

Countesthorpe A-Z

AUSTREY LANE

ARCHERY CLOSE

BEECHINGS CLOSE

DISTRICT OF BLABY
BARNLEY CLOSE

CHURCH STREET

CENTRAL ST

Street names
explained

2018
edition

Countesthorpe. A-Z.

Have you ever wondered how your street came to have a name? Way back in the really old days they didn't need them and you would be known as old Bill of Countesthorpe, everyone would know you, and the postman would have no trouble finding you. If he couldn't find you he would know your Mother!

But what of today when there are over seven thousand of us living here?

Station Road is obvious, but what about Tebbs Close and what about Station Road before the Station was there?

This booklet aims to answer to all those questions. However like all reference books it raises more questions than answers, so if you have a better answer than any of these offered please let me know.

Compiling this list has been a great learning experience and would have been impossible without the help of many friends in the village. I thank them all most sincerely and promise I won't make such a nuisance of myself again...until the next time.

What follows then is my interpretation of some historical facts, some local gossip and some, where no information has been found, quite simply my guesswork. The work has been checked, again by my many helpful friends but the errors and opinions are entirely mine.

2010 was a quite a year for Countesthorpe. In a twelve-month period from mid 2009 to May 2010 Blaby District Council together with The Planning Inspectorate approved the building of some 450 new homes thereby increasing Countesthorpe housing stock by some 17%. The first significant number since the Leysland estate was built in the 1990's. It has continued at apace since then. All these streets have names and most have a local historic connection, which is explained in this third edition.

Ian Paterson 2018

Countesthorpe

The first records of the village, dating from the late 11th and early 12th centuries, refer to it simply as 'torp' or 'thorp (e)', a Danish term for a secondary settlement or outlying farmstead. In 1276 it was referred to as 'thorpcontasse', and the 'countes-' element is said to derive from the Countess Judith, niece of William the Conqueror, who was a major landowner in Leicestershire (and elsewhere) at Domesday. The first record of the prefix 'countes-' dates from 1242 and the first modern spelling is to be found in a record of 1395. Variations in spelling continued into the 17th century. Four centuries later people still have difficulty with the spelling.

Countess Judith was a niece of William I, being the daughter of his half-sister Adelaide and Lambert, Count of Lens. She was the widow of Earl Waltheof of Huntingdon and Northumbria the last of the Anglo-Saxon earls. He was a son of Earl Siward of Northumbria, and, although he was probably educated for a monastic life, became earl of Huntingdon and Earl of Northumberland about 1065. After the Battle of Hastings he submitted to William the Conqueror. But when Sweyn of Denmark invaded Northern England in 1069 he joined him with Edgar Aetheling and took part in the attack on York, only, however to make a fresh submission after their departure in 1070. Then restored to his earldom, he married William's niece, Judith, and in 1072 was appointed Earl of Northampton.

There is of course another theory, which fits the dates better.

Robert de Beaumont, 4th Earl of Leicester (died 1204)

Robert was Lord of the Manor of Blaby. On his death all his lands were divided between his two sisters. The younger sister, Margaret, had married Saer de Quincy, and they inherited half of his estate.

Three years later Saer was created Earl of Winchester, making Margaret a Countess.

(hence Winchester Road!)

The good villagers of Blaby would then be visiting the Countess's Thorpe.

1242 saw the words Countes Thorpe first written on an official document.

During the work on the Redrow development on Leicester Road in 2012 three burial urns were uncovered. They were analysed by archaeologists and found to be of the Bronze Age. Proof that people were living in the area some 4000 years ago.

ALBERT ROAD

Built by Persimmon Homes in 2010 on land that was once in the ownership of the Rector of Blaby and was part of his Glebe, Albert Road is part of the second phase of development, and can be reached off Borrowcup Close.

It is fitting that the first entry goes to someone who probably had more influence in Countesthorpe over many years than any other person named in this book.

Dr Albert Frederick Hoffler, (Jim) arrived in the village in 1953 to join Dr Wynne Barnley at the surgery in 7 The Square where he worked as a General Practitioner until retirement in 1984. Jim lobbied for a new purpose built Health Centre which was finally opened in 1977 by the then Chancellor of the Exchequer and local member of Parliament Nigel Lawson and now serves some 9,500 patients from all around the south of the County.

Jim joined Countesthorpe Parish Council in 1958 and went on to be the Chairman of the Council from 1961 to 1974 a thirteen year spell which will never be matched. He did a further spell as Chairman but ill health caused him to retire from parish council work in 1991

He joined what was then Blaby Rural District Council as an Independent councillor in 1967 and remained in post until 1987. Among his other many interests he was a Justice of the Peace, the founding Chairman of Active Arts of Countesthorpe and Blaby in 1976 and President of Countesthorpe Twinning Association in 1985.

Jim arrived in the village when the population was around 1000 and having helped bring lots of Countesthorpe children into the world sadly died in 1997 when the population was 6000.

ALMOND CLOSE

One of the tree names used in the 1968 Bruce Fletcher estate off Gwendoline Drive. There may be an Almond tree in someone's garden, but I doubt it!

ARCHERY CLOSE

In England at the time of Battle of Bosworth, Agincourt etc. it was expected that every man would be ready to fight for his King and Country- whichever king- and he had to practise somewhere, so fields were set aside for training and practice on a Sunday morning. The archery field was thought to be somewhere close to here at Maple Avenue, where the field was flat rather than the ridge and furrow of the field that became Judith Drive.

