about 7 a.m., so police rushed to erect traffic barriers.

One of the piers had sunk into the river bed which thus affected two of the arches. The bridge also carried the gas main from Long Eaton gas works to Castle Donington and its surrounding district, which meant that houses on the south side of the river were without gas. The *Derby Evening Telegraph (DET)* reported that an emergency surface main was laid that very day to restore supplies.

Worse news was to follow the next day, because during the evening the central span of the bridge also fell into the river, leaving a 60ft (18.3ms) gap. A local resident, Mrs M.E. Coleman of the Old Crown situated beside the south end of the bridge, stated that “All the stonework collapsed with a crash like thunder.” Villagers on the Leicestershire side of the river were thus completely isolated. There were pictures in the press of the inside of houses with “furniture floating all over the kitchens”.

The emergency gas main fractured after this collapse, though the rope to which it had been bound prevented it falling into the river. Attempts to restore services were abandoned in favour of sealing the main so that at least Shardlow could have a weekend supply. Press photos showed telephone cables carrying trunk lines across a flooded countryside between the north and south of the country. The *DET* reported that, though damaged, the service remained intact. The *Loughborough Echo (LE)* described Sunday sightseers being entertained by telephone linesmen crossing the gap in a ‘Bosun’s Chair’ “above a raging torrent”, in order to restore service between Leicestershire and Derbyshire. The first man across, only giving his name as Arthur, said “if his wife knew what he was doing she would have a fit!” R.H. Thompson, an assistant telephone engineer, told the *LE* that over 1,200 new long distance trunk wires

had been installed over the breach, in addition to those which had survived. Subsequently telephone linesmen also assisted gas workmen by fixing a wire hawser to take across the ten-ton gas pipe.

Further excitement was provided when ex-R.N.V.R. Sub-Lt. Noel McNaught, having entered the river at Burton-on-Trent, navigated a tiny canoe through the rapids between piles of masonry and brought it safely to the bank amid congratulations from the crowd. Canoeing was his hobby and he estimated his speed passing the bridge as about 10 miles/hour. He then carried the canoe upstream to repeat his feat!

Drivers were being warned by police to avoid using Swarkestone bridge, about three miles further upstream, as it was also in danger of collapse. Swarkestone remains one of the oldest bridges across the River Trent. Attempts were being made to re-open the bridge at Sawley so that then Swarkestone could be closed. Other reports on that Saturday mentioned the slaughter of cattle and the evacuation of villages due to the hundreds of square miles of land under water. Army amphibious vehicles were called in to help. Other services also became more flexible. The “Post Office made special arrangements for the pensioners to be paid on the opposite side of the river” because they could not cross to Shardlow Post Office.

The collapse of Cavendish Bridge appeared to produce an increase in the height of the floods in the vicinity, which was thought to be due to the quantity of stone and debris that had fallen into the river. This included large sections which acted like a temporary barrier causing the floods to spread more widely, but by daybreak the river had begun to recede.

It may be thought that the bridge itself was the victim of other debris being carried downstream in the flood waters which jammed up against the piers. However, given that the pier was described as sinking into the river bed, it is likely that the entire river bed had become unstable due to saturation of the ground. The way in which nearby worked-out gravel pits quickly flood demonstrates that there is a relatively high water table in this area, so that extremely heavy rain soon caused the land to reach saturation point.

“Post Office made special arrangements for the pensioners to be paid on the opposite side of the river.”

It took until Tuesday 1 April for repairs to begin in preparation for the construction of a Bailey bridge. These sectional structures had been extensively used by both British and American military engineering units during the war. Meanwhile local travellers faced long detours: Shardlow residents going via Melbourne to Donington faced a 20 mile journey instead of the usual two.

The *NEP* for Thursday 3 April included a photograph showing the “nose” of the bridge being erected by Royal Engineer officer cadets from Newark across the gap. The nose was pulled over, taking the rest of the bridge proper. The final bridge was three panels high and, with top bracing, capable of carrying 70 tons. On Friday 11 April Sir Robert Martin, then chairman of Leicestershire County Council was the first civilian across the Bailey bridge. It had been completed on Thursday afternoon but could not be used until the road surfaces had been raised eight inches. It took ten years for the completion of a replacement bridge, built by Leicestershire County Council and formally opened by Sir Robert Martin in 1957.

Interestingly, one possible root for the river’s name “Trent” is from a Celtic word meaning “strongly flooding”. Particularly in the middle stretches, there is evidence of old meanders and cut-off loops. There are also historical records of similar catastrophic flood events to that of 1947. 📄

Jenni Dobson

Other reports on that Saturday mentioned the slaughter of cattle and the evacuation of villages due to the hundreds of square miles of land under water.



