JOHN NICHOLS 1815-2015
New book and Candlelit Banquet
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Welcome to the
Magazine
of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society

Richard on Richard

So many words, books and papers have been published since the remarkable Greyfriars Dig.

The challenge for the editor of this magazine was to find a different approach and to offer something new, and possibly an alternative to the analysis, the emotional comments and the academic theses of the past year.

So we are delighted that the Chairman of our Society, who was the lead archaeologist of the Greyfriars Excavations has agreed to talk to us candidly and informally, about his approach to events since the Greyfriars Dig was undertaken.

Decisions: How do you want your Magazine delivered?

The Society will be publishing the next issue of the Magazine in both digital and print formats.

This means that, if you choose so to do, you can receive this publication by email or downloaded from our websites, so that you can forward it by email to friends who may be interested in joining the LAHS.

Please look at our Digital Dimensions feature and send us your views.

A special occasion and two new publications

A candlelit banquet and a new book to mark the 200th anniversary of the completion of Nichols’ Leicestershire History - and, the first in a series, the publication of the Buckminster Town Record. Please make a note of the date and the details.
The Old Grammar School Unveiled

Restored using funding from the Market Harborough and the Bowdens Charity, the Old Grammar School in Market Harborough has been restored to its seventeenth century form.

The roof, opening windows and external plaster work have been replaced, and restoration work has been carried out on the bell turret and building timbers. None of the new timbers has been treated or painted. As they are seasoned oak, they will tone back to a grey colour in time.

The renovation work took ten months to complete at a cost of £400,000. The team undertaking the work constructed a weather-proof covering, to shield the structure from the weather during the work which was supervised by English Heritage.

The school was erected in 1614 and paid for by Robert Smyth, who was comptroller of the City of London.

Beaumanor Book Apologies

In our last issue, the editor inadvertently failed to attribute the brief review of England Needs You: The Story of Beaumanor, Y Station, written and published by Joan Nicholls.

The review originated on the Wartime Leicestershire website, created and edited by Clive Cartwright, who is a member of the LAHS, but was passed to this Magazine from another source. We take this opportunity to recommend www.wartimeleicestershire.com to all who have an interest, academic, professional or through family history research in the Second World War in Leicestershire.

Richard rides again

Members attending the 159th Annual General Meeting of the Society on 27 November 2014 enjoyed a fascinating presentation by Dominic Smee in the wake of the Channel 4 documentary King Richard Rides Again.

Dominic, a 27-year-old teacher from Tamworth, Staffordshire, has the same rare form of adolescent-onset scoliosis that Richard III was thought to have had resulting in spinal curvature of 75 degrees to the right and an S-shaped curvature of the ribs.

He took part in a series of challenges with experts, including a cavalry charge, to assess what the king might have been capable of when he went into battle at Bosworth in 1485.

‘Far from being a hunchback, he’d have looked pretty normal in a suit of armour. He’d just have had to have armour specially made,’ Dominic commented, having found that rather than hindering him, the armour provided support, strengthening his upper body.

Additionally, the medieval saddle, with its rigid construction and stiff back, provided additional support.
Kibworth Reprised: LAHS President Michael Wood and the Story of England

For his 2014 Presidential Lecture on Thursday 13 November 2014, Michael Wood took LAHS members behind the scenes of his ground-breaking 2010 television series based on the villages of Kibworth Beauchamp, Kibworth Harcourt and Smeeton Westerby.

Michael clearly has very fond memories of the project and the many characters he met whilst filming. Although his television canvas covers the world - his current project is based in China - he remembered with ease the many exciting, and enjoyable moments that were compiled into the *Story of England* series.

The structure of the series was based on a two-day community ‘dig’ involving some fifty test pits in gardens and on public land, yet until the moment that the volunteers began arriving for the first briefing, no-one in the production team knew whether the idea would work. Happily, the villagers of Kibworth, young and old, arrived with their shovels and wheelbarrows, in such numbers that there was a long queue outside the Grammar School Hall in Kibworth Beauchamp.

One of Michael’s many attributes as a professional television historian is his natural willingness to step back from the camera to give space to others. In the case of *Story of England*, the residents of Kibworth were allowed to take centre stage and to tell their story, which was then so expertly extended by the production team to be relevant to viewers across the country and overseas.

The series has certainly added to the broader academic understanding of the area, and has prompted a re-assessment of our previous interpretation of the development of the villages. All the research undertaken by the production team is available for future local researchers to consult.

For the people of the Kibworth settlements, the effect of *Story of England* was not that they felt any more important or significant but that their personal histories had been heard and treated with respect.

War Memorials Project launched

A project has been launched to mobilise a network of volunteers across England to carry out condition surveys of their local war memorials.

The War Memorial Project is part of a wider First World War project funded by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport and is a partnership between English Heritage, the Imperial War Museum, the War Memorials Trust and Civic Voice. Five million pounds has been set aside for the project.

English Heritage will receive £500,000 to provide better protection for war memorials by tripling the number of listed memorials and to deliver a larger pool of skilled and trained specialists to repair them. They will also develop an education toolkit for schools to encourage pupils to research their local memorials.

The Imperial War Museums will receive £500,000 to develop a website to help communities find out where information about war memorials can be found. By 2018 the site will have developed substantially, to create an authoritative, fully-searchable, and free to access, national register of all recorded First World War memorials in the UK.

The War Memorials Trust hopes to encourage volunteers from civic societies, local history and archaeology groups, parish councils and anyone else who is interested to get involved, with a view, if necessary, to then apply for grants for conservation work.

Volunteers will receive training and be encouraged to apply to have their memorials listed, carry out more research and perhaps apply for HLF grants for public engagement projects.

Workshops have been held in Birmingham, Winchester, Leeds, Gateshead, Liverpool and Harrow. Anyone who would like to attend others being organised for later in 2015 should register their interest in the project at www.civicvoice.org.uk. They will then be contacted directly about workshops taking place in their area.

The Kibworth community celebrating at the Coach and Horses after two days of digging and filming in July 2010. (Photo: Andrew Carpenter)
‘Ra Ra Ratae!’: digging in Leicestershire and Rutland 1945-1990

LAHS Officer Yolanda Courtney is planning to undertake an oral history project about digging in Leicestershire from World War Two until the beginnings of commercial archaeology and the advent of Channel Four's Time Team.

This will be published in print and online. She plans to cover professional and community archaeology and to carry the work out with advice from the East Midlands Oral History Archive. Yolanda will be contacting people soon with a view to requesting and setting up interviews. These will include questions about people’s earliest days digging in Leicestershire, involvement in Community Archaeology, and what has made Leicestershire's archaeology distinctive or pioneering.

Also people's experiences regarding how things were organised for visiting diggers, social life and relationships with mainstream popular culture especially in the 1960s/1970s will be covered if possible. Initially Yolanda will collect around fifteen stories and hopes that people will also lend her images to scan and include.

She will create a version for publication and will therefore seek permission to proceed from the interviewees. Yolanda would be happy to hear from anyone who has views and thoughts about this project by email at yolanda.courtney@ntlworld.com.

An early photographic record of diggers at work, in Leicester at the Jewry Wall site in 1936. Welles Street is on the left.

New history and heritage website for Loughborough

A new website has been launched which will focus on history and heritage activity in the Loughborough and Charnwood area.

The Loughborough History and Heritage Network is a collaborative project between Loughborough University, Charnwood Museum and the local community.

The Network signposts historical events, local heritage organisations, and publications about Loughborough and Charnwood. It intends to provide information on local history groups and events in the area as well as featuring articles and stories about Loughborough and Charnwood in the past.

