



## Stone Age/Bronze Age (pre-history – c. 1000 BC)

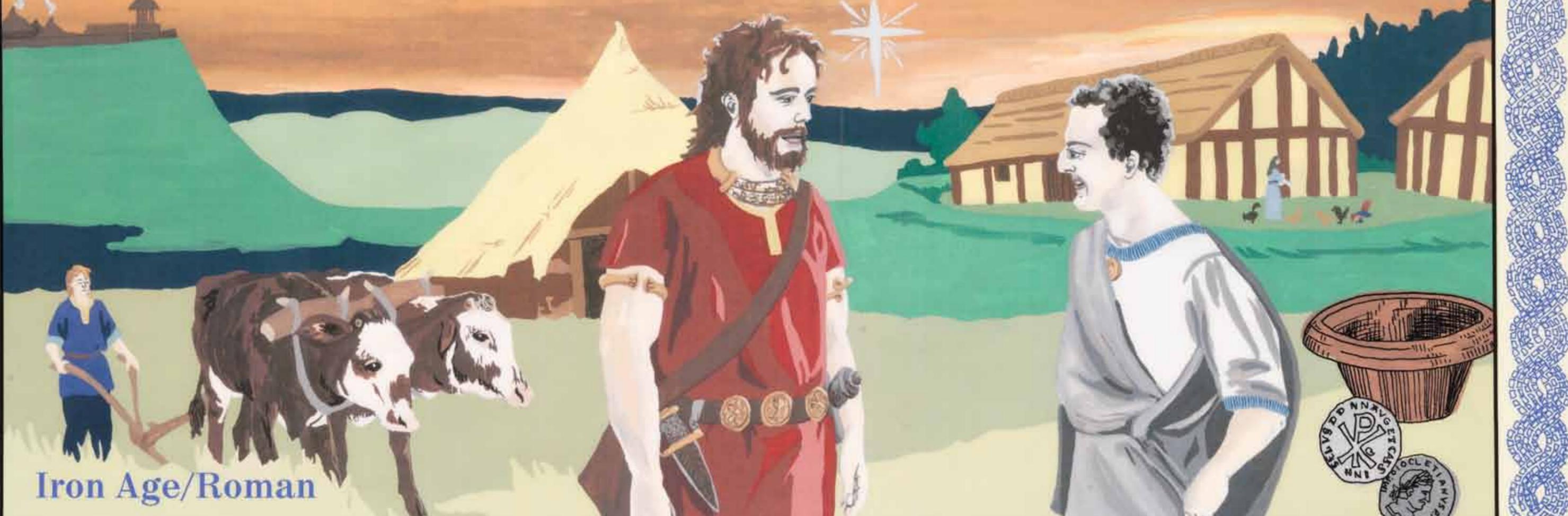
### Introduction

What is History? Is it just a recounting of what happened over time? Or the interaction of people with each other as well as their surroundings? Does it involve small happenings here as well as all those big events that go on around the world and shape the future? The events and people that end up shaping history often go unnoticed at the time. It is when we look back that the significance is seen. Every conversation, chance encounter, object lost, is a chance for history to happen. So beware, you are part of a story, you cannot escape it because.....History Happens!.

**Stone Age.** We know very little about life around this area so long ago. But some excavations at sites around Melton Mowbray e.g. Edendale Road, Kirby Lane and the Country Park, have contained flint tools. The working of flint is called napping and some of the pieces that are chipped off in this process were found with the tools at the Country Park site. Our Stone Age Meltonians were hunter gatherers, the woodland landscape being home to deer, among other animals. Spindle Whorls are simple round stones with a central hole into which a pole called the distaff is fixed. This simple tool was used to spin the wool from their sheep in the same way as this Bronze Age woman is doing. This method of spinning continued right up to the 1600's.

“History happens”

**Bronze Age.** We know that there was a settlement of some kind here because of the objects these people hid away so long ago. In 1875 the “Welby Hoard” was discovered and in 1919 it was deposited in Leicester Museum. The sword has been broken deliberately showing that bronze working was happening here. The axe heads and spear heads tell us about their tools. The bowl, tiny as it is, seen here being admired by a Bronze Age woman, is very precious as it has travelled here from Europe. The trade routes at this time extended from here right across Europe as far as Hungary. The excavations under the Samworth Brothers’ factory off Leicester Road produced 50 burial urns. The fact that these people took the time to cremate the remains of the dead and inter them in these decorated urns shows that they had a form of religion and a belief in life after death.



## Iron Age/Roman (c. 1000 BC – 410 AD)

**Iron Age.** The most impressive site in our area is at Burrough Hill. This Iron Age hill fort provides a splendid view and strategically this means it can be easily defended. The Iron Age finds found closer to Melton Mowbray show a farming community evolving here. Both saddle and round querns have been found here showing that flour was being ground from locally grown grain. The Iron Age saw the clearing of woodland and the use of oxen for ploughing.

