The W.Alan North Memorial Lecture 2016

Almost two hundred members and guests packed the Victorian Gallery of the New Walk Museum to enjoy an entertaining overview of the continuing archaeological investigations at Herculaneum, given by Professor Andrew Wallace-Hadrill as the 2016 W.Alan North Memorial Lecture.

The Society was delighted that Nigel North, whose father is commemorated in this annual lecture series, was able to attend the event.

The event was the twenty-eighth North lecture. The series was launched in 1989 and provide the funding for a major talk on a Roman archaeological or historical theme.

Anything Goes

Cole Porter’s famous song title is the underlying theme to a new initiative by Age UK Leicestershire which intends to address the problem of social isolation experienced by some older people who live on their own.

The Project Organiser, Nikky Miles is encouraging the setting up of social groups including local history discussions.

Talking about the past and looking at archive images of familiar locations and landmarks has been proven to be of immense help to those who are dealing with short-term memory loss and other issues.

Jewry Wall Museum Refurbishment

Sir Peter Soulsby has announced not only the purchase of the former Vaughan College from the University of Leicester but also a major refurbishment of the Jewry Wall Museum which will cost in the region of £1.5 million.

Both structures was designed by the distinguished architect JamesTrevor Dannett MA., Dip., Arch FRIBA, Hon FAIA, who has recently celebrated his 96th birthday. He created a challenging building within an equally challenging and sensitive location. It is hoped that Sir Trevor will be invited to the formal re-opening.
Kibworth mud wall to be rescued

A Grade 2 listed mud wall which formed the front wall of an eighteenth century cottage in Kibworth Beauchamp High Street is to be rescued from decay and potential collapse.

The wall is located at the front of land occupied by 70 High Street, and is described in its listing as ‘mud with rubble stone plinth and corrugated iron coping.’ The wall is about two metres high, eight metres in length and projects back to the rear of the site by about two metres.

The land on which the wall stands has passed through several owners in recent years, and has suffered from lack of maintenance. Several local residents had expressed concerns about the apparent decay, but an inspection commissioned by Kibworth Beauchamp Parish Council confirmed that the core of the wall was in reasonable condition, and that the plaster which had been crumbling was of a modern date.

The owner of the land and the property behind the wall has now agreed to repair the wall’s surface, which will involve removing the crumbling modern plaster and mortar. This will be undertaken by a locally-based heritage building expert.

The owner has also indicated an intention to sell the entire site for redevelopment, but is willing to negotiate with the Parish Council with a view to ensuring that the wall is maintained by the local community.

It is hoped that this familiar structure, opposite the village’s only supermarket, could form the nucleus of a new and exciting local heritage community project which could, subject to funding and planning approval, involve opening the blocked-up doorway and windows, rebuilding and re-thatching the roof, and using the small building as a local history and heritage centre.

Several photographs of the cottage, which was demolished in 1947, exist in local archives, and older residents of the village remember when it was occupied. It is significant historically, as an indicator of the extent of the expansion of the settlement of Kibworth Beauchamp from its centre (the former market place known as the ‘bank’ at the junction of High Street and Station Street) by the mid-eighteenth century.

The new space within the restored cottage could be used for displays reflecting the history of the village including its industrial past, with a space for demonstrating local crafts and industries such as framework knitting, which was extensive in the area.

By the nineteenth century, this cottage industry had become factory-based, boosted by the construction of the Midland Railway route from Leicester to London by which raw materials and the finished products could be transported easily. The Johnson and Barnes factory was built near to the cottage, and at the height of its prosperity employed more than four hundred local people.
Friars Mill: ULAS meets the Hairy Builder!

The restoration of the eighteenth century Friars Mill, now completed, coincided with archaeological research of a much earlier period in Leicester’s history. Leicester’s Bath Lane has been the focus of several redevelopment projects in recent years which have provided the opportunity for archaeological investigations to be carried out.

To discover archaeologists working on the same site was a gift for the independent television company filming the Friars Mill refurbishment for a programme in the BBC series *Hairy Builders* presented by ‘hairy biker’ Dave Myers. It enabled the programme to widen its focus and provide viewers with a broader context of the area in relation to Leicester’s history.

Consequently, ULAS director and LAHS Chairman Richard Buckley was interviewed, explaining that Bath Lane was somewhat ‘juicy’ in terms of the richness of the archaeology, and he was also filmed on location at the Jewry Wall.

Although rating relatively low in overall audience figures, the *Hairy Builders* series has been reaching about 400,000 viewers for each episode. The programmes present a positive and upbeat view of the restoration work and the towns and cities represented, which can only be to the benefit of Leicester and the work of those involved in the Friars Mill project and the archaeological work.

Known locally for many years as the Domisthorpe Mill, and built by the Donisthorpe Company in 1739, Friars Mill is Leicester’s oldest surviving factory building.

As the city’s dominance in textile manufacture developed, many of Leicester’s finest factory buildings were constructed in this area around Bath Lane.

Nikolaus Pevsner, in 1960, described Friars Mill as ‘a brick building of seven bays and three storeys, with a three-bay pediment and a pretty clock turret, still entirely Georgian in style.’

The complex closed in 2005 and suffered several years of neglect which led to decay and further damage to its structure. Then, in 2012, it was badly damaged by fire. The building was subsequently purchased by Leicester City Council for £550,000 and a major rebuilding and refurbishment plan was put in place costing £6.3 million which included nearly four million pounds of European funding.
Membership Matters

MATTHEW BEAMISH, MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY

Membership of the LAHS brings you:

FOUR publications every year - Transactions, the society's major annual reference work for Leicestershire. The Leicestershire Historian, presenting a wide range of articles, and two issues of our Magazine and Newsletter, in Spring and Autumn, keeping you in touch with all the society's news and events.

FREE admission to a full season of fascinating talks and lectures at the New Walk Museum, Leicester

ACCESS to the society's fine library in Leicester's Guildhall, a remarkable collection of resource and reference material

PRIORITY news by email, and access to talks, visits and events

FIND OUT more on our website at www.le.ac.uk/lahs

Society membership stands at 427, again, a year on year increase which reflects the continued benefits of membership and the excellent value that the subscription gives. Subscription rates remain unchanged at £20.00 Individual, £25.00 Family, and £6.00 Student.

The great majority of members have now paid their subs for 2016, but there are sixty or so members yet to pay which is a few more than in preceding years. I will have sent out reminders by email by the time you read this – thank you to those of you who have responded.

Some twenty members have yet to update Standing Orders which are still paying at the old rates which were increased as of May 2012. This is ten less than this time last year, so I am gradually making progress! I will continue to remind members by email and occasionally by letter if there are any arrears due.

You can appreciate that chasing members for outstanding subscriptions takes considerable time, and although the sums involved are generally small, they all add up. You will also appreciate that the cost of sending individual letters requesting these small amounts substantially reduces their value to the Society so contact by email has many advantages.

If you have not received any emails from me (mgb3@le.ac.uk), and you have an email address, do please let me know! If you do not have an email address then consider having one!

