

THE LEICESTERSHIRE  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL & HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
THE GUILDHALL · LEICESTER · LE15FQ



## **NEWSLETTER 95**      Spring 2017

Welcome to the first edition of the new Members' Newsletter, which replaces the Magazine previously sent to members twice a year. By simplifying the format we hope to be able to publish the Newsletter at more frequent intervals, and circulate it as far as possible by email (members without email will receive it by post).

We hope you will find it interesting and informative. Contributions to future editions are very welcome, and can be sent to the Newsletter editor, Cynthia Brown, at [cb@cydfx.net](mailto:cb@cydfx.net), or by post c/o Honorary Librarian, Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society, The Guildhall, Guildhall Lane, LE1 5FQ.

### **LAHS NEWS**

#### **LECTURE PROGRAMME**

All lectures take place at 7.30 pm at New Walk Museum, Leicester

**6 April 2017**

**The digital reconstruction of the church of the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary in the Newarke, Leicester**

Dr. Douglas Cawthorne, School of Architecture, De Montfort University

**27 April 2017**

**Scientific knowledge, print culture and radical politics in late 18th century Leicestershire**

Dr John Hinks

**4 May 2017 - PLEASE NOTE THE CHANGE OF DATE**

**John Scarborough Lecture**

**Test pit excavation: exploring a new source of evidence for historic village development**

Prof. Carenza Lewis, School of History & Heritage, University of Lincoln

#### **CHANGING LEICESTER – PROJECT UPDATE**

The LAHS Changing Leicester project, in partnership with Leicester Arts and Museums, is making good progress. Curators and designers are progressing the plans for the exhibition at Newarke Houses Museum between July and September, ensuring that the blend of objects, oral histories and audio visual displays give visitors a broad picture of post-war developments in Leicester and their impact on our built heritage. Oral history interviews with planners, architects, heritage experts, activists and other citizens are currently being transcribed by a team of volunteers. They are providing the project with an excellent resource that will inform the exhibition and then be housed at the East Midlands Oral

History Archive for future use. A touring exhibition is also being produced, to be hosted in community centres and libraries over the summer and beyond.

Changing Leicester is also working on an events programme, much of it taking place during the Old Town and City Festival, with activities at Newarke Houses Museum, Jewry Wall, The Guildhall and New Walk Museum based around the themes of the project. These include Leicester after World War 2; developments in the 1950s and '60s; changing approaches to planning and development; rediscovering lost Leicester; and heritage in neighbourhoods today. Plans are also in hand for our very own Heritage Question Time, to be broadcast by BBC Leicester in August, and events will also link with the Archaeology Festival. Full details will be available in a Changing Leicester brochure planned for May/June. The project website at [www.storyofleicester.info/changingleicester](http://www.storyofleicester.info/changingleicester) is still being developed. In the meantime, the contact for the project is Outreach Officer Davey Ivens at [davey.iven@leicester.gov.uk](mailto:davey.iven@leicester.gov.uk).

### **OBITUARY – MICHAEL JOHNSON**

Members will be saddened to know of the death in January of Michael Johnson, who was a Trustee of LAHS and Hon. Treasurer for many years before standing down in 2016. Michael was educated at Wyggeston Boys' School, and served as a Conservative councillor on Leicester City Council for 35 years until 2011. During his term of office as Lord Mayor in 1995-96 he raised over £80,000 for the oncology unit at Leicester Royal Infirmary. He was active in the local Scouts movement for almost 30 years, and also in the Leicester Twinning Association. In 2001 he became the first person in Leicester to be honoured as a Papal Knight. LAHS was represented at his funeral by Jill Bourne.

### **NEWS FROM THE LAHS LIBRARY**

Aubrey Stevenson, Hon. Librarian, writes that the Library reopened after its regular winter closure at the beginning of February. It will be open on the first and third Sundays each month 2pm - 4pm until 15 October. It will NOT be open on 16 April, Easter Day. A list of recent acquisitions follows. These were all published in 2016 unless otherwise indicated.

