Society projects

A number of projects organised by members of the committee and others are moving forward behind the scenes.

**Record Series**
The committee agreed in 2005/6 to establish a record series as Leicestershire was then one of only two counties which did not have one. Dr Mark Page has agreed to act as editor for the series and he is currently approaching people who have suitable research material which might make a volume in the series. It is hoped to have several volumes lined up before details are publicised and people are asked to subscribe.

**Victoria County History**
A working party has been formed and a trust is being established to raise money to continue producing volumes in the *Victoria County History* series. Only five volumes have been produced for Leicestershire, the last one appearing in 1964!

**Historical Atlas for Leicestershire**
Our latest project is to see if there is a demand, and we have the resources, for an historical atlas of the county. Dr Graham Jones is taking the lead in this proposal and your committee will be assessing the project later in the year. No decisions have yet been taken, but several other counties have produced such an atlas and it is certainly worth investigating the idea.

The first lecture is on Thursday, 9th October – Grace Dieu Priory

Professor Rosemary Cramp will give her Presidential Address on Thursday 12th February 2009

The AGM in on Thursday 20th November at the Guildhall

Please can we have your email address. Email it to the Honorary Secretary.
News

Committee member honoured in the Queen’s Birthday Honours List

The award of the CBE to Professor Christopher Dyer prompted this announcement from the University of Leicester:

A distinguished historian who heads a unique University of Leicester centre has been recognised in the Queen’s Birthday Honours. Christopher Dyer, Professor of Regional and Local History and Head of the Centre for English Local History, has been awarded a CBE for services to scholarship.

On hearing about the honour, Professor Dyer said “I am sure that I was greatly helped in the activities which brought me this honour by the opportunities provided by the University of Leicester. My colleagues, especially in the Centre for English Local History and the School of Historical Studies, but also in other parts of the University, have stimulated and supported my work. Awards are given to individuals, but they are earned by the efforts of communities of academic and support staff. Local history as a subject has also been recognised; it is not the most glamorous or flashy specialism in history, but it is constantly rewarding and gives us insights into the foundations of the contemporary world.”

Professor Dyer joined the University in 2001 having previously taught at Birmingham, and Edinburgh universities. His research interests include economic and social history, especially in the period 400-1600. He has written about peasants, landscapes, farming, towns, work and standards of living, often based on studies of midland villages and towns.

Professor Dyer is currently researching for a monograph on ‘John Heritage and his world’, a study of commerce, agriculture and rural society around Morton-in-Marsh, Gloucestershire, based on the account book of a Cotswold wool merchant, 1500-1520. He is also writing up landscape history projects on Admington in Warwickshire, Hazleton in Gloucestershire with David Aldred, and Westcote in Warwickshire.

Professor Dyer is currently involved in two major projects with the Society. The first is the formation of a Record Series to be published by the Society when suitable topics have been researched and prepared for publication. The second is to establish a trust for continuing the work of researching and publishing additional volumes of the Victoria County History for Leicestershire.

Members elected Fellows of the Society of Antiquaries

Three members of the Society have recently been elected Fellows of the Society of Antiquaries of London. They include long-time member of the Society and currently a Vice-President, Squire Gerard de Lisle, a former editor and committee member, Dr Joanna Story, and well-known extra-mural tutor and ULAS member of staff, Nicholas Cooper.

Nicholas Cooper is post-excavation manager with the University of Leicester Archaeological Services and the author of The Archaeology of Rutland Water (2000) and an edited volume on The Archaeology of the East Midlands (2006). He is co-ordinator of the East Midlands Archaeological Research Framework and specialises in Roman pottery and artefacts.

Dr Joanna Story is a senior lecturer in Early Medieval History in the School of Historical Studies, University of Leicester, and specialises in the political and cultural history of Carolingian Europe. She initiated the Society’s publication on Leicester Abbey and has acted as joint editor of Transactions for several years.

Squire Gerard de Lisle has been a member of the Society for many years and has had a long interest in the study of the history and antiquities of Leicestershire. He has published several books on topics ranging from the Quorn Hounds to diaries of members of the Phillipps and de Lisle families. In recent years he has been tracking down books from the March Phillipps de Lisle library once housed in Garendon Hall, but dispersed in 1943. So far he had recovered around 5,000 volumes. Recently he has been closely involved with the upkeep of the ruins of Grace Dieu priory.

Over to you ....

On Thursday 26th March 2009 we have scheduled another members’ evening into our 2008-9 lecture programme. This is your chance to tell us about your research or interests and possibly to ask other members for help in collecting data. Or you might have a special photograph or painting which would be of interest upon which you could talk for five minutes or thereabouts. We are looking for contributions of no longer than 20 minutes. If you have an idea talk to the Honorary Secretary (0116 2703031)
New county archivist appointed

A new challenge!

Dr Margaret Bonney has been appointed county archivist following the retirement of Carl Harrison and writes:

I've been asked to introduce myself to Newsletter readers as Carl Harrison's successor as Chief Archivist for Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland. Many of you I know already, some through your research in the Record Office, where I've been working since 2001, and those of you with long memories may remember a talk I gave to the Society many many years ago about my own earlier research interest, the medieval city of Durham.

I'm not from hereabouts - I hale from the city of Durham, that wonderful World Heritage City, hence my attachment to finding out something about the people who lived and worked there in the Middle Ages. I was very fortunate to spend my research days working in the Prior's Kitchen, just off the cloisters of the Cathedral, where the documents were stored in those days (now it's part of a café, I think). I stuck to the north for most of my education - St Andrews as an undergraduate, York as a postgraduate, and Liverpool to train as an archivist - and only progressed south to find work. Yes, I confess I miss the north, and I try to return there at least once per year to get a 'fix' of northern air!

After a stint in London, working at the House of Commons, which was quite a different kind of education, I moved to Leicester, first to the Department (as it was then) of English Local History at the University of Leicester, teaching students, and then, while my children were small, editing a journal, 'The Local Historian', from our front room. I returned to full-time work in 2001 when I became an Assistant Keeper of Archives at the Record Office in Wigston.

So it has been a rather unorthodox, not to say eclectic background, which brings me to this job right now, succeeding Carl Harrison. It is a time of change for the Office - there are all kinds of challenges on the horizon and nearer at hand - but it is very exciting and I feel very privileged to be in a position where I can help to shape its future.

National Archaeology Week in Leicestershire - two of the events which took place in July 2008

Below: Some of the 37 people being shown around Burrough Hill by Alan McWhirr as part of National Archaeology Week. (picture Alan McWhirr)

Above: Denis Baker of the Swannington Heritage Trust and the Leicestershire Industrial History Society, shows a local family group around the Swannington, Alabama shaft Engine House at the Califat mine site being excavated by the LIHS during National Archaeology Week. (picture David Lyne)
One in Twelve Heritage Treasures at Risk

The following is taken from the publication produced by English Heritage Heritage at Risk at Midlands:

English Heritage has launched the Heritage at Risk register revealing that no fewer than 1 in 12 is at high risk of neglect or decay or inappropriate change. The new Heritage at Risk project extends the formula of the Buildings at Risk Register (which since it began in 1998 has seen 45% of entries saved), to scheduled monuments and archaeology, registered historic landscapes, parks, gardens and battlefields and even protected wreck sites off our coast. Over the next few years, conservation areas, listed places of worship and Grade II buildings will be added to make England the first country in the world to have a comprehensive picture of every bit of its protected heritage at risk and the analysis to save it.

