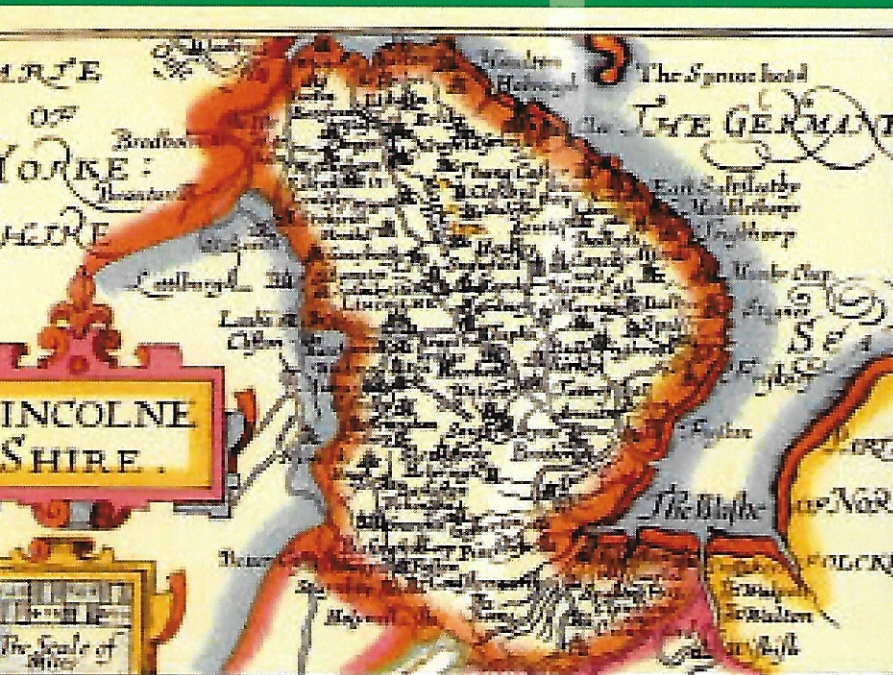




SOCIETY FOR
LINCOLNSHIRE
HISTORY &
ARCHAEOLOGY

2023 ANNUAL REPORT



Patron : Ursula Lidbetter
President : Naomi Field
Chair : Andrew Walker
Vice Chairman : Mike Daly

Treasurer : Chris Hewis
Secretary : Kathy Holland
Charity Number : 1182569
Total Membership : 611

Chair's Report

Firstly, I'd like to thank my predecessor, Ian George, for all his work chairing the Society, especially in the challenging days of the Covid epidemic and its immediate aftermath. The Society is now operating on a more 'normal' footing, post-Covid. As the accounts from the various SLHA groups within this report indicate, a host of face-to-face activities have taken place through the year, though some innovations introduced during the Covid period have continued, notably the programme of Zoom talks, for which there remains an appetite, particularly in the winter. During the year we have continued to work on enhancing the Society's infrastructure. In the early part of 2023-24 we hope to have improved the Society's IT provision significantly, and we are in discussions with a web developer regarding the replacement of our current website, which has served us well, but now requires technical updating. Particular thanks are due to Steve Stefaniuk for his work leading this initiative.

Thanks to everyone who completed the Society's membership survey. We are working on an action plan linked to this, which we will share with members. Many of the 90+ responses were very positive. However, there were points raised suggesting aspects of our work that needed further attention and improvement, including regular production of the Society's journal. We are working on these matters.

In last year's report, Ian mentioned the need to make progress with Bardney Abbey, a site for which we have responsibility. In May, a group of us undertook an assessment visit. Subsequently, a Bardney Abbey Working Party has been formed which, in the first instance, will develop a vision for the site and explore ways of implementing it, drawing upon the help of other bodies as appropriate. I hope that more progress on this can be reported during the forthcoming year.

The year 2024 will be a significant one for the SLHA, marking 50 years since its founding, (though of course its predecessor organisations themselves have longer histories). We will be organising a range of Golden Jubilee activities, including a conference on Saturday 20 April 2024, and an exhibition. We are keen to involve as many of our members as possible in these activities.

