

**LEICESTERSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL
AND HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

The Guildhall, Leicester LE1 5FQ

President Sir Timothy Brooks, K.C.V.O., LL.D., D.Litt., J.P.

NEWSLETTER

Number 69



Spring 2004

Editor Kay Gowland

Future of city museums in the balance

Your committee is concerned about future plans for the city's museums. The ruling LibDem/Conservative group claim that they have to make cuts to fill a £10 million shortfall. Departments have been asked to make cuts and Cultural Services have come up with a series of cost-saving proposals affecting the museums service. The details of these cuts as published on the council's web pages, are not explicit, although we hear about closing the Jewry Wall to the public and using much of the Abbey Pumping Station as a store. We said so in a press release and alongside is council leader Roger Blackmore's response. By the time this *Newsletter* is printed the results of the council's deliberations about the budget will be announced and we will see what the future holds for one of the jewels in Leicester's crown.

Statement from Cllr Roger Blackmore Leader, Leicester City Council

"I am sorry to see that Dr McWhirr has chosen to misrepresent the city council's position in this way.

"Both the Jewry Wall and the Abbey Pumping Station museums are crucial elements of our city's heritage, and there is no way we would want to see either of these important museums close to the public.

"Jewry Wall is a key archaeological site at the heart of Roman Leicester, and it features – along with Kirby Muxloe Castle – in the English Heritage members' handbook.

"The idea of relocating some of our collections to Abbey Pumping Station is an interesting proposition which we are studying, and which – if we get it right – could result in more public access to more exhibits than hitherto.

"It really does not help when people who have been generally supportive of the museum service spread alarm and despondency in this manner."

February 4th 2004

SUPPORT THE JEWRY WALL MUSEUM

Show your support for the Jewry Wall Museum by visiting on

Sunday 28th March between 2.00pm and 4.00pm.

If you feel strongly about museums in the city then do please show your support.

PLEASE TURN UP ON THE 28TH MARCH

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News from further afield

Church visiting remains a very popular activity

The Church of England has recently published the results of a national opinion poll showing that church visiting is a national pastime, with four out of five adults in the UK having visited a church or place of worship over the last year other than for a religious service. The poll, conducted by Opinion Research Business on behalf of the Church of England and English Heritage, showed that 89 per cent of those claiming to be Christian had visited a place of worship, 75 per cent of those professing another faith, and 80 per cent of those with no religion.

Ten per cent of those polled said they had attended a concert or theatrical performance in a place of worship over the past year; 13 per cent said they had just 'walked in' and another 10 per cent said they visited to find a quiet space: interestingly, the number of people visiting a church to find a quiet space was highest (28 per cent of those polled) among non-church-going inner city residents.

The ORB poll also found that 83 per cent of adults in Britain regard their church as a place of worship, 63 per cent think of it as a local landmark and 53 per cent regards it as a historic place. More than six in ten (63 per cent) said they would be concerned if their local church or chapel were no longer there. The majority of those polled were happy to consider alternative uses, with two-thirds agreeing that churches should be social meeting places. Poor understanding of the financial responsibilities for ecclesiastical building was apparent, with nearly a quarter of those polled believing that churches were maintained at tax payers' expense – though 42 per cent of those polled thought that they should be!

Commenting on the results of the poll, the Bishop of London and Chairman of the Church Heritage Forum, the Rt Revd Richard Chartres, acknowledged the claims of the whole community on its ecclesiastical buildings and said: 'Church buildings have an important place in local affections, with an impact on cultural and community life which extends far beyond the worshipping congregation'.

Copies of the poll report can be obtained from the Church of England website.

Medici family members to be exhumed

The Italian authorities do not seem to share British qualms when it comes to studying human remains. Gino Fornaciari, a history of medicine professor at Pisa University, announced at a news conference in January that fifty members of the Medici family, currently buried in the Medici Chapel at the rear of San Lorenzo church in Florence, are to be exhumed in June.

The Medici ruled Florence on and off from 1434 – when Cosimo il Vecchio returned to the troubled city from exile in Padova and became, in the words of the

future Pope Pius II, 'king in all but name' – until the death, in 1734, of Anna Maria Lodovica, the last of the Medici line.