The Heritage at Risk Report also reveals what the true enemies are. They include ploughing, scrub and tree growth, lack of funds, neglectful owners, burrowing animals, inappropriate development, vandalism and natural erosion.

Dr Simon Thurley stated ‘The Heritage at Risk project is at the heart of what English Heritage can do for the nation. It gives us all, for the first time, the big picture and the tools to interrogate it. It helps our experts to prioritise action to deal with the most urgent cases. We can identify what types of heritage are vulnerable to what types of threat and our experts can recommend solutions that will work all over the country.’

The inclined plane at Foxton Locks, Leicestershire, has been removed from the register as a consequence of meticulous conservation works by British Waterways and the Foxton Inclined Plane Trust. Built to allow canal boats to bypass the spectacular flight of locks, repairs to the masonry components of the plane are now complete. Interpretation and access to the locks complex have been enhanced with Heritage Lottery funding, and a Heritage Partnership Agreement with English Heritage and British Waterways is piloting an approach to conservation management which will be extended to other canal sites.

County Hall cabinet member for community services, Councillor Ernie White told Leicester Mercury, ‘We have not failed on this [Snibstone Colliery]. We can and do take measures to protect and maintain this important site, but we do not have the resources to completely refurbish it.’

“We have not failed on this [Snibstone Colliery]. We can and do take measures to protect and maintain this important site, but we do not have the resources to completely refurbish it.” Councillor Ernie White

Web site at: http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/server/show/ConWebDoc.14144

Left: Press cutting from the Leicester Mercury.
Opposite: Pages extracted from the English Heritage document relating to Buildings at Risk in Leicestershire.
### Risk

#### Leicester (UA)
- **Name:** Church of St Mark, Belgrave Gate, Leicester  
  - **Priority:** F (F)  
  - **Designation:** Listed Grade II*  
  - **Condition:** Fair  
  - **Occupancy:** Vacant  
  - **Ownership:** Private

- **Name:** County Court (inc. remains of Leicester Castle and John O'Gaunt's Cellar), Castle Yard, Leicester  
  - **Priority:** C (C)  
  - **Designation:** Listed Grade I, SM, CA  
  - **Condition:** Fair  
  - **Occupancy:** Vacant  
  - **Ownership:** Local authority

- **Name:** Belgrave House, Church Road, Leicester  
  - **Priority:** E (E)  
  - **Designation:** Listed Grade II*, CA  
  - **Condition:** Fair  
  - **Occupancy:** Part occupied  
  - **Ownership:** Local authority

- **Name:** Former Bank, 2 St Martins, Leicester  
  - **Priority:** E (E)  
  - **Designation:** Listed Grade II*, CA  
  - **Condition:** Fair  
  - **Occupancy:** Vacant  
  - **Ownership:** Company

- **Name:** St Saviour's Church, St Saviour's Road, Leicester  
  - **Priority:** C (C)  
  - **Designation:** Listed Grade II*, CA  
  - **Condition:** Poor  
  - **Occupancy:** Vacant  
  - **Ownership:** Religious organisation

- **Name:** Magazine Gateway, Regimental Museum, The Newarke, Leicester  
  - **Priority:** E (F)  
  - **Designation:** Listed Grade I, SM  
  - **Condition:** Fair  
  - **Occupancy:** Vacant  
  - **Ownership:** Local authority

#### Melton
- **Name:** Scarfpeep Monument north west of Church of St Peter, Mertert Road, Burton Latimer, Burton and Dalby  
  - **Priority:** C (C)  
  - **Designation:** Listed Grade I*  
  - **Condition:** Fair  
  - **Occupancy:** Not applicable  
  - **Ownership:** Unknown

#### North West Leicestershire
- **Name:** Swithland Colliery, Asby Road  
  - **Priority:** A (New entry)  
  - **Designation:** SM  
  - **Condition:** Fair  
  - **Occupancy:** Not applicable  
  - **Ownership:** Local authority

- **Name:** The Triumphal Arch, Cameron Park, Ashley Road, Loughborough  
  - **Priority:** C (C)  
  - **Designation:** Listed Grade I, FPG Grade I  
  - **Condition:** Fair  
  - **Occupancy:** Not applicable  
  - **Ownership:** Private

- **Name:** Levercourt Priory ruins, Priory Lane, Levercourt  
  - **Priority:** E (E)  
  - **Designation:** Listed Grade I, SM  
  - **Condition:** Very bad  
  - **Occupancy:** Not applicable  
  - **Ownership:** Private

#### Harborough
- **Name:** Scarpfoot Hall, Church Hill, Scarpfoot  
  - **Priority:** C (C)  
  - **Designation:** Listed Grade I*, CA  
  - **Condition:** Poor  
  - **Occupancy:** Vacant  
  - **Ownership:** Company

- **Name:** Wobcote Hall, Cilcawen Road, Wobcote  
  - **Priority:** A (A)  
  - **Designation:** Listed Grade II*  
  - **Condition:** Poor  
  - **Occupancy:** Part occupied  
  - **Ownership:** Private

#### Hinckley and Bosworth
- **Name:** Stable and bakehouse at Brogden House, Brogden Hill, Gresby  
  - **Priority:** C (C)  
  - **Designation:** Listed Grade I*, CA  
  - **Condition:** Very bad  
  - **Occupancy:** Vacant  
  - **Ownership:** Company

- **Name:** The Old Hall, Manfield Road, Gresby  
  - **Priority:** E (E)  
  - **Designation:** Listed Grade II*  
  - **Condition:** Fair  
  - **Occupancy:** Vacant  
  - **Ownership:** Private
The John Hurst Prize

The John Hurst Prize is awarded annually for the best MA dissertation on medieval settlement studies. John Hurst was the founder of the Deserted Medieval Villages Research Group (with M. W. Beresford), excavator of Wharram Percy for 40 years, and an important voice for medieval archaeology in English Heritage (and its previous incarnations). Entries are received from every part of the British Isles, and the standard of entries is very high. This year it was awarded to Michael Bushy of the Centre for English Local History in the University of Leicester for his dissertation analysing the Leicestershire poll taxes of 1377, 1379 and 1381. The dissertation sheds new light on the distribution of occupations, and made valuable proposals for defining the differences between urban and non-urban settlements in the county.

The Richard McKinley Prize

The Richard McKinley prize for the best MA dissertation in the Centre for English Local History in the University of Leicester in 2008 has been awarded to Peter Jennings. He is from Leicestershire, and completed his full time MA course in 2006-7. His dissertation employed the techniques of town plan analysis, as invented by Conzen and since developed by Slater and Lilley. This approach was applied to Leicester itself, and has resulted in a number of new ideas about the early development of the street plan, from the 9th century until modern times.