The official launch took place at Loughborough University in December 2013, and the website can be viewed at www.lboro-history-heritage.org.uk.

Parish Councils 120th Anniversaries

Many parish councils in Leicestershire created by the 1894 Local Government Act will mark their 120th anniversary in 2015.

The Act rationalised the large number of bodies which had been created for a variety of activities such as public health, secular burials, water supply and drainage. It also finally removed secular duties from the ecclesiastical parish councils.

There are over two hundred parish councils and meetings in the county. Their records are potentially a rich source of material about village social history in the twentieth century.

Keeping in touch

After the end of the present season of Thursday evening talks, the Society can only keep in touch with you and advise you of events, news and details of the 2015/16 season if we have your up-to-date contact details. If you have an email address, please let us know. We promise only to message you about specific and relevant society events. You can also follow us on Twitter and Facebook. Our next mailing by post to members will be during the first week of September 2015.
Mary Annie Sloane A.R.E.
SHIRLEY AUCOTT

Mary Annie Sloane pursued many interests throughout her long life. In addition to her work as a fine artist, she was also a member of the Leicester Archaeological and Historical Society. Since writing an article about Mary for the 2013 edition of the Leicestershire Historian, SHIRLEY AUCOTT reports that surprising and exciting events have taken place.

You never know who is going to read your article and to my astonishment one of Mary's younger relatives did precisely that. He has been a member of LAHS since he was a young man, having been taken to meetings at the age of 10 by his grandmother, a first cousin of Mary. He does not live in the county but his brother does and communication between the two rapidly followed publication of the article. This resulted in the Leicestershire brother contacting me and several most enjoyable planning meetings have taken place, at which we were joined, on two occasions, by one of Mary's great nieces.

Mary's extended family had been keen for some time to have an exhibition of her work in Leicester and the article helped to rekindle that desire. To have an exhibition of her work has also been an ambition of mine since I first did some research about her many years ago. We are all agreed that her contribution to the Arts and Crafts Movement needs to be acknowledged and valued in Leicestershire, as well as further afield. Her watercolours and etchings of Leicester and Leicestershire scenes and its past trade of Framework Knitting are an important part of the county's heritage.

It is also important that Mary should be recognised as a pioneering woman who helped to forge a path for other women artists to follow at a time when their artistic talents were not always recognised, or valued.

After lengthy negotiations with New Walk Museum and Art Gallery, the long held wishes of Mary's extended family and myself are now to come to fruition in 2016, when from January to April there will be an exhibition of Mary's life and work held in Gallery Seven.

Who was Mary Sloane?

She was born in 1867 to a family living on the Welford Road in Leicester. Her father was a doctor at the Leicester Royal Infirmary.

Mary was educated at Belmont House School and studied at the Leicester School of Art, continuing in Bushey, Hertfordshire and then London.

Mary's friendship with May Morris, daughter of William Morris, brought her into contact with the Arts and Crafts movement. Mary exhibited her work at various galleries. Her picture of Aylestone Packhorse Bridge gained an award at the Paris Salon in 1903.

Among items owned by Mary Sloane and recently presented to the William Morris Society are ninety glass slides made from photographs of medieval jewellery, textiles and embroidery, and artefacts made by members of the Women's Guild of Arts together with images of the Morris family and their homes.

The WMS is hoping to digitise the slides and to use the images in a display, as well as making them available to researchers, to discover more about the role of women in the Arts and Crafts movement.

Readers who may hold any of Mary Sloane's paintings, etchings, or ephemera are invited to inform the author who can be contacted through the Editor.
Mathematicians have calculated you had only a minute chance of finding Richard III on the first day of your dig, but presumably your preliminary research gave you some guidance on where to dig?

It did to some extent. Whilst we knew where the Greyfriars precinct was from documents and maps, the big questions were how much of it remained undisturbed by later development and how were the friary buildings laid out? So a major part of the preliminary research was to look at the map evidence to see how much of the precinct had already been built over. This showed that New Street had been punched through the middle of it in the 18th century and buildings had also been constructed along the frontages of Friar Lane and St Martins. In the 19th century, another new street – Greyfriars – cut through the eastern side of the precinct and this new frontage was also built up.

So the initial research basically enabled us to home-in on three areas for potential investigation on the grounds that the archaeology might be relatively undisturbed: the private car park on the west side of New Street, the Social Services car park and the school playground.

As it turned out, the available areas were further reduced by other factors – the privately owned western car park was in commercial operation and could not therefore be trenched whilst there were buried live services in the Social Services car park and adjacent school playground.

The research didn't actually help us to decide precisely where to put the trenches as there are no records of the layout of the friary buildings. So a Ground Penetrating Radar survey was then undertaken in the hope that it would reveal building plans which we could then target. Unfortunately the results were not good, so the trench locations were really based on overlaying typical plans of friaries on the site, moving them around, flipping them north to south, so the church was either at the north or the south, and then deciding on the strategy. Ultimately, that really only left us with doing two north-south trenches with the idea of picking up the east-west walls of some of the friary buildings – hopefully buildings which would be identifiable. A third trench would then be held in reserve.

All of the later buildings and roads on the site meant that only about 17% of the Grey Friars precinct was potentially accessible for investigation, but taking into account the private car park, service trenches and the need to leave a safe margin between trenches and occupied buildings, probably only about 10% was available. Then of that 10%, we could only afford to do a very small amount – about 1% of the entire precinct.

So how did those restraints - on time and funding - influence how you approached the dig?

I think we had about three weeks with four archaeologists. In Philippa (Langley’s) wonderfully optimistic mind, we would dig the trenches, find the church, put the reserve trench over where the burial of Richard III was likely to be, dig the burial and then off we’d go.

But in my rather more pessimistic view, it would not go like that at all because as a professional archaeologist you’ve seen lots of sites and you know that if you have very high expectations they are likely to be dashed on the very first day.

So the plan was really to do it in a measured way, first opening the initial two trenches in the hope that we might be lucky enough to find evidence for the friary and if we were really really lucky we might actually get the church. We then had a third reserve trench which we could then locate to home-in on the church in the right sort of potential area for where the burial might be. But that was a big ‘if’.
How do you feel about the way in which television has portrayed archaeologists in recent years, highlighting their enthusiasm, instincts, and emotions?

Whilst I’d accept that there is perhaps some truth in the idea that we are easily excitable by some of our discoveries (I do love a good pit, ditch or robber trench!), I wouldn’t want people to think we were emotional about them because in order to do a good job, we need to maintain a professional detachment. For example, when you are excavating things like cemeteries, to an extent you have to dehumanise the process so it becomes more of a technical exercise, but undertaken with due care and decency, acknowledging the fact that each burial is a human being.

With every fieldwork project, excitement also has to be kept carefully under control so that the work proceeds in a measured way in the correct sequence, using each set of results to inform the strategy as you go along. You don’t necessarily stick to the strategy that you have sorted out at the beginning, but refine it all the time. In essence that’s what happened at Greyfriars, because as that first trench was successful in finding a recognisable building it then meant that it would help us interpret the following trenches and decide on the location of the final reserve trench.

Whilst television tends to concentrate on individuals, it is important to say that all archaeological projects are very much a team effort. So for example at Greyfriars, Deirdre O’Sullivan – an expert on urban fraries – was involved early on in discussions about the strategy and continued to advise throughout the project. On the ground, the field team included some very experienced and talented archaeologists: Leon Hunt (who also undertook the background research), Tony Gnanaratnam and Jon Coward, supplemented by other members of staff and volunteers, who were all ably led by Mathew Morris. Mathew did the most fantastic job both on site and on the analysis of the results afterwards, not to mention dealing with the many press interviews!