FLOODING AT SAWLEY. COURTESY OF NOTTINGHAM EVENING POST AND WWW.PICTURETHEPAST.ORG.UK

Fieldwalking with Leicestershire Fieldworkers

BY KATHLEEN E ELKIN

On a cold but sunny November morning in 2016 Bob Gale, from the Oadby and Wigston Fieldwork Group, is walking along the top of a field in Stoughton, a small village on the outskirts of Leicester. Every twenty paces he places into the ground a bamboo cane with a piece of red material at the top as a marker. He puts a pole at every 60 paces along the field side and then 20 paces again at the far end of the field ensuring that the poles are in line with the top markers. Thus, the field is now gridded.

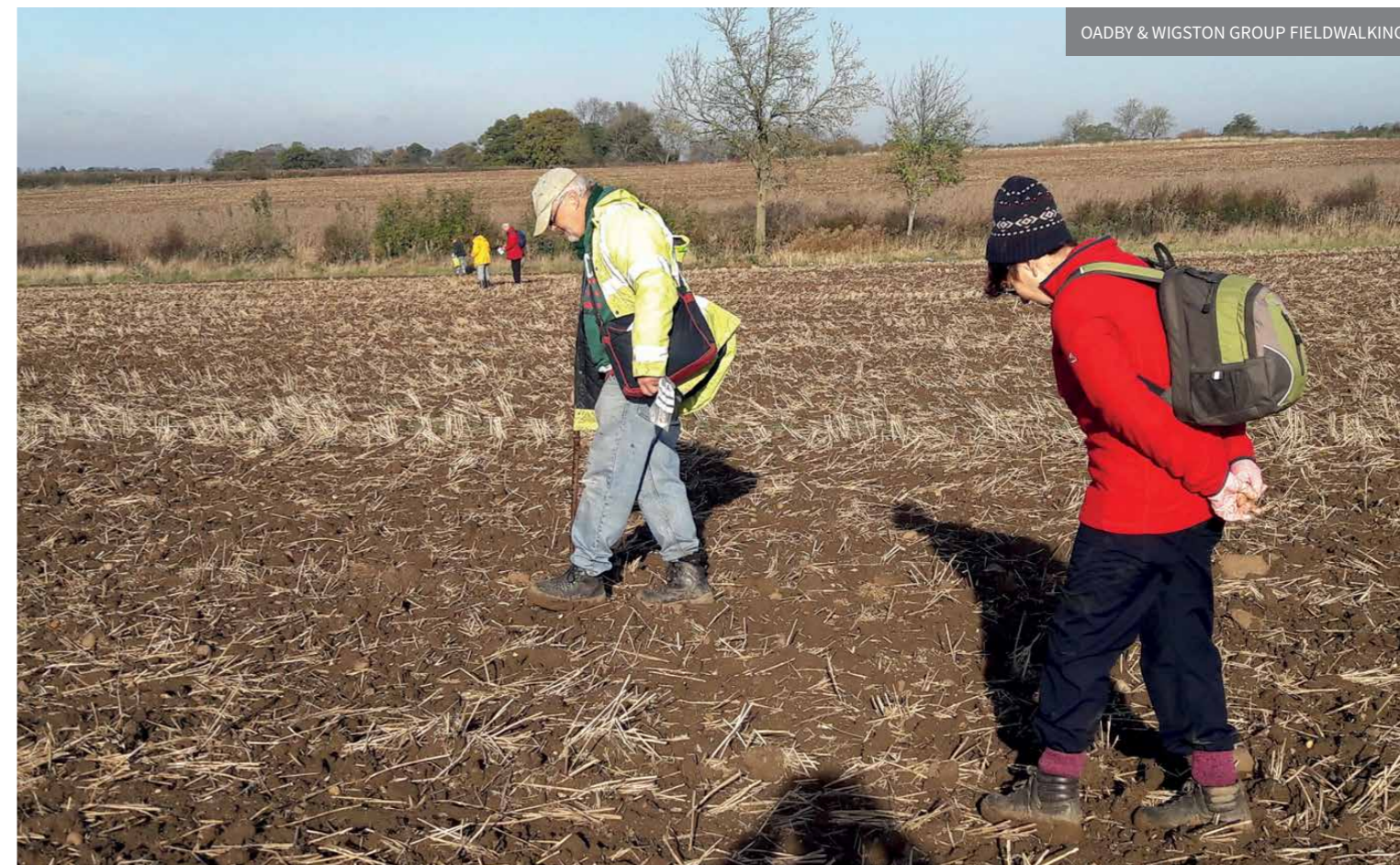
A group of 16 enthusiastic people have gathered in a corner of the field, waiting to be allocated their pole number or 'traverse'. They will walk in twos from one pole to the next, in a straight line from one end of the field to the other, keeping an eye on the poles on the side of the field, which indicate the 'stint' or section of the field that they are in. The top and bottom marker poles are numbered from '1', whilst the side markers are alphabetic. Thus, a number and letter will then define each area of the field.

