

OFFICER'S REPORTS

The Society

2015

BAS Council Meetings in 2015 were held on 6th January, 7th March, 6th June, and 10th October.

The business of the Society was reviewed at a well-attended Annual General Meeting held on 9th May 2016 at the County Museum.

Officers. Graham Parker had informed the BAS Council of his intention not to stand for re-election as Honorary Treasurer at the AGM in 2015, but that he would continue to serve as acting treasurer until the end of the year or until a new treasurer could be found. He had held this post for three years and served with the devotion, energy, and efficiency that deservedly earned the gratitude of the Society. Very happily, Harry Ball agreed to undertake the treasurer's duties in the new year, and subsequently at the AGM of 2016 he was unanimously elected to take up the position of Honorary Treasurer.

Michael Ghirelli likewise did not stand for re-election as Honorary Secretary at the 2015 AGM. Initially, after the position was advertised in the BAS Newsletter, it had seemed that a new Hon Secretary had been found, but unfortunately, circumstances resulted in the position remaining unfilled so that the post was re-advertised. Nobody volunteered until Sarah Gray stepped into the breach in 2016 when she was elected Honorary Secretary, to which post she brings her reserves of energy, enthusiasm, and attention to detail, and the experience gained from serving for many years with distinction as Director of the County Museum.

Another loss to the Society occurred when Marian Miller relinquished the post of Honorary Librarian and Archivist. Marian had taken on what had in earlier years been separate roles, organising with patience, efficiency, and a quiet humour both the valuable and comprehensive mass of book, and the extensive collection of documents and maps that are deposited with the Society. She was always

unsparing in her diligence and energy in organising both sets of collections, so that her departure could only be viewed by the Society with considerable concern. It is splendid news therefore, that Julian Hunt has taken on the role of running the library, while Roger Bettridge, formerly in charge of the Centre for Buckinghamshire Studies, will have care of the archives.

Councillors. At the AGM of 2015, Roger Bettridge, Sarah Grey, and Eliza Alqassar were elected as new members of Council, while Yvonne Edwards, Julian Hunt, and Michael Ghirelli reached the end of their three-year terms as councillors. However, Julian, in his capacity as organiser of the lecture programme, and Michael Ghirelli, editor of the Newsletter, both continued to sit on Council as co-opted members.

Finance and Membership. Graham Parker, the Honorary Treasurer, reported the Society was in a healthy financial position. The late Professor Bill Mead, the former President of BAS, has generously bequeathed to the Society the sum of £5,000. Consideration is being given to proposing an appropriate use of this sum that might stand as a worthy memorial to him. He also assigned various rights in his publications to the Society. Bronwen Lee the Hon Membership Secretary reports that total membership increased over the year to December 2015 from 417 to 425. There remained some confusion about membership rates that had been raised in 2013: some members are still paying at the old rate.

HS2: Heritage on the Line. The proposed high-speed rail link initially between London and Birmingham will run the length of the county from south to north and will inevitably have a profound impact on the historic landscape, the natural environment, and the archaeological and architect-

tural heritage of Bucks. BAS organised a one-day conference at Weston Turville village hall. On Saturday May 16th with the objective of discussing the losses and gains resulting from the development of this project. Ten speakers covered a wide variety of topics and considered both the advantages for archaeological research – for example the new knowledge gained from excavations in advance of the construction process – and the possible devastation and destruction of important sites. It has to be said that, to this writer's knowledge, no other county archaeological and historical society along the route of the line has shown such interest in and concern about the likely impact of HS2.

Planning Matters. Increasingly since the beginning of the twentieth century our county's valued and cherished landscape has been subject to the increasing suburbanisation as population and commerce spread out across the Chilterns and into the Vale of Aylesbury. The Society has been vigilant in ensuring that in any development, the various district council planning authorities are aware of any listed buildings or sensitive archaeological sites that may be threatened by development. It was disappointing that the local plan proposed by Aylesbury Vale District Council had been rejected; happily, a new plan has now been prepared. Nigel Wilson, a member of BAS Council, has asked AVDC what might be the landscape policy in the plan; unfortunately, BAS is currently unable to comment until the plan becomes available. At present, when a site is considered for development, assessments are being made on a site-by-site basis at the planning officer level. It is perhaps worth noting that English Heritage requested a higher level of assessment of those sites that are of particular scientific, historic or archaeological interest.

BAS and the County Museum. Over the year, the Society represented by Peter Marsden and Mike Farley has been involved in lengthy negotiations with Buckinghamshire County Council over the covenant in the lease agreement that requires the building to be used as a museum. The greater part of the building is owned by BAS, but Bucks CC have wanted the covenant removed, opening up the possibility of greater use of the building for commercial purposes. The Society is insistent that the covenant be retained. However, the Museum Trust set up by the County Council and responsible

now for the running of the County Museum has been sympathetic to the Society's position and is keen that the matter be resolved. They are themselves under pressure from the County Council, but do need the Society's support, for some sixty percent of the actual collection is owned by the Society. By the end of 2015, there had been no resolution of the issue.

Lectures. Julian Hunt arranged a full programme of lectures over the year. Speakers and topics included Richard de Peyer on the Wycombe Story; Mike Farley on Buckinghamshire pots and potters; Michael Ghirelli on the population of Buckinghamshire 1086–1801; Susan Sorek's talk dealt with Lenborough and the discovery of the coin hoard, while Max Hunt lectured on the life of Herbert Austin. Of special interest was the visit to the County Museum on May 11th by Dr Gareth Williams, Curator of Early Mediaeval Coinage at the British Museum, when he gave a talk on the hoard of Anglo-Saxon coins unearthed at Lenborough late in 2014.