ASPEN DRIVE

Aspen Drive is a continuation of Poplar Avenue built at the time of the great expansion in Countesthorpe in the 1960s. The Aspen tree (*Populus tremula*) is a member of the Poplar family. The bridleway (shown on ancient maps as Mill Road) to

the Blaby Mill runs north from Station Road to the mill on the River Sence where the remains of it are still visible. The Anglo-Saxon drove road carried on through Blaby to the city of Leicester.

Arran Way

On the Scotland Way estate built in what was the last of the 1970's development of Countesthorpe. The estate was known as the Broad Oak estate and the broad oak can still be found at the junction of Arran and Mull Way.

Austrey Lane

A connection with the village of Austrey in Warwickshire. Austrey Lane was part of the original lay out of the village and was the road to Lutterworth, Swinford and Willoughby Waterleys. The 19th century census return shows this road as Lutterworth Road and Willoughby Road.

See County Record Office ref. DW3222/530/1-41 - date: 1603-1831 Deeds relating to lands at Austrey, Blaby and Countesthorpe in cos. Warwick and Leicester, some in the occupation of Thomas Monk, and probably all relating to the charity endowed in his name. These include enclosure awards dated 1744 and 1796 for enclosing open fields in Austrey by private agreement. They were lords of the manor and owned property in the village.

Barnley Close

In 1925 Doctor E Wynne Barnley came to the village from South Wigston where her father was in General Practice. Doctor Wynne as she was always referred to set up practice in the village with another lady Dr. Ruth Brittan. As there were only around one thousand lady doctors in the country at the time Countesthorpe was quite unique in having two of them. As was customary then they set up a practice from her home in The Square. She later took on a partner Dr 'Jim' Hoffler who moved into the same house and carried on the practice from home until the Health Centre was built in 1970. Number 7 The Square was always referred to as the doctor's house. Dr 'Jim' went on to be a District and Parish Councillor serving as Parish Council Chairman for some thirteen years without a break. One Ulysses J Burke from Ireland who lived in Cox's Lane (Central Street) was 'surgeon sixty years in this parish' until his death in 1885. His handyman and village crier was William Keen who shared his house. However they have no streets named after them!

Bassett Avenue

At the time of the Enclosure Act (1767) the open fields of Countesthorpe were divided up and allocated to various landowners. William Bassett was one of those to benefit from enclosure. By 1851 William and Christopher Bassett had added to their land holdings by buying some of the Tithe land from the Rector of Blaby who was responsible for Countesthorpe church affairs. The Bassett family

lived on for many years in the village and were still living in Linden House opposite The Paddock in 1919. They were leading members of the Baptist Church.

Beechings Close

The railway came to Countesthorpe in 1840 on its way from Leicester to Rugby and on to London. In 1963 the government of the day invited Richard Beeching to draw up a report on the future of the railway network. Beeching was chairman of the British Railways Board at the time.

As a result of the by then Lord Beeching's report uneconomical lines were closed and thousand of miles of track pulled up making land available for housing. Beechings Close followed the line of the track as it crossed Station Road towards Willoughby Waterleys. Odd number houses at the top end still have the remains of the line in their back gardens. These were built by Pollock and North in 1964. The full Beeching report is available on www.beechingreport.info/

Benskyn Close

Part of the Leysland estate built in the 1980s by Persimmon Homes. John Benskin was the owner of Linden Farm. The farmhouse still exists on Gwendoline Drive corner, albeit unrecognisable from the original. At the time of the Enclosures Act of 1767 John Benskin owned 109 acres, which stretched from the farm house to beyond the Cosby Turn, and some 30 acres north of the village from Hamsons Hill to Crow Mill. He chose not to live in Countesthorpe but rented his land out to tenant farmers.

Billington Road

Off Scalborough Close built by Charles Church Development Ltd in 2011 gets its name from William Buckingham who started life as William Billington before being adopted and becoming:

Private William Buckingham, V. C. 1886-1916 spent his childhood in the Countesthorpe Cottage Homes. Born in Bedford he spent most of his young life in and out the workhouse and was sent to The Cottage Homes in 1892. From there he joined the Leicestershire Regiment and won the Victoria Cross in battle at Neuve Chapelle. He came home wounded and was hailed as a hero.

Bladen Close

A connection with Prime Minister Winston Churchill (1874-1965). Churchill was buried in the family cemetery at Bladon in Oxfordshire the same year as Bladen Close Countesthorpe was built. During 1965 there was a national collection for the Churchill Memorial Fund and the result of a house-to-house collection in the village raised £78:17:9. The same year the Parish Council minutes reported that the village caretaker had a pay rise to make his weekly wage £10:00

Bladon lies on the south side of Blenheim Park with many quaint cottages. St Martin's Church is a Victorian reconstruction of 1894 on the site of an earlier church rebuilt in 1801. In January 1965 Sir Winston Churchill was buried in the churchyard at the head of the grave of Lady Randolph Churchill his mother. His father, Lord Randolph Churchill is buried alongside.
<http://www.oxtowns.co.uk/woodstock/bladon.html>

Borrowcup Close

A romantic notion taken from a field-name but no proven connection with Countesthorpe.

Broadfield Way

Part of the Leysland estate built in the 1980s. Broadfield is taken from an old field- name not far from where it is now.

Brook Court

Brook Court residential home was opened in May 1977 and stands close to what was Brook Street until sweeping changes were made to the area in the late 1960s. The building was designed so that a footpath to the recreation ground divided it in two. That footpath was all that was left of the original Brook Street. (Prior to Brook Street the road had been Cow Lane). It became increasingly obvious that having a 'tunnel' through the building where children were playing did not mix well with the quiet life required by the elderly residents so eventually the footpath was diverted and the 'tunnel' built in.