**Year 0.** While in Britain our Iron Age Meltonians were settled in their farming communities and hill forts, far away in a country called Israel, at the edge of the Roman Empire a baby was born. His name was Jesus. His mother was called Mary. Jesus was trained as a carpenter by his father, Joseph. It would be the teaching of Jesus' last three years of life, his crucifixion at the age of 33, subsequent resurrection, and the teaching of his disciples and followers that would have the biggest effect on the history of Melton Mowbray, through the influences of the Christian faith and religion.

**“Britain produces corn, cattle, gold, silver, iron. All these are exported together with hides, slaves and dogs for hunting”**

**Roman.** In AD 23 the Roman Empire was expanding and one report from this time explains part of why the Romans eventually invaded Britain.

**In AD 43.** “Britain produces corn, cattle, gold, silver, iron. All these are exported together with hides, slaves and dogs for hunting”.

The Military centres at Leicester and Lincoln, among others, were linked by straight roads that criss-crossed the area such as at Six Hills on the Fosse Way.

Not all the Roman settlers during their 400 year occupation were soldiers. The excavations at the Country Park revealed a Roman farmstead. The finds left by these settlers include this small flanged bowl, 3rd/4th century from the Nene valley, and coins that show the changing fortunes of the Christian religion. The Chi-Rho is one of the early Christian symbols and appeared on Roman coins after Constantine took Christianity as the State Religion. The earlier Diocletian coin represents one of the periods of violent persecutions of Christians.



## Anglo-Saxon/Danelaw (410 – 1066)

500-671 AD. The local Anglo-Saxons were, like the rest of Britain, pagan. Their religion was based on nature gods and burials from this period show bodies buried in a North-South orientation, together with their belongings like this brooch. The tweezers and comb show that personal hygiene, though perhaps not all that we would expect today, was still very important.

664 AD. During this period the Christian Church was sending missionaries to evangelise Britain. From Ireland, to Scotland and down from the North of England came the Celtic Church. Pope Gregory, according to legend, on seeing some blonde haired, blue eyed child slaves in the market place in Rome, asked where they were from. When he was told they were Angles, he replied, "Not Angles, but angels". Following this he sent for Augustine and in 597 AD Saint Augustine arrived in Kent and so the Roman Catholic Church spread northwards. Finally, the differences between the two versions of Christianity proved a barrier to collaboration and so a council was held at Whitby in 664 AD to finally sort it out. The outcome was that the Roman Catholic traditions would be the pattern for Christianity in Britain.

**“Not Angles, but angels.”**

670 AD. Penda, the King of Mercia, the kingdom in which Melton Mowbray was situated, finally gave in to the Christian missionaries and was baptised. His kingdom seems to have followed his lead as the burial site found on the Scalford Road contained 50 skeletons all with their feet facing East, towards Jerusalem, ready for Jesus Christ's return. Buried with the bodies were beads, shields, spears and one burial had a long sword. This sword would have belonged to a local Chieftain as it represented his rank as well as being a weapon. He would have inspected it closely when he received it from the swordsmith.

700-800 AD The Danes overran this area but surprisingly little physical remains have been found. The small round brooch is typical of the style of decoration liked by the Danish Vikings who held this area during the Danelaw period. Most villages around the Borough have echoes of this time in their names, 'by' (as in Asfordby) and 'Thorpe' (as in Thorpe Satchville) are both of Danish origin.

1042-66 AD. During the reign of Edward the Confessor the last Saxon King of England, Melton Mowbray was granted the right to hold a market.



## Norman (1066 – 1154)

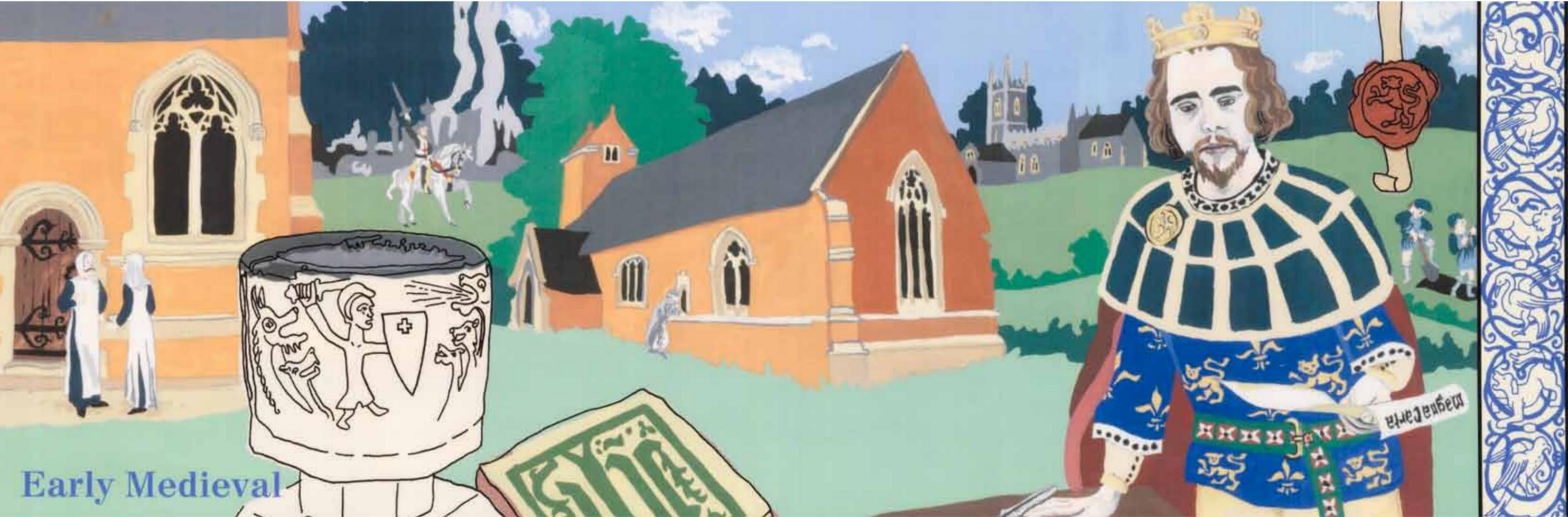
**1066.** When William the Conqueror conquered Britain he placed his Norman nobles in positions of authority across the country. The Domesday book was a detailed record of the taxable interests of his new country. From this we find that Melton Mowbray or Medeltune, as it was called, in the Franeland Wapentake (Framland Hundred) was held by the Norman Lord, Goisfridi de Wirce (Geoffrey de Wirce). There were two mills, one at Beck Mill Holm and the other at Corn Mill Holm, just off the Saxby Road where the Scalford Brook meets the River Eye.