Deserted Villages Revisited

The Centre for English Local History in association with the Medieval Settlement Research Group hosted on 21-22 June 2008 a conference on ‘Deserted Villages Revisited’. This was inspired by the 60th anniversary of a visit to Leicestershire deserted village sites in 1948 by a group of academics attending a seminar at Cambridge. The visit was led by Hoskins and Beresford, and the party included Miller, Postan, Saltmarsh and Steensberg.

The 2008 conference began on the Saturday with a series of papers on recent developments in deserted village studies by archaeologists and historians – Taylor, Wrathmell, Dyer, Jones, Hinton, Smith, Broad, Williamson and Silvester. The papers covered English and Welsh settlements using various regional examples, and ranged from the pre-Conquest period until the 19th century.

On Sunday, a windy day, Brown and Everson took the party around sites visited in 1948 and happily still intact – Hamilton, Ingarsby, Great Stratton and Knaptoft. Lunch was served memorably in Great Stratton church. The first day was attended by 110 people, and the field visit by 60. It was an enjoyable and stimulating weekend which showed new approaches and insights into a subject which still retains its vigour and excitement.

Research Grant Award

Professor Keith Snell of the Centre is working with Dr Julie Rugg (University of York) on an 3-4 year ESRC funded project from January 2008, entitled Death and community in rural settlements: changing burial culture in small towns and villages, c. 1850-2007.

Modern cemetery history has been dominated by urban themes such as rapid population growth, public health and secularisation. This study will, for the first time, examine change in rural locations, and in doing so explore the local impact of national burial legislation in the second half of the nineteenth century; the religious politics of burial in smaller settlements; and the endurance of ‘traditional’ funerary practice.

The research will focus on rural settlements in Leicestershire and Rutland, and in Yorkshire, and has three substantive stages.

- First, information will be collected on change in burial provision in smaller settlements in the two case study regions, so establishing a robust chronology.
- Second, thirty case study cemeteries will be chosen for more detailed investigation using a range of local documentary sources: this stage will establish a ‘cultural history’ of the selected cemeteries.
- Third, in ten of these sites, oral histories will be completed with local clergy, residents, funeral directors and parish officers to understand the contemporary meaning of burial space in rural communities.

Members are reminded that Professor Snell will be talking to the Society on Thursday 2nd April 2009 on Churchyard Memorials: What do they tell us about the past?
School of Archaeology celebrates its 50th anniversary

Part of a press release from the University of Leicester:

This year, as the University of Leicester celebrates 50 years since it received its Royal Charter, the internationally acclaimed School of Archaeology and Ancient History also celebrates 50 years of teaching and research in Archaeology as well as forty years of teaching Classics and Ancient History.

The occasion was marked on Saturday 15th March, when the School invited its graduates back to mark the successes and landmarks Leicester archaeologists have achieved over the years, and to launch an anniversary book, Digging up our Past. Edited by Alan McWhirr, Neil Christie and Marilyn Palmer, this tells the history of the School and its students over 50 years, heavily illustrated with archive photographs. Past students have also contributed their memories and the book is available for sale to the public at £5 (+p&p).

Colin Haselgrove, the current Head of School, commented “From its modest beginnings in the History Department in 1957, the grouping of archaeologists and ancient historians that makes up the School today is one of the largest and most distinctive of its kind anywhere, with a reputation that is truly worldwide. Staff are engaged in cutting-edge research and fieldwork projects in all six continents. Our students, past and present, are spread just as widely. Thanks to the distance learning programme, student and staff exchanges with other universities in Europe, Australia and Canada, and its overall reputation for research and teaching, the School regularly attracts students from all corners of the globe. We are justifiably proud of quite how many of our former students now hold professional posts not just in the UK, but all over the world.”

Copies of the book can be obtained from the School at £7 to include post and packing.

Top: The cover of the book showing 1962 excavation at Burrough Hill.
Left: Cutting the cake in the shape of Stonehenge. Left to right: Professor Graeme Barker, Dr Alan McWhirr, Professor Marilyn Palmer and Professor Colin Haselgrove.
Below: Past and present staff and students at the anniversary.
The Medieval Earthworks of South-West Leicestershire

To say that the latest volume in the series *The Medieval Earthworks of Leicestershire and Rutland* has been long-awaited is rather an understatement. The four previous volumes appeared between 1982 and 1989, when Mrs Thatcher was still in Downing Street and hardly anyone had a computer on their desk. The author, Robert F Hartley (Fred), set out with the intention of doing a local version of the earthworks surveys included in the RCHME County Inventories, at a time when that ambitious national programme was stalling due to financial constraints.

The volumes on Rutland, North West Leicester, North East Leicestershire, and Central Leicestershire were completed and published by the County Museums Service, but then other priorities intervened. The publications budget dried up, and the author was increasingly involved in museum display projects such as the start-up of Snibston, before moving out of archaeology altogether and taking over the Harborough Museum.

Although no more publications appeared, the bulk of the work had already been done, and a couple of years ago the author was able to set up a drawing board again and bring together the surveys for the new volume. The subject this time is *The Medieval Earthworks of South-West Leicestershire*, comprising the Borough of Hinckley and Bosworth. Although not thought of as a classic area for the preservation of medieval landscape features, it contains a good variety of sites, including 26 shrunken or deserted villages, 3 mottes or castles, 5 grange farms, several watermill and windmill sites, and five post-medieval formal gardens. Scattered amongst these are 17 moats of varied origin, size and date, and approximately 12 sets of fishponds. Not all of the sites still exist as earthwork features, but where possible these have been reconstructed from the evidence of old aerial photographs.

At the back of the book is a series of maps of the Medieval landscape, showing the known extent of ridge and furrow, and the areas of heathland, commons, and other areas such as deer parks. Highlights include the intriguing earthwork mounds and moats of Shackerstone, the faint traces of the village of Ambion (already deserted when the Battle of Bosworth was fought nearby) and the extensive late 17th century garden features radiating from Newbold Verdon Hall.

The new volume has been completed thanks to generous funding from the Leicestershire Museums Archaeological Fieldwork Group (LMAFG), and made possible by a great deal of editing and preparation work done by Kathleen E. Elkin, who also arranged printing by the County Council’s Central Print Unit.

With this volume completed, only Harborough District remains to be finished. Much of the survey work has been done, but so numerous are the Harborough sites, and so large, that three volumes will be needed to encompass them!

**Previous volumes compiled by Fred Hartley**

- *The Medieval Earthworks of Rutland*, 1983
- *The Medieval Earthworks of North-West Leicestershire*, 1984
- *The Medieval Earthworks of North-East Leicestershire*, 1987
- *The Medieval Earthworks of Central Leicestershire*, 1989

**To buy your copy ...**

Price is £6 + postage £1.20 if required. To avoid postage the book can be sent for collection via a County (Leicestershire) library or museum or collected from a LMAFG meeting. Cheques payable to LMAFG should be sent to Kathy Harman, Room 408, Community Services Department, County Hall, Glenfield, LE3 8TD.