All subscriptions paid directly to the Society from members bank accounts are Standing Orders rather than Direct Debits: any increase has to be requested by you either by contacting your bank, or completing a new mandate form and returning it to me – I am unable to alter a Standing Order arrangement on your behalf.

Members can now make any payments to the Society by PayPal in addition to the existing methods. The email address for payments is payments@lahs.org.uk.

Although not essential, there are a number of members with the same surnames, and some of these with same initials too - quoting your membership number can help me not to make simple mistakes!

If you are unclear on the state of your subscription, please do just ask – email, write or call. I can give you up-to-date, accurate information by return of email.

I am continuing to reclaim Gift Aid claims from HMRC – this is giving a very useful boost to the Society’s income. If you cannot remember having made a recent Gift Aid Declaration and you are a UK tax payer, then please do make one in favour of the Society. It will increase the value of your subscription to LAHS by 20%.

If you are a higher rate tax payer, you can claim back the amount of tax paid on the subscription above the base rate.

If you have previously made a Declaration and your circumstances have changed (i.e. you no longer pay tax, or have started to pay tax) then please do contact me so I can adjust my records. If you cannot remember if you have or haven’t made a Declaration, then please do contact me and I will tell you. My database system is quite sophisticated, and the relevant information is quickly to hand.

Forms for Standing Orders, Address and Email updates, and Gift Aid Declarations can all be found as part of the Membership Form on our website – www.le.ac.uk/lahs.

Finally, thank you to those members who responded to my plea in my February note, to return any duplicate copies of Transactions 89 that you may have been sent in error. Ultimately, everyone due a copy received one although our library stock will be less than we would have wanted.
Lubbesthorpe, Lubbesthorpe Bridle Way (Donald Clark, Wayne Jarvis)

Two areas are being investigated where previous trial trenching has suggested some prehistoric activity. The first area (for the new Main Street) has now produced two urned cremations of probable middle Bronze Age date with further un-urned examples too. Additionally there is a group of roundhouses which appear to be of the same date.

The second area (for new ponds), adjacent to Beggars Lane, has revealed several possible enclosures, pits and post-built structures. Not much dating evidence but some of the features appear to be Neolithic-Bronze Age.

Lifting the urned cremations at Lubbesthorpe

Melton Mowbray, Leicester Road (Tim Higgins)

Just before Easter we undertook trial trench evaluation on a very large 22 hectare site located to the west of Melton on the Leicester Road. The site is located very close to Eye Kettleby Bronze Age Cremation and Anglo Saxon settlement excavations undertaken by ULAS in the mid 1990s – now the site of the Samworth Brothers sandwich factory.

Geophysical survey of the site revealed what was probably an extensive 7.5 hectare Iron Age settlement together with rectangular anomalies to the south. The subsequent evaluation confirmed the dating of the Iron Age settlement and also revealed a probable extensive Roman settlement associated with the rectangular anomalies.

Surprise discoveries from the evaluation were possible Bronze Age features in the north-east corner of the site, including a pit, gully and a potential buried soil that were sealed under a colluvium deposit. From the pit were sherds of rusticated Beaker, very like vessels found at Burrough Hill.

Enderby, Leicester Lane (Wayne Jarvis)

Excavation has started where an Iron Age settlement was found during trial trenching in 2011. The features that have been sample excavated so far are producing a good assemblage of finds, including what appears to be a comparatively large number of querns. The majority of the archaeology (so far) appears to be of an Iron-Age date, although only a little Scored Ware has been recovered.

The central area of the site consists of a D-shaped enclosure system, some 45m across. Within this are a series of post-hole and pit groups. To the north of this we have exposed four roundhouses. Beyond the roundhouses are further pits and post-holes. The roundhouses do look like structural circular wall-slot features rather than eaves drip gullies, and the relative absence of drainage features on the site in general is testament to the free draining nature of the subsoils here.

To the south-west of the D-shaped enclosure (but not apparently contemporary) is a larger roundhouse (14m in diameter), with a double circuit around its circumference, presumably a structural wall-slot and perhaps an eaves drip gully. It seems to be respected by a large ditch system running right across the site in an NE-SW alignment. This ditch system tracks to the south-west and is then, in one phase, replaced by a double post-hole and narrow linear feature, the latter possibly a palisade trench. Here, where stripping is still underway, we are again getting a denser cluster of features including another possible roundhouse.

A different phase of the NE-SW ditch shows it sweeping westwards in the south of the stripped area. To the west of this ditch system is a large 50m-diameter near-circular enclosure which we are still exposing.

Glenfield Park, Kirby Muxloe (John Thomas)

Four of the cauldrons found during the excavations in 2014 have been CT scanned by MOLA (Museum of London Archaeology) with excellent results. The scans appear to show four very similar-looking vessels, two deposited upright and two upside down. More scans to follow when we will hopefully get another look at the two originally discovered during the evaluation by Cotswold Archaeology.

CT scan of one of the cauldrons showing the iron rim & upper band, iron handles
Leicester, St Nicholas Circle, Jewry Wall (Gavin Speed and Richard Huxley)

As part of the major revamp of the Jewry Wall Museum, a new level access walkway is proposed over the southern edge of the ruins from St Nicholas Circle to the entrance of Vaughan College. In advance of this proposed walkway, ULAS excavated six 2.5m² trenches over the proposed pile cluster locations. These lay just outside of Kenyon’s 1930s excavation. In between the tangle of live electric, gas, fibre-optic cables and Victorian sewerage pipes we were able to find good surviving Roman archaeology, with Roman stratigraphy likely to be 2.5m thick (based on a borehole core).

A collapsed wall (NE-SW aligned with Roman street grid), opus signinum floors, overlaying demolition (tile, brick, painted wall plaster fragments, pottery, glass, nails), and other Roman layers were found in all trenches. Good environmental remains were recovered from the debris overlying a floor. Human remains were discovered in a trench closest to St. Nicholas church.

The Roman building(s) discovered could be additional rooms associated with the bath complex, or else a separate building adjacent to it. Alternatively it may be part of the same structure as the Peacock Pavement building, discovered in 1898 and excavated in 1965, this lay just 15m to the SE, believed to be a town house for an important official, or else a mansio. Despite the narrow ‘window’ in each trench, the evaluation has clearly revealed the good survival of Roman remains, it certainly has potential to add further to our understanding of Roman Leicester.

Leicester Castle (Steve Baker)

A watching brief has been maintained on works at Leicester Castle in connection with the conversion of the 12th-century Great Hall into a Law Centre for De Montfort University. These have included the excavation of a service trench across Castle Yard, and the removal of the civil court furniture. The Castle Hall is one of the oldest buildings in Leicester, dating from the early 12th century and has been subject to regular, at times extensive, alterations up until the present day. The Castle Hall is also reputed to be one of the oldest surviving aisled and bay-divided medieval halls in Europe. In the early 19th century it was adapted and enlarged to house a Crown Court and a Magistrates Court but this use ended in the early 1990s and the building was until recently unused.

