

THE VICTORIAN SOCIETY LEICESTER GROUP NEWSLETTER

The national charity campaigning for the
Victorian and Edwardian historic environment

SUMMER 2011

Chairman's Notes - Summer 2011

Welcome to the summer 2011 edition of our newsletter which, as you can see, is now in a new format. For some time the committee has been contemplating a change from the old style which essentially was just a collection of individual sheets of paper! If you were like myself then it seemed remarkably easy to mislay the particular page you were seeking. Anyway we have now bitten the bullet and I do hope you like it – please let us have your thoughts. Here I must give thanks to our Treasurer (Peter Ellis) who has taken on the task of transforming the individual contributions into what you are now reading. Also of course I must thank Marion Hare for her invaluable work as the previous editor of the newsletter.

A few other items are worthy of note. At long last the archives of the late Dr. Joan Skinner, which were handed over to us, have been sorted and catalogued. Joan had an extensive knowledge of the industrial and commercial history of Leicester and its buildings, reflected in the extent of her files. Her archive is to be handed over to the Urban Studies Centre of the University of Leicester, where it will be available for all to access. Our thanks must go to Rowan Roenisch and Gwyn Jones for the work done in sorting out her records – at least they will now have a bit more space in their garages.

As usual I hope that you have enjoyed the talks so far this year and the visits in the first part of the summer. Booking forms for events in the second half of the summer may be found elsewhere in the newsletter. Again may I repeat that we always welcome suggestions for speakers and visits – let myself or any committee member know.

Finally may I inform you that once again we shall be participating in the “Heritage Fair” at Bishop St. Methodist Church on Saturday 4th June along with other groups such as the Industrial History Society and the Civic Society. I would welcome any offers of assistance even if only for an hour or so.

Enjoy the rest of the summer!

*Jon Goodall
75 Kings Drive, Leicester Forest East, Leicester, LE3 3JE
0116 239 3744*

William Millican 1830-1889

illican was a Leicester-based architect in partnership with Thomas Smith in their Horsefair Street offices.

Millican and Smith were embroiled in controversy over the choice of design for the 'public sculpture for Leicestershire and Rutland' in the Haymarket in 1867.

The Haymarket Structure Committee, formed after a meeting in the Temperance Hall on the 25th October 1867, had raised funds and invited design submissions. One hundred and six were received and put on show for the committee and subscribers to vote on. Millican and Smith's design won by a majority of 24. The committee itself drew up a shortlist with Millican and Smith in first place as well. However, the Corporation of Leicester then became involved, offering to supply the clock and lighting. The committee voted to allow the Corporation to decide on the final design.

The Corporation retained the Millican and Smith design, but proposed two more; Joseph Goddard's of Leicester and Giles and Bevan's of London. The Giles and Bevan design was dropped, leaving the two Leicester contenders. The vote led to a tie, a second ballot gave Goddard one more vote.

The Corporation wanted modifications to the designs and the statues had to be at least six feet tall. Both architects agreed to do some modifications by the 1st January 1868. Some committee members claimed that Goddard had been given assistance and had even 'stolen from Millican's design'.

The tide turned and Goddard's design was deemed more suitable, being in a contemporary decorated Gothic style. Goddard won by 30 votes to 14 and Millican and Smith penned a letter of discontent to the 'Builder' journal, saying that they felt their design should have won, as the committee voted it in originally. But the Corporation took over and agreed to pay the total cost of £800, whereas at first the Haymarket Structure Committee was fundraising.

It is pleasing to think that some features from Millican's design may have been incorporated by Goddard in his iconic and much-loved Clock Tower.

Millican and Smith also carried out restoration works on several local churches including St Peter's in Arnesby, St Egelwin the Martyr in Scalford, St Thomas a Becket in Skeffington and St Michael's in Markfield.

William Millican designed the Congregational Church that stood just past Leicester railway station on London Road. The building survived until 1960, when it was sold and demolished. Antibo's restaurant now stands on the site.

