

# DESFORD & DISTRICT LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

March 2014

This is my first newsletter as secretary and I hope I can make it, and future ones, as good as Linda Mitchell's were. Many thanks to her for setting the 'standard'.

As there have been some changes I am taking the opportunity to remind you who your committee are for 2014 :

President - Caroline Wessel

Chairman - Colin James

Secretary - Angela Thomas

Treasurer - Bernard Grimshaw

Members - Gwyneth Reed, Brian Ward, Pat Crane, John Richards.

Co-opted members: Steve Thorpe and Molly Marcus.

We will shortly be planning our programme for 2015 and would welcome your suggestions for visits or talks. So, if you have a place you would like to visit or know someone who will give a talk, particularly on a topic local to the area, please contact one of the committee or email me:

[angelthom1948@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:angelthom1948@hotmail.co.uk)

## IMPORTANT!

All meetings now start at **7.30pm.**

**Subscriptions for 2014** are due. Please see Bernard as soon as possible if you have not paid. They remain at £12 for this year.

Our next meeting **ONLY** is moved to the 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday in the month.

**Tuesday March 25<sup>th</sup>** – Dr Turi King, Leicester University geneticist, will talk about 'The Search for Richard III'. Your opportunity to ask questions of a key member of the university team responsible for analysing the DNA evidence and 'telling the story'.

## One of our photo albums is missing!

The album featuring 'The High Street' is missing. We had hoped it would turn up when the archives were moved. This is a large, dark blue album. Many of you will have seen our albums when we have them on display at events such as 'Open Gardens'. Have you borrowed it or recollections of seeing it?

If you can help please get in touch.

## PAULA

We were all shocked to hear of the recent untimely death of Paula Casson, a member of the society for many years, committee member and Chairperson for three years.

She brought intellect, knowledge and energy to the role of chairperson and revitalized the society by recruiting many new members, booking interesting speakers and planning fascinating visits. In fact much of this year's programme has been instigated by Paula along with members of the working group which she chaired.

She was very happy to lead meetings herself and will be remembered in particular for the Anglo Saxon and Roman evenings for which she researched numerous recipes and foods, which were then cooked and served as authentically as possible for members to experience and enjoy. She was always 'in role' on these occasions, making her own costume and giving a talk about the period.

Although she moved to Newbold Verdon to live many years ago, she was always particularly interested in the history of Desford and gave an illustrated presentation about the development of the village in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. This is now in the archive collection.

Her 'Chairperson's Entertainments' as part of the Annual General Meetings which she led were always lively and often involved audience participation. For example there were quizzes, discussions about unusual historical objects, and mini-talks by members which were very strictly timed by husband Dennis, who always gave her such wonderful support.

She has been described as a 'larger than life character' who touched many hearts and minds and she will be sadly missed.

Our sincere condolences and thoughts go to Dennis and his family.

Linda Mitchell



'Anglo Saxon' Paula

## **Visits in 2014**

### **Sunday May 11<sup>th</sup> – A walk to Barns Charity Fields**

Meet at the Church Centre at 2.30pm. Peter Ward will briefly explain 'the history of the Barns Charity' and there will be a small amount of archive material to see, followed by a walk to the fields led by Nick Crowley.

Please sign up at the March meeting.

Organizer: Angela Thomas, 822934

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### **Saturday June 21<sup>st</sup> – Annual trip to Cambridge**

Have you signed up? Have you paid?

Organizer: Brian Ward, 822396

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### **Tuesday July 29<sup>th</sup> – Evening guided walk**

Incorporating New Walk and aspects of Georgian Leicester.

Details to follow.

Organizer: Pam Wocha, 822701

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### **Thursday August 21<sup>st</sup> – Coach trip to Kedleston Hall (NT) near Derby**

Cost: Coach approx £12.

Entrance: Free to National Trust members. Approx £9 for non-members.  
Further details in the May newsletter.

Organizer: Linda Mitchell, 822197

Please send any contributions for the next newsletter by 1<sup>st</sup> May to:

Angela Thomas  
8 Oxford Road  
Desford  
822934 [angelthom1948@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:angelthom1948@hotmail.co.uk)

# **DESFORD & DISTRICT LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY NEWSLETTER**

**May 2014**

**I hope you have all had an  
enjoyable Easter break.**

**Dr Turi King – The Greyfriars Project**



We were very pleased to have as our first speaker of the year Dr Turi King, geneticist at Leicester University. Dr King gave us a very interesting and entertaining talk on the search for Richard III: a project she had not expected would take much of her time, as the chances of him being found were thought to be low. How wrong they were! Dr King's DNA analysis of the bones, or at least the teeth, were crucial, along with samples from descendants in determining that it was indeed Richard III they had found. Dr King is expecting to be able to determine Richard's hair and eye colour, with advanced DNA technology. A large team of experts were involved in this fascinating project. Richard's final resting place has still to be decided. Will it be Leicester or York? I hope it will be Leicester, others of course may disagree.

