

LEICESTERSHIRE FIELDWORKERS

Report of the Committee of Trustees for the years May 2016- March 2018

As you are aware Leicestershire Fieldwork Group Committee has been operating under some pressure for the past two years. Because of the legal process that ensued we were unable to hold the AGM in 2017 and also not able to tell members why this was so. The Committee was keen to ensure business as usual to keep the Fieldwork Group running and ensure that members continued to be offered a good selection of talks, newsletters, trip and opportunities to visit excavations. During the period of January -May 2017 the committee met monthly and also held special meetings to receive information on progress by the police and other authorities in relation to the theft.

In the autumn of 2017 following the closure of our regular meeting place at Jewry Wall Museum, we found a new venue in the University of Leicester George Davies Building, Centre for Medicine, which is large enough to accommodate both our regular talks and celebrity lectures. This venue is free of charge, has a central location, good parking facilities and built-in IT facilities. The turnout for meetings has confirmed that this has worked well for members. In June 2017 it was also agreed to use the University of Leicester Archaeological Services offices as the group's postal address for new membership to ensure continuity through any changes of personnel.

Meetings 2016 – June 2018

In 2016-17 six meetings were held at the Jewry Wall Museum, one at the Ken Edwards Lecture Theatre, University of Leicester and since November 2018 at the George Davies Centre, University of Leicester. We are extremely grateful to the University for providing Lecture Theatre 2 to us free of charge.

Talks in 2016/17 were given on Archaeology in Cambridgeshire (Graham Appleby), Planning Archaeology in Leicestershire (Richard Clark), The Viking Camp at Torksey (Professor Julian D Richards), Iron Age Leicestershire (Dr Jeremy Taylor), Archaeology and History of Sherwood Forest (Andy Gaunt), Fieldwork in the Moroccan Sahara (David Mattingly).

The first lecture in the George Davies Centre in November 2017 was The Beaker Project (Professor Mike Parker Pearson) which generated a very good turnout to hear about new cutting-edge research findings on the DNA origins of people buried with Beaker artefacts. Lectures continued in January 2018 with Recent Excavations in Roman Leicester (Mathew Morris), Iron Age Cauldrons from Glenfield Park (John Thomas), iPads, Volunteers and LiDAR in Groby (Matt Beamish), Excavations at Thistleton – a Roman town, villa and temple (Peter Liddle).

Trip 2017

Following the June 2017 talk Andy Gaunt and two colleagues led a Fieldworkers field trip to Rufford Country Park, Sherwood Forest WW2 remains and the newly discovered Viking meeting site of Thinghowe, and King John's Palace site, on June 17. Despite it being a very hot day this was enjoyed by all who attended. There was no trip in 2018 due to the demands of organising the Archaeology Festival and the smaller remaining number of 6 committee members.

Newsletters

Regular bi monthly newsletters were circulated by Peter Liddle throughout the year.

Online media

The website was redeveloped in 2016 and in January 2017 Alan Clark launched the Leicestershire Fieldworkers Facebook Group which now has 159 members, not all from Leicestershire. A feature article about the Fieldworkers was published in East Midlands History and Heritage magazine at the beginning of 2017.

Training

A training day in October 2016 was attended by 20 members some of whom then went fieldwalking at Othorpe near Slawston with Paul Bowman and Peter Liddle. A half day of pottery and flint identification training was provided in September 2017 at the School of Archaeology, University of

Leicester. A half day training seminar to group representatives in the use of the online OASIS computer system for recording excavations and sites was given by English Heritage and the Archaeology Data Service at the University.

Fieldworkers Network

Established groups were active during this year and a new group covering Thurgaston and Rothley was founded during 2017 with support from Peter Liddle. The Melton group was also revived by Paul Dickinson and others and a new group at Hoby has been supported by Richard Knox. Members of the Oadby and Wigston group were key in redesigning fieldwork recording sheets into a digital format so there is a standard system which can be used by all Leicestershire and Rutland fieldwalk groups. A training day was given on this hosted by Mike Bruce and organised by Peter Liddle.

Festival of Archaeology – Leicestershire and Rutland

The 2016 Festival of Archaeology was well attended and at the start of 2017 an organising committee with Peter Liddle as Chair and a wider stakeholder email group was formed to run the 2017 Festival. The 2017 Festival was also very successful with a high number of participants. The Festival aims to be self-funding and is grateful to donations from local history and archaeology groups including the LAHS, the LIHS and the Fieldworkers.

Excavation Visits

In February 2017 a special visit was arranged for Leicestershire Fieldworkers to the Highcross excavation supervised by Mat Morris and involving 60 people in two groups. A visit was also arranged to the popular Stibbe excavation in May. 31 members attended the Castle Hill excavation open day on 10th September for Fieldworkers, and 50 attended a special tour of the Bradgate Park excavations in 2017.

Fieldworkers book and membership stall

In 2017 Kathy Elkin with help from John Lacey and Stephen Womersley took the Leicestershire Fieldworkers bookstall to the Charnwood Roots History Fair at Beaumanor Hall and again in 2018 when the LAHS World War I event was held with Peter Liddle also very busy talking about pottery and fieldwalking. Although we were not able to attend the University's Bradgate open day in 2017 we got there in 2018 and also attended both years' Festival of Archaeology launch events in July at Jewry Wall. The stall went to some of the CBA regional events and continues to make a good income to offset our storage costs. We are very grateful to Aucott and Thomas, internet booksellers of Ibstock, for providing free good quality history and archaeology books for sale as well as to members and supporters who have donated journals and other books to us for resale.

Books publishing

Work continued in 2016 on Robert 'Fred' Hartley's book on The Medieval Earthworks of South and South-East Leicestershire by editor Kathy Elkin but this was restricted by her duties as acting Treasurer for the first half of 2017. The book was published in July 2018. There were steady sales of Medieval Leicestershire during this period. Sales have covered the cost of printing and we are in profit.

Membership

Membership is stable at around 410 households. We lose around 30 people each year but this is offset by numbers joining. Peter's lecture series are a big factor in creating interest. About 60 members pay by Standing Order. The cost is £6 for an individual member and £10 for 2 or more at the same address.

August 2018