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Conferment of the
HONORARY FREEDOM
of the City of Leicester
27th April 2009



IN THE 800th YEAR OF THE MAYORALTY

THE MAYORALTY OF LEICESTER

800th ANNIVERSARY

The history of the Office of Mayor of Leicester dates from 1209 when Alderman William fil Leveric, a Gild Merchant, is first noted on the Latin Roll.

In the subsequent 800 years, there have been a total 550 Mayors/ Lord Mayors, with some individuals having held the Office on more than one occasion.

Leicester had been a Borough since medieval times but, following the Local Government Act 1888, it became a County Borough. At the end of the First World War, and after much lobbying, Leicester was granted City status by George V. The King visited Leicester on 10 June 1919 and, four days later on 14 June, the Home Secretary wrote to the Mayor of Leicester, informing him that:

'His Majesty has been graciously pleased to approve the restoration of the Town to its former status of a City'.

Some time later, the City applied to the King for permission for its Mayor to be known as the Lord Mayor. The 'Letters Patent' required for the change of Office were duly granted on 19 July 1928, making Alderman James Thomas the last Mayor and first Lord Mayor of Leicester.

The Lord Mayor's Office holds biographical details of every Mayor/Lord Mayor, with some examples set out below:

John Biggs (1840; 1847; 1855): supported the building of the Town Hall and founded the Reference Library

William Grimsley (1878): died after just 12 days in office, the shortest term on record

Sir Israel Hart (1884; 1885; 1886; 1893): funded the Town Hall Square fountain

Thomas Wright (1887; 1891): first person to receive the Freedom of the Borough

Jonathan North (1914-17): Knighted in a ceremony at De Montfort Hall. Instrumental in the formation of the North Memorial Homes, Victoria Park Gatehouses and the Luytens War Memorial

James Thomas (1927): last Mayor and first Lord Mayor

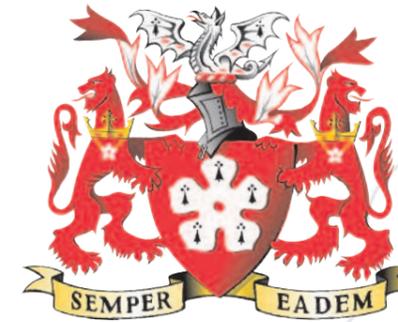
Elizabeth Rowley Frisby (1941): first female Lord Mayor

Councillor Albert Sylvester Watson (1978), whose Lord Mayor's Charity Appeal raised more than £1 million for the first hospital scanner in Leicester

Councillor Mrs Janet Setchfield (1985): only person to have held the Offices of Lord Mayor of Leicester and Chairman of the County Council

Councillor Gordhan Parmar (1987): first Asian Lord Mayor of Leicester

Councillor Manjula Sood (2008): first Asian female Lord Mayor of any city in Britain



City of Leicester

Conferment
of the
Honorary Freedom
of the City
upon

Alan Birchenall MBE
Engelbert Humperdinck
Sue Townsend

27 APRIL 2009

De Montfort Hall, Leicester

THE RIGHT WORSHIPFUL
THE LORD MAYOR OF LEICESTER
COUNCILLOR MANJULA SOOD

HONORARY FREEDOM OF THE CITY OF LEICESTER



THE CONFERMENT of the Honorary Freedom of the City of Leicester dates from the Freedom of Boroughs Act 1885 which enabled boroughs and cities to confer the honour upon citizens deemed worthy of such recognition. The Honorary Freedom remains the highest civic honour that the City can bestow.

The first occasion on which the Borough of Leicester exercised its powers was in 1892 when two former mayors, Alderman Thomas Wright and Alderman Edward Wood, became the first recipients. Initially the honour was given to senior elected members of the Council “in recognition of the eminent services rendered to the Borough”. It was gradually extended to include businessmen, benefactors, Members of Parliament and local clergy. Most recently, in 2001, Dr Frank May was honoured in recognition of his outstanding contribution and generosity to the City.