In the Domesday Book Melton had a population of 300 including 2 priests which suggests a church of some kind, and a market. The earliest written record of which is in 1077 when Geoffrey de Wirce sends the tithes of the market to the Abbey of St. Nicholas of Anjou in Normandy, his home town. The market crosses, positioned throughout the town, marked the gathering points for selling farm produce. Sheep at the Sheep Cross, probably somewhere near the bottom of Scalford Road. Corn and other cereal crops at the corn Cross, and butter and cheese at the Butter Cross, both of which have been replaced in recent years. Herbs and vegetables were sold at the Sage Cross, and near it cattle at the beast market along what is now Sherrard Street.

**“The same Geoffrey holds  
Medeltone In Franeland  
Wapentake.  
The whole was worth when he  
received it  
£4 10s 0d, now £15 10s 0d.**

**1135-54.** The big problem with recording the Norman history of Melton Mowbray is that there is nothing physical left of it, not any pictorial representations. So we do not know what the early church looked like, though we can guess a little from the singing gargoyles at St. James Burton Lazars and other Norman church buildings. The same problem occurs with the castle, or more likely fortified manor house, which was built at about this date somewhere along King Street, probably in the area of the cinema. The property at 5 King Street has been renovated and its roof beams and octagonal crown post are now visible as they were when it was part of the moot hall of the castle.

**1135-79.** Roger de Mowbray took over the Lordship of Melton Mowbray and during this time he was responsible for founding and endowing many religious houses. These included a chapel and religious house for the Order of St. Joseph at Spittal End and for the Knights Templar at Rothley and Old Dalby. In 1140 a large farm house or grange at Welby, then the largest of the hamlets around Melton, was given to some monks as a monastery.



Early Medieval

## Early Medieval (1154-1272)

**The Crusades.** In 638 Christian Jerusalem fell to the advancing Islamic empire. By 750 Islam reached from Spain in the west, across North Africa to Persia in the east, and the advance was poised to threaten the Orthodox Church in Byzantine Greece and east Europe as well as the Roman Catholic Christian countries of France and Italy. By the late 11th century the Pope had declared that the recapture of Jerusalem was a Holy War and that knights who died in the crusades went straight to heaven. This led to wholesale slaughter by the crusader knights not only of Muslim soldiers, but of civilian men, women and children of all faiths, including Jews, Orthodox Christians and Christian splinter groups such as the Cathars. The 'ethnic cleansing' that we shudder at now echo these earlier conflicts. The knights from Melton who went out on these crusades to Jerusalem included Roger de Mowbray, and later his son Nigel. The stories they brought back would have included the story of St. George and the dragon, which no doubt influenced the carving of St. Michael fighting Satan on the early 12th Century font of St. Mary the Virgin, Thorpe Arnold.

The church at Welby dates from the time of Roger de Mowbray and has a small window, called the leper's window, discretely positioned halfway along the church wall, so that lepers could watch the service without offending the congregation. St Edgwin, Scalford also dates from this period.

**“Roger de Mowbray to all his vassals and friends, French and English, as well future as present, greeting”**

**1160.** Roger de Mowbray was responsible for enlarging the leper hospital at Burton Lazars which was dedicated to St. Lazarus and subject to the house of St. Lazarus in Jerusalem. A grant dated 1160 uses the phrase friends, French and English, showing the lingering divide between the Meltonians of this period. The hospital at Burton Lazars was the head of all the Spittal houses in England and was run by eight monks of the order of St. Augustine. The natural spring at Burton was thought to help in the care and healing of the victims of leprosy. Now all that remains of it is a pathway on the north-west side of the village, not far from the church, and some floor tiles. Nigel de Mowbray's son William de Mowbray became a powerful force in this country. When King Richard Coeur de Lion was captured returning from the crusades by the Duke of Austria, William was one of the English nobles who raised the ransom money. King Richard had stayed at the castle in Melton and signed charters here, hence the name King Street.