The ostensible reason for excavating the Medici graves is to see what needs to be done to preserve the remains and the chapel itself, which is thought to have suffered damage in the destructive flood of 1966. But exhumation also allows for samples to be taken from the graves for detailed analysis at the University of Pisa, where it is hoped that more will be learned about the Medici lifestyle, diet, ailments (including a genetic predisposition for the arthritic disease gout) and the causes of their deaths.

Red ochre used in burials 100,000 years ago

Further news about death and burial practice comes from Qafzeh Cave in Israel where, according to an article that appeared in the December issue of *Current Anthropology*, fragments of red ochre – a form of iron oxide that yields a pigment when heated – have been found alongside 100,000-year-old human bones. According to Dr Erella Hovers, of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, the seventy-one pieces of ochre seem to have been used as part of a ritual, thus establishing a clear link between the red ochre and the burial process.

Examples of association between red ochre and burial have been discovered before, but not this early. 'The red ochre meant something to them – exactly what we do not know – but it is not inconceivable that they painted their dead with red ochre,' Hovers says. Puzzlingly, there is a long gap between this first very early evidence of symbolic behaviour in the Qafzeh Cave and the re-emergence of ochre use about 13,000 years ago.

The above items have been taken from the Society of Antiquaries email Newsletter Salon with permission.

It is your Newsletter!!

If any of our members are taking part in historical or archaeological activities in their area through local history and heritage societies, or working on their own, why not send a report of your work for inclusion in the *Newsletter*. We are looking for anything from a few sentences to a short article. Deadlines are mid-August and mid-February. Please send contributions to Kay Gowland, whose address is on the front of this *Newsletter*.

Recent excavations in Leicester

The University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) is currently involved in several urban projects in Leicester in advance of large areas in the northern half of Roman/Medieval Leicester being developed. Here is a brief round-up of some of these projects.

Leicester, Bath Lane/West Bridge Wharf

Directed by Lynden Cooper

One of the puzzles in Leicester's archaeology has been the location of the western defences of the Roman and medieval towns. Although most people believed the course to run to the west of Bath Lane no positive sighting of the defences has been made. These developer-funded excavations in advance of development have now solved the problem and in addition have provided some useful dating evidence for those defences.

The earliest Roman occupation seems to be related to land reclamation along the Soar floodplain. Then the first phase of the Roman defences, consisting of a rampart in which the turves of its construction could be clearly seen during the excavation, was erected. Later a stone wall with 3m wide foundations was added adjacent to which was a lime kiln/clamp some 6m across, making it one of the largest ever found in Britain. It seems fairly obvious that this was located in this spot to provide lime for the construction of the town wall and so any date for it would provide a date for the construction of the city's defences. Archaeomagnetic dating was used and the results gave a date of AD 230-270.

The excavations also revealed a series of Roman burials immediately outside the town wall along with medieval refurbishment of the wall itself. Excavation of deep extra-mural waterlogged deposits produced medieval and post-medieval tanning and horners' dumps.

Leicester, St Margaret's Baths

Directed by Tony Gnanaratnam

An archaeomagnetic date of 1120-1180 has been obtained for the malting kiln/oven – earlier than expected and potentially extremely useful in helping refine dating for any associated pottery. A Roman street was also revealed on this site.

Leicester Vine Street

Directed by Tim Higgins

Trial trenching evaluation in progress north of Vaughan Way has found evidence of a substantial Roman town house with a backfilled Roman cellar, column foundations for a portico and a small fragment of a tessellated pavement. Medieval burials have been located which are likely to be associated with the lost church of St Michael although no sign of the church itself has been found yet.



General view of the site in Bath Lane (behind the hoarding on the right) with the excavations taking place in the background.



A section of the Roman town wall found west of Bath Lane.



Malt kiln found on the site of the former St Margaret's baths.