Leicester has also honoured a number of national figures “for eminent services to the Nation” – Admiral Sir David (later Earl) Beatty, Field Marshal Douglas Haig (Earl Haig of Bemersyde), Prime Minister James Ramsay MacDonald and Cosmo Gordon Lang, Archbishop of Canterbury. To this illustrious list of recipients has been added more recently, Sir David and Sir Richard (now Lord) Attenborough, Professor (now Sir) Alec Jeffreys, Gary Lineker and Rosemary Conley.

In addition to these individuals, the honour has also been bestowed on Leicester Football Club (The Tigers) in 2001 and the Royal Anglian Regiment in 1996. The Freedom of Entry to the City confers on the regiment the right, honour, privilege and distinction to march through the streets of the city with colours flying, bayonets fixed and band playing.

There is a distinction between the Freemen of Leicester and the conferment of the Honorary Freedom. The Freemen can be traced back to 1196 when the Guild of Merchants officially came into being. Membership could be inherited or bought and from 1589, admission to the freedom was available to those serving an apprenticeship to a freeman. Outsiders could buy their freedom and it was also possible to appoint Honorary Freemen, but often this was related to how a person might vote at a local election; the Municipal Corporation Act of 1835 effectively withdrew such powers as the modern democratic process began to evolve. Today the Guild of Freemen enjoys a close and friendly relationship with the Leicester City Council thus maintaining a unique historical presence in the City over the past 800 years.

Undoubtedly, the measure of the Honorary Freedom of the City itself is best described in the words of Captain Robert Gee, VC, MC, the only Leicester born man to be awarded the Victoria Cross, who received the Honorary Freedom in 1925. Writing to the Lord Mayor of Leicester, Councillor Charles Worthington, from Australia in 1946, Captain Gee expressed his feelings with the following words:

“Of the many honours which fortune has favoured me with, the one I most value is having been made an Honorary Freeman of my native City.”

The enabling statute requires a specific procedure to be followed before the Honorary Freedom can be conferred. First, the Honorary Freemen must be “persons of distinction”, or “persons who have ... rendered eminent services to the City”; then a special meeting of the City Council has to be convened with the sole object of passing a resolution to confer the honour, and this must be passed by no less than two thirds of the members present.

THE OATH TO BE TAKEN BY EACH HONORARY FREEMAN

**You affirm to be true to the
Lord Mayor of this ancient
City for the time being, and
be supportive of any Warrants,
Precepts and Commands
issuing from this office.
And you shall, as much as lies
in your power, contribute and
do every act and thing for the
good governance and safety
of the rights and privileges
of this ancient City and the
inhabitants thereof.**



At a Special Meeting of the Council of the City of Leicester held at the Town Hall on Wednesday 25 February 2009, with the Lord Mayor of Leicester Councillor Manjula Sood, in the chair, the Council wished to recognise the many and valuable services rendered by

Alan Birchenall MBE

it was moved by Councillor Ross Willmott seconded by Councillor John Mugglestone and carried unanimously in accordance with the provisions of the Local Government Act 1972 [Section 249 (5)]:

“That the City Council confers on Alan Birchenall MBE the Honorary Freedom of the City of Leicester and causes him to be admitted as Honorary Freeman of said City in recognition and appreciation of the honour and distinction brought to the City by virtue of his outstanding contribution to the sport of football at both professional and amateur levels and through his sporting links his generosity and contribution to charitable works both within the City of Leicester and beyond”.

ALAN BIRCHENALL MBE

Alan Birchenall, MBE, born 22 August 1945 in East Ham, played professional football during the 1960s and 1970s.



A talented, flamboyant and much travelled player, ‘The Birch’ was a skilful forward then midfielder who started his professional career with Sheffield United in 1963. He made his league debut a year later and won the first two of his four England under-23 caps while with the Blades.

He was among the first players to command a £100,000 price tag three times when he moved from Sheffield United to Chelsea in November 1967. After three years at Chelsea, he joined Crystal Palace in another £100,000 deal, and led their scoring list in his first season at Selhurst Park, scoring around 100 goals at the highest level.

