



FORUM NEWS

NEWS FROM THE LEICESTERSHIRE & RUTLAND MUSEUMS FORUM



CHRISTMAS SPECIAL 2004

You may have read in your daily paper of the success of the Portable Antiquities Scheme (PAS), established two years ago with a £4m Heritage Lottery Grant and the Government. The latest annual report highlighted important finds, including the wonderful hoard of coins found in South Leicestershire, made by the dedicated enthusiasts of metal detecting. These volunteers wander their local fields, (hopefully with the permission of the landowner!) in all weathers, looking for treasures from the past, that might otherwise be damaged beyond repair by the plough. Under the Treasure Act, the PAS requires finders' to declare their finds to the local archaeologist service in their area, and the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council, which manages the PAS, could reward the finder.

Many professionals question the validity of metal detecting arguing that, by removing an artefact from the ground without proper archaeological excavation, it loses the context in which that artefact was lost or buried, but I admire the dedication of these volunteers. Provided the area is recorded, and the find declared to the proper authorities, this must add to our knowledge. Only rarely are valuable treasures found, but all items from the past give clues to, and enhance our knowledge of our ancestors, whether bonded serfs, or the lord of the manor. What a wonderful way to learn of the history of this country, and get fit at the same time! If anyone would like to comment on this scheme, I would be happy to print a short letter.

The Editor

News from the Museums

Cadeby Light Railway will hold its last public open days with a Gala Event on 14th/15th May 2005. The Cadeby Light Railway is a 2'0" gauge railway running in the grounds of the Old Rectory, at Cadeby. Mrs Audrey Boston is preparing to sell the Old Rectory and so an era, started by her husband the late Rev 'Teddy' Boston, will come to an end.

Mrs Boston hopes that the large model railway, based on Great Western practice in

1935, will continue to be open for visitors to the timetable running sessions; these are held on the last Friday of each month and will continue after May 2005, but visitors need to telephone in advance to confirm that these evenings will take place. It is not

envisaged at present that any locomotives or rolling stock from the Cadeby Light Railway, including the steam locomotive "Pixie" will be included in the sale of the Old Rectory. Many people may wish to visit the Cadeby Light Railway before May 2005, but visitors are asked to respect Mrs Boston's privacy, and only visit by prior appointment or during the Open Days. Extra Open Days have been arranged and are shown below:-

- December 11th 2004 – Father Christmas Special
- December 27th 2004 – Mince Pie Special
- February 12th 2005 – Valentine's Special
- March 12th 2005
- April 9th 2005
- May 14th and 15th 2005 – Gala Weekend



Timetable running nights – Model Railway

January 28th; February 25th; March 25th; April 29th; May 27th; June 24th; July 29th; August 26th; September 30th; October 28th; November 25th, and December 30th, all at 7.30pm. Please ring in advance to confirm.

Enquiries should be directed by telephone to 01455 290462 (Mrs Audrey Boston), or email to Simon Lomax at his website - simon@planethalo.freeserve.co.uk
Photographs are available from Simon Lomax.

Audrey Boston

Swannington Heritage Trust wins coveted national award!

In the summer, Swannington Heritage Trust won the “**2004 Dorothea Award for Conservation**” presented by the British Association for Industrial Archaeology. The award was given for the Trust's continuing work of restoration at Hough Windmill in Swannington coupled with their sensitive presentation of the history of coal mining on two adjacent sites.

The Gorse Field contains landscape evidence of 800 years of the development of coal extraction culminating in the use of the horse gin winding engine, an example of which has been constructed on site. The nearby Califat Spinney contains the remains of the C19 coal mine that was the scene of a flooding disaster in 1863 in which three miners, including a sixteen year old boy, lost their lives.

The award, sponsored by Dorothea Restorations Ltd, takes the form of a certificate, a handsome commemorative plaque and a prize of £500. It was presented at the annual general meeting of the Association at Hatfield on 15th August. Denis Baker, Chairman of the Swannington Heritage Trust, said :

“It is particularly pleasing to receive such a prestigious national award from a body universally acknowledged as the most authoritative in the field of industrial archaeology. I believe that it recognises not only the work of the Trust in practical industrial conservation but also as a propagandist and interpreter in the field. I hope that our members and supporters will be rewarded and reinvigorated by this marvellous acknowledgement of the contribution the Trust has made in the field of industrial archaeology at the vital local level at which we operate.”

The Award's purpose is to support and encourage voluntary conservation work on sites and artefacts of industrial, agricultural and domestic importance. Projects, which are concerned primarily with the recording or interpretation of sites, or with the collection of items, are not eligible.

The projects have to have been undertaken by amateur and voluntary groups or individuals.

Members of the Trust prepared a project report, which outlined the background of the organisation, and an account of the process of both acquisition and management of the refurbishment of Hough Windmill, from a ruined empty structure to its present conserved state. The report was well illustrated with drawings, plans and photographs to give an overall picture of the work carried out both on the Mill and on the adjacent visitor centre, constructed on the foundations of the mill's cart house and stable.

The mill stands in an area, which has suffered centuries of coal mining activities, landscape evidence of which can still be seen. There are several sites where horse gin winding engines were operated in the past, and on one of these, Trust members have constructed a full size replica of gin such as would have been used in the late C18.

In an adjacent spinney the Trust, in co-operation with Leicestershire Industrial History Society, has excavated and recorded the foundations of the large inverted-beam pumping engine of the C19 Califat Colliery and are currently stabilising these foundations in order to display the importance of an important stage in Steam engine technology.

The report, supplied in print or CD format, had to provide evidence to meet detailed criteria on which the judgement was to be based. We would recommend other members of the Forum to consider entering the competition in future.

Details can be obtained from –
David Line, Dorothea Award for Conservation, c/o 10, Somerville Road, Leicester. LE3 2ET.

Denis Baker



Wigston Museum gets the go-ahead from the HLF!

The second week of November 2004, is the turning point for the grant for the refurbishment and building of an Interpretation Centre for the Wigston Framework Knitters Museum. After nearly two years of discussions the Museum Trustees got approval from HLF to appoint the professional design team. They can now proceed with all preliminary work up to commencement of building work on site. The triggers for a physical start are two fold, tenders for the work within the award of £182,500; and the completion of the property conveyance from the Borough Council into the ownership of the Trust.

What the Museum will get for the money are repairs to the property, including work to the west side boundary wall and reduction in damp along the west wall of the cottage, re-decoration of the first floor bedroom, and principally the construction of an Interpretation Centre on the site of the former frameshop. This will include video projection, display panels, and importantly an arched and lettered fascia over the entrance gate. This will help to give prominence to this cottage museum which is of local and national importance. Start date is anticipated to be March/April 2005, and completion in October/November 2005.

We are only the custodians of this priceless piece of our heritage. The passage of ownership from Council to Trust is a mechanism for achieving the full potential of this unique inheritance. Between the Trust and the Friends of the Museum we can continue what we set out to achieve when the Trust and the Friends were established almost 20 years ago, that is to secure this

microcosm of 19thC knitting industry for the enjoyment of future generations.

Alan Kind, Trustee.

Future Events:

- Christmas Opening Weekend: 3rd 6.30pm opening, Christmas Carol concert, 4th 10am-5pm, 5th December. 2pm-5pm.

January 28th 2005 –  Jig Dance, Wigston Liberal Club, 7.30pm.

Foxton Incline Plane Trust. The Trees Come Down at Foxton,

September 25th - October 3rd 2004 goes down as an important step in the campaign to restore the Inclined Plane Boat Lift. After months of planning and obtaining the necessary licenses, 60 trees on the lower slopes of the Incline have started to be cleared. What was not so obvious was that the ivy entangling dead or dying trees gave them an appearance of good health, and no one appreciated how hard it would be to drag the material up a 1-in-4 incline. The top third has been cleared so that carrying the material up the incline is a 200 ft slog on the uneven ground, which turns into slide at the first sign of rain.



Many members of the Trust wanted the trees removed for years, but permission had been refused. More recently English Heritage backed removal because the roots were destroying the remains of the Incline. The number of trees being removed is a small proportion of those on site, because with the all the newly planted trees, we will have more than in some parts of the new forest!

The objectors did manage to get on the front page of the Leicester Mercury but do not seem to have gained any real support.

The main gang from the Waterways Recovery Group (WRG) were from the forestry group, who are highly trained in tree removal and tree surgery, Over 9 days, 38 people were involved in the work, contributing around 605 hours to the project, all of which can be used as match funding for the lottery bid. Many old and new members worked with them. Concerns over safety meant that fewer volunteers were recruited due to the potential hazards of fallen trees and chain saws. WRG are very

proud of their safety record, but British Waterways were apprehensive as this kind of operation is new to the local waterways men. It was particularly heartening to see James Clifton (Project Manager), and Peter Ruffle (Engineer in charge) mucking in with everyone else. The chippings will be used as mulch for the new trees to be planted in November. The last two days saw most of the Forestry group move to another site, and our friends of Essex WRG move in. Essex found themselves with a much bigger task than expected, but they carried on to leave the site as safe and tidy as possible. The boundary fence had to be re-erected to preserve the privacy of the boaters in the bottom basin.

The basin itself is a lot clearer and lighter with many bushes around the bottom docks removed. The northern-most slope is now clear except for three big trees, one of which is a day's work in itself, the other slope has had much of the smaller growth removed and you can see through to the bottom. Possible plans for the removal of the rest of the trees have been informally discussed, and Essex will be back for a weekend in December.

