Having celebrated our 150th Anniversary it is now time to look forward. For the past year the energies of officers and committee members have been channelled into various anniversary events and publications. Now we must look to the future and ensure that the Society is ready for the next 150 years!

The efficiency of the Society depends a great deal on the work put in by officers and members of the committee and, as our chairman said at the AGM, we do need to find replacements for a number of officers who wish to retire. So far we have not found any volunteers who would like to take up office and even gentle hints to people have not yet brought any response. So please do not be shy. Contact me if you have any skills which you feel might give you the necessary background to become a lecture secretary, membership secretary, general secretary, editor of the Newsletter or whatever. If you would like to act an assistant for a while to see what the job entails that could be arranged.

The committee is considering whether we should appoint an administrative assistant to help with membership, the library, and other administrative duties to make the running of the Society more efficient and professional. One of our strengths is publications and we must maintain and improve the quality of all of our publications. Members will have noticed the attractive new cover of the last edition of Transactions which makes the volume slightly more contemporary looking and we hope will be welcomed by members. We are looking to improve the printing of the Leicestershire Historian and possibly using more colour, but we need to raise external money (advertising or sponsorship) to help pay for these improvements. When we do this we need to make sure it is available to a wider audience. It would be good to find sponsors for the LH and if any member knows of somebody we might approach please contact me.

Alan McWhirr

And now to the future… ...

The Society of Antiquaries lecture held in Leicester to mark the 150th Anniversary of the Society. From left to right: Professor Eric Fernie, President; Professor Marilyn Palmer; Dr Alan McWhirr; the Lord Mayor of Leicester, Councillor Mary Draycott and her consort, Mr Raymond Draycott.
The AGM

The AGM was held on Thursday 24th November and at that meeting we said farewell to our President Sir Timothy Brooks and elected Professor Rosemary Cramp in his place. The Society will in due course make a presentation of two suitably bound copies of the Index and Leicester Abbey to Sir Timothy to mark his presidency of the Society since 1994.

The committee suggested that the term of office for future presidents should be limited to three years so that nobody was put off by feeling that it was a ‘job for life’! In addition we would ask the president to either give a lecture or write an article for Transactions or the Leicestershire Historian. Professor Rosemary Cramp has agreed to become president and details of her connection with Leicestershire were noted in previous Newsletters.

Also standing down at the AGM was committee member Carl Harrison, County Archivist, and we are grateful for Carl’s support over the years. Robin Jenkins from the Record Office has agreed to serve on the committee and he was duly elected at the AGM.

The Honorary Treasurer warned the society that the committee is reviewing the annual subscription as at present it does not cover the basic expenditure of the society. If those who were able Gift Aided their subscription this might avert an increase in the annual subscription.

NEW VENTURE ... ...a Record Series

The committee is looking into the possibility of launching a new publication devoted to the county’s historical records. Nearly every county in England has what is usually referred to as a ‘Record Series’, and Leicester appears now to be the only county which does not have such a publication. A small working party has been formed to investigate the mechanics of producing such a series and whether it can be made financially self supporting. For such a series to be successful it needs to have a first-class editor and the working party is currently trying to fill this important post. If any member has any ideas of a person who might have the qualifications to undertake this voluntary role they should contact the Honorary Secretary.

Member’s new book

Member Derek Seaton has been busy again writing another book. This time he has turned his attention to the High Bailiffs of Leicester and has produced a very attractive booklet entitled A Brief History of the Ancient Office of High Bailiff of Leicester which is on sale at £2.75. A ceremony was held at the Guildhall to launch the book and several former High Bailiffs were present, including our Honorary Treasurer, Michael Johnson, who is pictured below with Derek Seaton holding a copy of the book.

We want to communicate with members more efficiently and regularly. Are you willing to be contacted by email? If so, please email the Honorary Secretary your email address at: alan@dovedale2.demon.co.uk
Index to the Transactions of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society

Cumulative Index to volumes 21-74 (1940-2000) and a reprint of the index to volumes 1-20

The index was delivered to Leicester in early November and was available for members to collect at lectures and at the AGM. Some members living out of Leicestershire who wanted copies have paid an additional sum to have their copy posted. So far we have distributed most copies to members who returned an order form.