Leicester City paid £100,000 for him in 1971, and he remained with them for six years, making 163 appearances and scoring 12 goals, until signing for Notts County in 1977. He later played for NASL sides, the San Jose Earthquakes, under present Chairman of Leicester City Milan Mandaric, and the Memphis Rogues.

He also spent brief spells with Blackburn Rovers, Luton Town, Hereford United and was Player/Manager at Trowbridge Town. During these spells he still represented LCFC at functions.

He is now an integral part of the LCFC ‘Foxes’ staff. Birch has raised over half a million pounds for nominated charities over the years, including through his end of season sponsored run around the Filbert Street/Walkers Stadium pitch. In 2002 he was awarded an MBE for his charity work.

Currently Birch is also an Ambassador for the Special Olympics to be held in Leicester in the summer of 2009.

At a Special Meeting of the Council of the City of Leicester held at the Town Hall on Wednesday 25 February 2009, with the Lord Mayor of Leicester Councillor Manjula Sood, in the chair, the Council wished to recognise the many and valuable services rendered by

ENGELBERT HUMPERDINCK

it was moved by Councillor Ross Willmott seconded by Councillor John Mugglestone and carried unanimously in accordance with the provisions of the Local Government Act 1972 [Section 249 (5)]:

“That the City Council confers on Engelbert Humperdinck, the Honorary Freedom of the City of Leicester and causes him to be admitted as Honorary Freeman of said City in recognition and appreciation of the honour and distinction brought to the City by virtue of his outstanding contribution worldwide to popular music and also his generosity to charitable works within the City of Leicester and beyond”.

ENGELBERT HUMPERDINCK

Engelbert Humperdinck was born Arnold George Dorsey in Madras, India, in 1936. The son of a British Army officer and engineer, Mervyn Dorsey and Olive Dorsey, he was raised in Leicester along with his nine brothers and sisters.



In 1967 Engelbert was asked to perform at the London Palladium and it was there that his well known signature hit “Release Me” was born.

He went on to serve in the British Army for two years, following which he spent six months in hospital battling against tuberculosis. But the “King of Romance” was determined to overcome setbacks and earn his rightful place in the entertainment world.

Engelbert went on to sell over 150 million records worldwide, including 72 gold and 25 platinum albums. He has had a number of other hits including “The Last Waltz”, “A Man Without Love”, “Spanish Eyes”, “Quando, Quando” and in 1977 “After the Lovin’.

Engelbert has performed before Her Majesty the Queen and other members of the Royal Family and many heads of state. He was honoured with a Royal Variety Club award in 1967 and in 1989 received a ‘star’ on the prestigious Hollywood Walk of Fame.

In January 2006 Engelbert was awarded an Honorary Degree of Doctor of Music at Leicester University.

Engelbert Humperdinck also serves as ambassador and patron to several organisations in Leicester. He is a Patron to the Derbyshire, Leicestershire and Rutland Air Ambulance and is also Cultural Patron for the 2009 Special Olympics.

At a Special Meeting of the Council of the City of Leicester held at the Town Hall on Wednesday 25 February 2009, with the Lord Mayor of Leicester Councillor Manjula Sood, in the chair, the Council wished to recognise the many and valuable services rendered by

SUE TOWNSEND

it was moved by Councillor Ross Willmott seconded by Councillor John Mugglestone and carried unanimously in accordance with the provisions of the Local Government Act 1972 [Section 249 (5)]:

That the City Council confers on Sue Townsend, the Honorary Freedom of the City of Leicester and causes her to be admitted as Honorary Freeman of said City in recognition and appreciation of the honour and distinction brought to the City by virtue of her outstanding contribution to the arts, notably as a novelist and playwright and, in particular, the encouragement of children and a wide audience to enjoy the experiences which can be achieved through the written and spoken word”.

