



DESFORD & DISTRICT HERITAGE SOCIETY

Newsletter November 2023

A message from our Chairman, Bernard

We have had a good year in 2023 so far, have we not? Village walk, Air Museum trip and some good talks, culminating in our own Kate Twitchin's virtuoso address at our last meeting. Still to come is a choral history of Carols on 21 November, and then Christmas itself, for which I and your committee send our early greetings!

But, looking forward, "there are problems ahead" for next year. Our committee numbers will be reduced to a level which will make it hard to cope with meetings, talks, outings, the archive and admin. We have no Secretary still, so, while we are coping by sharing the load, it is not satisfactory, and I plead yet again for a volunteer to come forward and help with at least some of the work. Further ahead, 2024 is the CRUNCH YEAR for new people to step up: I, Dennis our Treasurer and Angela will put ourselves forward for one more year for your acceptance, but, while we hope you will appoint us for 2024, we all need to stand down in January 2025.

Everyone on the committee has done sterling service for several years: but anni domini and changing circumstances mean change is needed by us, and the future means new leadership is needed by the society. As I said, we all wish you a Merry Christmas, and hope you will make it a great new year by volunteering for the committee in 2024 with a view to taking an office in 2025. Honestly: you will enjoy it: it is very rewarding.

Merry Christmas, Happy New Year and see y'all on 21st November and on 16th January 2024 for our AGM



THE DESFORD & DISTRICT HERITAGE SOCIETY
Invite you to join them for a talk on:

THE HISTORY OF CAROLS WITH AN OCTET FROM THE CANTAMICI CHOIR

FREE MINCE PIES, NIBBLES, TEA & COFFEE



THERE WILL ALSO BE A RAFFLE & BAR TO PURCHASE DRINKS

TUESDAY NOV 21ST/7.30PM SOME AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

VENUE: BOTCHESTON VILLAGE HALL, LE9 9FF

 SOCIETY MEMBERS FREE, VISITORS ARE VERY WELCOME FOR A £4 ENTRANCE FEE - INCLUDES REFRESHMENTS
Lift from Desford needed? contact Angela on 01455 822934
For all DDHS enquiries please email: desford.history@gmail.com

Get into the Christmas mood.

We really hope that many of you will make the journey to Botcheston for our November meeting. Bring a friend or 2 as well! We will try to organize lifts for those who need one. Contact Angela: 822934

If you could contribute a raffle prize, that would be most appreciated. You can bring it on the night or deliver to, Angela at 8 Oxford Road.

Looking forward to seeing you!

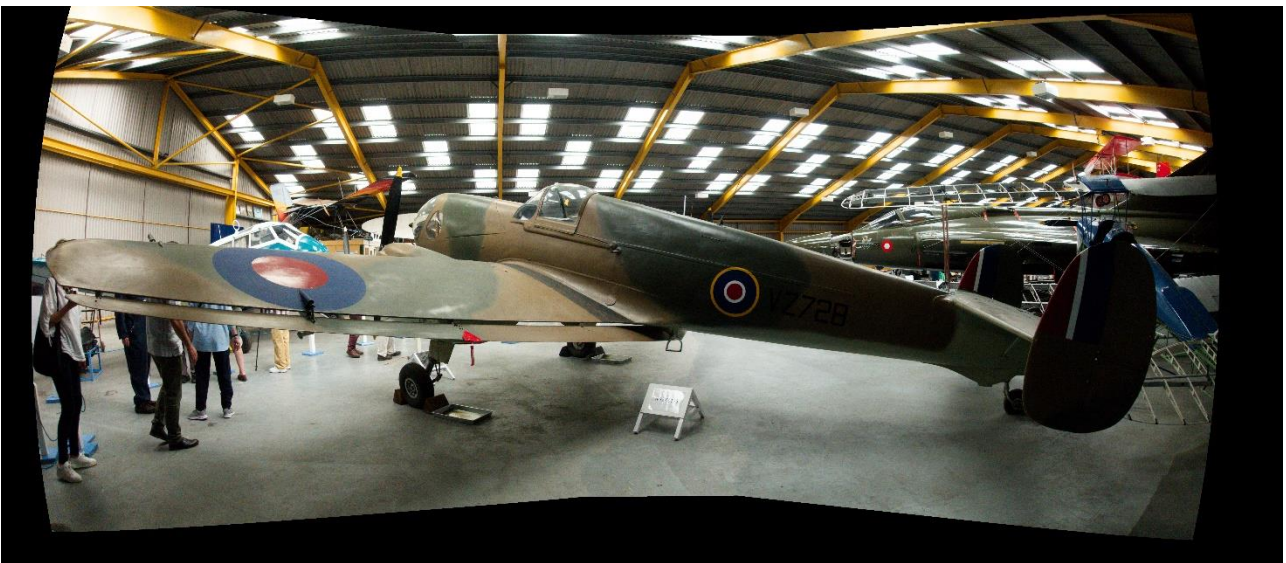
As Bernard said we have had some good visits and talks this year. Here are a few reminders!

Newark Air Museum - On Friday 11th August, members of the Society visited Newark Air Museum to see the final resting place of 'The Desford Airplane'.

'The Desford' was developed by Reid and Sigrist at Desford airfield. After the war it had various owners eventually though it passed to Leicestershire County Council. It was dismantled and stored at Snibston museum. When the museum closed the R.S.4 was moved to Spanhoe airfield, Northamptonshire for restoration by Windmill Aviation. The restored Desford flew again on 22nd April 2018, but LCC did not have the funds to keep it airworthy.

The R.S.4. Desford made its final flight from Spanhoe to the [Newark Air Museum](#) on 19th August 2022, flown by test and display pilot Dan Griffith.