**1215.** King John finally became king after his brother Richard's death, having tried to take the crown during his brother's long absence at the Crusades. He also stayed at Melton Castle and when the Barons finally forced him to sign the Magna Carta at Runnymede in 1215, the seventh seal was that of William de Mowbray, the Lion Rampant. King John, never very popular even after death, was buried in various parts of the country and some of his organs were buried at Croxton Abbey.



Late Medieval

## Late Medieval (1272-1485)

**1324.** Melton Market's charter states that it was held on a Tuesday.

**1339.** At this time the wool trade in England was so important that sheep actually outnumbered people 3:2. Melton was one of the main wool trade centres and because of this three merchants were sent to the Trade Council of Edward III. These were Robert de Waltham, Robert Palmer and John de Brunkelo. These men were so rich that they paid about an eighth of the total tax bill for the town.

**1341.** The seal of John de Mowbray pictured here was placed on a conveyance for a parcel of land along the banks of the River Eye purchased by Robert de Waltham in December 1341.

**1347.** The cell of Cluniac monks based in Sherrard Street was closed as the order was officially suppressed in 1347 as it was of French foundation and England was again at war with France. The school which they had been running passed into the hands of the Crown at this point. This is the first written record of a school in Melton Mowbray, although it must have been running for some time before this date.

**1380.** The Brentingby bell dedicated to 'The Blessed Virgin Mary', was made in 1380. When the church at Brentingby was declared redundant in 1970 the bell was removed and now hangs in the Bell Centre in the middle of Melton Mowbray.

**1384.** The Anne of Cleve's house was built to house the chantry priests who sang prayers for people with a view to getting them to heaven more quickly!

**King Richard II**  
**“Rage must be withstood:**  
**Give me his gage: - Lions**  
**make leopards tame.**

**Thomas Mowbray, Duke of Norfolk**  
**‘Yea, but not change**  
**their spots!’**

**(Richard II Act 1 scene 1)**

**1349.** The Black Death, Bubonic Plague, wiped out half the population of France. The rats unwittingly carried the fleas that passed the bacteria *pasteurella pestis* from victim to victim as they fed on their blood. Shivers, a high fever, vomiting, coughing up blood, aching limbs and light hurting eyes were the early symptoms. Unable to sleep, the victims fell in deliriums and suffered diarrhoea before their skin broke out in deep blue swellings, called buboes. Once these appeared death soon followed. In 1349 alone 72 parish priests, including John de Melton Mowbray, died in office in the Lincoln Diocese. By 1381 the population of Melton was reduced to 290 adults. Before this it had been second only in size to Leicester in the county.

**Late 1300's** Thomas de Mowbray was created Duke of Norfolk and Earl Marshal of England. Shakespeare portrays him in Richard II in the sword fighting duel with Bolingbroke, Duke of Hereford, later to become Henry IV. For his part in this Thomas de Mowbray was exiled and died in Italy. His son Thomas was beheaded after his part in the rebellion at York under Archbishop Scrope in 1405.

**1428.** Robert Monk, a chaplain and a Lollard was tried for heresy at Lincoln and stated his birth place as Melton Mowbray. The Lollards were followers of John Wycliffe and dissenters from the Roman Catholic Church.

**1475.** Anne de Mowbray succeeded her father as heir to the Melton Mowbray estates. The last of the de Mowbray line, she died aged only eight, betrothed to Prince Richard, son of Edward IV the younger of the two princes murdered in the tower of London.



## Tudor (1485-1603)

**1500.** St. Mary's Parish Church gained its distinctive clerestories and decorated upper level to the tower. The increased interior light from these high windows would have fallen on a brightly painted interior. A huge rood screen, wide enough to walk along the top, would have blocked the view to the altar. Above this a large crucifix with St. John and the Virgin Mary kneeling on either side would have dominated the scene. The two town boundary crosses, one on the Leicester road and the other at Thorpe End, marked the route for religious processions.

**1538.** The dissolution of the monasteries under Henry VIII forced out the monks and the knights of the Order of St. John from their properties in the town. In 1549 some of this property was bought by two church wardens and passed on to 20 trustees to be kept in trust for the town of Melton Mowbray. This was primarily for the schools and is the first reference to the Town Estate.

**1543.** The two brasses of this date in St. Mary's Parish Church were fixed, one above the other, in a niche in the vestry. One gives details of the bodies placed near it, one Chrystoper Gonsone and family and is dated 'XX day of Augt. 1543'. The other is in Latin 'Scta Trinitus unis deus miserere nobis' 'Holy Trinity, One God, have mercy on us'.

**1547.** The reformation meant that the Church of England was formed with Henry VIII as its head breaking from the authority of the Pope in Rome. In St. Mary's the rood screen was removed and from the records there was no priest appointed until 1562.