There are still copies available and any member wishing to buy the index should send a cheque to the Honorary Secretary, made out to the LAHS, for £15 which includes post and packing.

During the course of production a small section of the index to volumes 1-20 was omitted. It is the section on page 388 comprising the index from Wyschard to Zouch, some twelve or so entries.

It was decided not to reprint from the earlier index the Index of Papers and the Index of Contributors and some members have felt that this was unfortunate. However, we have in mind to do a complete list of papers and contributors for all volumes some time in the future, perhaps linked to our web site in some way.

Leicester Abbey

The special anniversary publication on Leicester Abbey is now with the printers and is likely to be delivered to the society within the next month or so. A formal launch of the volume is expected to take place during the course of excavations on the abbey in June/July.

Members will be informed by email and on the web page when they can collect their ordered copy. We will also endeavour to put something in Leicester Mercury.

Other publications still available from the Honorary Librarian

Bringing them to their knees: church-building and restoration in Leicestershire and Rutland 1800-1914

by Geoffrey Brandwood

Paperback, 146 pages, 53 illustrations and a very informative Gazetteer

Normal price

Members offer £10 plus £3 p&p in the UK

BUT it will be on special offer on Sunday 7th May – see page 5

Incised Slabs of Leicestershire and Rutland (prefaced by a Brief Manual of Incised Slabs)

F. L. Greenhill

An important reference work and still available

Published by the Society in 1958. Hardback.

256 pages. 42 plates

Limited stock available

Price £15 plus £4 p&p in the UK

On special offer on 7th May – see page 5
Post card from abroad

Dear Dr McWhirr,

In a letter written to me in 1963 by my great aunt, she recounted some historical anecdotes about her family, including.

“My grandmother was a Miss Ross, and her ancestors founded the factory which made the first blankets in Leicester. There is a road now called Ross’s Walk, and a stone to mark the place where the factory stood.”

From ‘Historical Directories’ on the University of Leicester website I have browsed through the Pigot & Co. entries for Leicester and find that in 1828/9, Sarah Ross and Sons had a hosiery manufacturing business in Bond Street. By 1841 they had expanded this to include woolstapling and worsted spinning, and had moved to Market Street.

Are you able to confirm that this was the Ross mentioned? I really would appreciate any information you may be prepared to share with me on this.

With kind regards,
Barry John Cleveland
(great great grandson of Thomas Berry Cleveland, proprietor of the Leicester Guardian - does it still exist?)

If you can help Barry please contact Alan McWhirr

ICE AGE

Much of our knowledge about the Ice Age in Britain has come from commercial sand and gravel quarrying and to promote the study of this period a National Ice Age Network (NIAN) has been established to raise awareness and to improve our understanding of England’s Ice Age heritage.

Four regional centres have been created in the universities of Birmingham, Leicester, Southampton and London and the team here in Leicester comprises Dr Terry Hopkinson, Mr Lynden Cooper (ULAS) and Dr Mark Stephens.

More information can be found on the web at www.iceage.org.uk and if you wish to contact the group their email address is info@iceage.org.uk The Network will also be publishing regular newsletters, leaflets and a series of documents relating to the main types of Ice Age remains, including ‘recognition sheets’ covering stone tools, Ice Age sediments, animal remains and environmental evidence. If you would like to receive a copy then contact them at the email address given above or write to Dr Mark Stephens, School of Archaeology and Ancient History, University of Leicester, Leicester, LE1 7RH

Top: Anne Graf and Mark Stephens examining certain and possible Palaeolithic artefacts recovered by fieldwalking in SW Leicestershire.

Right: Selected Quartzite Lower Palaeolithic axes recovered by fieldwalking from SW Leicestershire.
MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTIONS ARE NOW OVER DUE
PLEASE PAY YOUR SUBSCRIPTION BY BANKERS’ ORDER AND ALSO
GIFT AID YOUR SUBSCRIPTION

Massive clear out Sale!!

Members will have the opportunity to buy back-numbers of Transactions, offprints and other society publications (see page 3) at knock-down prices on Sunday 7th May 2006 in the library at the Guildhall, between 2.00pm and 4.00pm.

Sale

You can also increase your run of Transactions with some very tempting offers. We need to clear stock in order to make room for new publications and so there will be some great reductions.

