

THE VICTORIAN SOCIETY LEICESTER GROUP NEWSLETTER

The national charity campaigning for the
Victorian and Edwardian historic environment

SUMMER 2012

Abbey Pumping Station to run four engines together

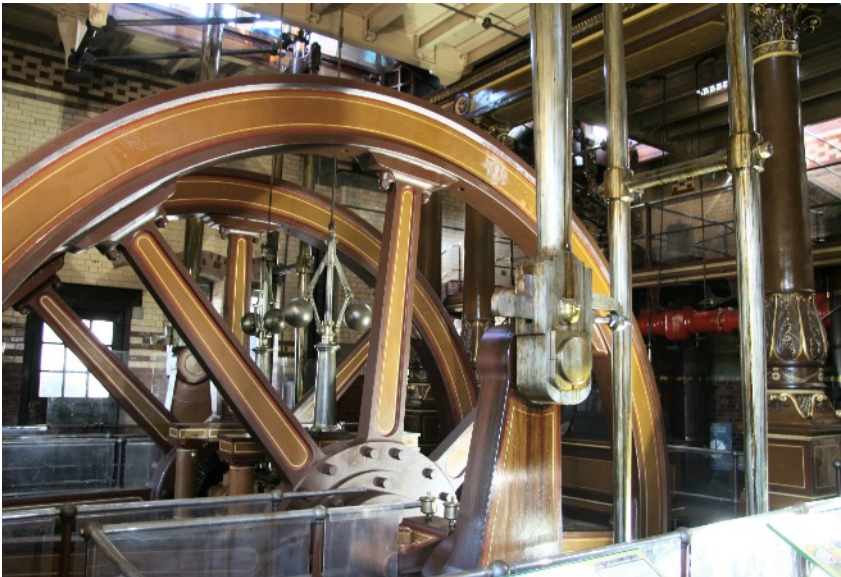
Leicester's Abbey Pumping Station on Corporation Road is one of the finest and most impressive industrial heritage museums in the country. Designed by Leicester architect Stockdale Hall and built by Leicester engineers Gifford and Partners.

The station was built in 1854 on the site of the former Beaumont Leys Farm. It has been open to the public for some years and is one of the most popular Museums and Galleries in Leicester. It is a dedicated to the

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by Leicester heritage.
the farm at Beaumont Leys in 1964. For more information, visit the website at www.abbey-pumping-station.co.uk or contact Leicester City Museums and Galleries on 01533 434343.



When the station was working, two engines were generally running at any given time, the other two being stopped for necessary maintenance or kept as standby. At periods of heavy rainfall all available engines were pressed into service to cope with storm water, so that occasionally all four ran simultaneously - a truly awe-inspiring spectacle, about to be re-created for the first time in preservation.

All four engines at Abbey Pumping Station are due to run in public for the first time over the weekend of 28th/29th June - make a note in your diary!

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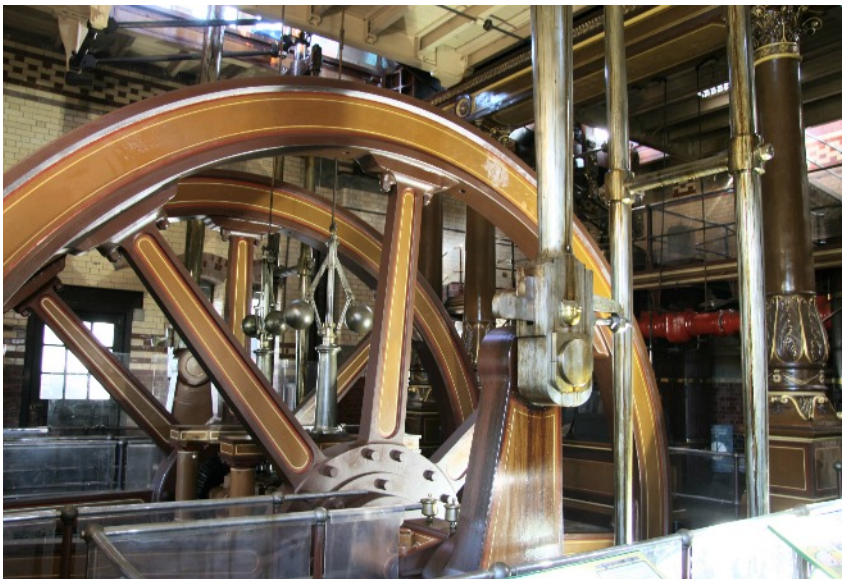
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Abbey Pumping Station to run four engines together