**“Be of good cheer,  
Master Ridley,  
and play the man.  
We shall this day light such  
a candle in England by  
God's grace,  
As I trust shall never  
be put out”**

**Bishop Hugh Latimer**

**1550.** The Glebe house at Frisby-on-the-Wreake was built.

**1553.** Hugh Latimer was born at Thurcaston in 1473. Originally a Roman Catholic priest, he became an ardent disciple of the reformers and in **1535** Henry VIII made him Bishop of Worcester. However he was too outspoken for Henry's liking, and after he handed Henry VIII a Bible marked at a passage which read 'Whore mongers and adulterers God will judge' he was sent to the Tower of London for 7 years. After his release Bishop Hugh Latimer moved to Melton Mowbray, where he preached for the last few years of his life before, at the age of 80, he was captured and brought before Queen Mary's Bishops. Together with Bishop Ridley and Bishop Thomas Cramner, Hugh Latimer was burnt at the stake in 1553.

**1566-7.** When Queen Elizabeth gained the throne from Queen Mary the country once again became protestant and St. Mary's rood screen, having been replaced under Queen Mary was once again removed. The pulpit and reading desk at Welby church are of an Elizabethan date. The silver chalice used at Communion services at Sysonby church dates from 1566-7. Sadly its paten had been stolen, which is why most of these valuable and special objects are kept well away from the churches these days.

**1580.** The school buildings at Spittal End became so dilapidated that the school was moved into the North transept of St. Mary's Church where it stayed for quite some time.



## Stuart (1603- 1714)

**1603.** James I, during his triumphant progress from Scotland, passed through the Vale of Belvoir and knighted as many people as he could, 50 on 22nd and 23rd of April alone! This was to try and gain popularity as his strong protestant standards upset Catholics to the point that one Guy Fawkes tried to blow up the Houses of Parliament in 1605! The first English translation of the Bible in 1611, is the King James version.

**1604.** William Digby died and in 1610 he was charged in the Court of the Star Chamber by the Attorney General with the depopulation of Welby. This he had done some years before his death to complete the layout of his house and estate.

**1620-30.** Cold Overton Hall was built.

**1642-9.** The English Civil War was a result of Charles I's attempts to rule with supreme authority. The Melton Borough was divided. A Parliamentarian garrison was station in the town. They took down the coat of arms of Charles I from the church to use for target practice. The church suffered at this time and most of the interior furnishings and brasses were removed. On February 23rd 1645 the bloodiest battle of the local campaign occurred on Dalby Road, which was formerly called Ankle Hill after the amount of blood shed. About 150 men died here when the Royalist forces under Sir Maraduke Langdale charged down the hill to be met by the Parliamentarians who fought their way up the hill from the town. Who won is not clear as with so much in this war.

**“A thousand ages in thy sight  
Are like an evening gone;  
Short as the watch that ends  
the night  
Before the rising sun”**

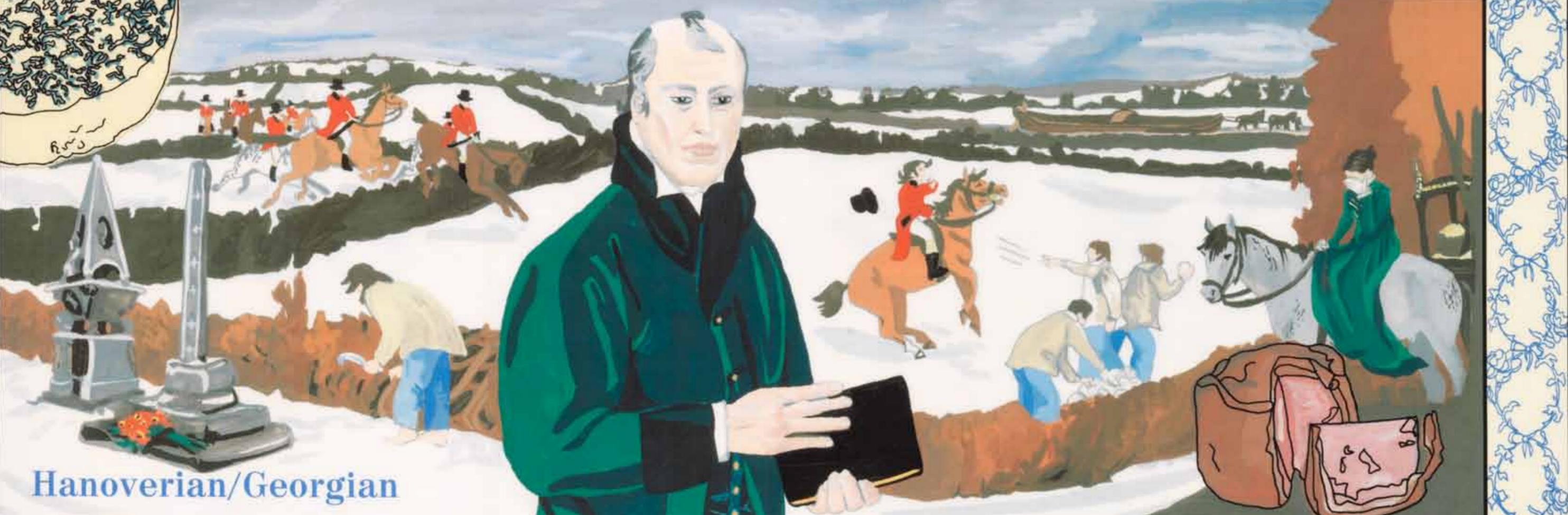
**(O God our help in ages past. Verse 4)**

**1638.** Due to his good fortune in London, Robert Hudson whose birth place was Melton, gifted money to build Bede Houses opposite the church. These were originally built for six old bachelors or widowers.