Can you help run the Society?

We would like to find somebody who can devote 3-6 hours a week for around 40 weeks of the year helping with various tasks involved with the running of our Society – basically an administrative assistant. We would be able to pay an honorarium for this work.

The person we are looking for will be asked to maintain the membership database, help with the distribution of our publications, deal with the sale of publications and a number of other tasks. They should be computer literate and familiar with the use of a database and other basic computer software. A lap top computer will be provided and the person would be able to work flexible hours and for most of the time could work from home. Occasional visits to the Guildhall and officers’ homes will also be necessary.

We are also looking for somebody who has ideas about increasing our membership and promoting the Society. If any member feels they have the necessary skills and is interested in applying for this post they should contact me as soon as possible.

It is likely that this post would appeal to a recently retired person, or somebody who needs to be at home with children or when they come home from school.

Alan McWhirr

So that we can keep members informed please let the Honorary Secretary have your email address

Part-time job

The library is now open

The Society’s library at the Guildhall is now open again on the first and third Sunday of every month except for some dates when the librarian is not available (see page 10). The library contains many books and runs of journals which can be borrowed by members, so do please make use of the library, it is yours!
Shires West, Site 12 (former St. Margaret’s Baths site). Interim report on the Excavation of St. Peter’s Church and Graveyard

Tony Gnanaratnam

A series of phased archaeological investigations on the site of the former St. Margaret’s Baths (Shires West Site 12) were undertaken by University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) on behalf of Shires GP Ltd, between early 2003 and December 2005.

The earliest activity on site consisted of a large Roman quarry. This was sealed beneath a Roman gravel surface with vague streaks of rubble, which were probably the remains of an insubstantial Roman structure.

A possible truncated Saxon grubenhaus was also found. The presence of Early Saxon settlement is also suggested by small finds and pottery found nearby.

The bulk of St. Peter’s Church was revealed. This is likely to be of at least early post-Conquest origins and the

Borough Records show that it was being dismantled in 1573 to provide building stone for the Free Grammar School on Highcross Street. The church probably began as a small two-celled building. It expanded, aisles were added and the final length of the church was 32m or 105ft, a respectable size for an urban parish church. Adjacent to the chancel was a sunken-floored charnel house.

Medieval features, including pits, building remains and an oven were found sealed beneath the expanding cemetery. To the north, other medieval buildings included a robbed-out undercroft and clay-walled building.

Approximately 1340 burials were recovered. Historical evidence uncovered by Dr Paul Courtney suggests that the church may not have originally had burial rights. Interestingly, there seems a general lack of clearly early burials within the church.

Initial inspection of the skeletal remains shows a number of pathologies and evidence of trauma. These include vitamin deficiencies such as anaemia (cribra orbitalia and porotic hyperostosis), possible scurvy and rickets.

Osteoarthritis seems especially prevalent in the spine but also the hands and knees. Many older adults exhibited Schmorl’s nodes, a possible result of heavy lifting. Scoliosis also indicated vertebral trauma. DISH (Diffuse Idiopathic Skeletal Hyperostosis) was seen, most often in older individuals and has been associated with obesity and diabetes. It is characterised by bone growth along the spine, fusing the vertebrae although the
condition can also affect other parts.

A couple of individuals suffered dislocations of hip and shoulder, whilst others showed evidence of fractures (mainly of the lower arm but also the clavicle), most of which were well healed though some were misaligned. Evidence of non-specific infections in the form of osteomyelitis was also seen and was often very advanced. Evidence of Tuberculosis and Meningitis has also been found.

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A major ULAS excavation is also taking place in the vicinity of Freeschool Lane, the former site of Norman and Underwood. Further details will be included in the Autumn Newsletter.

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From Leicester Mercury

**BREAKING NEWS**

**VALUABLE: MUSEUMS TEAM HOPES TO KEEP HOARD IN COUNTY**

A hoard of 5,000 Iron Age and Roman coins found in a field in Leicestershire has been valued at about £280,000, it was revealed today.

The coins were discovered by a volunteer during a metal detection survey and were later confirmed by experts. The find includes a variety of coins from different periods, including Roman coins and Iron Age brooches.