Brook Street took its name from, and naturally led to, the Countesthorpe Brook. The recreation ground with access now from Dale Acre or Shetland Way is still known as Brook Street "Reccie" to some of the older Countesthorpe residents.

Broomleys

Taken from a field name but with no proven connection with Countesthorpe. Broom (*Cytisus scoparius*) is abundant all over England.

Buckingham Road

Private William Buckingham, V. C. 1886-1916 spent his childhood in the Countesthorpe Cottage Homes. Born in Bedford he spent most of his young life in and out the workhouse and was sent to The Cottage Homes in 1892. From there he joined the Leicestershire Regiment and won the Victoria Cross in battle at Neuve Chapelle. He came home wounded and was hailed as a hero. After recovering from his wounds he toured the region encouraging others to join the army and fight for the King. He later returned to the front and was killed in action.

Derek Seaton 2001 "A Tiger and a Fusilier, Leicester's VC Heroes"

Bute Way

One of the romantic Scottish names chosen by the developer Bruce Fletcher on the Scotland Way estate in the early 1970s.

Central Street

Formerly Cox's Lane after the Cox family who were master framework knitters. Their frameshop stood on the site of what is now the car park in Central Street.

Cherry Tree Close

One of the tree names used in the 1968 Bruce Fletcher estate off Linden Farm Drive with a 'Jitty' through to Walnut Way.

Chestnuts Close

Off Cosby Road, a small development of five houses built on the land previously owned by the Tomkin family (see Maurice Drive)
The developer was frequently told there was another Chestnuts in the village but the authorities declined to listen. There were some mighty Chestnuts growing in the garden prior to the new houses completed in 2015

Christopher Close

A group of sheltered bungalows off either side of Bassett Avenue takes its name from Christopher Bassett one of the sons of the Bassett family. See Bassett Avenue.



Church Street

Formerly Jacksons Lane after the Jackson family who were landowners in the area and in 1664 owned the largest dwelling in the village with 'six hearths'. It was known for a short time as Pawley Lane after widow Jackson married Simon Pawley, but reverted back on his death. The Baptists Church Sunday School was established in 1792 and a church built there soon after.

Clarke Crescent

Off Borrowcup Close and built there by Persimmons in 2011 takes its name from Clarke the farmer and Countesthorpe's milkman for many years until the pressure of supermarket prices did away with the local doorstep deliveries by the milkman. Clarke's owned land around this end of the village, as well as the current farm on Willoughby Road.

Cosby Road

The road to Cosby village

Dale Acre

From Dale Acre Furlong dated 1636 probably derived from the field name Dalicarr Piece (i.e. a piece of land lying in a valley)

Diamond Avenue.

See Elizabeth Close

Edgeley Road

Mr Percy Lord of Lords Electrical in Wigston was also a parish councillor in Countesthorpe. Although he left Edgeley near Stockport when aged nine he clearly had fond memories of the place of his birth. He lived in New Street in a house named Edgeley and it was he who proposed the name should be used on the new development in 1960.

Elizabeth Close

Part of the Redrow development off Leicester Road built in 2012 the year of Queen Elizabeth's Diamond Jubilee.

Prior to building the estate archaeology survey was conducted by Wessex Archaeology and as a result a major dig was organised which resulted in the discovery of three bronze age funeral urns and a single post hole.

The vessels were all probably of Early Bronze Age date, in the Collared Urn tradition typically dating from c. 2200 - 1400 BC.

At the base of the post pit were worked flint tools, diagnostic of the late Mesolithic and early Neolithic period (c. 5000 - 3500 BC), and a large broken stone object worn smooth by grinding cereal grain or polishing activities.

www.wessexarch.co.uk/projects/leicestershire/countesthorpe-evaluation-collared-urn

Thus proving that people had been living in Countesthorpe some 4000 years ago whereas the earliest known evidence of life here was probably the Church tower of 11th century or perhaps some discarded roman ware.

Elliotts Yard

A small development on what was recently Eales farmyard. A William Elliott was a yeoman and churchwarden in 1753 and has a window in the church dedicated in his name. One Thomas Elliott served on the St Andrews church council in 1933. The yard name is from a family machine frame-knitting workshop that was on this spot.

Fair Isle Way

One of the romantic Scottish names chosen by the developer Bruce Fletcher on the Scotland Way estate in the early 1970s.



Fir Tree Avenue

One of the tree names chosen by developer Bruce Fletcher in the 1960s.

Foston Road

Also known as 'Foston turn' from the days of the turnpike road. The turnpike road was built to transport coals from the coalfields in the north west of the county towards the coal-less south. The turnpike keeper's house stood at the junction of what are now Ladbroke Grove and Foston Road.

There was a Countesthorpe Road in Barlestone until the name was changed to the rather grand West End. Despite that, it is still known in Barlestone by the locals as Coal Pit Lane.

Gillam Butts

Taken from an old furlong name.

Butts: -A furlong with some strips shorter than others.

Gilden: -'Golden' as where the yellow flowers grew. *Gilden Butts* from a terrier dated 1636.

In 1841 Jonathan Gillam was a gardener whose house was at the top of Green Lane and was allocated a box pew in the church. Thomas Gillam is commemorated in a tablet on the north wall of the chancel in St Andrew's dated 1772.