Copies will also be on sale at Bosworth Battlefield Centre and the Record Office in Wigston.
Royal Arms on our New Coinage

This year sees the biggest change in British coinage since decimalisation writes Caroline Wessel. The new design on the reverse of all coins is to be the Royal Arms, split into sections on all but the £1 coin, which will display the entire Arms.

But how many of us know the meaning or history of the different ‘quarters’ of this Royal shield? Let alone, the ways in which the Royal Arms have altered over the centuries?

The three running lions of England, in the first and fourth quarters, were first officially used by Richard I around 1195 and have remained continuously unaltered on the Royal Arms to this day. However the French shield of gold fleurs-de-lys on a blue ground dominated our own Royal Arms from 1340, due to Edward III’s claim to the French throne, through his mother Isabella, heir to the King of France. The result, of course, was the Hundred Years War, but the shield of France was not removed from our Royal Arms until 1801, and then only because of a re-design due to the Act of Union with Ireland.

With the coming of James I in 1603 the Scottish lion was introduced into the second quarter, Ireland appeared in the third, and the first and fourth quarters now each displayed France and England quarterly. In Queen Anne’s reign, England and Scotland appeared vertically together in the first and fourth quarters with France relegated to quarter two. And the Hanoverian Georges inserted their own three-sectioned shield denoting Hanover, Luneburg and Brunswick, plus the crown of Charlemagne, into the fourth quarter. In 1801, when Hanover became a kingdom, the French Royal Arms were finally banished for ever!

In 1837 Queen Victoria ascended to the throne and, being a woman, could not inherit the throne of Hanover. The Hanoverian arms were therefore removed, and the British Royal Arms took on the form that has been used by all subsequent sovereigns. It is this design that we look forward to seeing soon on our new coinage.

But if you wish to enjoy some examples of earlier versions, try visiting these Leicestershire churches:-

Plantagenet – France and England quarterly
Billesdon, Blaston, Husbands Bosworth, Kegworth, Leicester/St Martin’s, Sutton Cheney, Woodhouse

Stuart – France/England combined, Scotland and Ireland
Ashby-de-la-Zouch, Great Easton, Illston, Kegworth, Lockington, Melton Mowbray

Hanoverian – Hanover/Luneburg/Brunswick/Charlemagne, in the third quarter, or (later) all these on a central mini-shield
Appleby Magna, Bringhurst, Bruntingthorpe, Congerstone, Cosby, Countesthorpe, Diseworth, Edmundsthorpe, Freeby, Garthorpe, Great Bowden, Great Dalby, Harby, Heather, Keyham, Kings Norton, Kirby Muxloe, Lubbenham, Medbourne, Melton Mowbray, Nailstone, Newbold Verdon, Newtown Linford, Peatling Magna, Prestwold, Ratcliffe Culey, Saddington, Scraptoft, Stapleford, Stoney Stanton, Stoughton, Swithford, Thornton, Welham, Wistow

Victorian/Modern – 1 & 4 England; 2 Scotland; 3 Ireland
Blaby, Bottesford, Castle Donington, Catthorpe, Gilmorton, Groby, Hathern, Heather, Husbands Bosworth, Ibstock, Keyham, Leicester/Aylestone, Leicester/Humberstone, Little Dalby, Loddington, Mountsorrel, Peckleton, Rolleston, Shackerstone, Snibston, Thurcaston, Twycross, Whitwick, Witherley, Worthington

Happy travelling!  

Caroline Wessel

Illustration above – Hanoverian Royal arms in Keyham church

Presidential address – Thursday 12th February 2009

New directions in the study of Anglo-Saxon sculpture with special reference to the East Midlands

Professor Rosemary Cramp

A synopsis

There has been considerable change over the last ten years in the approach to the study of Anglo-Saxon sculpture, both in relation to meaning and function. Its importance as often the first indication of pre-Christian settlement on a site has long been recognised, but how it was viewed in its time, and how it functioned within its political and cultural context, are now more deeply explored. This lecture will review some of the new research directions and consider how they apply to East Midlands sculpture in particular. Topics which will be considered include lay and ecclesiastical patronage and its effects; the use of monuments for teaching and for religious conversion, and the potential significance of their location.
**Inclined Plane is on the up (Matthew Bea mish)**

From 2006 to 2008, ULAS has worked closely with British Waterways at Foxton Inclined Plane during improvement works. The inclined plane and associated constructions such as the bottom basin dock, and upper arm with stop lock have been transformed, and are well worth a visit or revisit by anyone with an interest in the county’s industrial landscape.

In the early 19th century flights of narrow beam (7') locks at Foxton, Leicestershire and Watford, Northamptonshire (some 10 miles southwest) effectively joined waterways running north to the cities of the East Midlands with those from the South Midlands and South East. At Foxton, 10 locks in two staircases each of five locks rose 23m from bottom to top level, and it took a single boat 45 minutes to pass through. Competition from the railways increased the pressure to operate wide-beam boats (12'-14') which led in places to the widening of many locks to 14', and the opening of Foxton Inclined Plane in 1900. As the flight of locks at Watford remained narrow, traffic in wide-beam boats never materialised, although the advent of motorised narrow boats as steamers and subsequently with diesel engines in the late 19th/early 20th century, and the ability of carriers to operate boats in pairs (a motor and butty) rather than singly as horse-boats, did mean that pairs of boats could ascend and descend at Foxton simultaneously, with a greatly improved time of just 8 minutes.

The Inclined Plane was closed by 1911, although it was not until the late 1920s that major phases of demolition occurred. The land has seen little development throughout the 20th century which has resulted in good preservation of some structures, although in some areas damage has resulted from regenerated woodland (which until recently covered the lower half of both inclines), the slipping of the incline bank and subsidence of retaining walls (the plane is effectively half cut, and half fill) and also by piecemeal robbing of material from the inclines, and small scale development in the bottom basin.

Since 2006, a multi-million pound project backed by the Heritage Lottery Fund has seen large-scale work including the restoration of the stop lock, and the re-watering of the upper arm it served (which necessitated the piling of its banks); the careful restoration of the bottom basin walkway and dock, along with major and minor repairs to the revetment walls of the bottom basin; the clearance of trees, vegetation, accumulated soils and dumps from the lower half of both inclines and the re-exposure of concrete and brick aprons with associated silt traps at the foot of both inclines.
As the Inclined Plane has been a Scheduled Monument since 1973, any work has required Scheduled Monument Consent. This consent has required archaeologists to supervise work (the point of ULAS’ involvement in the project), to record exposed structures and deposits, and report on their findings. The watching brief has served to increase our knowledge of the inclined plane, and ensure that there has been minimal further damage to the monument throughout all phases of development work, and that elements of reconstruction have been in accordance with those required by English Heritage.

