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The Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society 128th Annual Report 1982-83

Thirteen General Meetings of the Society were held at which the following papers were read:

1982

- 15 October *The Natwest Lecture. Stonehenge and its People.* Aubrey Burl, M.A., F.S.A.
- 21 October *Ernest Gimson: Architect and Designer.* Annette Carruthers, B.A., A.M.A.
- 24 October *Visit to All Saints' Church, Highcross Street, Leicester.* David Parsons, B.A., F.S.A.
- 12 November Annual General Meeting.
- 18 November *The Coritani: Iron Age Tribe and Roman Civitas.* Ben Whitwell, Ph.D.
- 2 December *The Leicester and Swannington Railway 1832-1982.* Bob Bracegirdle, B.Sc., A.M.A.,
A.S.D.C.

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- 6 January *Archaeology in Radical Leicester, 1780-1850.* Bob Rutland, M.A., F.M.A.
- 20 January *Reading Buildings.* Peter Messenger, B.Sc., M.A., Dip.T.P.
- 3 February *Reconstructing the Past.* Mike Moore, D.A.
- 17 February *Leicestershire Churches before the Restorers.* Geoff Brandwood, M.A.
- 3 March *Introduction to Geometric Design in Roman Tessellated Pavements.* Susan Tebby, B.A.
- 17 March *Farm Animals and Fine Art.* Clifford Owen, B.A., F.L.S., F.M.A.
- 31 March *The Excavation of a Neolithic Cotswold — Severn Tomb at Hazleton, Gloucestershire.*
Alan Saville, B.A., F.S.A.

Meetings

The Civic Lecture this year was generously sponsored by the National Westminster Bank and dealt with Stonehenge, not merely from the state of present knowledge of the successive periods of construction and use, but also the way in which it has been subsequently regarded and used from the seventeenth century to today. The present problems of access and visitor erosion were also considered.

The full list of meetings will be found elsewhere in these Transactions. The spread of subjects covered has, if anything, been even wider than usual and it is noteworthy that with only two exceptions the lecturers, all experts, came from within Leicestershire. The talent available locally is obviously great.

During the year Bob Rutland retired as Lecture Secretary after several successful seasons. His place was taken by Jean Mellor who is arranging the 1983/4 season's programme.

Committee and Officers

There have been a few Committee changes this year. Professor Megaw left for Australia, and Mr E. Tura took his place. Mr D. Edwards and Dr V. Williams were elected to the Committee during the year.

Transactions

Volume 56 for 1981-82 was produced during the year reviewed and consisted of 125 pages of articles, short notes and reviews. The archaeological/historical balance has continued much as previously. It is on these that the long term reputation of the Society depends.

Newsletter

This more immediate vehicle of contact for the membership, copes with all sorts of minor administrative matters as well as 'stop-press' items like the redevelopment of the St Martins area in Leicester discussed later in this report, the National Heritage Bill, the sad fate of the Antiquities Bill at the hands of a local M.P., news of the parallel Museums Fieldwork Group and from the Record Office and the Local History Council.

Membership

Membership has remained at much the same level as last year, though the balance has changed somewhat, a slight fall in personal membership being offset somewhat by a rise in membership of Libraries and Institutions. Encouragingly the number of student members who we hope will continue to belong and become full ordinary members in due course has increased. It is with regret that we record the deaths, during the year under review, of Mr A. Goddard, Mr G.F. Keating, Mr E.W. Marston, Mr D.M. Swain, Mr T.W. Townsend and Dr C. Walters.

Membership 1982-83

Paid Members:—

Ordinary Membership.....	260
Libraries & Institutions.....	89
Associates & Students.....	46
Members who paid less than the full subscription in 1982/83.....	27
Honorary Life Members.....	<u>2</u>
Total.....	424

Library

Dennis Thompson, our Librarian for many years resigned the post after his serious illness. The Society is highly indebted to him for his devoted work over a long period which is reflected partly in the high value of the existing collections.

His place was taken in September 1982 by Aubrey Stevenson.

Historic Buildings Panel

The Society's representative on the City's Conservation Area Sub-committee, past Chairman Roger Keene, was appointed Chairman of that Committee last September and this should ensure even closer liaison between the re-organised Panel and the City area. Meanwhile the panel has continued to Report for both City and County authorities on literally hundreds of historic buildings affected by planning applications.

Excursions

There is no doubt that the loss of an Excursion programme has been keenly felt by the membership, but it has still not been possible, in a Society depending entirely on voluntary effort for all its administrative functions, Treasurer, Secretary, Editor, Historic Buildings panel and so on, to find anyone prepared to act as Excursion organiser. However, members were invited to join with the Leicestershire Fieldwalkers Group in two excursions, one to the Long Barrows of the Cotswolds and one to the Roman coastline of the Fenland area. Those who went on them had energetic but very rewarding experiences joining erudition to entertainment. The Committee hope, in the Summer of 1983 to organise a series of Town Walks as an alternative to extensive excursions.

Report on Fieldwork in 1983

The Society owns some simple surveying equipment (tapes, ranging poles, and the like) for the use of members engaged in fieldwork. The Fieldwork Secretary records the borrowing of these items. Attention has been drawn to the availability of this equipment, through the L.A.H.S. and the Leics. Museums Fieldwalkers Groups.

The Fieldwork Secretary reports that the equipment has been used by fieldworkers in Hallaton, Newbold Verdon, Cold Newton, and Loughborough. At Hallaton a group are engaged in locating a Roman occupation site, while in Newbold Verdon a moated site and its surroundings have come under scrutiny. Members of the L.A.H.S. have been carrying out geophysical surveys using a soil resistivity meter and proton magnetometer (not belonging to L.A.H.S.) at the two remaining sites. (i) At Cold Newton the survey has been in progress for six years, on a Roman double rectangular enclosure. (ii) At Loughborough University a survey has been started this year on a rectangular earthwork near the site of the former Burleigh House, with assistance from members of the Loughborough Archaeological Society.

In summary, it may be said that the Society's surveying equipment is being put to good use, and that its wider use will be encouraged.

The St Martins Development

The redevelopment of part of the old town in St. Martins area moved forward this year. There were long discussions between the developers and the archaeological interests. The Society prepared and submitted a report to the appropriate point in the City Council and in the upshot an agreement was reached through the structural engineers on a method of construction which would involve the minimum of disturbance to the archaeological layers. This was fortunate as there was neither the time nor the money for an excavation of the area. A watching brief will be kept on work as it progresses by the Museum's Survey and Archaeological Units to record anything which is brought to light.

Two other matters relevant to Society interest though the Society is not directly involved.

Harborough Museum

Although the Society was not involved directly, various individual members, and the sister society, the Market Harborough Archaeological Society have been concerned with the setting up of a joint venture Museum at Market Harborough. Based on the collections of the Market Harborough Society this opened in April 1983 with the Local District Council providing the premises and the County Council, through the Museums Service, the staff.

The appearance of a fresh Museum in the area, adequately funded and expertly staffed is a welcome development in these financially difficult times.

The Moira Trail

Devoted work by yet another Historical Society — the Leicestershire Industrial History Society — in collaboration with the N.W. District Council has resulted in the opening up of an industrial trail at Moira in the area dominated by the Moira Furnace which is being literally excavated. Running for a mile and a half, and taking in eighteen points of industrial interest this is a beginning for a scheme to restore the Furnace. The identification of a surviving cottage adjacent to the site as having been originally the engine house for a Newcomen pumping engine is noteworthy.