

Branchline

Spring 2011

Editor's Note

This edition of Branchline focuses on a new warden project, environmental records available from LRERC, the exciting new NatureSpot website and much more. The deadline for articles for the next issue is 1st August 2011.

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Let's Get Talking!

Launching the 'Village Voices' project in association with the University of Leicester and the East Midlands Oral History Archive...

There is more to your voice than you may have thought. Explore the fascinating world of accent and dialect and get recording and researching the heritage of words and speech in your village. We need your help with this new project taking place from June 2011 to January 2012. Turn to page 21 to find out more, and fill in the enclosed form to be part of the action!

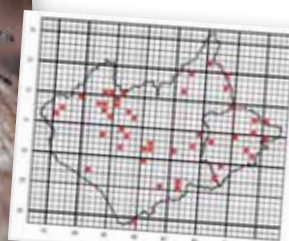


Atlas of Carabidae – Released!

The Provisional Atlas of Carabidae of Leicestershire & Rutland has been produced by Derek Lott, Graham Finch and Gareth Price. The atlas includes a VC55 Carabidae Checklist, distribution maps of all the species reliably recorded in VC55, and an extensive gazetteer of all the sites which feature in the records.

This combined with the Royal Entomological Society taxonomic

key for ground beetles and Derek Lott's "The Leicestershire Coleopterists" should provide all the necessary means for recorders to start to record ground beetles.



Carabus violaceus (Linnaeus, 1758)
57 Records in Total Occurring At 48 Sites
Occupying 48 Tetrads

First recorded by George Crabbe in the 1780s from Belvoir Castle. Frederick Bates and Don Tozer both described it as common. Found in a variety of habitats on humid soils including old gardens.



Archaeology

'Unique' Anglo-Saxon gold Bracteate mount from Melton area

Wendy Scott, Finds Liaison Officer

This amazing gold pendant, known as a 'Bracteate' was found last summer, just north of Melton Mowbray. It is currently going through the Treasure process and the Museum Service hope to acquire it to display in the newly refurbished Melton Carnegie Museum.

However, it is not the first bracteate from this area. A silver C-bracteate has been found in a grave in East Leake, a gold F-bracteate in Market Overton and a fragment of a silver bracteate (that cannot be classified) from a grave at Broughton Lodge, Willoughby on the Wolds

'New Type'

Whilst preparing the Treasure report I spoke to Bracteate expert Dr Charlotte Behr of Roehampton Univeristy, who classified it as an 'A-bracteate,' which date to the late 5th century. She advised me that A-bracteates are not that common in Anglo-Saxon England and in fact this example is a new model and the first instance showing a drinking vessel, probably a drinking horn or perhaps an even more luxurious glass goblet.



Photograph showing both sides, you can clearly see how the decoration has been pressed into the thin foil

Dr Behr very kindly completed the treasure report for the find, which is reproduced below:

"The pendant is made of a disc of gold sheet that is scratched, torn and bent in several places. A simple gold strip serves as loop. The gold underneath the loop is far more reddish than the remainder of the pendant.

The centre is decorated with the design of a male head with bust. In the tradition of the image of the emperor on late Roman coins and medallions that served as model the head is shown in profile. The hairstyle is decorated with a diadem ending in a framed triangle of three dots with a spiral in front above the forehead and in cross-shaped double lines behind the head.

The coat is lined by two dotted borders and consists of four parts with stylized folds, the upper two ending in two mirror-image spirals. The three lines ending in open semi-circles on the back of the coat reflect the three pendilia, pendants ending in a precious stone or pearl, hanging off the imperial brooch (Sebaste & Bonfante 2001, 244). The bent feature in front of the coat may be discussed hypothetically as an arm with a hand holding a conical drinking vessel decorated with three bands at its upper end in front of the mouth. In front and behind the head are several symbols and imitations of Latin letters. Along the edge of the flan are incisions imitating a beaded framing wire."



Archaeology

"Discussion:

The find is only the sixth known A-bracteate (defined as a pendant with an anthropomorphic head in profile) from early Anglo-Saxon England (Behr 2010; Behr & Marzinzik, forthcoming). Whereas the find and its iconography have close links with Scandinavian bracteates, it was most probably made in England as it is possible to tell from some technical idiosyncrasies, like the absence of a framing wire and the undecorated loop. If the identification of the drinking vessel is correct, this would be a unique element within bracteate iconography."

Wendy Scott

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Visit www.finds.org.uk to see what has been found in your area.



Illustration by Jane Sandoe, clearly showing the 'unique' drinking horn or glass

The Story of Ridge and Furrow

Helen Wells, Historic Environment Record Officer

As you cross the Midlands you cannot fail to notice the sinuous earthwork banks that fill many of the pasture fields. Leicestershire has some of the finest surviving examples of these earthworks and we are often asked about them.

The story probably begins in the late Anglo-Saxon period – the 8th or 9th centuries – when villages began to be established. Although there is debate about when it started, the 'open field' system was definitely in place by the 12th/13th centuries. Villages developed around the county, and around these settlements an 'open field' system was organised. There were few if any hedgerows – the medieval landscape was an open one, very unlike the countryside we have today.

The area around each village was divided into long strips (or 'lands'), which averaged 7 by 80 metres, though there was considerable variation. It is these 'lands' that we can see today, preserved as ridge and furrow. Groups of 'lands' with parallel furrows were called 'furlongs' (not to be confused with the modern linear measurement – this was an area of land). Groups of 'furlongs' were often grouped together into larger blocks called 'fields'. Most villages in Leicestershire had three 'fields', supporting a three year crop rotation. People were assigned 'lands' scattered throughout the area to be farmed, so they all had some good and bad ground, and they always had some land to farm whichever 'fields' were left fallow.



Ridge and furrow at Baggrave (Copyright Cambridge University Collection)



Archaeology



A picture from an Anglo-Saxon manuscript

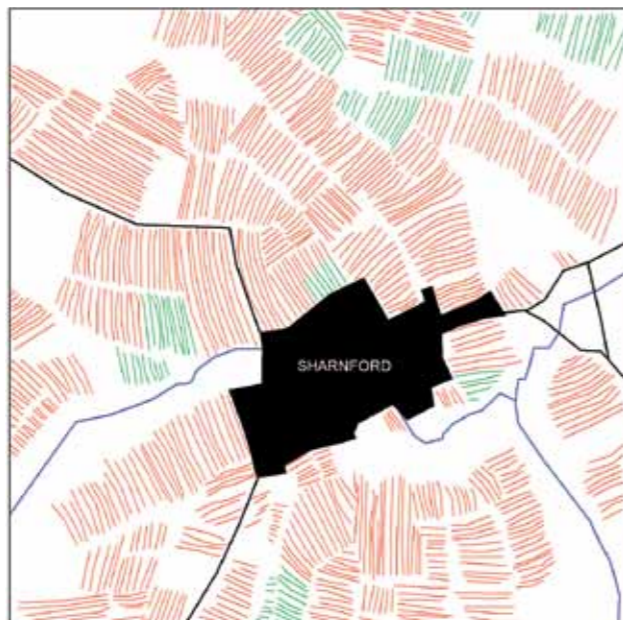
This explanation of how the land was divided may help explain the ridge and furrow, though it does not explain exactly how the earthworks were formed. The 'lands' were usually ploughed in a clockwise direction, with the plough pushing soil so that it caused a ridge in the centre. You may notice, especially when looking at aerial photographs, that there is often a twist towards the end of the 'lands' (a sort of reverse-S).

This was caused by longer plough teams pulling to the left in preparation for the turn at the end of the 'land'. Ploughing also transferred soil in a forwards direction, which was deposited at the end of the 'land', forming a heap called a 'headland'.

