



SOCIETY FOR
LINCOLNSHIRE
HISTORY &
ARCHAEOLOGY

2025 ANNUAL REPORT



*Members of the SLHA Building Recording Team
in Greyfriars*

Patron : Ursula Lidbetter
 President : Naomi Field
 Chair : Andrew Walker
 Vice Chairs : Mike Daly & Heather Hughes

Treasurer : Chris Hewis
 Secretary/Heritage Engagement Officer: Kathy Holland
 Charity Number : 1182569
 Total Membership : 609

Chair's Report

There has, as usual, been a lot to keep members occupied this year with a busy schedule of activities extending across the range of the Society's interests.

As is made clear in many of the reports from the various committees and groups that make up the Society, new volunteers are warmly welcomed to take part in their work. If you'd like to join one of these groups, please do contact Kathy Holland

Fundraising is very much in the forefront of our thinking at present. In his report, Steve Stefaniuk, the Chair of Trustees mentions the imminent repair work and improvements that need to be undertaken to our headquarters, Jews' Court. We will keep members informed of progress with this.

Although membership of the Society is quite healthy, we would like to welcome still more and urge current members to spread the word to their friends and family members. Perhaps a gift membership subscription to the Society might make an appropriate present for someone you know?

At the Society's forthcoming AGM, members will be invited to consider and approve a Strategic Plan which we have been working on for the past six months. Trustees and executive members gathered together to produce a draft document in the spring and over the summer it has been available for members to view and to make further suggestions. Thanks to everyone who has made their comments known in this process so far. The final months of the Society's golden jubilee celebrations are mentioned elsewhere, though it's worth emphasising that one important legacy will be the SLHA display boards. These have proved to be a helpful way of raising awareness of the Society and its activities and we will continue to use them to publicise the Society across the entire historic county.

Thanks to everyone who has contributed in some way to the activities that are recorded in this Annual Report either as active participants or audience members. We value all your contributions and of course as a membership organisation we couldn't do much of what we do without your active involvement. We look forward to the coming year in which we already have many events planned. However, we would like to hear from you, especially if you have any thoughts about things we should be doing, themes we should be exploring, places we should be visiting, and speakers we should be inviting.

I'd like to finish by offering some thanks. Firstly, to Ros Beevers, editor of the Society's magazine, *Lincolnshire Past & Present*, and Kathy Holland for her tremendous work as the Society's Heritage Engagement Officer, ensuring the smooth running of the Society's many events. I also wish to echo the thanks recorded by Steve Stefaniuk to our retiring Treasurer, Chris Hewis who has served the Society in this role with considerable distinction for over two decades. We are considerably in his debt.

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, intruder and fire alarm servicing.

Checks and monitoring are carried out at approved intervals to the fire alarm, emergency lighting, the Intruder Alarm System, smoke and heat detection and fire extinguishers.

Members of the Property Team are working with Stewart Bennett to complete a funding application to the Heritage Lottery Fund in order to carry out structural stabilisation to the front of Jews' Court. Listed Building Consent has been obtained for these repair works. It has been decided to explore separate funding options to cover the demolition and replacement of a 50+ year old shed in the

garden behind Jews' Court. Permission has been granted for the demolition work.

In June 2025 part of a large tree, which had grown over the shed, collapsed and brought down an overhead electricity supply serving the shed, this was isolated by Gladwin Electrical on the same day and Tree Services removed some branches from the fallen tree. A section of material containing asbestos attached to a stay, pulled from the shed by the falling tree was removed by Rilmac. Consent to remove the remains of the collapsed tree was obtained from the City Council and the work carried out.

When the overhead cable was removed it was ascertained that an unprotected cable to the side of the shed was 'live' and could not be isolated. It has been inspected by National Grid who are scheduled to remove the 'live' cable and meter.

Hazard tape has been wrapped around the cable in question and the shed declared 'out of bounds' Maintenance of the gardens to the rear of Jews' Court has continued with grateful thanks to Dave Mellows

Members of the Property Team continue to participate in meetings and site visits regarding the future of the Bardney Abbey site.