Supporting evidence for some of these alterations has been recorded from observations within the service trench, including the remains of a porch added in the 14th century and the 1695 rebuilding of the east wall, corroborating evidence from previous archaeological work, notably in 1994. Three truncated undated east-west inhumations were uncovered towards St Mary de Castro Church perhaps suggesting the church graveyard extended further west. Two of these were lifted. Pockets of rough yard surfaces (medieval?) and a possible ‘oven’ feature (undated) were identified within the castle yard, an area which presumably contained various ancillary buildings during the occupation of the castle.

Truncated inhumations – Leicester Castle Yard

Leicester Castle Motte Interpretation Boards (Richard Buckley, Yolanda Courtney)

ULAS has provided text and images for Leicester City Council’s new interpretation boards on the castle motte. Due to the many changes the castle has seen over the centuries, the site is a difficult one for visitors to understand and the project has provided the perfect opportunity to commission some new reconstruction paintings to help people visualise some of the key buildings in the late 15th century. The artist Graham Sumner worked closely with ULAS to ensure that the paintings incorporated the latest archaeological research. The interior view of the hall is based on Sarah Geeve’s reconstruction of about 1987 which incorporated the results of the architectural survey a year or so earlier, which established that the
hall in its earliest form was a magnificent aisled and clerestoried Romanesque building with timber arcades. Later work in the 1990s revealed the base of one of the arcade posts which provided possible evidence from jointing for the raised timber dais. The scene shows a banquet in progress in the late 15th century, perhaps presided over by a notable royal visitor. But who that might be, we could not say!

Near Bradgate House, one test pit revealed deposits representative of the dumping of domestic waste from the house over a prolonged period of time, from the 16th century-19th century.

Another test pit unexpectedly revealed a narrow stone wall on an east-west alignment, with a laid stone floor on its southern side. Fragments of slate on its northern side suggested that the structure had been roofed. Its curious location will merit future investigation (could it represent an outbuilding such as a viewing point over the park or maybe even a dovecote?)

While the walls were our most visible archaeology, it is likely that the structural component of the building was timber. Padstones, which would have supported large posts, were located in pairs across the western part of the building, indicating a set of five bays. The east wall had no corner padstones, possibly suggesting a lean-to rather than a gable end. Towards the western end there was a narrow partition wall with a 1.6m gap in the centre, probably representing the division between a large hall to the east and the service bay to the west. Two padstones were inset from this corner along this wall and were aligned with two rubble-filled gaps in the western wall, hinting that further padstones had been removed from these locations. The evidence seems to suggest a ‘base-cruck’ open hall with spere trusses at either end, potentially forming a parlour or private chamber at the high end of the hall and the service bay to the west.

The hall was heated by a fireplace in the side wall and evidence for a probable oven was found in the service bay. The entrance to the hall was perhaps on the northern wall of the probable service bay, whilst investigation of the causeway across the moat on the south side indicated that this was probably the original access to the platform. Finds were generally few, but pottery and ridge tile suggests the building dates to the 13th/14th century.
The 2016-17 Lecture Season

Thursday 6 October 2016
Patrick Clay
Late Neolithic Art and Symbolism at Rothley Lodge Farm, Rothley

Thursday 27 October 2016
Gavin Speed and James Harvey
Iron Age, Roman, and Anglo-Saxon activity at Pineham, Northamptonshire

Thursday 24 November 2016
Annual General Meeting
In the Guildhall with wine and nibbles, 7.00pm for 7.30pm
Richard Thomas
"The Bradgate Park Fieldschool: revealing 15,000 years of human interaction in an upland landscape"

Thursday 8 December 2016
Jess Jenkins
"Burning Passions, the struggle for women's suffrage in Leicestershire"

Thursday 12 January 2017
Robert Stephens
The 1916 Zeppelin Raid on Loughborough (respecting the anniversary on 31st January 2017).

Thursday 9 February 2017
Mark Webb (Changing Leicester Heritage Lottery Fund Project)
Local heritage opposition to post war town planning schemes: Leicester and Coventry

Thursday 23 February 2017
Members' Evening
Members' current research.
Please contact the Lectures Secretary if you wish to present your research.

Thursday 9 March 2017
The Annual Alan North Lecture
in the Victorian Gallery with wine and refreshments.
Prof Tim Whitmarsh
‘The bastards of Cynosarges and the invention of virtue’

Thursday 6 April 2017
Douglas Cawthorne
The Digital Reconstruction of the Church of the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary in the Newarke, Leicester.

Thursday 27 April 2017
John Hinks
'Scientific Knowledge, Print Culture and Radical Politics in late eighteenth-century Leicester'.

Thursday 11 May 2017
The First Annual Scarborough Lecture
in the Victorian Gallery with wine and refreshments.
Carenza Lewis
A lecture on the Late Medieval period.

All lectures take place in the Lord Mayor’s Rooms of the New Walk Museum except otherwise stated.

Subject to available seating accommodation, visitors and guests are welcome at our Thursday evening lectures, and will be invited to join the society or make a donation of £2.00 per talk.
Castle Donington is one of Leicestershire’s least-known historic market towns. Located on the north-west border of the county, many people visit the parish each year, to catch a flight from East Midlands Airport, to watch motor-racing at Donington Park or to enjoy the Download rock festival, but relatively few choose to explore the historic town itself. This is one reason why Leicestershire Victoria County History Trust selected Castle Donington for its first paperback parish history, which will be published in Spring 2017.

The VCH is renowned for high-quality parish histories researched from primary sources, which take the reader on a thematic journey from the arrival of the first settlers to the date of publication. The name Castle Donington provides two clues that in this case the journey will cover far more than a thousand years, and will be packed with interest for many. The -ington suffix (also seen twice in the neighbouring parish of Lockington cum Hemington) is indicative of an early settlement, while the later addition of the distinguisher, ‘Castle’, suggests a place of strategic importance in the Middle Ages, in this case on a naturally defensible site, with a commanding view of the Trent valley.

Modern development has provided many opportunities for archaeological exploration, and finds from the Neolithic, Bronze Age, Iron Age and Roman periods are brought together and summarised here, alongside the later history.

Even the street names in Castle Donington have historical resonance. Bondgate is to the west of the castle, and would have been the area occupied by the peasants. To its west is Spittal, which led to the medieval hospital of St John (in some documents the Evangelist, in others the Baptist). A number of houses along this road have cruck frames, and one of these may be part of the original hospital buildings.

The aptly named Hillside (formerly Big Hill) follows the line of the outer castle moat, while The Barroon, to its east, was probably where the town bar stood, marking the entrance to the medieval town. Running south from the castle is Borough Street – a name leaving no doubt about the urban ambitions of the lord – where the medieval planned town was laid out with long burgage plots, and a market place immediately to its south. A charter was granted for a market and fair in 1278, but they failed to prosper over the longer term. Donington Park began life, as its name suggests, as a medieval hunting park.