In the 1980s Fred Hartley (Keeper, Collections Resources Centre), used aerial photographs to plot the former extent of these landscapes of ridge and furrow (using cropmarks and soilmarks as well as extant earthworks). The finished product (the area around Sharnford reproduced here

was redrawn by me) records the medieval agricultural system at its peak.

This shows that the vast majority of Leicestershire's countryside would have been farmed in this fashion. The medieval population was at its height in the early 14th century. Following disease, economic turmoil and an increasing trend towards livestock farming, by the 15th century there were no longer enough people to maintain the old agricultural system. Some poorer land was left as permanent pasture. Villages shrank, some were abandoned altogether. Land began to be enclosed with hedges, initially by agreement between landowners, later driven by Acts of Parliament in the years between 1750 and 1850.



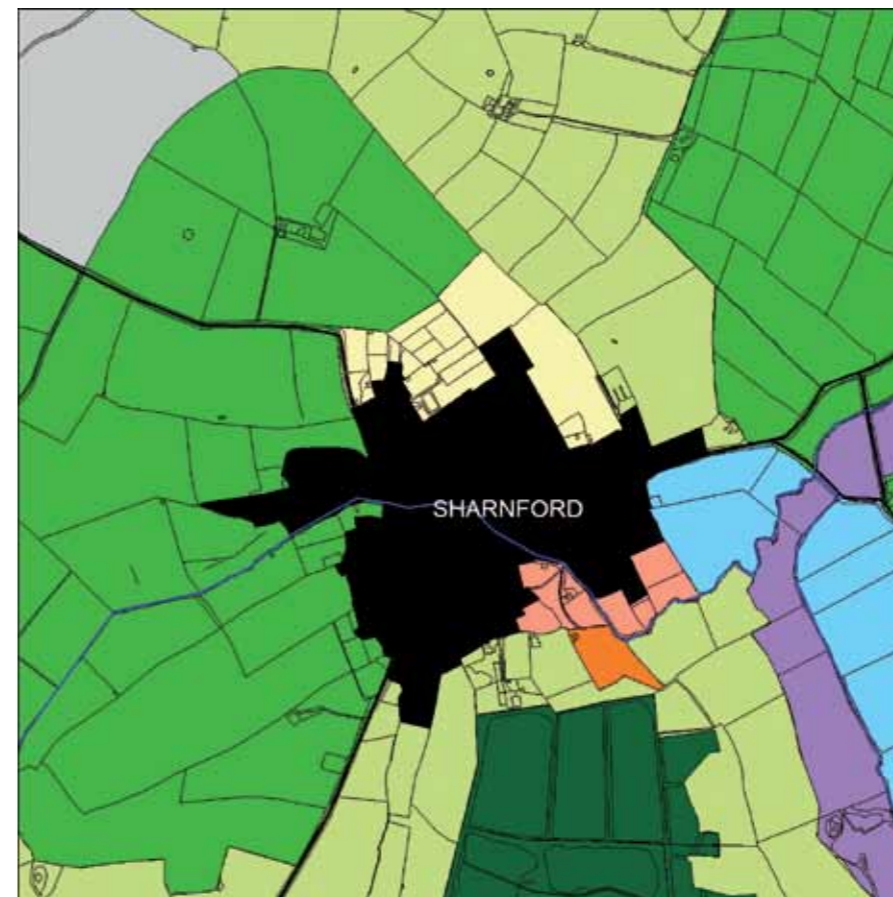
Recreation of the extent of medieval ridge and furrow around Sharnford (the only remaining parts (c.2006) are marked in green)

When you look at the fields, you can see that sometimes the field boundaries follow the curve of the ridge and furrow. Field boundaries such as this are likely to be earlier than the straight hedgerows that cut through the earthworks. By the 19th century the fields were enclosed and 'agricultural improvement' meant that ridge and furrow was gradually being ploughed away, with the exception of land that remained in pasture. (It is probably worth mentioning at this point that some straight ridge and furrow is said to have been caused by steam ploughing, rather than medieval ploughing.)

Further changes in the landscape occurred in the later 20th century. Following World War II, field boundaries were increasingly removed in order to create massive fields that could be farmed with larger machinery. More and more ridge and furrow earthworks were ploughed away. Today we see only remnants of earthworks that once blanketed the county – earthworks that (as pasture) are often great homes for wildlife as well as being fascinating archaeological features.



Archaeology



Historic Characterisation Project extract for the area around Sharnford

The recent 'Historic Landscape Characterisation Project' carried out by John Robinson (our Project Officer) shows where these different field types are present in the landscape today.

Character types include informal 'piecemeal enclosure' (generally respecting ridge and furrow), 'planned enclosure' (straight edged, measured out by surveyors), and 'very large post-war fields'. On the previous page I have reproduced the same area around Sharnford used earlier to demonstrate the open field system. When you look at it closely, today's countryside reflects activity during many different periods...

As it becomes less economical to keep livestock, it is likely that more ridge and furrow will be destroyed. It is not generally protected by law, though fragments may form part of larger Scheduled Monuments, so the outlook may seem bleak. However, farmers that enter into Environmental Stewardship Schemes (Entry Level, Higher Level and Organic) can be paid by Natural England to keep their ridge and furrow as pasture.

For further details about farm Stewardship Schemes:

<http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/farming/funding/es/>

Helen Wells

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HLC Type

- Miscellaneous Floodplain Fields
- Other Plantation
- Other Small Rectilinear Fields
- Paddocks and Closes
- Piecemeal Enclosure
- Planned Enclosure
- Re-organised Piecemeal Enclosure
- Sports Fields
- Very Large Post-War Fields

Further reading:



'Medieval Fields' by David Hall (Shire Books, 1982)



'The New Reading the Landscape', particularly Chapter 8, by Richard Muir (University of Exeter Press, 2000)



'Village, Hamlet and Field' by Carenza Lewis, Christopher Dyer & Patrick Mitchell-Fox (Windgather Press, 2001)

'Glebe Terriers and Open Field Leicestershire' by M W Beresford (Transactions of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society Vol 24, 1948, p97-126)



David Nicholls, Founder and Chair of NatureSpot

This month a new web site has been launched – all about the wildlife of Leicestershire and Rutland. The new NatureSpot web site includes a host of features that not only celebrate the nature on our doorstep, but also enable the public to add their own wildlife images and sightings.

We want the community to help add to the knowledge of what lives where in Leicestershire and Rutland. Without good biodiversity data, land-owners, conservation bodies and planners cannot protect important sites or know how best to manage habitats to help the wildlife living there.

A central feature of the NatureSpot web site is its illustrated Species Library, with over 2000 species now covered. Every photo has been taken in Leicestershire and Rutland, showing when and where it was taken. New species are being added all the time as records and images are submitted. Every species has one or more images and information on how to recognise it, where and when to see it, life history details and status information. It also shows distribution maps of records from across the UK and also specifically in Leicestershire and Rutland.

No one knows how many species live in our counties and part of the excitement of this site is discovering what is out there and which new species turn up.

Our local biodiversity is changing all the time with some new species arriving and others disappearing.

Some of this change is the natural ebb and flow of populations but the twin threats of climate change and habitat loss are increasing the pace of change. It is therefore more important than ever to get regular records of wildlife sightings.

The online Recording Form on the NatureSpot site is designed for convenience and ease of use by the general public. Even tricky data requirements like the grid reference are entered by just clicking on a map. All the records submitted are checked and then passed onto the Records Centre (LRERC), the County Recorders and other key bodies.