Colin Holland for the Property Team

Industrial Archaeology

The Annual Industrial Archaeology conference, *Draining the Land* was held at Boston's Guildhall Museum. Presentations included an explanation of the history and work of a local Internal Drainage Board, the recent comprehensive refurbishment of Keadby Pumping Station and Boston's waterfront.

The talk *Dunham Bridge - Then and Now*, held in person on 19th February 2025 gave the history of this toll bridge from construction in 1831 up to the present. Elements of the maintenance and operation of the bridge were explained.

A further in-person talk on *Lincolnshire Papermaking and Paper Mills* comprehensively covered the history of papermaking in Lincolnshire. The processes of papermaking, together with a description of the mills and their locations were included in this informative talk.

The Team provided a speaker for the Louth Heritage Day on the topic of the Louth Navigation. Team members also contributed to Sunday Special events with talks on Watermills in Lincolnshire and Robeys of Lincoln.

Field work included ongoing work on the Austen Fen Warehouse on the Louth Canal.

The project to celebrate Lincolnshire's Bricks and Brickmakers continues. Activities include visits to the remains of brick works to record their remains as well as the recording the details of locally produced bricks.

The publication of the late Eric Newton's series of books, *A History of Water Supply in Lincolnshire* continues with the publication of the second volume which covers Lincoln's water supply.

Stephen Betteridge, Chair of the Industrial Archaeology Team



The Industrial Archaeology Conference at Boston Guildhall

Local History

We held our Annual Conference on the theme of Lincolnshire Explorers & Inventors at Walton Academy in Grantham. There were five presentations on subjects from the famous Sir Joseph Banks to the rather less well-known Richard Hill. The event finished with a fine performance of music, poems and stories on the day's theme.

The Team held two well-received talks at St Hugh's in Lincoln on Lincolnshire *Photographers & their Postcards* and *Torrington's Tour of Lincolnshire in 1791*. We also hosted the Sunday Special in Nettleham in January where the Flora Murray Award was presented, in his absence, to David Start for his website on Lincolnshire's medieval crosses.

Our Churches group has hosted three separate day trips to churches this year based on Wellingore, Colsterworth and Donington. Another is planned for later this year with more being arranged for 2026. Next April sees a Historic Churches conference in Heckington. My thanks go to Jean Howard for taking the lead of this group.

Restructuring at the University of Lincoln has led to the departure of Natalie Brimecome-Mills from the team but we are pleased to welcome Professor Amy Livingstone in Natalie's place, and we will also be joined in our work by Adrian Gray. Thanks are due as ever to Kathy Holland for her help and support and to Caroline Crane for her continuing fine work as Minutes Secretary.

Mark Acton Chair, Local History Team

Building Recording Group (RUBL)

This year RUBL continued working on established projects and added one new one, Lincoln Greyfriars. RUBL members had access to the whole building during the major restoration work. The plan is to publish the results of the survey in *Vernacular Architecture and Lincolnshire History and Archaeology*.

The survey of the Headmaster's House at the King's School Grantham was completed. The report was well received by the headmaster. Work continues on the RUBL element of *The Lincolnshire Hearth Tax* volume which will be published jointly by the Lincoln Record Society and the British Record Society. The Kirkstead report was completed. An additional building was found in the garden at Abbey Farm, Stixwold and is being surveyed. RUBL members continue to play a leading role in the Lincoln Local List project.

The proposed new Lincoln Local List of some 400 heritage assets is scheduled for adoption by the City Council later in 2025. Discussions continue with Lincolnshire County Council on a project to better understand mud and stud buildings.

RUBL members are contributing to the Lincoln Civic Trust's Blue Plaque project and also took part in the Lincolnshire Landscape conference in June. There have been regular Zoom meetings throughout the year.