‘The VCH is renowned for high-quality parish histories researched from primary sources, which take the reader on a thematic journey from the arrival of the first settlers to the date of publication.’
The river Trent and its crossings have been of vital importance to the local economy. The medieval manor obtained a significant part of its income from the mills, a ferry crossing and the letting of fishing rights, and the osier beds along the Trent provided the raw materials for basket-making, which provided a steady income for some residents from earliest times to the 20th century. With the benefits came disadvantages, as the river was prone to change its course. Managing the risk of inundation, and coping with the aftermath of several serious floods between the 12th and 16th centuries required resilience, and absorbed both time and resources.

This forthcoming book includes the history of the two secondary settlements within the parish which developed on the south-east bank of the Trent, at King’s Mills and Cavendish Bridge.

If the built environment interests you, the parish contains 76 listed buildings or structures, and a further 200 other buildings have been identified in detailed appraisals made over the last 20 years as having architectural or historic interest.

The timber-framed properties lay interspersed between the red-brick houses and shops built by prosperous Georgian townsfolk. That so many have survived is through a combination of factors, including the collapse of the local bobbin-net industry in the 1830s and 1840s, which resulted in severe poverty and left few residents able to do more than effect basic repairs, the late arrival of the railway, which stifled the development of alternative employment to ease the hardship, and the early designation of the centre of Castle Donington as a conservation area in 1972. Few factories developed here, although Watson’s silk mill of 1870 still presents an impressive facade. School log books show that it initially employed children who worked alternate three- and two-day weeks, which led to some issues for the teachers, as the other children also wanted to attend school part-time!

The character of a place is about more than just its buildings. This strategic site was held by a series of lords whose interests lay in national politics, and whose main homes were elsewhere. Some were not lords for long; three were executed between 1322 and 1330, and another was beheaded in 1400. The castle was probably abandoned, even as a temporary residence for a household, in 1322. The manor became part of the Duchy of Lancaster in 1400, and stewardship was initially granted to the stewards of the honor of Leicester. The parish church may also have seemed to residents to be under distant control, having been given to Runcorn (later Norton) priory in 1135, who appointed the vicars from amongst its canons. With no strong local leadership, the people of Castle Donington developed a streak of independence which endured for centuries, as demonstrated in the 19th century, for example, by an initial refusal to be taken within the ambit of the Leicestershire police, and by the rebranding of county newspapers as Castle Donington editions.

Nowhere is this independence of mind better demonstrated than by the diversity of religious beliefs held by Castle Donington’s inhabitants. Some, adhering to the traditional teachings of the church, formed a religious fraternity and created a separate chapel within the parish church in c.1300, dedicated to St Mary. The ‘St Mary priest’, documented from 1301 to 1540, was chosen by the people, and...
Castle Donington: a place steeped in history

PAM FISHER

funded by gifts of land, rents and sheaves of corn. The effigy of a priest added to the chancel of the parish church in 1320-30 may be of the first ‘St Mary priest’, John Lacatour.

The weekly market would have brought visitors to the town and exposure to other ideas. Religious dissent appears early, with Lollards identified in the opening years of the 15th century, including one who preached here with the consent of the parishioners.

Later generations may have been influenced by vicars appointed by the ‘Puritan Earl’ of Huntingdon, who held the advowson between 1561 and 1595, and by the religious views of vicar Thomas Smith, who was ejected from the living in 1662. Smith was licensed in 1672 to preach at Presbyterian meetings in Castle Donington and Congregational meetings at Wanliff Grange (probably Wartoft Grange, also in Castle Donington parish), and probably took some of his congregation with him. Active nonconformists outnumbered Anglicans by four to one in the mid-19th century, and buildings used for worship by Quakers, Independents, Baptists, Methodists and Roman Catholics (from the twentieth century) can still be seen.

As well as thriving Sunday schools, the Baptists and Wesleyan Methodists had day schools which competed with the parochial school built in 1855 from subscriptions and grants raised by vicar John Bourne. Anglicans, Baptists, Catholics and Methodists still meet for weekly worship in Castle Donington today.

By the early twentieth century, this former medieval town had declined to no more than a dormitory village with little employment, but new transport infrastructure has transformed its fortunes since the 1950s, and in 2016 many people who work in the parish live elsewhere.

Modern industry and commerce is also covered in this volume, including the power station (now demolished, one of the last industrial sites in the UK to use steam locomotives on a regular basis), engineering companies, the distribution businesses based at the airport and the large accountancy firms attracted to this central-midlands location. It is still perhaps not quite a town, as its shops are mostly small businesses rather than the chain stores that the word ‘town’ implies today, but neither is it really a village, given its population (in 2011) of 6,416 and numerous employment opportunities.

The research for this important new book was begun for the VCH in the 1950s by Michael Lee, who also researched and wrote many of the parish entries in Leicestershire VCH Volume V, published in 1964, and an article on nineteenth century Castle Donington, published in this Society’s Transactions in 1956. His work on Castle Donington in earlier periods was never published. Developments since the 1950s have been researched by Pam Fisher, who has also added significant new material on earlier periods, as better cataloguing and digitisation has enabled more records to be consulted, including those in the Huntington Library in San Marino, California.

On sale in Spring 2017 at £9.99, this book will be of interest to those who want to find out more about a parish they may have visited but never explored, those who have a specific interest in a single aspect of archaeology, history or heritage across a wider geographic area, and those who are interested in what makes a town, or how a single place can reinvent itself over the centuries.

Readers can be kept informed of the date of publication by providing their contact details by email to leicsvch@le.ac.uk or by post to Leicestershire VCH Trust, 5 Salisbury Road, Leicester, LE1 7QR. Leicestershire VCH is also researching the history of a number of other towns and villages in Leicestershire. These include Lutterworth, Buckminster, Sewstern, Sileby and, through the Heritage Lottery funded community project Charnwood Roots, thirty-five other towns and villages in the Charnwood area. If you would like to know more, please get in touch through the email or postal address given above.

‘The research for this important new book was begun for the VCH in the 1950s by Michael Lee, who also researched and wrote many of the parish entries in Leicestershire VCH Volume V’
In discussing the engraving it transpired that some years ago Alan McWhirr had consulted the dealer, Tony Yates, who it emerged during our conversation had been one of Alan's many students, with view to giving a talk on Leicestershire views including the one for sale. Samuel Buck was an extraordinary eighteenth century antiquary, who embarked upon an extensive series of tours of England in order to visit and record the ruins of castles, religious foundations and other antiquities to “rescue them from the inexorable jaws of time”.

His approach was to advertise for subscribers from those connected with a small group of counties and publish a set of engravings, usually 24, representative of that particular area together with an advertisement for the next proposed tour. Encouragement was provided by his now better known contemporary William Stukeley, whom he had accompanied on two of the latter’s own antiquarian travels. The scope of Buck’s hugely ambitious project was extended into Wales and to embrace views of sea-ports and principal towns such that it lasted for over thirty years, during which time he and his younger brother Nathaniel published over 500 engravings. Richard Gough described the views as being accurately engraved, whilst the entry for Buck in the Oxford Book of National Biography notes that he was the most prolific producer of views of antiquities and town prospects in the eighteenth century. Typically the views of towns were from the countryside one or two miles outside the town or city from an elevated spot, where possible. The Bucks designed, drew the views and engraved the copper-plates with ‘The South Prospect of Leicester’ being a classic example from a spot near to where Victoria Park Gates stand today.