**1658.** Great Dalby church's spire came crashing down after a vigorous ringing in of the New Year. It took out most of the nave and an estimated £1660 was required at that time to rebuild it. Coinage though was in short supply and the two 'men of good standing' who sent around the country to raise money finally ran off with it once they had obtained it! The trade token show here, issued in Melton Mowbray in 1666, shows the measures taken to keep the local economy going during the upheavals of the Civil War and following Commonwealth period.

**1662.** The first edition of the English prayer book written primarily by Thomas Cranmer, was printed in 1533. The second edition under Edward VI was in 1552. In 1553 Mary removed it and then Elizabeth restored it. In 1604 James I altered it but, finally in 1662, when Charles II had regained the throne the version of the Book of Common Prayer still used in some Church of England services was printed.

**1665.** Freeby chapel was built as an independent chapel - one of the first in the county. Born in 1674 Dr Issac Watts the great non-conformist clergyman was chaplain to Sir John Hartopp at Freeby chapel. He may even have written some of his famous hymns, 'O God our help in ages past' or 'Jesus shall reign where ere the sun' in Freeby.



Hanoverian/Georgian

## Hanoverian/Georgian (1714-1837)

**1722.** The large monument in Burton Lazars churchyard to William Squires with figures representing life, death, time, faith, hope and charity, cost so much that there was nothing left of his estate to pass on to his family.

**1730.** Lady Beaumont's cheese was first made at Quenby Hall. The house keeper, a Mrs. Orton of Little Dalby, went on to make larger quantities of this cheese once she left this employment. By 1756 it was being made by only three women, then the recipe was passed to women in neighbouring parishes and a Mrs Paulet at Wymondham eventually sent some of this cheese to be sold by her relation Cooper Thornhill, who kept The Bell at Stilton in Huntingdonshire on the Great North Road. It is from here that it gained its popularity and name-Stilton Cheese.

**1753.** The Quorn hunt was formed.

**1740.** The local people continued to place flowers on the cross at Burton Lazars at times of religious festivals. This practice was deemed Papist and so the cross was destroyed.

**1760.** The Enclosure Act forced the defining of boundaries which changed the look of the countryside as new hedges were laid.

**1795.** The canal was opened linking Melton Mowbray to Leicester and the primary commodity transported was coal. The basin at the bottom of Burton Street then became the commercial centre of the town.

**“The earth is cover'd thick  
with other clay, Which her own  
clay shall cover, heap'd and  
pent, Rider and Horse, - friend,  
foe, - in one red burial blent!”**

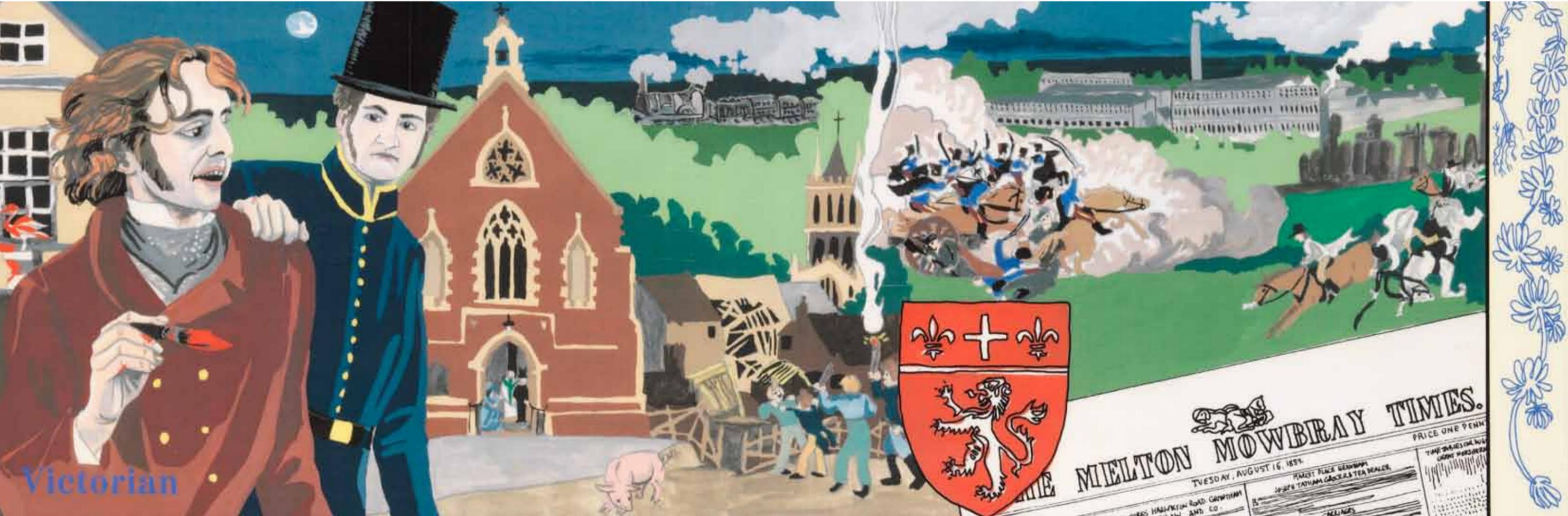
**(Lord Byron – The eve of  
Waterloo, last verse, 1815)**