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Comments from officers

The Honorary Secretary writes:

Gift Aid

Extra income can be generated for the society by those members who are able gift-aiding their subscriptions. This would mean that for every £16 subscription we would receive an extra £4.50, i.e. 28% of £16. Once you have completed the enclosed form you do not have to do anything more, we reclaim the Gift Aid and you do not have to do anything when completing your tax forms (unless you pay at higher rates of tax than the standard rate). As you can see, if 200 of our membership gift-aided their subscription that would bring in an extra £900 per year – equivalent to an extra 56 members.

Membership Drive

The committee is about to produce a new coloured recruitment leaflet which we will be distributing around the county. In due course we will be asking each member to try to recruit one new member and we will therefore, be including one of these new leaflets in a later posting.

Please help us to find new members

From the Lecture Secretaries:

Next season we are arranging 12 lectures and so extending the lecture season into April. We are always on the look out for speakers on local topics and if any member feels that they would like to be considered for inclusion in our lecture programme do please contact one or other of the lecture secretaries. Maybe you only feel able to give a short twenty minute presentation on some topic you are researching. If that is the case then do please let us know and we will try to find 2-3 other people to fill up a complete lecture slot.

From the Honorary Librarian:

The library at the Guildhall will NOT be open on Sunday 20th June.

Normal opening times are the first and third Sunday of each month from 2.00 until 4.00pm.

Back numbers of the Leicestershire Historian and Transactions can be purchased when the library is open.

Events at Donington-le-Heath Manor House

11 April	Plant Hunter Fair – Rare and Unusual Plant Sale
17-8 April	Redcoats and Jacobites – Re-enactments etc
16 May	Crime and Punishment through history
12-3 June	Life in the Wars of the Roses – food, music & combats
11 July	Victorian Garden Party
7-8 Aug	Medieval Falconry Display
19 Sept	Medieval Mayhem
28 Oct	Apple Day
31 Oct	Gunpowder and Hallow'en
14 Nov	The War to end all Wars – Remembrance Day Tribute
11 Dec	Christmas at the Manor

All events are free although there may be small charges for some activities. For further information and details of times contact Peter Liddle (0116) 264 5810

The Membership Secretary writes:

An intensive effort has been made by the Society membership secretary to update the current membership list and to recover subscription arrears.

The Society year is from the 1 May to 30 April and as many members have made a practice of paying subscriptions at Lecture meetings starting in October, the Society Year and the income of funds have been somewhat out of phase, and difficult to monitor. Subscription reminders have always been part of our Spring Newsletter.

The Society would like to thank our many members who now pay by standing order and this certainly simplifies our record keeping.

Complaints have been received that subscription

reminders have not been received, so it is our intention in the future to incorporate the reminder as a separate inclusion with the Newsletter – perhaps even in colour!

Our recent effort to convert members to pay by standing order incorporated the request to complete a gift aid voucher. The completion of the gift aid voucher enables tax paid by tax paying members to be recovered by the Society (a registered charity), at no loss to the member.

All UK tax paying members who have not yet completed a gift aid form may complete the one included with this Newsletter and return it to the Honorary Membership Secretary, thus enabling the Society to limit future increases in subscriptions.

Geoff Clark Monks

Member's project in Enderby

Since the excavations of 1952/53 on the site of the Anglo-Saxon Church of St John's, Aldeby, many people have wanted the site to be restored for the benefit of all as it had remained open and become very overgrown with scrub and nettles. The Enderby Heritage Group recognized this and about two years ago started investigating the possibility of clearing the site. The Group found that both Peter Liddle and Dr Alan McWhirr wanted something to be done about the site especially as no archaeological work had been recorded, though a few finds are now to be found in museums.

As the site had been scheduled in 1985, the Group had to establish the legal ownership of the site and also contact English Heritage about the possibility of being able to carry out some remedial work. With the help of Peter Liddle, a meeting with English Heritage was arranged and permission was given to undertake a limited programme of scrub clearance to ground level. The Vicar of Enderby, the legal owner, also gave his permission. In the late autumn of 2003 this programme was started and will be continuing during 2004.

After the first stage of clearance, English Heritage came back to the site and was very pleased with work to date and recommended that proper recording of the ruins be undertaken. Grant applications are being made to cover the costs of this. The ruins would then be properly reburied using the spoil heaps from the previous excavation and a site management plan implemented.