William's finest work is the National Provincial Bank building of 1869, (now Nat-

West) which stands on the site of the Three Crowns Inn. Built in buff brick and stone, the pleasing Italianate design greets us as we walk along Gallowtree Gate towards Granby Street. Fortunately still being used for its original purpose, one hopes that it does not succumb to the fate of its near neighbours; the Midland Bank in Granby Street and Barclays Bank facing Town Hall Square, both empty and awaiting an uncertain future.



*NatWest Bank - Granby St
(currently under scaffolding)*

At the age for 55, William was put forward as a candidate in the General Election. He was described as an architect, surveyor, town councillor, member of the council of the National Union of Conservative Associations and Lieutenant Colonel in the Rifle Volunteers. He appealed to the ecclesiastical sentiments of the electorate – ‘Your churches are in danger’ and condemned the Liberal government on foreign and colonial policies. He did not win a seat, but continued with his many political interests until his death, four years later.

Carole Face

Reports of Recent Leicester Group Activities

The Lost Houses of Stoneygate - Neil Crutchley - Tuesday 1st March

Residents of Stoneygate know how lucky they are to be among such elegant houses, but few of us are aware of the grandeur of the houses we have lost. Some



Ratcliffe House

of these were palatial, like ‘Lyndhurst’ on the corner of Albert Road and ‘The Shrubbery’ where Stoneygate Court now stands. Perhaps the most awe-inspiring was Ratcliffe House, on Ratcliffe Road. It was demolished before the Second World War, making way for an ordnance depot. Later Sackville Gardens was built covering the whole site, an indication of the extent of the original property. Many of the other grand houses, that had stretched

from Victoria Park to the Oadby border, were swept away before the War while others were demolished in the fifties and sixties, like ‘Elmfield’, the home of Samuel Stone, the solicitor who compiled the Justices Manual.

Fortunately for us, Neil Crutchley has brought together a collection of photographs, mainly from the archives of The Leicester Mercury, of nearly every one of these magnificent mansions. Neil gave us details of the owners of the houses together with some description of their contents, culled from sales advertisements and personal reminiscences. Neil's talk, flagged up in the columns of the Mercury beforehand, was predictably well-attended, with a record number of members and visitors. It was a memorable evening and an experience we all hope will be repeated.

Malcolm Elliott

Thomas Cook's 19th Century Competitors - Dr Bob Gibson - Tuesday 5th April

In his introduction, Dr Gibson described John Mason Cook, the son of Thomas Cook, as a "fantastic PR man and a tough Victorian businessman". In contrast to his father Thomas, a Baptist who died leaving only a small legacy, John Mason Cook, who became an Anglican, left a considerable fortune.

The speaker explained that it was necessary to separate myth from history. Cooks were not the oldest travel agency, this distinction belonged to Cox and Kings, founded by Richard Cox in 1758, and focused upon people travelling to India. The firm is still in existence today. By 1840 Emigration Agents had been established to enable people to start a new life in the United States of America, Canada and Australia.

In Britain, the Temperance movement arranged summer outings, the first being in 1844-45 by Joseph Deardon for deprived people in Preston. Other excursion organisers were Joseph Crisp of Liverpool, John Hargreaves and Thomas Clapham.

1851, the year of the Great Exhibition, was a critical landmark for Thomas Cook and the year in which his operations developed into a commercial enterprise. Another successful travel operator was Henry Gaze and his three sons, Alfred, William and Harry, who arranged excursions to Paris (1844), Waterloo (1854) and Switzerland (1858). In 1860 they organised the first trip to Egypt, a year ahead of Thomas Cook. Initially, Cook saw Gaze as an ally in the expanding tourist business but he became "a deadly rival".

