

# LANCASTER ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## NEWSLETTER FEBRUARY 2013

This year marks the fortieth anniversary of the founding of our society, then known as the Lancaster Archaeological Society. Clearly this calls for a celebration and we are planning to hold an event for members in the late summer.

The Duchy of Lancaster has now made public its preliminary plans for the future of Lancaster Castle. These involve a mixture of uses for the site, including: a museum of judicial and penal history, incorporating some of the former prison accommodation; offices for the duchy; law courts; performance areas and a café in the courtyard; education facilities; a 'boutique hotel'; and a 'signature restaurant'. A very welcome aspect of the plans is the proposal to provide open public access to the courtyard of the castle.

An invitation has been issued for volunteers who would like to work on contributing to new editions of the *Victoria County Histories*. At present, there are no plans to undertake such an exercise for Lancashire, probably because the existence of Farrer's splendid edition from early in the twentieth century makes us a lower priority than counties which have no earlier edition of the *VCH*. Work is proceeding on producing an edition of the *VCH* for Cumbria, including the Furness and Cartmel areas of Old Lancashire. There is scope for people who live in a county that is not being covered by a new edition to contribute to the work on a new *VCH* in a neighbouring county. If you are interested, please contact me or a member of the committee and we will put you in touch with the coordinator.

We have also received an invitation from Levens Local History Group for members to take part in an archaeological survey in the park at Sizergh Castle. Again, I can provide further details about the project and information on how to make contact with the group.

As those of you who attended the January meeting will know, we have now purchased an impressive digital projector and a lap-top computer to operate it. Our thanks are due to the Galbraith Trust for funding half the cost of the equipment – and to Gill Hey for providing such splendid images for its first outing.

Now that *Contrebis* 33 has been successfully published, the Publications Sub-Committee has turned its full attention to our forthcoming book on the history of Lancaster Castle. It is hoped that we will be able to synchronise its publication with a suitable stage in the continuing development by the Duchy of its plans for the future of the castle.

Our AGM will take place on Thursday 25 April 2013 at the St Paul's Hala Centre at the usual time, 7:30 pm. Formal notice of the meeting is included with this newsletter. This year we will be operating the new constitution that we agreed at our last AGM, so officers will be elected for three years, rather than one year. It looks as though we may have people prepared to stand for each of the various posts, but there is likely to be a vacancy for anyone wishing to serve as an ordinary member of the committee. After the business part of the AGM, Brenda Fox will give a talk on *Turnpike Roads*.

We are planning three excursions as usual this year. The first, on 11 May, will be to Clwyd in North Wales where we will visit three of the region's medieval sites, Basingwerk Abbey, Rhuddlan Castle and the Maen Achwyfaen Cross. We will also spend some time in the historic town of Holywell, where we will see its interesting Georgian centre and the well for which the town is famous. An application form for the trip is included with the newsletter. Although the

last date for booking is 20 April, places will be allocated on a first-come-first-served basis – so book early to avoid disappointment. We are planning a half day trip on 14 July to Ribchester and there will be another full-day excursion in September.

Our programme of talks for 2013/14 is now being finalised. It will be as varied and fascinating as this season's programme is proving to be.

Our next meeting takes place at 7:30 pm on Thursday 28 February, when David Mason will speak about *Roman Britain and the Roman Navy*. The meeting after that is on 28 March, when Andrew Jotischky will talk about *Diet in Monastic England*.

I look forward to seeing you at these meetings and at the AGM.

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