The site is being managed by Leicestershire County Council, who are now working with the museums team to ensure the coins are kept in the county.

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Please HELP

The future of the Society depends upon finding people who will undertake various posts. A number of officers have been in post for many years and are looking to hand over.

If anybody is interested in helping, a period of shadowing an officer can be arranged. Alternatively, a spell sitting on the committee might introduce a member to workings of the Society. Anybody interested please contact the Honorary Secretary.
Work is progressing well on the third phase of the Vine Street excavation on the north side of Vaughan Way – a site earmarked for a new multi-storey car park to serve the new Shires development. Excavations in 2004-5 uncovered part of what was believed to be a large Roman town house at the junction of two streets; one of the rooms was equipped with a hypocaust, represented by surviving tile pilae, and is thought to be part of a small bath suite, perhaps with a plunge bath. Adjacent to the town house, a large Roman building of the 3rd century AD was discovered with unusually thick walls, and is thought to be a public building, although of uncertain function. Also identified on the site were thirty or so burials which almost certainly relate to the lost church of St Michael, demolished in around 1450.

The current excavation, following demolition of buildings on the west side of Vine Street, has more than doubled the area examined, revealing a significant proportion of what now appears to be a very large town house, probably mid second century AD, with rooms arranged around a central courtyard, served by several corridors, within some of which are fragments of tessellated pavements. The Vine Street tessellated pavement, found in 1830 and currently in store at Leicester City Museum Service, may have come from this site, probably from one of the rooms in the western range. The sheer size of the building, perhaps with multiple courtyards and gardens, could indicate that it is a mansio, providing overnight accommodation for officials, rather than a private town house. Certainly finds of lead seals of the 20th legion and 6th legion, perhaps attached to documents or consignments of goods, could support this theory. Work is still underway to establish the full extent and perhaps function of the adjacent public building and to determine how it related to neighbouring properties.

Richard Buckley and Tim Higgins

Contemporary drawing of the Vine Street Mosaic. For a later drawing and description see Roman Mosaics of Britain Vol 1 by D Neal and S Cosh, 95-96. This floor uses figured samian pottery for some of the red tesserae.
John Brownlow, a long-standing member of this society, has spent a great deal of time combing through Nichols’ monumental history of the city and county and has listed all the illustrations and pedigrees with all the names contained therein. He has also produced 500 pages of selected extracts from Nichols on subjects including agriculture, waterways, customs, legal matters, plague and sickness, roads and bridges, storms, wages and witchcraft all of which have their own separate index. The end result is 24 files containing over 1,300 pages on a CD in a portable document file format (pdf) which can be used on PCs and Macintosh machines running Windows 9 or later. There is also a ‘find’ facility to enable the user to search for specific words. Also included on the CD are the original 74 questions that John Nichols sent out to every parish in the county the answers to which formed the basis of his major work.

The CD costs £10 and can be obtained from the Loughborough Archaeological and Historical Society by contacting Derek Hardy, 5 Chapel Rise, Worthington, Leicestershire, LE65 1RX.

The Archaeology of Rabbit Warrens
Tom Williamson

Members will recall the article written by Anthony Squires in last year’s edition of the Leicestershire Historian on ‘The Rabbit in Leicestershire’. Now Shire Publications has published The Archaeology of Rabbit Warrens in its Shire Archaeology series. It is written by Dr Tom Williamson, Reader of Landscape Archaeology at the University of East Anglia, Norwich.

The book describes the main archaeological features of warrens and discusses their date and function, the banks and walls used to contain rabbits, the traps used to catch both them and their vermin predators, the lodges in which the warreners lived and kept their equipment, and, above all, the ‘buries’ or pillow mounds in which the rabbits were encouraged to reside. Rabbit farming was an important part of the rural economy from medieval times through to the early twentieth century.

The book is 72 pages with 13 colour and 34 black and white illustrations and costs £5.99. ISBN 0 7478 0616 0.

UPPINGHAM IN LIVING MEMORY
Snapshots of Uppingham in the 20th Century

Part I: Uppingham at War

Uppingham at War, the first part of a new local history series entitled Uppingham in Living Memory, brings together historical research into aspects of wartime Uppingham with personal recollections from residents of the town. Fully referenced and illustrated with photographs and facsimile editions of official documents, this latest publication from the Uppingham Local History Study group will be of great interest to Rutland residents and historians alike.