Ken Hollamby, Secretary for David Stocker, Chairman

SLHA Study Tour

This year's Study Tour in July was to the Isle of Wight. There were twenty-five on the trip. On day one we drove to Portsmouth for the ferry and on to our hotel in Shanklin. We started the following day with a visit to the amazing Dinosaur Isle Museum in Sandown followed, after lunch, with a visit to Brading Roman Villa. In the evening, we had a talk about Tennyson and his life on the Isle of Wight. Day three was spent in the west of the island. In the morning, we visited Tennyson's home, Farringford House. Lunch was at the National Trust's Old Battery with a magnificent view of the Needles. In the afternoon we went to Dimbola, home of the nineteenth century photographer Julia Margaret Cameron. On our last day on the island, we visited Carisbrooke Castle

and Osbourne House. On our journey back to Lincoln we stopped at the Museum of Rural Life in Reading. Plans are well advanced for a Study Tour to Chester in July 2026.

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 just under £20000 to the Society. High quality donations of books, both fact and fiction are still urgently needed to increase sales. Our major problem has been that we have not been able to access the storage facility in the back garden of Jews Court. We had to cancel our stand at the Heckington Show due not being able to retrieve the stock we had assembled there for it. However, earlier in the year we had a stand at the Woodhall Spa Show and though the sales were not very high we felt we made a lot of contacts and raised interest in the Society.

We have excellent volunteers and have had several more join us as the result of an advertisement on Facebook. We are still only open Wednesday to Saturday and hope that we can open on more days and engage more help with organising bookstalls at events.

The shop has been renamed 'Steep Hill Bookshop' and the new colourful hanging sign is making people aware of us and bringing more customers in.

We have just published another book via KDP in the series A History of Water Supply in Lincolnshire, this time on Lincoln. This method seems very successful as it means we do not have any significant upfront costs and just order as many as we required. We now have Facebook site dedicated to the Bookshop and are also hoping that it will be possible to sell books via the new website.

Eva Moore, Chris Gilham and Roz Mellows, Bookshop Managers

Trustees

The Trustees have had a busy twelve months.

A recurring theme for many months has been the deterioration of the bookstore behind Jews' Court. This has been closely monitored by the Property Committee and widely discussed by the Trustees and the Executive Committee. The decision to limit access to the building over health and safety concerns has caused considerable disruption to many volunteers, and we are grateful for their forbearance.

The Trustees have also been involved with the need for structural repairs to Jews' Court. Again, the Property Committee has overseen this work, and we are grateful to them for the many hours spent in deliberation over the planning and repercussions that will be inevitable whilst carrying out this critical project.

This remedial work will need a submission to a funding agency for grant funding, if successful this will be as a result of the efforts of the "Bid" group, which is being led by Stewart Bennett.

Finance is another major area of responsibility for the trustees. We have been working closely with our treasurer, Chris Hewis, and other partners to map out a sustainable future for this key responsibility. Chris has worked tirelessly over many years, often in challenging circumstances, to maintain financial stability, for which we owe him many thanks.

Another major area has been the development of a draft Strategic Plan. This will pave the way to a business plan in due course. Please consider being involved in the development of this process, the more input from our members the better.

Steve Stefaniuk, Chair of the Trustees

Archaeology Team

Unfortunately, a long-time servant of the Archaeology Team, passed away in June. Dr Glyn Coppack was Inspector with English Heritage for many years and in retirement had his research into medieval religious houses. He was a widely published and highly-respected scholar whose wisdom will be sorely missed by the Committee.

This year has also seen a high-profile resignation from the committee. Mick Jones, once the Director of the City of Lincoln Archaeology Unit and the Archaeology Officer of Lincoln City Council, served on several committees since 1974. His contribution is incomparable, and he will be missed by all who have worked alongside him over the years. Mick's experience of working in Lincoln is captured in an autobiography, *Digging Lincoln*, published this year. It's so good we had to launch it twice with two highly successful events at Lincoln Central Library.

Members of the committee took part in a number of activities across the county ranging from learning about Ground Penetrating Radar with member Chris Caswell in Lincoln Castle to digging with Dr Sam Tipper on South Common in Lincoln in search of evidence of Lincoln's medieval leper hospital.

