THE LEICESTERSHIRE
ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND
HISTORICAL SOCIETY
155th ANNUAL REPORT 2009–2010

2009
Thursday
7 October
The Victoria County History in Leicestershire
John Beckett
Professor of English Regional History at the University of
Nottingham, and Director and General Editor of the
Victoria County History

Thursday
21 October
Medieval Houses in East Leicestershire and Rutland: recent
research
Nick Hill
Project Director, English Heritage

Saturday
23 October
Memorial Tribute to Alan McWhirr BSc., M.A., Ph.D.,
F.S.A., M.I.fA.

Thursday
4 November
Feeding the Roman Army
Richard Thomas
School of Archaeology and Ancient History, University of
Leicester

Thursday
25 November
Annual General Meeting

Thursday
9 December
The Slums of Leicester
Ned Newitt

2010
Thursday
6 January
Medieval Pilgrimage in Leicestershire
Peter Liddle
Community Archaeologist at Leicestershire County
Council Museums Service

Thursday
20 January
Goings on with Grooved Ware: Recent Discoveries from
Rothley, Leicestershire
Gavin Speed

Senior Supervisor at the University of Leicester Archaeological Services

Thursday 10 February
Everyday Life in Roman and Medieval Leicester: Finds from the Highcross Project
Nicholas Cooper
Post-Excavation Manager at the University of Leicester Archaeological Services

Thursday 24 February
Projections from the Past: Digitisation and Managing Digital Files: the Glass Lantern slide collection at the Record Office, Wigston
James Ryan
Photodigitisation Officer, Record Office for Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland

Thursday 10 March
W. Alan North Memorial Lecture
Elephants and Camels: Roman Emperors on the Laurentian Shore
Amanda Claridge
Professor of Roman Archaeology, Royal Holloway, University of London

Thursday 24 March
The Hemington Bridges
Susan Ripper
Project Officer, The University of Leicester Archaeological Services

The Annual General Meeting
This was held on Thursday 26 November 2009 at New Walk Museum, Leicester. The chair was taken by the President Squire Gerard de Lisle.

The Committee
The Committee met five times during the year under the chairmanship of David Ramsey, who had been acting as Chairman following the sudden death of Dr Alan McWhirr earlier in the year.

The lecture programme for 2009–10, arranged by Lecture Secretary Neil Finn, offered a wide range of subjects, from ‘Early Roman Leicester: Iron Age transition’, by Lynden Cooper; ‘Not quite a village, the archaeology of the Doomsday Book’, by Paul Courtney; ‘A promise Unfulfilled – the rise and fall of the Coleorton Railway’, by Fred Hartley, to ‘Taking the “pre” out of prehistory: the third radiocarbon revolution’, by Alex Bayliss of English Heritage. Our late Honorary Secretary, Alan McWhirr, drew attention to ‘Leicestershire’s Topographical artists’ and what they tell us about the past. Jeremy Taylor spoke about ‘The Welland Valley Project’ and this was followed by the W. Alan North...
Memorial Lecture, ‘Imperial possession? Changing perceptions of Britain in the Roman Empire’ given by David Mattingly, from the University of Leicester. More recent times were represented by Susan Tebby’s talk on ‘Mills, Millers and Milling’ and Margaret Bonney, the County Archivist’s, talk entitled ‘Making History: working with communities to create archives of the future’.


*The Leicestershire Historian*, No. 45 (2009), edited by Joyce Lee, proved of great interest, with the cover and centre pages of David Ramsey’s article on ‘John Martin: Quarry Manager and talented Leicestershire Topographical Artist’, introducing members to the sketches of Charnwood made by John Martin 1815–1864. ‘Pleasure and recreation in Bath Lane, Leicester’, by the late Alan McWhirr and Lynden Cooper, drew attention to the little known Public or Corporation baths which were erected in 1879 in Bath Lane, near west Bridge, Leicester. ‘Travels through Quorn’s past’, by Kathryn Peterson, gave light to the interesting treasure trove of material which can sometimes be found in Parish Council cupboards. Christine Taggart looked closely at Thomas Henry Fosbrooke’s (1862–1925) ‘Scrapbooks’, a pictorial record of his observations of old and new buildings within the county, Ashby and Kirby Castle, The Old Town Hall, wrought iron gates, finger stocks and lock ups, “Do it with pride”: working lives at Joseph Johnson’s Department Store’, by Edna Blake and Erica Statham, introduced the reader to a working environment where the head buyer for the ladies wear proclaimed that a naked cup of coffee should never ever be taken across her department! (A brown paper bag was used to cover the offending object.) Working with pride and no visible rush, Joseph Johnsons was a shop which offered staff guest-house type living-in accommodation between the wars. It was, however, very difficult for single women staff to meet eligible men as segregation applied even at meal times. In all, 14 articles – plus the Recent Publications section, edited by John Hinks – brought the 2009 edition to 68 pages, effectively doubling the size of the Leicestershire Historian in the space of five years.

The Society’s website continues to be developed by our Webmaster, Richard Buckley. A visit to the pages allows almost all previous volumes of *Transactions* to
be read, as well as the latest archaeological news from around the county. Richard
is also assisting Geoff Clark-Monks, our Membership Secretary, in his activities
prior to taking over that office himself.

14 April 2010 brought the sad and completely unexpected news that Alan
McWhirr, our Honorary Secretary for 30 years, had died in hospital after
undergoing surgery. Cheerful to the end, Alan had prepared the Committee for
what he thought would be a short-term absence whilst he would be in hospital.
His title of Honorary Secretary hardly does justice to his tireless and extensive
work which he carried out on behalf of the Society. The Committee continues to
carry on the links which Alan had with outside organisations and individuals,
which were many and various. To say Alan will be sorely missed is an
understatement in the extreme.

The Committee has recently been approached by the Leicestershire Museums
Fieldwork Archaeological Group to consider closer links leading to cooperation
on lecture dates and affiliation links. The Society has approximately 470
members, Fieldworkers have 400. Surprisingly, considering the similarity of
interests, there is an overlap of less than 100 members. Negotiations continue.

David Ramsey (Acting Chairman)
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2009–2010

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