**Our next talk is on May 20<sup>th</sup> at 7.30pm**

**WW1 Conscientious Objectors**

**John Sutton**

**Brian Ward will be leading the –  
CBA Festival of Archaeology  
Heritage Stroll around the  
Conservation Area of Desford  
Saturday July 26<sup>th</sup>**

Meet at 2pm in the car park of Desford Tropical Birdland, Lindridge Lane.

There will be a leisurely stroll around the conservation area in Desford, with a short time in Desford Free Church where you will be able to see some pictures of Desford in the past.

The owner of the Tropical Birdland has kindly made available the toilet facilities, car park and cafeteria for people attending the event on the day, also 20% discount on the admission price for those who wish to visit the Birdland.

Contact. [brianward.le99fx@talktalk.net](mailto:brianward.le99fx@talktalk.net)  
Phone: 01455 823073.

## **Can you help?**

The Society will be having a display at Desford Carnival on June 29<sup>th</sup>. Our theme will be WW1. Do you have any photos or 'memorabilia' of this time that we could borrow for the day? It does not have to be related to Desford.

Contact: Angela Thomas, 822934 or Pat Crane, 823537.



## **Leicestershire and Rutland Heritage Forum**

The Society belongs to The Leicestershire and Rutland Heritage Forum (LRHF). Membership is open to small private museums, and groups such as ours. Pat Crane and Angela Thomas attended the recent Heritage Awards evening at the Century Theatre, Snibston introduced by Dave Andrews of BBC Radio Leicester. We were amazed at the variety of projects undertaken by very dedicated, hardworking volunteers. Swannington Heritage Trust won three categories, as well as The Heritage Group of the Year Award. We were entertained by students from The John Moore Foundation and the evening finished with a food and drink reception.

More information and local places to visit can be found at:

<http://www.goleicestershire.com/see-and-do/leicestershire-heritage-forum-homepage.aspx>

**The Leicestershire and Rutland Heritage Forum** are holding their annual exhibition at Snibston from May 23<sup>rd</sup> – June 29<sup>th</sup>.

The theme is **‘Through Time in Your Local Landscape’**.

For the first time we are taking part. Our display is entitled: ‘Desford – The Conservation Area’.

On Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> May from 2 - 4.30pm there is a ‘Meet the Forum’ event. Members from many of the groups, including DDLHS, will be available to answer questions about their exhibits, chat about their local activities and help spread the word of the importance ‘our heritage’.

### **Michael Richardson**

It is with sadness that we have learned of the recent death of one of our members, Michael Richardson. Our thoughts at this time are with his wife, Margaret.

Please send contributions to the next newsletter by 1<sup>st</sup> July to:

Angela Thomas, 8 Oxford Road, Desford LE9 9JN 822934, [angelthom1948@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:angelthom1948@hotmail.co.uk)

**Hinckley Museum**, located in Lower Bond Street, Hinckley, has a stunning temporary exhibition about World War One, entitled ‘Somewhere in No-Man’s Land: Hinckley and district in the First World War’. On view is a fascinating and touching collection of memorabilia and personal possessions belonging to Hinckley soldiers and their families and records on all aspects of Hinckley life during WW1. The whole display is beautifully presented and easy to follow. A visit is highly recommended. Opening hours: Museum, garden and tearoom from Easter Monday till the end of October on Saturdays and Bank Holidays 10am - 4pm: Sundays 2pm - 5pm. Admission 50p, children 25p.

## **Visits Update**

### **Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> May Barnes Charity Fields Walk**

**No dogs** are allowed on this walk as there are cows in the fields (surrounded by electric fences).

Stout shoes and suitable weather attire are strongly advised.

Meet at the church centre at 2.30pm.  
Contact: Angela Thomas 822934.

### **Tuesday 29<sup>th</sup> July New Walk and Georgian Leicester**

Meet at Welford Place, Leicester at 6.30pm. Cost £4. Sign up at May meeting.

Contact: Pam Wocha 822701.

### **Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> August Kedleston Hall (NT)**

Lovely house and gardens. Restaurant and shop. Meet at the library, for coach 9.30am.

Coach £12.50 + entrance if non-NT member.

Sign up and PAY (coach only) at May meeting. Contact: Linda Mitchell 822197.

### **Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> September**

Evening walk around Frisby on the Wreak.

Contact: Graham Alsop 823116.

# DESFORD & DISTRICT LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

July 2014

**June 21<sup>st</sup> was not only the longest day of the year but also the date of our visit to the beautiful city of Cambridge.**

It was a gloriously sunny day. Did Brian Ward organise the weather? – maybe not but he certainly organised a very good trip.

