

**PROGRAMME: LOUGHBOROUGH HISTORICAL AND
ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY 2026:**

Welcome to 'The Old Rectory':



Loughborough's venue for history, art exhibitions, events, and creative masterclasses. **Talk to a member and come and volunteer! Also, take a walk to the Rector's Wildlife Garden, Fearon Hall and Church - the beating heart of medieaval Loughborough.**

Lectures - usually at Fearon Hall. The Rectory's street-lit for evening events. Nita Rao's 'Bell' Willow Installation's sited in the Rectory Grounds. Virtual Listing's on the new 'Historic Sites' noticeboard.

Saturday Opening Times: 11-3: 28th March – 31st October. OPEN ON SATURDAYS, AND OCCASIONAL SUNDAYS ...

Curator, Alison Fearn, plus members of the volunteer team will facilitate new exhibitions and displays throughout 2026, so, come in and have a look.

PRICES:

£20.00 Membership (includes guide and members only events):

Lectures/ Talks: £5.00 non-members/ free to members

Ian Keil Lecture: £10.00 a head, free to members.

Creative Writing Workshops: £12.00 a head.

***New events will mean an updated programme. *Special Lectures and events are marked in red - this may indicate a need to book early.**

2026 NEWS:

ILLUSTRATED GUIDEBOOK TO THE RECTORY WRITTEN BY LAHS SECRETARY BEN DOTY: £3.50 or free to members and selling very well.

Forthcoming: A Guide to the Rectory's Ghost Stories.

2025's Open Day attracted 91 visitors/ Heritage Open Day - 87.

Leicestershire Tourism Awards:

Finalist: 'Best Day Out in Leicestershire', Leicestershire Tourism Awards, 2023/ 2024/ -

Finalist in three categories (Best small venue/ Dog friendly venue/ Best day out in Leicestershire) 2025.

CHECK HERE FOR OUR EXPANDING PROGRAMME OF EVENTS SUCH AS THE CREATIVE WRITING WORKSHOPS, HALLOWEEN, CHRISTMAS EVENTS, OPEN DAYS AND SPECIAL MEMBER SOCIALS AND MEET-UPS.

2026 Lecture Programme:

Done: Mike Burton, ‘Tales from Melton

Mowbray: A Little Known History.’ Thursday the 5th of February, Fearon Hall, 7.00.

Mike Burton is a former newspaper journalist and teacher, now retired - who spent many years in New Zealand, working as a reporter for the national daily newspaper. Much of his teaching career was at Uppingham School, where he was Director of Studies and taught History. He was hugely fortunate to be able to work in the classroom, for so many years, with enthusiastic youngsters. In his dotage he fritters away time - writing historically-themed talks. He sings in two choirs, also working part-time as a guide at Rockingham Castle. He spends too much time at Trent Bridge and enjoys walking the great paths of Britain.

Tales from old Melton Mowbray

A quiet market town, before and since, Melton found itself – for two centuries – the winter social capital of England. The ‘great and the good’ descended on the town for fun, carousing, and, at times, complete madness. It was all about the aristocracy’s love of horses, racing and many other diversions in this ‘glorious country’ – with its ‘screaming’ scent grass, and the ‘very best’ hunting.

**Thursday 26 March, 7.00, Charnwood Museum,
Granby Street: AGM: with talk by President,
Professor Martyn Bennett on “Shoeing
Goslings’: James the Sixth and Ireland’.**



Ian Keil Lecture: Professor David Woodman, Cambridge University: *Æthelstan: The First King of England*. 7.00, Tuesday the 21st of April, at Fearon Hall.

Marking the 1100th anniversary of Æthelstan's coronation, and the upcoming 1100th anniversary of the birth of England, Cambridge historian David Woodman explores the reign of England's founder king, whose achievements of 927, when he conquered the Vikings at York, rival the Norman Conquest in shaping Britain as we know it. Starting with the reign of King Alfred the Great (Æthelstan's grandfather), he traces the outline of Æthelstan's life and the ways in which he first created the 'kingdom of the English', and went on to create a vision for England on a European scale.

David Woodman is Professor of History at Robinson College, the University of Cambridge. His recent biography of Æthelstan is published by Princeton University Press: *The First King of England: Æthelstan and the Birth of a Kingdom*.



