THE LEICESTERSHIRE
ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND
HISTORICAL SOCIETY
153rd ANNUAL REPORT 2007–2008

2007
Thursday
11 October
The unquiet, the disobedient and the criminous: the work
of the Archdeaconry Court
Ann Tarver
Local Historian

Thursday
25 October
Sadly mangled by the insulting claws of time: the church of
Crowland Abbey, Lincolnshire
Jenny Alexander
Church Archaeologist

Saturday
27 October
History and Heritage Fair
Held at Vaughan College and Jewry Wall Museum

Thursday
8 November
Printing and the book trade in the life of Leicester up to
c. 1850
John Hinks
Honorary Fellow, Centre for Urban History, University of
Leicester

Thursday
22 November
Annual General Meeting
Held at the Guildhall, Leicester

Thursday
6 December
Thomas Babington and the Leicestershire link to the
abolition of the slave trade
Terry Sheppard
Local Historian

2008
Thursday
10 January
Monuments, memory and myth: the use and reuse of three
round barrows at Cossington
John Thomas
University of Leicester Archaeological Services

Thursday 24 January  | From folklore to intangible heritage: the 2003 UNESCO convention
Patrick Boylan  
Emeritus Professor, City University, London

Thursday 7 February | Human impact in the Trent Valley: occupation, clearance and alluviation in the fourth to second millennium BC at Willington, south Derbyshire
Matt Beamish  
University of Leicester Archaeological Services

Thursday 21 February | Building reconstruction as a means of archaeological interpretation: a view from Virginia, USA
Marilyn Palmer  
Professor of Industrial Archaeology, University of Leicester

Thursday 13 March | W. Alan North Memorial Lecture
The villa of Tiberius Claudius Severus: a window into the past
Roy Friendship Taylor  
Director of Excavations, Piddington Roman villa

Thursday 27 March  | ‘What bard has sung of thee?’ – Women’s contribution to Leicester’s history 1780 to 1920
Shirley Aucott  
Local Historian

Thursday 17 April  | Members’ evening

The Annual General Meeting
This was held on Thursday 22 November 2007, at the Leicester Guildhall, by courtesy of the Leicester City Council. The chair was taken by the President, Professor Rosemary Cramp, CBE, MA, BLitt., DSc., FSA.

The Committee
The Committee, under the chairmanship of Dr Gerald Rimmington, has met four times during the year. There was an average of eight members present.

The Society’s lecture programme, organised by Mrs Sybil Rutland, was well received by Society members, some of whom were attracted by intriguing titles, like ‘The unquiet, the disobedient and the criminous: the work of the Archdeaconry Court’ by Ann Tarver, ‘Sadly mangled by the insulting claws of time: the church of Crowland Abbey, Lincolnshire’ by Jenny Alexander and
‘Monuments, memory and myth: the use and reuse of three round barrows at Cossington’ by John Thomas. Particularly noteworthy were the lectures by Terry Shepherd on ‘Thomas Babington and the Leicestershire link to the abolition of the slave trade’; Matt Beamish’s ‘Human impact in the Trent Valley: occupation, clearance and alleviation in the fourth to second millennium BC at Willington, south Derbyshire’; and Marilyn Palmer’s ‘Building reconstruction as a means of archaeological interpretation: a view from Virginia, USA’. The W. Alan North Memorial Lecture series was continued with a contribution from Roy Friendship Taylor, Director of Excavations at Piddington Roman Villa, on ‘The villa of Tiberius Claudius Severus: a window into the past’. This had the advantage of a follow-up excursion, attended by some of our members, to the Piddington site.

Members will have noted that the History and Heritage Fair held on 27 October 2007 was listed in our lecture programme. It was mentioned in last year’s report, within the context of developing relationships with other local historical, heritage, archaeological and similar societies in the county and in Rutland. Caroline Wessel, who worked extremely hard to organise the occasion, reported that it was ‘an unqualified successful’. About 50 stall-holders set up stall and seemed to enjoy ‘selling their wares to the public and networking with each other’. There were two workshops, three brands of tour, and Dinosaur and Roman children’s activities. Altogether there were about 700 attendees, who included the Lord Lieutenant, Lady Gretton and the Lord Mayor of Leicester.