#### **Books and pamphlets**

AUSTIN, F., BROWN, C. & YOUNG, R. Syston in World War II: the Home Front in an East Midlands village. (Syston Past Vol.5). Donated by the publisher, Syston Local History Group.

BANBURY, P. Glenfield Tunnel. 2015

BEARDMORE, A. Leicestershire and Rutland unusual and quirky.

BRIGGS, J. That fine bunch of boys at the mill! Steel tube making at Desford 1941-2006. ed. D. Pearce. Donated by the publisher, Leicestershire Industrial History Society.

BROUGHTON, J. The old church: a history of St. Wistan's church Wigston Magna. Revised edition. 2006.

BUTT, S. Leicester in 50 buildings. Donated by the publisher, Amberley. LAHS is mentioned with reference to both the Guildhall and the New Walk Museum.

BUTT, S. Leicester pubs. The author of these two books is a member of LAHS and one-time Hon. Secretary and Magazine Editor.

COUSINS, P. Champion of the people: the life and times of Orson Wright 1853-1913. 2013. There is much about South Wigston.

COX, B. Place-names of Leicestershire pt. 7: W. Goscote Hundred & the Leicestershire parishes of Repton & Gresley Hundred. This completes the author's survey of Leicestershire begun in 1998. Maps in the series are by LAHS member Dr. Anne Tarver.

PAULMEDIA (comp.) Desford railway disaster [1881].

FERN, C. & SPEAKE, G. Beasts, birds and gods: interpreting the Staffordshire Hoard. 2014.

GREYFRIARS RESEARCH TEAM The bones of a king: Richard III rediscovered. 2015.

HARRIS, K. Market Harborough Constable's accounts 1606-1625: an interpretation. 1995.

HARRIS, K. Public health in Harborough: the Reports of the Medical Officers of Health 1881-1920. 1993.

HARRIS, K. Some accounts understood – those of the Overseers of the Highways of Market Harborough 1694-1735. 1996.

HARRIS, K. Some aspects of education and society in Market Harborough 1869-1913 as seen through school log books. 1999.

HARRIS, S. The life of John Flower "The Leicester Artist" 1793-1861. 2015.

HUNT, J. Warriors, warlords and saints: the Anglo-Saxon kingdom of Mercia.

JONES, M. Bosworth 1485: psychology of a battle. 2014. (1<sup>st</sup> ed. 2002).

JONES, R. & DYER, C. eds. Farmers, consumers, innovators: the world of Joan Thirsk. Ch.1 Joan Thirsk at Leicester, by C. Dyer, LAHS Committee member. Thirsk was at Leicester University for 14 years and was a Society member.

LEICESTER CATHEDRAL Redemption: the new light beams: the Redemption windows.

MANTERFIELD, J. ed. Borough government in Newton's Grantham: the Hall Book of Grantham 1649-1662. (Lincoln Record Society. Vol.106). There are references, amongst several to Leicestershire and Rutland places, to Mr. Stokes the School Master of Melton, 1649, and Wm. Clarke apothecary Loughborough 1671.

MOSAIC Our lives: disabled people in Leicestershire [memories of life over 100 years]. [c.201-]. Donated by Joan Rowbottom, LRFHS.

PEMBERTON, B. Leicester and Swannington Railway today: a photographic journey along this historic railway.

RESEARCH CENTRE FOR THE HISTORY OF RELIGIOUS AND CULTURAL DIVERSITY Discussion paper no.7. Includes Mohinder Singh's story of migrating to and living in Leicester, and a paper by Cynthia Brown, LAHS Committee member. Donated by Prof. K. Sato, Meiji University, Tokyo, via C.B.. LAHS and Leicestershire Historian are mentioned.

RODGER, R. & MADGIN, R. eds. Leicester: a modern history. LAHS features extensively in ch.13.

RUDDY, A. Tested by bomb and flame: Leicester versus Luftwaffe air raids 1939-1945. 2014.

SCREATON, B. Thurnby Court: the story of an extravagant but short-lived Leicestershire mansion. Donated by the author, publisher, and LAHS member.

