

“EXPLORING HERALDRY”

Started September 16th 2011, continuing through into 2015

**If you are interested in joining our ‘Exploring Heraldry’ group,
please contact me by telephone, post, or email:**

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After our U3A's Open Meeting on Heraldry 2011, this Interest Group was formed, with between 10 & 15 members taking a lively interest. Our meetings include a series of **“home” sessions** which enable us to explore, at **our own level of knowledge and interest**, what Heraldry entails, and which gain added point & interest from **external visits**, which so far have included Thrumpton Hall, the Nottinghamshire Archives, Flintham, Tollerton, and Bottesford Churches, Belton Hall and Church, and Lincoln Cathedral.

All meetings include intros and catch-ups, stimulus material on screen and/or paper, with contributions and a lot of enjoyable discussion by members. Up to now, our meetings have included making up our own family's coat of arms for **fun**, looking at books on Heraldry that one can use and **ENJOY**, and investigating the language of heraldry, within a **central general motive of seeing how a coat of arms is designed, what it is made up of, and how it might have come about.**

“Home” meetings (the Feignies Room of Keyworth Village Hall, basically 10.00 am till mid-day, every 3rd Friday of the month) had been part of a planned sequence of sessions building in key information and ideas for looking at and understanding how heraldry works and what it does. This has provided a background for further study, research, or just interest – all with the main aim of increasing **enjoyment** of a fascinating area of **history, genealogy, art, design and science**. There are some **LAUGHS** in all this quite hard “work”.

Such a programme clearly occupied us, but, in addition, to enable changing focuses of interest for our regulars, to keep in touch those members who have to miss sessions, and **to encourage NEW MEMBERS to attend, we based later programmes on a series of sessions (or sets of meetings) that should each stand largely on their own.** This meets more positively an overall aim of giving information, interest and **ENJOYMENT** by the following approaches:

- (a) To base sessions on a **main topic that in itself supplies plenty** of interest, enjoyment and examples of key ideas and information about the subject
- (b) To enable **newcomers to the group** immediately to find a focus for a start in exploring heraldry
- (c) To enable anyone absent on any given meeting **not to feel the need to “catch up”** before the next one
- (d) To provide **“revision”** both for new members and for those continuing from earlier years
- (e) To give the opportunity for **any members wanting to explore a special interest or enquiry to introduce & present aspects**, in however limited or full a way they wish
- (f) To **make it easy to alter the subject or focus** of any session so as to explore further, recap, clarify, etc., all within an aim of working at **individual's own level or experience**.
- (g) And thus to **shift the focus** from month to month for **variation**, as well as to introduce new ideas and repeat, for whatever reason, ideas and information via different material

Outside visits (which normally replace Feignies Room sessions) are usually planned well ahead, and we have a list of possible venues, which have included these **suggestions (more proposals are very welcome)**:

County Hall; Newstead Abbey; churches anywhere reasonably near; Kedleston Hall; the National Memorial Arboretum near Lichfield; a re-look at Thrumpton (in the Church) including a follow-up to Archives work and looking closer at the system of Heralds; and a return to Lincoln Cathedral.

Some of these places take up time beyond our “normal” two hours, so judicious choices are made by the group. **All-in-all, I'd say that the group has ensured that we have FUN, whether on “Away Days” or in...**

“Home” meetings, which for 2014-15 could include probably most of the following (often probably combined, not necessarily in this order, and to be more “firmed up” (and where necessary booked) at our next meeting on October 17th), as suggested by the group:

3 full sessions for a full revision/recap/revisit of “the basics” till Christmas

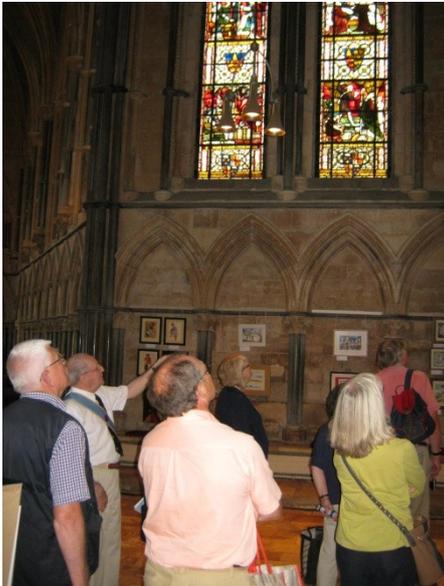
Members of our group doing each a presentation, at their own level, for two sessions

Using a little Archives material (16th/17th Century “Visitation” Records) in a specific setting (Thrumpton Church), in connection with both the system of Heralds and the Pigot family monument Plumtree Church – History and Heraldry

A visit to Newstead Abbey (prepared on a Friday in the Feignies Room; visit over the weekend)

A return visit to Lincoln Cathedral (much requested by the members)

(There is no limit on the time we might spend on these, apart from visits already planned, so the programme is adaptable.)



Rod Wetton, Lincoln Cathedral Volunteer,

who was our guide for part of our visit,

points out some features of the Chapter House Heraldry,

before we all troop off, inspired or bewildered by the usual Quiz,

for our usual “Away Day” lunch treat,

on this occasion to the White Hart “Grille” Restaurant

The programme for 2014-2015 is due to start in October and these are the dates booked (all Fridays, from 10 a.m. to mid-day):

2014 *17 October; 21 November; 19 December

2015 16 January; 20 February; 20 March; [17 April some doubts = Easter Hols]; 15 May; 19 June; 17 July

Likely costs would probably be the same as now:

£2.00 per head for Feignies Room sessions and to cover some of the printing costs, with generally a cost of £5.00 per head for intros and donations at places we visited.

It would be useful to have a notebook of at least A5 size, pens & pencils (perhaps including basic colours), and – not essential, but great for outside visits - a simple camera, very handy (many perfectly good digitals available cheap); and a few cars are usually needed. **All towards getting ENJOYMENT from our activities.**

Any doubts, just get in touch by any of the means above

Vic Taylor, October 2014