As the group walk they keep their eyes down, searching for the remains of previous occupation, usually bits of broken and discarded pottery, but sometimes someone finds a piece of flint, perhaps an arrowhead shot and lost maybe three or four thousand years ago by prehistoric hunters, or a stone tool, used and then discarded before its maker moved on.

When something is found it is put into an envelope on which is written the number of the traverse and the stint – so recording the location of their find in the grid overlaying the field. Walking a whole field can take a couple of hours – a line of people slowly advancing, first down one side of the field, then up the middle and then down the other side. When they get to one end Bob asks, "Has anyone found anything interesting?" This time it's mostly pieces of early Medieval Potters Marston ware and later Midland Purple pottery (in use from the 16th to the 20th century in dairies and kitchens).



HALLATON GROUP GEOPHYSICAL SURVEY



OADBY & WIGSTON GROUP FIELDWALKING

One or two pieces, also, of Roman grey ware – indicative of the Romano-British occupation. Linda Gale has, however, found an arrowhead – probably Neolithic and everyone is very envious. A local says that all the good stuff is on the other side of the village, but as the Oadby and Wigston Group know, 'absence of evidence' is also evidence, and it's likely that these high fields, which give a view across Leicester to Charnwood Forest, have been pasture or woodland rather than arable until very recently.

So what makes a group of (mostly) retired people give up a Friday morning to walk slowly across a field? Juliet Bewley thinks "It's lovely to be outside in the autumn and winter, and actually it puts us in touch with farming and what is happening to the land. It gives me an appreciation of the landscape that you can't get from a car."

Margaret and Keith Grindall like "getting a sense of the people who were here before us and the excitement of finding something that they once used." Mike Bruce got bitten by the pot sherd bug after walking his first field: "I just find it addictive – you never know what you might come across. And to think that I am the first person to hold it again after what might be hundreds of years." Iain Jones is also fascinated that the next field is called "Aeroplane Field", and wonders if the piece of aluminium he found is part of the remains of a bomber that they know came down there in World War Two. All agree that being in the company of like-minded people, unearthing the past and getting together later to log and review results on a field map is a big draw. There's an element of treasure hunting, but it's the excitement of the search not the value

(usually nil) that draws them out today. And, as Celia Cotton says: "it's healthier than sitting searching Ebay! I think fieldwork in archaeology is about people – it's that contact we get with past lives as practical historians that makes discovering these remains so interesting."

Later they review their finds and plot them on a map of the field. This will enable them to identify any dense locations of pottery and, together with maps from other fields in the parish, define the record of past settlement. Further research may then be required. It will fall to one or two members to write up the findings and to submit these to the Historic Environment Record

(HER) at Leicestershire County Council, to inform planners and historians and future archaeologists.

Oadby and Wigston Fieldwork Group is a new fieldwork

group and one of several county-wide groups supported by an overall body, Leicestershire Fieldworkers. The Fieldworkers celebrate 40 years in existence in 2016/17. Originally founded by Peter Little MBE, former County Archaeologist now retired, Patrick Clay and Richard Buckley, now both Directors of University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS), this umbrella body currently has 410 households (individuals and couples or families) in membership. It was one of the first community archaeology groups in the country. Its research has helped change the perception of Leicestershire as a forested county with few inhabitants until the Saxons arrived. Not all fieldwork members are in local groups. Some do individual research in their

“I just find it addictive – you never know what you might come across. And to think that I am the first person to hold it again after what might be hundreds of years.”

A first fieldwalk by a group from Hoby History Society uncovered an unknown Roman site!

own parish; some are supporters of archaeology, though no longer active, yet want to know what is happening in their area and county.

Leicestershire Fieldworkers runs fieldwalking training courses for members, as well as providing pottery identification, and has links to ULAS and Leicester University academics. The group puts on lectures on local and regional archaeology and runs an annual field trip. In the west of the county Hinckley Archaeology Society are currently conducting a small dig on the line of the original Fosse Way to prove the actual line of the Roman Road after the turnpike road was re-aligned in the 18th century. Local groups also run test pit excavation projects, such as that conducted by the Great Bowden Heritage and Archaeology Group with Heritage Lottery support. The Hallaton group, with expertise in geophysical surveying, found the South-east Leicestershire Treasure – a Roman helmet and associated Iron Age coin hoards – at a ritual site near Hallaton. In the south-west of Leicestershire the Lutterworth Fieldworkers and Archaeology Group, after finding wonderful flints and stone tools for years under the leadership of Brian Burningham, are currently investigating a possible Iron Age roundhouse and associated burials with the help of an archaeologist from Leicestershire County Council's planning team.