Buck: The South Prospect of Leicester, 1743

Hanging on the wall above a dealer's stand at a recent local book fair, a yard-wide engraving of a panoramic view of the spired town against the backdrop of a familiar Charnwood forest skyline caught my eye - ‘The South Prospect of Leicester’ by Samuel and Nathaniel Buck, published in 1743.

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(Spellings and punctuation as published)
Buck: The South Prospect of Leicester, 1743

1 Rudin's Esqr

This is Westcotes Manor, purchased by the Rudin family in 1558. An engraving of the manor is in Throsby’s Select Views, 1789 - Plate X opp p 324. (In Nichols vol IV Plate XCIV opp p 571 is the same image, whilst there is also a different image in Plate XCIII opp p 567). The manor was demolished in 1886.

2 River Soar

The original settlement of Leicester was built and developed on a gravel terrace alongside the eastern bank of this major tributary of the River Trent. The origin of the name of the river remains vague. ‘Ser’ meaning to flow has been unconvincingly proposed, whilst Nichols quotes Leland in holding that the river Soar was anciently called Legra or Leir (vol I, pp 3, 355) but this appears to confuse the names of King Leir and that of the river, upon which he built his city as recorded by Geoffrey of Monmouth. (See footnote 6). His Latin name for the river is ‘Sors’, which can mean chance, fortune, a portion in an inheritance or capital as in money. Interestingly, King Leir’s problems about dividing up his Kingdom (including, of course, his city) are referred to insofar as there is no male issue. Perhaps this is an alternative etymological confusion.

3 Work House

In the early eighteenth century Leicester consisted of six parishes - St Mary's, St Margaret's, St Martins, St Nicholas's, St Leonard's (7) and All Saints – and at that time work commenced on building work houses for the destitute. Buck's work house is the one in St Mary's Parish, which embraced the extensive area of South Field, later Southfields. Reference is made in 1725 in St Mary's Poor Relief Accounts 1720-6 Parish houses. (Victoria County History vol IV pp 187, 188.)

4 Watts's Esqr

This is Walsh Hall or Danet's Hall, acquired by the Watts family c 1700. (Victoria County History vol IV 1958 p 381). An engraving of the hall is in Throsby's Select Views in Leicestershire, 1789 - Plate VI opp p 262. (In Nichols vol IV the plate opposite p 571 is the same image.) Susanna Watts, born in 1768 at the Hall, wrote A Walk through Leicester, first published in 1804 and republished in 1967 with an introduction by Jack Simmons.

5 St Mary's Church

In his The Buildings of England Leicestershire and Rutland, first published in 1960, Nikolaus Pevsner records that the church of St Mary-de-Castro was founded in the twelfth century and that the spire was replaced in 1783 - forty years after the publication date Buck's engraving.

6 The Magazine being the Gate leading into Newark

Nichols reports that the Newark was a four acre district originally surrounded, except towards the river, with high stone walls. Pevsner comments the the Gateway was much extended in the late nineteenth century (Pevsner (ibid) p152) and refers to the battlemented parapet and the two domed turrets illustrated in Nichols (Vol I, PL XXIX p329). Presumably, they were there in Buck's time.

7 Markfield-knowl on Charley Forrest

The windmill is illustrated by Nichols, who refers to 'Markfield Mill Hill' and comments that it can be seen “from afar”, in an engraving dated 1792 (Nichols vol III PL XXI opp p126). A windmill icon is marked at the knoll on the enclosure map of 1847. Today the Nichols image is reproduced on the visitors' guide board on-site at Hill Hole Quarry in Markfield. Both windmills 7 and 13 below are included in Nigel Moon's Windmills of Leicestershire and Rutland, 1981. The two windmills in the foreground of the engraving are those, which stood in South Field not far from the Welford road, mentioned by F S Skillington in The Plain Man's History of Leicester, published in 1950 (p45).

8 Earl of Stamford's House

Just South-South East of Markfield Knoll, is Stewards Hay, which Nichols describes as the residence of the Earl of Stamford’s steward and illustrates in Vol IV, PL CIV, p634. Pevsner (ibid) tersely notes that Bradgate House was “built in 1856 and now pulled down. The stable block however remains, a quadrangle with the craziest entrance tower.” Such an emotional reaction is extremely rare for Pevsner! Indeed in the mid-nineteenth century the seventh Earl of Stamford did “a stately pleasure dome decree” and the building of a colossal 52 room house commenced to replace the ruined house in Bradgate Park but save for the stable block it was demolished in 1925.

9 St Nicholas's Church

Pevsner (ibid) notes that the nave is substantially Early Anglo-Saxon. The spire as depicted in the engraving survived until 1803.

10 St Martin’s Church

Buck’s “former SSoat of a Bishop” was restored as such in 1927. Pevsner (ibid) notes its origin from the twelfth century.

11 Bowling Green House

Bowling Green House is mentioned briefly by James Thompson in his Leicester in the Eighteenth Century, published in 1871 and reprinted in 2013 by Forgotten Books. Apparently the House was erected in 1733 in what was called the Horse fair.

12 All Saints’ Church

Pevsner (ibid) notes the Norman west doorway with zigzag decoration in the arch and that the chancel was rebuilt, long and low, in brick in 1829. The thirteenth century font is particularly noteworthy.
Buck: The South Prospect of Leicester, 1743

13 Old John upon Charley Forrest

The Old John windmill is still marked as such in 'A Plan of Charnwood Forest' of 1754 (County Records Office DG9/Ma/66/2a) reprinted in Nichols vol III Plate XXIII opp p 131 but its destruction in a storm of 1783 and subsequent replacement by the well known folly is told by David Ramsey in his article in Leicestershire Historian No 47 (2011).

15 St Margaret's Church

The tower, according to Pevsner (ibid), is one of the grandest of Perpendicular style in Leicestershire. The oldest surviving part is the probably Anglo-Saxon wall below the present church but which is exposed to view.

16 Stocking Wood

Stocking Wood is included in Barrie Cox's Place-names of Leicestershire (p 224) and is clearly marked as such between 'Ansty' and 'Birstal' in the New Map of Leicester engraved in 1801. Susanna Watts reported a boundary dispute over Stocking Wood between the Abbot of Leicester Abbey and the inhabitants of Belgrave (A Walk Through Leicester, 1804 p54. See 4 above). The Editor of The Magazine kindly pointed out that he recalled visiting Stocking Wood, adjoining Swithland Wood, about 25 years ago and that it was acquired by the Bradgate Park Trust a couple of years ago.