If you do not know what species it is, identification help is on hand. The species library is arranged in galleries that offer a useful reference guide, and if you have a photograph you can upload this as 'unknown' and get help from other users.

All uploaded images are added to the Latest Images page, giving an ever-changing picture of what is around and what has been seen. All images allow comments so you can let the photographer know what you think or ask a question.

Another interesting feature of the new web site is the Wild Places section. This provides a showcase of local sites known to be of wildlife interest, such as nature reserves and country parks. Here you can see a list of the wildlife seen there and view a gallery of species images taken at the site. An interactive map gives an overview of these Wild Places across Leicestershire and Rutland so you can see what lies near to you. You can also search by District and Parish. New Wild Places are being added regularly so if you have a favourite place let us know.

To submit a record or image and get the most from the site you have to register, though this is free and quick. Once you have submitted records and images you can view, sort and download these at any time on the My Records and My Images pages. For example, you can keep a list of birds in your garden or the butterflies you see in 2011. You can also add records of wildlife you have seen previously to ensure your lists are complete.

There is more, such as a guide to wildlife books and internet sites, links to local wildlife organisations and the NatureChat forum. Why not explore for yourself?

New Arrivals

These are just a few of the new species that have been found in Leicestershire and Rutland, in the last year or two, for the first time.



Swollen-thighed Beetle *Oedemera nobilis*



Western Conifer Seed Bug
Leptoglossus occidentalis



A Mirid Bug *Miridius quadrivirgatus*

Some arrivals are welcome additions, such as the exotic Little Egret, but others are invaders that can harm our native wildlife, such as the Turkish Narrow-clawed Crayfish. Find out more about these at www.naturespot.org.uk.

NatureSpot is a Registered Charity. It is supported by Leicestershire County Council, Leicester City Council, The Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust and Groundwork Leicester and Leicestershire.

www.naturespot.org.uk

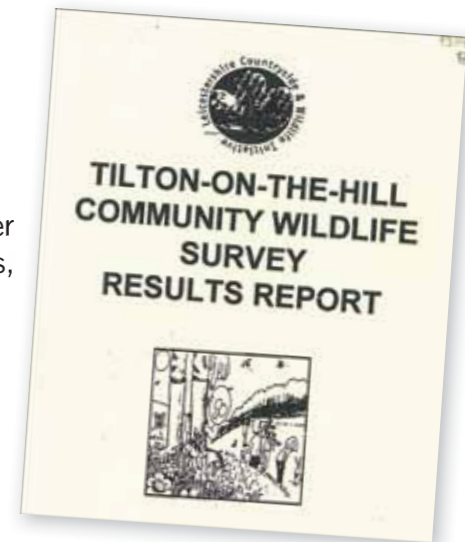
Wildlife Records in the Parish Archive

Sue Timms, Senior Ecologist

Are you interested in historic wildlife records for your Parish? If so, we can now send you a scanned copy on a disc of our archive wildlife files for your Parish.

LRERC's paper archive of wildlife reports and sightings is mainly from the 1970s to 1990s, although there are some earlier documents for some of our special sites. Documents range from species lists and site reports, to letters, newspaper cuttings, community surveys, habitat surveys, hedgerow surveys, veteran trees, pond surveys... and the content ranges from the esoteric to the commonplace.

Some of our 262 Parishes have been very well recorded (we have over 150 documents for Groby, and over 200 for Shepshed, for example) but some hardly seem to have been visited by naturalists at all. Horn in Rutland has only 9 documents in our archive - and poor



Preston is probably the least well-recorded, with only 3. We also do not hold many archive documents for Leicester City; these were transferred to the City Council about 10 years ago.



Records for Tilton... literally on the back of an envelope!

Very few of the species records in the archive have been put onto our electronic database, so we do not know how many records are hidden in there – maybe 100,000 to 200,000 species. Many of the records (perhaps 80%, but again we do not know) are for flowering plants and relate to a specific site or habitat, but there are also records for birds, mammals, amphibians, butterflies, moths and other invertebrates.

For those who are interested in species recording, an interesting project might be to extract this species data so that you can start to compile a species list for your Parish. If anyone was interested in doing this it would help LRERC as well, as we could add the data to our species database. Historic data from your Parish would then be accessible to all naturalists interested in a particular site or species in your area.

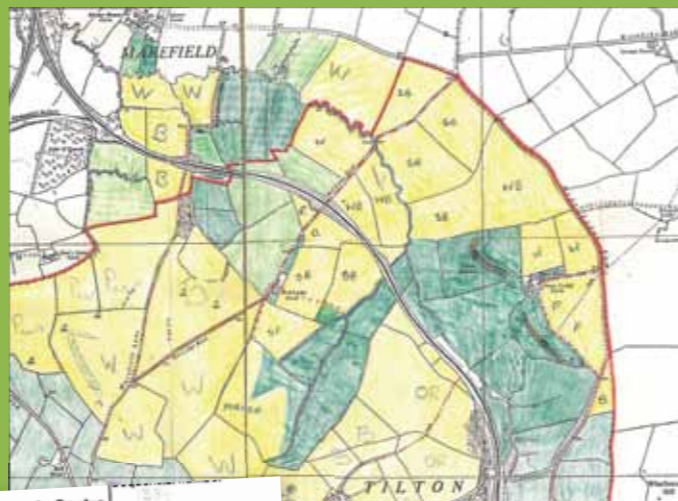
Of especial interest to us are the Parish Surveys done by a team of ecologists working at the Museums Service in the 1980s and early 1990s, under the supervision of the Director, Ian Evans. Their great achievement was to do complete habitat surveys of very nearly all of Leicestershire and Rutland, annotated with target notes for features of interest that they discovered. This is a unique record of how your Parish looked 20 – 25 years ago. It is unlikely that we would ever have the resources to do it all again, but for an individual Parish it would be very interesting to carry out a new habitat survey to find out how the Parish has changed.

Our complete scanned paper archive is the culmination of over a year's work by LRERC's Ecology Records Officers, Anona Finch and Rocio Rodriguez, who have sorted, catalogued and scanned over 15,000 documents. If you are interested in receiving a copy of the archive for your Parish, please contact Sue or Rocio.

To read the documents on your home computer you will need to have a compact disc or DVD drive on your computer, and will need to have Adobe software (this can be downloaded from the Internet).

It will help us to set up the catalogue if you can let us know which Drive your computer uses to read CDs or DVDs (you can find this out by opening up 'My Computer'; under 'Devices with Removable Storage' the Drive is given in brackets after the DVD or CD Drive). It is usually the D Drive, but it might be different on your home PC to your laptop.

Part of the Women's Institute Tilton Habitat survey of 1976



Leicestershire Biological Records Centre	
Sighting Card	Acquisition number 4284A/29
Locality where seen - including parish, underlined, if known TILTON	
Map Reference SK763052	Date 17/1/88
Seen by Name Greg Thurlow / Simon Ford	
Address	
Species Seen - enter only one species on each line	Checklist number
Broadleaved Helleborine (<i>Epipactis helleborina</i>)	
in Tilton Cutting, LRERC. Abbr. on NE bank by large Silver Birch near recent hedge	
4 Spikes (1 spike green / 3 spikes violet/purple - showing possible characteristics of <i>E. purpurata</i>)	
Copied to DB/JSYST LRERC 17/1/88	

Rare plant records in Tilton Parish

If you are interested in extracting the historic species data from the files, please get in touch and we will send you some guidance on how to go about it.

Sue Timms
0116 267 0008

Rocio Rodriguez
0116 267 0018

Recorders' Conference 2011

Gareth Price, Community Support Ecologist

The annual Leicestershire & Rutland Recorders' Conference took place on Saturday 26th February at Rothley Village Hall. Over 40 taxon specialists, county recorders, members of local natural history groups and heritage wardens attended. The event started with Richard Bennett, the Senior Ecologist for British Waterways' talk about "Engaging People in Recording & Management on Waterways in Leicestershire".