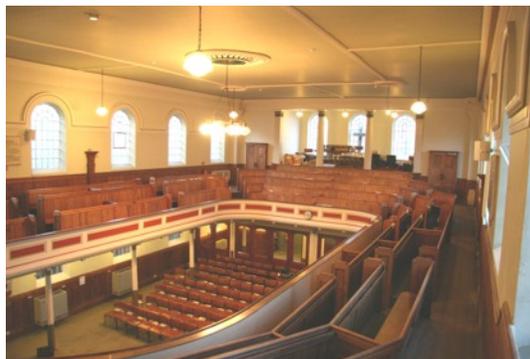
Dr Gibson gave a well-researched and entertaining presentation at the conclusion of which one was left with the impression that Thomas Cook & Son, despite so many competitors, remained at the forefront of the tourist industry. The sons of Henry Gaze did not have the business acumen of the Cooks and failed to survive as tourist operators. On the other hand the Cook dynasty, inspired by the powerful leadership of John Mason Cook, gave continuity and service and effectively saw off their rivals. The three sons of John Mason Cook – Frank, Ernest and Thomas moved the firm onwards until 1928 when the business was sold to the Belgian company, Wagons Lits.

Derek Seaton

Central Baptist Church & Wm Carey Museum, Charles Street - 19th April

Members of the Central Baptist Church were out in force to welcome the Society.

We began by admiring the simple classical lines of William Flint's church of 1831. Light and airy inside, it has a gallery on all four sides, supported by a series of slender columns. Sadly, the original high pulpit has been removed but a painting showed the glory of the original design.



Central Baptist Church

It was soon evident that, behind the church, lies a complex of buildings based on the Victorian school-rooms of 1888. Refurbished in the 1990s, they are busy throughout the week providing a range of services to lonely and vulnerable people. The main rooms are named after Baptist churches, all separate in Victorian days, which came together as the Central Baptist Church in the twentieth century: the Belvoir Room, named

after the 'pork pie' chapel on Belvoir Street; the Victoria lounge, reminding visitors of the former Victoria Road Church (the destination of a Society visit in 2010); and the Charles Room, recognising the contribution of the earlier congregations at Charles Street. We were also introduced to another early Baptist church in Leicester. In 1789, the Harvey Lane Particular Baptist chapel invited William Carey to be its minister. During a brief pastorate, Carey was one of the 'leading lights' behind the formation of the Baptist Missionary Society and he became its first missionary in 1793. Central Baptist Church holds a collection of papers and artefacts relating to Carey and, after a brief introduction to his life and achievements, we had chance to view the exhibition.

Our thanks go to Roger Beeby and his team for a fascinating evening, and to Neil Crutchley for organising this event.

Paul Griffiths

Building Sub-Committee Report May 2011

For a change there are several decisions and/or proposals which have arisen in the last few months concerning key buildings in the city. Some brief notes are set out below.

St. Paul's Church, Kirby Road (Ordish and Traylen 1870 – 71)

A proposal to convert this church into the head office of an organisation had been submitted to the City Council. The proposals would entail the construction of a glass mezzanine floor and glass walls between individual offices. As such this would continue to allow full appreciation of the structure and in particular the splendid stained glass.



St Saviour's Church

St. Saviour's Church & Schoolroom (George Gilbert Scott 1875-7)

After a prolonged period the Church commissioners have finally decided to put the church on the market with a guide price of between 250 and 750 thousand pounds. The wide price range would presumably reflect what any potential new owner proposed to do. Of course the Church of England will not permit its use as a place of worship by a non-Christian religion.

H.S.B.C Bank Granby St. (Joseph Goddard 1872)

At the April meeting of the City Council's Conservation Advisory Panel, a firm of architects gave a presentation on the possible conversion of the building for alternative use. The precise use and potential new owners were not stated, but the proposals (again involving a

glass mezzanine floor) seemed quite interesting. As and when more detailed plans are put forward a more considered appraisal can be made.

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Former Eastgates Coffee House

Former Eastgates Coffee House (Edward Burgess 1885)

At the time of writing there has been no response from English Heritage regarding the proposal for listing. In the meantime the exterior of the upper floors continues to deteriorate, especially the Eastgates frontage.

