

Topic Page: [Leicestershire](#)

Definition: **Leicestershire** from *Philip's Encyclopedia*

County in E central England; the county town is Leicester. The area is drained chiefly by the Soar and Wreak rivers. The uplands of the E are devoted to farming; the W has more industry. Wheat, barley, sheep and dairy cattle are important, and the region is famous for its hosiery, Stilton cheese and Melton Mowbray meat pies. Area: 2,553sq km (986sq mi). Pop. (2001) 609,579.

Summary Article: **Leicestershire**

From *The Hutchinson Unabridged Encyclopedia with Atlas and Weather Guide*

County of central England (since April 1997 Leicester City and Rutland have been separate unitary authorities).

Area 2,084 sq km/804 sq mi

Towns and cities Loughborough, Melton Mowbray, Market Harborough (administrative headquarters at Glenfield, Leicester)

Physical rivers Soar and Wreake; Charnwood Forest (in the northwest); Vale of Belvoir (under which are large coal deposits)

Features Belvoir Castle, seat of the dukes of Rutland since the time of Henry VIII, rebuilt by James Wyatt in 1816; Donington Park motor-racing circuit, Castle Donington

Agriculture good pasture with horses, cattle, and sheep (especially the New Leicester breed, first bred by Robert Bakewell in the 18th century at Dishley); dairy products (including Stilton cheese at Melton Mowbray); cereals

Industries engineering (Loughborough); hosiery (at Earl Shilton, Hinckley, and Loughborough); footwear; bell founding; quarrying of limestone and granite

Population (2001) 609,600

Famous people Thomas Babington Macaulay (poet), Titus Oates (conspirator in the Popish Plot), C P Snow (writer)

Topography Leicestershire is bounded on the north by Nottinghamshire; on the east by Lincolnshire and Rutland; on the southeast by Northamptonshire; on the southwest by Warwickshire; and on the northwest by Derbyshire; it contains Leicester City. The broad valley of the River Soar is one of the county's chief physical features, running from south to north, and separating the Charnwood Forest area from the uplands of the east. The Wreake valley, which runs from east to west, cuts through these eastern uplands. The highest point in the county is Bardon Hill (278 m/912 ft), in the Charnwood Forest.

History There is only slight evidence of prehistoric settlement in the county. In the 9th century the district was in the hands of the Danish invaders, and there are many place-names of Scandinavian origin. Richard III was defeated by Henry VII at the Battle of Bosworth in 1485.

Industrial past Leicestershire was famous for its wool as early as 1343, and with the introduction of the hand knitting frame in the 17th century the county soon established itself as the main area for

hosiery manufacture in the country.

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Leicestershire at the Heart of the Shires

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