



THE SYMINGTON BUILDING

Photographs displayed within The Symington Building

Harborough District Council and their partner Leicestershire County Council want to celebrate the history of this building, once a corset factory, and the surrounding area. Throughout the building are reproduced historic images of the factory and from around the district, archived in the Record Office for Leicestershire Leicester and Rutland. Images such as these are available to view and purchase at www.imageleicestershire.org.uk This leaflet provides some information about the images you can see around the building.

Background: The Symington Building was built in 1884-9 by R&W.H. Symington Co. Ltd. due to the expansion of their business making foundation garments. In 1980 the building was sold to Harborough District Council to be used for their offices, and also to house the museum and library. In 2012, Harborough District Council approved plans to refurbish the building and work commenced in 2013. The Symington Building re-opened to the public in 2014 and as well as housing the Council Offices it is also home to Market Harborough Library, Harborough Museum, Leicestershire Adult Learning Service, Market Harborough Registration Service, Adult Social Care, Job Centre Plus and Citizens Advice.

Market Harborough Millennium Tapestry



Created by over 30 volunteers of the Market Harborough U3A to celebrate the new millennium, the tapestry depicts significant scenes and landmarks from around the town. The tapestry took three years to complete.

The tapestry can be seen on the ground floor of the building.



Hollow copper blocks were used to mould the corsets into shape using steam. One of these is now on display in the entrance to the museum and library on the first floor. The internal windows shown here were the inspiration for the design of the ICT and large print room wall found in the library and museum. This is by the main entrance stairs.



The printing room, early 1900s. R&WH Symington manufactured as much as possible 'in house', this included printing their own advertising and packaging.

This is past the Story Place where large objects are mounted on the wall.



Liberty Bodice Room. Early 1900s. The Liberty Bodice, launched in 1908, was designed for children to provide warmth and allow freer movement than a traditional corset. Examples are displayed in the Harborough Museum exhibitions.

This is near the entrance to the Registration Service.



The pressing department, early 1900s

This is by the large print books section.



The Parcel Room, early 1900s

This image is part of the glass atrium.



The Cutting Room, early 1900s.

Situated on the third floor of The Symington Building, this is now Harbourhough District Council offices. The vaulted ceiling inspired

The Story Place in the refurbished library and museum. The Cutting Room Diary is now on display in the Harbourhough Museum exhibitions.

This image is by the Story Place.



Opposite The Symington Building was another factory (pictured here). Originally Clarke's carpet and worsted factory, with steam powered machines, it was taken over by Symington's in 1861. The building was demolished 1972-74, and the turret is now in Welland Park.

This image is part of the glass atrium.



"Night view by B Southwell, 1959."

In the centre is the toilet block, the design of the brickwork and drainage pipes was inspired by the lacings of a corset. This part of the building was demolished in the 1970s.

This image is part of the glass atrium.



The new sales office, 1951. R&WH Symington Co. Ltd. recorded and collected their history and this rich archive was transferred to Leicestershire County Council in 1980.

This image is part of the glass atrium.



Making swimsuits. Symington's continued to make swimwear until the final workshop closed in c.1992. In 1983 Symington's supplied the swimwear for the Miss World competition, and the winner visited Market Harborough that year.

This image is part of the glass atrium.



Workroom

Do you recognise anyone in this picture? If so please get in touch, email:

harboroughmuseum@leics.gov.uk

This image is part of the glass atrium.



A machinist at R&WH Symington.

This image is not on display but if you who this is, please get in touch by email:

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St Mary in Arden. The church is first mentioned in the 1220s, and later rebuilt. By the 17th century the cemetery was used for the residents of Harborough, as the main parish church did not have one. It was also reputedly the location for clandestine marriages.

This image is part of the glass atrium.



The Incline Plane Barge Lift at Foxton Locks. Designed to take larger boats and increase the speed of traffic whilst conserving water, the lift opened in 1900 with a gradient of 1 in 4 and lift height of 75 feet (23m). The lift closed in 1911.

This image is part of the glass atrium.



Market Harborough Boat Rally.

The first festival and rally of boats, organised by the Inland Waterways Association, took place in 1950 at the canal basin with 120 boats, and over 50,000 spectators.

This image is part of the glass atrium.



Kibworth Town Football Club 1922-3

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This image is on the ground floor.



The caption for this photograph is “**First Armistice, 1919**”, however the war memorial on The Square was unveiled in 1921, so this photograph may date from then.

This image is on the ground floor.



St Mary's Church, Lutterworth

The church dates from the late 13th century; John Wycliffe was rector here 1374-84. The top tier of the tower was built in 1761, and the building was refurbished in 1867-69. The church boasts a number of medieval features including wall paintings, pulpit and a tomb chest.

This image is part of the glass atrium.



Hallaton Bottle Kicking, Easter Monday, about 1900. An annual contest between the villages of Hallaton and Medbourne, three bottles, or kegs, are kicked, thrown, and chased over stream boundaries.

You can see a dummy ‘bottle’ in Harborough Museum in the introductory case.

This image is part of the glass atrium.

Arnesby windmill
Situating on the edge of the village of Arnesby, the windmill dates from 1815. The mill is made of brick and was extensively restored in the 1970s, it is listed by English Heritage. The mill is privately owned.



This image is part of the glass atrium.