The following reports provide details of the various groups within the society. If you'd like to become more involved with any of these, please do contact Kathy Holland.

I'd like to finish by thanking all members for their ongoing commitment to the SLHA, especially our many volunteers, and to Kathy in particular for her tremendous work supporting all of the Society's activities – and for helping me get to grips with chairing this wonderful organisation.

Andrew Walker, Chair of the Society

Property

Cyclical maintenance continues to be carried out at Jews' Court including, boiler maintenance, annual asbestos check, PAT Testing, radon monitoring, plus intruder and fire alarm servicing. Weekly/monthly checks and monitoring are carried out at approved intervals to the fire alarm call

points, emergency lighting, the Intruder Alarm system and smoke and heat detection.

Further to the Fire Risk Assessment Report produced in 2022, fire stopping work has been carried out including the installation of a new smoke detector and emergency light in the attic. Training of new volunteers in Fire Safety Awareness has been completed and will continue to be carried out in-house as required.

Plans are in place for monitoring of the stone façade to the front of the building which is due to be carried out shortly. Discussions have taken place regarding the appointment of a Conservation Care Structural Engineer to carry out an assessment of Jews' Court.

Members of the Property Team participated in the site visit and discussions regarding the future of the Bardney Abbey site which is in the care of the Society.

Maintenance of the gardens at Jews' Court has continued with grateful thanks to Dave Mellows.

Colin Holland for the Property Team

Industrial Archaeology

The annual Industrial Archaeology Conference Lincolnshire Railways was held in Grantham. The five talks successfully described examples of the range of applications for railways that once existed, and to some extent still apply in the County.

The talk *The Night of 24th October 1942; The Last Air Raid on Grantham* was held in person on 15th February 2023 and described this raid and what happened to the speaker and his family together with the reasons for the Raid and those who conducted it. An in-person talk on *Associated British Ports and Rail Transport* included a history of the port of Immingham and the changes needed to meet the ever-changing requirements of those using the port. Fieldwork included visits to the surviving buildings and other structures associated with the East Lincolnshire Line and "New Line" together with other nearby locations of industrial archaeological interest. Other field work included a visit to Gunby Hall to assist the National Trust with the interpretation of the use of the Robey engine.

The Society picnic at Oxcombe Farm was a success despite the threat of inclement weather. I.A. Team members took the lead in organising this event. The project to celebrate Lincolnshire's Bricks and Brickmakers in conjunction with Alford Manor House continues to make progress. The Team is greatly saddened by the recent death of Eric Newton. Eric was a much-respected member of the Team. His knowledge of Lincolnshire's water supplies was very comprehensive.

Stephen Betteridge, Chairman of the Industrial Archaeology Team

Local History

Our flagship event of 2023 was the well-received conference on 'Reimagining Lincolnshire' which was organised in conjunction with the University of Lincoln and held at Welton village hall. It consisted of thought-provoking talks & a finale of songs and music. My

thanks go to Professor Heather Hughes for her help in the planning of this event. Our affiliated churches group held its first conference in Epworth Memorial Church. We were given guided tours of the Memorial Church and the Parish Church of St Andrew. There will be another church conference in 2024 which is expected to take place in Tattershall. Two guided tours of churches have also taken place – one to Tathwell and Haugham under Jean Howard whilst John Manterfield led a visit to Allington and Sedgfield. Further church trips are being planned along with the possibility of Zoom tours. My thanks to Jean Howard for leading the churches group. Chris Hewis continues to help arrange events for Heritage Open Days. Our team still monitors the heritage activities of Lincolnshire County Council and the future of Raithby Methodist chapel. Team members also answer queries and questions from around the world. We welcomed SLHA vice-chair Mike Daly to our ranks and would welcome any SLHA member who has an interest in our work.

