

# The Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society

## 148th Annual Report 2002-2003

2002

Thursday  
10th October

*Held in the Victorian Gallery, New Walk Museum The Leicester Mummies: scientific studies of life, disease and death in ancient Egypt*

Rosalie David, B.A., Ph.D., FRSA  
Professor and Keeper of Egyptology, The Manchester Museum, University of Manchester

Thursday  
24th October

*Shopping in the Middle Ages*

Christopher C. Dyer, B.A., Ph.D., F.B.A., F.S.A., F.R.Hist.S.  
Professor and Director, Centre for English Local History, University of Leicester

Thursday  
7th November

Brian Allison Memorial Lecture

*Victorian Villas in Leicester*

Grant Pitches M.A. A.R.I.B.A  
Lecturer in architectural history, Institute of Continuing Education, University of Cambridge

Thursday  
21st November

Annual General Meeting

Held at the Guildhall, Leicester

Followed by a presentation by Dr Andrew Lacy on the Special Collections in the University of Leicester Library

Thursday  
5th December

*Exploring Leicestershire's Churchyards*

Alan McWhirr, B.Sc., M.A., Ph.D., F.S.A., M.I.F.A.  
Honorary Secretary of the Society, University Fellow, University of Leicester

2003

Thursday  
9th January

*Iron Age Britain and the Celtic myth*

Simon James, B.Sc., Ph.D., F.S.A.  
School of Archaeology and Ancient History, University of Leicester

Thursday  
23rd January

*Treatment of the sick poor in Leicester: the North Evington Poor Law Infirmary, 1905-30*

Gerald T. Rimmington, B.Sc (Econ.), M.A., M.Ed., Ph.D., F.C.P.  
Honorary Visiting Fellow, Centre for the History of Religious and Political Pluralism, University of Leicester

- Thursday  
13th February      *Eye Kettleby: Excavation of a Prehistoric, Anglo-Saxon and Medieval Site*  
Neil Finn, University of Leicester Archaeological Services
- Thursday  
6th March          Alan North Memorial Lecture  
*Recent Archaeological Work at Portus, the Harbour of Imperial Rome*  
Simon Keay B.A., Ph.D., F.S.A.  
Professor of Roman Archaeology, University of Southampton
- Thursday  
20th March        *Printers and Antiquaries: the papers of John Nichols and his Family with special reference to Leicestershire*  
Julian Pooley, B.A., D.A.A., F.S.A.  
Archivist, Surrey History Centre  
Honorary Visiting Fellow, Centre for English Local History,  
University of Leicester

#### *The Annual General Meeting*

This was held on Thursday, 21st November, 2002, at the Guildhall, by courtesy of the Leicester City Council. The chair was taken by our President, Mr. T. G. M. Brooks, LL.D., D.Litt., J.P., who is to be congratulated on his subsequent appointment, announced in the Queen's Birthday Honours List 2003, as Knight Commander of the Royal Victorian Order. The business of the meeting was followed by a presentation on the Special Collections in the University of Leicester Library by Dr. Andrew Lacey.

#### *Committee*

This has been an interesting year for members of the Committee.

Mr. Rupert Evans, who served with distinction for twenty years as the Chairman, decided to relinquish the post but agreed to continue on the Committee as Vice Chairman. He was succeeded as Chairman by Dr. Gerald Rimmington, who had been a Committee member for eight years. Mrs Helen Edwards, who successfully turned the *Leicestershire Historian* into a popular publication alongside the more academic *Transactions*, has had to resign as Editor. The Secretary has agreed to edit for the time being but it is hoped that an editorial appointment can be made soon.

During the year we noted with regret the death of a former Treasurer, Stephen Billson, who had served in this capacity for many years, keeping the finances of the Society in perfect order. He was much valued as a committee member; his quiet good humour will be missed, especially when referring to his attempts to resign over a period of fourteen years.

The memorial volume in honour of the late Professor Jack Simmons and which the Society agreed to sponsor, was published by Ashgate Publishing Ltd. Entitled *The Impact of the Railway on Society in Britain*. It was edited by Dr. A. K. B. Evans (a long-standing member of the Committee) and J. V. Gough. As a high quality production, with which the Society is proud to be associated, it is significant that the first print run was sold out very quickly.

We have begun to look toward 2005 as the 150th anniversary of the Society's foundation. It was established initially as, 'The Leicestershire Archaeological and Architectural Society', to further the study of the architecture associated with the Oxford Movement. We have not yet decided exactly how we are going to

celebrate this event, but Robert Rutland is working on a publication about the Society's history.

One significant event during the year was the Open Weekend, held on the 17th and 18th May, when it was estimated that 250 people visited the Society's Library in the Leicester Guildhall. Aubrey Stevenson, our Honorary Librarian, arranged a display of books, nineteenth century minute and scrapbooks, and the albums containing Henton's black and white photographic prints. Among those who visited were the Lord Mayor of Leicester, Maggie Bodell Stagg, and the Chairman of the Leicestershire County Council, Anna Pullen, as well as the former leader of the Leicester City Council, Ross Wilmot, and the new leader, Roger Blackmore. Nick Carter, the editor of the *Leicester Mercury*, also paid a visit. In addition, Mr Stevenson reported, £470.80 was raised from sales of the Society's publications and several new membership subscriptions.

A survey of members was conducted in early 2003, which brought in 78 responses (about 21 per cent of the membership); the Committee is grateful to those who took the time to complete the questionnaire. Following the analysis by Mrs Helen McWhirr, it was agreed, *inter alia*, to extend the well-received lecture programme (beginning in 2004–5) by two lectures. We were also pleased to receive interesting suggestions for topics and venues.

Alongside the survey analysis the Committee also considered a discussion paper on 'The Future' by our Honorary Secretary. An invaluable aid to the making of informed decisions, it covered the areas of membership, publications and the library.

In considering membership the Committee was aware that the majority of our members are over 50 years of age, with only a small number below the age of 40. Only ten per cent of the membership have joined the Society over the last three years. It is, therefore, vital to consider the question of attracting younger members. With this in mind an *ad hoc* working group, convened by Mr. Richard Buckley, was set up. It made a number of recommendations, including liaison with local history and archaeology societies throughout the county, and the publication of fieldwork results by active local interest groups. It was recommended that the Society become 'more visible and actively involved in its own fieldwork and/or research projects', for which funds are available.

A review of the Society's publications, aided by the survey of members, concluded that the range, comprising, *Transactions*, *Leicestershire Historian*, and *Bulletin*, was just about right, providing information about the Society's activities, as well as articles that suit all interests while at the same time maintaining quality.

As the Library storeroom at the Leicester Guildhall had become cluttered with surplus publications the Committee organised a Sunday afternoon working party to help the Honorary Librarian to clear some of the materials no longer needed. It is emphasised that the Society's Library which is a valuable research resource, is much under-used at present.

On October 12th, 2002, there was a very successful Day Conference organised by Dr. Joanna Story at Vaughan College on the subject of 'Leicester Past and Present: Migration and the Making of the Modern City'. The papers contributed were of a high standard and were much appreciated by the sixty people who attended.

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Helen Edwards

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