Leicester's Abbey Pumping Station on Corporation Road is one of the finest and most impressive industrial heritage museums in the country. Designed by Leicester architect Stockdale Harrison to house four massive beam engines manufactured by Leicester engineers Gimson & Co, it is the 'jewel in the crown' of the city's Victorian heritage.

The station began work in September 1890, pumping sewage to the farm at Beaumont Leys, and the beam engines last ran in service in February 1964. For some years they were allowed to deteriorate, but they were taken over by Leicester Museums and a process of restoration began, largely carried out by a small but dedicated team of volunteers.



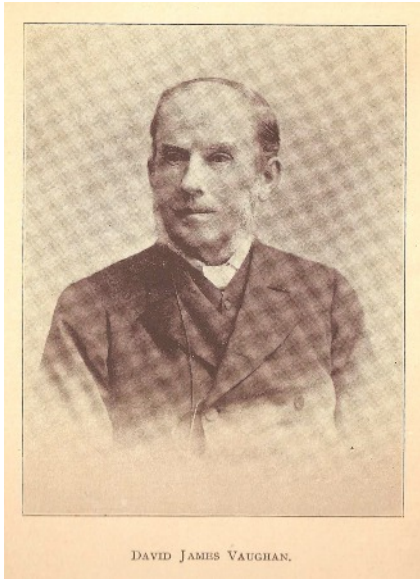
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David James and Margaret Vaughan

Vaughan College in Leicester commemorates the name of its founder, David James Vaughan. He was born in 1825, the sixth and youngest son of Edward Thomas Vaughan, vicar of St Martin's, Leicester, and Agnes Pares, daughter of John Pares, a local banker. After attending the Collegiate School, Leicester and Rugby School he read mathematics and classics at Trinity College, Cambridge, graduating in 1848, and was subsequently awarded a Fellowship and a Master's degree. Instead of an academic career, Vaughan was ordained as a deacon in 1853 and began work in Leicester as an honorary curate at St Martin's. He was ordained a priest in 1854 and moved to St Mark's, Whitechapel where a friend from Trinity, John Llewellyn Davies, had previously been vicar.



DAVID JAMES VAUGHAN.

Llewellyn Davies introduced Vaughan to Frederick Denison Maurice, a Christian socialist who founded the London Working Men's College in 1854, and the two became good friends. Maurice's 'noble and inspired example', along with the widespread poverty and distress that he encountered in Whitechapel, had a profound influence on Vaughan's future work, particularly his ideal of 'brotherhood' and his lifelong work in the cause of adult education. In 1860, at the request of the parishioners, he returned to Leicester to become the fourth member of the Vaughan family since 1802 to hold the living of St Martin's (which after his death became Leicester Cathedral). He remained vicar until his retirement due to ill health in July 1893, refusing all offers of preferment.

One of his enduring legacies was the Working Men's College he founded, originally in St Martin's Infant School, in 1862. The College was open to those of any religious belief or none, and as well as offering "very good pennyworths of knowledge to all who care to apply for them" it was also intended to "cultivate and develop a spirit of true Christian brotherhood, grounded on the basis of what we owe to God". This was epitomised in the 'watchword' handed down by David Vaughan at the Annual Meeting in 1871–72, which became in turn the motto of the College: 'Sirs, ye are brethren'.