Information not evident from previous research has included evidence of construction materials, techniques and designs in all areas, specifically relating to towpath surfacing (a vivid red burnt shale); the design of the bottom basin walkway as an integral part of the incline mechanism (and not simply an add-on); the meticulous construction of the stop lock; and the exposure of drainage systems at the sides and bottom of the inclines. Although documentation of the monument’s construction is elusive, an excellent set of photographs taken during stages of construction and use have survived, and these have provided good collateral for the evidence discovered. Work on site has been directed by Gerwyn Richards, and the Project managed by Matthew Beamish. We would like to thank Peter Chowns and Howard Wilcox of British Waterways for their help.
Leicester Abbey (Andy Hyam, Steve Baker, Terri Davies)

The 9th season at Leicester Abbey organised as a field course for students at the University of Leicester focussed on the alleged guest hall suggested by Bedingfield during his excavations in the 1930s. At times the trenches resembled a scene from the building of the pyramids with 40 plus students during the first week! Five trenches were opened all of which proved to be more fruitful than expected with plenty of unexpected masonry appearing where none had previously been recorded. The outcome of the dig was that we are now reasonably sure that the guest hall, with a possible bay window, was at first floor level with covered walkways and small subdivided rooms beneath. Across the eastern end of the east to west hall was a smaller cross-wing room with a brick hearth at one end. At a later stage in the history of the guest hall the southern side was remodelled and a nicely preserved garderobe was inserted. Running alongside the garderobe, in another covered walkway, was a large lead pipe which may have served an as yet unknown building south of our trenches. Further north there was evidence that this pipe had been laid down the centre of the guest hall walkway and had subsequently been robbed during the Dissolution (or disillusionment as a student reported). A small trench in the cloister revealed a complete section of medieval floor tiles surviving in-situ. Elsewhere numerous floor levels and occupation layers were observed showing that the abbey still has plenty of secrets to give up.

Brooksby Quarry (Wayne Jarvis, Greg Jones)

Quartzite Lower Palaeolithic implements (nine to date including retouched flake and choppers) have been located in the rejects pile. These include the first finds of this type from Leicestershire, and date from 500-700,000 years ago. As a PPG16 project, with a brief specifying that the rejects are searched, this has proven the worth of this technique. This is a really exciting development, as we have previously observed preserved organic waterlogged material in the quarry of a similar date to these finds. Now, we are hoping for in-situ artefacts with more of this material, in which case the site will be of national significance. We will soon be getting a full GPS survey up and running for the site, with which we will be able to model the line of the ancient Bytham River, from the sands and gravels of which these artefacts are being recovered.

Leicester, Oxford Street, (Steve Jones)

Following a long and patient wait for water and electric services to be diverted the remaining area was machined and excavation east of the PACE was finally undertaken. Due to a very tight mid-July contractual deadline for completion of pre-arranged piling, De Montfort University agreed to fund overtime and weekend work for us to get the archaeology dealt with. Fortunately, no burials or excessively complex stratigraphy was revealed and thanks to the hard work put in by the 15 plus strong ULAS team we completed everything on time.

The Roman road surface which formed the Roman road to Tripontium was clearly visible and an east-west crossroad was also evident, possibly linking up with a suggested road at the south end of Lynden Cooper’s excavations at the Elfred Thomas building in Newgate Street to the east. The road-side ditches on both sides of the roads were visible, with at least two recuts. Early pot was retrieved from the fills – probably 2nd century. A number of post holes and post pads which post-dated the ditch fill were revealed to the centre and north west of the exposed area. A surface, wall beam-slot and a number of stake holes were also evident suggesting phases of Roman structural occupation in this vicinity.

Further evidence of medieval occupation was marked by more pitting. Two cess pits, one stone lined, one wood lined were revealed. The latter was also lined with clay and contained two well-preserved leather shoes and some interesting environmental material, including cherry stones. Another c.5m deep cess pit was also exposed in section during the machining for the new basement. This appeared to be associated with a communal pit, similar to the other
More ULAS projects

previously exposed large pit to the north, whereas the smaller wood and timber-lined pits can be associated with possibly more private usage, suggesting a differentiation of status. A clear equidistant line of post-holes was visible some 2 metres from the east-west beam slot and wall boundary previously exposed in the centre of the area, with pitting respecting this boundary. The fills contained early medieval pot – so some phasing of medieval occupation should come apparent in post-exavation analysis.

The medieval phase was also marked by the discovery of a ditch and road surface just east of the Roman road, marking the medieval line of Oxford Street. This alignment was clearly shifted further east after the civil war when the road came to respect the defensive ditch, cut by post-medieval stone, and latterly Victorian brick-lined cellars.

For more reports on current and recent ULAS projects visit:
www.le.ac.uk/ulas

Late Iron Age, Roman and Medieval Discoveries at Bath Lane, Leicester (Dr. Roger Kipling)

Excavations by ULAS during the latter half of 2007, on the site of the Merlin Dye Works between Bath Lane and the River Soar, revealed important new evidence for late Iron Age and Roman Leicester as well as medieval activity within and without the Blackfriars precinct. In addition, a last-minute discovery revealed, for the first time in Leicester, Upper Palaeolithic flint blades dating to the end of the last Ice Age.

The location and potential status of the late Iron Age settlement of Ratae has previously been recognised during earlier excavations in Bath Lane, St Nicholas Circle and on the Jewry Wall site itself, but the present work has revealed more substantial evidence both for coin production and the importation of wheel-thrown pottery from the Continent in the first half of the first century AD. The evidence for coin production comprises large numbers of ceramic ‘flan tray’ fragments, used to melt metals into cylindrical pellets of fixed weight, the three different indentation sizes indicating pellets intended for coins of different denominations. The shallow gulley into which these fragments were dumped, flanked a cambered gravel bank, and to the west was a shallow ditch, which may have formed the boundary of the late Iron Age settlement. The findings suggest that Ratae, alongside Old Sleaford which has produced similar coin production evidence, was an important centre of the Corieltaivi tribe.

In the later first century AD the site was cleared and a number of timber buildings with clay floors were erected. These structures were replaced shortly afterwards with a substantial masonry building which extended beyond the limits of the excavation area; its construction requiring ground stabilisation on the riverward side. The rectangular building with adjoining apses on the west and south sides, the latter with a hypocaust heating system, is almost identical in dimensions to the southern hot room of the Jewry Wall baths, and has led to speculation that it was an earlier site for the public baths. The building was flanked to the east and north by a corridor or colonnade opening on to further rooms and a courtyard respectively. The building appears to have been demolished in the later second century AD in order to make way for the construction of the earth and timber town defences, the course of which was traced running north-south through the excavation parallel with the river. In the later third century the timber palisade was replaced by a masonry wall, a six metre length of which was preserved in situ.

