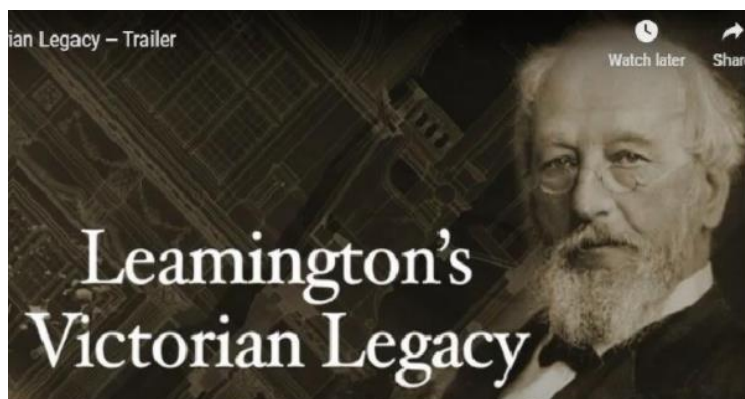




### Leamington's Victorian Legacy Video Launch date: 23 October 2020



We are delighted that through the generous support of LHG members, friends and the Town Council, our new 2<sup>nd</sup> video "Leamington's Victorian Legacy", produced and directed by Mark Ellis, was launched on 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2020.

An exciting sequel to the first video: "Birth of a Spa Town", this tells the story of Leamington's development during the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Young

people from North Leamington, Princethorpe and Warwick Schools, take starring narrator roles in the video alongside local experts who tell the story of Leamington's development. Far from declining when inland Spa towns became less popular, Leamington flourished.

From the splendour of the Spa and the Grand Balls to the excitement of its steeplechases, lawn tennis and archery, the town thrived. Our Victorian predecessors (Dr Jephson, Dr Hitchman, Alderman Bright, the Flavels and William De Normanville being the most prominent) made a lasting impact on the town. Through sheer innovation, energy and adaptability, Leamington's landscape, public health, housing, sports and industry were transformed into the town we know today.

Full details on how to view the video are available now on Leamington History Group's website: [www.leamingtonhistorygroup.co.uk](http://www.leamingtonhistorygroup.co.uk)

### Monday Evening Presentations: Digital Speaker Programme 2020-2021

During the current situation, your committee is now developing a Digital Speaker Programme for 2020-2021, as an alternative to our planned Monday evening presentations at meetings at Dormer Hall. This will start with a Leamington's Victorian Legacy Video Discussion led by our writer and producer Mark Ellis, on Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2020 at 7.30 p.m. Further details coming out soon (email circulation list, Facebook page, website and twitter).

As before, and Covid regulations permitting, if you know of a member who cannot access the talks, and you are able to, please invite them for a socially distanced cup of coffee and share the presentation. Similarly, as some of us are already doing, keep in contact with them by phone, so that we can keep our Leamington History Group Community Spirit alive!

## Virtual Local History Day and Quiz 26 September 2020

Thank you to all our speakers and members who participated in our very first Virtual Local History Day. There was an amazing response, with 13 quality presentations on different local history topics. These included interesting information about Leamington's canals, shops, lost pubs, the Home Front, slum clearance, a Cemetery Walk, Lillington Saxon Church; Leamington's First Hospital, Southam through the Ages, the London and North West Railway; and Glimpses of Warwickshire. We also had an extremely successful live family history advice session with Jacqui Kirk. This was followed by an Afternoon Tea, and local quiz led by our Chairman, Barry Franklin. Thanks again for your constructive feedback, including technical comments to help us improve in the future.

Special thanks our presenters: Barry Franklin, Mick Jeffs, Allan Jennings (Sydenham History Group), Tom Lewin, Pat Whorton (The Arts Society, Leamington), John Wilmot (WLHS), Jacqui Kirk, Mike Musson (LNWRS), Richard Taulbut (Lillington Local History Society), Bernard Cadogan (Southam Heritage Collection) and Jim Ranahan (Shakespeare Birthplace Trust).