17 Leicester Abbey

Buck's engraving of Leicester-Abby from the North is dated 1730 and shows the ruined but substantial house constructed out of recycled stone. The house was looted and destroyed by fire in 1645. Dedicated to William Duke & Earl of Devonshire the text reads, "THIS place still retains the Name of an Abby here having formerly been an Abby of Canons Regular of St Austin founded 1143 by Robt Bossu E of Leicester who retir'd himself and there finish'd his Days. Here also died the famous Cardinal Wolsey to whom Mr Cavendish so distinguished himself or his Fidelity in the Cardinal's worst as well as best Fortunes that Kn Hen VIII gave it him at ye Suppression; and for this so remarkable a demonstration of his Abilities and Virtues he also made him an Auditor of his own Court of Augmentation, Treasurer of his Chambers & a Privy Councillor. From him it came to his Descendants, Earls and at length Dukes of Devonshire, one of whom built a fair house out of the Remains of ye [suppressed] Abby but this is also come to decay."

18 The Station near the Turnpike in ye London Road where this Drawing was taken

This is near to where Victoria Park Gates now stand but the view partially observable from the road as one descends towards the Station is obscured by building development in and around New Walk. When I first saw the engraved view's foreground it conjured up Russel Crowe, the eponymous Gladiator, walking down New Walk towards Leicester City centre, trailing his hand through the golden ripened corn as portrayed in the film.

NOTES

(1) (Page 15)

Ethelfleda, the daughter of Alfred the Great, is credited with strengthening the fortifications of Leicester and there is a statue of her in the courtyard at The Guild Hall.

(2) (Page 15)

Callias or Calais, under English rule from 1347 until 1558, was the main or Staple port for wool.

(3) (Page 15)

Buck's sixth group of counties, comprising those of Cambridge, Huntingdon, Leicester and Rutland, was published in 1731. Included in Leicestershire were views of Leicester Abby, Olveston Priory (Owston Abbey), Ulverscroft Priory, Grace Dieu Nunnery, Belvoir Castle (two views) and Ashby de la Zouch Castle (2 views). View 18, The North View of Ulverscroft Priory in the County of Leicester, is very finely executed.

(4) (Page 15)

William Stukeley, who inextricably linked Stonehenge with the Druids, published Itinerarium Curiosum in 1724, which contains an account of seven Iters or Journeys in his own quest of recording antiquities. Buck's fourth collection of 24 views of ruins in the Bishopric of Durham in Northumberland was published in 1729, one of the subscribers to which set was Stukeley. Plate number 24, Bambrough Castle, is dedicated to him. The list of subscribers for this fourth collection is dated "April" 1729 and carries an advertisement for a proposed tour in the following summer "to take Drawings of the most remarkable remains of ABBY'S CASTLES &c. to be found in travelling through the Counties of Oxford Northampton and Warwick, and to finish the Plates in twelve Months time from the Date hereof." In his diary entry for 13th August 1742 (Stukeley's Diaries & Letters edited by W C Lukis published by The Surtees Society, vol II, 1883, p338) Stukeley notes that "Mr Saml. Buck, Mr Warburton, Herald and myself, had a conference together. Mr Buck is taking a prospect of Stamford for printing."

(5) (Page 15)


(6) (Page 16)

Although long challenged and completely rejected as a correct historical record, Geoffrey of Monmouth's British History records that King Leir, the 11th King of Brittain, "built upon the river Sore a city, called in the British tongue, Kaerleir, in the Saxon, Leicestre" (Bk II, chap xi). His daughter, Cordellia, buried him in a vault there (Book II chap xiv). Leicester's significance, however, is clearly noteworthy. Interestingly, it is further claimed that Arthgallo, the 29th King, was buried in Kaerleir (Book III chap xvii). (Incidentally, Arthur is listed as the 90th King in the Genealogical Summary.) Richard III, then, was not the first King to be buried in Leicester!

(7) (Page 16)

In the text Buck states that "[h]ere are 5 Parish Churches". St Leonard's was no longer extant. Although repair work was carried out in 1642, it is said that the church had been demolished during Fairfax's seige of Leicester in 1645. (VCH vol IV p349)."
LAHS gains £45,000 HLF Grant

The Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society (LAHS) have been awarded a £45,000 grant by the Heritage Lottery Fund to undertake the Changing Leicester project. In partnership with Leicester Arts and Museums Service and the University of Leicester’s East Midlands Oral History Archive.

The LAHS will be carrying out an oral history project focusing on the development of Leicester’s heritage from World War Two to the present.

“Changing Leicester” will tell the story via oral testimony of the beginnings of heritage development in the 1950s and 1960s, continuing through the evolution of archaeological research and finally reaching a peak with the discovery and re-interment of the bones of King Richard III. The project will create a record of the changing perceptions of the importance of buried remains and local heritage, the impact of heritage preservation on local people and the way that heritage preservation is reflected in the media.

The project will be recruiting volunteers to work with the team to travel around the city recording people’s memories and opinions; this will include attending heritage events across the city. The information will feed into an exhibition at Newarke Houses Museum in the summer of 2017.

A touring exhibition will visit community venues over the same period. There will also be a programme of exciting events including community activity days, talks and walks and a celebration event to share the results of the project with people in Leicester.

The sound and documentary records created will be held at the Record Office for Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland and the East Midlands Oral History Archive to inform future research and understanding.
The project will use the experiences of the city and its people during the discovery and reinternment of Richard III as a springboard for collecting stories. It will be using this topic to promote deeper and wider discussions of Leicester’s changing physical spaces over the past seventy years.

The project will also be collecting the memories of those people who were actively involved in the major projects that changed Leicester’s landscapes, including archaeologists and town planners.

If you have memories, opinions, photographs or memorabilia that you would like to share with the project about Leicester’s development, for example archaeological digs, local campaigns or just changes to the spaces in the city you lived, worked and frequented or if you would like to join the volunteering team please email yolanda.courtney@ntlworld.com or catherine.hallsworth@leicester.gov.uk

Next year will be the twentieth anniversary of the death of James Kemsey Wilkinson who founded the Wilkinson stores when he opened his first shop in Leicester’s Charnwood Street in 1930. A second shop was opened in 1932 in Wigston.

It will also be the 110th anniversary of his birth. Today, the chain has almost 400 stores, 23,000 employees and annual revenues in excess of £1.5billion. James, always known as JK, remained involved in the company until well past retirement age.

The business has remained a family concern. JK’s son, Tony, retired as Chairman after 45 years in 2005 to be replaced by his niece, Karin Swann, and his daughter, Lisa Wilkinson. Lisa Wilkinson has been the sole chairman since 2014.

In the Charnwood Street community, JK had a reputation for fairness: ‘I always like to look people in the eye and know in my heart that they are getting a good deal.’ was his mantra. The original shop survived until 1970 when

‘I always like to look people in the eye and know in my heart that they are getting a good deal.’
‘Priceless’ stained glass panel stolen from Withcote Chapel

As this issue of The Magazine went to press, we received the sad news of a theft from Withcote Chapel of a panel of stained glass. In this early stage of investigations, police do not know whether the lead or the glass was the main target of the theft.

The window, which dates from between 1530 and 1540, is believed to be the work of Galeon Hone, who was the King’s Glazier in 1517 and undertook extensive work at Eton College, Westminster, Windsor Castle and elsewhere.

