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

Thursday 7th December 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 25th January 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
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
The Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society
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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. Rimington. 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. nor 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 riverside. 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.