Glebe Drive

The Act of Enclosure of 1767, meant that all the common land around Countesthorpe was divided and enclosed. Edward Stokes the Vicar of Blaby who was also responsible for St Andrews was granted a consolidated block of some 200 acres of glebe land. (It wasn't until many years later that vicars got a stipend and until then they had to live of their glebe.) Over the years much of the land was sold off and now all that remains in the care of the Diocese is some 13 acres. Most of the glebe land is at the top of Glebe Drive, known locally as the 'Ag' and is cared for by the members of Countesthorpe Garden and Allotment Society, who continue to pay rent to the diocese via an estate agent.



Green Lane

Green Lane is one of the oldest roads in the village, and before the Enclosure Act the road out of the village to Leicester, and, like most green lanes, originally a sunken track.

However if you turned left at the first bend the route took you down Packman Lane, to Blaby and beyond to Leicester. This continued the 'Packman route', which ran along, east of the parish from Peatling Magna. Part of the route is still usable today.

Gwendoline Drive

Part of the huge expansion of the village in the 1960's. Believed to be the name of the wife of the managing director of Bruce Fletcher the developers. However that came as a complete surprise to Mr Carter who was the boss at the time, and to his wife, so the lady Gwendoline and her whereabouts will forever remain a mystery!

Messrs Pollock & North built the western end of Gwendoline Drive and there are those who say Gwendoline was the wife of one of them. Gwendoline Pollock or Gwendoline North I have been unable to prove either!

Hallcroft Avenue

Usually a piece of enclosed land owned by the lord of the manor. In this case Hall Croft was one of the large medieval fields, it lay either side of Station Road from the Square to about the Vicarage in Station Road. Mill Field, South Field, North and Field below town were other substantial open fields.

Hallcroft Gardens

A small development built in the 1990's off Gillam Butts

Hazelbank Road

Part of the Rosebank Road estate built in the 1960's by Bruce Fletchers

Heather Way

Another of the romantic Scottish names chosen by the developer Bruce Fletcher on the Scotland Way estate in the early 1970s.

Hoffler Close

See Albert Road

Holyrood Drive

Holyrood palace is the Queen's residence when in Scotland, but what this has to do with Countesthorpe is a puzzle.

Iona Way

Another of the romantic Scottish names chosen by the developer Bruce Fletcher on the Scotland Way estate in the early 1970s.

Jubilee Way

See Elizabeth Close.

Judith Drive

See Countesthorpe

Kirkfield Road

Another of the Scottish names from the 1960s Bruce Fletcher Scotland Way estate off Rosebank Road.

Ladbroke Grove

The Church of St. Andrew dates from the early 13th century when the Lord of the Manor was noted as William de Lodbok from Ladbroke in Warwickshire.

Larchwood

Laurel Drive

Tree names used in the 1968 Bruce Fletcher estate.

Leela Close

A small collection of houses started off Willoughby Road in 2011 next to what was Countesthorpe's brickyard also known as Soars Pit after one of the owners of the pond, which can still be seen there. Leela is named after the developer's mother.



Leicester Road

Leicester Way at the time of laying down around the late 1700's after the Enclosure Act of 1767. Prior to then it was known as Little End.

Leopold Close

Leopold Wacks was a Leicester factory owner who lived in Linden House Station Road for a number of years in the 1920s. A very generous man who supported many schemes in the village, it was he who gave the land to 'the people of Countesthorpe' that the current village hall stands on. In its lifetime it had a bowling green, tennis courts, billiard room and library. The current Village Hall was built to replace the old wooden structures in 1996.

Lewis Way

One of the romantic Scottish names chosen by the developer Bruce Fletcher on the Scotland Way estate in the early 1970s.

Leysland Avenue

Leysland farm was at the end of the footpath leading from Winchester Road heading east towards the village. In 2005 the remains of the farm buildings could still be seen from the public footpath, known locally as the Black Pad.

Linden Avenue

The name comes from the farm of the same name but has no connection. To complete the avenue, at the time of building it was lined with Lime trees (*Tilia vulgaris*)

Linden Avenue was the first of the new housing to break into new ground from the otherwise 'ribbon' development style of hugging the main road. Started mainly in the 1920's but almost every age of house and design is here.

Linden Farm Drive

Leading from Gwendoline Drive eventually to Linden Farm House from which it takes the name. Linden Farm dates back to before the Enclosure when the Gillam family owned it. John Benskin from Stoney Stanton bought the land from the Gillam family in the late 17th century, but never actually lived there and instead let it out to tenant farmers.

Lord Close

Small collection of houses built by Davidsons on Clarkes Farm completed in 2016. Rumour has it that the developer named the small development off Willoughby Road after seeing the names Lord on the village war memorial. Nice story and possibly true as there are two Lords mentioned (Private John Thomas 11th Battalion Leicestershire Regiment. Killed in action, 15th October 1916 aged 20. and William Herbert, Private, 11th Battalion Leicestershire Regiment. Killed in action, 15th October 1916 aged 20.)

The family lived at the other end of the village on Peatling Road and as far as is known never owned any land at the Willoughby Road end. Percy Lord from the same family started Lords Electrical in Leicester Road Countesthorpe now known throughout the County.

Ludlam Close

Part of the Leysland estate built in the 1980s. Edmund Ludlam and his family owned land in the village from the 1680s but never lived here. They owned Poplars Farm now in Green Lane and a hundred plus acres north of the village.