Even relative novices can be lucky. A first fieldwalk by a group from Hoby History Society uncovered an unknown Roman site! It is hoped a new group will be formed in Market Bosworth, with support from an HLF bid, to dig test pits in the village. This should take place during the two-week Council of British Archaeology Festival of Archaeology held each July.

During this Festival over 70 events take place in Leicestershire, as all the archaeology groups and associated history societies in the county put on talks, walks and events. This year these attracted an audience of over 8000 people. Not only do the Fieldworkers promote archaeology but they recognise that it is important to disseminate their findings through publication. They also hold conferences and their last, on Medieval Leicestershire, was published in book form. The Fieldworkers next book will be the final volume in Robert Hartley's Medieval Earthworks of Leicestershire series that began way back in 1985. The 'Earthworks of South Leicestershire – Market Harborough District', is due for publication in Spring 2017 and includes results for the Lutterworth, Market Harborough and Billesdon areas.

The fields of the East Midlands have secrets to give up: evidence of past settlement, traces of our prehistoric past, industrial remains. Walking a ploughed field with their eyes fixed firmly on the ground, Leicestershire Fieldworkers aim to discover all this and more, putting the evidence for our past existence back on the map and allowing us to build up a picture of land and settlement use over the last few thousand years.

For more information go to Leicestershire Fieldworkers website at leicsfieldworkers.co.uk or email info@leicsfieldworkers.co.uk

Kathleen E Elkin
Leicestershire Fieldworkers



HINCKLEY ARCH SOC DISPLAY OF STONE TOOLS

The workhouse: a lasting legacy

BY KATHERINE ONION & SAMANTHA BALL

When did workhouses end? The answer, as this article will demonstrate, is more complicated than just a date. The story of the workhouse system from inception to demise can be told through *The Workhouse, Southwell*. A semi-rural workhouse built in 1824 to accommodate 158 paupers, it was designed to encapsulate Reverend J.T. Becher's deterrent regime of supervision, segregation and classification. The harsh regime of the Victorian workhouse clearly depicted in fiction is familiar to many. The New Poor Law of 1834 had sought to change fundamentally the parish-based relief system, through newly-formed union workhouses. Becher experimented with a system that included minimum wages, saving clubs and allotments. His pamphlet, *The Anti-Pauper System*, influenced the 1834 Act with its particular emphasis on the frugal, beneficent and careful administration of Poor Laws. Within this, it was the substitution of indoor for outdoor relief as the deterrent element for able-bodied paupers which attracted most attention.



STAFF OUTSIDE THE WORKHOUSE 1930S. COURTESY MRS C LEE.

However, the new Act never realised its aim to relieve only the truly destitute 'inside' workhouses. Thirty years after its implementation, some 85% of paupers continued to receive 'out-relief' (money or payment in kind given by Unions to the poor not living in workhouses). Policy during these years rested on the principle that "no distinction should be made between the various reasons for destitution". Yet it was also recognised that the infirm and old should be accommodated within a less severe regime, though still as a less-eligible option than care at home provided by family. Decisions also were frequently based on moral judgements. For instance, while destitute widows were routinely granted out-relief, unmarried mothers were required to be admitted to the workhouse.

By the 1860s and 1870s it became apparent that in practice only a minority of inmates were able-bodied. In fact, it was the old and infirm, and women and children who were populating workhouses. Legislation and high profile campaigns recognised that reforms were necessary to work more effectively with these categories. These reforms represented as radical an attempt to reduce poverty as the New Poor Law itself. The result was to create an institutional system which survived well into the late twentieth century and provided the foundation stones of our modern welfare state.

The 1870s witnessed a significant shift in the use of workhouse buildings, as they became an administrative hub for the wider work of the district in health, sanitation and benefits. The Guardians (elected local rate payers) ▶

Further reading: Margret Crowther, 'From Workhouse to NHS Hospital in Britain, 1929-1948', in C Hillam and J M Bone (eds), *The Poor Law and after; workhouse hospitals and public welfare* (Liverpool Medical History Society, 1999), pp. 38-49. Margret Jones and Rodney Lowe, *From Beveridge to Blair the first fifty years of Britain's Welfare State* (Manchester University Press, 2002). Mary McKinnon, 'English Poor Law and the Crusade Against Outrelief', *The Journal of Economic History*, Vol.47, No.3 (1987), pp. 306-625. Kathryn Morrison, *The Workhouse: A Study of Poor Law Buildings in England* (RCHM, 1999). Nick Timmins, *Five Giants, A Biography of the Welfare State* (Fontana press, 1995).