TAYLOR, M. The quality of Leicester: a journey through 2000 years of history and architecture. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (1<sup>st</sup> pub. 1993).

VINCENT, M. Rothley remembers men and memorials. This includes a CD. Donated by T. Sheppard of the publisher, Rothley Heritage Trust.

The Society is grateful to Mrs. A. Arnold of Queensland, Australia for the generous donation of the following from her family:

FORSYTH, M. History of Bradgate. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. 1978.

HOSKINS, W.G. Leicestershire: a Shell guide. 1970. Signed by the author.

LLOYD, P. Anecdotes of bygone Leicestershire & other stories. N.d.

SIMMONS, J. Mr. Colin Ellis. 1970.

WESSEL, C. Lost mansions around Desford and Leicester Forest West. 1986.

Mrs. Arnold's grandfather was William Heycock Rippin of Desford who was a county alderman, chairman of the Leicestershire Footpaths Association and leading light of Leicestershire's Ramblers' Federation. Her aunt was Mollie Rippin who was Hon. Secretary of LAHS 1964-5 to 1972-3.

### **Periodicals**

We are grateful particularly for the continuing donations of Harborough Historian, Hinckley Historian and Rutland Record. Articles of local interest can appear in unexpected places: English Place-Name Society Journal 47 2015 Searching for early drove roads (with some local examples); Historical Research 89.245 The decline of the Liberal party in the heart of England: the Liberals in Leicestershire 1914-24, and 89.246 English parishes and knights' fees of 1428... which includes Leicestershire and Rutland. A new title has belatedly come to our notice: East Midlands History and Heritage, published from Nottingham Trent University. We have been sent copies of issues 1-3, 6/15-7/16, all of which have some Leicestershire articles.

### **OTHER NEWS**

#### **GREEN PLAQUE SCHEME – NEW ROUND OF NOMINATIONS NOW OPEN**

Nominations are invited for the next round of Leicestershire County Council's Green Plaque scheme, which recognises the contribution to a local community made by an individual, a place or an event. Nominations close on Monday 20 March 2017 when a panel of judges, including honorary aldermen and LAHS representative Cynthia Brown, will agree a shortlist of 12 contenders before the public are asked to vote on the top six to receive the honour. Further details of the scheme, the nomination criteria and an online form are available at [www.leicestershire.gov.uk/news/rallying-call-to-nominate-your-favourite-people-and-places](http://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/news/rallying-call-to-nominate-your-favourite-people-and-places), or by contacting Karen Wilde, 0116 3054 112, email [Karen.wilde@leics.gov.uk](mailto:Karen.wilde@leics.gov.uk).

#### **GREAT CENTRAL RAILWAY – APPEAL FOR VOLUNTEERS**

The Great Central Railway (GCR) hopes to develop a major new museum at Birstall, dependent on approval from the Heritage Lottery Fund next year. In the meantime it is appealing for volunteers to help build up evidence for stories that will be told through the museum. This could range from studying accounts of passengers travelling on the Great Central in its early days, or looking at the reasons for the decisions taken to downgrade and close the GC main line in the 1950s and '60s. Less conventional stories are also sought: who looked after the army of horses that pulled the carts delivering goods from the railway to local homes and businesses; what was it like being a railway wife; where did the railway recruit its staff? If you have experience of research on the Internet or in a record office, or are interested in recording memories of people living or working near the railway before it closed, Roger Shelley would like to hear from you. He can be contacted at the GCR's Loughborough offices, tel 01509 632323, email [roger.shelley@gcrailway.co.uk](mailto:roger.shelley@gcrailway.co.uk).