One Richard Ludlam Mayor of Leicester 1642 was appointed to the Leicester Committee in the House of Commons. Hansard



Main Street

It's difficult to think of Main Street as anything other than the main street of Countesthorpe. But there is no mention of it in any census or document until 1861. Certainly it was there but would have been called Cox's Lane, Ferret Alley, Peatling End, or any of a number of Yards depending on where you were standing. It might have been outside one of the three pubs, The Roebuck, The Bulls Head or the Sir Robert Peel. You would not have been outside the King William as that was in Cox's Lane in 1851. By 1861 it was in Central Square but had settled in The Square by 1871. The Railway Hotel was miles away up Hall Lane, later to be Station Road.

Maple Avenue

A tree name given by the builders Wheatcroft in the 1980s on what was Chaplain's Close.

Martha Close

Small close of houses off Winchester Road built in 2012 and named after Martha Clarke who bought the land when Blaby church sold off their glebe land. Clarkes farmed the land for many years and was Countesthorpe's milk supplier until the arrival of the supermarkets.

Marston Crescent

Mr Edward Marsden was headmaster of Countesthorpe Junior School from 1956 to 1972 and was in office when the school moved from the corner of Foston Road to the new premises in Gwendoline Drive. After he and the pupils left Foston Road school it became an engineering factory producing equipment for the mining industry. It has since reverted back to the world of education and now houses the Blackberry Bush Nursery.

Countesthorpe Junior School became Linden Junior School and finally (?) Greenfield Primary when the Junior and the Infant schools were amalgamated into one school in 1999

Maurice Drive

Maurice Tompkin (1919-1956) England & Leicestershire

Maurice was born in Countesthorpe, learned his cricket playing skills here and played regularly behind the Railway Hotel. The higher ground of what is now Maurice Drive acted as a natural grandstand for the home crowd.

Information taken from Cricket Archive Oracles

Maurice Tompkin England

Born February 17, 1919, Countesthorpe, Leicestershire
Died September 27, 1956, Leicester (aged 37 years 223 days)

Leicestershire (1938-1956)
Marylebone Cricket Club (1951-1955/56)
Rest of England (1947)
Sir PF Warner's XI (1947)
North of England (1949-1956)
Players (1951-1955)
TN Pearce's XI (1952)
England XI (1954-1955)

One James Tompkin was recorded as innkeeper of The Axe and Square in the census of 1851, and there are Tompkins still living in the village today.

A fellow county cricketer was Anthony Riddington (1911-1998) who also played for his county and lived for many years in Waterloo Crescent. He was a great supporter of the Countesthorpe Show with his prize tomatoes and his own strain of potatoes.

Meadow Close

A small four house development behind 'Glebe Mount' one of Countesthorpe's few 'big houses' on Willoughby Road. One time the home of the Soars family from Bakers & Soars a famous Leicester plumbers.

Completed by Tobias the builders in 2016

Mennecy Close

In 1990 the Chairman of Countesthorpe Parish Council exchanged twinning charters with the Mayor of Mennecy. A small town some twenty miles south of Paris Mennecy, is a busy commuter town with huge parklands, Olympic standard swimming pool, tennis courts, theatre, cinema, and naturally restaurants. The Mennecois continue to visit Countesthorpe regularly.

Mill Field Avenue

Off Scalborough Close comes from a field name in the area presumably where the windmill was situated on some high ground. No trace remains.

Morgan Close

Between numbers 81-83 Bassett Avenue is Morgan Close, on what used to be garages for Bassett Avenue until Morgan was created in 2016.

H.J.Morgan esq was the very first Chairman of Countesthorpe Parish Council when Parish Councils were started in 1894. He was joined with Rev.S.H. Tomes, Messrs C. Bassett. C. Cox, J. Hubbard, A Hubbard, J.H. Hubbard, and T. Immins.

Population of the village in 1891 was approximately 1,300.

Mull Way

One of the romantic Scottish names chosen by the developer Bruce Fletcher on the Scotland Way estate in the early 1970s. The estate was also known as the Broad Oak estate. The Broad Oak still stands at the bottom of the Way

New Street

New in 1876 when Beaconsfield Terrace was built on Leicester Road. However it was never actually named New Street until the road was extended for new housing in the 1920's. It is assumed that the terrace was named after the Earl of Beaconsfield, the title Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli (1804 - 1881) took on his elevation to the House of Lords. Curiously he took the title in 1879 three years after the building was completed!

It was Disraeli who first coined the phrase
"There are three kinds of lies: lies, damned lies and statistics"

Oldfield Close

Part of the Leysland estate built in the 1980s. Oldfield is taken from a field name in the region. Upper Oldfield and Nether Oldfield (1766) were on the Blaby side of the footpath -The Black Pad- by the last Countesthorpe house in Winchester Road number 137. Oldfield in other parts of the country has been shown to mean 'abandoned arable on the outskirts of settlement'.
(Margaret Gelling *Place Names in the Landscape*)

Orchard Lane

Originally known as 'Peatling End' Orchard Lane runs from Main Street through to Stroma Way. One Ephraim Barlow had his blacksmith's shop in Orchard Lane in 1841 when he was a supporter of church repairs and therefore allocated a box pew in St Andrews. Ephraim and his wife buried six infants and are commemorated in the churchyard. It was also known as Donkey Lane until one of the residents asked for it to be changed, presumably to Orchard Lane, but where was the Orchard?

Orkney Way

One of the romantic Scottish names chosen by the developer Bruce Fletcher on the Scotland Way estate in the early 1970's

Packman Green

A packman is a pedlar or travelling salesman. Like most towns and villages Countesthorpe would have had its own packman or chapman.