Copies can be obtained from Roy Stephenson, 7 Newtown Road, Uppingham, Rutland, LE15 9TR price £6.83 including postage and packing.
News from the Library

The sad saga of the closure of the Jury Room which houses our library at the Guildhall, thus rendering the library inaccessible, has continued since my last report in the Autumn 2005 Newsletter. However, there is now some light on the horizon. Although no further building work has yet been carried out it will be possible to open the library at its regular times now that the Guildhall has reopened after its closure for two months. We shall doubtless be informed when work will take place and if you are on our email list we will inform you. I thank members for their understanding and forbearance.

In 1983, at the age of 73, Ellen Smith began writing about her life in Wymeswold from before the First World War and produced four books. The first two volumes, long out of print, have now been reprinted by the Wymeswold Church Appeal Fund and Heart of Albion Press. Bob Trubshaw of the Press has generously presented a copy of each to the Society:

- Memories of County Girlhood
- Seven Pennies in My Hand

These, along with the later volumes
- Many Fingers in the Pie
- Never too Late
are available from Heart of Albion Press (01509 880725) email albion@indigogroup.co.uk.

We have also received two other publications from the Press:

- Essinger, Mary In my fashion: starting work in the heyday of Leicester’s knitwear factories. 2005 £7.95
- Trubshaw, Bob Interactive little-known Leicestershire and Rutland CD-ROM 2nd ed 2005 £14.95

This CD contains over 700 photographs on local towns and villages relating to holy wells, standing stones, crosses, castles and windmills.

Other donations for which we are grateful include:

- Conybeare, E. Rothley Temple in the olden time. 2005 (Rothley Chronicles no. 3) Nos 1 and 2 were reviewed in the Leicestershire Historian 2005: donated by Terry Sheppard of Rothley Historical Society (0116 2302931)
- Seaton, D. ed Brief history of the ancient office of High Bailiff of Leicester 2005 £2.75 from the Lord Mayor’s Secretary, Town Hall, Leicester: donated by member Derek Seaton (see also page 2 of this Newsletter)
- Wix, D. and Goodwin, A. The Making of Loughborough 2005 £3.25 from Friends of Charnwood Museum: donated by Adam Goodwin of the Record office. I understand that this has already sold out, but that there are plans to reprint.

Further additions to the library stock:

- Cooper, P. Leicester Abbey 1143-1538 2005

Periodicals

The usual range of titles continues to arrive, so on this occasion, I shall just highlight those with immediate Leicestershire interest:

- Ashby de la Zouch Past and Present 6(2004); 7(2005)
- Ecclesiology Today 34 (2005) includes ‘A.W.N. Pugin and the restoration of St Mary’s church, Wymeswold’. Donated by Ian Stevens, a member of the society.
- Hinckley Historian 56 (2005)
- Historical Research Vol. 78 (8/2005) includes “Battle of Sandeford: Henry Tudor’s understanding of the meaning of Bosworth Field’
- Village Voice (summer 2005)

Index to TLAHS ... (although I trust every member has acquired their own copy)

In any member wishes to check on the situation regarding the opening of the library I can be contacted at the Record Office for Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland (0116 2571080)

Aubrey Stevenson
Honorary Librarian

Library Open 1st and 3rd Sunday each month, 2.00-4.00pm

Except for:
- 5 March – returning from supporting Leicester Tigers in Cardiff
- 16 April – Easter Sunday
- 7 May – grand clearance SALE
- 4 June – daughter’s wedding weekend

Record: unlocking heritage information. 2 vols 2004
English Heritage A user’s guide to public sculpture 2000
Donated by the publisher, but Leicestershire receives barely a mention.

Hickman, T. Market towns of Leicestershire and Rutland 2005
Jenkins, J. Honest people but destitute: the plight of Leicestershire framework knitters in the 1840s 2005
Leicestershire County Council Vikings in Leicestershire 2005
Rigby, S. ed. The overseas trade of Boston in the reign of Richard II 2005 (Lincoln Record Society 93)
The 1712 Land Tax Assessments and the
1710 Poll Book for Rutland

Transcribed by members of the Village Studies Group for
Rutland, with an Introduction by Dennis Mills and
Commentary by T H McK Clough.