If any members of the LAHS have any photographs, press cuttings or other memorabilia of the site, the Enderby Heritage Group would be pleased to see them and if possible take copies to enable a full record of the site to be made. Contact can be made through Mark Carne at any Society meeting or by email at cmarkcarne@hotmail.com

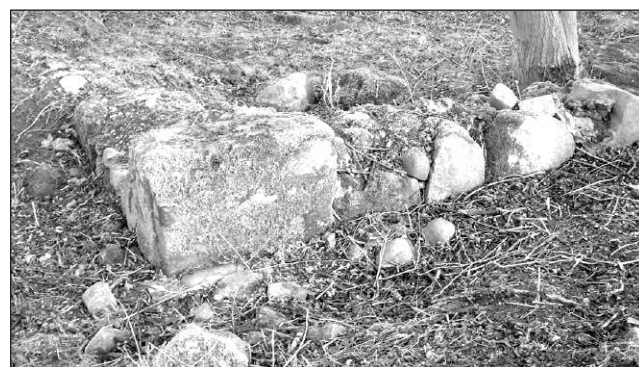
Mark Carnes

The Honorary Secretary writes:

When I was a student at the University of Leicester, the student Archaeological Society took an interest in this site as it lay open following the excavations referred to above and was deteriorating. I seem to remember that somebody drew a quick sketch plan and possibly sent it to Raleigh Radford for comment. I cannot remember whether he commented, but knowing Raleigh Radford I am sure that he saw great things in that sketch plan!! There is reference to carved stonework coming from this site which may be Saxon in date.



The site of Aldeby church looking west.



Aldeby church south-west corner.

Dr David Parsons, former committee member and an authority on Leicestershire churches writes:

In the absence of a proper account of the excavations it is difficult to be certain about the interpretation of the building, particularly about its date; the plan alone is not indicative, since it occurs in minor buildings at different periods. The surprise is that this *is* a minor building – given the apparent status of Aldeby church, something more impressive might be expected, so is this a subsidiary chapel in the curtilage of a larger mother church? The carved stone remains enigmatic. While there appears to be a consensus ‘feeling’ that it must be ‘early’, the old equation of crude/rustic = early has long since been discounted, and serious research into vernacular stone carving has yet to be carried out.

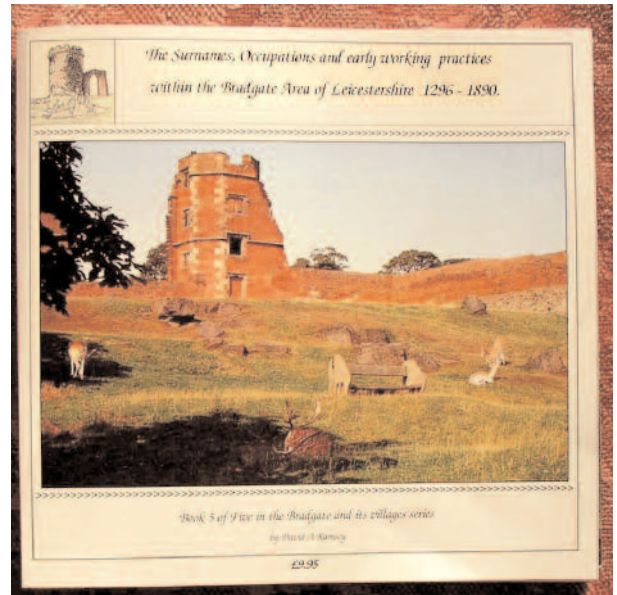
Member publishes another book

This latest book from the pen of David Ramsey completes the *Bradgate and its Villages* series of five. Entitled *The Surnames, Occupations and early working practices within the Bradgate Area of Leicestershire 1296-1890*, it runs to 150 pages and costs £9.95.

There are chapters within the book on Groby Pool, Mills and Millers, the second Bradgate House at Groby c1855, the artist John Martin, Henry Adams (Bradgate Park Keeper) and many more. Of interest to family historians is the fact that one third of the book contains surnames and occupations, which in the main pre-date the national census returns, which start in 1841. Some of the surnames have been picked out for pen portraits where a little more was known.