I think a successful project is very much about everyone coming together and discussing strategy at regular intervals – by ‘everyone’ I mean not just the archaeologists, but all stakeholders. So of course we also discussed it all with Philippa, without whose enthusiasm and determination the project would never have happened. She had ideas about what she wanted to do and may well have said ‘I think the burial will be here’ but could not explain why. This isn’t good enough for archaeologists whose strategy has to be informed by hard evidence. Having said that, she was happy to be guided and accepted that we were doing the archaeology.

All human remains are treated with the same respect, but there must have come a point when the exceptional status of the person you had found suddenly hit you and your team in that you were dealing with a former King of England?

Well yes. One question is whether that has really happened to me yet! On most sites, when you dig burials you don’t generally know who they are, and you will never know who they are. You will know that they were people living at a certain time, you might have an idea of what sort of status they were, but you won’t be able to put names to them.

What was particularly amazing about this project was seeing the burial in the ground whilst it was being excavated by Jo Appleby and Mathew Morris. In my mind, it was so patently obvious that it was him - Richard III - from the outset, but of course the task then was to prove it through scientific research.

Yes, seeing him in the ground was quite a poignant moment because whatever you think about the man, about what he believed and whether he was good or bad, here was a human being who had suffered a violent death with horrific injuries and was then buried in a sad-looking grave, too short for him. Yes, that was the moment for me when we first uncovered it.

At that point you couldn't share that experience with many people?

No. We had to be completely quiet. I remember I went for a drink with some friends that night and they asked me how things were going and I said ‘Oh yes. It's going OK’. I thought they were trying to wheedle it out of me but they didn’t manage it

The intense media coverage and also the quite bitter dispute that arose between York and Leicester must have been quite demanding on you and your colleagues at times?

Yes. We have obviously talked to the press over the years about Leicester sites on many occasions, usually only on a local level, and we would normally be doing well to get one or two interviews about a particular project, but Greyfriars was very different! We had a huge amount of interest at the beginning of the excavation but when we first announced at the Guildhall that we had probably found Richard III, we were absolutely overwhelmed by the press, and there really wasn’t time to take stock. It was exhausting – I remember I just had to go away for a few days afterwards to recover. The second press conference in February 2003 was even more intense.

On that day we were literally being passed from person to person and my last interview was for Channel 5 on site in total darkness. That seemed to be it, but then at
‘Seeing him in the ground was quite a poignant moment because whatever you think about the man ... it is something of a sad-looking grave, and to see this person in a grave that was too short for him. Yes, that was the moment for me, when we first uncovered it.’

about 8.30pm, Australia was awake and I had to do a live telephone interview at our kitchen table for ABC radio!

The dispute over the place of reinterment was also quite intense, leading to the preparation of witness statements for the Judicial Review hearing in the High Court. Much burning of midnight oil, but happily it paid off and the reinterment plan was upheld.

One of the success stories about this project for the University of Leicester has been that so many different areas of the university’s expertise have been able to contribute to the research?

Absolutely. The fact that it has been a truly multi-disciplinary project has been amazing. To an extent all archaeological projects draw upon the expertise of different specialists – as on the Highcross dig, where the team included specialists in such things as human bone, animal bone, plant remains, pottery, special finds and building materials - but usually it’s a bit more straightforward.

You don’t normally involve senior academics from other departments but in this case, yes, we had specialists from Archaeology (Dr Jo Appleby, human osteologist), Forensic Pathology (Profs Guy Rutty and Bruno Morgan), Engineering (Prof Sarah Ainsworth, a weapons specialist), Geology, Genetics (Dr Turi King who looked at the DNA), History, English and our Pro-Vice Chancellor Prof Kevin Schurer was also involved as a specialist genealogist. We also went out of the University where there was an expertise we needed that we didn’t have.

Medieval weapons specialist Bob Woosnam-Savage from the Royal Armouries became involved together with Dr Piers Morgan from Cambridge on the scoliosis and Prof Jane Evans and Dr Angela Lamb from the British Geological Survey who analysed the stable isotopes using new techniques that told us about the diet and health of Richard III. Prof Russ Harris of Loughborough University produced the amazing three-dimensional print of the skeleton using scans of the bones made at Leicester Royal Infirmary and at the University. So the project widened out considerably beyond the University.

Really, the task of the Project Manager is to look at what needs to be done, and then find where the expertise exists, and if you do it in house, so much the better, but if you can’t then you spread your wings a bit more.

We are good at anniversaries in this country, noting them and marking them. This discovery is a landmark in history, and you are part of it. You cannot not accept that now, and when the re-interment takes place, that is going to be a world event, isn’t it?

I guess it is. It is only just about sinking in. I suppose it was a historical event. The discovery itself, it’s amazing to be part of that. So much of what we do as archaeologists either as pure research or in connection with development is really important stuff and we have some fantastic sites, not least in Leicester itself, but rarely do these receive international attention. At the moment, for example, we’re trying to finish our publication of the Highcross excavations, and I am currently writing about a collapsed Roman wall which, although incredibly important, is perhaps not something that would capture everyone’s imagination!

What pleases me more than anything is that the discovery of Richard III has provided many people with a way into other aspects of archaeology and history, not only in Leicester but elsewhere, and the fact that people are talking about the Wars of the Roses, in pubs and in the street makes me feel I am really part of it.

That’s the true answer really. It’s all sort of happening and I am there.

After graduating from the University of Durham in 1979, Richard was a Field Officer with Leicestershire Archaeological Unit from 1980 to 1995 when he worked on the investigation of Leicester Castle Hall and John of Gaunt’s Cellar (1986), the Shires excavation (1988-89) and the Causeway Lane excavation (1991).

In 1995, he formed (with Patrick Clay), University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) where, as co-director, he manages archaeological fieldwork projects principally in the East Midlands, specialising in urban sites and historic buildings. He was consultant and project manager for the Highcross Leicester Project, which led to three major excavations with a budget of over £4million.
LAHS Springtime lectures at New Walk
The Society’s 2014-15 lecture season continues and concludes.

12 March 2015
The 26th W. Alan North Memorial Lecture
Temple, altars and religious change on the northern frontier: recent work at Maryport and Birdoswald
Tony Wilmott
(Senior Archaeologist, English Heritage)

2 April 2015
The Blackfriars Excavation, Bath Lane, Leicester
Adam Slater
(Project Officer, Wardell Armstrong)

23 April 2015
Leicestershire at War
Robin Jenkins,
(Senior Archivist (Collections), Record Office for Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland)

14 May 2015
Between the Monuments: Ongoing Fieldwork at the Neolithic Monument Complex of Avebury, Wiltshire
Dr. Mark Gillings
(Reader in Archaeology, School of Archaeology and Ancient History, University of Leicester)

All lectures take place in the Lord Mayor's Rooms of the New Walk Museum, beginning at 7.30pm. Please use the main entrance from New Walk.

There is a car park on site, and further free car parking on adjoining streets.

You are invited to partake in a cup of tea or coffee, and biscuits, after the lecture.

Non-members will be welcomed as guests of the Society, and will be invited to offer a donation or consider joining the Society.
A Candlelit Banquet to celebrate the anniversary of John Nichols’ Leicestershire History

To mark the 200th anniversary of the completion of John Nichols’ landmark *History and Antiquities of the County of Leicester*, the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society is holding an eighteenth century candlelit banquet with a three course dinner based on a menu served to the Nichols family at a feast at Gumley in 1819. A vegetarian menu is also available.