Vaughan's 'indefatigable exertions' were not confined to the college, which was renamed the Vaughan Working Men's College in his honour after his death in 1905. From 1860 until he died, he served as Master of Wyggeston's Hospital in Leicester and was chairman of the governors of the Wyggeston Boys' and Girls' Schools.

He was also honorary chaplain to the Borough Isolation Hospital on Groby Road, Leicester, a role he first took on during a smallpox epidemic in 1871, and one which other clergy showed “no eagerness to share with him”. One of his greatest challenges was the three years he spent as the first chairman of the Leicester School Board, elected under the Education Act of 1870. Here he faced the almost impossible task of reconciling the views of Anglican and Roman Catholic members on the one hand with those of Liberal Nonconformists and secularists on the other.

Although not a great orator he was voted the most popular Anglican clergyman in the town, and there was ‘wide and sincere sorrow’ at his death at Wyggeston’s Hospital in July 1905 at the age of 80. The *Leicester Daily Post* reported:

As the deservedly respected vicar of St Martin’s, the late Doctor Vaughan won the golden opinions of all classes by his earnest and indefatigable work... [he] exerted an incalculable influence on the working classes; moulded and guided their thoughts on the ideal lines, and made his pulpit a potent factor for good – an invaluable weight on the side of international peace; cordial relations between employer and employed; public health and happy homes.

Margaret Vaughan

In 1859 David Vaughan married Margaret Greg, the daughter of John Greg of Escowbeck, Lancashire, one of a family of prominent textile mill owners that included Samuel Greg of Quarry Bank Mill at Styal. The importance of her contribution to David Vaughan’s work was abundantly clear to contemporaries. The *College Annual Report*, reflecting on her death in 1911, refers to “the beautiful and inspiring life of her who was his wife and co-partner in the founding of the College”, where she also taught scripture, reading, writing and arithmetic in the Women’s Department, and later became one of its Governors.



When the new Vaughan Working Men’s College opened in Holy Bones in 1908 her portrait was placed alongside that of her late husband in the entrance hall. In 1866 she helped to establish the Leicester Institution of Trained Nurses, becoming one of the ‘Lady Superintendents’ who oversaw the work of its district nurses. She was also a member of the Leicester Branch of the National Union of Women Workers, formed in 1897, and a vice-president from 1898–1911. As Mrs Agnes Evans wrote of her, it was:

impossible to disassociate her altogether from her husband in regard to their common work and labour of love. Throughout their whole married life she stood at his side ready to help in everything that he undertook... the two were one.

Cynthia Brown

Cynthia Brown is the author of *A Blessing to the Town: 150 years of Vaughan College, Leicester* (University of Leicester Institute of Lifelong Learning, 2012)

Chairman's Notes - May 2014

Welcome to the latest edition of our newsletter, heralding (we hope) the arrival of summer and possibly some good cricketing weather.

I am pleased to be able to report that, following the Annual General Meeting, we have been joined on the Committee by a new member, Carl Klan. Carl will be familiar to many of you as he and his wife have been regular attendees at our meetings and other events for several years.

The City Mayor's Heritage Partnership, at which I represent the Victorian Society, continues to meet quarterly. The last meeting in March included an interesting walk around the 'old quarter' of Leicester (Peacock Lane, Greyfriars etc) in which many of the buildings are now looking rather shabby. The Council is aiming to provide small grants to encourage property owners to carry out minor repairs and refurbishments in this very attractive area of the city, to tie in with the opening of the Richard III Centre.

It was pleasing to see that the City Council successfully prosecuted the owners of the former All Saints Brewery site for failure to safeguard their property (thus encouraging repeated vandalism and arson attacks). Although the fine was not exactly punitive, it does send out an appropriate signal to developers - the Council will take action in cases of blatant disregard of heritage assets.