British Waterways manages 2,200 miles of canals and river navigations. Richard talked about the Annual Waterway Wildlife Survey and the Floating Pennywort Monitoring and Management Programme. The Annual Waterway Wildlife Survey began in 2004, currently in its 7th year, its purpose is threefold; to promote the canals and rivers, obtain species records and to generate public engagement.



The survey received 42,000 records in 2009 from roughly 500 participants. The survey was continued in 2010 and received 365 records from Leicestershire in 2010 including sightings of Red Kite, Otter and Kingfisher. The launch of the 2011 survey was on the 4th April at www.waterscape.com

Floating Pennywort spread downstream through Leicester in December 2004; if left unmanaged it can block large river sections. British Waterways have engaged in active sustainable management along the Soar valley.

Second to give a talk was Dr Richard Gornall from the University of Leicester on "New data, new analyses and a new taxonomy for the British & Irish flora". He discussed new evidence such as phylogenetic taxonomy, phylogeny reconstruction and statistical support as a basis for a revised taxonomy. Changes in taxonomy are likely to occur in four of the twenty commonest families including Scrophulariaceae, Apiaceae, Liliaceae and Chenopodiaceae.

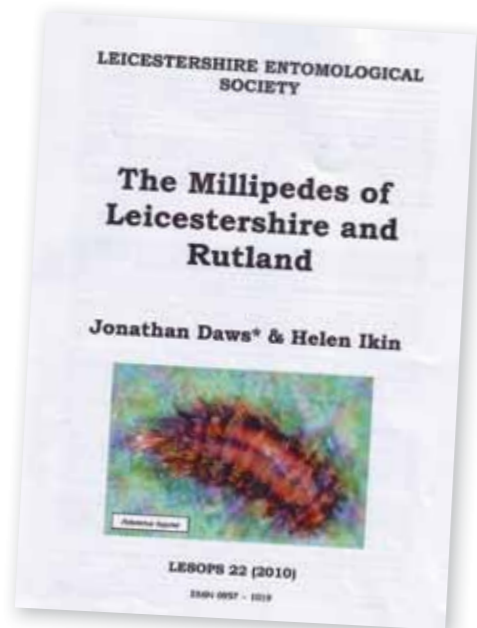
After a tea and coffee break, Delia Shannon gave a presentation on her role as the Biodiversity Manager for Aggregate Industries. Aggregate Industries have produced a Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) covering 1,788 hectares along with 49 International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) red list species.

The BAP addresses the challenges facing Aggregate Industries and includes initiatives aimed at halting species loss and enhancing biodiversity on their sites.

Mike Jeeves, the BSBI Vice County recorder talked about "The Checklist and Rare Plant Register of The Flora of Leicestershire & Rutland". The checklist contains 1,011 native plant species, 748 alien plants, 136 archaeophytes, 346 casuals and 152 hybrids bringing the flora of Leicestershire & Rutland to a total of 1,759.



In the afternoon, Ray Morris, Chairman of the Leicestershire Entomological Society (LES), took the opportunity to briefly review the development of entomology in Leicestershire & Rutland and to talk about the Society. The Society was founded on September 5th 1988 to foster the study and conservation of insects and other invertebrates in VC55. The aim was to ensure continued communication between enthusiasts through indoor and outdoor meetings along with publication of sightings and reports.



The LES has two types of publications, a biannual newsletter and LESOPS (LES Occasional Publications Series) which make more substantial reports of entomological research by members available.

Louise Richmond, the Farm Conservation Adviser for the Farming & Wildlife Advisory Group (FWAG) in Warwickshire & Leicestershire finished the day's presentations. FWAG became an independent charity set up in 1969 to deliver practical, impartial and confidential conservation advice to farmers.

FWAG works to achieve conservation gains on farms by getting farmers interested, giving practical solutions, explaining legislation and providing financial incentives. FWAG actively manages the Environmental Stewardship Scheme which came about in 2005 with four distinct layers including Entry Level, Organic Entry Level, Uplands Entry Level, and Higher Level stewardship.



Aerial photograph of earthworks

FWAG work to ensure prehistoric enclosures overlain by medieval ridge and furrow are protected by taking some of the arable land out of cultivation.

For more information contact Gareth Price on **0116 267 0005** or Gareth.Price@leics.gov.uk

To Lay or Not to Lay a Hedgerow?

Helen Gregory, Countryside and Biodiversity Officer, Oadby & Wigston Borough Council

Hedgerows are habitats of national importance for many species of bird, bats and insects and are recognised as such in the Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland Biodiversity Action Plan. They are particularly important in Leicestershire and Rutland as the two counties have a low percentage of woodland cover and hedgerows can thus contribute to woodland habitat by creating linear wooded corridors.



To lay...

The term hedge-laying is an old one, stretching back many hundreds of years and referring to the traditional skill of laying vertical tree stems (pleachers) between a horizontal and 45 degree angle and interweaving them to form a living fence. It is a traditional form of hedgerow management which ensures the long-term survival of hedgerows, as the laying can increase the natural lifespan of hedge-plants by stimulating growth of new shoots and reinvigorating even large old hawthorn stems. Hedge-laying also helps to thicken out the base of the hedgerow by preventing gaps appearing and this was the main reason it was originally carried out to prevent livestock from escaping out of fields. Hedge management is best undertaken when the plant is dormant which is between mid-October and the end of March, but by leaving it to the later months of the winter season it means that birds can take advantage of the berries over a cold spell. Once a hedge has been laid it can be left to grow on until it requires laying again or it can be maintained by trimming.

Or not to lay...

Hedges which are not laid tend to grow out over time, become thin at the base and in the continued absence of management grow out into lines of trees. This is one of the main reasons for hedgerow decline as the hedge plants will eventually start to die off and become gappy.

However...

It is never a good thing to hedge-lay all the hedgerows in one area at the same time – the reason being that variety is the spice of life and wildlife like the different structures and heights that shrubs and trees can provide at different stages of growth.





Hedge-laying in the Borough

Oadby Grange

Once a hedge has been planted it normally needs to put on about 10-15 years growth before being hedge-laid. Below is an example of a hedgerow which has been growing for 10 years in the vicinity of Florence Wragg Way, Oadby. Over three weekends in January and February 2011 students on a hedge-laying course organised by the Stepping Stones Project based at Leicestershire County Council have laid 200 metres of hedgerow on behalf of the landowner.



Brocks Hill

Brocks Hill Country Park's conservation volunteers have recently completed 20 metres of hedge-laying outside the environment centre as part of the ongoing work on site.



They meet every Wednesday between 10.00am and 3.00pm, so if you would like to become involved in helping the park staff conserve the country park, please contact:

Helen Gregory

helen.gregory@oadby-wigston.gov.uk

0116 257 2651

You may be interested to read about the National Hedgelaying Society

www.hedgelaying.org.uk

They run the National Hedgelaying Championship, which is now in its 33rd year.



Unearthing the History of a Local Notable Tree: A Silver Birch for a Diamond Jubilee Commemorating Queen Victoria's Sixty Year Reign in 1897

Francesca Wall-Bray, Tree Warden for Houghton on the Hill

At the Heritage Conference in Broughton Astley last year, Jon Stokes (Tree Council), challenged Tree Wardens to find and protect by registering, any local trees of historical note. This was of particular interest as I had already been digging up the past on some old trees in my village.