Silver Arcade (Amos Hall 1899)

At long last work appears to have started to convert the Arcade back into a multi-occupancy unit.

Natwest Bank, St. Martins (Everard and Pick 1900)

Again work appears to have recommenced on the building in line with the planning permission granted to convert it into a mixture of apartments, retail and commercial.

Former Factory Rutland Street (1882-1886)

This building was ascertained by the late Joan Skinner as being the oldest factory in Leicester and as the result of her work it was listed by English Heritage (after her death). It is now owned by the City Council who have submitted plans to repair and renovate the building prior to conversion into separate units for start up businesses.

As usual may I request that you keep your eyes open for possible threats to our built environment. Should you note anything of concern please let either myself or a member of the Sub-Committee know. It is only too easy to assume that someone else is bound to have spotted it!

Jon Goodall

VICTORIAN LEICESTER by Malcolm Elliott

2nd Edition, with over 60 new colour illustrations

Amberley Publishing, 2010 - £14.99

Victorian Society members trying to evaluate the significance of Leicester's heritage will find this book provides a valuable context. However, **Victorian Leicester** deserves a much wider readership. Those familiar with national histories, with their focus on London and other big industrial cities, will find Malcolm Elliott's book injects greater realism into developments of the period. For Malcolm shows us a Victorian municipal corporation, not as a passive administration driven simply by national policies, but a radical body engaging with the issues itself and forging its own independent path. The outcomes are occasionally odd, but sometimes ahead of their time.

Essentially this book identifies the individuals who grappled with Victorian local democracy, health, housing and immigration in industrial Leicester. Viewed through the lens of the global economy or environmental debates today one realises that many of the issues discussed have not really gone away – the need for better working and living conditions; ways of economising and better re-using resources; the struggle to maintain a health service that resulted from the pioneering work of amongst others, Victorian Medical Officers – and it was Leicester in 1846 that had the first of these; and the creation of a planning system that properly and democratically controls and plans for the true needs and enjoyment of the community.

Whilst **Victorian Leicester** surveys the complexities of municipal politics and administration, this very readable book is full of delightful observations regarding Victorian attitudes to life from swimming naked in the River Soar to perceptions of the role of smells in health policy.

A wealth of illustrations, many coloured, pertinently elaborate points in the text. There are others with detailed captions, which offer a complementary narrative on Victorian Leicester. Incidental moments of everyday life including horse drawn carts, market stalls and lads playing what looks like cricket on Soar Lane, enliven scenes with no longer surviving medieval buildings. There are some idyllic rural views of the River Soar and others, just as enticing, of the goods yards, warehouses and factories lining the canal. Many of these are rarely seen images by Victorian artists such as Henton, Fulleylove, Gittins and Elgood – all of which provide another good reason to acquire this splendid volume.

Rowan Roenisch

Summer Visits 2011

Tuesday 31st May 2011

Full day visit to Sheffield - NOW FULLY BOOKED

Tuesday 21st June 2011

Evening Visit to St Thomas' Church and South Wigston

A few places left - please contact Marion Hare as soon as possible

Sunday 10th July 2011

The D H Lawrence Museum, Eastwood and Papplewick Pumping Station, Nottinghamshire



The ornate interior of Papplewick Pumping Station

We will have a guided tour of the D H Lawrence Birthplace Museum, and a visit to the Durban House Heritage Centre with displays on mining history and material connected with the writer and his life in Eastwood. Nearby Papplewick Pumping Station (Marriott Ogle Tarbotton - 1884), housing two beam engines by James Watt & Co, is an ostentatious display of civic pride, with stained glass, elaborately decorated columns and polished brass, steel and mahogany.

Departures:

Knighton Park Road - 9.30 am Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate - 9.45 am

Estimated arrival back in Leicester: 6.00 pm

Cost £26 (including tours of both sites)

There are refreshment facilities at the D H Lawrence Museum, or, if preferred bring a packed lunch.