The Grade I listed chapel is cared for by the Churches Conservation Trust which describes the building as ‘a stunning Tudor chapel, with windows fit for a king. A towerless, pinnacled box made from pale gold ironstone, it looks like a miniature King’s College Chapel, Cambridge. Its most spectacular treasure is its stained glass.’ The glass is contemporaneous with the chapel. It was the work of William Smith who died in 1506, the building being completed by his widow Catherine Smith and her second husband Roger Ratcliffe. It was built to the side of their Hall as a private chapel but later became the parish church.

It is possible that the panel, or segments of the glass, may be offered for sale, perhaps at fairs, fetes and car boot sales. LAHS members are requested to report any relevant sightings to the police on 101 or via Crimestoppers.

Withcote Church, near Tilton-on-the-hill.

‘A stunning Tudor chapel, with windows fit for a king. A towerless, pinnacled box made from pale gold ironstone, it looks like a miniature King’s College Chapel, Cambridge. Its most spectacular treasure is its stained glass.’

(Churches Conservation Trust)
Library routine has continued this year without anything special to report. Stock is added, books are borrowed and returned, and enquiries are received. There is an increasing number of questions from non-members who have obviously discovered the Society from the website and the online files of Transactions and Leicestershire Historian. While one tries to be helpful, the Society does not have (or offer) a research service.

ACQUISITIONS

All published in 2016 unless otherwise indicated

BOOKS and PAMPHLETS


CHILDS, B. A short history of the City of Leicester College 1956 – 2013. 2014. (The College evolved from City Boys’ School, Spencerfield School, and the City of Leicester School). Donated by member B. Screaton on behalf of the author.


PATRICK, D. ed. The life and times of Charles Rozzell 1754 – 1792. 3 vols.: Epitaphs and elegies and other fragments of eighteenth century Leicester, Improvements of Leicester and other fragments. Political songs and satires and other fragments. 2014. Duncan Patrick, 78 Gainsborough Road, Leicester, LE2 3DF. duncan.patrick@virginmedia.com Donated by the Editor and publisher. Have YOU forgotten “Leicester’s framework-knitter poet”?


STOATE, C. Exploring a productive landscape: from a long history to a sustainable future in the Eye Brook catchment. 2010. (includes villages from Tilton to Caldecott).

Windows of Leicester Cathedral. 2012.

WINFIELD, E. Childhood memories of Cosby in the 1930s and 40s. 2005.

PERIODICALS

Ancient Monuments Society Transactions 60

Archaeologia Cantiana 137 (includes a timely article “If the Kaiser should come: defending Kent during the Great War”)

Ashby-de-la-Zouch Past and Present: the journal of Ashby-de-la-Zouch Museum 18 (As well as Ashby this issue includes articles on Donisthorpe Colliery, Staunton Harold, and book reviews). Donated by the Editor.

British Archaeology 149 (includes a report from Croxton Kerrial by Framland Local Archaeology Group). Receipt of this journal, published by the C.B.A., has been disrupted in recent years. It is hoped that it will arrive regularly in future.

Essex Society for Archaeology and History Transaction 5 2014

Hinckley Historian: magazine of Hinckley and District Museum 77 (includes an article by L.A.H.S. Vice-President J.D.Bennett on the “Bonaparte connection”). Donated by the Editor.

Historical Research 89.244

S.P.A.B. Magazine Summer 2016
News from the Library

AUBREY STEVENSON, HON LIBRARIAN

NEWSLETTERS
(Current copies only)

Ancient Monuments Society Newsletter
Winter – Spring 2016 (included a review of
the LAHS publication "Nichols’ History of
Leicestershire" (2015)). Also: Summer.

Council for British Archaeology Newsletter
June - September.

Essex Society for Archaeology and History

Essex Society for Archaeology and History
Newsletter Summer.

Lincoln Record Society News Review Summer.

S.P.A.B. Events June.

Stoneygate Conservation Area Society
Newsletter April.

Worcestershire Recorder April.

LIBRARY CLOSURE

Please note that the final open afternoon for
members this year will be Sunday 16
October (2.00 - 4.00pm). The Library will
then be closed as usual during November,
December and January. It will reopen on
Sunday 5 February 2017.

Society visit to the Century Theatre

The Society is organising a visit to the
Century Theatre at Coalville on Monday
26 September 2016.

The Century Theatre is Britain’s oldest
surviving travelling theatre. At the end of
World War II in 1945 many city centre
theatres had been destroyed and elsewhere
performance facilities were very poor. The
theatre was created to fill this need by being
a completely portable stage, auditorium,
and dressing rooms, together with box
office, mobile living quarters, offices and
stores.

The structure cost £22,000 (about £500,000
by today’s prices) and all the money was
raised by private sponsorship with
Donations came from national firms and
private individuals. Famous contributors
included Lawrence Olivier, John Mills,
Enid Blyton and Agatha Christie.

The theatre is supported by an enthusiastic
team of volunteers who were concerned about
the future of the structure following the
closure and demolition of the Snibston
Discovery Park and Museum.

The evening will include a talk about the
theatre and an opportunity to visit back
tage to see the dressing rooms and scenery
areas.

Tickets will need to be booked in advance as
spaces are limited. They can be reserved
using the Eventbrite booking system.
Members will receive further information by
email in due course.
On Wednesday 6th July, on an overcast though fine and warm evening, around fifty members and friends of LAHS met at the Newtown Linford gate of Bradgate Park for a visit to the recent and current archaeological excavations.

Our host and guide was Dr Richard Thomas of the University of Leicester's School of Archaeology, and a director of the Bradgate Park Field School, a project being run jointly by the University and ULAS during the summer months of 2015-2019. Richard's charm and prodigious knowledge of his subject held us all spellbound, and he was ably supported by our own Membership Secretary and ULAS expert, Matt Beamish. An added delight was the many archaeological 'finds' that Richard passed around for us to handle at each stage of the tour.

During the walk beside the river Lin through Little Matlock gorge towards the Bradgate House ruins Richard told us about the different species of deer in the park and their history, and he pointed out the two medieval hunting park boundaries of different dates. He also drew our attention to the river running alongside our path where a dam had been built and the water diverted to supply the sixteenth-century mansion house, where a mill was also operated.

At the eastern end of the gorge, climbing up a steep path to our left, we arrived at a small high plateau. An area of some 10m x 8m had been archaeologically excavated here by ULAS in the autumn and winter of 2015/16 but was now back-filled and re-instated. Here the archaeologists had discovered over 5,000 pieces of worked flint of Late Upper Palaeolithic date, in what appears to be the remains of a hunting stand, making this a very rare site indeed. Around 15,000 years ago, at the very end of the last Ice Age when conditions were beginning to warm and areas of grassland were developing, people, probably a family group camped together on the plateau, knapping their flints, and driving the roaming herds of animals, such as deer, into the river's bottleneck beyond, where they were brought down with spear-throwers. The animals were then butchered and processed: other flint tools such as scrapers, piercers and knives hint that a range of craft activities were also taking place. Diagnostic pieces known as Cheddar Points indicate that these people belonged to the Creswellian culture. The flint material probably came from East Anglia or Doggerland (which at that time joined east England to the Continent), but unfortunately, as the soil here is so acidic, no bones or metalwork have survived.