Caroline Wessel continues to compile a list of speakers for local groups. She and the Committee are wondering where we go from here. Could there be a conference, training day or lecture day, run as an intermediate event before another history fair? The Committee would value suggestions and reactions on this sort of topic.

The publications of the Society have continued as before. The Newsletter for Autumn 2008 was 20 pages long, and particularly interesting. It was wholly compiled and edited by Alan McWhirr in the absence of an editorship appointment. The Leicestershire Historian, ably edited by Joyce Lee, lived up to its increasing reputation for short, relatively popular, articles. Terry Shepherd’s article on ‘Rothley and the Abolition of the Slave Trade’ was particularly noteworthy, and topical, as also was the article on ‘Beaumont Leys and its Parks’ by Anthony Cabaniuk and Anthony Squires. The section on reviews, edited by John Hinks, had short reviews on some 16 books and booklets, and listed many more.

Our flagship publication is, of course, Transactions. Volume 81, edited by Jill Bourne, was originally intended to be a slim volume, following the bumper sesquicentennial volume, but it grew and ended up with six major articles comprising 249 pages. Six pages were taken up by a new reviews sections, edited by Dr Graham Jones.

The Committee, through Professor Christopher Dyer, has been concerned with the furtherance of the Victoria County History, which was never completed. Some progress has been made. On 29 August 2008, the Leicestershire Victoria County History Trust was incorporated under the Companies Act 1985 as a private
company. The next stage will be to register the company as a charity, so that the raising of finance can begin in earnest.

The Committee is continuing to discuss the preparation and publication of an Historical Atlas of Leicestershire. It is hoped to make an arrangement with Phillimore the publishers, but more work needs to be done on costing before Dr Graham Jones’s project can proceed.

During the past year we lost one of our faithful members, Brian Bilson, who frequently was to be seen at our lectures. Among his estate were many books, from which the Society will have its choice. Our Honorary Librarian, Aubrey Stevenson, has worked hard in making a selection for our library, and deserves our thanks.

Some members using the facilities of the Record Office for Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland have expressed concern that the use of an individual’s own digital camera for documents is not permitted there. Apparently this is allowed at the National Record Office in Kew, and at some other record offices. Accordingly representations have been to the new Archivist, Dr Margaret Bonney, to see if a change in policy can be effected. The Record Office, however, is concerned about disruption in the search room. Loss of income is also a factor. The situation will continue to be reviewed.

David Smith has continued as co-ordinator of the Historic Buildings Panel. He is frequently busy looking at and making reports on historic buildings, as requested by district authorities.

It has been a successful year, but it needs to be stressed that we are without a number of key committee people. We have so far been unable to replace Sybil Rutland as Lecture Secretary; our omnicapable Honorary Secretary, Dr Alan McWhirr, has had to organise the programme of lectures for 2008–9. Neither have we been able to find a Minutes Secretary; this is also undertaken by Alan McWhirr. As has been mentioned previously, we still need an editor for the Newsletter.

Several times over the past few years members of this Society have received honours of various kinds. This year is no exception. Professor Christopher Dyer was appointed to a CBE in the Queen’s Birthday Honours List in 2008 for his services to history. He has been congratulated on your behalf.

This is the third and final year that our President, Professor Rosemary Cramp, will be with us. She will be President a little longer, however, as she is to deliver a Presidential Address in February. We shall look forward to ‘New directions in the study of Anglo-Saxon sculpture with special reference to the East Midlands’. In the meantime I want to say what a pleasure it has been to have a distinguished archaeologist and local girl as our President.
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2007–2008

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G. Clark Monks (Membership)
Kay Gowland (Newsletter) (Resigned 2008)
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Representatives on other bodies
Council for British Archaeology
Conservation Advisory Panel, Leicester City Council
University of Leicester Court

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