In reality, workhouses became places for those who couldn't look after themselves, such as children and the sick and the old, and those poor who had been refused out-relief.

became the first local government boards implementing medical and sanitary innovations as a method of getting more people into work and off benefits. The drive to reduce out-relief was a success. By 1900, 30% of all Poor Law claimants were relieved inside the workhouse. This was more than double the number in the 1860s. In reality, workhouses became places for those who couldn't look after themselves, such as children and the sick and the old, and those poor who had been refused out-relief. Workhouses also accepted "moral degenerates" including: unmarried mothers, alcoholics, and vagrants. Previously workhouses had been self-sufficient. Now, extra staff had to be employed to do cleaning, painting, gardening, nursing, childcare: all jobs which had previously been carried out by able-bodied inmates who were no longer there to do it for free.

Workhouse infirmaries increasingly played a significant role in both social and medical history. Nursing duties in workhouses had previously been carried out by trusted paupers under the eye of the medical officer or matron. However, from the 1870s most new nursing staff were specially trained. By the turn of the century, 108 workhouse infirmaries were approved to offer nursing training (including Nottingham), and the Poor Law authorities provided approximately three times the number of beds than the more prestigious voluntary hospital sector, primarily catering for the chronic sick and geriatric patients.

The growing expansion and professionalisation of medical welfare came at a cost to Unions, as the poor who couldn't afford medical treatment could use their local workhouse infirmary without being required to pass the workhouse test and formally enter the workhouse. These new infirmaries were built next to but outside the main workhouse compounds for reasons of hygiene, but also to separate those admitted from their less deserving workhouse inmates. Arguably, too, those treated were increasingly viewed as 'patients', rather than 'paupers'.

Local healthcare reforms continued into the twentieth century: vaccination drives and the 1918 Maternity and Child Welfare Act (offering free pre and post-natal care), were delivered from workhouses, since these were the buildings at the disposal of the local government boards. Midwives became regular members of workhouse staff during this period (and a legal requirement from 1915), and many mothers chose to deliver their babies in their local infirmary. It was only in 1974 that such primary care was taken from local authorities and moved to the NHS.

The 1929 Local Government Act, which abolished the Poor Law Guardians, may at first glance be thought to signal the end of the workhouse system. However in reality the story is more complicated and drawn out. While some local unions were abolished altogether, others, such as Southwell, continued with very little change, becoming Public Assistance Institutions looking after the remaining categories of inmates well into the 1970s and 1980s.

The Poor Law itself was finally abolished in 1948, to be replaced by National Assistance. In Nottinghamshire, the public infirmaries at Nottingham, Mansfield, Newark and Worksop became the buildings in which the new NHS was born, transferred to health authority control. Some institutions like Southwell, however, continued to provide institutional assistance for those outside of NHS provision: "Old persons; those not capable of living a normal life in homes of their own for example, a cripple, sub-normal person who does not need full hospital care but whose family are unwilling or unable to care for them; able bodied either homeless or wanderers (casuals) or the work-shy on whom every other persuasion has failed" (National Assistance Act, 1948). Unmarried mothers were also included in this category, as they were excluded from NHS maternity units and were provided for separately under section 21 of the Act.



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After 1948, life at Southwell remained pretty much the same. The Master and Matron, Mr and Mrs Freeman, who had arrived in the 1930s, remained until the 1950s. Tramps continued to queue up at 6pm for a bed for a night; the elderly remained in the infirmary and also occupied the old hospital building. The main workhouse contained long-stay residents, those not elderly enough for the infirm blocks. Six bedsits were also created in the women's side of The Workhouse to provide temporary accommodation for homeless mothers and children. This provision continued until the late 1970s. Greet House, as it was now called, still provided maternity accommodation for local "morally destitute" unmarried mothers. Institutions like Southwell were also thought suitable for those "eccentric bad habited old people who would be a disturbing element in a small home of well-behaved old people. Plus a variety of disabled and sub-normal people of varying ages not necessarily needing treatment."

For nearly 160 years, welfare was provided in Southwell. Its story reflected changes in legislation and national trends with the development of local healthcare and welfare. From its early beginnings in 1824 the site expanded and specialist buildings were added to the main workhouse. These include a separate Infirmary

in 1871, isolation hospitals in 1900 and 1912, a hospital and mortuary (1925/6), a separate provision for maternity and unmarried mothers (1914) and children's home (1937). These buildings (although used for different purposes) remain on the site today. It also reflects elements of change and continuity. If legislation affected who lived on the site and who controlled it, we can see that the pattern and level of care for the workhouse old and infirm in 1900 was more similar than might be imagined to that received by the elderly residents in the 1980s, even down to shift patterns, food, bed spacing, furniture and architecture. Although the temporary accommodation from 1948-1970s allowed, for the first time, mothers and children to stay together in one room, men were still separated. Movement in the old workhouse building continued to be influenced by its design as doors only led to rooms of each designated category. Homeless children were not allowed to mix with the elderly residents in the back blocks or to play with the other older children, or to use the toys in the children's home. The legacy of supervision, segregation and classification continued.