Jean Townsend, Thursday, June 11th, 7.00.
‘LONDON’S LOST JEWELS: THE STORY OF THE
CHEAPSIDE HOARD’, venue TBC.

Jean Townsend is a social historian (semi-retired) adult education tutor and free-lance lecturer. She specialises in the late medieval early Tudor period. She’s also an amateur archaeologist and was one of the volunteer lecturers for the *Mary Rose Trust* in the 1980's.



Thursday October 8th, 7.00: Dr Deborah Tyler-Bennett: 'Lost Empires: Music Hall in the East Midlands', Venue TBC.

'Roll-Up to hear of Sam Torr, Nottingham's manager extraordinaire, Leicestershire's Joseph Merrick, 'The Elephant Man' who faced life as an exhibit, Gertie Gitana, a star buried at Wigston Cemetery. and the Buswell (or Boswell) sisters, Loughborough's inventors of 'The Tassel Dance' – and of how The East Midlands has a wide ranging, ever emerging, history of music hall and variety. Join us for an evening of theatrical tales, music hall memorabilia and handling objects, and a history of our own, our very own, Lost Empires'...

Poet, fiction writer, and theatre historian, Dr Deborah Tyler-Bennett, has had three collections of linked short stories published using variety as a backdrop. She's written web pages for Leicestershire County Council/ Heritage Lottery projects on music hall in the East Midlands during WW1, and writes for the Max Miller Society Magazine, There'll Never Be Another. She's performed her stories/ histories at many festivals and literary events, sometimes with music hall song expert, Anne Featherstone. She's also conducted music hall walks of the region, and collects music hall/ variety memorabilia. Her stories are currently being podcast by Charnwood Arts (<https://soundcloud.com/user-868271798-685604246/sets/deborah-tyler-bennett>).



Open Days:

April 4th 2026's Rectory Official Opening Day :

Come and celebrate the Rectory's opening, with talks/ walks/ 'Easter Egg Hunt' and 'meet the volunteers' events. Volunteers will be opening the building on March the 28th for a cleaning day, so the building will be open then, also, for those wishing to pop by.

July 4th Community Open Day:

This provides chance for communities in Loughborough to visit the Rectory, talk to our curator and volunteers, and find out what we do. Events include talks, walks, a raffle prize, heritage groups, and lots to see and do. Free event.

Saturday the 19th of September: Heritage Open

Day: Part of the Nationwide 'Heritage Open Days'

celebration, where a trail offers people a chance to look round historic buildings and participate in events. We also have 'Heritage Open Day' leaflets showing what's on in Loughborough and Children's activity sheets on offer.

Visitors to the Rectory will be able to follow a 'Heritage Trail' around Loughborough or, if feeling adventurous, Loughborough and Leicestershire.

31st October: Last Day of the Year/ Halloween

Open Day: This year, our closing day coincides with the festival of Halloween, so, instead of our usual Halloween evening event, we'll be having our own mini Halloween festival at the Rectory - with talks and spooky stories. Child friendly, free event.



Workshops:

July: Deborah Tyler-Bennett hosts three creative writing workshops ‘In Situ’: Using Historic Details in Poetry and Prose.’

1: Place.

2: People.

3: Things.

Fridays July 3rd/10th/ 17th, 10-12 (£12.00 a head per session, payment cheque or cash on the door).



Please note, if you’ve done workshops at The Old Rectory before, 2026’s workshops are new in both contents and topics.

Exhibitions:

Forthcoming: exhibition from the North East's acclaimed 'Smokestack Press' run between the Old Rectory and Charnwood Arts (curated by Andy Croft, poet and editor in chief).

CHRISTMAS 2026: EVENTS:

The Old Rectory will be taking part in 2026's Christmas Tree Festival at the Parish Church, December DTBC.

Thursday the 3rd of December: 7.00, The Brian Williams Lecture, Fearon Hall main room. This year, Loughborough's Lynne Dyer author and tour guide, gives us an insight into her career as 'Lynne About Loughborough' – whose wide ranging historical talks and tours have taken in the town's historic pubs, enviable Art Deco buildings, and industrial history.

Come and listen and have a mince pie! Lynne's Books will be on sale.

We wish you a Merry Christmas and a very Happy New Year:

