

LANCASTER ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER JULY/AUGUST 2011

For those of you who missed the meeting, the most important item of business at our AGM last April was the election of David Shotter as an honorary member of the society. Reflecting the enormous amount of work that David has done for the society, this was agreed by appropriately loud acclamation.

At a more mundane level, we discussed at the AGM the need for the society to obtain a digital projector and related equipment, so that we can provide these facilities for visiting speakers. We submitted an application to 'Awards for All', which is funded from the national lottery, but have just been informed that this has been unsuccessful. The committee will consider at their meeting in August other options for funding a digital projector.

Shortly after the AGM, Judith Horsfield offered to take on the post of Minutes Secretary. The committee has gratefully accepted this offer and has appointed David Shotter, who was reluctantly re-elected to the post at the AGM, to the vacant slot for an ordinary member of the committee. My pleas, and before me those of David Shotter, for volunteers to join the committee appear to have fallen on fertile ground, since we now have all positions filled:

Chair	Mike Derbyshire
Treasurer	Maureen Leach
Membership Secretary	Sandra Burr
Excursions Secretary	Doug Alcock
Speakers Secretary	David Cox
Minutes Secretary	Judith Horsfield
Six Members of the Committee	Rachel Newman
	George Howson
	James Price
	Anne Shotter
	Mike Winstanley
	David Shotter.

George Howson has been acting as Vice-Chair since 2010; I apologise for failing to report this at the AGM. Rachel Newman is the editor for our journal, *Contrebis*, and of the book about Lancaster Castle that we are preparing. She is assisted in this work by David and Lyn Cox. George Niven acts as examiner of our accounts and Alan Shirras is our webmaster – our excellent web-site is well worth a visit at www.britarch.ac.uk/lahs/ and carries, among much else, back-numbers of *Contrebis*. Although we are indeed fortunate to have volunteers for these various posts, who are prepared to contribute so much to the running of the society, we are still looking for one more volunteer; someone to take over from David Cox as Speakers Secretary. The job is not difficult. If you feel that you might be interested, do have a word with David or with me to find out what is involved.

It is with sadness that I report that John Champness died suddenly in June. Although not a member of the society, he will have been well known to many of our members, both as the author of books

about architecture in Lancashire and as a leading member of the Lancaster Civic Society. John was a good friend of our society; he had written a chapter in the book on Lancaster Castle and had agreed to act as guide for our visit to Lytham Hall in July this year.

A full coach-load of us visited Vindolanda in May. We benefited from the presence of David Shotter, who arranged for a gap in the rain so that he could provide his customary engaging and informative commentary. The revamped museum was also greatly admired. The half-day visit to Lytham Hall in July attracted twenty-two people for a guided tour of this eighteenth-century manor house. The fact that major restoration work is underway meant that various interesting, historic features were visible within the fabric of the building and grounds. Afternoon tea and scones, together with much chatter, concluded a memorable visit. Our forthcoming excursion to Cheshire on 3 September will provide an opportunity to discover the small, historic town of Knutsford, with a walking tour of its many Grade 1 listed buildings. Later, we will travel to Little Moreton Hall to examine in detail this distinctive, moated, manor house with its black-and-white, Tudor architecture. **There are still some places available and the deadline for booking is 5 August 2011.**

With escalating price inflation, particularly in the costs of fuel and of coach-hire, we have had no choice but to increase the amounts that we charge for our excursions. However, we believe that they continue to provide excellent value for money and it is pleasing to see how well supported they continue to be.

Enclosed with this newsletter is an application form for renewing your membership of the society. Please return the form with a cheque for your subscription to Sandra Burr, who will then send you your membership card. Alternatively, you can pay at the first meeting of the new season and collect your membership card then. The increasing cost of postage also adds to our financial pressures. If you are able to receive correspondence by e-mail, please indicate this on your application form and thereby help to save us a significant amount of money.

Our new season of talks starts at 7:30 pm on Thursday 29 September at the St Paul's Hala Centre, Hala Square, when Rob Philpott will speak about 'Meols: the North West's Oldest Port.' The speakers at the following two meetings are Admiral Sir John Kerr (27 October) on 'Nelson and HMS Victory' and Paul Cross (24 November) on 'Amounderness in Tudor Times'. To provide a little background on these: Meols is pronounced 'Mells' and lies at the seaward end of the Wirral peninsular; Sir John's distinguished career culminated in his serving as Commander in Chief, Naval Home Command; and Amounderness is the area stretching from Preston and Bleasdale in the east across the Fylde to Blackpool in the west.

We are always anxious to receive suggestions from members concerning future talks, both general ideas for topics and recommendations regarding particular speakers. Likewise, ideas for future excursions are most welcome. Please pass on your suggestions to any member of the committee.

I do hope that you do decide to renew you membership – and that you will join us at the meetings in our forthcoming season, which I am sure will be as rewarding as those of last year.

Mike Derbyshire 01524 61108