I began by talking to parishioners who had lived in Houghton since Moses parted the Red Sea or thereabouts. Everything I was told about one particular tree, a silver birch, was very intriguing; it made me curious and eager to find out more.

Sieving through what villagers said or from amateur writings, I discovered multiple versions of when and how this silver birch might have been planted: 1) for Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee; 2) for her Silver Jubilee; 3) one of three birches planted for a Jubilee; 4) one of two trees originally planted on a small green further east where the War Memorial now stands; 5) only surviving one of three birches planted for a Jubilee, then moved to make room for the War Memorial.

Oral history is a wonderful and important tool in research. However, over time, events fade: things partially remembered are filled in, repeated incorrectly, added to and so on. Before many years pass, facts erode and 'tales' emerge; the truth may be entirely lost or just deeply imbedded under a patina of accidental embellishment.

However varied or interesting stories about this tree were, facts had to be verified. In addition to wanting to upload the tree's details onto the Woodland Trust's website (Ancient Tree Hunt), I also planned this article; separating fact from fiction was imperative in either case; I wanted to know the truth about this tree.

The first thing was to glean hard facts from documentation. Local history, though possibly swathed in layers of 'story', is usually based on kernels of truth, however small. In the case of this tree, the 'kernels' appeared to be the consistent references to Queen Victoria—and her Jubilees.

Parish Council Records

Having picked as many brains as possible in the village, it was time to begin checking any available, preferably substantiated, written records. It was a fairly sound guess that if the Village or Parish had paid for this tree (or others) to be planted for Queen Victoria's Golden or Silver Jubilee, there could be a record of it somewhere.



The Parish Council Record would be ideal, that is, if the tree(s) were planted in the late 1890's: Parish Councils (England) were formed under the Local Government Act of 1894. If the trees were planted post-1894, and if Houghton Parish Council had been involved, there might well be some mention of the expense or event. However, if the trees were planted before 1894, there would be no Parish Council Record.

I would have to begin tracking down private documentation; specifically, something that would mention the planting of these tree(s) in the village—and dates. Such a narrowly-focused search would take a great deal of time with no guarantee of ever verifying the tree's origins.



This highlighted the fact that any Parish Council's Minutes can be immensely valuable for local historical research. It was clear that Houghton's Parish Council Record was an excellent place to continue research to confirm whether this tree was planted during Queen Victoria's reign.



With a fairly good starting point (Queen Victoria's Jubilees), and at least one substantiated record to go through (Parish Council Minutes), it was time to brush up on Victorian history. This only took a few minutes on the internet; the dates of Queen Victoria's Jubilees were Silver 1862, Golden 1887 and Diamond 1897.

Having reviewed these facts, it was then easy to dismiss the Silver Jubilee as a possible planting date, because Prince Albert had died in 1861. Considering the deep mourning Queen Victoria succumbed to,

it seemed highly unlikely that the Village, or indeed Country, would have done anything to commemorate her first twenty-five years on the throne, while she was so newly bereaved.

Closing In On the Quarry

Next on the list was the Golden Jubilee of 1887. This was certainly a possibility but there would be no Parish Council Record to look through. This time I felt a twinge of disappointment—then nipped it quickly in the bud. I had one more date: the Diamond Jubilee of 1897; I crossed my fingers and made plans to visit the Wigston Record Office.

Grab a Local and Get Thee to the Record Office

A firm believer that two sets of eyes are better than one, I invited a friend to go with me to the Record Office. In this case, the second set of eyes belonged to Mrs. Ann Sharman: resident of Houghton Village from the mid-1950's. The little I know about Parish history or the old farming families wasn't going to make an impact on my research, though my Californian enthusiasm and natural persistence would.

I knew Mrs. Sharman's personal experience and intimate knowledge of Houghton and of villagers from days gone by would be a tremendous asset. Whereas I would have to research family names and connections for Houghton of the 1890's, Mrs. Sharman would be able to illuminate or pin-point most such references from memory.

The Hunt Is Over!

We headed over to the Wigston Record Office, signed in, and were soon pouring over an old book that holds Houghton Parish Council Minutes from 1894 to 1967. With my guestimates in mind and one more Jubilee to go, I cut to the chase and scanned through Parish Council Minutes for the late 1890's. On page nineteen was an entry—exactly what I had been hoping—and looking for:

Houghton Parish Council Minutes:

“ Meeting Held Monday, February 21st 1898 all the councillors present, Mr. T. Fielding in the Chair. The minutes of the previous meeting were read and passed. It was reported by the committee appointed for the purpose that sufficient funds having been forthcoming two trees (instead of one) had been planted on the 30th of December in commemoration of Her Majesty Queen Victoria's long reign of sixty years. On the open space near the top of the village opposite the house occupied by Mrs. Radford a chestnut planted by Mrs. Winkley of the Rectory (Houghton). And one on the green in the middle of the village opposite the entrance to the premises occupied by Mrs. Francis Fielding a silver birch planted by Miss Hart of Ingarsby. A large number of parishioners were present. The total cost of trees, guards, and planting was £3 no shillings no pence.”



This was such an exciting find; it clarified everything about this tree in a few sentences. While the oral history of the silver birch had given me a good starting point, searching the Parish Council Record evaporated the 'stories' about this tree and allowed true events to emerge once more.

The trees were planted for Queen Victoria's Jubilee but the Diamond Jubilee, not Golden nor Silver. Only two commemorative trees had been planted in 1897, not three: a Silver Birch and a Chestnut. And in the early 1920's it was the Chestnut—not the Silver Birch—that had been dug up and replanted near the Village Hall, (not near the pub) in the hope of saving it when public space was needed for the Village's War Memorial. And it was the Chestnut that did not survive being transplanted, as opposed to the accidentally fictitious 'two more silver birches'.

The Houghton Parishioners of 1897 who went out to watch, and the ones who lived in the houses nearby, where each of these two commemorative trees were planted, on what was surely a bitterly cold December 30th, have long gone and so too most memories of them. Though not all: Mrs. Ann Sharman and Mr. Ray Davis (who was born and lived in Houghton most of his 60+ years), between them, were able to shed a good deal of light on 'Who was Who' in the 1898 Houghton Parish Minutes

(tree planted December 1897, HPC meeting February 1898).

The Fieldings were farmers with quite a prominent standing in Houghton; the family was extensive, even by Victorian standards. It is thought that Mr. Tom Fielding and Mrs. Francis Fielding were married. The house referred to in connection with the latter in the PC minutes for 1898 is now called Willowsic and known to have been built by Fieldings. Mrs. Radford was Head of Houghton School. Mrs. Winkley, wife of Houghton's Rector, did many 'charitable' acts in the village, taught Sunday School and planted the Chestnut.

Unfortunately, nothing is now known of Miss Hart of Ingarsby; though perhaps we may guess that she had green fingers: the Silver Birch that she planted is still alive today.



It has not been possible to locate any photographs from 1897, but here is one from a 1918 Garden Party at Houghton Rectory. Many of the people named above very likely attended this event though not identified in this picture; no doubt there are one or more Fieldings. The Rector Mr. Winkley, wearing black, is standing at the back left and his wife is seated in the far right wearing a black hat. I like to think that Miss Hart of Ingarsby, green fingers suitably gloved for the day—is sitting here also—caught forever, enjoying her tea.

Flash forward 24 years from 1897 to 1921. Perhaps many of the same Villagers who had also seen the Chestnut tree first being planted, went out to watch again when it was being moved to make way for the War Memorial. On a damp or cold day (very possibly both), while men worked to free the tree from the soil, Parishioners probably came and went, standing briefly to watch and chat to one another.