During the medieval period a substantial wall, preserved to a height of 1.5m, was constructed across the line of the Roman defences; historic map evidence suggesting that it is the southern boundary of the medieval Blackfriars monastic
precinct, which occupied the north-western corner of the medieval town. Inside the precinct lay a large rectangular masonry structure, measuring c.9.50m by 5m, which appears to have been of Roman date but was reused as a cesspit in the medieval period, and may confirm a reference in the borough records to a transfer of land from the Blackfriars monastic community to the corporation for the construction of a communal toilet in 1342/3. Outside the precinct, to the south, a plot of land called the Water Laggs, which was owned by the Austin Friary on the opposite side of the river, became the site of fellmongering, the treatment of animal skins, which was documented as continuing on the site into the 18th century. The evidence comprised a series of granite-lined tanks standing in a cobbled yard and containing degraded lime associated with the fellmongering process. The yard surface became overlain with a thick accumulation of organically rich material containing considerable quantities of animal bone, including butchery waste. A slightly fuller summary of these excavations will appear in this year’s Transactions in November.
News from the library

Members interested in historic buildings and their conservation and restoration will be pleased to hear of the kind donation by Patrick Boylan of some 40 volumes published from the 1990s onwards by Historic Scotland. The Society is grateful to him for his generous thought. The books consist of a number of series: Guides for Practitioners, Research Reports and Technical Advice Notes. Sample titles include Conservation of Historic Graveyards, Conservation of Plasterwork, Stone Cleaning. Please ask to see these at the Guildhall.

Books and pamphlets: titles old and new recently added to stock:

Archaeology of Barrow-upon-Soar (2008)
AUCOTT, S. Women of courage, vision and talent: lives in Leicester 1780-1925. 2008 (see Newsletter 77 p3)
Bottesford Local History Trail. 2007
BUCHANAN, B. and HULME, G. St. Mark’s Church Leicester. 1996
DEEDES, C., STOCKS, J.E. & J.L. Old Town Library of Leicester …. 1919
FORTEY, N. Exploring the geology of the Bottesford area (2007) includes walk around village
GARDNER, A. and BATES, C. People and places: a very short history of Barrow upon Soar with pictures and poems. 2008
HARTLEY, R. Medieval earthworks of S.W. Leicestershire: Hinckley and Bosworth. 2008 (volume dedicated to James Pickering (1915-2004) and includes an appreciation) – see page 8
HONEYBONE, M. Wicked practise and sorcery: the Belvoir witchcraft case of 1619. 2008 (see Newsletter 77 p14)
The LACEMAKER’S story: Loughborough, Luddites and long journeys. 2007
LICESTER VILLAGE HISTORY GROUP Walk around Langham in Rutland (2008)
LEICESTER MEDICAL SOCIETY Bicentenary Book. 2000
PARISH Church of St. Paul Leicester 1871-1971
SHIPMAN, E. Gleanings about the Church of St. Mary the Virgin Bottesford. 1995
SPAB Report 2007
WESSEL, C. The Knights Hospitaller of St. John and their history in Leicestershire. 1999
WESSEL, C. 125 years of charity organisations: LCOS to Leicester Charity Link. 2002
WESSEL, C. The parish pump: a history of water in Desford. 1997

Periodicals: latest issues of these titles have been received.

A few specific articles are noted.

Ancient Monuments Society Transactions
Archaeologia Cantiana
Ashby-de-la-Zouch Past and Present
Birmingham & Warwickshire Archaeological Society Transactions
Cambridge Antiquarian Society Proceedings
Cornerstone (S.P.A.B.)
Derbyshire Archaeological journal. 128 (Latter-Day Saints in S. Derbys. 1842-57; incl. N.W. Leics)
Ecclesiology Today 5/2007 (devoted to R.C. churches)
Donated by Ian Stevens
English Place-Name Society Journal 39 (obit. of Harold Fox, Leicester University)
Essex Archaeology and History
Hinckley Historian. Donated by Phillip Lindley
Historical Research 2/2008 (Chief Officers and professional identities: the case of fire services in English municipal government c1870-1938 (incl. Leicester))
Lincolnshire History and Archaeology
Research News (English Heritage) Spr. 2008 (Local history, family history and the Victoria County History: new directions for the 21st century; “The Last Night of the Proms” in historical perspective)
Staffordshire Archaeological and Historical Society Transactions
Staffordshire Studies

A new book reviewed in Refer; Journal of the Information Services Group of CILIP may be of interest:

Comments from the review: massive compilation begun in 1970s, includes scholarly and popular books and articles, main topographical section of almost 600 pages, up to date as possible with appendix listing 2007 publications, index of authors, places. Recommended.

Please note that the Library will not be open on 21 September and 19 October.

Also a reminder that the Guildhall is closed in December and January

Finally, a personal note. Many will know that my professional job has been with Leicestershire County Council. The Environment and Heritage section has deleted the post of Local Studies Librarian and so I have been made redundant from the Record Office for Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland. I can therefore no longer be contacted there. In future please contact me at the Guildhall by post or by email on:
aubreystevenson@hotmail.co.uk
Aubrey Stevenson
Honorary Librarian
Thursday 9th October 2008
Grace Dieu Priory, Leicestershire
Conservation & Archaeology,
Ernie Miller
Local Historian and Archaeologist

"The ivied ruins of forlorn Grace Dieu". Words written by William Wordsworth whilst staying at Coleorton Hall in the early part of the 19th century, in 1995 the same words still applied. By 2006, thanks to the Heritage Lottery Fund and other donors the ivy had gone and the ruins consolidated. With this came an opportunity to answer a few questions by excavation.

Thursday 23rd October 2008
12th Century Manor to 19th Century Farm: Excavations on the site of the former Space Foods Factory, Wymondham
Alex Pickstone
Project Officer, Oxford Archaeology East

The excavation of the old Space Food factory site, Wymondham was carried out in the summer 2007 by CAM ARC, the Cambridgehire County Council Archaeological Field Unit (now Oxford Archaeology East). A large manorial building with very good levels of preservation was discovered dating from the 12th century and is thought to have been in use up to the 18th to 19th century as a farm house. Post-excavation analysis is currently in progress!

Thursday 6th November 2008
Passing Muster: the Leicestershire Militia and its records
Robin Jenkins
Keeper (Collections) Record Office for Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland.

This talk tells the story of our local part-time soldiers, from Anglo-Saxon times to the call-up of 'militiamen' in 1939. A story more of bureaucracy than battles. Few organisations have generated so much paper - from which we can piece together a fascinating story. Chosen by ballot if too few volunteered, militia service was compulsory long before conscription in 1916. At times of national emergency the militia could be embodied and might remain under arms for years on end. The Leicestershire Militia garrisoned coastal fortresses, guarded prisoners of war, and served against Jacobites and even Quakers! Though intended solely for home defence, the militia even saw active service abroad - in Ireland and South Africa."

Thursday 20th November 2009
Annual General Meeting at the Guildhall, Leicester

Thursday 11th December 2008
John Flower: Topographical Studies in Leicester and Leicestershire
Neil Finn
Project Officer, University of Leicester Archaeological Services

A collection of over 200 topographical sketches and watercolours by the Leicester artist John Flower (1793-1861), held at the Record Office for Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland, has recently been catalogued. Spanning almost half a century, these illustrate Flower’s wide-ranging interest in local subject matter, from the urban streetscapes and ancient monuments for which he is well known, to the less familiar village scenes, country house landscapes, rural churches and contemporary buildings. Some of the themes that run through this and other collections of Flower’s artwork are considered and the opportunity is taken to present some of his less familiar pictures.