The 2 volunteers at the Air Museum who showed us round are very passionate about all their aircraft and we were happy and confident that this part of Desford's heritage will be well looked after. We would definitely recommend the Air Museum for a visit.



COSBY VILLAGE HERITAGE TRAIL

On **Wednesday 13th September** more than 20 members and friends were guided around Cosby by Pat Crane using the trail leaflet.

We started at the car park next to Victory Park. This recreation area was purchased in 1919 in memory of the 41 men from the village who gave their lives during the First World War. In the first part of the walk along Park Road and then Croft Road, we passed two Non Conformist Churches built in the 1920s. Our walk then turned down Kingsfield Road to another road where the Cosby Cottages are located. These properties were built in the 1930s as part of the Land Settlement Association scheme to provide houses with half an acre of land for unemployed workers and their families, mainly from northern England and Wales. Most of the houses have now been extended or rebuilt.

Our route continued along a footpath through the village allotments and back to Croft Road. We paused to see two of the oldest buildings in Cosby - the Grade -II listed Cosby House dating from 1608 and the Old/Great Barn dating from the mid 16th century.

Next, we continued into The Nook. One can imagine this wide part of the village being the centre of activities in the years before the 1960s. There is a stream running down the middle and a pub, The Bull's Head, which incorporated the village post office and a general store in the early 1900s. No.9 has the date 1713 picked out in blue bricks.

After an optional circular walk we all continued along Main Street with more 18th century houses including the former Cross Keys Inn. Passing the Tithe Barn, now a deli-café, we reached the oldest building in the village - the parish church, St Michael and All Angels, dating from the 11th to 15th centuries. It is a Grade II* listed church. After spending time in the church and graveyard, including some light refreshment, we walked back to the car park.

The afternoon was concluded with a short drive to Whetstone where we had a meal at the Lime tree Inn. Pat was thanked by all for arranging this interesting walk.



The Other Rippin Girl by Kate Twitchin was our September talk. Kate had done her research very well and certainly brought to life the adventures of the remarkable Muriel Rippin, a Desford girl who lived at Sunbreak in her youth. Unusual for her time, Muriel, trained to be a doctor, graduated in 1927 and then travelled to Australia and New Zealand. Eventually she married and lived in a remote part of Australia. In the photo Kate is showing some skis and explained that Muriel used skis to reach a patient during a blizzard and deep snow! This was 'normal' for Muriel. She loved to travel by plane at a time when air travel was in its infancy. Muriel had one daughter whom she brought with her when she visited her family in Desford. We have a photo of them in our archives!



The archiving group have been busy attending events in the city and county.



Beaumanor History Fair – 18th March

Jane and Angela took a display to Beaumanor Hall. The History Fair was organized by Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society

Our display showed what we do as a society and included photos and articles from our archives. Taking part in Desford Heritage weekend in 2022 and of course the Heritage Trail. On display were some examples of the Trail boards.

We were able to show our new website which was partly funded by a grant from LAHS. This generated interest from other groups keen to see what is involved. Jennie Hollier who created our website was able to talk to a few interested people.

Talking to other local societies is very useful for swapping ideas and to find out we are all struggling to find volunteers!

Caterpillar 70th celebration, Family Open Day – Saturday 2nd September



We were invited by Caterpillar to have a display for their 70th celebration.

What could we do but put up our airfield display! It is surprising how many people in Desford do not know that the Caterpillar site was an airfield during the WWII. In fact, it was on a smaller scale even earlier that.

We were treated to an aerial display of Tiger Moths, together with a running commentary which was fantastic.

A very warm day, with plenty to see and do.

Hello Heritage Leicestershire and South Derbyshire Coal Mining Heritage Day – Sunday 10th September.



Pat and Angela took our mining display to Snibston Discovery Park. (not much room to take pics).

Displays from other heritage groups all had a strong mining connection. Former mine workers visited. They are always interested in photographs and artefacts on display.

Pit tours took place throughout the day, although they could not go underground. Health & Safety!



[Leicestershire & Rutland Heritage Forum - Awards evening on October 5th at the Century Theatre, Coalville.](#)

This is the first time the awards have taken place since Covid. The Society has not been eligible to enter before as we are not museum. However, for 2023 the awards were opened up to all local history groups, so we felt it was worth submitting an entry. There were 11 different categories and we selected 2.

Best Project Under £1000 - Desford Pop-up Museum for the Heritage Festival 2022.

Heritage Hero – Kate Twitchin

Pat and Angela filled in the ‘paperwork’ and made our case for each.

On the night we did not win our even get a special commendation! There were 41 entries from 24 organisations. Plenty of competition.

We did get some judge’s feedback:

- Desford Pop-up Museum - *Clear remit to engage with new audiences on a diverse range of topics.*
- Heritage Hero - Kate Twitchin - *Proves that history is fun. Truly raised the profile of Desford with pride of place and love for the community.*

The Heritage Hero winner had 20 years of volunteering and special commendation over 30 years! We thought the comment for Kate was something to be proud of. We really must back Kate and her team for the next big event!



LRHF are struggling with a committee of only 3 people. We hope it does keep going as it is a useful resource for many heritage groups.



Desford Colliery Band Ensemble

Xmas Extravaganza

Sunday 10th December 3pm-5pm

@Caterpillar Social Club

Tickets £12

desfordheritage@gmail.com or ring. 823537

**This has been our only
newsletter this year!**

I hope you have found it an interesting summary of some of our activities. I know we keep asking, but we really would appreciate some help, especially at some of the events, which take time to put together and attend.

See you soon! *Angela Thomas*