#### **400 VOICES OF LEICESTER/ ORAL HISTORY OF POST-WAR LEICESTER 1945 - 1962**

From Colin Hyde of the East Midlands Oral History Archive (EMOHA): 'There are currently over 200 oral history recordings on the *My Leicestershire History* website, but soon there will be 400! These interviews were recorded in the 1980s by the Leicester Oral History Archive, and you can browse the oral history collection from here - <http://specialcollections.le.ac.uk/cdm/landingpage/collection/p15407coll1>'. The EMOHA

project 'Oral History of Post Leicester 1945-1962' is also looking for people from all walks of life with good memories of Leicester from 1945-1962 to record interviews, and volunteers to help conduct these. If you know of anyone who would like to get involved please contact Colin at EMOHA, [ch38@le.ac.uk](mailto:ch38@le.ac.uk), tel 0116 252 2065. There is more information about the project at [www.le.ac.uk/emoha/community/postwarleicester.html](http://www.le.ac.uk/emoha/community/postwarleicester.html).

### **GREYFRIARS, LEICESTER – AUDIO TOUR**

Students from the University of Leicester's School of Archaeology and Ancient History have created a Smartphone audio tour of the Greyfriars area of Leicester as part of their second year 'professional skills' module. They used newspapers and other archives from more than two centuries to explore its history as the city's 'legal quarter', taking in the locations of law firms, hostelrys frequented by the legal profession, and other buildings later converted to legal offices. The tour starts in New Street, the location one of the oldest practices, that of William Heyrick, which dates back to 1794. It enables property owners and businesses to apply for funding to repair buildings, restore original architectural features, and bring empty space back into use. The tour is available at [www.mixcloud.com/LeicesterCityCouncil](http://www.mixcloud.com/LeicesterCityCouncil). Further details of the Greyfriars Townscape Heritage Initiative (GTHI) can be found at [www.leicester.gov.uk/thi](http://www.leicester.gov.uk/thi).

### **JONATHAN WILSHERE LOCAL HISTORY PUBLICATIONS – AVAILABLE FREE ONLINE**

Jonathan Wilshere will be familiar to many LAHS members as the author of a number of books on the history of Leicester and Leicestershire. All of them are now out of print, but have been made available free of charge online by his son Andrew. They include *The Town Gates and Medieval Bridges of Leicester* (1978); *Leicester Clock Tower* (1974); *Leicester Markets and Fairs* (with Susan E. Green, 1973); *Scenes from Kirby Muxloe History* (1971); and *Loughborough Street-Name Origins* (1986). They can be downloaded from [www.andrewwilshere.com/jeow/](http://www.andrewwilshere.com/jeow/).

### **ARCHAEOLOGICAL REPORTS**

#### **ST EDMUND MEMORIAL ANGLO-VIKING COINAGE**

From Wendy Scott, Finds Liaison Officer for Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland:

As an Archaeologist based in Leicestershire who is interested in coins and Viking age England, I had been a little disappointed that in 13 years as an FLO I had only recorded one Anglo-Viking coin (see PAS database at <https://finds.org.uk/database> [LEIC-B230B8](#)). We of course have the small but fabulous Thurstaston hoard, but this was found back in the 1990's (see [LEIC-C6D945](#)).



This changed late in 2015 when I was shown a St Edmund memorial penny, minted in East Anglia by its Scandinavian rulers c. 895-910AD. The coins feature the often blundered inscription 'SC EDMUND', a dedication to the saint who was, ironically, martyred by them. I told the finder how rare his coin was and that he had made my year (see [LEIC-19C0DA](#)).

But it turns out that these coins are like buses and within weeks I was shown another (see [LEIC-B7F405](#)). By last April I had the hat trick, with a third being found in the same district as the first (see [LEIC-4FC58C](#)). Nationally the PAS has only recorded 34. Most were



single finds from within the Danelaw, with one outlier from a hoard in Cumbria. The majority were lost within East Anglia, with a few in Lincolnshire, Yorkshire and Staffordshire.

These coins are very interesting as their distribution may tell us something about political organisation in the areas controlled by Scandinavians. They also add an important layer of evidence in a county that was in the Danelaw, but which has not yet yielded too much solid evidence for Scandinavian settlers.

They add much weight to the county's few artefacts and many place names that reflect an Anglo-Scandinavian character, but whose reliability as evidence for settlers is hotly debated. Because, like the Thurstaston hoard, these coins were only used by people who accepted them, either for their bullion value or because they were Scandinavian issues, this points directly to Scandinavians living in Leicestershire.