### **A selection of comments from participants**

*Working... through yesterday's splendid virtual presentations. A great credit to all involved in putting the programme together!*

*Congratulations on all your efforts to put together a veritable feast of local history... An inspired idea, brilliantly executed."*

*Well done for providing such a feast of a day.*

*[LHG] should be well pleased with themselves for managing such a delightful and interesting local history day for us.*

*"most impressed." Congratulations on a successful day. An excellent virtual programme, really enjoyed the films today.*

*Spent a most enjoyable day... We thought it was both entertaining and informative, and the quiz was great fun. Thank you so much for a wonderful day, learning so much about the lovely town I live in.*

*"extremely successful and your idea and input does you credit. Looking at the year as a whole I believe the Leamington History Group has excelled itself, keeping our membership informed in these troubled times.*

*Very informative and also enjoyable, ... a huge credit.*

*Absorbed most of the day learning about Leamington from various voices and found it a really worthwhile... pass on my congratulations to everyone... in front and behind the camera.*

*Excellent event today. Congratulations and thanks to all concerned. Enjoyed every minute of it.*

*LHG have shown everyone what can be done! I think we have a lot to be proud of.*

*It was so interesting... great content.*

*I really enjoyed the day... The family history session was a particular highlight*

*Congratulations on successfully putting together the virtual presentations. It was a tremendous achievement.*

*As a first-time effort it was commendable - so well done again.*

*Congratulations on a well-organised and well-delivered event. All the more impressive for being a FIRST in the field! All [speakers] deserve credit.*

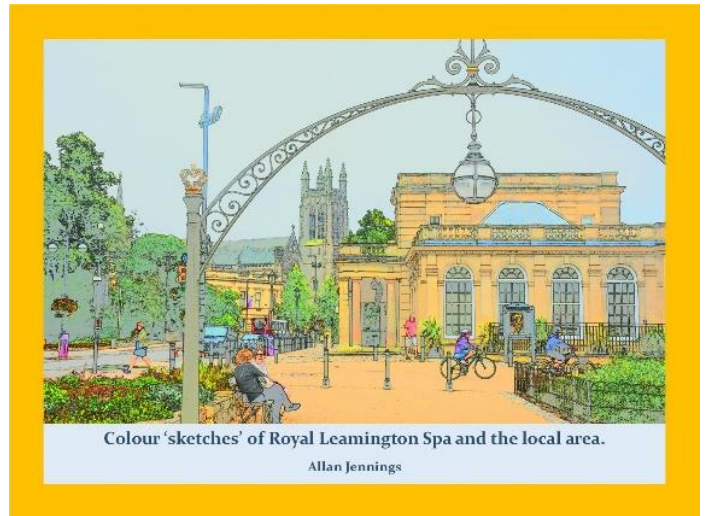
*You did Leamington proud!*

# Inspirational New Book: "Colour 'sketches' of Royal Leamington Spa and the local areas"

in aid of the NHS:

LHG member, Allan Jennings, has produced colour photographic sketches to do something different to raise money for the Intensive Care Unit at Warwick Hospital. "In my own small way, I am trying to show my support for the NHS and all profits will be donated to Warwick Hospital. The coronavirus pandemic this year has changed so many lives. Who would have thought that back in 2019 that we would experience such an event – isn't that something that happened 100 years earlier with the Spanish Flu, or in Asia and Africa?"

"The National Health Service is 72 years old this year. The staff have had their most difficult year in all of that time, putting their lives on the line to help the rest of the population - and some of them have paid the ultimate price. Thousands of former employees heard the call and resumed work at their local hospitals. Everyone worked long hours, in some cases double shifts, day after day. Many were called upon to help in intensive care units where a significant number of patients were being ventilated - and then when they finished work for the day, or night, they struggled to buy groceries from the supermarket because the shelves had been stripped bare."



"We are very fortunate to live in a lovely town and a picturesque part of the country, so I thought that I would try to reflect some of our buildings and views, whether historic, architecturally interesting, new or old. The vast majority of the 111 images relate to Leamington and the local area, but I have added a few from places such as Warwick, Kenilworth and Stratford Upon Avon - after all many of us spent time enjoying both rather than holidaying abroad." This is a "welcome addition to your own local history shelves, a way to support the NHS and will also make an excellent Christmas present!"

