THE LEICESTERSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL SOCIETY
151st ANNUAL REPORT 2005–2006

2005
23rd–25th September Vaughan College, University of Leicester
Council for British Archaeology Members’ Weekend in
Leicester to mark the 150th Anniversary of the Society

Thursday
6th October
The Whittlewood Project: Landscapes and Settlements in
the Middle Ages
Christopher Dyer
Professor of English and Regional History
University of Leicester

Thursday
20th October
Recent Tree Dating Analysis in Leicestershire
Robert Howard
Tree-ring dating laboratory
University of Nottingham
[Replaced at short notice by a talk on buildings by
Neil Finn and David Smith.]

Thursday
3rd November
A newly uncovered Doom painting in Coventry and its
context
Miriam Stevenson
Department of Art and Film History
University of Leicester

Thursday
10th November
Society of Antiquaries meeting at the University of
Leicester to mark the Society’s 150th Anniversary
Rituals, boards and helmets: The East Leicestershire
Shrine and the Corieltavi
Vicki Priest and Jeremy Hill
University of Leicester Archaeology Services and the
British Museum

Thursday
24th November
Annual General Meeting
The Guildhall, Leicester
Thursday 8 December
‘Excessively pleasing to the English eye’: British reactions to Florence in the eighteenth century
Rosemary Sweet
Assistant Director of the Centre for Urban History
University of Leicester

2006
Thursday 19 January
The Archaeology of Leicester Abbey
Richard Buckley
Director, University of Leicester Archaeological Services
University of Leicester

Thursday 9 February
Going, going, almost gone: The Historic English Pub
Geoffrey Brandwood
Chairman of the Victorian Society

Thursday 23 February
An overview of archaeological projects in Leicestershire
Richard Clark
Archaeological Planning Officer
Leicestershire County Council

Thursday 9 March
The W. Alan North Memorial Lecture
Roman Syria
Jim Summerly
Radley College

Thursday 23 March
Anglo-Saxon Place Names in the Midlands
Margaret Gelling
President of the English Place Name Society

Thursday 6 April
The Work of the Portable Antiquities Scheme
Wendy Scott
Finds Liaison Officer, Leicestershire and Rutland
Leicestershire County Council

The Annual General Meeting
This was held on Thursday, 24th November, 2005, at the Leicester Guildhall, by courtesy of the Leicester City Council. The chair was taken by the retiring President, Sir Timothy Brooks, KCVO, LL.D, DLitt, JP, who was thanked for his contribution to the Society over the past fourteen years by the Chairman of the Committee, Dr Gerald Rimmington. Mr Robin Jenkins, Dr Graham Jones and Mrs Caroline Wessel have, during the year, been co-opted on to the committee.
The Committee
The Committee, under the chairmanship of Dr Gerald Rimmington, met five times during the year, with an average of eight members present at the meetings.

This year has seen a continuation of the sesquicentennial celebrations. The publication of *Leicester Abbey: medieval history, archaeology and manuscript studies*, edited by Joanna Story, Jill Bourne and Richard Buckley, occurred in June 2006. A high quality book, with eleven detailed chapters in 314 pages, it was introduced at the University of Leicester Archaeological Services excavations on Abbey Park, a delightful evening occasion with refreshments, on June 24th. On July 25th the Chairman and Secretary presented a copy to Councillor Paul Westley, the Lord Mayor of Leicester.

Another invaluable long-term project had been brought to an end with the publication of the Cumulative Index to Transactions, compiled by Auriol Griffith-Jones. Apart from the index to volumes 21 to 74 (1940 to 2000), there is an appendix containing a reprint of the index to volumes 1 to 20 (1862 to 1939). So that the publication relates to the whole of Transactions, and, therefore, is an invaluable aid for anyone undertaking research on the archaeology and history of Leicestershire.

Another highlight, already touched upon in last year’s Report, was the meeting of the Society of Antiquaries held at the University of Leicester on 10th November, 2005. On this occasion Vicki Priest of the University of Leicester Archaeological Services and Jeremy Hill of the British Museum gave a presentation on ‘Rituals, hoards and helmets: The East Leicestershire Shrine and the Corieltavi’.

The Society’s lecture programme for 2005–2006 was well-organised by Mrs Sybil Rutland, our Lecture Secretary. Among the highlights were Jim Summerley’s W. Alan North Memorial Lecture on ‘Roman Syria’, Christopher Dyer’s ‘The Whittleword Project: Landscapes and Settlements in the Middle Ages’ and Rosemary Sweet’s ‘Excessively pleasing to the English Eye’: British reactions to Florence in the eighteenth century.

Professor Chris Dyer informed the Committee that all counties in England, except Leicestershire and Herefordshire have record societies or record publishing facilities attached to societies like this one. He therefore proposed that we use Gloucestershire as a model. The Gloucestershire Record Series, founded by the Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society in 1988, is administered by a sub-committee of the latter. The sub-committee oversees editing, printing, publicity and sales of the Record Series. There is an additional subscription for members of the parent society who wish to receive these publications. Professor Dyer was appointed to chair an ad hoc working group to make firm plans for the Record Section of the Society. As a result Dr Mark Page is standing by to become the General Editor of the Record Series.

For several years now the annual subscription has been maintained at a level well below the cost of the publications that each member receives; it has now become necessary to review then subscription level for the future; the committee will be reviewing this over the coming months.
The publications of the Society continue to maintain the same high quality as in previous years. Volume 79 of Transactions, edited by Jill Bourne and Joanna Story, presented six learned papers. The re-designed front cover had the architect’s drawing for the proposed Clarendon Park Congregational Church depicted on it. The Leicestershire Historian, edited by Joyce Lee, grows ever more exciting. Kay Gowland produced two copies of the Newsletter – a valuable means of keeping members up-to-date with archaeological and historical information. Particularly important are the book and journal acquisitions listed by Aubrey Stevenson, the Society’s Librarian.

Aubrey Stevenson has brought the Library in the Guildhall back to normal, after a frustrating year when the facilities were unusable because of essential repairs. He has been troubled by lack of storage space, caused by having too many unsold copies of Transactions from previous years. Two sales afternoons reduced quantities somewhat but more such sales will be needed to meet the need for space.

David Smith has continued as Co-ordinator of the Historic Buildings Panel and has been kept very busy with referrals from local authorities.

The Committee noted with great pleasure that one of our members, Anthony Squires, recently received a British Association for Local History Award to Encourage Research and Publication for his characteristically well-researched article on ‘The Medieval Park of Ridlington’, published in the Rutland Record: Journal of the Rutland Local History and Record Society, no 23 (2003).

Following the retirement of Sir Timothy Brooks as President of the Society, we were delighted to be able to elect Professor Rosemary Cramp to succeed him. She has had a long and distinguished career in archaeology, beginning when still a schoolgirl on a ‘dig’ on the family farm at Glooston. She is now Professor Emeritus of Archaeology at the University of Durham, and is also an honorary graduate of the University of Leicester.
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