This special event will take place on Friday 15 May 2015 at the City Rooms in Hotel Street, Leicester from 7.00pm.

On arrival, guests will be served sparkling wine by a footman in eighteenth century costume and will be entertained by live music of Nichols’ time performed on period instruments by the Longslade Consort. There will be an after-dinner talk by Julian Pooley of the Nichols Archive Project, and the High Sheriff of Leicestershire will be in attendance.

7.00pm - Drinks Reception
7.45pm - Dinner (in upstairs ballroom)

Carriages at 10.30pm

Dress Code: Lounge Suit (or Smart/Casual).

The City Rooms was erected in 1792 and opened as the Leicester Assembly Rooms in 1800. It was used for the first time on 17 September 1800 to house the visitors to the Leicester Races held at Victoria Park. Nichols provides us with a detailed contemporary description of the building as well as an engraved plate. The ballroom is decorated with paintings by Ramsay Richard Reinagle. The figures in niches on the front of the building are by John Charles Felix Rossi, representing the comic and lyric muses. The architect was Leicester-born John Johnston (1732-1814). A biography of Johnson, written by the Prof Jack Simmons, was published in TLAHS Vol XXV (1949).

Bookings must be sent by post to:
LAHS NICHOLS DINNER, C/O ULAS, UNIVERSITY OF LEICESTER
UNIVERSITY ROAD, LEICESTER LE1 7RH
by Friday 17 April 2015.
PLEASE USE THE BOOKING FORM ENCLOSED, OR DOWNLOAD FROM
WWW.LAHS.ORG.UK
‘The front of the hotel, which name it bears, having been originally designed for that purpose, may, from the grandeur of its windows, its statute, basso relievo, and other decorations, be considered as the first modern architectural adornment of the town.’

John Nichols: The History and Antiquities of the County of Leicester Vol I Part II, p.533

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The front elevation of the Assembly Rooms in 1800 published by Nichols and engraved by Barak Longmate from an original engraving by John Walker. In 2008, the present owners were given the Leicester Civic Society’s award for Best Restoration.

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**MENU**

**On Arrival**
Sparkling wine

**Starter**
A roulade of fresh Salmon mousse, steamed and served with a champagne sauce, garnished with crayfish tail and served in an oyster shell.

**Starter (vegetarian option)**
Rosette of honeydew and watermelon with a pineapple fruit and mango coulis.

**Main Course**
Diced venison, braised with shallots in red wine and English root vegetables. Served in a pastry crown with mini suet dumplings.

**Main Course (vegetarian option)**
Mushroom and Stilton Wellington with a slight scented sage and onion gravy

**Dessert**
Glazed carved fruits on card in a sweet pastry

**Tea or Coffee**
Wine can be purchased by the bottle or by the glass

Please book your seats as soon as possible so that we can confirm the table and seating plan.

Whether you attend on your own, with your partner, family or friends, we can assure you of a very pleasant evening with good food and excellent company in a superb venue.

The address of the City Rooms is Hotel Street, Leicester LE1 5AW. The nearest car parking is the NCP car park at the Rutland Centre, off Rutland Street. The City Rooms offer a discount on parking charges on presentation of the ticket.
Celebrating Leicestershire’s own ‘magna carta’
A new publication from the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society

In the year that the country will be commemorating the 800th anniversary of Magna Carta, the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society will be celebrating the completion of the county’s great compendium of historical knowledge, the History and Antiquities of the County of Leicester, published by John Nichols between 1795 and 1815.

To mark this anniversary, the Society has published a major new book. Nichols’ History of Leicestershire: a bi-centenary celebration 2015 has been compiled and written by Caroline Wessel, an officer of the Society, with chapters by Julian Pooley FSA and Robin Jenkins.

There is every good reason to celebrate the bi-centenary of John Nichols’ remarkable History of Leicestershire (1795-1815), for its eight out-sized volumes of detailed and fascinating information have captivated historians of every type for two centuries.

With colour illustrations throughout, this publication explores the remarkable lives, talents and achievements of three generations of the Nichols family and the literary and antiquarian world of London and Leicestershire that they inhabited. Focussing on the extraordinary, extensive and varied contents of Nichols’ History, a veritable treasure trove of information is uncovered.

The book includes original watercolours, sketches and engravings from Nichols’ own personal copy of his History. It also utilises the Nichols Archive Project’s huge collection of letters and journals to shed light upon late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century life. The ‘User’s Guide’ and ‘Who’s Who’ chapters are invaluable tools for the Nichols reader, whilst contributions from present-day Leicestershire people with specialist expertise bring John Nichols’ concept of enlisting the local populace right up to date.

This highly readable book, with its evocative illustrations and gentle humour, is a must for historians and for all those who love Leicestershire.

‘It has many errors of course, but its vast assemblage of material, though uneven in its scholarship by today’s standards, was an indispensable tool for the searcher after the history of Middle England.

He (John Nichols) taught them, and us, where, and how, to look.’

Professor Michael Wood, President, LAHS

This limited edition is available from the Society’s exclusive distributor, Clarendon Books

All major credit and debit cards are accepted.

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John Nichols’ epic work, The History and Antiquities of the County of Leicestershire, was completed in 1815 when the final volume (on the town of Leicester) was published.

Two hundred years later, this vast compendium of Leicestershire’s history is still consulted, quoted and recognised as an important source for anyone researching the county’s past.
Joseph Cradock and Gumley Hall: Two engravings

STEPHEN ALLEN

An exchange of emails with a fellow collector and great admirer of the writings of Thomas Love Peacock, wherein he became intrigued by my suggestion of the influence of Gumley Hall on the author's early novels, led to his tip-off that there were two relevant modestly-priced engravings for sale on the Abebooks website.

Firstly, there was an engraving of the silhouette profile of Joseph Cradock. The description reads:

Joseph Cradock Esq. M.A., Senior Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries; Born 1741_2 ____ Died 1826. Gent. Mag. Jan 1817 Pl. II p 17, published Feb 1 1827 by J B Nichols, Parliament Street. 'Taken from the life by Miers & Field 11 Nov 1826 and Engraved by Audinet' can be discerned round the oval.

This engraving (below right) was published in the Gentleman's Magazine in January 1827. (It is incorrectly dated 1817 in the description) and subsequently as the frontispiece for Cradock's Literary and Miscellaneous Memoirs: Village memoirs in a series of letters; published by J. B. Nichols in 1828.

Freeman O'Donoghue's authoritative Catalogue of Engraved British Portraits preserved at the Department of Prints and Drawings in the British Museum vol 1 A–C, published in 1908, records only one such engraved portrait of Cradock (p 510).

Secondly, there was an engraving of Gumley Hall (reproduced above). The description reads:

GUM[B]LEY HALL
The seat of Joseph Cradock, Esq. Published by J THROSBY, Leicester, March 26th 1790, and sold by Wm Richardson, Strand.

Throsby Pinx (abbreviation for the Latin Pinxit, meaning 'he painted') can be discerned immediately below the left hand corner of the engraving, whilst on the right is, Walker Sculp (abbreviation for the Latin Sculpit meaning 'He engraved').

This engraving appeared as Plate XII (as engraved above the top right hand corner) opposite p 286 in John Throsby's Select Views in Leicestershire, from Original Drawings: Containing the seats of the Nobility and Gentry &c, published in 1790.