Mark Acton, Chairman of the Local History Team

Building Recording Group (RUBL)

We have made steady progress during the year on a number of projects. Fieldwork is taking place in South Willingham for the RUBL element of The Lincolnshire Hearth Tax volume which will be published by the Lincoln Record Society and the British Records Society in 2026. Work continues at Kirkstead and Stixwold as part of our contribution to the Sacred Landscapes of the Witham Valley project based at the University of Wales Lampeter. A society visit was made to look at the buildings in Barton-Upon-Humber. A new member has joined the team who is researching the village of Stragglethorpe. Members of RUBL have joined the working party looking at the future of Bardney Abbey. RUBL members continue to play a leading role in the Lincoln Local List project. The Local List is scheduled for adoption by the City Council in 2024. Discussions continue with East Lindsey District Council on the conservation of mud and stud buildings. The Guide to Jews' Court for use by guides to the building is making good progress. The Grantham team continue to monitor developments in the town. There have been regular Zoom meetings throughout the year.

Ken Hollamby, Secretary for David Stocker, Chairman of the Building Recording Team

SLHA Study Tour to SW Scotland

After missing a year for logistical reasons the delayed Study Tour to SW Scotland took place in July. The original plan had been to stay in Dumfries but the hotel was not available and we were moved to the Gretna Hall Hotel at Gretna Green. There were 30 passengers on the trip. The packed weekend started on the journey out at the Devil's Porridge Museum and Ruthwell Cross. On day two there were visits to Dumfries House and the Museum of Lead Mining at Wanlockhead. On day three we had a long drive to medieval Whithorn Abbey and a visit to the nearby book-town of Wigtown. On the last day we visited the National Trust for Scotland's Threave Gardens followed by Sweetheart Abbey and New Abbey Cornmill. On the way home we had a morning in Carlisle. Next year we plan to visit the Isle of Anglesey.

Ken Hollamby

Lincolnshire Heritage Ltd (Booksales)

The Directors of Lincolnshire Heritage remain the same. The bookshop continues to make regular sales and Lincolnshire Heritage transferred £23000 to the Society, but we are hampered by the lack of high-quality donations of books, both fiction and non-fiction. From Easter we were able to open for an extra day. We are now open Wednesday to Saturday. This is due to several new volunteers coming forward. They have integrated well with the existing volunteers and are helping both in the shop and behind the scenes. We do still need more volunteers as we are very stretched over the holiday period and doing outside events and would like to open an extra day. Apart from having stands at the various group conferences we also had a stand at Sparks in Lincoln Cathedral and at the Heckington Show. Both these events were useful for raising the profile of the Society, as well as bringing in a good income. Roz Mellows is now in charge of the Volunteers rota and has also been changing the windows every few weeks to reflect events and lectures. Chris Gilham has taken over postal sales and ordering new books. During the year we published M Miller's book on Pinfolds, doing it via Amazon, which proved quite successful, but was a steep learning curve.

Eva and Nick Moore, Bookshop Managers

Trustees

The Trustees have continued their valuable work via zoom meetings for the last year, a format that is unlikely to change. This does offer the advantage of avoiding travelling time and costs to our members, something particularly welcomed during the winter months. Our primary responsibilities are ensuring that the Society has a clear strategy for the future, and to safeguard the Society's assets; property, reputation and finances. Nick Moore has resigned as a Trustee but continues to support the Society in the bookshop and in many other capacities, and I would like to thank him for his valuable contribution. We have been joined by Chris Gilham, and recently Ian Newton has also attended our meetings. Our minutes are now routinely shared with The Executive, and the Trustees receive theirs, part of an initiative to improve communication within our various bodies. Our work covers a wide variety of topics. This year it has included our annual Trustees Skills review, reports from the Publications Review Group, receiving a report from Nick on the conservation of Jews' Court, as well as matters such as budgeting and succession planning. All of this is in addition to our regular updates covering developments in our bookshop, a report from our Treasurer and an update from the Chair of the Executive. Please consider joining us. Our meetings, only four each year, are interesting and varied, and contribute greatly to the wellbeing of the Society.

Steve Stefaniuk, Chair of the Trustees



Norwich Castle, the subject of the first 'live talk' of 2023.