### **THE ROMAN SLATES OF GROBY REVIEWED AFTER THE BRADGATE/FERRERS LODGE EXPOSURE OF JUNE/JULY 2016 (UNIVERSITY OF LEICESTER FIELD SCHOOL, 2<sup>ND</sup> YR.)**

A report from David Ramsey on guillotine shaping: The precise guillotine cut edges and modifications to the face of this Groby slate found at the Roman town of Margidunum,



Nottinghamshire, close to the A46, should have attracted attention earlier as these straight lines cannot be cut with simple hand tools. A similar slate found at Bradgate in Spring 2016 had the added refinement of a chevron cut on the lower half of the slate one cm from the edge hence this review of previous slate material. A theory was put forward in the Leicestershire Industrial History Society Bulletin No.18 (2007) that the Groby slate quarries at both Home Farm and Upper Parks Farm Groby, and *not* the Swithland slate quarries, might well be the source of *all* Roman/ Charnwood slates in the local area. This now appears to be sound thinking. The recent University of Leicester archaeological excavations in Bradgate Park (First Field School 2015; Second Field

School 2016, directed by Dr. Richard Thomas), in addition to the community dig at Castle Hill, Beaumont Leys in 2016, have underlined the theory. All the sites have yielded more slate material from Home Farm, Groby, all seemingly drawn from large stocks prepared for use some 800 years or earlier!

The time scale of slate quarry usage in Leicestershire based on the evidence gathered so far is: the Groby quarries, throughout the Roman occupation until circa 1500; then Woodhouse, quarry, with the distinctive purple or mauve slate short term; and finally Swithland in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the latter date corresponding with the first leases granted by the Earl of Stamford for slates in Charnwood. This timeline does not ignore the trade in second hand slates as the closure of the religious houses took place from the 1540s. This recycled material was offered until mention is made of Woodhouse slate being used in the improved Leicester market shops by Robert Herrick of Beaumanor in the early 17<sup>th</sup> century.

What has proved to be a most interesting development in 2016 is the realization that the Roman slates were produced not with simple hand tools, but by bench and cleaver devices. This would allow a far greater control of the pressure required to cut a straight edge, offering scope for an almost factory like production line, thus holding stock in advance of purchase. This method of production would enable the carrier to avoid lengthy periods

spent at the point of sale at Groby or Markfield. It is these stockpiles of slates at Home Farm which were sought by later visiting collectors. Although well down in the ground after centuries of non disturbance, those seeking slates are returning over and over again, believing that a search of the site is worth the effort, rather than cutting new material. The mystery is how the soft iron was tempered by the Romans to give a cutting edge so hard that it would cut the roofing slates. Were they introducing carbon into the iron to acquire a sharper, more durable cutting edge on the cleaver blades? (With acknowledgments to Will Bowden, Nottingham University for the loan of the illustration. A more detailed version of this article is available on the LAHS website at

<https://www.le.ac.uk/lahs/downloads/Ramsey.Roman%20slates20.01.2016.pdf>).

## **FORTHCOMING EVENTS**

### **MANUFACTURING THROUGH THE AGES**

**Sunday 26 March 2017, 10 am – 5 pm, Derby Moor Community Sports College,  
Moorway Lane, Littleover, Derby, DE23 2FS**

LAHS Committee member Professor Marilyn Palmer will be speaking at this British Council for Archaeology: East Midlands event on 'Powered textile manufacture in the East Midlands in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century'. Other topics include workers' housing in the Derwent Valley; regional research frameworks to study manufacturing; new finds of prehistoric copper mines in England and Wales; Roman saltmaking on the Lincolnshire Coast; bellfounding in the Midlands from 1200 – 2017; and manufacturing in the Nottingham caves. Fees: £12 for members; £17 for non-members, including free parking, cold buffet lunch and other refreshments. Further details and online booking at [www.archaeologyuk.org/cbaem/cba-em%20events.htm](http://www.archaeologyuk.org/cbaem/cba-em%20events.htm), or contact David Ingham, 1a Stamford Lane, Warmington, Northants, PE8 6TW, tel 07717 866767.