We then crossed over to the other side of the path to view the one remaining section of the deer park pale (fence), that originally encircled the whole park to retain the deer within its boundaries. The pale consisted of a ditch dug out to erect a mound on top of which was a high wooden paling fence, with an occasional 'deer leap' break where the animals could leap in (thus replenishing the hunting stock) but could not escape. The powerful Lords of Groby would have held grand hunting parties here, though more to impress with their social status than as a purely hunting exercise.
Moving on we came to a current archaeological dig within a rectangular moated site that is a recognised archaeological site and designated as a Scheduled Monument. The site is suspected to have been park keeper's lodge.

The current excavations have fully exposed the plan of a rectangular building that appears to have become disused in the thirteenth to fourteenth centuries. The building consisted of five bays including a Great Hall with typical central fire place, parlour, and kitchens, and its structure was cruck beams placed on foundation pad stones with low stone walls. However there was also a chimney and fireplace located on an outside wall, a feature not normally introduced until the fifteenth century, so this is of interest as a possible very early example.

The house had boasted a fine Swithland slate roof, nicely decorated along the top with green glazed ridge tiles. When the building became unoccupied and gradually fell into disrepair, the wooden beams rotted and collapsed and the slate roof spilled on to the ground. Although hundreds of slate roof tiles were lying around on the site, not a single nail to affix them was found, as they would have been totally eroded by the acidic soil.

Further on, we viewed a small trench dug in search of more flint material close to the western end of the house ruins. The trench had revealed a wall with floor surface running towards the house, whose date and purpose is completely unknown - a mystery yet to be solved in the future.

The handsome mansion, Bradgate House, was completed around 1520, and has long been considered to have been built upon on a new unoccupied site. During the 2015 summer excavations compelling evidence came to light of a late fifteenth-century building within its courtyard, indicating the existence of a hitherto unknown earlier house on the same site. Around the outside of the ruins the soil is surprisingly thick and rich, suggesting midden heaps for the house. On investigation, the top layer proved to date from the 1920s, when the Leicester businessman, Charles Bennion, bought Bradgate Park to give to the people, and the County Council undertook considerable 'renovating' and tidying-up activities. However underneath this twentieth-century layer was found an earlier midden heap, yielding many artefacts from the period when the house was inhabited. The passing round of these beautiful 'finds' took our thoughts back to the time of the powerful Grey family and the sad fate of Lady Jane Grey, and we strolled back through the Park delighting in our newly acquired knowledge and a memorable evening with friends.
THE LEICESTERSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The 161st Annual General will commence at 7:30 on Thursday 24th November 2016 at The Guildhall, Leicester

Members are asked to arrive between 7:00 and 7:15 to allow time for the distribution of Transactions.

The Annual General Meeting is an important event in the Society’s calendar and all members are requested to attend. Please bring this Agenda with you.

The meeting will include the Annual General Meetings for the Research Fund and the Alan North Memorial Fund.

AGENDA

1. Apologies from Members

2. Approval of the Minutes of the 160th Annual General meeting held on Thursday 26th November 2015

3. Presentation of the 161st Annual report for 2015-1016 by the Honorary Chairman, Dr Richard Buckley

4. Adoption of the Annual report

5. Presentation of the Society’s accounts for the year 2015-2016 and the accounts of the Research and W A North Memorial Funds

6. Adoption of the Accounts of the Society, the Research Fund and W A North Memorial funds

7. Approval of the updated Rules of the Society

8. Election of Officers and Committee for the year 2016-2017

9. Any other business, as communicated to the Hon. Chairman or Hon. Secretary by 31st October 2016

Following the conclusion of the official business there will be a talk by Dr Richard Thomas on the recent excavations in Bradgate Park.
1) Attendance and Apologies

Over 60 members attended the Annual General Meeting.

Apologies were received from our President, Prof. Michael Wood and 27 other members.

2) Approval of the Minutes of the 159th Annual General Meeting

Subject to three amendments, the minutes were proposed, seconded and passed by a unanimous vote. The amendments are: the 159th Annual report was for the period 2013-2014 (not 2012-2013), third paragraph, first line repetition of the word "usual" whilst the second line should read "... Mr and Mrs Laurence" (not Mr and Mrs Lewis).


The Hon. Committee Chairman informed the meeting that the Committee met five times during the year. Thanks were expressed to Stephen Butt for arranging a new venue for the Committee meetings (the Leicestershire and Rutland Family History Society room in Pilot House, Wellington St) and Peter Cousins and Joan Rowbottom of the Family History Society.

A new member, David Howell, was welcomed to the Committee. Vacancies exist for Honorary Treasurer, Secretary and Minutes Secretary,

The Thursday talks were well attended and the Society's website received a very large number of hits.

Membership stands at 421. The work of the Membership Secretary in reclaiming Gift Aid provided a worthwhile addition to our funds.

Library usage remains low, although several queries were received and answered by post and email.

We wish to express our thanks the following, for their work on behalf of the Society: Stephen and Linda Butt (Stephen for his tireless work as Hon Secretary and Linda for arranging various post talk buffets), Patrick Clay (of ULAS) for his assistance with the Transactions, Jon Dean for help with the Leicestershire Historian, Michael Johnson our retiring Hon. Treasurer and Mr and Mrs Lawrence for organising refreshments on Thursday evenings.
Additionally, a very popular and well attended, dinner celebrating the work of John Nichols was arranged by Caroline Wessel.

1) Adoption of the 160th Annual Report

The report was proposed, seconded and passed by unanimous by a vote.

2) Presentation of the Accounts for the Year 2014-2015

Hon. Treasurer reported that the Society remains solvent but that it had been necessary to draw £3000 profit from the Willett Bequest to subsidise our annual running costs. However, the bequest is still above last year’s valuation.

The Hon. Scrutineer (Mr RP Scuplak) and the Hon. Treasurer are relinquishing their posts. Mr M Johnson is willing to act as scrutineer but the post of Treasurer is vacant.

3) Adoption of the Accounts

The Accounts were proposed, seconded and accepted with one abstention.

4) Election of the Officers and the Committee for the year 2015-2016

Prof. Michael Wood has agreed to continue as president for a further year.

It was proposed that the Hon. Vice Presidents be re-elected, this was seconded and passed by unanimous vote.

It was proposed that the existing Hon. officers be re-elected, this was seconded and passed by unanimous vote.

It was proposed that those existing members of the committee who are not officers be re-elected, this was seconded and passed by unanimous vote.

Mr David Howell was elected Hon. Treasurer and Mr Chris Jordan Hon. Secretary.

5) Any Other Business

After confirming that no other business had been notified, the Hon. Chairman closed the meeting at 8:05pm.

Signed: Date:

The Hon. Committee Chairman thanked the Vice President for once again chairing the AGM.

Sixty members collected their copy of Transactions, so saving the Society a considerable sum in postage.

The meeting was followed by a short talk, "Enigma is not the only fruit", by John Alexander.
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