Archaeology Team

The Archaeology Team meets at Bishop Grosseteste University, and I am grateful to Dr Derwin Gregory for facilitating this. The 2022 Conference was held in Welton with over 80 people attending. We heard about recent finds from Lisa Brundle the Finds Liaison Officer and the recent project on historic towns. For many the highlight of the day was a personal reflection of her time with Time Team by Prof Carezza Lewis. The afternoon began with an entertaining talk by John Thomas of the University of Leicester Archaeology Service on the famous recent discovery of the Trojan War mosaic at the Roman site in Rutland. The theme of Roman archaeology continued with talks about the pottery industry of Market Rasen and the discoveries on the line of the Grantham Southern Relief Road.

Evening lectures at St Hugh's Hall in Lincoln have included Professor Martin Millet talking about Roman Aldborough, Alice Beasley of Allen Archaeology about the works done for the Cathedral Connected project in Lincoln and Tim Pestell speaking about Norwich Castle. The Archaeology Team continues to be involved in the City of Lincoln Local Listing initiative and work around Norton Disney Roman Villa. The Team made a representation on the plans for and continues to monitor developments on Lincoln's Greyfriars. The Team has also been involved in meetings about the management and future for the Bardney Abbey site. The Team also responds to on-going enquiries, helping people learn more about the archaeology of the county.

Ian George, Chairman of the Archaeology Team

History of Lincolnshire Committee

The Committee met three times during the year online. It continues to monitor the progress of a number of potential publications exploring the history of the historic county. Works currently in preparation range chronologically from prehistoric Lincolnshire to some aspects of the county's twentieth-century history.

During the year, a number of book proposals have been received and discussions are ongoing with these prospective authors.

One manuscript has been received and externally reviewed; another has very recently been received. We expect the first of these volumes to be published within the next twelve months.

The History of Lincolnshire Committee now also has oversight of the Society's academic journal, Lincolnshire History & Archaeology. Volume 53 (for 2019) will be dedicated to the memory of Dr Dennis Mills and is due to be published in Autumn 2023. It is hoped that a subsequent volume will be published shortly afterwards as ongoing attempts are made to 'catch up'.

Potential authors undertaking academic research into the history of the county are encouraged to contact members of the Committee to discuss the possibilities of publishing books under the Committee's auspices, or to contact Dave Start, the editor of Lincolnshire History & Archaeology with regard to the future publication of potential journal articles.

Andrew Walker

Chair of the History of Lincolnshire Committee

Events and Activities

Following requests for more events from members, a number of visits and activities have taken place in addition to the Conferences and Talks Programme organised by the teams. These have included a visit 'behind the scenes' at the Museum of Lincolnshire Life, a visit to Mrs Smith's Cottage, and a full day Conference with a focus on Sleaford which included presentations by local organisations. The Society plans to continue to develop a diverse programme of events and activities inspired by information collected from the recent Members' Survey.

Kathy Holland

Treasurer's Report

The Society showed a surplus for the year of £8,219. Subscription income was 15% (£2,500) higher than the previous year, and donations were £2,700 higher. A doubling of the Bookshop surplus on the previous year to £23,500, together with an increase in bank interest, resulted in a year-on-year increase of income by 12% to a total of £59,500. We have been successful in maintaining administration costs to the levels of the previous year, other than postage costs, which have risen 52% to £13,700, which is now one of the largest items of expenditure. The Trustees and Executive Committee are currently examining ways of reducing this cost with a move to online communication with those members willing to make this change.

Chris Hewis ACMA, Society Treasurer

Sleaford History Group

During the year, planning occurred for a Sleaford conference in August 2023 and discussions took place regarding the future of the Sleaford History Group. Whilst the Society remains committed to exploring the town's history and archaeology it is felt that this is best done in co-operation with Sleaford's other history and heritage groups. We will continue to schedule events and activities in and about Sleaford but at the moment will no longer be running a separate group. Thanks are due to David Boutle for his work chairing the Sleaford History Group and for engaging in discussions about the future direction of the Society's presence in Sleaford.

Andrew Walker, Chair of the SLHA



Speakers at the 'Lincolnshire Reimagined Conference' held at Welton Village Hall.

Special Interest Teams

Information about the Special Interest Teams can be found on the www.slha.org.uk. If you are interested in joining any of the Teams please contact the Society Office and your details will be passed to the relevant Team.