The view, with the spire of St Helen's Church to the right and the edge of the lake to the left of the Hall, is of the rear elevation in contrast to Barak Longmate's engraving dated 1796 and published by Nichols in The History and Antiquities of the County of Leicester.

EDITOR'S NOTE: The menu for the forthcoming Society Banquet is based on a menu served to the Nichols family at Gumley on 16 September 1819.
The Society has decided that Leicestershire should publish a Record Series, that is a series of books containing editions of historical documents of all periods.

Such a series is published in other counties by the county Archaeological Society, for example in Gloucestershire and Yorkshire. Most counties have their own independent Record Society or Historical Society, such as the Lincoln Record Society which will be known to Leicestershire historians because its publications of documents for the diocese include church records relating to Leicestershire. Over the years in each county the regular flow of volumes can build up to a formidable library of sources which are essential for local historians, and are used throughout the country and overseas. It is hard to understand how such a historically conscious county as Leicestershire missed out on the foundation of a society of this type in the last century, but now is the time to catch up! We hope in the future to see editions of such sources as tax records (the Hearth Tax is an obvious candidate), or the Religious Census for 1851, or court records from manors, quarter sessions or church courts.

Our first volume is an edition of two documents from Buckminster in the north-east of the county. They relate to one parish, but they are of much general interest because they show the routines of parish life which were followed in all parishes. Unfortunately these documents became redundant when the system of government changed, and many of these documents were lost or destroyed. In the case of Buckminster the parish preserved them, and then they were passed for safe keeping into the muniment room in the Buckminster Estate Office.

The records cover the period 1665-1813, and they provide a comprehensive answer to the question: 'How did the grass-roots of local government work, before the county councils and all the modern systems of administration?' In the case of Buckminster, like many others, the crucial body was the vestry, which met under the chairmanship of the vicar, and which operated through officers: churchwarden, overseer, constable and surveyor of the highways. As Buckminster was united with Sewstern, these offices were duplicated, but often the same man filled two of the jobs. They served for a year, and at the end of their term of office presented financial accounts. These were written into the Town Book (which covers the years 1665-1767) and the Constable's Book (for 1755-1813).

We can only marvel at the ability of the parish officials to carry out so many duties – in modern terms they were multi-tasking, and they had to work very hard. These were villagers, apparently literate, and competent to do some complex tasks. Their duties are recorded because of the costs involved. The vestry was much concerned with maintaining its income, which came mainly from a levy of 1d. per acre from the whole parish. There were also church lands to be rented. In administering the poor law they had to agree the terms under which the children of paupers were apprenticed, and they made various payments to the poor, including the organisation of a feast for the poor in August. They were charged with killing vermin, so a mole catcher was employed, and payments were made to those bringing in dead crows and foxes. The constable had a particularly difficult set of tasks, such as collecting taxes for the central government, including those ingenious eighteenth-century taxes on windows and servants. The constable had to attend the annual 'statute fair' held at a number of venues, which could be a scene of disorder.

The records of these payments are much more than an indication of the many functions of government. The Buckminster books are an insight into the social life and social attitudes of country people over more than a century. The society is grateful to Alan Fox for editing the volume, and Mark Page, the general editor of the series. We have further volumes in mind, but if there are any would-be editors reading this, please get in touch. The volume will be published in summer of 2015, at a cost of £15 for members of the Society, and £18 for non-members.
Digital Dimensions for the LAHS

The Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society is proud of its long and distinguished history of promoting the study of the history, archaeology, antiquities and architecture of Leicestershire, and which began when members undertook excursions in horse-drawn coaches, and before the GPO created Britain's telephone service.

However, in the twenty-first century we need to embrace the new technologies so that the Society can be run efficiently, and can manage its finances in order to give members best value for their subscriptions. We already use digital technology in many ways including the creation and printing of this Magazine, the handling of bookings for our special events, publicising our work to a wider (even worldwide) audience, and in communicating with the majority of our members.

Digital Technology saves money

Sending just one letter to our membership by Royal Mail Second Class post costs the society more than two hundred pounds.

However, we do realise that not all our members have regular access to the internet, and the society will therefore always ensure that those members will still hear about our special events through regular mailings.

The contact addresses and telephone numbers of key officers are always published in our mailings. However, if you do use email, and you have not advised us of your email address, we ask you to make contact so that we can keep in touch with you.

Digital Technology gives you access to the LAHS archives

Through our website at www.le.ac.uk/lahs, the Society provides an impressive resource of papers and articles relating to history and archaeology in Leicestershire in the form of the Society's Transactions, and previous issues of the Leicestershire Historian and the Magazine in digital form.

These can be downloaded, printed, and searched using keywords - a facility that previous generations of historians could only dream of.

The Magazine is going digital

From our next issue in early September, this Magazine will be available in a digital version as well as in printed form.

Members will be able receive each issue digitally in an email or downloaded from our websites. This will enable you to pass on the Magazine to friends by just forwarding an email. It's an easy and inexpensive way to recruit new members.

We will send out our next issue in digital form to those who have registered their email addresses with the Society. If you would be happy to receive the September 2015 Magazine by email only, please contact Matt Beamish, Membership Secretary.

The Leicestershire Historian and Membership Cards will still be sent in printed form to all members, and the Magazine in printed form to all members who have not indicated otherwise.

Facebook and Twitter help the LAHS

Last year, the Society appointed Ian Marshman as its first-ever Social Media Officer Marshman.

Ian maintains our online presence through Facebook and Twitter, regularly updating both with news of LAHS events, and passing on information about local historical activities.

Through social media, we connect not only to enthusiastic and interested individuals, but to many important organisations with similar aims. Social Media is enabling us to maintain relationships with these other organisations, societies and groups, and to inform a very wide audience of our own activities.

Why we use Eventbrite

Eventbrite is an online digital service which helps organisations to manage bookings for events.

We use Eventbrite because we need to handle bookings for our major events efficiently and without cost to the society. Eventbrite is an international service with a fine reputation, and which is totally secure. The only information that you will ever be asked for is your name and email address.

It provides us with many useful tools, such as alphabetical lists of attendees, the facility to send reminders by email to members, and to manage a waiting list if an event is over-subscribed. A major advantage is that it is a free service.
News from the Society’s Guildhall Library
AUBREY STEVENSON, HON LIBRARIAN

The Library reopened in February after the Guildhall's winter closure. It should be open as normal this year from 2.00pm until 4.00pm on the first and third Sundays of each month until the end of October. It will NOT be open on 5 April, being Easter Day.

Acquisitions continue in the form of books, pamphlets, periodicals and newsletters. The Society is grateful to those authors and publishers who are kind enough to donate copies of their publications. Those submitted for review in the Leicestershire Historian are subsequently added to the stock of the Library.

Additions since August 2014. All published in 2014 unless otherwise indicated.

BOOKS AND PAMPHLETS

ADAMSON, M. & MONCKTON, A. A taste of Roman Leicester: Roman food for events at Jewry Wall Museum, Leicester.


BUTT, S. Leicester in the 1950s: ten years that changed a city. Donated by the publisher. Our Hon. Secretary and Magazine Editor has been busy.


CRUTCHLEY, N. The Belvoir Street Chapel Leicester. Donated by the author.


GRiffiths, P. St. Peter's and Highfields: the history of a Leicester church and its community. Published by Kairos Press in association with the Church. £5 + £1.50 p. & p.(cheque payable to 'The Parish of the Presentation PCC') from Publications, 5 Southernhay Avenue, Leicester, LE2 3TU or order online at www.kairos-press.co.uk. Donated by the author.