HENRY ADAMS
Park Keeper to the Earl of Stamford & Warrington.
Bradgate Park, Leicestershire. 1838



John Martin at Pool House, Groby sketched in and around Bradgate c1840 with the young Seventh Earl of Stamford. Included are many sketches by both artists and together with the Henry Adams lithograph all are published for the first time in Leicestershire.

Grace Dieu Priory Trust

Our Vice-President, Squire de Lisle, writes:

After much deliberation, this Trust was formed in 1997 to lease the land and buildings comprising the ruins of Grace Dieu Priory in the parish of Belton, north-west Leicestershire, to repair, restore, maintain and preserve the ruins and then to manage this heritage site.

With the help of local supporters, the North West Leicestershire District Council and Grace Dieu School, the aims of the Trust are being achieved and some trial work has begun this year (2003) in anticipation of a major effort next year. This work will consolidate the door and window openings and also the remaining walls following the ravages of ivy and time.

Charitable status has been obtained after lengthy legal efforts and its registered charity number is 1069804. This has allowed important funding to be awarded principally from the Heritage Lottery Fund, but also from English Heritage and many other local charities, individuals and organisations.

As you travel on the A512 between Shepshed and Whitwick, you will now see some genuine progress at the site of this nunnery founded by Lady Roesia de Verdon in about 1242 and poetically described by William Wordsworth in 1881 as 'The ivied ruins of forlorn Grace Dieu'.

Request for help

Heather Mac Dermid of Great Glen has asked members for help. She writes:

I have been browsing in the Record Office through a most interesting photo album with accompanying detailed architectural notes of old buildings in Great Glen. It was donated in 1984 to the Newark Houses museum before being transferred to the Record Office without the appropriate indexing information. I wonder if any of your readers could help in identifying the donor and the author of the notes.

If any member can help, please contact the Honorary Secretary (0116 270 3031)

News from the Library

If you wish to discover the origin of your place-name, assuming that you live in this county, of course, or to discover more about the names of streets in medieval Leicester, or of local rivers, then the ideal book has recently been published. *Understanding Leicestershire and Rutland Place-Names* has been written by Jill Bourne and published by Heart of Albion Press, 2 Cross Hill Close, Wymeswold, LE12 6UJ, £6.95, 2003 (1872883710). Jill is a member of the society's committee and is now joint editor of *Transactions*. A copy of the book has been kindly donated to the library by Bob Trubshaw.

Another member of the society, Christine Jordan, has just written *The Illustrated History of Leicester's Suburbs*, which is published by Breedon Books, £14.99, 2003 (1859833489). Christine has generously donated a copy to the library, which she used as a source of information while carrying out research. The book ranges from Aylestone to Humberstone Garden suburb to Saffron Lane estate to Western Park and is illustrated with photographs from Leicester Mercury and the Record Office for Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland.

Other **books** recently acquired for the library include:

Clare, T. *Account of Grimston Church* 1966

Clarke, D. *Daniel Lambert* 2nd ed. 1964

England, S. *Memories of Leicestershire* 2003. Steve is librarian at Leicester Mercury.

Fox, L. *Leicester Castle* 2nd ed. n.d.

Hickman, T. *Best of East Leicestershire and Rutland* 2001

Hunter, J. *Field systems in Essex* 2003 (First in a series of Occasional Papers celebrating 150 years of the Essex Society for Archaeology and History). Donated as part of our exchange arrangement.

Jenkins, J. and R. *A century of Leicester* 2000

Kibworth windmill must be preserved n.d.

Sandys, J. ed. *Thrussington: a village story* 2003

Periodicals

The latest issues of the following titles that are permanently filed have been received:

Antiquaries Journal

Architectural History

Birmingham and Warwickshire Archaeological Society Transactions

Cambridge Antiquarian Society Proceedings

CBA News (Council for British Archaeology)

Durham Archaeological Journal

English Place-Name Society Journal

Essex Archaeology and History

Hinckley Historian (congratulations on its 50th edition)

Historical Research

Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society Transactions

Lincolnshire History and Archaeology

Medieval Archaeology vol 47 2003 Includes 'The archaeology of medieval small towns', by Christopher Dyer, now a member of the society's committee, and an obituary of John Hurst.