Thursday 8th January 2009
Time Team and the Stonton Wyville survey
Peter Liddle
Community archaeologist
Leicestershire County Council

The Stonton Wyville Fieldwalking Survey started in 1995 with an English Heritage grant. It then became the training project for new members of the Fieldwork Group. In 2007 Time Team came to Leicestershire in search of an Anglo-Saxon site – something that they had never successfully found before. The survey had revealed the biggest scatter of Anglo-Saxon pottery ever found in Leicestershire and we guaranteed them that they would find their site. Thankfully, we were right and, as a bonus, a very nice Iron Age and early Roman site as well.

The talk will go behind the scenes at Time Team to show how a programme is made and will put the finds into the context of the archaeology of Leicestershire.

Thursday 22nd January 2009
First Farmers Revisited: changing perceptions of the Neolithic and Bronze Age of Leicestershire and Rutland
Patrick Clay
Director of University of Leicester Archaeological Services

This talk will look at how our understanding of the Neolithic and Bronze Age of the county has changed in the last 30 years since the excavation of the Sproxton round barrow. From a county dismissed as having little Neolithic and Bronze Age settlement (with only one known sherd of Neolithic pottery!) it is now clear that it was extensively if not intensively settled from around 4000BC onwards. Finds from the Swift valley, Husbands Bosworth, Rothley and Lockington will be focussed on which have shown it to be a significant area with great research potential.

Thursday 12th February 2009
Presidential Address

New directions in the study of Anglo-Saxon sculpture with special reference to the East Midlands
Professor Rosemary Cramp
(for details see page 9)

Thursday 26th February 2009
Thirty years of investigating Leicester’s Victorian and Edwardian buildings
Rowan Roenisch
Architectural historian and conservation adviser

‘Towns are centres of sociability, places where the minds and where the eyes are enlivened by a townscape that encapsulates in building the history of our society. Most of the towns that have acquired new centres in the postwar years have lost their old hearts and received in return transplants of vacuity.’ [Colin Amery and Dan Cruikshank, Rape of Britain 1975]. The lecture will raise the question of whether the local group of the Victorian Society has made a contribution to Leicester’s sense of identity.
Researchers from University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) have recently completed work on the results of three closely related Bronze Age round barrows excavated at Cossington, Leicestershire.

The findings have been published in Monument, Memory, and Myth, by University of Leicester archaeologist John Thomas, offering an important addition to understanding how burial monuments were used, not only by the people who built them in the Bronze Age, but also by later generations living close to the monuments.

The three barrows form part of a small cemetery located at the confluence of the Rivers Soar and Wreake. This may have been an important location where Bronze Age people met up at certain times of the year to trade, foster relationships, forge alliances and swap stories. The formation of the cemetery is likely to have been due to the importance of this part of the landscape to the people who lived in it.

John Thomas explained the significance of the finds: “The three barrows are likely to have been built as community projects, with different families pooling resources to create monuments for wider kinship use. Evidence for the careful maintenance and re-building of the barrows shows that they were not built for single use, but had a long history and were used and re-used many times. A cremation burial close to the child’s grave also had broken pieces of Beaker style pottery that must have been quite ancient even before they were placed in the grave so it is possible that these were also treated as a link to the past – almost as heirlooms or antiques – with ancestral connections. After their original period of use the three barrows continued to attract attention. A small cremation cemetery developed on the edge of one of the barrows, which probably represented the burial ground of a single family group. The location of the burials suggests that this family wished to be associated with the barrow and those buried in it.

The earthwork monument also became the focus for activity during much later periods. In the Iron Age a settlement grew nearby and the significance of the barrow is shown by a number of pots (perhaps once containing offerings) that were buried in the barrow mound. This practice continued into the Roman period when more whole pots were buried.

Finally the barrow mound became the setting for a small Anglo-Saxon cemetery. This association between Saxon burials and earlier monuments is a recognised phenomenon nationally but the first definite example from Leicestershire. No bone survived, but iron spears, knives, buckles and brooches indicated that at least five people had been buried there. A small settlement also existed nearby.

Thursday 12th March 2009
W Alan North Memorial Lecture
Eagles on the Euphrates: Life and death of the Roman garrison at Dura-Europos, Syria
Simon James
Reader in Archaeology
University of Leicester

Around AD 256, the Persians besieged Roman-held Dura-Europos on the Euphrates in Syria. The city was destroyed and abandoned, sealing remarkable archaeological treasures. Not the least of these pertained to the Roman garrison. Dura provides an example of an urban military base, common in the East but little known archaeologically, and very different from the ‘playing-card forts’ familiar in Britain. Here a garrison of legionaries and auxiliaries shared the city walls with locals and the descendants of the Macedonian soldier-colonists who founded the city. And here the garrison and the civil community perished, in a ferociously-contested siege which left some of the most remarkable evidence ever found of ancient warfare.

Thursday March 26
Members’ evening

Thursday 2nd April 2009
Churchyard Memorials: What do they tell us about the past?
Keith Snell
Professor of Rural and Cultural History
Centre for English Local History
University of Leicester

This lecture will examine changes in churchyard memorials between 1700 and 2000, considering their symbolism, theological content, and what they can tell us about shifts in morals, ideas about local belonging, and social history. There will be particular attention paid to memorials from Leicestershire.
Agenda for Annual General Meeting
20th November 2008

The 153rd Annual General Meeting of the Society will be held on Thursday 20th November 2008 at 7.30pm in the Guildhall, Leicester

AGENDA
[Please bring this agenda with you to the AGM]

1. Apologies
2. Minutes of the 152nd Annual General Meeting held on 22nd November 2007
3. Presentation of the 153rd Annual Report for 2007-2008 – The Chairman, Dr G. T. Rimmington
4. Adoption of the Annual Report
5. Presentation of the Accounts for the year 2007-2008 – Honorary Treasurer Mr M. H. Johnson
6. Adoption of the Accounts
7. Appointment of Auditors
8. Election of President. Professor Rosemary Cramp retires in May 2009 and the committee propose that our Vice-President Squire G de Lisle be elected President for 2009-2012
9. Election of Vice-Presidents
10. Election of Officers
11. Election of Committee
12. Honorary Secretary
13. Any other business (to be communicated to the Honorary Secretary by 1st November 2008).