No doubt these villagers commented 'that it seemed just like yesterday' when the Chestnut had first been planted. Perhaps one or two said that 'it was a different world back then', back when the tree was planted—back before the Great War. Eventually the Chestnut was transported down through the village and replanted; that it did not survive created a good deal of heated feeling in the Village.

Changing Times and Evergreen Themes Today, as it has ever been, there is a small green at the eastern end of Houghton Village closest to the A47. Here in 1897 the Chestnut tree was planted. Then in the early 1920's, in an utterly transformed world, the sitting Parish Council voted that Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee Chestnut tree, be moved in order to erect a War Memorial.

Each generation seeks to mark important and poignant events and experiences of their times in some meaningful way. We want to



Trees

celebrate, commemorate and memorialise; we all want to say in some manner that 'we' or 'someone' we respect or love—had been alive, had mattered.

Planting trees in 1897 for Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee was not only an act of commemorating the Queen's obvious staying power but it also celebrated what that sixty year period of time had meant for Britain. Erecting a War Memorial in the early 1920's, issued forth from that indelible part of our human hearts: we want to remember those we have loved and lost; those who loved their country and lost their lives in service, ultimately, protecting the ones they themselves loved.

This 'hunt' was quite a journey and though most journeys end, some beckon us onwards and a new journey unwinds. There is another old tree in Houghton, an Oak. I've been told a number of different stories about when it was planted. How quickly one becomes ensnared in the branches of history; go on, find your own old tree, get the facts and get it registered on the Woodlands Trust website. I've got to get on now and see about this Oak...



LCC Inspection of Silver Birch 10th February 2011:

Mr. Peter Kenyon, Forestry and Arboricultural Officer, kindly agreed to come and inspect this silver birch. It stands in a very small green next to the parking lot of the Black Horse pub. While Kenyon took measurements and made his inspection, I took a few pictures and typed up his comments on my iphone.

At present this tree is 12.5 metres high and 1.8 metres in girth. Recently however, both in 2001 and 2006 LCC removed upper crown dieback. Now, knowing the true age of this tree at 113, Kenyon noted it was quite surprising there was no significant large deadwood or twig dieback evident. He observed the tree was vigorously in full bud and added it would be interesting to see it in leaf.

Just below the present crown is the decay fungus specific to birch: *Piptoporus betulinus*. There is a fruiting body and a more recent one below it. As there is no weight or structure above these, (due to crown work in 2006), the presence of this fungus has no safety consequence. There is a cavity at two metres; the result of branch loss. Lastly this tree has a lot of branch galls that are akin to witch broom. These are not necessarily age related and fortunately, nothing to worry about. For two days prior to our site visit there had been severe to strong winds yet the debris was quite minor, just small twigs.

Although some silver birches reach 100 years in ideal conditions such as an open parkland or garden, the fact that this tree has survived to this goodly age (on an ever-diminishing bit of green with traffic in all directions) is still very noteworthy. Mr. Kenyon, now fully aware of the age and history of this commemorative tree (considered to be in the 'notable' category by Woodland Trust), will continue to inspect the tree every three years as part of LCC's ongoing commitment to highway trees.

It is important that the tree and its history be safeguarded for the future. A record will be held by LCC Forestry Department, the tree has been registered on the Woodland Trust website and will also be entered into an upcoming project, Houghton Archives. In this manner, we Tree Wardens may help not only to protect old or notable trees in our parishes--but also help to unearth local history--and pass it down to future generations.



Museums

Exhibitions and a Spring Clean

Geoffrey Hall, Curator – Natural Life (Botany)

The Natural Life team at the Collections Resources Centre, Barrow upon Soar has been busy with supporting three exhibitions held during the autumn and winter.

Loughborough Naturalists' 50th Anniversary Exhibition

As part of their activities to celebrate their 50th anniversary, the Loughborough Naturalists' Club mounted an exhibition about the Club in the Community Gallery at Snibston Discovery Museum, Coalville. The focus of the exhibition was on the Club's history, the activities of its current and former members, and the wildlife of the Charnwood and Ashby areas, where the Club has studied. Although the exhibition was only open from 9th November until 31st December 2010, over 5,500 visitors saw it!

The content and layout of the exhibition were decided by the Club, with some input from the Natural Life team, who provided advice and some specimens from the County Council's Collections that had been donated by the Club's members over the years. Comments about the exhibition have been very positive, and it was a privilege for the team to work with such dedicated and enthusiastic naturalists.

Worn to be Wild

Recently on at Snibston, 'Worn to be Wild', was an exhibition by costume maker and textile artist, Kate Plumtree, who uses the natural world to provide inspiration for costume design. The garments are made in the style of those worn during several historical periods (Medieval, Tudor, 18th Century, etc.) and are inspired by birds and mammals, many of which are local to Leicestershire. From a medieval deer to a contemporary hedgehog, each costume has been carefully designed and constructed by observing the movement, character, habitat and style of each creature. They were complemented by two cases of animals from the Natural Life collections.



Owls are not what they seem

Melton Carnegie Museum

Following the investment of £1m by the Heritage Lottery Fund and Leicestershire County Council, the Melton Carnegie Museum has undertaken a major building project which has created a new state-of-the-art gallery, study area and community space for museum activities, schools, volunteers and community groups. A new gallery under the theme of 'Changing Life in Rural Britain' has been opened for which the Natural Life team provided plant and animal specimens, models and books. A display case in the Gallery focuses on animals and plants that have either declined or increased in the Melton area over the last 25 years, telling a story of local wildlife. The exhibition also has a number of electronic photo frames displaying photographs of local wildlife provided by local naturalists, which change with the seasons.

Tender Loving Care (TLC)

Part of the routine work of the Museums Service is to maintain the displays of natural life exhibits at museums around the county. Natural Life specimens have been on display at Charnwood Museum since its opening over a decade ago. These are monitored regularly for signs of pests, dirt and general wear and tear. Over the winter, working with the Service's Conservation staff, a number were taken off display so that essential conservation work could be done to ensure a clean bill of health for the coming years. They are now back on display and look much better for some 'TLC' from the Curatorial staff.

Geoffrey Hall

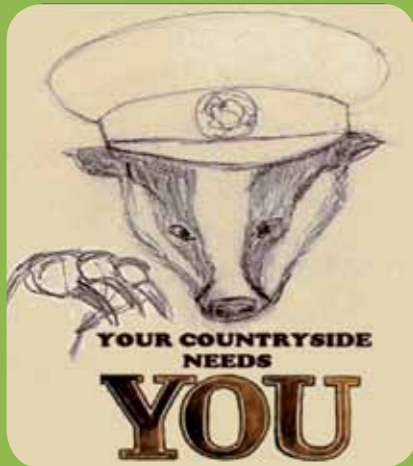
Geoffrey.Hall@leics.gov.uk

0116 3058293



Museums

Warden Recruitment Drive 2011!



Coming soon to a village near you, Liz Blood and Peter Liddle will be looking for new Heritage and Archaeology Wardens for 'empty' parishes.

This will be done on a district-by-district basis, throughout Leicestershire and Rutland, beginning with Blaby.

We will be writing to all wardens and Parish Councils to verify the current positions filled, and contact details for each, and will be seeking out new volunteers to fill the 'gaps'.

If you know any willing candidates, please get in touch!

Liz Blood

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New Hallaton Helmet Discoveries

Helen Sharp, Project Officer **Harborough Museum**

Painstaking work on the ornate Roman cavalry parade helmet found at Hallaton, Leicestershire is revealing intriguing images that have been hidden for 2,000 years. The helmet is also giving archaeologists a fascinating insight into how these prestige objects were made.