Leicester & District Armaments Group of Engineering Employers An experiment in engineering co-operation 1915 -1918. Facsimile by Leicestershire Industrial History Society. This is a timely reprint of this scarce pamphlet first published in 1919. Donated by LIHS Chairman Chris Hossack.

May, J. & Horner, R. eds. World War 1 servicemen: Belgrave Cemetery.


Perry, I. Bringing them home: the story of the lost sons of Wymeswold. Wolds Historical Organisation, £12.95. Donated by the author.

Swift, A. The complete guide to the parish churches of Rutland. This is a companion volume to the author.
Library (n)
A place for books.
Late 14c from Anglo-French *librarie*

Old French *librarie* ‘A collection of books’ (14c)

From Latin *librarium* ‘a chest for books’

From *liber* ‘book, paper, parchment’

Originally ‘the inner bark of trees’

*leub(h)* ‘to strip, to peel’

Old English: *bochord*, literally ‘book hord.’

‘An original idea. That cannot be too hard. The library must be full of them.’
Nurse Edith Cavell honoured in Thrussington

Thrussington Parish Projects are honouring the centenary in 2015 of the execution in Brussels by the Germans of British Nurse Edith Cavell

The village has an important connection with Edith Cavell in the form of Thrussington's longest-serving vicar, the Revd Stirling Gahan, who attended and prayed with Edith Cavell just hours before she was shot at dawn. His report to the government about her courage greatly influenced the British public's mood.

A Heritage Lottery Fund grant has been awarded to Thrussington to renovate Revd Gahan's grave in the churchyard and to undertake projects to inform local young people about Cavell's supreme sacrifice.

Villagers and dignitaries will attend a special Service of Dedication on 12 October 2015, the anniversary of Nurse Cavell's death.

Hinckley historians mark Nichols Bi-centenary

The Hinckley and District Museum is mounting a small exhibition on John Nichols and his *History of Leicestershire*, at the Museum on Lower Bond Street, Hinckley, when the Museum re-opens at Easter for its 2015 season.

Hinckley has a close association with John Nichols as his second wife, Martha Green, came from the town. In addition, in 1782 Nichols wrote a History of Hinckley, much of which was later incorporated into his *History of Leicestershire*.

Julian Pooley, originator and Director of the international Nichols Archive Project, is giving a Nichols lecture in Hinckley on 15 October 2015 at Café Impressions in the Atkins Building (opposite the Hinckley Museum).

Battle of the Beams on DVD

The Charley Heritage Group, together with Terry Sheppard of Rothley, has produced a two-part programme on DVD of their research into the WW2 'Battle of the Beams'.

It tells the story of the secret and furious 'cat and dog' electronic war with Luftwaffe radio direction beams played out by young wireless mechanics in a field in the parish of Charley in Charnwood during WW2, and explains how British scientists came to discover the ingenious target-finding beams laid down by the Luftwaffe.

Many people were thrilled by Terry's mini-talks and Charley's display stands on this topic at the 2014 Beaumanor History Fair, so can now purchase the DVDs as a permanent record of this fascinating piece of WW2 local history. Contact the group on 01530 811149.

Great Central Railway on track to bridge the gap in 2015

The GCR is intending that 2015 will be the 'year of the bridge' when the bridge over the Midland Main Line north of Loughborough Central is re-constructed to create a single eighteen mile heritage railway.

Planning permission has been granted, a final design has been agreed, and over £700,000 has been raised.

The ground work has been completed, and a one million pound Government 'local growth fund' grant is available for the next phase of reunification works.

For the latest news, go to the GCR website at www.gcrailway.co.uk.

The Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society's Networks Project brings together the rich diversity of history, archaeology and heritage groups across Leicestershire. Currently, almost one hundred societies, projects, academic departments and individuals are taking part. A list of all participants and their contact details can be downloaded from the Society's main website at www.le.ac.uk/lahs. To join the Network or to provide amendments to existing details please contact Matthew Beamish by email at mgb3@le.ac.uk.
Kate Eliza North
1879-1930

In the last issue of the Magazine news that Leicester City Council was to refurbish the gates of Victoria Park, which were erected by Sir Jonathan North in memory of his wife, included the comment that ‘little is known [...] about the lady they were dedicated to’. The ensuing correspondence has prompted this brief article.

Lady North was born in London in 1856, the daughter of Mark and Sarah Trott of Taunton in Somerset. Mark was a master plumber. As kate Trott, she married Jonathan North, the son of a farmer from Rothley in Leicestershire, in 1879.

She led the normal life of the wife of an up-and-coming businessman and politician, but it was the outbreak of war that changed her life. Jonathan North, having refused the office of mayor twice, felt it was his duty to accept the position. It was said at that time that ‘if they had found the man to be Mayor, they had found the woman to be Mayoress’.

It was written that her presence, gracious personality and unswerving loyalty won and retained friendship wherever she could serve a good cause, and during her time as Mayoress there were no lack of these, but little did she expect that she would have to serve four long years. She was not in the best of health during these years but whatever she lacked on the physical side she more than made up for with her mental determination.

Both the Mayor and Mayoress felt deeply the pain of seeing young men go off to fight, and took it upon themselves to invite the wives and widows to receptions at the De Montfort Hall. Over two nights, 3000 attended.

The Mayoress not only spent her time in fundraising (and by July 1915 had raised over £1200 for a motor ambulance) but also, each morning, she went to the Mayor's rooms to preside over a working party of 150 ladies who gathered to sew, knit and mend garments for the troops and local hospitals. She also helped in setting up working parties throughout the city and provided them with material from the Mayoress equipment fund. It is said that by 1916 she had over 4000 workers in the city producing over 2000 garments each week and mending many more. This equipped all the local hospitals but was also linked to the War Office, and two bales a month were sent to the comfort pool at Havre.

This heavy toll in late 1915 had an effect on her fragile health and she was temporarily invalided, but soon returned. This only echoed the energy, physical stamina and mental strength that the women of England gave in supporting their fighting men.

Lady North also organised another committee to provide all visitors to the sick and wounded in hospitals with a free meal at the Park Pavilion, and drew up a list of householders in the Clarendon Park area who could offer lodgings to the visitors. She worked tirelessly in raising money for, among others, the War Hospital, the Memorial workshop, and also help to the Serbians, Russians and French who had arrived in the city.

Lady North's contribution can best be summed up by tributes paid to her when the Council re-elected Sir Jonathan as Mayor. In 1916 all political sides thanked the Mayoress for what she had done not only for the soldiers but also for the sick and wounded, and had justly earned her title ‘Leicester's Florence Nightingale’.

Again in 1917 when he was re-elected for a fourth year, the Mayoress was presented with a replica of the pendant attached to the Mayor's chain and a cheque for £35 which she gave to the equipment fund.

At the end of the war the good works of her husband were recognised by a knighthood and she became Lady North. She then returned to family life, as her husband remained in public service, no doubt she accompanied him on many occasions. She died in 1930.

On 9 June 1931 the gates at the entrance of Victoria Park and the Memorial Gardens were presented by Sir Jonathan North to the city as a tribute to the memory of Lady North, with the following words:

My family and I appreciate the opportunity given to us to make these beautiful gates a memorial to one of the best mothers, to a loving and devoted wife. She was always interested in any work that could be done for the good of our city. She served as Mayoress for four long, dark and depressing years of the war, and I might add, served with a personal zeal and devotion such as not only evoked admiration and affection but called others to work, women and children alike.’