Paddock Close

Opposite The Paddock, a relatively new complex built in the late 1980's on what was the garden of Linden House.

Peatling Road

The village ended at Peatling End (Orchard Lane) until Peatling Road was laid down after the Enclosure Act 1767.

Penfold Drive

Built on the site of the pinfold on Countesthorpe Railway sidings where cattle were rested awaiting collection by farmers. Tradition has it that Countesthorpe's pinfold (a pound for stray animals) was by St Andrew's Church gates behind the present Cornerstone. On the OS map of 1888 the 'Pinfold' is clearly marked opposite Gutlac House in other words number 7 The Square.

Pinewood Close

One of the tree names used in the 1968 Bruce Fletcher estate

Poplar Avenue

One of the few remaining unadopted roads in the village it follows the ancient bridle road to Blaby mill and continues on to Leicester. It was known as Mill Way in 1630.

In 1919 it was known as Sparks Lane when according to Mr John Shakespear Auctioneer a 'Pleasantly Situated Cottage with large garden' there sold for £160 At the same auction Linden House in Station Road and what we now know as The Paddock sold for £1,500.

See Aspen Drive.

Poplars Farm Court

Built on the orchard of The Poplars Farm on the bend of Green Lane, which was owned by Edmund Ludham in the 1700's. The current building dates from the 1890's but within the structure are parts much older. Poplar Farm Court was built in the 1990's and is accessed from Maple Avenue.

Poppy Close

Poppies grew here before Westleigh Homes came along and added to the houses on Gillum Butts in 2016

Queens Close

See Elizabeth Close

Reed Pool Close

Possibly after Reed Pool Spinney close to Barley Lane, Foston.

Regent Road

Regent Road was a track down to the allotment field behind Beaconsfield terrace until it was developed, as a very early industrial estate in the 1950's Quite

why it has such a grand title is a mystery. King George the IV was the last Prince Regent from 1812 -1818!

Ridleys Close

Off Scarborough Close. 2011 by Charles Church Development

For more than twenty years the planning authorities and Countesthorpe Parish Council opposed the building of what is now the Leysland estate. After numerous applications, appeals and visits from planning inspectors the plan finally ended up on the desk of Nicholas Ridley the Secretary of Environment in the Government of Mrs Thatcher.

Amongst Mr Ridley's claims to fame he is credited with popularising the phrase NIMBY or *Not In My Back Yard* to describe those who instinctively opposed any local building development. It was soon revealed that Ridley opposed a low cost housing development near a village where he owned property. He was the Cabinet Minister responsible for the introduction of the Community Charge or poll tax, a policy that brought a standing ovation at the Conservative Party conference at which it was announced, and riots across the country when it was implemented. Ridley was also famous for covering more of England with tarmac than any other minister in his short time in the ministry. He was also responsible for the deregulation of the buses and it was he who finally allowed the development of Leyslands and the parish council at the time asked that a street be named Ridleys End as he left government shortly after making the decision.

There was a local landowner named Ridley but that's not such a good story.

Royal Drive

See Elizabeth Drive

Rosebank Road

Chosen by the developer Bruce Fletcher as the main road through the Rosebank Road estate in the early 1970s.

Scarborough Close

Part of the Leysland estate built in the 1980s by Persimmon Homes. An old furlong name close to here, "Scarborowe" was next to Leysland Common and Nether Oldfield (1766) Scarborowe was thought by some historians to be a separate settlement.

Scholars Court

Created in 2006 on what was the Infant and Junior School in Main Street. Monies left in the will of Henry Ralphs (died Countesthorpe 1848) blacksmith and veterinary surgeon funded the school in Main Street. The school became redundant in the 1960s when Linden Junior School was built (now Greenfield Primary) and was taken over by St Andrews Church to become known as the Church Rooms, it was then sold to a design company who in turn sold it to developers. The existing buildings were converted in 2005/6 to living accommodation and a further building added at the rear to match the design of the original.

Scotland Way

The main road leading to the Scotland Way estate also known as the Broad Oak estate after the tree in Mull Way which managed to survive the Bruce Fletcher bulldozers in the 1970's

Shetland Way

Off Rosebank Road and another of the Scottish names

Skye Way

Another of the romantic Scottish names chosen by the developer Bruce Fletcher on the Scotland Way estate in the early 1970's
No historical connection to Countesthorpe.

Southfield Close

In days before enclosure (1760s) the village map would have contained The Southfield, Upper Oldfield and Nether Oldfield amongst other now romantic sounding names. Southfield was built on The Southfield as was Gillam Butts, Tophall and Marston.

Today's Southfield was added as yet another extension to Gillam Butts in 2016 by Westleigh Homes.

Spinney Avenue

The road to the Spinney on Leicester Road. A Wheatcroft development in the early 1960s. During the building and for a long time afterwards the oak trees in the Spinney were standing in a huge pond, which wasn't drained until the Parish Council took over the site and maintained it.

Springwell Close

For many years sand and gravel were extracted from either side of Station Road, which left behind a serious drainage problem, that still gives trouble today. Developers Bruce Fletchers had a great deal of trouble with the excess water running off Station Road and bubbling up in Springwell in the 1960s. In the 2000s it still gives problems on Station Road.

Springwell Drive

Same problem but a little further away!



Station Road

Before the railway came to Countesthorpe in 1840 it was known as Hall Lane, as it led to the Hallcroft Field one of the three mediaeval fields before they were divided up at the Enclosure. At the time the railway was a good trek from the village but allowed the building of the road and the further development of housing and the first real expansion of the village after the 1700s.