The best preserved cheekpiece features an Emperor on horseback (University of Leicester Archaeological Services)

The helmet was excavated along with over 5,000 Iron Age and Roman coins, thousands of pig bones, a bronze tankard handle and mysterious and unique silver objects known as the Hallaton Treasure. These finds appear to have been ritual sacrifices at a Late Iron Age shrine belonging to the Corieltavi, the Celtic inhabitants of the East Midlands around 2,000 years ago. The finds are on display at Harborough Museum in an award-winning gallery.



The helmet was lifted from the site in a plaster of Paris block as it was too fragile to excavate on site. The block was taken to the British Museum where conservators Marilyn Hockey and Fleur Shearman have been excavating the extremely fragile remains and piecing them together for two and a half years. Another year of work will see the helmet stabilised and prepared for display at Harborough Museum in 2012. In the meantime, visitors can view webcam footage of Marilyn and Fleur patiently working on the helmet, allowing them to appreciate the enormity of the task.

Conservation work has revealed that the helmet block contains the parts of at least one helmet comprising of an iron core covered with a very fine silver sheet which has intricate designs hammered onto it using a technique called repoussé. The helmet consists of a bowl which covers the head, a neck guard and two hinged cheek pieces to protect the side of the face. The best preserved cheek piece bears the image of a triumphant Emperor on horseback trampling a barbarian beneath his horse's hooves.

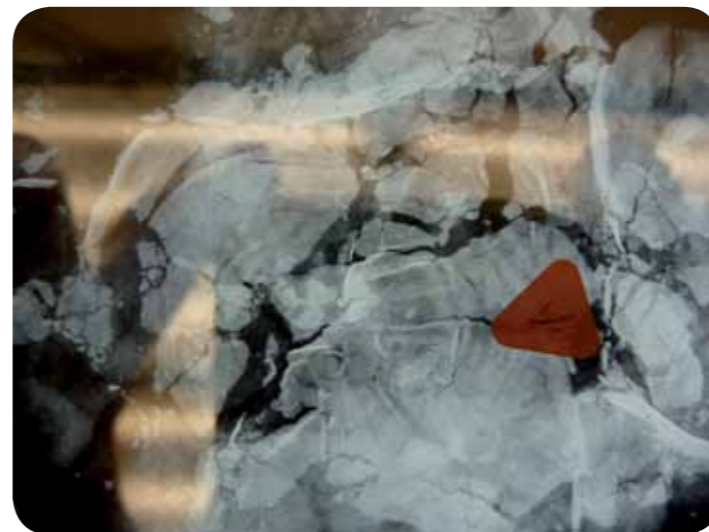
The conservators are undertaking the painstaking task of removing clay from the scalloped brow guard (LCC)



Museums



Intriguingly, there are also four extra cheek pieces. Did Roman cavalry officers alternate cheek pieces depending on the day of the week and what design was suitable for the occasion? Or does the Hallaton helmet assemblage represent material from a helmet workshop containing spare cheek pieces in case of damage? At this stage we do not know! What we do know is that X-rays of the fragmentary cheek pieces have shown there are two matching cheek pieces featuring a man on horseback. A further design shows a bearded man with a helmet and shield beneath his feet – are these the spoils of a battle? Research is currently being undertaken to find a parallel for this last mysterious design.



Who is this mysterious bearded man? X-rays have revealed this image for the first time in 2000 years (LCC)

New information regarding the structure of the helmet bowl has emerged recently as the conservators tackle the extremely delicate task of removing a layer of clay from the fine silver sheet coating. We now know that the helmet had a scalloped brow guard which protruded above the bowl and below this is a scene showing various animals. The brow guard is packed out with an as yet mystery substance



– this is vital and rare information which will inform us how Roman craftsmen created high quality armour and is potentially a national first.

How the helmet came to be buried on a Leicestershire hillside during the AD 40s or 50s is another mystery. One theory is that it was owned by a local Corieltavi man who had served as a Roman mercenary on the continent and then returned home. Another theory has it that it was given to the Corieltavi tribe as a diplomatic gift by invading Romans during the conquest of Britain.

The helmet parts are being pieced back together for display at Harborough in 2012. This shows the neckguard (LCC)

For further details about the Hallaton Treasure Project and Harborough Museum, please visit www.leics.gov.uk/harboroughmuseum

Helen Sharp

Helen.Sharp@leics.gov.uk



9 Decades of Caring and Campaigning: the RBL in Leicestershire & Rutland 1921-2011

Margaret Bonney, Chief Archivist, Record Office

It seems almost unbelievable that we are 3 months into this project, which is all about collecting and documenting the history of the work of the Royal British Legion in Leicestershire and Rutland. We started back at the beginning of December 2010, sending out letters and information to all the branches around the county, appealing for their help and asking them to let us know if they had any documents, photographs and memorabilia of any kind going back to the origins of the branch. We also wanted to know if they had any members with long memories of the work of the branches over the years, willing to be interviewed and recorded for the project.



Captain Brown leading a British Legion procession

Since then, we have been contacted by a number of branches, including Market Harborough (which has a great website), Kegworth, whose historic objects and documents reside in the local independent museum, Thurmaston, Hose & Harby, Empingham, Husbands Bosworth and Braunstone (Leics). Individuals have come forward with material from branches now closed, such as Evington, Enderby, Croft and Newbold Verdon.

I was delighted to have the opportunity to speak about the project to the December 2010 gathering of Heritage Wardens and War Memorial Project volunteers at County Hall. As a result, I have had help from Vic Alsop, who put me in touch with Twyford & District Legion branch, and one particularly eager beaver, Keith Oldham from Houghton on the Hill has taken up the challenge of putting together the history of the now closed local Legion branch, from all the available documentation he can find, and from people's memories.

I have met some very interesting people who have given freely of their time to talk to me, and who have loaned me items of historic value for copying. Mrs Vera Barrett of Syston is a fund of splendid stories about her time as the first female Standard bearer for any Legion branch in the county – and she won the county Standard bearer's cup which gave her the honour of carrying the county Standard at the Royal Albert Hall Festival of Remembrance in the early 1960s. Mrs Gaye Bramley donated her late father's Ashby de la Zouch branch commemorative ashtray (manufactured by Moira Pottery) to the museum collections in the county.

So the project has aroused a lot of enthusiasm already, and we go on with the 'hunter-gatherer' phase as we embark upon a series of events in local libraries designed as a cross between a 'drop in' and a 'roadshow', where people are invited to bring in items about the Legion to show us, to have memories recorded and objects scanned/photographed, and where we will be appealing for assistance from anyone who has time to share. We would like more help with researching the history of branches from newspapers and other documents; we need people to give us a photographic record of all the existing Legion buildings, and to find historic images of ones that no longer exist; we need help with interviewing and transcribing interviews; and with creating an exhibition and web resources. If anyone reading this has time to spare (apart, of course, from your duties as wardens – I do not want to take away volunteers from other projects!) we would be delighted to hear from you.

Our library events started in early March at Market Harborough and Oadby, too early for you reading this Branchline to participate unfortunately, but information is welcome any time. We also held events in Coalville, Wigston, Melton, Hinckley and Loughborough. There will be others during and after the summer, with some workshops in museum venues in the autumn.

When I started this project, I was not sure that the history of the Legion was 'out there' at all. I know that in several branches, they lack documentation from pre-1960, and in very few cases have we come across anything pre-WWII. But I am encouraged by how much of the heritage of the Legion is being uncovered as the project develops,



largely because of the dedication of a few individuals who have a sense of history, and a determination that the Legion's work over the past 90 years should not be forgotten.



The Prince of Wales visiting the Legion in Leicester in 1927

Interested in knowing more? Please contact Margaret Bonney or Lindsey Beesley at :

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New Warden Project!