Some of us took a traditional punt down the river to the Magdalen Bridge, past the Bridge of Sighs (named after the famous one in Venice). Our guide managed to skilfully avoid other punts and tell us some college history as we passed along the ‘backs’.



Most of the party opted for a guided tour around the historic centre and, although the colleges were closed to visitors, they were lucky enough to go into the magnificent Kings College Chapel to admire the mediaeval stained glass windows and vaulted ceiling. Over several hundred years the colleges have been the centre of learning for many who have made their names in the arts, sciences and politics.

I (and Huw) opted to visit ‘Kettles Yard’ – a large house converted from several slum cottages (that gave it its name) in

1957 by Jim and Helen Ede. Their collection of early 20<sup>th</sup> century British and European art is displayed as it was when they lived in the house for 15 years. They were friends of many of the artists and held musical recitals. They held open house every afternoon, and this tradition has been continued by volunteers. The house was given over to the university in 1973. We found it a very simple, quiet house. Certainly worth a visit.

We all had ample time for sightseeing and ‘soaking up the atmosphere’ whilst taking care to avoid the many bicycles and tourists!

The day finished with a meal at The Ferryboat Inn in Holywell. A few, fast eaters managed to get to see the ancient well that had been ‘dressed’ just a few days before.

Many thanks to Brian for his meticulous organisation. Next year’s annual trip will take us north.

*Angela Thomas*

## Dates to Remember

**Saturday July 26<sup>th</sup>** – Stroll around the Conservation area – Brian Ward 823073

**Tuesday July 29<sup>th</sup>** – New Walk / Georgian Leicester – Pam Wocha 822701

**Thursday August 21<sup>st</sup>** – Kedleston Hall – Linda Mitchell 822197. Coach places available

**Tuesday Sept. 2<sup>nd</sup>** – Evening walk – Frisby on the Wreake – Graham Alsop 823116

## A Short History of Desford Pipe Organs



In March this year the Free Church organ needed repairing. Whilst taking pictures of the repair work I learnt a little about the church organs in the village. Pictured in front of the Free Church organ during the early stage of repair are Stephen Taylor (on the left) and Richard Young, operating as R & S Young Ltd.

R & S Young has been established over 100 years. Stephen Taylor is the fourth generation of organ builders and Richard Young is the second generation of organ builders in his family. His father Roy was apprenticed to Stephen's father Geoff Taylor and his uncle, also Stephen Taylor.

As an aside, T Taylor and Sons built the organ in De Montfort Hall, the lowest note of which has a frequency of 32Hz and the pipe producing this note is 16 feet long and cannot be removed in its entirety without dismantling the whole organ.



## Desford Free Church

The Free Church organ was built by Hewitts of Aylestone, Leicester, in 1904 and was acquired with funds raised by the 'Ladies Bright Hour' chapel group. Hewitts made more organs for chapels than for churches. The chapel organ required repairs in the late 1950s / early 1960s and again in 1992, all carried out by Roy and Richard Young. The organ had two manuals (keyboards) and a pedal board. When the recent repair work was in progress it was discovered that the large accumulator (or bellows), that stores the air, was leaking. The cost of repairing this was well in excess of funding so sadly a decision was made to scrap the organ. The area occupied by the organ will be used for much-needed storage space.

A G<sup>#</sup> organ pipe was donated to the writer for the DDLHS archives.

## St Martin's Pipe Organ

The pipe organ at St Martin's Church was built by J Porritt circa 1880. Porritt made organs of a very fine quality. The organ came originally from Blaby Parish Church where it was replaced by a J W Walker Extension Organ (electric action). The Porritt organ was removed during Rev. Sharp's time and promised to a new home, but its location is unknown. If anyone can throw a light on its whereabouts please let us know.

*Steve Thorpe 3/7/14*

## Next Meeting – September 16<sup>th</sup>

Archers in the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> Centuries –  
*Peter Hallett*

Our display on Desford in WW1 that we prepared for Desford Carnival will be available for all to see on the night.

Please send contributions to the next newsletter by 1<sup>st</sup> September to: Angela Thomas, 8 Oxford Road, Desford  
angelthom1948@hotmail.co.uk

# DESFORD & DISTRICT LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

October/November 2014

## Summer Visits and 'Archers'

We have had a varied programme of summer visits, not too far afield.

The evening of July 29<sup>th</sup> saw 22 of us meet with Stuart Bailey, our guide from Leicester Civic Society, for a very interesting walk around **Georgian Leicester and New Walk**. We have our own 'Georgian Crescent' in King Street. It may not be on a par with the one in Bath but is still a pleasure to see. By the end of the evening Stuart had opened our eyes to a wealth of architecture and told us numerous tales about the area. When I stroll along New Walk in the future I will certainly see it in different light.