In early April Peter Ellis and I attended a meeting of regional groups in Sheffield. We were able to discuss the different ways in which we each approach similar matters, and we were also able to highlight issues of mutual concern to representatives from the Society's head office. It was interesting to note that other regional groups share our concerns about falling numbers, recruitment difficulties, and finding suitable (and affordable) meeting rooms. The Leicester Group continues to organise one coach trip each year, but several other groups have abandoned these altogether in recent years due to the ever increasing cost of coach hire.

In March I attended the official reopening of the Secular Hall after its refurbishment. It now looks very smart and is a great improvement. Members may recall that we made a small contribution to the restoration appeal, and it is good to see that the money has been well spent. We now await the reopening of the Victorian Art Gallery at the New Walk Museum at the end of May. Refurbishment here has been beset by continuing problems including the discovery of further areas of asbestos. We are also looking forward to the opening up of Ernest Gimson's house, Stoneywell, by the National Trust.

Finally may I direct your attention to the booking forms for our guided walks and visits in the second half of the summer. I hope to see as many of you as possible on these - so book early!

Jon Goodall
Chairman

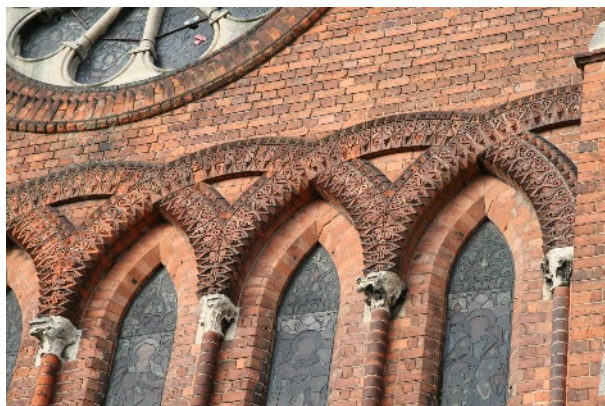
Buildings Sub-Committee

The following buildings have been discussed at the Sub-Committee; some may also have featured in discussions at the Council's Conservation Advisory Panel (CAP).

St Luke's Chapel - Leicester Royal Infirmary There are proposals to demolish the hospital chapel in order that an urgently needed new and expanded Accident and Emergency Department can be constructed. Externally the chapel is fairly nondescript but it has attractive fittings including stained glass and memorial plaques. We applied to English Heritage to have it listed some ten years ago but it was turned down as not being especially unusual or distinctive.

We and other Groups would very much like to see it retained and believe the plans for the new A&E Department could be amended to accommodate the chapel. However at the time of writing the Hospital Trust state that to do so would substantially increase the cost of the project. They have however stated that a new 'Faith Centre' (with a specifically Christian area) would be constructed nearer the wards. This would incorporate the stained glass and memorials from the chapel.

St Peter's Church Highfields (GE Street 1874) Unfortunately there has been a fall of masonry from near the main entrance, necessitating erection of protective scaffolding. Plans for removal of the unsympathetic screening which currently divides the nave are still in place but, due to funding constraints, other aspects of the ambitious plans may have to be revised. However, even minor works should still be a huge improvement and the funding applications are being prepared.



Interlaced arcade on the west front of St Saviour's

St Saviour's Church

(GG Scott 1877) No new buyer has come forward for this magnificent building and vandalism continues.

St Martin's Cathedral Plans had been put forward for a substantial re-ordering of the cathedral - largely affecting much of the 1927 work carried out when it was upgraded to cathedral status. Most of the heritage groups (and Gavin Stamp in *Private Eye!*)

objected to the proposed changes, and the Cathedrals Fabric Commission expressed disquiet. Amendments were then put forward and have been approved by the CFC, but we have yet to see the details. Meanwhile, work on the cathedral gardens continues.

St Barnabas Church (Goddard and Paget 1886) The City Council have granted planning permission to Mr Ebrahim Sabat for conversion to a function/banqueting hall.