EVENTS DIARY 2004/2005

- Sunday 5th December, Plant a Tree at Foxton, 11m-3pm, family event.
- Friday 7th Jan; New year Carvery meal at the Toby Inn, Foxhunter Roundabout at Narborough. 7.30pm for 8pm. Book with Gill Cook on 0116 271 0801.
- Tuesday 1st Feb; Quiz Night at the Black Horse Pub, Foxton. 7pm start. Raffle and supper, £6.50 per head. Book with Gill Cook on 0116 271 0801.

Do you fancy organising an event for us? Or do you have ideas that you think are worth trying? Please contact Ann or Gill and let us know

Mike Beech

Rutland Railway Museum

– Santa Specials 2004



Father Christmas visits the Railway Museum this year, on Sunday 5th, 12th and 19th December. Trains run half-hourly between 11am and 4pm, and **booking is essential!** After a short steam-train ride you can visit Santa's Grotto before choosing a gift to take home. Included in the price is a mince pie

and hot drink for adults, and a snack and drink for the children.

You are welcome to look around the museum, the shop and use the café, and you may ride in the carriage as often as you like. **The fully inclusive fare is £6 per person. Booking forms can be obtained from:**



Santa's Little Helper, Rutland Railway Museum, Ashwell Road, Cottesmore, Rutland, LE15 7BX, tel: 01780 764118 between 4pm and 8pm only, and to whom they should be returned with your cheque and a stamped addressed envelope.

Aussie expert's praise for independent museums

Hinckley and District Museum opened its doors for a private viewing by Dr Michael Pickering, Repatriation Programme Director at the National Museum of Australia, during his UK tour in November 2004.

Dr Pickering, who specialises in Australian anthropology and archaeology, also took time to visit relatives living in Hinckley where his father was born before emigrating after the war.

The visit had been arranged by Susan Fell of Leicestershire Environmental and Heritage Services, Hinckley Museum's curatorial adviser, who also arranged for Dr Pickering to visit Snibston Discovery Park and the Collections Resources Centre at Barrow on Soar.

Dr Pickering had wanted to see how a small independent museum works, and after his visit said **"I am very impressed with what I have seen. I think large museums can learn a lot from community museums like Hinckley's. Small museums are a major resource and are the voice of their communities."**

Thanks to Dr Pickering's visit the museum also received the added bonus of some free press publicity, with two local newspapers including photographs taken at the museum.

Phillip Lindley

Wigston Framework Knitters Museum

Forgotten Wigston via the Paint Brush

During September 2004 a combined event took place at Wigston Magna; a collaboration of the Historical Society, Wigston Folk Museum, Wigston Framework Knitters Museum, linked with the County Records Office to put on an exhibition by local artists, for one month. Local historians Duncan Lucas and Alan Kind teamed up with Dr Margaret Bonney of the Record Office for Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland to present the exhibition, which was the largest attendance for an exhibition at the Records Office.

Through the ages the storyteller has passed on to successive generations how things were in former years. From these truths and myths this generation builds up a background to our heritage, to our very roots. Compelling as the story may be in awakening a mind's eye picture of events, it is left to the artist to paint the picture of those long lost scenes. In so doing the artist leaves us with an indelible image and, interestingly of equal importance, of himself or herself.

This exhibition of the work of artists local to Wigston, whilst touching upon the sense of nostalgia present in us all, also served to encourage everyone in the recording of our times for the future. Alan Kind and Duncan Lucas researched forgotten paintings and the background information of the artists. Over 60 framed paintings, 40 pencil drawings, over 20 card paintings, plus artefacts, bronze age flints, Neolithic axe head, pub pewter tankard etc. were on show, all of which have been photographed and recorded, and it is hoped that the photos can be made into a book.

Duncan Lucas

Executive News

At the last meeting of the Executive Committee held on 24th October at Hinckley museum, the following items were discussed:

- Education Project. Claire Browne updated the Committee on the Lottery Heritage Project, and the EMLAC scheme.
- Draft user/non-user survey forms, to be sent to Forum members to tailoring to their own needs.
- Meeting dates – see below

- A number of Forum museums have raised their concern at the high cost of entry into Cream of Leicestershire (to be renamed Leicestershire Visitors Guide in 2005). An eighth of a page entry is currently advertised at £125 plus VAT and many Forum museums say they cannot afford the increase and will reconsider their entry next year. Members should write to Leicester Shire Promotions expressing their dismay, with a copy to Leics. County Council PR Department. Comments on this to the Editor please.

- It was decided to hold the Forum Open Meeting dates as follows. **Please note that all dates times and venues are provisional**, and will be confirmed as soon as possible.