At the core of the Archaeology Team's activities are the events it organises on behalf of the Society, and this year saw some excellent lectures and the highly successful conference at Welton Village Hall on what we can learn from studying human remains.

Ian George, Chair of the Archaeology Team

History of Lincolnshire Committee

The Committee meets on a quarterly basis. Following the publication in July 2024 of Professor Andrew Jackson's, *Rural England Through War and Peace: The Literary Work of Lincolnshire's Bernard Samuel Gilbert, 1882-1927*, we are grateful to Professor Jackson for his work raising awareness of this important work through the many talks he has undertaken across the county during the year. The book is available for purchase at Steep Hill Bookshop.

At present we are dealing with the manuscripts of four volumes. We hope to be going to press with these in the future. Proposals for monographs relating to aspects of the county's history continue to be welcomed by the Committee.

The Committee is now also responsible for the SLHA's annual journal, *Lincolnshire History & Archaeology*, edited by Dave Start. Efforts continue to be made to 'catch up'. We aim to produce two volumes annually over the next few years until the publication year of the journal aligns with its actual year of production. Thanks are due particularly to Dave Start for his work editing the journal, together with associate editors Naomi Field and Martin Watkinson, and Heather Hughes, who is editing a themed issue of the journal. Thanks should also be recorded to Ros Beevers for her work preparing the journal for publication.

We are always interested in discussing any ideas regarding potential articles for inclusion in the journal. Please contact Dave Start via Jews' Court, or info@slha.org.uk.

Finally, I'd like to thank my fellow committee members for their important contribution to the work of the committee.

Andrew Walker

Chair of the History of Lincolnshire Committee

Treasurer's Report

The Society showed a loss for the year of £8,417.

Income from subscriptions was £2,757 (13%) less than the previous year, and the Bookshop surplus was also down by £1,917 (9.5%).

Additionally, income from events was considerably less than the previous year.

This decrease was offset by an increase in donations, largely from a £5,500 bequest and a £4,500 grant.

The History of Lincolnshire new publication contributed an additional £2,000.

Whilst general administration costs remained very similar to the previous year, there was additional expenditure of £8,500 on updating the website

Chris Hewis ACMA, Society Treasurer

Events & Activities

The Society continues to develop a diverse programme of events in addition to the Conferences and talks and Church visits organised by the teams.

The Jubilee Exhibition has continued its journey to venues around the county moving from Caistor to Boston Guildhall and Brigg Heritage Centre. Supporting events including talks and musical folklore events have accompanied the exhibition which has provided an excellent opportunity for promoting the Society.

This year has seen the introduction of a series of successful and well-attended afternoon talks at Lincoln Central Library, including diverse titles such as *Parklife: Lincoln, Boutham Park and Temple Gardens*, *Digging Lincoln*, *Investigating Medieval Churches and Bygone Lincoln*, a tour in pictures. These talks have helped the Society engage with new audiences.

Presentations by Zoom have included a variety of topics, for instance *The Definitive Magna Carta*, *The Siege of Crowland*, *Music in the Luttrell Psalter*, *Richard Barnard*, *Dogdyke Pumping Station*, and *Louth Museum*.

On a very hot day in June, we held a well-attended conference at Bishop Grosseteste University on the *Making of the Lincolnshire Landscape*, with a range of excellent speakers.

The practical craft sessions inspired by historical themes have included, *Roman Designs*, *Victorian Christmas*, *Flowers and Folklore and Medieval Medley*, some wonderful and creative artwork was created by attendees.

Louth and Locality, a full-day event held in Louth Methodist Church offered the chance for the Society to engage with local people and attendees to learn about the history and heritage of this lovely town.

The popular *Behind the Scenes Tour* to the Museum of Lincolnshire Life was again well attended as was the Guided Tour of the Usher Gallery and Art-store. A visit to the Tennyson Collection provided an excellent opportunity to access this unique collection.

Thank you to all those to all those who helped with and supported events and activities throughout the year.

Kathy Holland, Heritage Engagement Officer



An SLHA 'Behind the Scenes' visit to the Museum of Lincolnshire Life.