Society of Antiquaries of Scotland

SPAB News (Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings).

This is circulated to members of the society's Historic Buildings Panel to help them with their work before reaching the library file.

Staffordshire Archaeological and Historical Society. Index to the Transactions. Vol. 35-39, 1996-2000. 2003

Village Voice

Current copies only of the following newsletters are available for reference use on the library table

Ancient Monuments Society Newsletter

Branchline (Leicestershire Environmental Resources Centre)

British Record Society annual report

Dustsheet (Record Office for Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland)

For the Record (as above)

Network News (Leicestershire and Rutland Archaeological Network)

Society for Medieval Archaeology Newsletter

Society of Architectural Historians of Great Britain Newsletter

South Derbyshire Heritage News

Talking History (East Midlands Oral History Archive)

Thoroton Society (Nottinghamshire)

Worcester Recorder

Work in the society's storeroom at the Guildhall (which is continuing) prompts the reminder that copies of most back issues of the *Leicestershire Historian* are still available for purchase. If you wish to extend or complete your run at very reasonable prices, do not hesitate to contact the Honorary Librarian with your requirements. Back copies of many *Transactions* are also available.

The Honorary Librarian regrets that owing to holiday absence the library will not be open on the 3rd Sunday in June (20th)

Aubrey Stevenson

Membership Subscriptions

The Honorary Membership Secretary has recently mounted a campaign to collect unpaid subscriptions. Some members are concerned that requests have not been made earlier to those falling behind with their subscriptions, but announcements are made every year in this Newsletter. With some 350+ members this seems to be the most convenient way of communicating with the membership. Maintaining membership records is a huge job and anything members can do to help relieve the burden would be appreciated. The Membership Secretary writes more on page 4.

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Lectures

With the publication of this Newsletter the lecture season is coming to an end, and one of our Honorary Lecture Secretaries, Sybil Rutland, writes about a recent lecture to the society.

One of the highlights this season was undoubtedly January's lecture on the Iron Age coin hoard found in south-east Leicestershire. The lecture was given by Vicki Priest, Project Officer with U.L.A.S., (University of Leicester Archaeological Services), who directed excavations at a 'secret' location. The story she told was a perfect example of the ways in which amateur archaeologists and metal detectorists from the local community can work together with professional archaeologists on a site which made national headlines and became the subject of a television programme – a really outstanding achievement which deserves to become a model for others to follow. The find changed dramatically our view of Iron Age Leicestershire, being the largest hoard of gold and silver Iron Age coins ever found in Britain, leading to suggestions that the site was a major religious centre. Vicki's infectious enthusiasm and professionalism was apparent to her audience and the fact that she brought along a small selection of the coins for members to handle was an unexpected bonus. The Society now looks forward to more information as the study of the site and finds progresses, and, hopefully, the opportunity to see some of the materials on display in one of the county's museums.

The 2004/5 season will consist of 12 meetings, an increase suggested by some members, and we hope that the lectures will continue to be well supported. Ideas for topics are always welcomed by the lecture secretaries.



Members attending Vicki Priest's lecture with chairman of the evening, Bob Rutland, on the left, and Vicki Priest on the right.

Leicestershire Historian

Following the resignation of Helen Edwards, who did sterling work as editor of the LH for several years, the society is fortunate in recruiting Joyce Lee as editor from 2005. Joyce will be well known to members for her books on Leicestershire topics and articles in the LH over the years. One of her most useful books is *Who's buried where in Leicestershire*, sadly now out of print. For the 2004 edition she will be working with our Honorary Secretary, but from 2005 she will be on her own! Please support her by suggesting or even submitting articles and illustrations.

We are planning to publish this year's edition in May/June and items ranging from short quotes, to full-blown articles are always required; illustrations which members come across are also always welcome. Items can still be accepted for this coming edition. Please send them to the Hon Secretary.

Back numbers of the Leicestershire Historian are available and can be purchased from the Honorary Librarian.

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