Reply by Friday 10th June 2011

Numbers limited - please book early

Tuesday 26th July 2011

An Evening Walk around Aylestone Park, led by Richard Gill

Cost £5.00

Meet 7.00pm in the forecourt of Aylestone Leisure Centre (corner of Knighton Lane East and Saffron Lane)

Reply by Friday 1st July 2011

Saturday 27th August 2011**Three North-West Leicestershire Churches – visit led by Richard Gill**

Churches to be visited:

St Peter's, Bardon (J B Everard 1899) 'idiosyncratic from the outside, the interior serious and quite lavishly done' ; St Christopher's, Ellistown (Goddard, Paget and Goddard 1896) ; St John the Baptist, Hugglescote (J B Everard 1878-88) 'easily the best 19C church [in the county] outside Leicester' according to Pevsner!

Departures:

Knighton Park Road - 11.30 am Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate - 11.45 am

Estimated arrival back in Leicester: 6.00 pm

Cost: £15.

It is hoped to stop at a pub for drinks around lunch time. Please bring a packed lunch if preferred.

Reply by Friday 15th July 2011

Numbers limited - please book early

For further details please contact

Mrs M Hare, Bookings Secretary – 0116 273 9710

Lectures - Autumn 2011:**Tuesday 6th September 2011****'Ada, Countess of Lovelace and Charles Babbage: 19th Century Computer Pioneers'**

David Herbert

Tuesday 4th October 2011**'The Churches of Sir George Gilbert Scott'**

Dr Geoffrey Brandwood

Wednesday 9th November 2011***Professor Brian Allison Memorial Lecture*****'The Mysteries of Northanger Abbey'**

Jane Austen and Victorian Gothic Architecture

Richard Gill

In the "Hansom Hall" Leicester A E College, Wellington Street.

Please note change of date and Venue

Tuesday 6th December 2011 (Christmas Event)**'The Splendours of Victorian London'**

Derek Seaton

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
A donation of £2.00 is requested to cover costs

Other dates for your Diary

(Space permitting, we will be happy to publicise other events and activities which may be of interest to Victorian Society members)

Leicestershire Industrial History Society

Website – lihs.org.uk **Secretary** – David Lyne - 0116 2919706

Sunday 26th June – Visit to Cromford Mill near Matlock with guided tour of site.

Sunday 14th August – Walk along part of the former Leicester/Swannington railway line near Bagworth. Further details available nearer the date.

See contact details above.

May we have your e-mail address?

Sending our Newsletter and notification of events electronically is convenient, green and saves the Victorian Society postage.

The Leicester Group Newsletter is available in PDF Format, which can be read on any computer with Adobe Acrobat Reader (available as a free download).

If you would be happy to receive the Newsletter as a .pdf file please contact Peter Ellis (ellisdesign@talktalk.net) with your e-mail address.

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.

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.

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

D H Lawrence Museum and Papplewick Pumping Station, Notts

Sunday 10th July 2011 - Booking deadline - 10th June

Please return, with payment made out to "The Victorian Society"
To

Mrs Marion Hare
10 Church Road
Evington
Leicester
LE5 6FA

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Tuesday 26th July 2011 - Booking deadline - 1st July

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Saturday 27th August 2011 - Booking deadline - 15th July

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D H Lawrence Museum and Papplewick Pumping Station, Notts

Sunday 10th July 2011 - Booking deadline - 10th June

Please reserve places @ £26.00 per person for this visit

Name/address:

Post Code

Telephone

e-mail

Please list other participants:

Cheque enclosed for £



Evening walk around Aylestone Park

Tuesday 26th July 2011 - Booking deadline - 1st July

Please reserve places @ £5.00 per person for this visit

Name/address:

Post Code

Telephone

e-mail

Please list other participants:

Cheque enclosed for £



Three North-West Leicestershire Churches

Saturday 27th August 2011 - Booking deadline - 15th July

Please reserve places @ £12.00 per person for this visit

Name/address:

Post Code

Telephone

e-mail

Please list other participants:

Cheque enclosed for £

