The Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society 1978-9

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Mrs. E. M. Dickson (Secretary)
Mrs. W. A. North

Melton Mowbray and District Branch;
Officers
Hon. Chairman: H. A. J. Dennison, Esq.
Hon. Secretary: C. Bowes, Esq.
Hon. Treasurer: K. C. Wright, Esq.
Twelve General Meetings of the Society were held at which the following papers were read:

1978

20 October  THE LEICESTER BUILDING SOCIETY LECTURE  

3 November  Annual General Meeting, followed by Romanesque and Gothic Churches in Central Germany. D. Tomkins, Esq., B.A. Former Hon. Secretary to the Society.

17 November  Inns and Taverns of Leicestershire. E. Swift, Esq.


1979

12 January  Charnwood Forest—a history of the living landscape. A. E. Squires, Esq.


9 February  'After the Excavation' with special reference to the Austin Friars Excavation. Miss Jean E. Mellor, Senior Field Archaeologist, Leicestershire Museums.

23 February  The Leicester Mid-Victorian Newspaper Project. R. L. Greenall, Esq., B.Sc., Warden, University Centre, Northampton.


16 March  Recent Results from the Archaeological Field Unit in Leicestershire. P. Liddle, Esq., Archaeological Survey Officer, Leicestershire Museums.

Meetings

The Annual General Meeting, held at the Guildhall, was chaired by Mr. R. J. B. Keene, who also presented the Annual Report. The Hon. Treasurer presented the Accounts and drew attention to the excess of expenditure over income of £266. He noted, however, that there had been an increase in income, as a result of a very welcome rise in membership, the re-introduction of Deeds of Covenant and an increase in the sales of literature. The Society had also received a generous grant from the Libraries and Museums Committee towards the cost of publishing 'Transactions' in addition to a number of personal and institutional grants to cover part of the cost of individual articles. The Chairman then presented his own report. He observed that much of the Committee's time was involved in examining the various threats to the county's archaeology and historic buildings. The present refusal to allow any archaeological investigation of the High Street area was of particular concern. He remarked that the Committee does a considerable amount of work, but that it preferred to achieve its aims without undue publicity. The Secretary's investigation of the possibility of forming a Record Section of the Society was also mentioned.

The lecture programme began most successfully with the Society's second Civic Lecture. The Leicester Building Society were the sponsors of the evening.

Committee and Officers

The Committee met seven times under the chairmanship of Mr. R. J. B. Keene. The Secretary discharged most of the routine work and correspondence of the Society. There have been a number of changes in the Committee's membership. Mr. F. W. Russell retired from the Committee after five years as Membership Secretary. The Society owes a considerable debt to Mr. Russell who, as the first holder of this office, has done much to encourage new members to join the Society. Mr. W. A. North has very kindly agreed to undertake these duties. Mrs. Drinkall resigned as leader of the Youth Group prior to the start of the new season following her move to a new appointment. Miss Jean Mellor, Mr. R. Rutland and Mr. Geoffrey Brandwood have joined the Committee. It is with great regret that the Committee report the death of Mr. W. P. Widdowson, B.Sc., M.A., in early August. Mr. Widdowson had been Excursions Secretary for the past three years. The Secretary would like to thank Mr. K. G. Norris for his considerable assistance.

The Committee continues to be concerned over the refusal by the owners of the High Street site to allow access for any archaeological investigation. The increasing use of metal detectors in areas of archaeological importance and the present state of the early nineteenth century houses in Princess Road West are also matters of concern. The Committee has also considered the possible effects of the proposals to mine coal in North-East Leicestershire on the area's archaeology and historic buildings.

Transactions

Volume LII saw the appearance of the first volume of the redesigned 'Transactions' following the change in the Society's printers. It was issued to Members in early November 1978. The Editor is to be congratulated on continuing to maintain the present high standards despite the increasing difficulties due to rising printing cost. The Committee would like to express their thanks to Dr. Williams for the considerable amount of time and effort he spends on editorial work and negotiations with the printers.

Membership

Paid Members: Ordinary Membership 354
Paid Members: Libraries and Institutions 55
Paid Associates and Students 41
Members who paid less than the full subscription in 1978–79 82
Deaths
We record with much regret the deaths of the following members during the past year: Miss M. Abbott; Mr. D. J. Bott; Mrs. B. A. Dale and Mr. C. N. Hadfield.
In addition, the deaths of two of the Society's Vice-Presidents: Dame Kathleen Kenyon, D.B.E. and Dr. Ronald Williams shortly after his retirement as Bishop of Leicester are also recorded with regret.

