

ASSOCIATION ACTIVITIES

Wednesday, 15th June 7.30 pm	Social Evening at the Manor House, Donington-le-Heath
Thursday, 23rd June 6.30 pm	Exton Hall Estate, Rutland*
Thursday, 21st July 9.00 am	A Day in Gloucester*
Saturday, 13th August 1.30 pm	Hinwick House, Wellingborough*

*Full particulars and booking forms were circulated with the April/May issue of "Link".

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING: 1st JUNE 1988

The following officers and committee members were elected for the year 1988/89:

President:	Mr G Lang
Vice-President:	Mrs P Leslie
Honorary Secretary/ Editor of "Link":	Miss M McHarg
Honorary Treasurer:	Mr R P W Bambury

Committee

Mrs M Armitage	Miss Z Rubinstein
Mrs M Brundell	Mr T Schadla-Hall
Mrs S Gibson	Mr D Tookey
Miss O Kelly	Miss D Valentine
Mrs M Robinson	

Staff Representatives are:

Dr P J Boylan:	Director
Miss J May:	Keeper, Decorative Arts
Mr M Moore:	Assistant Director, Museum Services

L.M.A. VISIT TO THE AGE OF CHIVALRY EXHIBITION

Leaving Leicester on a dull wet morning we soon arrived at Burlington House to find ourselves in the dim light and atmosphere of the Middle Ages. Images of crown and sceptre, coronation and sword, proclaimed kingly power. Here was the cross-legged knight with his hand reaching for his sword.

There were dozens of saints' images, pilgrimage reliquaries, badges and manuscripts testifying to the power of the Saints. The Becket Miracle window shows his marvellous power at work.

From churches, centres of Medieval parish life, come retables, chalices, chests and stained glass windows where they have rested undisturbed for six centuries. An inspiration, perhaps to track down the loans from the parish churches to their settings.

Crowds stood silent before case after case of illuminated books fascinated, perhaps, by the fantastic convolutions, bright colours, masses of foliage and scenes of piety. The Windmill Psalter could be read as well as seen.

From the Great Wardrobe accounts one can get some idea of 14th century fashion and the materials used; the cost was great and the workers many. In particular, for 1349 Edward III insists on new clothing and new colour schemes twice a year.

The five Plantagenet kings give us some historical sequence. They show how Gothic art and architecture gradually developed. The tools of the Gothic builders appear so simple as we look at photos of the soaring spires and arches of Canterbury and Salisbury cathedrals. There are again the jewel-like colours of the stained glass windows; red, gold and emerald.

Nobles and knights appear on seals and brasses. There is a knight jug; peasants are shown at work on Misericords. Their social life passes before us. Suddenly we are confronted by the portrait of Richard II, the last of the Plantagenet kings to be depicted in the exhibition. Behind the kings are the bishops, nobles, artists and builders, and it is all their work which we have seen slowly unfolding before us. We leave the Middle Ages, our heritage, and pass quite naturally into the present.

MAR

THE SQUIRE GALLERY

On 14 May, 1988 a new gallery opened to the public in the New Walk Museum building, adjacent to the Victorian Paintings gallery. The space is part of the refurbished museum wing formerly known as the Lord Mayor's Rooms, referring back to a "temporary" arrangement from the 1890s (the Lord Mayor's suite has now moved to the City Rooms in town). This particular area will be used mainly for the display of the many local views, watercolours, drawings and prints, usually kept in store as reference collections, due to limitations on display space.

The gallery is named after Alderman Charles Squire, Chairman of the City Council Museums and Libraries Committee from 1916 until his death in 1945, whose considerable achievements in the museum world were recognised by The Museums Association culminating in his election as President in 1937.

RMP

TRADITIONAL INDIAN ARTS OF GUJARAT

This new permanent collection at Leicestershire Museums were assembled in India in 1985 by Julia Nicholson, the museums's Curator of Indian Arts. It is the largest museum collection of contemporary Gujarati crafts in Britain and a particularly exciting development for Leicester where nearly one sixth of the total city population have cultural origins in Gujarati.

Gujarat is known as "the colour belt" for its brightly-coloured vibrant costumes. The exhibition "Traditional Indian Arts of Gujarat" features a remarkable variety of hand-made textiles. These range from finely worked embroidered costumes with lively motifs of parrots, peacocks and elephants, to sophisticated silk tie-dyed sairs, including the famous patlou sari of Gujarat.

This exhibition also provides a picture of everyday life in rural Gujarat. Through a series of illustrated photographic panels and displays of pottery, hand-made toys and other crafts the visitor can learn about weddings, festivals, life on the farm or how a printed sari is made.

To complement the traditional crafts exhibition are striking contemporary paintings and sculptures in the second show - "Gujarat Indian Artists".

JHN

THE VOLUNTEER SOLDIER IN LEICESTERSHIRE AND RUTLAND

New Gallery at the Rutland County Museum, Oakham, opened on 14th May 1988.

This major new gallery tells the story of the Volunteer Soldier of the two historic counties of Leicestershire and Rutland from the 1790s to the present day.

The main thread of the story is the history of the Leicestershire Yeomanry, first raised in 1794. Many other corps were formed at that time, during the Napoleonic Wars. The Rutland County Museum itself is housed in the indoor riding school built for the Rutland Fencible Cavalry at this time.

The Rifle Volunteers, raised in 1859-60, who later become volunteer battalions in the Leicestershire Regiment, are also included.

The later part of the displays covers the distinguished service of the Leicestershire Yeomanry in the Boer War and the Great War of 1914-18, and more recent events. The opening coincides with the Yeomanry's annual commemoration of the action at Frezenberg on 13th May 1915, in which they won a distinguished battle honour at the expense of the lives of many officers and men.

To complete the picture, the Rutland Militia and the 58th (Rutlandshire) Regiment each have a section in the display.

THMcKC

BELGRAVE HALL GARDENS

Spring has given way to early summer with the usual daily mixture of sunshine, showers and very cool nights. June in the last few years has become almost as difficult a month to predict as May as far as the weather is concerned. Will the summer bedding grow away quickly or will the rain demolish the Iris border display before it gets a chance to make a good show? These problems arise for us each year of course but in the past the difficulties faced by the gardener in trying to produce a continuous display must have been overwhelming. Roses are a good example; until the introduction of the China roses (Rosa chinensis) in the middle of the 18th century there was no repeat flowering of rose bushes. The older Gallica, Alva and Moss types flowered only once and were finished most years by the end of June.

The 18th century gardener did not have summer bedding to contend with: that was a 19th century development. The owner of a large house in the 18th century would, once the fear of frost was over, wheel out from his Orangery where they had been over-wintered large tubs or pots containing his "exotics". These were placed at strategic points along his terrace, in his parterre or along his gravel paths. Orange and lemon trees (Citrus sinensis and C. limonia) were very popular for this use, both for their sweet scented flowers and their juicy fruit. However, many other types of plant were also cultivated in this way and were regularly used to decorate the summer garden: palms, cacti, bannanas, succulents, and special bulbs were some of the more popular choices.

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