RLHRS Occasional Publication No 7

Members of the Village Studies Group for Rutland have
recently made an important contribution to the history of
Rutland by transcribing a set of archives to do with the
taxation of land in Rutland three hundred years ago. Their
work has just been published by the Rutland Local History &
Record Society as the latest in its Occasional Publications
series.

Dr Dennis Mills, a specialist in Land Tax studies, provides a
general introduction explaining how the Land Tax worked in
its national context and stressing the importance of Rutland’s
early archive. Tim Clough, the Society’s Honorary Editor,
looks at the Rutland assessments to see how they were
recorded and what they can contribute to our studies of
Rutland in the early eighteenth century. He said, “These
archives contain an enormous amount of information about
Rutland people and places in the early eighteenth century,
and the Village Studies Group have done us a real service in
transcribing them”.

Together these archives give us a picture of Rutland society
at the time. They are brimming with information of interest
to family historians, local historians, and all those fascinated by how the county has developed. There are full indexes of
personal names, occupations and topographical names.

Copies of the new publication can be obtained from the Society at the Rutland County Museum for £5.95 (plus £1.00 p&p), or
from local bookshops. For further information, please contact: Tim Clough, Honorary Editor, RLHRS, Rutland County
Museum, Catmose Street, Oakham, Rutland, LE15 6HW, or tel 01572 722316.

Stamford in the late middle ages

Stamford was one of the
major towns of medieval
England, but relatively little
is known about it. One of
the reasons for this is that
many of the borough
records have been lost over
the century. But a new
project has been started to
make what records have
survived available. The first
of a series of publications by the Stamford Survey Group (in
association with Stamford Town Council and the Stamford
Civic Society) has just been launched.

Entitled William Browne’s Town: Stamford 1465-1492, it is
an edition of the first part of the town’s Hall Book, a minute
book of the town council. Stamford received its major
charter in 1462 during the Wars of the Roses when it helped
Edward IV to the throne; just after the succession of the
Yorkist king, the new council started the minute book in
1465.

This book is well produced and heralds the start of this
project. Copies can be obtained from Stamford Survey
Group, 2 Kings Road, Stamford PE9 1PJ at £10 (inclusive
of package and postage).

In My Fashion by Mary Essinger published by
the Heart of Albion Press £7.75

A delightful account of the life of a young factory worker in
the years immediately after World War 2. School leavers, 14
years old, were plunged into working conditions very
different from today’s, and much of this story will be
completely unknown to youngsters growing up now. In those
years Leicester had many busy factories where hosiery,
underwear, children’s clothes and boots and shoes were
made. Goods were exported all over the world – indeed
‘Leicester clothed the world’.

Mary tells of her life from day one, in a simple, entertaining
way, as she started working at the Cherub factory in Charles
Street. She proved to be a quick learner and was soon given
a little more responsibility, and fortunately for her, her talent
for cutting patterns, and later, designing dresses, was quickly
noticed, and she soon moved on to a much improved working
life.

There are also glimpses of her personal life – again very
different, in some ways, from today’s; a nostalgic reminder of
a former way of living, an enjoyable read and another good
offering from our member Bob Trubshaw and the Heart of
Albion Press.

Kay Gowland
The Council for British Archaeology’s Annual Meeting held in Leicester to mark the Society’s 150th anniversary

The Annual Meeting of the CBA was held in Leicester on the weekend of 23-25 September and was based at the Jewry Wall Museum and the University of Leicester. The organisation of the event from the Leicester end was undertaken by Robert Rutland. The Society held a reception at the Jewry Wall Museum to welcome members of the CBA and distinguished guests.

1. and 2. Members of the CBA listening to speeches.
4. Robert Rutland, Francis Pryor and Pete Liddle.
5. Nick Cooper explaining Roman pottery to ‘Young Archaeologists’.
6. Julian Richards inside a woodhenge with ‘Young Archaeologists’.
7. Julian Richards toasts the 150th anniversary of the Society.

Pictures 1, 2, 3, 4, and 7 David Ramsey (LAHS); 5 and 6 Colin Webb (University of Leicester Audio Visual Services).