Stanyon Close

Miss Lindsey Stanyon helped run the surgery in The Square and was Dr Wynne Barnley's companion
See Barnley Close

Stonecroft

Stonecroft lies very close to Countesthorpe's last clay pit where bricks were manufactured for building in the village. Now somewhat rare and treasured items the bricks were proudly labelled 'Countesthorpe'. However this was on the inside so once in use could not be seen. George Potter and his wife Mary lived in Brickyard House close to the Station in the 1881 Census; George was brickyard foreman. Vass & Co Ltd made the bricks that built the Countesthorpe Cottage Homes in 1884 and as they are marked 'Vass & Co Ltd Brick Works Countesthorpe' it's fair to assume they came from the clay pit on the corner of Stonecroft. By 1904 all that was left of the Countesthorpe Brick & Tile Company was a large pond now known as Soars Pit. No trace of any of the works is now visible.

Stroma Way

Another of the romantic Scottish names chosen by the developer Bruce Fletcher on the Scotland Way estate in the early 1970s.

St. Andrews Court

Six small houses on what was once a row of garages for the folk of Reed Pool. Completed in 2013 by Abraham developers. It is just about possible to see the tower of St Andrews church if you stand on tiptoes!

Sunbury Rise

A romantic notion but sounds good! Built as part of the Leysland estate in the 1980s

Tebbs Close

The Tebbs family name crops up regularly in the history of Countesthorpe. There is tombstone in St Andrews church to Elizabeth Tebbs aged 32 who died in 1781. In 1841 Farmer John Tebbs was allocated a box pew in the church. A plaque in the church is dedicated to him and his wife Francis. He took over the post of

churchwarden from his brother William in 1841. Richard Tebbs their father (?) was 'suddenly called' when he was 86 and lies in the churchyard having died in 1836. It was Richard who built the splendid Beeches Farmhouse in 1751 that stands in Green Lane. On the north wall, above the door are the initials of the family put there when the original building was extended.

The Bank

Long before The Midland or Alliance & Leicester Bank had an office there The Bank was established in Countesthorpe. The term appears in lots of villages (there are eight in Leicestershire alone) and is derived from a steep slope to keep the cattle from straying out of the pasture and into the street. Perhaps the forerunner of the 'ha ha' made famous by Capability Brown in many a stately home across the country.

The Chestnuts

One of the tree names used in the 1968 Bruce Fletcher estate, but the nearest conker is round the corner in Gwendoline Drive by the Primary School.

The Coppice

A woodland name for the group of bungalows off Walnut Way to go with the tree names on the 1968 Bruce Fletcher estate.

The Dales

The name is taken from a natural drainage channel, which runs north south from Blaby, and crosses Station Road almost opposite Waterloo Crescent and continues on past the bottom of the allotment field towards Willoughby.

The Drive

The Drive running from Cosby Road to the houses that were The Countesthorpe Cottage Homes built as an alternative to the Workhouse by the Guardians of the Poor of Leicester in 1884.

Further Reading: *The Countesthorpe Cottage Homes, a World Apart*. Karen Saunders *et al* Available from County Record Office Wigston.

The Elms

One of the tree names used in the 1968 Bruce Fletcher estate.

The Hawthorns

Another of the tree names used in the 1968 Bruce Fletcher estate.

The Leys

A charming secluded cul de sac off Cosby Road. A colourful picture in the summer months when the street is awash with colourful bedding plants. The

Dictionary definition is "A field covered with grass or herbage and suitable for grazing by livestock".

The occasional puppy dog can be seen but no livestock grazing any longer.

The Plantation

The Plantation was built on a field of the same name behind the houses on Station Road. The Little Plantation is the name given to the jitty, which runs from Station Road to the Plantation.

The Paddock

Formerly The Hall Close and part of the estate of number 5 Main Street. In 1851 it was purchased by Christopher Bassett and added to his estate and fronted Linden House in what was then Hall Lane, now Station Road. Many years later The Paddock was given to Blaby Rural District Council. In 2017 Countesthorpe Parish Council announced on their web site.

"The Parish Council have agreed to rename the area currently known as the Paddock once they have taken over ownership from Blaby District Council. The Paddock will be renamed the Centenary Paddock to mark the 100 years since the end of first world war. The council intend to install two new benches depicting first world war scenes and a flag pole with the Union Jack permanently flying to enhance the area. Once the council have taken over the Centenary Paddock it will always remain an area for recreation and remembrance."

The Rowans

One of the tree names used in the 1968 Bruce Fletcher estate.

The Spoilbank

Not a street name as such but a playground for youngsters. The name dates back to the building of the railway through Countesthorpe in 1840. Properly called The Woodlands.

The Square

Most people would assume this to be the oldest part and centre of the village, but although certainly the centre and certainly old the name is relatively new. The name probably grew out of the confusion of Cox's Lane, Church Lane, Jackson's Lane and Green Lane. Mr Glazebrook the Postmaster and hosier living in Main Street who employed 28 men and 5 boys in 1851 must have found it difficult to sort it all out. In the census of 1851 the Square did not exist. By 1861 The King William the Fourth Hotel was in Central Square. As was the exotic Ulysses J Burke from Ireland who was 'surgeon sixty years in this parish'. He and his manservant William Keen, who also spent time as the Village crier, were now to be addressed at Central Square. By the 1871 census it had changed again to the name we are now all familiar with, The Square.