**1773.** Dr Thomas Ford became vicar of Melton Mowbray. A friend of John Wesley, this energetic preacher had a great effect on the town, starting the first Sunday school in the country. In 1775 the Grammar school ceased to exist Dr Ford was the driving force behind remodeling it on an elementary school system with free tuition. The school moved back to its refurbished premises in Spittal End and out of the church. In 1794 a girls' school was started to teach reading, knitting and plain work.

**1811.** The Prince of Wales, son of George III, became Prince Regent and would later be George IV. While hunting from Belvoir Castle he was greeted by the ringing of Melton's church bells. The bell ringers expected him to ride into the town, and they hoped he would give them some money. George sat tight and the angry bell ringers and townspeople showed their displeasure with him by snow balling him when he did finally visit the town!

**1824.** Lord Byron died at Misselonghi and his body was brought back to England for burial. On its way to Nottingham it rested overnight at The Swan Inn. The next day Lady Caroline Lamb, whose father owned Sysonby Lodge, was out riding and met the funeral procession. She was said to be very upset by this last meeting with her love.

**1831.** Melton Mowbray pork pies were first baked by Edward Adcock in a shop next to the Fox Inn yard. The waste product of cheese making is whey and pigs love eating whey, so one local delicacy inadvertently led to the other.



## Victorian (1837-1901)

**1837.** On the night of the 6th of April 1837 the Marquis of Waterford and his cronies from the Hell Fire Club decided to paint Melton red. This included the toll gate at Thorpe End and the toll gate keeper, as well as the swan on the front of the Swan Inn. They had already made a nuisance of themselves over the previous few nights causing much damage to property in the town. The local constables apparently could not cope and called in reinforcements from Leicester. Finally arrested, the Marquis and his friends were brought before Leicester Assizes and fined £200 each.

**1842.** After the Emancipation Act Roman Catholic churches could once again exist in England. The Roman Catholic Church on Sherrard Street was designed by Pugin and built in 1842.

**1846.** The railway came to Melton Mowbray. In 1875 a freak snow storm left snow to the depth of 14 inches on the railway station roof, which promptly collapsed.

**1848.** The houses backing on to the Play Close were encroaching on this common land with pig sties and allotments. The local townspeople rioted and the local specials were called in. After the case was tried at Leicester Assizes the Play Close was freed from all encroachments.

**1849.** The Melton Town Estate bought the Lordship of Melton, which included the market tolls.

### Paint the town red”

**1854.** The charge of the Light Brigade was led by Lord Cardigan, who lived at the Limes in his old age and hunted from Melton.

**1859.** The first edition of the Melton Mowbray Times was published on August 16th 1859.

**1866.** After the absentee vicar Robert Croughton had run up massive debts, the curate-in-charge, Revd. W. M. Colles became Vicar. Interested in archaeology he talked his friend Gilbert Scott into becoming involved with the restoration of St. Mary's Parish Church, Melton. Rev Gilbert Kaney followed Revd. Colles as vicar and had the Colles Hall built in his honour. He was followed by Canon Richard Blakeney, who was responsible for the restoration of the hamlet churches, of which Freeby and Sysonby were in the worst state and had almost fallen down.

**1890.** Saw the dare devil Midnight Steeplechase with the competitors riding wearing ladies night dresses over their riding clothes!

**Late 1800s.** Robert Dalgleish, a surveyor for the railways, noticed the large deposits of iron stone in the area and set up the iron foundry at Holwell Works. The second wool spinning mill was built in Melton Mowbray on the site now occupied by Pedigree Petfoods. It was huge and would have employed mainly women and children for very low wages. The first mill on Asfordby Road was attacked by workers from the Leicester mills after its opening in 1780 and closed not long after as much of its machinery was destroyed.



Edwardian/World Wars

## Edwardian/World Wars (1901-1945)

**1900.** Burton Lazars race course was a popular social event for both rich visitors and locals. The social divide was such that soup had to be distributed through the winters. In 1907, for example, this was on Fridays and Saturdays.

**1903.** The Remount Depot was established to meet war needs for horses. The Equine Division main block was built in 1895.

