

Chairman's Ramblings

by Barry Franklin

Delighted to say that all our Leamington History Group activities are fully operating again. We are progressing well with our new book (Global Leamington) and our new town walk (Commonwealth Trail). We also have an exciting LHG exhibition in the Arts Trail, in August.

Tuesdays at The Band Factory, Althorpe Street, Leamington



Don't forget to join us each Tuesday morning at the Band Factory: 9.30 – 11 a.m.

Join us for our history and coffee meetings to reminisce and learn more about our local history, over tea/coffee.

LHG Monthly Meetings

Recently, we had three varied but fascinating talks on our local history. Nigel Bishop took us through the revival of Jephson Gardens to its original splendour. Kevin Hunt provided a good insight into William Gascoyne's life - a prolific Leamington builder and 'true Victorian pillar of society, until his business failure and bankruptcy turned him into a social outcast.' Helen Pendery then took us on the Toone family USA travels and adventures.

Connections

June 2022

**Future Monthly Talks Mondays
7.30 p.m. Join us and bring a
friend!**

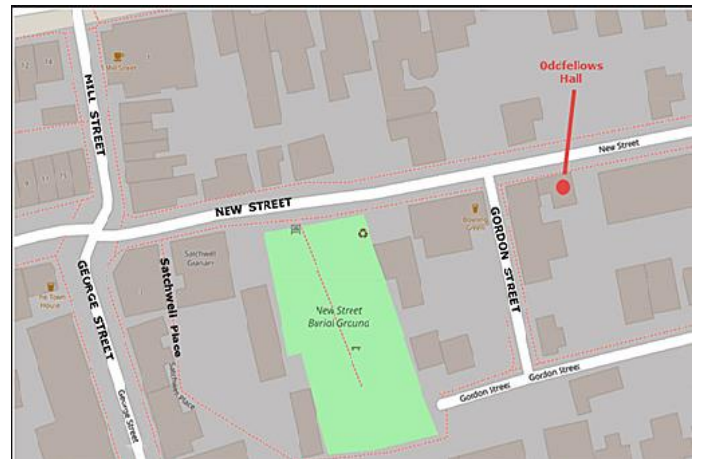
27 Jun: "Fetch the Engine!" - A history of firefighting in Warwickshire (Mike Bunn)

25 Jul: Norman Hyde: Tennis the Leamington Way



1920s Our Warwickshire

Venue: Oddfellows, New Street, Leamington



Global Leamington Book

Now at the editing stage, we are progressing well for Autumn publication. This book will tell the story of how Leamington made its mark on the world, and how people from around the globe made Leamington their home. Interested? book your copy: secretary@leamingtonhistory.co.uk

LHG Video 4

Our Video Project Team is currently planning our next local history film, based on some of the multicultural groups who have settled in our town. If you have a story to tell, please get in touch! Supported generously by WDC Arts Grant, we are looking at interesting stories about individuals and cultural groups who made an impact in Leamington. Donations welcome to match funding for the film: secretary@leamingtonhistory.co.uk

New Leamington Town Walk: Commonwealth Trail

Our new themed town walk, based on Leamington's Commonwealth connections will take place during the Commonwealth



Games on Tuesdays at 2.30 p.m. Dates: **19, 26 July; 2, 9, 16 August.** Book your place at the Visitors Centre, Pump Rooms 01926 456940.

Many thanks to Dr Ben Richardson and the University of Warwick students for their in-depth research on our tour stops. Warwickshire College students have also excelled themselves by designing our Commonwealth Trail leaflets - distributed across town as part of CultureFest 2022.

Leamington History Group Exhibition

Pop in to see our history photographic exhibition during August at The Arts Trail, 20 Upper Mall, Royal Priors Leamington. Thanks to Gerry Smith and all our contributors.

Leamington Blue Plaques

Two plaques were unveiled in March: Miss Eleanor Doorly, former pupil of Leamington Girls' High School (now Kingsley) and Head of King's High School Warwick for 22 years; and Mrs Fowler, lifelong Red Cross champion and owner of the Blue Café in Bath Street.

Two more plaques are planned: to W.M.Heynes, C.B.E., Chief Engineer of Jaguar Cars until retirement; and a joint plaque to Christopher Ironside, artist, camoufleur in WW2 and designer of the first decimal coins, and his wife Janey, also an artist and Professor of Fashion.

THE ASCENT OF M. BLONDIN



25 July 1861

About 7000 persons were present in the Pump Room Gardens, Royal Leamington Spa, on Thursday 25 July 1861 to witness the ascent of Charles Blondin.

He climbed a mast which was about ninety feet high. The rope which was then stretched before M Blondin for the performance of his feat is a segment of the identical rope used by him in his passage over the Falls of Niagara.

M. Blondin's first step upon the rope showed that he was more at home upon the rope with his feet than most people are upon *terra firma*. A great feature was the balance pole, some thirty feet long.

Having arrived at the opposite stage from which started, on the Victoria Terrace side, he paused for some time. He returned cautiously until he arrived two-thirds of the way when he stood upon his head and turned over, making his pole his pillow.

Having arrived where he started he proceeded to prepare for that feat which was the terror of every beholder. He walked blindfold over the rope with an ornamental bag over his shoulders. He, of course, made the usual feints of falling.

Finally, an assistant tied himself to M. Blondin and with him on his back, the two proceeded together over the rope.

Charles Blondin was born in France in 1824 and died in Ealing, England in 1897.
Article summary of Leamington Courier
27 July 1861 **by Mick Jeffs**

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