As we have seen, the official closure of workhouses in 1948 was not the end of the story and visitors are often surprised to learn that it remained open until the late 1980s. Although many official records are closed, our understanding of the post-war site is enhanced by oral history interviews and volunteer research into local and national policy. The sound archive at Southwell includes interviews from virtually all categories of staff, inmates and residents which date from the 1920s to the 1980s, although unmarried mothers are notable by their absence. Volunteers are always keen to speak to those who have a connection to Greet House, as research and recorded memories give life to our understanding of the later history of the institution.

In 2017 The Workhouse, Southwell will begin a major re-imagining project to deliver a completely new visitor experience telling the story of welfare development and explores its contemporary relevance. By bringing the 1871 infirmary into the story, a place in history can be given to those who have been forgotten. It will also allow space to tell the rich, powerful and complex Workhouse story up to 1948, and beyond.

To discover more about our exciting plans look at the website: www.nationaltrust.org.uk/the-workhouse-southwell

Katherine Onion, Samantha Ball
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The Militia Lists and family history

BY MATTHEW MCCORMACK

The civil census is usually the first port of call for people wishing to trace their ancestors, but it has its limitations. In particular, it does not go back very far: the first national census did not take place until 1801, and family historians know that the 1841 census is usually the earliest this is usable. To go back further, you have to consult other types of sources.

A body of documents that is often overlooked by family historians and social historians alike are the militia ballot lists, known as the 'Militia Lists'. In 1757 the government passed the Militia Act, which meant that 33,000 civilian men should be available for military service. Britain was regularly at war with France in the eighteenth century, but the regular army was relatively small and mostly posted abroad, leaving Britain vulnerable to invasion. Supporters of the measure argued that Britain needed a large force of part-time soldiers, who could quickly be brought into service in times of emergency. Although they were only part-timers, the eighteenth century had a great deal of faith in the 'citizen soldier', who made up for his lack of formal training by his intense motivation to defend his homeland. He was also safer (and, crucially, cheaper) than a standing army or a foreign mercenary.

The problem they encountered was how to recruit such large numbers of men. Although the officers were gentleman volunteers – and even these were not as forthcoming as had been hoped – there was an element of compulsion in the recruitment of privates from the common people. This was politically controversial, since conscription was seen as contrary to the rights of the freeborn Englishman: indeed, successive governments managed to avoid conscription until 1916. Instead a system of balloting was introduced. Service was a universal obligation, but each county would conduct a ballot to work out who would serve for the following three years.

In order to conduct the ballots, accurate lists of men from the localities had to be collected. A census of adult males therefore had to be taken. This was a big step forward in the history of population statistics, and flew in the face of decades of anxiety about whether a census was an infringement of popular liberty, or even against the teachings of the Bible, since God had punished David for taking a census of Israel. It was no coincidence that the context for this was war, since the military power of the state relates to the number of people that it can put in arms. Britain was then fighting the Seven Years War, the biggest war that it had fought to date. The 1801 census was taken during the Napoleonic Wars for much the same reason. The Militia Lists were not designed to be a national census: they were taken by county as an effective way of ascertaining the country's total military manpower, more so than a full civil census would have been.

Using the militia lists today can be a frustrating process. They are not held nationally and have not, to date, been digitised. Responsibility for collecting the lists fell to the county's civil authorities, so the militia lists are now held in county record offices. Some counties like Northamptonshire are fortunate

Further Reading: Jeremy Gibson and Mervyn Medlycott, *Militia Lists and Musters 1757-1876* (Bury, 2004); Victor Hatley (ed.), *Northamptonshire Militia Lists 1777* (Kettering, 1973); Matthew McCormack, *Embodying the Militia in Georgian England* (Oxford, 2015).



to have had this material collated into user-friendly modern editions, but most do not. The survival rate of this material can also be patchy, although Gibson and Medlycott's guide tells us what survives and where. Some counties were not quick off the mark in putting the legislation into practice, so lack lists before the 1760s, and others met their quotas through volunteers so had no need to do so.

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Nor are the lists comprehensive in terms of who they recorded. Clearly they only record men, and only between the ages of eighteen and fifty. Various occupations were omitted by the Militia Act, and this list of exceptions lengthened as the century went on: clergymen, members of universities, medical men and apprentices (so as not to disrupt the system of indentures). Various officials were also exempt, including peers, MPs, judges and magistrates (who would likely qualify as officers instead) and also constables (who had an important role in administering the process). Serving military personnel were also excluded, and in the 1790s this extended to volunteer corps, which may go some way to explain their popularity. Poor men with three or more children were also excluded, ▶

The attempts to collect the lists were met with some of the worst rioting of the century – and, ironically, existing militia regiments had to be brought in to suppress the disorder.

which appears to have been a practical measure to avoid large families falling upon the parish. These exempt groups were often recorded and crossed off, and are therefore visible to us, but sometimes they were omitted from the lists.