**1914-18.** The First World War took many men and horses from this area. The need for horses at the front led to the requisition of farm horses. The lists of names on the war memorials of the Borough show the horror of the First World War and this would begin the social changes of this century. The economic pressures of wartime caused Collins pork pie factory to close down and the trade never recovered.

**1922.** Howard Carter discovered the tomb of Tutankhamen, who had ruled Egypt in the first half of the 14th century BC. The expedition led by Lord Carnavon led to many Egyptian inspired building designs. The shop frontage along Sherrard Street dates from the 1920's and clearly shows the influence.

**1914-24.** Sir Malcolm Sargent was organist and choirmaster at St. Mary's Parish Church.

**1920-30's.** Edward VIII, while Prince of Wales, met Mrs. Wallis Simpson at Burrough Court, near Melton Mowbray for the first time. It was because she was a divorcee that he was forced to choose between marrying her and becoming King. He abdicated in 1936 and was succeeded by his brother, George VI.

**“I happened to get a game rifle from a hotel. I pinched it. I broke into more houses to get to Sweden than most cat burglars do in their lives”**

**(Emery Chamberlain, Scalford, describing his 100 mile trek across snowbound Norway after being stranded behind enemy lines in 1940)**

**1936.** Garner's Garage was built on the corner of High Street and Wilton Road. The Art Deco design of this garage says a lot about the importance of automobiles. Other builds of this date include the Regal Cinema with its coloured tiling.

**1939-45.** When Adolf Hitler ordered the invasion of Poland this brought Britain into the Second World War. A number of Poles managed to get to Britain and a parliament in exile was set up. Nine RAF stations were selected for use by the Polish Resettlement Corps but only Melton Aerodrome near Great Dalby could house families. In 1946 the first contingent of 250 Polish men, women and children arrived in Melton.

**1939-45.** There was very little bomb damage in Melton Borough by all accounts, though one house in Brook Street was hit and the road rattled with machine gun fire from the plane as it flew on.

**1944.** Private Dick Burton, age 21, was serving with the 1st Battalion, Duke of Wellington's (West Riding) Regiment at Monte Casino, Italy. On 8th October 1944 his platoon was advancing on the 1,950 foot height when they came under fire from a German machine gun emplacement. The Platoon leader was wounded. Private Burton rushed forward and killed three German gunners. As the assault continued it was again held by two more machine guns. Again Burton rushed forward and when his ammunition was exhausted he grabbed a Bren Gun and firing from the hip and forced the Germans to withdraw. Dick Burton was the only Meltonian to be awarded the Victoria Cross.



Post War/Elizabeth II

## Post War/Elizabeth II (1945-present)

**1951.** Pedigree Petfoods moved to Melton Mowbray from Slough, having outgrown its premises there. The closure of the woollen mill provided not only a site with room for modernisation and expansion but also labour. The other factors that influenced the move were good access, especially to the fishing ports and adequate water availability. The products produced then were Kit-E-Kat, Whiskers, Chappie and Lassie. The Kit-E-Kat poster shown here was produced at this time.

**1961.** At the end of the 1950's Melton Aerodrome was closed down. The Polish families who had made their home there were moved into Melton Mowbray. In 1961 the first ever Polish Church in England was built on Sandy Lane. It is dedicated to Our Lady of Czestochowa. The Polish dancers represent the Polish community in Melton Mowbray.

**1965.** The mid-sixties saw a boom in housing and municipal building in response to the rapidly growing population of the town. In 1965 the new police station in Leicester Road was built and the swimming pool was opened by the Marquess of Exeter. The money for the swimming pool was raised in the town by Toc H, who started campaigning and collecting in 1955. The population of the town had doubled in the three decades after the Second World War and in 1976 was 20,000. As it increased, so to did the need for houses; the digger and building site represent this.

“Unity with Diversity”

**1946.** The Royal Army Veterinary Corps moved to the Melton Depot from Doncaster. Expanding the site of the Remount Depot, the RAVC now train all the Army's horses and the dogs for the Army, Ministry of Defence Police and Royal Navy.

**1986.** Melton Borough Council was granted its own coat of arms on 17th December 1986. The elements that go to make it reflect much of the history of the town: the rampant Lion of the de Mowbray family, the ancient castles of Belvoir, Melton Mowbray and Thorpe Arnold. The agriculture of the area is represented by the wheat sheaves, the bull and the horse. The cross shows the town's links with the church. Finally the motto sums up nicely this market town as it prepares for the new millennium: 'Unity with Diversity'.

**1996.** Emily Jennings won a Gold medal at the Para Olympics in Atlanta. Before and since she has competed in events around the world. In 1999, at the age of 18, she had over 365 Gold medals and no idea how many silver and bronze medals. A happy young Meltonian who has become famous through doing what she enjoys, swimming, but not to the expulsion of real life and friends. This is why she is this time zone's key person.

**1999.** The European Union, health scares and increasing pressures on the farming community have all led to changes in the landscape around Melton Mowbray. Perhaps most obviously seen in the bright yellow fields of oil seed rape. The buffalo can be seen grazing in the fields at Nether Broughton.