Cost £15 - available from Waterstones, Leamington in early November 2020.

*Allan Jennings*

## **Committee News/Events/Activities**

The LHG Committee has had its first Zoom meetings to ensure that our activities can continue. We are also planning an AGM in January 202 (TBA).

### **New Town Clerk**

Following the retirement of Leamington's Town Clerk, Robert Nash, after serving for 18 years, we are pleased to welcome the new Town Clerk, Stephen Marks, and look forward to working with him in the future.

### **The Band Factory**

To date, our weekly Tuesday morning meetings at the Band Factory are still on hold until this is safe to use again. The good news is that our archives are safely stored there at present.

## Two sad looking sights!

### Old Milverton Churchyard



I wonder how many of you are aware that Dr. Jephson is buried in Old Milverton Churchyard? OK, that's probably quite a few of you. How many of you would be able to find his grave? Not so many, I suspect.

It is close to the wall overlooking the fields towards the Saxon Mill. Unfortunately, it is almost covered in brambles and is inaccessible.

It is the one in the top centre of the photograph, and almost invisible. The churchyard volunteers

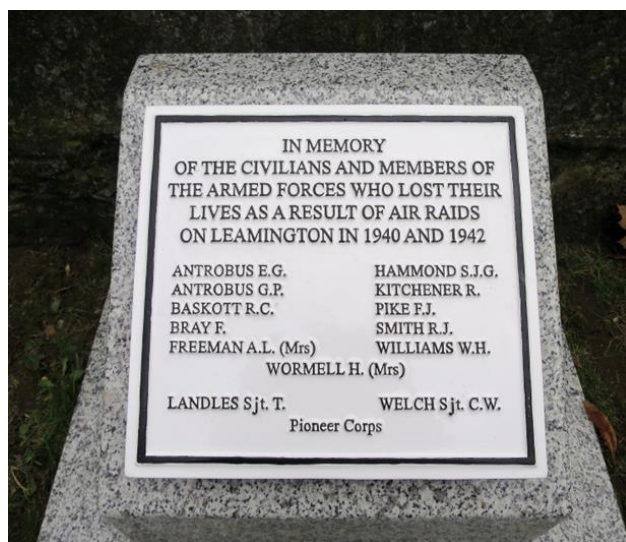
do a terrific job in keeping the vast majority of the cemetery in pristine condition, but this area is a step too far, which makes it a sad sight. Not much of a tribute to the man who reputedly put Leamington on the map as a Spa town in the 19<sup>th</sup> century!

### Second World War Memorial

A sad-looking sight the other day was the memorial organised by the LHG to the Second World War bombing victims in Euston Place, Leamington.

When I passed, it was looking rather grubby with a build-up of dirt. I have since taken some soapy water, a brush and a cloth and given it a clean. Can I ask LHG members to consider giving it a wipe down if you happen to be passing please? Between us we should be able to keep it looking as it should. Thank you.

*Allan Jennings*



### Barbed Poppies Memorial



The Barbed Poppies Memorial in the Jephson Gardens, between The Aviary and Willes Road, is specifically dedicated to the memory of those who died in the First World War. It was created by Tim Tolkien and was unveiled in November 2014. It depicts three iron poppies in states of growth and decay. The sign at the front simply states "*The Poppies: Lest We Forget*". It looks fairly forlorn but I think that was the intention of the artist.

*Mick Jeffs*



### Commemorative Wreaths

LHG will be placing a commemorative wreath on both memorials at the Annual Remembrance Day ceremonies on Sunday, 8th November 2020. Timings are uncertain with the current distancing restrictions.





## Eagle Recreation Ground

In 1896 Leamington Borough Council purchased two parcels of land in the town: the former Parr & Wisden cricket ground which eventually became Victoria Park, and Ladder Bridge Field which became Eagle Recreation Ground. An advertisement placed in the Leamington Courier by the Estate Agent, Anthony Locke, announced the sale of the field, belonging to by Lady Aylesford, measuring between 5/6 acres and said it was suitable for 100 houses. It failed to sell.