The militia ballot also included many health exemptions, since the purpose of the lists was to provide men who were physically fit enough to serve. Details about men's bodies and their physical and mental health are recorded, and they are then crossed out if they are therefore not liable for the ballot. Men were rejected for suffering from 'fits', lameness, rheumatism or flat footedness, which would prevent them from marching. Men had to be able to handle a musket, which was five feet long plus bayonet, so were rejected if they were "very short, unable to carry arms". They needed a forefinger to pull the trigger and front teeth to rip the top off a powder cartridge. Looking at the lists, it is possible that some individuals deliberately maimed themselves. The poet John Clare (who himself served in the county militia) recalled that the local gypsies "disabled the finger of every male child in war time when infants to keep them from being drawn for the Militia."

Other disabilities are recorded in the lists including deafness, dumbness, blindness or loss of an eye. The lists also record mental illnesses, albeit rather imprecisely: "infirm & insane" or "he is not rite in his head". As well as being of interest for genealogists trying to find out about a particular individual, they therefore have much potential as sources for historians of medicine and disability. Indeed, the militia lists of the eighteenth century provide much more biometric information than the early Victorian censuses.

There are other factors that we have to bear in mind when using these sources. Fundamentally, most men did not want to serve, so it is fair to assume that they tried to avoid being listed if possible. If a man was drawn in the ballot he could buy himself out or provide a substitute, but the £10 fee and the cost of substitutes were beyond most poor men. Effectively it was a form of conscription, which was rarely popular.

The attempts to collect the lists were met with some of the worst rioting of the century – and, ironically, existing militia regiments had to be brought in to suppress the disorder. At a more personal level, the process could be resisted. Men sometimes refused to give their names, and it is likely that constables were subject to bribery or intimidation, or to being misled on medical grounds. The sources themselves also vary hugely. They are handwritten documents, rather than standardised forms like the census, and the constables who drew



MILITIAMAN. COURTESY BUCKS MILITARY MUSEUM TRUST.

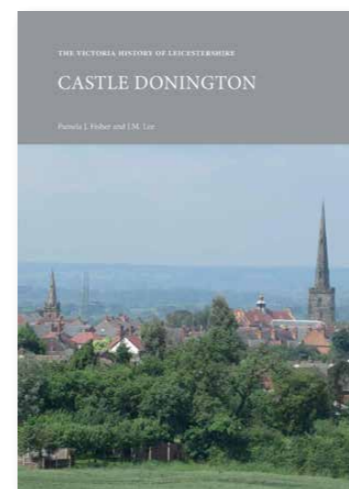
them up chose their own format. Some constables were more literate and conscientious than others, and spelling in the eighteenth century was often hit-and-miss. If you are tracing a particular surname, it is advisable to try various spelling variations: Hatley suggests no fewer than 17 different ways of spelling the common Northamptonshire name "Tebbutt", for example.

Even given these limitations, though, these are tremendously rich sources. At their best, they give details of names, occupations, military service, family size, apprenticeship and mental and physical disability. They were collected by parish, so if you are trying to track down an individual you need to know where to look. For example, if you consult the lists for the parish of Culworth in 1777 you can see "Richd. Law", "Wm. Turrell" and "Wm. Smith" from the notorious Culworth Gang, which committed violent robberies across south-west Northants. If there's a modern edition like Hatley's, then being able to browse and use the index will speed things up, so it's a good place to start. Yet I would highly recommend consulting the originals, if they are available. Given how fraught and controversial collecting the lists proved to be, and how much was at stake for the men concerned, it is a moving experience to encounter the very document at the heart of the process. As well as giving an insight into big questions like population, military policy and the workings of the state, the militia lists help us to study history 'from below' by telling us about ordinary people. It tells us about their jobs, their families and their health, a full century before the censuses enable us to do so. 📖

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News and notices

First paperback from Leicestershire VCH CASTLE DONINGTON



Many people associate Castle Donington, in north-west Leicestershire, with East Midlands airport or with motor-racing and rock festivals at Donington Park, but the parish has a wider and more fascinating story to tell. This is now the subject of a new book, the first in the Leicestershire Victoria County History series since 1964.

Combining archaeological, documentary and architectural sources, and stretching chronologically from the arrival of the earliest known settlers to the present day, this publication will be of interest to local and regional historians, residents and visitors. Family historians and others will welcome the index, with over 300 personal names.

Castle Donington was a medieval town, and the book includes new information about the market, fair and St Mary's guild. The development of Donington Park and the settlements at King's Mills and Cavendish Bridge are also covered. Later history has been shaped by strong religious nonconformity, the growth and then decline of traditional industries in the 18th and 19th centuries, and the stimulus provided by modern transport links.