### **CHARNWOOD ROOTS HERITAGE FESTIVAL**

**Sunday 21 May 2017, 10am – 4pm, Beaumanor Hall, Woodhouse, Leicestershire**

Charnwood Roots is exploring the history of Charnwood Forest and the towns and villages that surround it, and will be celebrating this history in a one day event in May. The centrepiece of the festival will be a large exhibition showcasing some of the research compiled by over 600 volunteers. This covers the period from medieval times to the present day, and will be presented through a combination of text, images, and archaeological and document displays. Films of the community test-pitting undertaken in Rothley, Whitwick and Anstey, and of historical research techniques and archaeological surveys, will be shown during the day, along with clips from oral history interviews. There will also be talks by guest speakers on the history and archaeology of Charnwood Forest. Other features of the day include an outdoor area of archaeology displays and living history, and displays by local history and heritage groups. A children's area will include history games, hands-on archaeology, and adventure stories in which they can take part themselves. To join the mailing list for more details nearer the time, see [www.charnwoodroots.org](http://www.charnwoodroots.org).

### **MARTIN LUTHER AND THE EAST MIDLANDS**

**30 September 2017, 10am – 5pm, De Montfort University, Leicester**

This one-day public history & archaeology conference will mark the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the beginnings of the Reformation in Europe and Britain. Speakers include Dr Stephen Bates (University of Warwick), The Virgin Mary and the Reformation in the East Midlands; Professor John Beckett & Dr Chris Brooke (University of Nottingham), The Parish Church in

the Sixteenth Century: the Southwell and Nottingham Church History Project; Richard Buckley (University of Leicester Archaeological Services), Excavations at Leicester Abbey; Sylvia Gill (University of Birmingham), Chantry Priests of the East and West Midlands; Paula McBride (University of Bristol), Witchcraft in the East Midlands; and Dr Deirdre O'Sullivan (University of Leicester), Friars, Friaries and the Reformation. Fee for conference, lunch and refreshments £25 waged/£20 concession. For details contact Professor Elizabeth Tingle, [elizabeth.tingle@dmu.ac.uk](mailto:elizabeth.tingle@dmu.ac.uk).

## **A HISTORICAL FOOTNOTE**

LAHS started its existence in 1855 as the Leicestershire Architectural and Archaeological Society. This account of its annual excursion in the following year is extracted from the *Leicester Journal*, 12 September 1856.

EXCURSION. Wednesday was the day fixed for the society's annual excursion, and the neighbourhood of Melton its locality. Accordingly, at half-past eight, a party of members and friends started from the Bell in a char-a-banc, drawn by four horses, and proceeded at a rapid pace down Belgrave-gate, on the road to Melton. The number which left Leicester was smaller than last year, but this may be accounted for mainly by the fact that many had determined to join the party at Melton, instead of coming first to Leicester, as they would have done if any other part of the county had been selected for exploration.

The morning was not of the finest, rain had fallen in the night, and the peculiar damp chill which heralds the approach autumn led some to predict that the day's pleasure would be marred by inauspicious weather. But about eleven o'clock all fear of rain was at an end, and the remainder of the day was as fine could possibly be wished. Nothing particular occurred until Kirby-gate was reached, when attention was drawn to the mounds on the left hand side, which Mr. Thompson pointed out as in all probability Scandinavian barrows, though there was always a degree uncertainty in coming to such a conclusion in places where excavations have been made; but still he thought there could be little doubt in this case, that the elevations were genuine barrows...

After the momentary halt required to notice these matters, the party proceeded on their way, bestowing a passing glance on the beautiful grounds of Egerton Lodge, which they passed on entering the town of Melton. The Metropolis of Pork Pies was a little startled from its propriety, as the excursionists drew in front of the George, and alighted to visit the Corn Exchange...

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This newsletter is edited by Cynthia Brown and published by Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society. Further information about the Society, its publications and other activities can be found on its website at [www.le.ac.uk/lahs/](http://www.le.ac.uk/lahs/).