The Council earmarked it as a possible recreation ground and entered into negotiations with Lady Aylesford's representatives, finally agreeing the purchase in April 1896 for £1300. The land sat between the Great Western Railway, the Grand Union Canal and East Grove. It was decided that it would become a children's play area with a wharf alongside the canal for Flavel's factory.

This ground was very uneven and undulating, so it was agreed to cover the field with tip waste to help level it off. In 1898 it was decided to fence the perimeter of the ground except that boundary alongside the railway which was the responsibility of the railway company. After along saga of bringing the field up to a good standard, in July 1903 Park Villa FC were the first users of the football pitches. By 1906 St Johns' Church football club were using the pitches.

This continued throughout the 1st World War and in 1926, when the Council purchased Rushmore Farm to build Leamington's 3rd council estate, some more land was added to the recreation ground. In July 1932 the council decided to transplant the Victoria Park Bandstand (moved there from Jephson Gardens in about 1909) into the Eagle Recreation Ground, to be used as a shelter. (see photo, left)

Today the ground has an active Friends' Group, together with outside fitness equipment and a measured hard surface walkway round the ground. This article is just a small pen picture of the ground and a fuller article on the ground will be downloaded to our website in due course.

*Barry Franklin*

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## Flavel Memories: "The Ironmen of Leamington" by Martin Green and Mick Jeffs

Following an article by Martin and Mick, James Bryce, a Leamington Courier journalist wrote to the authors recently about a "weird connection..."

"My sister is named after a Flavel cooker. My mother's maiden name was Flavel, and she had a 'Flavel Fiona' cooker (so nothing as grand as you write about!). No doubt produced long after the company lived on only as a brand name in the 1970s. My mum liked the name Fiona and the connection to Flavel and decided to name her after the cooker which the family owned up until my sister was almost a teenager".

## **Leamington Town Council Award £2000 for LHG's 3<sup>rd</sup> Video 2021**

Exciting news - following the success of our recent town videos (Birth of a Spa Town and Leamington's Victorian Legacy), we are delighted that the Leamington Town Council have just awarded us with £2000 towards our third film.

This project will enable LHG to research and create a new video: 1900-1974 which will explore Leamington's rich and diverse story in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It will focus on the development of Leamington Borough Council, the emerging multi-cultural communities, and the people who made Leamington the town it is today. The video is intended to build a lasting chronological and thematic historical record of our town.

We would like to ask our members and the wider business community to sponsor this new video to help us raise the matched funding.

If you or your organisation are able to donate funds to support this, can you please make a payment:

BACS transfer: Sort Code 40-27-06, Account No 42083019, plus your name),  
Cash/cheque: cheques payable to Leamington History Group.  
If using post, please address to Secretary, L H G, c/o 15 Vicarage Road, Lillington,  
Leamington Spa, CV32 7RH.

Thank you for supporting the Leamington History Group.

## **Volunteers! LHG Members - we need your help!**

We very much welcome your ideas on our LHG activities and your research. We also need volunteers (researchers, presenters, storytellers, networkers, fund writers and video-makers to join us to help with our newest projects. Please get in touch to talk through: [secretary@leamingtonhistory.co.uk](mailto:secretary@leamingtonhistory.co.uk)

## **Early Christmas presents: Calendars and Local History Books**

We are pleased to announce that the Calendar for 2021 with 12 pictures of Royal Leamington Spa is now available. Calendars cost £5.00, and can be obtained from Anthony Eden. Gents hairdressers, 97 Clarendon Street; the Visitors' Centre at the Royal Pump Rooms; the Arts Trail Studio, Royal Priors, Leamington Spa. Alternatively please email: [secretary@leamingtonhistory.co.uk](mailto:secretary@leamingtonhistory.co.uk)

Please see our website for details on Local History Book sales: [leamingtonhistory.co.uk](http://leamingtonhistory.co.uk)

## **Membership and Gift Aid**

We have had an increasing number of members this year, particularly those completing their Gift Aid form. We are about to claim Gift Aid on the £880 we have received in subscriptions. Details regarding next year's membership and payment out soon on our website.