The Vineries

Named after a market garden in 1840, on the land now housing Cherry Trees old folks home. Actually built on land that formerly housed Goulds Knitwear Factory, which gave employment to many village folk.

The Woodlands

Not to be outdone with a single tree name, Jelson's the builder in the late 1960's went for the lot! Centuries ago the countryside around here, as elsewhere may have been covered in forests but there is no evidence to prove there was a wood here. Also known locally as The Spoilbank when waste from the railway cutting was deposited there, also as Penny Hill which is its name at times of snow as its an excellent toboggan run! Where that name comes from is anyone's guess?

Thomas Drive

Built as part of the Scarborough Close development by Charles Church in 2012. Every good story needs a mystery and Thomas Drive is the one! The District Council is the responsible authority for naming roads, but it is often the choice of the developer at the time who chooses names they think will help sell their homes, hence the Scotland Way estate and Iona, Mull, Stroma Ways. Often the developer seeks advice from the Parish Council which over the years has always used local names relevant to the area or past residents in the village, hence Maurice Drive, Ludlum and Beechings Close. However sadly no one admits to knowing Thomas or why he ended up here!

Tophall Drive

Top Hall Croft (1776) was not far from the current Tophall Drive, Bottom Hall Croft was next door, but who would want to live in Bottom Hall Drive?

Walnut Way

One of the tree names used in the 1968 Bruce Fletcher estate.

Waterloo Crescent

Built in the 1930s largely by Weston and Pilling who also built most of the houses in Winchester Road. As a selling point at the time it was said you could commute to Leicester by train in seven minutes, and the ticket cost eight pence (3 p in today's money) the houses cost £450 at the time.

Mr William Weston father of Roland Edgar mentioned above built for himself the splendid bungalow next door to Countesthorpe Bowls Club on Station Road. One day someone will write the history of that house which has a tale to tell.

Weston and Pilling were also Plumbers Merchants who operated from the main office and showroom in Waterloo Street Leicester.

Waterloo Street became Waterloo Way in 1973 when it was cleared to make way for the abortive ring road and route to the London Road Railway Station.

So the naming of our Waterloo had nothing whatever to do with the Battle of Waterloo of 1815 which was fought south of Brussels where the Duke of Wellington, defeated the Emperor Napoleon, but came from a plumbers merchants in Leicester!

Mennecy Close was added in 1990.

Westfield Avenue

The road runs north to south but it is in the west end of the village, which is reason enough to give it the name.

Built by the Chapman family who constructed a great deal of Countesthorpe including the virtual rebuild of St Andrew's church in 1907.

The Chapman family, although no longer building are still in Countesthorpe today running a garden machinery business in Station Road from what was the family builders' yard built at the end of the 19th century.

Wheatlands Drive

Built at the same time as The Woodlands, but the name has no connection with the field names of the area, and merely a fancy of the estate agents!

Wigston Street

Until Leicester Road was built around 1770 the village ended just beyond the Axe & Square and the route to Leicester was down Green Lane. The yards and closes around the pub were known as Little End. The southern end of the village was Peatling End. There is another Little End close by in Bruntingthorpe.

Willoughby Road

The road to Willoughby Waterleys. Until fairly recently there was some debate whether it was Waterless or Waterleys. In fact the debate continues!

By among the willows and waterleas (corrupted to waterless) Wilebi, Wilechbi, in 1086; Wilewby 1236; Wilweby 1254 (Taken from Jonathan Wilshere *Leicestershire Place -Names*)

Willow Drive

One of the tree names used in the 1968 Bruce Fletcher estate.

Winchester Road

Winchester Way in 1619.

In Saxon times Winchester was the capital of Wessex and home to the kings of England. It doesn't take a huge leap of the imagination to connect Bambury Lane -the meres or boundary- to Winchester Road and see an ancient track through Leicester via Blaby and on to the south of England to Saxon country.

However a Blaby historian offers another theory.

In the 13th Century the Lord of the Manor of Blaby was one Robert Fitzparnel de Beaumont who died in 1205 and having no children his estates were divided equally to provide inheritance for his two sisters. One of these sisters, Margaret was married to the Saer de Quincy Earl of Winchester making her the Countess of Winchester. Had she inherited some land south of Blaby, access to that land would have been down Winchester Way. Those people who had settled on her land would have been living at the Countess's Thorpe!

Margaret de Beaumont, Countess Winchester "Margaret de Harcourt" was born 1154 in Hampshire, England and married before 1173. She died 12 Jan 1254. She was the daughter of Robert de Beaumont III, Earl of Leicester and Lord High Steward of England who was born between 1121 to 1130 in Leicester, He died 31 Aug 1190 in Durazzo, Greece.

www.boazfamilytree.com/gneville/aqwg12.htm

Over the centuries Countesthorpe has gained many streets and names with some past connections. However there are a few that sadly we have lost completely. All of these appeared in one or other of the Census so were regarded as 'official'.

Bakehouse Lane	Brook Street	Burley's Yard	Church Yard
Clowes Yard	Cow Lane	Donkey Lane	Ferrets Lane
Hubbards Lane	Jacksons Lane	Little End	Pawley Lane
Pink Street	Sparks Lane	Taylor's Lane	

And Finally **Niffy!**

Ask a dozen people the reason Countesthorpe gets referred to as Niffy and you'll get two dozen theories- and more than likely they'll all be right!

Acknowledgements:

Countesthorpe: A Leicestershire Parish Before and After Enclosure.
Sheila Knight and Henrietta Schultka.

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