However the Church Commissioners are further reviewing the proposal. We have written to them in support of Mr Sabat, having seen the excellent work he has undertaken on the former St Mark's church in Belgrave Gate.

Silver Arcade (Amos Hall 1899) There are increasing numbers of tenants on the upper floors, but it is disappointing that the 'flagship' units on the ground floor remain vacant.

Stoneygate Tram Depot, London Road (1904) Acquisition of this building by the Leicester Transport Heritage Trust is proceeding and plans are being drawn up for alterations to make it suitable for public access when it will house some of the Trust's preserved vehicles and artefacts. Sainsbury's have recently presented the Trust with a spiral staircase from their old supermarket in Belgrave Road which is being demolished. The staircase was originally part of the old Great Northern station warehouse which stood on the supermarket site. The Trust intend use it to access a proposed mezzanine floor in the tram depot.

Once again may I request that you keep an eye open for any threats to our built environment (remember that the Victorian Society does in fact cover the period up to 1914) and let us know of any that you come across.

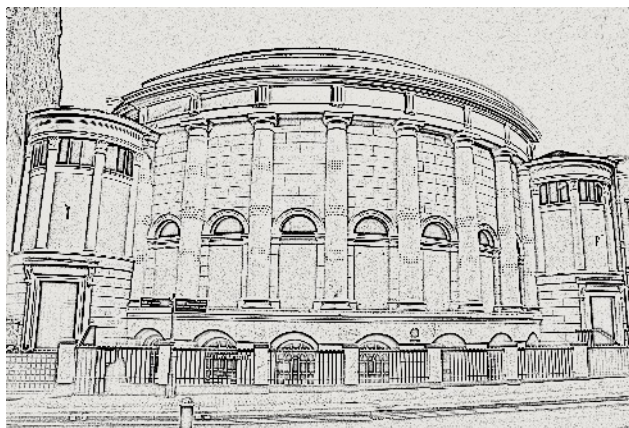
Jon Goodall

Recent Leicester Group Activities

Joseph Hansom and the Pork Pie Chapel

A talk by Neil Crutchley - Thursday 6th February 2014

The round, ('Pork Pie') chapel on Belvoir Street was opened in 1845 to replace the old



Harvey Lane Baptist Chapel, noted for the ministry of Robert Hall. The new chapel was designed by Joseph Hansom, a gifted architect whose work included many Catholic churches, Birmingham Town Hall, the Hansom cab and Leicester's New Walk Museum. The curved façade and ornate plasterwork of the classical chapel was far removed from the old 'preaching box' in Harvey Lane.

The Rev James Phillip Mursell had succeeded Robert Hall at Harvey Lane in 1827, and he moved to the new chapel where he remained for another 32 years, and the chapel thrived under his leadership.

Many wealthy and prominent Leicester businessmen were among the 550 chapel members, and the adjoining schoolrooms had to be extended to accommodate over 650 scholars. Despite personal tragedies in his own life, Rev Mursell served the chapel until the age of 75, when he was succeeded by Rev James Thew.

The new century saw many changes. Thirty members lost their lives during the First World War. Rev Frank Smith succeeded Thew, but resigned when his radical views were opposed. By the 1920s Belvoir Street Chapel was supporting other local chapels financially, and this was proving expensive. A deficit necessitated a loan of £2,000 from the Charity Commissioners, and further loans followed.

Membership declined as the wealthier businessmen moved to churches nearer to their homes in Stoneygate and beyond. In 1938 it was recommended that the chapel should close and amalgamate with Charles Street Baptist Chapel, and that the front of the building should be sold. In 1946 the schoolrooms were also sold, being bought by Leicester Corporation later to become part of the Adult Education College.

The chapel itself, now known as the Hansom Hall, is being used by the young and enthusiastic Leicester Theatre Group. In the near future it is to be hoped that theatre goers will be able to use the elegant entrance doors to the hall on Belvoir Street, thus ensuring an appropriate start to the evening's entertainment.

Writing a Year - 1859

A talk by Professor Gail Marshall - Tuesday 4th March 2014

We were delighted to welcome the Director of Leicester University's Victorian Studies Centre for an erudite and intriguing lecture on the literary output from the year 1859. This was when epoch-making texts such as Dickens's *A Tale of Two Cities*, Eliot's *Adam Bede*, Darwin's *The Origin of Species*, Mrs Beeton's *Book of Household Management* and Smiles' *Self-Help* made their first appearance, subsequently becoming canonical works that define the Victorian era.

Professor Marshall conveyed how 1859 would have seemed to contemporaries living in a country at peace but fearful of war in Europe and amidst agitation for political reform. The 1850s saw an enormous increase in reporting following the abolition of newspaper stamp duty - 816 different newspaper titles and over 500 periodicals being published.

The opening of the National Portrait Gallery can be seen as defining the national impulse to look to our past and it addressed the complex idea of 'custom'. This was debated to an unprecedented extent in 1859 and was interpreted by writers and thinkers in various ways. Some saw it as a despotic notion that hindered human advancement and was to be resisted; others, who understood society as incarnate history, saw it as something that carries society safely through revolution. We were expertly led through these competing interpretations in seminal texts which certainly now ask for a further reading.

The Fall and Rise of Victorian Architecture

A talk by Gavin Stamp - Tuesday 1st April 2014

Gavin Stamp is one of the best known architectural historians of our time and for many years he has been a prominent member of the Victorian Society. His talk, 'The Fall and Rise of Victorian Architecture', examined the background to the formation of the Victorian Society and why it was so necessary in the late 1950s to create a strong lobbying group to counter the general view that anything built during Victoria's reign was worthless and could be disposed of at the drop of a hat. It is due in no small measure to the efforts of Victorian Society founder members, such as Anne, Lady Rosse, Sir John Betjeman, Sir Nikolaus Pevsner and others, together with early supporters (not least Stamp himself) that attitudes began to change.

Gavin Stamp provided illustrations of many of the fine London buildings we have lost including, Bunning's Coal Exchange, Hardwick's Euston Station Arch and Great Hall, Scott's St Agnes (Kennington), Colcutt's Imperial Institute and Norman Shaw's New Zealand Chambers. Others were threatened, most notably St Pancras and King's Cross stations and the Foreign Office, but thanks to the sterling efforts of the preservationists, good sense prevailed and today these buildings are rightly cherished.

We have seen this reflected in our own city where, after losing so much worthy of preservation, 1970s plans to demolish the Midland Station frontage and the façade of the Sun Alliance building (Town Hall Square), were rejected.



King's Cross and St Pancras, both proposed for demolition in the 1960s, and both now beautifully restored

With illustrations from notable architectural publications that have influenced enlightened opinion and lighter pieces such as articles from *The Saturday Book*, (edited by that notable lover of Victorian ephemera, John Hadfield) along with his own vast knowledge of Victorian buildings in Britain's great metropolitan centres, Gavin Stamp gave us a compelling insight into the necessity and purpose of the society to which we belong.



Guided walk in High Street and Shaftesbury Hall

Thursday 24th April 2014

This was an evening of surprises. We assembled at the newly refurbished Silver Arcade and, under the expert guidance of Richard Gill, meandered along High Street. Surprises included the decorative lantern atop the Grand Clothing Hall (Stockdale Harrison, 1902), the menagerie of statues lining the Singer Building (Arthur Wakerley, 1904) and the 'sea breeze' ceramic mural left by Butlers, Chemists, at number 58.

The modest entrance to Shaftesbury Hall on Holy Bones held another surprise. Behind, we found a sizeable hall, lit from above, full of antique and reproduction fireplaces! After refreshments, our host, Jeff Dennis of Britain's Heritage Ltd, explained the reasons behind this unusual building. In 1898, a charity had been formed by Lady Rolleston to take poor children from Leicester for holidays by the sea at Mablethorpe. Its work soon expanded to include educational and social activities in Leicester and Shaftesbury Hall was built to accommodate these, as well as the organisation's offices. The activities in Leicester ceased after the Second World War but the premises remain to provide income for the charity – which still continues its work in Mablethorpe.

We were grateful to our organisers and guides – Richard Gill, Jeff and June Dennis, Neil and John Crutchley – for a fascinating evening.

Leicester Decorative and Fine Arts Society

Members of the Victorian Society may be interested to know that the Leicester Decorative and Fine Arts Society meets on the 4th Wednesday of every month (except July and August) at the old Phoenix cinema, Upper Brown Street at 7.45 pm. Car parking is available at the NCP car park next door. Guests are asked to pay £7.00, and may attend two lectures before being expected to pay the full membership subscription of £42 per year.

Why not join us at one of our forthcoming lectures? On 28th May we will hear about the Festival of Britain in 1951, whilst on 25th June Eveline Eaton from the Courtauld will speak on The Arts of Bloomsbury and Omega. Our AGM on 24th September will be followed by a talk on medieval stained glass. More details can be found on our website www.leicesterdfas.org.uk

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<http://www.victoriansociety.org.uk/leicester/>



The views expressed in this newsletter are those of the contributors and do not necessarily represent those of the Editor or of The Victorian Society.

The Victorian Society, 1 Priory Gardens, London W4 1TT

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Forthcoming Events - Summer/Autumn 2014

Summer Visits

All our activities, including visits, are open to all subject to space limitations.

Our booking form "green sheet" is only sent to members living in Leicestershire.

If you do not receive a booking form, but wish to participate in a bookable activity, the form can be downloaded as a PDF from our website or booking enquiries can be made direct to
Grahame Lees - see page 9

Tuesday 1st July

Evening Walk around Riverside North, led by Bob Gregory

On this walk along a short stretch of the towing path of Leicester's canalised River Soar from the West Bridge as far as the Northgates, it is possible to discover evidence of the city's development in almost every period/epoch of Britain's growth from the earliest times of human settlement through the years of Roman occupation, the Middle Ages, the Canal era and the period of gigantic feats of Victorian engineering and 20th century industrial and urban change.

Cost: £5.00

Meet at West Bridge (St Augustine Road) north side at 7.00 pm
(Closing date for bookings - Friday 22nd June - see green sheet)

Tuesday 12th August 2014

Church and Chapel in Highfields

This visit will start at St Peter's (1874), GE Street's only Leicestershire church. Conventional in form, it was built as a memorial to Earl Howe of Gopsall and was always intended to impress. The rugged outer stone walls give way to a spacious interior, lit largely by Victorian stained glass. Our guide will be Paul Griffiths who is writing a history of the Church. The present congregation has ambitious plans to refurbish the building and to increase its community use and we hope that the Project Director will be present to give details.

The evening also offers an opportunity to see a very different church of similar age, just a 'stone's throw' away. Melbourne Hall (1881) was designed by local architects, Goddard and Paget, for 'free church' worship. It is a huge octagonal building in red brick designed around a central pulpit. We hope to gain access but this has yet to be confirmed; in any case, we will be able to admire the spectacular exterior.

Cost: £5.00

Meet outside St Peter's Church on St Peter's Road, LE2 1DA at 7.00 pm
(Some car parking is available on the site.)
(Closing date for bookings - Friday 22th July - see green sheet)

Tuesday 2nd September

St James the Greater and St James Road area walk

The Church of St James the Greater on London Road is one of the most imposing in the city. Modelled on Torcello Cathedral near Venice by Leicester architect Henry Goddard, St James' has a spacious and spectacular interior that repays close inspection. Renaissance detailing, terracotta, faience and good quality stained glass abound.

There are many fine and substantial Victorian houses on St James Road and these were once the homes of some of Leicester's leading citizens. We will take a look at the architecture and the social history of this fascinating tree-lined road.