August 21<sup>st</sup> saw 24 of us board a coach to **Kedleston Hall, NT**, in Derbyshire. We toured the house with 'the grandest Palladian façade in Britain', finished in 1765 for Sir Nathaniel Curzon. Robert Adam was the architect. The Curzons still live in part of the house to this day. All Saints Church was close by, the only survivor of the medieval village which was demolished to provide the site for the house. We walked around the 'pleasure grounds' and park and we had an entertaining guided tour of the stables.

On the evening of September 2<sup>nd</sup> 19 members visited **Frisby on the Wreake**, where they witnessed the home of a highwayman and heard about a rector who married without banns until he was caught. They saw a water mill without water and a coaching inn that, until 1810, was on the route from Leicester to Melton. It sounds as if it was a good evening and I am sorry I couldn't be there.

Many thanks to the members who organised these visits. Pam Wocha for Georgian Leicester, Linda Mitchell for Kedleston and Graham Alsop for Frisby. We certainly appreciate the research and organisation that makes these visits so interesting and successful.

Our first talk after the summer was Archers in the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> Centuries. Peter Hallett was our speaker and came in the costume of the period. He showed us clothing and other objects, from his longbow and arrows to authentic handmade clothing and shoes. As a sewer I could appreciate the skill and time that Mistress Joan had taken making these garments. Peter certainly knew his subject and spent some time talking to members after his talk. Master Peter and Mistress Joan, his wife (who unfortunately did not accompany him due to illness), take part in many enactments. They had recently been at Bosworth Battlefield Heritage Centre for a Richard III event.

**\*\*The hearse containing Richard III will travel through Desford on Sunday March 22<sup>nd</sup> en route to Leicester Cathedral, where his remains will finally be laid to rest.\*\***



**Victorian Evening (FOR MEMBERS ONLY)**

**18<sup>th</sup> November 7.30pm at Botcheston Village Hall**

*A grand evening of education, entertainment and a 'Victorian Afternoon Tea' to include*

The Secrets of Princess Louise – Queen Victoria's sixth and most gifted child.

A talk by Dr. Sue Heightman

Songs of the period sung by Eric Whittaker

(audience participation, for the final song, will be encouraged)

A poem recited by Pam Wocha and Molly Marcus will tell us about Mrs Beeton

The afternoon tea will consist of dainty sandwiches, small cakes and, of course, tea. It is not intended to be your main meal of the day! We would like you to bring your favourite pretty cup/saucer and plate, if you have one. No mugs please! There will be a display of Victoriana. If you have an interesting item of the period please bring it along on the evening. Victorian attire may be worn.

**There will be a charge of £2 to cover the cost of the food, payable on the night. It would help us for catering if you could let us know if you will be coming, preferably by email, see below.**

If you require a lift to Botcheston this can be arranged. Please contact Angela Thomas by Tuesday November 11<sup>th</sup>. Contact details below.

**The Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society**

13<sup>th</sup> Nov: **The Story of England: Kibworth in Local and National History** *Michael Wood, President of Society* (Fully booked but you may be able to go on a reserve list, ring 07805 459764)

27<sup>th</sup> Nov: **The 159<sup>th</sup> AGM followed by Q & A with Dominic Smee on research into the effects of scoliosis on Richard III.**

11<sup>th</sup> Dec: **We Will Not Fight: WW1 Conscientious Objectors** *John Sutton* (Chair of Leics. And Rutland Western Front Association)

15<sup>th</sup> Jan 2015: **An Unholy Conflict: Church and Chapel in Early 18<sup>th</sup>C Lutterworth** *Pamela Fisher*

5<sup>th</sup> Feb: **Lost Buildings of Rutland** *Robert Owens*

26<sup>th</sup> Feb: **Members Evening**

12<sup>th</sup> Mar: **Temples, Altars and Religious Change on the Northern Frontier: Recent Work at Maryport and Birdoswald** *Tony Wilmott, English Heritage*

2<sup>nd</sup> April: **Blackfriars Excavation, Bath Lane, Leicester** *Adam Slater, Wardell Armstrong Archaeology*

23<sup>rd</sup> April: **An A to Z of Leicestershire at War** *Robin Jenkins, Snr Archivist, Leics& Rutland Record Office*

14<sup>th</sup> May: **Between the Monuments: Ongoing Fieldwork at the Neolithic Monument Complex of Avebury, Wiltshire** *Mark Gillings, School of Archaeology. Univ. of Leicester*

All lectures take place in New Walk Museum at 7.30pm. The group has a membership card which can be collected from Angela Thomas.

**Contact: Angela Thomas, 8 Oxford Road, Desford. [angelthom1948@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:angelthom1948@hotmail.co.uk) 01455 822934**