THE LEICESTERSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL SOCIETY

149th ANNUAL REPORT 2003–2004

2003
Thursday
9th October

The Brian Allison Memorial Lecture
London’s Arcadia: John Nash and the Planning of Regent’s Park
Emeritus Professor of Architectural History, University of London; Supernumerary Fellow of Brasenose College, Oxford

Thursday
23rd October

Prehistoric activity in the environs of the Husbands Bosworth causewayed enclosure
Matthew Beamish, B.A.
Project Officer, University of Leicester Archaeological Services

Thursday
6th November

The earliest English: living and dying in early Anglo-Saxon England
Samantha Glasswell, B.A., A.M.A.
Leicester City Council Museums and Heritage Services

Thursday
11th December

Burton Lazars Hospital: a reassessment
David Marcombe, B.A., Ph.D.
Director, Centre for Local History, University of Nottingham

2004
Thursday
8th January

Hidden treasure: a south-east Leicestershire hoard
Vicki Priest, B.A.
Field Officer, University of Leicester Archaeological Services

Thursday
22nd January

Possessions, Politics and Power: the Greys of Groby through Five Hundred Years
Anthony Squires
Landscape Historian

Thursday 6th February  
*William Camden and the rediscovery of England*  
Roger C. Richardson, B.A., Ph.D., F.R.Hist.S.  
Professor and Director of International Relations, King Alfred’s College, Winchester

Thursday 11th March  
The W Alan North Memorial Lecture  
*The Vindolanda Writing Tablets*  
Alan Bowman, M.A., PhD., F.B.A.  
Director of the Centre for the Study of Ancient Documents, University of Oxford

Thursday 25th March  
*Exploring Leicestershire’s Churchyards – part 2*  
Alan McWhirr, B.Sc., M.A., PhD., F.S.A., M.I.F.A.  
University Fellow, University of Leicester  
Honorary Secretary of the Society

The Annual General Meeting  
This was held on Thursday, 20th November, 2003, at the Leicester Guildhall, by courtesy of the Leicester City Council. The chair was taken by the President, Sir Timothy Brooks, KCVO, LLD, DLitt, JP. Unlike previous years there was no special lecture or presentation following the business session but there was much conviviality over the refreshments that concluded the meeting.

The Committee  
The Committee, under the chairmanship of Dr Gerald Rimmington, has met five times, an average of ten members were present at the meetings.

During the year, the membership secretary, Geoff Clark Monks, conducted a drive to recover unpaid subscriptions; this produced additional income in the region of £3,000.

Concern about membership led to the development of new ideas relating to a new membership drive. Dr Alan McWhirr, our secretary, produced an attractive colour leaflet advertising the work of the Society, a great improvement on the previous monochrome application form. These were widely distributed in the hope that they would produce a commitment to membership.

The lecture programme, arranged by Dr Babette Evans and Mrs Sybil Rutland, continued at the same high level for which the Society is well-known. Especially popular were the presentation by Vicki Priest on the south-east Leicestershire hoard of coins, with samples of the coins available for the audience to see, and Professor Alan Bowman’s W Alan North Memorial Lecture on ‘The Vindolanda Writing Tablets’.

We have a developing problem with the venue for some of our lectures as many of them are now attracting greater numbers than can be accommodated in the Council Room at the New Walk Museum. Fortunately, we predicted accurately that the larger seating capacity of the Victorian Gallery would be
necessary for the W Alan North Memorial Lecture. There are an increasing number of occasions times when we are unable to predict when there will be a greater demand for seats than the Council Room provides often leaving people disappointed. On the whole we feel that a well-filled room is better than a larger room half-filled. The views of Members would be appreciated on this matter.

The Committee has been greatly concerned about plans by the Leicester City Museums Service to curtail opening hours at some of the museums, particularly the weekday unavailability of the Jewry Wall Museum, the proposed closure of the Guildhall during January and February and the closure, except for special events, of the Abbey Pumping Station. Members of the Committee have joined in protests over these proposals.

The Society’s publications have had another good year. We felt the loss of Mrs. Helen Edwards as editor of the *Leicestershire Historian*. The 2003 publication was particularly interesting. The editing work for the 2004 publication was largely undertaken by Alan McWhirr with the welcome help of Joyce Lee, who has now kindly agreed to become the editor.

Kay Gowland has continued as editor of the Society’s *Newsletter*, producing two a year. It continues to be a valuable source of information about activities of members. Particularly interesting for researchers is the information about library acquisitions written by our honorary librarian Aubrey Stevenson.

Joanna Story and Jill Bourne edited the 2003 volume of *Transactions* which maintained the scholarly tradition of this publication and although Richard Buckley has retired from the editorship he continues to edit the section *Archaeology in Leicestershire* section.

The Historic Buildings Panel, now led by David Smith, handled over sixty referrals for comment on works to listed buildings in Leicestershire. Members of the Panel were instrumental in obtaining Grade II listed status for Eastfield Hall, Stanley Road, Leicester, a mid-nineteenth century house (1848) with a series of additions undertaken in 1867, 1887 and 1904.

The 150th anniversary of the Society’s foundation, under the original name of ‘Leicestershire Architectural and Archaeological Society’, is imminent. It will take place on the 10th January 2005 when the Committee have arranged a reception at the Guildhall to mark the occasion. The Committee has been involved in making other plans too for the anniversary year. There will be, in addition to the regular volume of *Transactions*, a commemorative volume on Leicester Abbey. Robert Rutland’s research on the history of the Society will be published as well as a complete index to the *Transactions*. This will also be the first year when the lecture programme will be extended by two additional lectures. This promises to be an exciting year in the history of the Society.
OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE
2003–2004

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Joanna Story, B.A., Ph.D.

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Council for British Archaeology
Conservation Advisory Panel, Leicester City Council
University of Leicester Court

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