Cost: £5.00

Meet outside St James the Greater Church, London Road at 7.00 pm

Closing date for bookings - Friday 17th August (see green sheet)

Wednesday 11th June

Edgbaston - Birmingham's affluent suburb

Cost: £26.00

Details of this tour were given in the Spring newsletter. There may be a limited number of places available.

Please contact Grahame Lees for details 0116 238 7760

Eileen Chambers' Book Sale

In a recent issue of this newsletter we advertised that Eileen Chambers wished to 'down size' by selling some of her 40-year-old collection of books, including many on Leicester and Leicestershire local history. The response from members was enthusiastic, and all the books have now been sold, as a result of which Eileen has generously made a donation of £50 to the funds of the Leicester Group.

BOOKING CONDITIONS

Please note that our visits may present a variety of hazards including uneven surfaces and stairs, low head heights, low lighting and building or demolition works. There may be stairs or uneven surfaces which cannot be avoided, and long periods of walking or standing. Should you have any questions about your ability to participate in an event, please contact us. Children under 18 must be accompanied by an adult. Participants are reminded that they participate in events at their own risk, and neither the Society nor its officers or servants accept any liability of any kind whatsoever, howsoever arising. The Victorian Society reserves the right to cancel, alter or postpone events if necessary.

Cancellations: No refunds will be given for cancellations for events costing £10 or less, but as a courtesy to others we ask that you let us know if you cannot attend an event for which you have booked. In other cases, cancellations will be accepted and fees returned up to a month before the date of the event, but will be subject to a £10 deduction per ticket for administrative costs. Separate arrangements may apply for weekend visits and foreign tours and terms will be clearly stated on the printed details in each case.

Lecture Programme - Autumn 2014

Tuesday 7th October 2014

Will Victorian Churches survive the Twenty-first century?

Tom Ashley - Senior Conservation Adviser - Victorian Society

Drawing on his experience as a caseworker for the Victorian Society, Tom Ashley will discuss the challenges facing Victorian churches and church furnishings as the custodians of our sacred buildings grapple with making them 'fit for purpose' in the 21st century. As demographic changes continue to erode the status of churches as central to the life of the communities in which they stand, their custodians face a stark set of choices: diversify the range of uses to which the building can be put, develop more attractive styles of worship, or close.

In many of our sacred buildings, the Victorian layer remains the most recent, but they are now facing widespread alteration. Will they survive in the hands of those who find pews inconvenient, wooden doors uninviting, tiled floors inhospitable, pulpits intimidating and rood screens simply unholly?

Tom Ashley is responsible for all casework affecting places of worship in England and Wales. Before joining the Society he was pursuing a doctorate at Yale, studying Victorian literature and visual culture.

Tuesday 4th November 2014

Tanky Smith and the Winstanley Mystery

Michael Robinson

Michael Robinson will outline his recent research into the disappearance of James Beaumont Winstanley of Braunstone Hall in the 1860s. He will examine the role thought to have been played by Francis 'Tanky' Smith, the Leicester detective hired by the Winstanley family to find their son, and suggest that the conventional view of this incident, famous in Leicester folklore, may not be entirely accurate.

Tuesday 2nd December 2014

Joseph Rogers - A Grocer of Distinction

Brian Johnson

Joseph Rogers was born in 1806 and came to Leicester to work as a grocer. The business he founded became the largest wholesale grocer in the Midlands. Had he been born a hundred years later he would probably have opened a chain of supermarkets. Rogers was a family man and noted for his benevolence, but sadly his plans for the business did not continue after his death.

All lectures take place, unless otherwise stated, in the Small Hall (Room 3) of The Leicester Adult Education College, Wellington Street, Leicester at 7.30 pm. Our meetings are open to all, but we ask all attendees, whether or not they are members, to register in order to comply with Fire Regulations, and to make **a contribution of £2.50 per person** towards the costs of room hire and other expenses.