SUE (SUSAN LILLIAN) TOWNSEND



Sue Townsend was born in Leicester in 1946. She went to Glenhills Primary School where her class teacher was a Mr Moles. After failing her 11-plus, she went to South Wigston Girls' High School. She left school shortly before her 15th birthday and worked in a variety of unskilled jobs. She married young and by the time she was 22 she had three children under five with her fourth following 10 years later. She now has 10 grandchildren.

Sue trained as a youth and community worker and worked on the Eyres Monsell, Saffron Lane and St. Matthews estates. Then, encouraged by her second husband, Colin, she joined a writers' group at the Phoenix Theatre Leicester and wrote the first of many plays – *Womberang* – which won the Thames Television Playwrights Award. She became most well known for her book, published in 1982, about a 13¾ year old, bookish youth, living in Leicester, called Adrian Mole. At the time of writing *The Secret Diary*, Sue was working on the Saffron Lane Estate at the Goldhill Adventure Playground. She completed the book in Garendon Street, Highfields. In 1984 *The Growing Pains of Adrian Mole* was published, making Sue the best-selling novelist of the 1980s. Further books on Adrian's journey through life have been published and translated into 48 languages and adapted for radio, television and stage. In July 2009, filming is due to start on a film of *The Secret Diary*.

Her books about the Royal family's exile to the Saffron Lane Estate, *The Queen and I*, and *Queen Camilla*, were also best-sellers and Sue adapted *The Queen and I* for the West End stage and for an Australian tour.

Sue has suffered from diabetes for many years and in 2001 she was registered blind. She has touched on this theme in her recent work.

She is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature and was presented with the James Joyce prize at University College Dublin in 2008. Last year she was voted the funniest living comic writer. Sue is currently working on a new book, *Adrian Mole, The Prostate Years*.



CITY OF LEICESTER

ORDER OF PROCEEDINGS

27 APRIL 2009

**Gary O'Donnell will
welcome the guests**

**Arrival of
The Lord Mayor**
(Councillor Manjula Sood)

The High Bailiff
(Councillor Paul Westley)
and

The Chief Executive
Ms Sheila Lock

Preceded by The Mace

Organist *Mr Simon Headley*
Trumpet Tune by M A Charpentier

(audience to stand for the entrance)

~~~~~  
**Celebration of 800 years of  
Mayoralty in Leicester**

Leicester: 1209 - 2009

***Rupal Rajani***  
(BBC Radio Leicester presenter)

~~~~~  
Desi Masti Dancers

FREEDOM OF THE CITY CEREMONY

The Chief Executive will read the Resolution of the Council, 25 February 2009, conferring the Honorary Freedom of the City upon

ALAN BIRCHENALL MBE

The following members of the Council will speak:
Councillor Ross Willmott
Councillor John Mugglestone

The new Honorary Freeman will receive at his hands his Illuminated Certificate of Admission and casket from the Lord Mayor

Alan Birchenall MBE will reply

The new Honorary Freeman will sign the Roll and the Chief Executive will witness the same.

The Chief Executive will read the Resolution of the Council, 25 February 2009, conferring the Honorary Freedom of the City upon

ENGELBERT HUMPERDINCK

The following members of the Council will speak:
Councillor Ross Willmott
Councillor John Mugglestone

The new Honorary Freeman will receive at his hands his Illuminated Certificate of Admission and casket from the Lord Mayor

Engelbert Humperdinck will reply

The new Honorary Freeman will sign the Roll and the Chief Executive will witness the same.

The Chief Executive will read the Resolution of the Council, 25 February 2009, conferring the Honorary Freedom of the City upon

SUE TOWNSEND

The following members of the Council will speak:
Councillor Ross Willmott
Councillor John Mugglestone

The new Honorary Freeman will receive at her hands her Illuminated Certificate of Admission and casket from the Lord Mayor

Sue Townsend will reply

The new Honorary Freeman will sign the Roll and the Chief Executive will witness the same.

The Lord Mayor will give a vote of thanks and will introduce the Special Olympics Ambassadors.

Entertainment by the D-E-A Bhangra Drummers

THE LORD MAYOR and the Chief Executive, preceded by the Mace and accompanied by the three new Honorary Freeman, the High Bailiff and the platform party will leave the De Montfort Hall auditorium and proceed to the Garden Suite.

Organ music
Tuba Tune by C S Lang

LIST OF
PERSONS UPON
WHOM THE
HONORARY
FREEDOM OF
THE CITY
HAS BEEN
CONFERRED

THOMAS WRIGHT JP, ALDERMAN
25th October 1892

EDWARD WOOD JP, ALDERMAN
25th October 1892

THOMAS WINDLEY JP, ALDERMAN
31st March 1903

JOHN EDWARD SARSON VD, COLONEL
31st March 1903

ALEXANDER BAINES JP
29th November 1904

WILLIAM WILKINS VINCENT JP, ALDERMAN
28th November 1911

THOMAS SMITH JP, ALDERMAN
3rd July 1918

JONATHAN NORTH JP, ALDERMAN
28th January 1919

DAVID BEATTY GCB, GCVO, KCB,
ADMIRAL OF THE FLEET
28th January 1919

THOMAS FIELDING JOHNSON JP
8th July 1919

DOUGLAS HAIG
(EARL HAIG OF BEMERSYDE) Kt, GCB, OM,
GCVO, KCIE, FIELD MARSHAL
28th February 1922

THOMAS FIELDING JOHNSON MA, JP
28th April 1925

CHARLES JOHN BOND CMG, FRCS
28th April 1925

ROBERT GEE VC, MC, MP, CAPTAIN
28th April 1925

JAMES WENT MA, CANON
28th April 1925

EDWARD ATKINS BSc, CANON
28th April 1925

JOHN EDWARD FAIRE JP
28th September 1926

ARTHUR ISAAC GROVES JP
28th September 1926

JAMES RAMSAY MACDONALD PC, LLD, MP, JP,
PRIME MINISTER
29th October 1929

COSMO GORDON LANG PC, DD
ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY
28th May 1935

JOHN PARSON, ALDERMAN
24th September 1940

HARRY PERCY GEE OBE, JP
26th July 1949

WALTER ERNEST WILFORD JP, ALDERMAN
26th July 1949

THOMAS ROWLAND HILL CBE, ALDERMAN
3rd January 1956

ROBERT EDMUND MARTIN Kt, CMG, TD,
DL, JP, AMICE, MA, Hon LLD, LT-COL (TA)
3rd January 1961

CHARLES ROBERT KEENE Kt, CBE, JP,
ALDERMAN
31st July 1962

BARNETT JANNER, BARON JANNER OF THE
CITY OF LEICESTER Kt, BA Hon LLD
26th October 1971

FREDERICK ERNEST OLIVER Kt, CBE,
TD, DL, ALDERMAN
26th October 1971

SIDNEY WILLIAM BRIDGES, ALDERMAN
26th October 1971

MAC GOLDSMITH Hon LLD
26th October 1971

DAVID FREDERICK ATTENBOROUGH
CH, Kt, CBE, FRS, Hon D Litt., Hon D Sc,
Hon LLD, Hon Sc D
30th November 1989

**RICHARD SAMUEL ATTENBOROUGH, BARON
ATTENBOROUGH OF KINGSTON UPON
THAMES** Kt, CBE, Hon D Litt, Hon DCL, Hon LLD
30th November 1989

ALEC JOHN JEFFREYS

Kt, Wolfson Research Professor of the Royal Society,
BA, MA, D Phil D Univ (open), Hon DSc (St Andrews),
Hon DSc (Strathclyde), FFSc (India), C Biol, Hon FI
Biol, FLS, Hon FRCP, FRCPath, FRS, F Med Sci,

Professor of Genetics

26th November 1992

GARY WINSTON LINEKER OBE

26th November 1992

THE ROYAL ANGLIAN REGIMENT

25th January 1996

FRANK EPHRAIM MAY MBE, Hon LLD, MCIM

12th July 2001

ROSEMARY CONLEY, DL

12th July 2001

LEICESTER FOOTBALL CLUB (The Tigers)

12th July 2001