The book will be published in March 2017, and will be available from Leicestershire Victoria County History Trust for £9.99. If you wish to be advised when copies are available, please email leicsvch@le.ac.uk, or write to Leicestershire VCH Trust, 5 Salisbury Road, Leicester, LE1 7QR.

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Containing more than 100,000 fully searchable photographs, postcards, engravings and paintings the website documents how life has changed in the region over the last few hundred years. You can visit the website for free at www.picturethepast.org.uk

The site will continue its lively series of events that use re-enactment, crafts, hands-on activities, drama, and specialist demonstrations to interpret the history of the site and life at the time.

The Centre for English Local History, University of Leicester

Do you remember when history was the national study of war, politics, and religious revolution? Thankfully we've moved beyond that now. This is a change for which the Centre for English Local History can take significant credit. It has pioneered the study of local history as a rigorous academic discipline, encouraging the subject to become what it is today – respectable and respected.

The Centre was originally founded in 1948 as the 'Department of English Local History'. It was created for W.G. Hoskins, whose approach to history was so notably expressed in his *Making of the English Landscape* (1955). Hoskins espoused the significance of local history, and the importance of quite literally getting your boots dirty when researching: opinions that went very much against the grain of mainstream historical study at the time. A core feature of the 'Leicester approach' was – and is – the investigation of the interaction between society and landscape, promoting both comparative and interdisciplinary study. The Centre is devoted to the study of local history in England and Wales, but also invites comparisons with areas further afield.

The Centre offers courses for postgraduate students. MA degrees are taught weekly over a year, or over two years for part-time students. Research degrees, MPhil or PhD, are pursued both by Centre graduates and by students from elsewhere. Students come from all age groups, and all backgrounds.

The Centre has an active Friends organisation, and members – including past and present students – can attend seminars held fortnightly in the autumn and spring terms. A recent highlight was a paper shedding new light on the Jack the Ripper case, using local history techniques to explain the gruesome events in relation to their location.

The Friends of the Centre for English Local History organise occasional day and weekend trips, including recently a study weekend in York, a guided tour of Leicester, and a trip to Castor, near Peterborough, to explore the medieval iconography of the church. Planned activities for 2017 include a study weekend in Lincoln, and a trip to the potteries in Stoke on Trent. Every two years the Friends also host the 'Spotlight' conference, giving attendees a chance to catch up with the current research of the staff and students of the Centre.

The Centre for English Local History is a great asset for anyone interested in local history, landscape history or family history. You can become involved by becoming a student, or by joining the 'Friends'.

For information about study opportunities at the Centre, contact Dr Andrew Hopper (ajh69@leicester.ac.uk).

The Friends of the Centre for English Local History is a registered charity. Contact Robert Mee (rm421@leicester.ac.uk) for details of how to join. Further information on the Friends and their activities can be found at www.friends.englishlocalhistory.org.



MA in English Local History and Family History

The Centre for English Local History at the University of Leicester was founded by W.G. Hoskins and will shortly be celebrating the 50th anniversary of its MA in English Local History and Family History.

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Join us to develop your knowledge and interests further. For more information, please visit our website or contact Dr Andrew Hopper ajh69@le.ac.uk

www.le.ac.uk/local-history-ma



Advance notice – September 2017 one-day conference 'Martin Luther and the East Midlands'.



2017 will be the 500th anniversary of Martin Luther's Ninety-Five Theses and the beginnings of the Reformations in Britain and Europe. To mark the event, there will be a one-day conference on the impact of the Reformations on the East Midlands, co-sponsored by East Midlands History and Heritage, held at De Montfort University, Leicester. This will be the first of a series of day events promoted by EMHH on the history and heritage of the region.

We would like to bring together local historians, archaeologists, post-graduate students and academics to examine the impact of the Reformations and religious change on the people and communities of the East Midlands region.

If you are working on any aspect of the religious history of the East Midlands in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, or if you would like to come along to the conference, we would be interested in hearing from you.

We would welcome 20 minute presentations, 5 minute presentations, posters and displays. Topics might include:

- Impact on the parish and parish churches
- Dissolution of the monasteries and religious houses
- Individual writers, preachers and religious reformers
- Changes in religious belief and ideas of communities/individuals
- Material and visual culture of religious change
- Impact on townscapes and landscapes
- Sources useful for Reformation studies
- Catholicism under the Tudors.

But there are many other areas of life that might also be examined.

If you are interested in attending and/or participating, please contact Prof Elizabeth Tingle at De Montfort University. Email: Elizabeth.tingle@dmu.ac.uk



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*National Student Survey, 2016

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Save the date!

The 2017 East Midlands Heritage Conference is on Wednesday 26 & Thursday 27 April, at the National Civil War Centre in Newark.

More information available soon at www.emms.org.uk



In the next issue

The Social World of Nottingham's Green Spaces. The Impact of the Black Death in Northamptonshire. Fundraising for Hospitals before the NHS.



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