Historic Buildings Panel
The Panel, with the Rev. O. S. Bennett as co-ordinator, has received requests for advice on 258 planning applications between November 1978 and October 1979. A total of 129 visits were made and in 47 cases comments ranging from suggested improvements to outright opposition were given. The following were among the major applications opposed: the intended ring road at Melton Mowbray, involving the loss of 12 listed buildings; the proposed demolition of Lutterworth Hall, an unusually well-documented early nineteenth century neo-classical building; Elgin Lodge, Melton Mowbray, with its Ferneley associations; two Georgian cottages at 102 and 104 Bradgate Road, Anstey; and Lily Bank Barn, Thringstone, involving the demolition of the barn and the incorporation of some of the materials into a house; and the application to remove the third storey of a Georgian building at 6 Church Street, Lutterworth, thus ruining the proportions and affecting the quality of the surrounding area. The Panel was further involved in preparing a Leicestershire appendix to the exhibition of Redundant Churches held at the Polytechnic in April and considering the possibility of making the All Saints area in Leicester a Conservation Area.

The Youth Group
The Group, under the direction of Mr. Michael Moore, has continued to meet on alternate Saturday mornings at the New Walk Museum with an average attendance of 15 out of a nominal membership of 25. The Group has covered a large range of topics including vernacular architectures, castles, field-walking and surveying, Roman baths and the excavations at Norfolk Street and Sproxton. They involved visits to the Castle and Jewry Wall Museum and the handling of site material and other specimens. The session ended with a day trip to Rutland with visits to Hallaton Motte and Bailey, Lyddington Bede House and Stoke Dry Church. At present the post of Teacher Leader in Human History in the Museum Education Section remains frozen. The holder of this post would normally bear the brunt of organising the Young Searchers. The Group could be greatly expanded if more regular voluntary assistance were available, and possibly the age group could be extended to include school leavers, with Saturday afternoon or perhaps weekday evening meetings. Acknowledgements are due to Mr. Peter Liddle, the Survey Staff and Mrs. R. A. Rutland for their help with the Group, and the Museum attendants for preparing the lecture rooms.

Archaeological Fieldwork Group
The Group, under the direction of Mr. R. G. Mitchell, spent much of the early part of the season investigating the large complex site in Cold Newton Parish. Work has also been undertaken in the parishes of Mowsley, Allenton, Barkby Thorpe, North Kilworth, Redmile and South Kilworth. Other members have been engaged on the more laborious task of sorting the mass of documentary material in preparation for the gazetteer of moated sites. The Group has also been concerned with the problem of classifying the many and varied types of moated sites. The destruction of ancillary features relating to scheduled moated sites and damage to the less noticed, but still important, features such as fishponds and ring-works, remains a matter for great concern.

The Group was awarded a £70 grant for equipment by the Lloyds Bank Fund for Independent Archaeologists in May 1979.
The Library

After last year's disappointing report on the use of the Library, there has been some improvement following the change in opening hours to the first Sunday and second Friday in the month, instead of every Friday and Saturday afternoon. The response by members to the new Sunday opening has been encouraging. The Librarian has continued his work on recataloguing. The Society is grateful to all the volunteers who assist in opening the Library.

Excursions

1978

10 June  Day excursion to Erddig. Led by Mr. W. P. Widdowson. Attendance 27.
20 July  Day excursion to the Cotswolds, visiting Chipping Campden Church and Wool-staplers' Museum, Barnsley Park House and the Roman Villa nearby with a talk by Dr. Graham Webster (excavator). Led by Mr. John Willett. Attendance 39.
24 August Half-day excursion to Cotterstock Hall, Brigstock and Fotheringhay Churches. Led by Mr. David Parsons. Attendance 33.

1979


Melton Mowbray and District Branch

The Branch has again enjoyed a very successful year with membership being maintained despite a number of removals from the area.

The excursion programme has received excellent support with an average of 40 persons joining each excursion.

The following meetings of the branch were held during the winter:

1978

29 September  Early Man in Western Wessex. P. A. Stevens, Esq.
13 October  St. George's Chapel, Windsor. Dr. A. K. B. Evans.
10 November  Everyday Life as seen by Nichols. David A. Smith, Esq.
8 December  Christmas Meeting.

1979

12 January  Members' Evening, Victorian Melton. J. A. Plumb, Esq.
9 February  Some Recent Developments in the Study of Roman Britain. A. D. Mcwhirr, Esq.
6 April  Nottingham Heritage. A. Hamilton, Esq.
11 May  Annual General Meeting.
Excursions
The following excursions were held:
1978
13 May  Waddesdon Manor, Bucks. Leader: Mr. H. L. Copson.
24 May  Stonesby and Sproxton. Leader: Mr. G. M. P. King.
24 June Coalbrookdale and Ironbridge. Leader: Mr. H. A. J. Dennison.
  5 July Holme Pierrepont Hall. Leaders: Mr. and Mrs. C. Bowes.
27 July  Warwick. Leader: Mr. H. L. Copson.
17 August Crowland, Holbeach and Gedney. Leader: Mr. K. C. Wright.
  9 September Drayton House, Northants. Leader: Mr. H. L. Dowson.
20 September Annual Dinner.