Officers of the Society 2007-8

Honorary Treasurer
Mr M. H. Johnson

Honorary Secretary
Dr A. D. McWhirr

Honorary Librarian
Mr A. W. Stevenson

Honorary Membership Sec
Mr G. Clark-Monks

Honorary Newsletter Sec
Mrs K. E. Gowland

Honorary Buildings Panel Sec
Mr D. H. Smith

Honorary Lecture Sec
Mrs S. Rutland

Honorary Minuting Secretary
Vacant

Honorary Editors Transactions
Ms J. Bourne

Honorary Editor Record Series
Dr G. Jones

Honorary Editor Leics Historian
Dr M. Page

Web Manager
Ms J. Lee

Mr R. J. Buckley

Honorary Editors Transactions
Ms J. Bourne

Honorary Editor Record Series
Dr G. Jones

Honorary Editor Leics Historian
Dr M. Page

Web Manager
Ms J. Lee

Mr R. J. Buckley

Vice-Presidents of the Society 2007-8

The High Sheriff of Leicestershire
Mr R. J. B. Keene

The Chairman of Leicestershire County Council
Mr O. D. Lucas

The Lord Mayor of Leicester
Mrs W. A. North

Mr R. A. Rutland

Mr L. Tharp

Dr K. M. Thompson

Dr D. L. Wykes

Members of the Committee 2007-8

Mr R. J. Buckley

Professor C. C. Dyer

Mr R. Jenkins

Professor M. Palmer

Dr G. T. Rimmington

Plus the officers

Mr R. Clark

Mr R. F. Hartley

Dr G. Jones

Mr D. Ramsey

Mrs C. M. Wessel
Minutes of the 152nd Annual General Meeting of the Society held at The Guildhall, Leicester, on 22nd November 2007

The Society’s president, Professor Rosemary Cramp, took the chair.

Thirty five members of the Society were present.

1. Apologies:
The Honorable Lady Ann Brooks, R. J. Buckley, K. A. Gowland, C. C. Dyer, M. H. Johnson

2. Minutes of the 151st Annual General Meeting held on 23rd November 2006
The Minutes of the meeting were approved as a correct record of that meeting and signed by the President.

3. The 152nd Annual Report for 2006-7
The chairman of the committee, Dr G. Rimington, presented the annual report on behalf of the committee. A full version of this report will appear in volume 82 of Transactions. On the proposal of Mr Duncan Lucas which was seconded by Professor Marilyn Palmer, the 152nd Annual Report was approved unanimously and adopted.

As the city council had moved their dates for meetings one now clashed with the Society’s AGM and as Mr Michael Johnson was speaking on two occasions that evening he offered his apologies to the Society in case he was unable to be present. In the event the Honorary Secretary presented a report on behalf of Mr Johnson and members were given accounts which had been scrutinised by Mr R. P. Scuplak. Mr Johnson pointed out that normal income was up slightly on the previous year due to increased sales of publications and that expenditure was inflated by two major publications produced during the year, the abbey volume and one on the history of the society. To offset the cost of these publications a sum has been transferred from the Willett fund thus producing a small surplus for the year. Dr McWhirr took members through the rest of the accounts produced by the Honorary Treasurer. It was proposed by Professor Patrick Boylan that the accounts be accepted and this was seconded by Mr Terry Cocks.

5. Honorary Scrutineer
It was proposed by Dr McWhirr and seconded by Dr Rimington that Mr R. P. Scuplak be invited to continue to serve as the Society’s scrutineer. This was unanimously approved by the meeting.

6. Election of President
Professor Marilyn Palmer proposed that Professor Rosemary Cramp be elected as president of the society. This was seconded by Mr Duncan Lucas and approved unanimously by the meeting.

7. Election of Vice-Presidents
It was proposed by the Honorary Secretary that the existing Vice-Presidents as listed on the agenda paper be elected en bloc. This was agreed on the proposal of Dr McWhirr and seconded by Mr M Calne.

8. Election of Officers
Three officers had decided not to seek re-election. They were, Mrs Sybil Rutland, Lecture Secretary, Mrs Kay Gowland, Newsletter Editor and Dr Jo Story, Joint Editor of Transactions. No names had been put forward for the first two vacancies, but it was proposed that Dr Graham Jones be appointed Joint Editor of Transactions. It was also proposed that Mr Richard Buckley be appointed Web Manager for the Society. A member has come forward expressing an interest in the post of Minuting Secretary and this was being followed up.

It was proposed by Mr Tony Squires that the existing officers as listed on the agenda paper with the changes announced at the meeting, be elected en bloc. This was seconded by Mr M. Calne and approved by the meeting.

9. Election of Committee
With the changes announced in the previous item it was agreed to elect the committee en bloc. This was proposed by Mr Alan White and seconded by Sir Timothy Brooks.

10. Honorary Secretary
Dr McWhirr thanked members for their support at the recently held History and Heritage Fair which was a great success and something upon which the Society wanted to build. He also referred to the most recent copy of the Newsletter which ran to 16 pages for the first time. The 2007 of the Leicestershire Historian was produced using a different printing technique to past editions and members had commented particularly upon the improved appearance. Mr Duncan Lucas interjected to say that it was not only the appearance which deserved praise, but also the content. The Honorary Secretary was asked to pass on these comments to Ms Joyce Lee the editor. Dr McWhirr also referred to the web site and the usefulness of the email list of members which now totalled 89 members.

11. Other Business
Two points were raised. A question was asked about the proposal by the committee to explore the production of an Historical Atlas for Leicestershire (and Rutland?). Dr Graham Jones explained to members that he was meeting with the publisher of other such atlases and the committee would be investigating the possibility of proceeding with the idea. Mr Squires asked whether colour was being considered for the inside pages of the Leicestershire Historian. Currently the cost of using colour was not within the budget for the Leicestershire Historian. If we could increase sales dramatically then the increased revenue might be sufficient to cover the cost of colour.

Following the formal part of the Annual Meeting the President and Honorary Secretary spoke about the VCH and gave details of the proposed trust being set up in order to produce further work for new volumes and other forms of publication.
Members of the Society are invited to:

St James the Greater, Leicester: a Torcello inspired design?

The building of the church between 1901-1914 and its later embellishment

A talk being given by Alan McWhirr

A fully illustrated account of the design and building of the church making use of slides of the original architect’s plans and early photographs. Also a chance to view some of the church’s archive.

Thursday 30th October 2008
in the church of St James the Greater
(Opposite Victoria Park, London Road, Leicester)

7.00 Coffee and chance to view the church archive
7.30 Illustrated talk followed by discussion, coffee and another chance to view archive

A tour of the church will take place on Saturday 1st November at 10.00am

Proceeds from the evening will go towards the accessibility project and so a minimum donation of £2 is requested

Do you have your copy of these two publications?

Members are entitled to a free copy of Leicester Abbey and they can also purchase a copy of the history of the Society for only £12. See our web site for an order form or contact the Honorary Secretary. You will find an order form on the Society’s web site.

Please pay your subscription by standing order and gift aid it

For latest news visit the Society’s web site at www.le.ac.uk/lahs

Vice-President appointed director of museum

The Trustees of the Foundling Museum are delighted to announce that Lars Tharp has accepted the position of Director of the Foundling Museum. Lars takes over from Rhian Harris who has cared for the outstanding collections of art, music, period interiors and social history archives belonging to the childcare charity Coram since 1995. She has overseen the creation and development of a museum that opened to the public in 2004 and which promotes the story of the Foundling Hospital, the many thousands of children it cared for and the philanthropic vision of artists led by William Hogarth and George Frideric Handel. Rhian will take over from Diane Lees as Director of the V&A Museum of Childhood in Bethnal Green in September.