7th April 2005 – Donnington Park Grand Prix Collection. This will be the Annual General Meeting. Evening meeting.

21st July – Cadeby Steam & Brass Rubbing Centre. This will be an evening event combined with the Heritage Awards presentation.

8th September 2005 – Foxton Incline Plane Trust – daytime.

8th December 2005 – Wigston Framework Knitters Museum. Evening meeting.

Executive Committee Dates

- 10th March; 9th June; 27th October. All items for discussion should be sent to the Hon. Secretary

Museum Information



LCC Grants in 2005

Due to Claire Browne's forthcoming maternity leave (mid April to mid October 2005), applications to the Shire Grants for Independent Museums programme will be assessed at two points only during 2005. The first deadline for applications will be 1 March 2005 and the second will be 14 October 2005. Please begin planning your grant needs now if you wish to be considered in the first group of applications. Museums will be able to apply for grants in 2005 for projects seeking to raise museum standards. Priority areas include projects to help your museum meet the requirements of

Museum Accreditation (formerly Museum Registration), collections care, documentation, conservation, education and learning. Other development areas will also be considered. To discuss your potential application contact Claire Browne, Community Museums Officer.

Museum Accreditation replaces Registration

Museum Accreditation is the new name for Museum Registration and on 17 November at the Imperial War Museum, the new standard was launched by Estelle Morris, Minister for the Arts. Significant and lengthy consultation has taken place with all sections of the museum community regarding the additional standards of the new scheme. Information about the new requirements was detailed in the Summer edition of *Forum News*.

If you would like further information contact Claire Browne, Community Museums Officer. Claire will provide assistance to all those museums currently within the Registration scheme and those wishing to apply for Accreditation, to help museums prepare to meet the new standards. The local authority museums within the East Midlands Museums Hub will be asked to apply first during 2005/6. CB

Forum Education project

Nine Forum museums are planning to take part in the education project to apply to Local Heritage Initiative (LHI) for funding towards a museum education freelancer to work closely with museums to develop education resources appropriate for schools and other groups. Hopefully projects will be off the ground in the New Year and Spring. CB

EMMLAC education project

Four Forum museums are due to participate in the project funded by Museums Libraries and Archives Council (MLA) and administered by EMMLAC to help increase the number of schools using museums. These non-hub museums have been chosen as the pilot for a project, which will be extended to the rest of the region next year. The new post of museum education worker at EMMLAC will also work closely with the Forum education project. Participating museums will be: Swannington Heritage Trust, Rutland County Museum,

Queen's Royal Lancers Museum and Lutterworth Museum. CB



Forum Christmas Meeting – 9 December, 7.30 p.m.

To be held at the Charnwood Centre, next to Southfields - Charnwood Borough Council Offices, Southfield Rd., Loughborough.

From 7.30 p.m. a festive buffet will be served followed by a short meeting, presentation about Community Archives by Margaret Bonney (Record Office) and Jerry Weber (EMMLAC) and ending with the annual Christmas raffle. Bring as many of your museum staff and volunteers as you like. Car parks are nearby and parking passes are available on a first come first served basis. Papers will be forwarded in advance.

Training Days

A training day has been arranged at Snibston on "Handling & Packing Objects; Labelling & Marking Collections. Trainer is Jane Henderson, Collections Care Consultancy.

A one-day training course organised by EmmS, in association with the Leicestershire & Rutland Museums Forum, for museum staff and volunteers who move and pack collections (morning), and who document, record and label or mark collections (afternoon).

During the morning, the course will cover: examining objects; handling objects; conservation safe materials; and packing objects. After lunch, there will be sessions on: health & safety; principles of safe labelling & marking; using mda labelling; and marking techniques. The training course will be delivered through a lively mix of briefings, demonstrations and practical exercises. Participants will be required to bring a range of objects and materials with them, and to be prepared for an active day!

Costs (including lunch & refreshments throughout the day): EmmS members - £7.50 Non-members - £22.50

Please make cheques payable to 'EmmS', and send with your name, museum details, tel. no and email address, to:

Claire Browne Community Museums Officer,
Leicestershire Heritage Services, Holly
Hayes, 216 Birstall Road, Leicester LE4
4DG. TEL. 0116 267 1950 ext. 27, or email
Claire at cbrowne@leics.gov.uk Or contact
Susan Lansdale at EmmS TEL.01949
81734.



Letters to the Editor

This is your chance to air your views on museum business, or a problem that your museum is facing. The Editor retains the right to edit long letters!

Please let me have articles and information about your Museum and your activities for the next edition of the Newsletter.

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As this is the last edition before Christmas, I would like to wish everyone a very happy Christmas and a peaceful New Year.

*Sally Howatt
Editor*



Seasons Greetings

