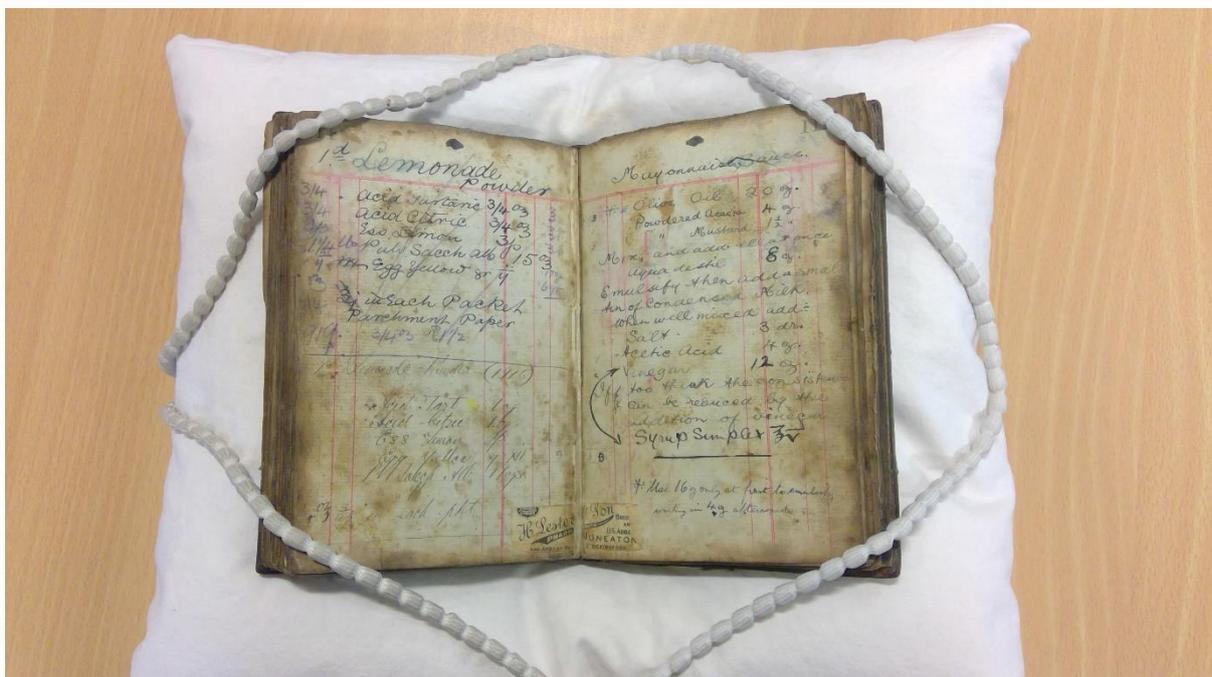


Lester's Chemist Recipe Book, Nuneaton, CR2207/14

May's Document of the Month is this volume of recipes from Lester's Chemist in Nuneaton. Dating from the late 19th/early 20th century, the volume features many recipes for many different things, ranging from medical prescriptions for colds through to food, drink and even recipes for the likes of furniture polish and straw-hat cleaner! The volume appears to have been a working document, with annotations made to the recipes, and some have been added later on. There is an index at the beginning of the volume.

The page we have on display features a recipe for mayonnaise. The recipe calls for ingredients such as condensed milk, olive oil, powdered mustard, vinegar and "Syrup Simplex". The recipe for this syrup can be found later in the volume and it was an ingredient for a number of the recipes featured. A full transcription of the mayonnaise sauce recipe has been provided separately.



Recipe for Mayonnaise Sauce, Lester's Chemist Recipe Book, Warwickshire County Record Office, CR2207/14

Lester's Chemist

H. Lester and Son's Chemist was established in 1872 in Bridge Street, Nuneaton. The business then moved to premises opposite the Post Office in Nuneaton a few months later. In 1897, Henry Lester's son William Henry Lester joined the business.

In 1907, the interior and exterior of the shop underwent alterations. A pamphlet produced to mark the opening of the business at its new premises in 1930 explains:

The Old Dispensing screen was removed from the back of the shop, and a new Dispensary made. An entirely new set of handsome mahogany fittings was installed, and electric light replaced gas¹.

The business moved to new premises again in 1930, this time directly opposite their previous premises and situated next to the Post Office². The business became a Limited Liability Company, Lesters Chemists Limited and they continued trading until 1964, when they were taken over by Boots³.

We have a selection of records relating to the chemist in our collections, which includes this recipe book. The collection is available to view at Warwickshire County Record Office and the collection catalogue can be found online at Warwickshire's Past Unlocked.

Henry Lester

Henry Lester was born in 1846 to Theodore Lester and Ann Rayner (Nuneaton and Attleborough respectively). His father was a clerk at a dye works and his mother a silk weaver. At 27 he married Caroline Shilton and they had two sons, William H Lester (born 1875) and Walter E Lester (born 1883). Henry passed away in 1933 at the age of 87.

His eldest son, William, took after his father and became his apprentice around 1891 and afterwards became partners with his father, renaming the chemist Lester's and

¹ Lester's, *Over Half a Century of Service in Nuneaton*, 1930, page 13, Warwickshire County Record Office, CR2207/34.

² Information gathered from Lester's, *Over Half a Century of Service in Nuneaton*, 1930, page 13, Warwickshire County Record Office, CR2207/34

³ Information gathered from *The Pharmaceutical Industry: A Guide to Historical Records*, Lesley Richmond and Julia Stephenson, Routledge, 2017.

⁴ Information gathered from <https://www.findmypast.co.uk/> (accessed 22/04/2022).

Sons. William served during the First World War as a driver for the Royal Horse Artillery, going back to working at his father's chemist shop after the war. At 24 he married Emma Elizabeth Deacon and they had three children: Leslie, Mildred and Bertie. William passed away in 1940 at the age of 65.

His youngest son, Walter, didn't follow in his father's footsteps, instead becoming a solicitor. Just like his brother, he served during the First World War, as an airman for what is now known as the Royal Air Force. At 29 he married Gertrude Mabel Button and they had two children: Michael and Margaret. Walter passed away in 1952 at the age of 69⁴.