'Village Voices' – introducing a project on local accent and dialect

Diane Davies and Colin Hyde, University of Leicester

At the Heritage Conference this year some readers will have heard about our proposed project on accent and dialect in the villages of Leicestershire and Rutland. Here we provide an overview the project for all those who may be interested, outlining the aims, what is involved, and how you can take part.

The project is called Village Voices: heritage in accents and dialects. Villages have traditionally been associated with the most stable localised speech forms, but how important is the local/regional accent and dialect to village inhabitants today? We live in an increasingly mobile and globalised world, and some of us live in villages but spend half our time working in multilingual cities. So, what role does regional accent/dialect play in the lives of today's 'villagers'?

'Accent' and 'dialect' are not exactly the same thing but are closely related. Our accent is just the variety of pronunciation we use, and most

people's accent will reveal roughly where they come from. We can quickly tell whether someone comes from the north or south of England by their pronunciation of certain words.

Accents in the Midlands are generally 'northern' in character, so here we expect people brought up in the area to say up as 'oop', pub as 'poob', bus as 'boos', and last as 'lasst'. However, only some Midlanders will say 'foo' for few, voice the 'g' in sing, or



pronounce bake as 'bike'. There are interesting variations across the Midlands as a whole, and also within the East Midlands.

It is often said that local accents are becoming less distinct, and there is evidence that geographically more widespread (or 'supralocal') variants are now more in evidence. For instance, the glottalised London or 'Estuary' pronunciation of 't' in words like 'better', and a 'w' quality in the final 'l' in words like 'feel' or 'wall', have spread far and wide among younger speakers. Other spoken features have also become more common, such as the North-American use of 'like' to introduce a quotation (She was like, 'I hate this place'). Yet younger speakers continue to use local as well as these more general forms and seem to project their identities in terms of both.

A dialect has distinctive features of grammar and vocabulary as well as an associated accent. Some linguists distinguish between the 'traditional' and 'modern' dialects of England. Our traditional dialects are connected with the more remote, rural areas and have declined in use, while modern dialects centred on urban areas are the mainstream varieties spoken today.

Traditional dialect grammar can have non-standard forms like yorn for 'yours' or us/uz for 'our', as in Ah didna know it wer yorn and Wey goin fer uz dinners. Modern dialects don't have such marked distinctions from Standard English, but they still have variant forms like I'll not go / I won't go, or I haven't a ticket / I don't have a ticket'. Traditional dialect words are particularly interesting. There are regional terms, for instance, for 'left-handed' (craggy-handed, keggy-handed), for a narrow alleyway (twitchel, snicket, jitty, gennel), for 'frightened' (frit), or 'throw' (yack, chuck). Usually, each of us just knows the terms used in the area where we grew up. To test this, what other word would you use for 'play truant'? Would it be bunk (off), tag (off), skive, or some other term perhaps?

What makes the investigation of regional accent and dialect fascinating is that varieties of a living language are never fixed in stone, so there is always something new to discover!

If you are interested in the project, your main activity will be to collect audio samples of the accents/dialects of people brought up and living in your village area today. These will help us study language change and variation in our region, enabling us to compare the accents/dialects of older, middle-aged and younger people from the same places. You will also be investigating villagers' perceptions of the local accent/dialect. For the part dealing with perceptions, you can also include residents who have come to the village from other places but have lived there for many years.

The project will involve:

- Recording speakers from different generations reading word lists and a given text (to be provided)
- Collecting data on words and expressions and responses to a questionnaire (we will again give guidance, materials and suggestions)
- Conducting, if possible, two or more oral history interviews with people from your village

Guidance and materials will be given for all the above (including advice on technical issues and how to conduct an oral history interview). For this purpose there will be a training day at Holly Hayes on 18th June for all those who sign up to be involved. We anticipate that the project will go on for about four months, beginning in the summer and ending in January 2012, and we will hold an event next year for all participants, to showcase the project's findings overall. The data you collect will eventually form part of a corpus of East Midlands English to be created at the University of Leicester, and we hope to add the oral history recordings to the East Midlands Oral History Archive.

To register your interest and book onto the training day, please complete the 'Village Voices' registration form enclosed and return to Liz Blood. We will then put you on our mailing list for the project.

Publication by Thurcaston Heritage Warden, Diane Denton

Turbulent Tudor Times

The world of Thomas Willet: 1510-1598

A Tudor Ecclesiastic

Rector of Thurcaston and of Barley Prebendary of Ely

By Diane Cole

Thomas Willet (Wylliat) was born in 1510, the year after Henry VIII became king, and two years after Michelangelo started painting the ceiling of the Sistine chapel in the Vatican. The Christian world was Roman Catholic and ruled by the pope, but that world was to change drastically. Willet experienced the turbulence of the Reformation through his life at the Tudor Court and in the Church, living through the reigns of four Tudor monarchs. He died in 1598, four years before James VI of Scotland succeeded to Elizabeth's throne.

Diane's publications can be seen and ordered online at www.caudlepublishing.com

Books can also be ordered by email caudlepublishing@live.co.uk, or by phone **0116 2362655**

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Cotesbach Schoolhouse Project Gets Green Light from HLF!

Sophy Newton, Cotesbach Heritage Warden

For Heritage Wardens, the excellent and long awaited recent news of funding for the Cotesbach Schoolhouse project means that from April 2012 there will be a new sympathetic venue which can be used for meetings, talks, exhibitions and a variety of events, enhanced by the facility of an onsite local archive – and a café! Contact info@cotesbachschoolhouse.org.uk for enquiries and provisional bookings.

Jackie Strong, Chairman of Cotesbach Educational Trust (CET) said:

"The Trustees are delighted to have received such generous financial support amounting to £570,000 from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF). The grant will allow us to sympathetically renovate three 18th and 19th Century buildings located on the Cotesbach Estate. They will provide storage for local archives of national interest and act as a base for sustainable educational and community activities focusing on our local social, environmental and artistic heritage. The CET Trustees will be working closely with the Estate and with HLF to achieve their aim of 'reconnecting with place and land to develop skills for the future'. The education programme and archive facilities will be available to schools and wider communities in Leicestershire, north Northamptonshire and north Warwickshire in the first instance but, using modern technology, CET hopes to reach a national audience over time."



Dates for your diary

Training Programme 2011 soon to be released!

Although the annual programme was not released during November as usual, a joint programme advertising heritage training sessions, talks, walks and workshops will be out soon. This will list the sessions on offer from Holly Hayes, Museums, and other County Council departments, which you will be able to book onto. Not all sessions will be coordinated from Holly Hayes so please look carefully at the booking information and venues.

- **Launch of the War Memorials Project website, June 2011**
Look out for the official launch of the war memorials archive during June. It is in the online testing stage at warmemorials.leics.gov.uk. For more information contact Liz Blood Liz.Blood@leics.gov.uk
- **Leicestershire Walking Festival, 4th -12th June**
Contact Andrew Poole for further information, Andrew.Poole@leics.gov.uk
- **Festival of Archaeology, various sites, Saturday 16th – Sunday 31st July**
Look out for programmes coming out nearer the time. Contact Peter Liddle for further information Peter.Liddle@leics.gov.uk 0116 30558326
- **Village Voices Project Training Day, Saturday 18th June, Holly Hayes, Birstall**
This session will provide all you need to know to become part of the Village Voices project on local accent and dialect. Further details to be confirmed. For more information or to book, contact Liz Blood Liz.Blood@leics.gov.uk

If you would prefer to receive Branchline electronically rather than by post, send an email to wildlife@leics.gov.uk with **BRANCHLINE BY EMAIL** as the subject line.

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