The Continuum of St Martins

The officers of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society have agreed to support Leicester Cathedral’s King Richard III Appeal with a donation of £1000 from the Society's funds. In acknowledging the Society’s grant, the Dean of Leicester, the Very Revd David Monteith has written exclusively for the Magazine.

When I moved to Leicester in 2010 to work as Canon Chancellor at Leicester Cathedral that marked my third position in a church dedicated to St Martin of Tours.

My first being as part of the parish that included the Bullring in Birmingham with that St Martin’s being the ancient parish church of what originally was the village of Birmingham.

My second was the vibrant and contrasting ministry of the parish of St. Martin in the fields, Trafalgar Square. This church has become known for ministering to the extremes of rich and poor seen in our capital city. It is the Royal parish church and the church of the Admiralty and many of the offices of state as well as being the place known for ‘its ever open door’ since First World War soldiers sheltered there on their journeys through Charring Cross. Evidence both mythological and actual points to origins with the monks and others from Westminster Abbey who needed a place to pray on the edge of their Convent Garden (now Covent Garden) at a time when there were fields between their monastic foundation and their working environment.

A move to Leicester Cathedral, the Church of St Martin seemed to be part of a continuum that I have no control over and little could I ever have predicted the unfolding events under my nose in the last three years.

It seems to me that the recent discovery of King Richard III by the University of Leicester through the energetic endeavours of the ‘Looking for Richard Project’ has in a variety of ways drawn attention to our buried history. A number of people have been quietly working away at uncovering this history but for many and me included, Leicester was just a modern multi-cultural city with a significant industrial heritage. There was little awareness of much more than that. Yet at least now there is a growing perception that we have a medieval history and possibly more.

The current works in the cathedral are the first stage of a major re-ordering. The contemporary demands on our building are great and the space is constrained. Our building not only needs to be beautiful and speak clearly as a cathedral, it also has to be very flexible and work well as a public space from its prime function of worship to that of a concert venue, a lecture hall or a social space. The work which was done in the 1920’s to make the shift from the parish church of St Martin to the cathedral by Sir Charles Nicholson was partially successful and came after the Victorians had done a very fundamental remodeling of the space – even to the point of obscuring most of the medieval character. We have looked carefully at the archive and in particular see a tussle of ideas going on between MacNutt, the first Provost and the architect. Some of that resolved creatively, other parts less successfully.

Each generation makes their mark on these buildings and that is partly why they continue to survive and have a place in our community. So we have been careful to try and be respectful of Nicholson’s work by retaining his great wooden screen (now moved back to the east-erly side of the great tower piers). This is a real crossover piece in terms of artistic styles marking the shift from the neo-gothic into art nouveau with the clear influence of the Arts and Crafts movement. We have also retained two of the side screens with 8 of the canon’s chairs demarcating the new east end which becomes the Chapel of Christ the King.
Nicholson’s cathedra which has been at the east end of the building will now sit under the window in the north transept. It has largely been redundant as Bishops no longer sit far apart from the people but rather try to lead from within the congregation to coalesce and gather people together. A new very contemporary and striking cathedra will sit in the new sanctuary area with a square stone altar made from alabaster sitting under the tower. This stone has great resonance with Leicester. Henry VII commissioned the making of a tomb for Richard III from Nottingham alabaster. Alabaster is a form of Gypsum which was mined here in Leicester—hence Gipsy Lane with St Mary's Humberstone containing some very fine alabaster carvings. Alabaster has not been mined for over 50 years but we are managing to mine some from Derbyshire.

I can see already that these new interventions in the history of St Martins will not only propel us into the next phase with the king reburied in our midst. But his story and our response also propels us literally to dig deeper into our story. Through these works we discovered human remains lying at least 5 deep in the chancel as we created the place for the king's reburial. ULAS have been our advisors in association with Dr Philip Dixon, our cathedral archaeologist. These finds are as we expected but actually we did not know since we have do not have a complete archive. Stripping back some of the early 20th century interventions helps reveal more of the inherent qualities of our building – not least the character of the great arches of the tower space.

Our dedication to Martin of Tours fits well with Richard III since both of them were soldiers of significance and both people shaped by their faiths. Richard was not born to be king and Martin fiercely resisted his call to be a bishop. Richard perhaps was ahead of his time through his personal ownership of books and his determination to keep the flow of ideas moving across Europe alongside his commitments made through parliament to his subjects almost suggests a proto-Renaissance man. Martin was seen as a pioneer especially in his capacity to care for the vulnerable. Martin's story radically shaped Christianity in our islands with monks from Iona travelling to see the dead saint's body in the Loire and then they returned with the gospel book that had lain in the dead saint's hands. Martin's model of Christian community became the proto-type for the Celtic monasteries. Most of the oldest places of worship can trace roots to Martin. For example, a church dedicated to Martin was established in Canterbury long before St Augustine's mission. Our St Martin's built on what was Roman Leicester; indeed I believe there is evidence of a roman temple under the cathedral suggests that it was likely the site of a Saxon church. As we both physically and theologically dig deeper we are beginning to see these things afresh.

So we are making history – no one has reburied a Plantagenet king with this particular story. We are also uncovering history - deepening our sense of this place. Those of us who hold responsibility now are merely custodians and I as Dean find no way to escape that soldier-saint whose generosity of character and his conviction of faith seemed to reshape the world around him. That remains the call of the church of St Martin Leicester.

Leicester Cathedral continues to fund raise for the reinterment of King Richard III during the week of 22 March 2015. If you would like to support this extraordinary project please send your donation either by cheque (payable to Leicester Cathedral Charitable Trust to Claire Recordon, St Martins House, 7 Peacock Lane, Leicester LE1 5PZ) or via our online donation facility http://don8.to/LEIC001
Reports from ULAS
Recent work by University of Leicester Archaeological Services

Brooksby Quarry (Matt Beamish, Wayne Jarvis)

Two areas of burnt mound archaeology were recorded in the south of the quarry on low lying ground near to the Rearsby Brook, while on the ridge top to the north, Iron Age and Roman occupation and some funerary deposits were recorded.

The burnt mound deposits included spreads of fire cracked stone and a number of good sized pits all containing stones showing evidence of heat although little thermal fracture. The deposits lay adjacent to a small stream course that provided the water for the burnt stone process. Finds from these deposits were few and far between but included flint thumbnail scrapers with some bone and antler. Several later field boundaries, suspected to be of Iron Age date, cut through the stream after it had silted up.

Adjacent to the end of this trackway was a 2m diameter pit, with the upright rails of a suspected ladder showing. Excavation of the whole pit exposed a complete ladder, still in situ, and propped and tied to the side of the pit with wooden stakes and lashes made of blackthorn. Next to the ladder was a further support, a long pole-like branch with a Y-shaped end used to support and attach one of the rungs to.

The rails survived for lengths of 1.61-1.64m, and were made from oak. Three rungs of the ladder survived in situ, these being attached through the rails with mortise and tenon joints, and then the through-tenons further having dowel holes and pegs to secure them in place.

This technology finds only one parallel in other ancient ladders, from an example recovered during work at the Iron Age lake village at Glastonbury thought to be of Roman date.

The feature is apparently remote from settlement activity and perhaps therefore not a well, being instead associated with an unpleasant task such as retting (flax production). The pit produced only limited plant remains with no definitive evidence for its function, but samples taken from the pit may indicate the processes involved. A recent radiocarbon determination on timber from the ladder has indicated a 5th or early 6th century AD date for its use.

