

# The Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society

## 141st Annual Report 1995-96

*In addition to the Annual General Meeting, which took place on 23 November 1995 at the Guildhall, ten General Meetings of the Society were held at which the following papers were read:*

1995

Thursday  
12th October

*Jane Austen and the Clergy*  
Irene Collins, M.A., B.Litt.  
Honorary Senior Fellow, Department of History, University of Liverpool

Thursday  
26th October

*600 Years of Digging Towns*  
Alan McWhirr, B.Sc., MA., Ph.D., F.S.A., M.I.F.A.  
School of Archaeological Studies, University of Leicester Honorary Secretary of the Society

Thursday  
9th November

*Robert Bakewell (1725-1795) of Dishley: 'the inventor of sheep'*  
Bicentenary lecture: a prelude to the Robert Bakewell  
Commemorative Exhibition  
David L Wykes, B.Sc., Ph.D. Department of History, University of Leicester  
Hon. Joint Editor *Transactions*

Thursday  
7th December

*Prehistoric Landscapes in the East Midlands*  
Graeme Barker, M.A., Ph.D., F.S.A., M.I.F.A.  
Professor of Archaeology, School of Archaeological Studies, University of Leicester

1996

Thursday  
25th January

*The Saxo-Norman Overlap in Architecture*  
Eric Fernie, C.B.E., B.A., F.S.A., F.R.S.E.  
Director, Courtauld Institute of Art, and Professor of the History of Art, University of London

Saturday  
3rd February

*Archaeology in Leicestershire 1995*  
Archaeology Day School jointly organised by Leicestershire  
Museums, Arts and Records Service, and the Society, and hosted by the School of  
Archaeological Studies. University of Leicester

Thursday  
8th February

*Romans, Barbarians and the End of Empire*  
Neil Christie, B.A., Ph.D., School of Archaeological Studies. University of Leicester

Thursday  
22nd February

*Pre-Victorian and Victorian Enterprise: the origins and early growth of footwear  
manufacturing centres*  
Peter R. Mounfield, B.A., Ph.D., Department of Geography, University of Leicester

Thursday  
7th March

**W. ALAN NORTH MEMORIAL LECTURE**  
*The Archaeology of Roman Sicily*  
Roger Wilson, M.A., D.Phil., Professor of Archaeology, University of Nottingham

Thursday  
21st March

*Church Monuments*  
Robin Jenkins, M.A., D.A.S.,  
Keeper of Archives. Leicestershire Record Office

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Under review

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1996)  
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*Annual General Meeting*

This was held at The Guildhall by courtesy of Leicester City Council. As our President was unable to be present the chair was taken by Squire De Lisle.

*Officers and Committee*

Seven meetings of the Committee have been held during the year, with an average attendance of eleven. Miss Jean Mellor has resigned from the Committee, but we are happy to report that she has accepted nomination as one of the Society's Vice-Presidents. The only new member of the Committee is Dr G. Rimmington. Mr D. T. Smith has taken over the responsibilities of Minutes Secretary.

*Transactions*

Volume 69 was published and available for members at the Annual General Meeting. The editors, Mr Buckley and Dr Wykes, are to be congratulated on maintaining the quality of *Transactions*, which offers the main instrument by which the standing of our Society itself is judged by the outside world. And our members in general can congratulate themselves on having contributed, by their support, to fostering the great aim of the Society, that of advancing the study and understanding of our County's (and City's) archaeology and past. We gratefully acknowledge the grant which the County Council has made towards the cost of this volume. We are again indebted to Mrs Barbara Barr for compiling the index for this volume. As for the much greater work of compiling the cumulative index for past volumes this is still in progress under Mrs Auriol Griffiths-Jones.

*The Leicestershire Historian*

Readers of the newsletter of Spring 1996 will be fully aware of the circumstances in which this Society has taken over responsibility for publishing the *Leicestershire Historian*, the periodical formerly produced for the Local History Council. Your Committee took the view that the *Leicestershire Historian* had established its own individual role and should not be allowed to lapse; and further that, by adopting it in this way, we could provide an additional benefit to our members. It would not compete with *Transactions* but offer a more popular, though scholarly, approach to local history. The first number of this new edition has now appeared; and we are deeply indebted to the efforts and enterprise of our Secretary, Dr Alan McWhirr, who has undertaken the editorship and produced a volume of which the Society can be proud.

*The Guildhall, Leicester*

At present there is nothing further to report about the intention of the City Council to encourage public interest in the Guildhall by establishing a visitor centre there. Detailed plans have been drawn up but we understand that difficulties have arisen over the treatment of the old burial ground to the north and that these have not yet been resolved.

*Local Government Reorganisation*

As far as the interests of this Society are concerned the main impact of the decision to restore the County of Rutland and the City of Leicester to their former status will fall on the present Arts, Records and Museum service. At present no firm information is forthcoming. Rutland is hardly in a position to establish its own service and is likely to make a contribution to the maintenance of existing arrangements. The City on the other hand seems determined to take control of the museums and galleries in its area, but acknowledges the wisdom of preserving the present Record Office. We must hope that decisions will be made and put into effect without delay. Not the least of one's concerns about delay is anxiety for the staff of these services, whose futures have for so long been clouded with uncertainties.

*Membership*

We mentioned last year new initiatives both to recruit new members and to collect backlogs in subscriptions. Both these have been continued in the course of the year under review. Some 40 new members have been recruited and total membership has increased to some 440 (institutions included).

Last year we reported, sadly, the death of our member Mr J. A. Willett of Loughborough. We now learn that he has left the Society a substantial legacy.

*History Fairs*

The Society was represented at the Local History events at the Guildhall and at the Jewry Wall Museum, Leicester.

*Historic Buildings Panel*

The Panel has continued to meet fortnightly to consider planning applications. In spite of recession the number of applications has remained considerable. In the year the Panel considered nearly 500 applications, of which over 100 concerned listed buildings: the remainder were related to conservation areas.

Two buildings in the City cause us some concern. One is the Corn Exchange in the Market Place, which is looking increasingly shabby. The other is the Pex factory by West Bridge, where the conservation of the facade seems to be severely prejudiced by plans for a large two-storey glass-fronted extension on the river-side. It seems unfortunate that after the Leicester City Council's Conservation Advisory Panel, on which the Society is represented, voted unanimously against the application, the full Planning Committee ignored its advice and approved the proposal.

The Panel is most grateful to Mr Richard Wood for continuing Mr Roger Keene's valued practice of offering secretarial services to the Panel.