The ridge top deposits included on the northern boundary a much recut and probably relatively long-
lived enclosure co-axial to enclosure systems recorded by magnetometry and excluded from the quarrying area.

Along with some evidence of adjacent timber structures, several small pits containing dense deposits of calcined bone were recorded just outside of the enclosure, and are probably human cremation burials.

**Hallaton, St Morrell’s Chapel (Vicki Score)**

ULAS archaeologists have been working with local volunteers to uncover the lost chapel of St Morrell overlooking the small village of Hallaton in east Leicestershire. The Fourth year of excavations with the Hallaton Fieldwork Group (HFWG) has revealed the full plan of the chapel as well as the cemetery and evidence that the hillside has been used since at least the Roman period.

The location of the chapel was unknown before research by local historian John Morison suggested it might be on Hare Pie Bank where the annual Easter Hare Pie Scramble and Bottle Kicking take place. Geophysical survey by HFWG showed a square boundary (approximately 36m across) with features inside it. Subsequent excavations by ULAS and the group have uncovered the chapel thought to be a place of pilgrimage in the medieval period and a pilgrim badge with ‘Morrell’ inscribed on it was found within the walls of the chapel.

The excavations have identified the walls and tiled floor of the chapel as wells as fragments of stone masonry, wall plaster, tiles and lead from the windows. A number of silver pennies dating between the 12th – 16th centuries have also been found on the site indicating when the chapel was in use.

One of the most intriguing aspects of the site is the cemetery which lies on the north side. A total of 11 skeletons have been excavated (although there are likely to be more) all orientated east-west in the Christian tradition and radiocarbon dated to the 14th century.

One older male was killed by a sharp weapon such as a pole axe to the head (presumably in battle). Another young male was buried in a pit with his legs raised to his chest, possibly the result of a medical condition; analysis of his teeth suggest he had suffered trauma in his early childhood. Another man and women had been buried together in the same grave, placed side by side with their arms crossed together.

*Skeletons of a man and woman buried side by side with their arms crossed together.*

Why these people were buried here rather than in the main church in the village is unknown but it is possible that this was a special place of burial, perhaps specially reserved for pilgrims. Antiquarian William Burton mentions in 1641 that:

> ‘Halloughton…a place of special holiness (the etymon of the name importing as much as Holy-town) so as sick folks did use to flock thither to die.’

Alternatively, they might have been refused burial in the main church, perhaps because they were criminals, foreigners or sick and diseased.

Roman remains were also found beneath the chapel including a square ditch around the site which might suggest that the hilltop was originally the site of a Roman temple – especially as it lies only a few hundred meters away from the Iron Age shrine where thousands of coins and silver objects including a Roman cavalry helmet were ritually buried. This could mean that the hilltop has been used as a special place for over 2000 years. A recent open weekend to promote the excavations was hugely successful, with the local school
being given a tour of the excavations and several hundred people visiting over the course of the weekend.

**Leicester, Peacock Lane, St. Martins Cathedral (Tim Higgins & Mathew Morris)**

A watching brief was undertaken at St Martins Cathedral to monitor ground works associated with remodelling of the interior to construct an underfloor heating system and a sub-surface vault to receive the remains of King Richard III.

Excavations found a thin concrete layer below the modern floor in all areas with deeper deposits in the north aisle. Immediately beneath this was an earlier 19th century floor with dozens of ledger stones, each having to be lifted carefully. Beneath this a disturbed soil was removed where charnel pits, some disarticulated remains, brick-lined graves and three large brick vaults were revealed. All the disarticulated human bone was carefully collected to be later re-interred. All the brick-lined graves and vaults contain coffins. The top of some the brick-lined graves and vaults needed to be partially dismantled to accommodate the new underfloor heating, floors and sub-surface vault.

Fortunately all the burials located within the brick-lined graves and vaults were at a sufficient depth that none required exhumation and re-interment.

**Leicester, Peacock Lane, Cathedral Square (Tim Higgins)**

**Wyggeston’s Hospital**

Ground-works associated with redevelopment work in the St Martins Visitor Centre car park revealed the tops of various stone footings. The wall footings suggest a rectangular masonry structure running north to south and located directly adjacent to St Martins West pavement. It is likely that these are part of the footings Wyggeston’s Hospital complex and are believed to be part of the hospital’s alms-house and Master’s house. Additional truncated stone footings were also revealed further west. These footings were thought to be the north wall of a west wing structure.

Further stripping to the north, for new pavements and service trenches, revealed a probable well and brick pavement also believed to part of the hospital complex. The overall shallow depth of the various excavated services within the hospital complex generally only reached a layer of stone rubble. This layer was thought to be associated with the demolition of the hospital in the late 19th century. Only a potential internal clay and stone floor surface was partially exposed close to the east wall of the hospital during these works.

In the south-east corner of the car park a shallow service trench found no evidence or remains of Saint Ursula’s Chapel that once fronted on to Peacock Lane and would have adjoined the main hospital building. The overall shallow depth of the new services suggests that any remains of the chapel that may have survived were perhaps not reached on this occasion.

**Leicester, St Martins Cathedral Garden (Tim Higgins)**

Additional stripping and excavations for various ground-works for the new gardens continued within the former churchyard of St Martins. These excavations revealed a total of 19 brick-lined graves or vaults within former churchyard. Generally the tops of graves and vaults were found at a depth below the new formation levels for new pavement and lawns. However this had not occurred in every case and some the vaults did contain coffin burials that were above the new formation levels for pavements and services. These burials were exhumed and were later re-interred within the churchyard.

The various narrow subterranean lined burial chambers found within this churchyard are commonly classified as brick-lined graves (BLG). The true definition of a burial vault is stone or brick structure capable of housing a minimum of two coffins side by side with internal height of not less than 1.70m.

On this site only one found in the south east corner of the churchyard could be classified as a true vault. This structure measured 2m long, 1.30m wide and 2.6m deep and also had a vaulted brick roof and access steps. The brass plates found attached to some of the coffins suggests that these brick-lined graves and vaults dated
from the late 18th and early 19th centuries. Burials within brick-lined graves had been a popular mode of intramural burial during this period and were associated more closely with city and large town churches. It is thought that construction of brick-lined graves or vaults were attempts by affluent families to create their own private burial space in what were often over crowded town churchyards.

Market Harborough, Waterfield Close (Jen Browning; Steve Baker)

Excavations at Waterfield Place, Market Harborough, began in August and followed geophysical survey and an evaluation by ULAS in 2011, which revealed extensive Iron Age occupation. Open-area excavation produced evidence for a succession of oval and rectangular enclosures, some with associated buildings and indicating several phases of activity. At the north-eastern end of the site a shallow boundary, open on the east side, enclosed a rectangular post-built structure.

The more complex and inter-cutting archaeology was concentrated on the south-western side of the site and it looked as though this part of the settlement continued beneath the late 70s/early 80s housing that lies adjacent to the site.

A human burial was found in the top of one of the boundary ditches and a good assemblage of pottery and animal bone was also recovered. Preliminary examination of the pottery indicates that the settlement continued into the early Roman period, which is particularly interesting given the proximity of a suspected Roman small town, east of the site.

On the weekend of 13th/14th September, a number of volunteers from local societies came to see the site and help to excavate one of the roundhouses. This was supervised by ULAS staff Mireya Gonzales-Rodriguez and Roger Kipling.

Plan of the Iron Age features at Waterfield Place

This article has been compiled with thanks to John Thomas and the ULAS staff.
An 18th century candlelit banquet in celebration of the bi-centenary of John Nichols’ History and Antiquities of the County of Leicester

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