Bucks Local History Network. David Thorpe wisely made the happy choice of the Oculus in Aylesbury at the AVDC buildings as the venue for the 2015 conference held on September 26th. The county town is conveniently central to our long narrow county and accessible both from both north and south Bucks. *Buckinghamshire Towns* was the theme of the day. Julian Hunt spoke on Wycombe and Chesham, Dr David Lewis on Windsor and Eton, and Prof David Lock on the development of Milton Keynes. Dr Thorpe himself brought his knowledge of Subtopia and pre Metro-land suburban development in Bucks before the Great War, and the eminent Prof Chris Dyer spoke on the medieval town in Bucks.

The Active Archaeology Group lived up to its name by being very active in a number of endeavours both within the county and beyond its borders. Survey work continues at Hogshaw, Hobbs Hill, and Cholesbury; the group has been involved in digging test pits at Wing, and has worked on the Hillforts survey. Other locations in which members have worked include Whelpley Hill, Saint Albans/Verulamium, Hockliffe, the Chess Valley and the gardens at Stowe. Over winter, the group held a series of very well-attended winter

talks in the County Museum. The AAG provides an opportunity for anyone interested in doing practical archaeology to get some hands-on experience, and new members would be welcome.

Excursions. George Lamb organised the programme of summer outings. Julian Hunt took a group to Colnbrook in the south of the county, Diana and Peter Gulland visited Burford and Northleach. George himself had planned an outing to Upton in Warwickshire; unfortunately, he was still suffering the effects of a road accident and so was unable to lead the outing. However, the excursion did go ahead. Finally, with his accustomed enthusiasm and expertise, Michael Hardy led the Church Crawl to west Bucks where it borders on Oxfordshire, visiting churches at Aston Sandford, Kingsey, Towersey, Chinnor, Bledlow Ridge, Saunderton, Horsenden, and Great Kimble.

Festival of Archaeology. Braving a gusty wind, a group from BAS including Nigel Wilson, Bron Lee, Kate Davis, Terry Bloxham and Kim Biddulph manned a stall at Aylesbury Town Centre on 18th July. They opened up around 9.45 and began to pack up at 3.30 and aroused considerable interest, being at times swamped with people. Plenty of BAS membership application forms as well as promotional leaflets for the Museum were distributed, though not very many books and copies of Records of Bucks were sold.

The Library and Archives. Marian Miller, as Honorary Librarian and Archivist, presided over the library and archive collection, leading a team of volunteers who catalogue and sort the documents and tomes stored in the muniment room

and the library, and ensuring this wealth of material is available to visiting researchers. This past year, an appointment system had been introduced to make the operation of the library and archives more efficient, while the sale or donation of surplus stock and duplicate volumes made room in the restricted space of the muniment room. Special mention should be given to Jeremy Howarth and Mel Czapski who made a selection from the Society's collection of prints in readiness for a talk and exhibition in the County Museum.

Records of Bucks. John Broad and Bob Zeepvat were responsible for ensuring that the Society's annual publication *Records of Buckinghamshire* maintained the highest standards of scholarship. The 2015 edition included papers on a variety of subjects, with dates ranging from prehistoric and pre-Roman through to the late Victorian and Great War era. With On-line Records of Bucks, John Dodd's work with a commercial IT company has speeded up the scanning of back volumes enormously. Six more volumes went on-line in 2015, for the years 1859, 1930 and 1971–74, bringing the total to 29 on-line volumes.

Deceased Members. We were informed of the deaths of the following members: Mr RM Allison, Mr A Boarder, Mr AR Bridbury, Mr D Collins, Mr JT Shipley, Mr & Mrs RFH Martin, Dr & Mrs PG Roads. In addition, we have heard the sad news that Lorna Head, who had been the BAS Honorary Librarian and Archivist, died peacefully on 21st December, her 95th birthday.

Michael Ghirelli
Formerly Hon. Secretary to May 2015.

The Library

ADDITIONS TO THE SOCIETY'S LIBRARY AND ARCHIVE 2015

1. Books

- ALCOCK, N. & MILES, D. *The Medieval Peasant House in Midland England*. 2013.
- ATKINS, R., POPESCU, E.S., REES, G. & STANSBIE, D. *Broughton, Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire. The Evolution of a South Midlands Landscape*. 2014.
- AUSTEN-LEIGH, R.C. (revised by MARTINEAU, R.C. & CONNOR, T.P.) *A Guide to Eton College*. 1988.
- BANVILLE, J. *Old Aylesburians Association Centenary (1907–2007)*.
- BROAD, J. (ed.) *Bishop Wake's Summary of Visitation Returns from the Diocese of Lincoln 1706–1715. Part 1: Lincolnshire. Part 2: Outside Lincolnshire*. 2012.
- BROWN, P. & HERBERT, E. (ed.) *The Secrets of Q Central*. 2014.
- BRAZIL, E. *Bloody British History – Buckinghamshire*. 2014.
- BUCKINGHAMSHIRE BIRD CLUB. *Buckinghamshire Bird Report 2013*. 2014.
- CAMP, J. *Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Pubs*. 1965.
- CHILTERN'S CONSERVATION BOARD. *Famous People of the Chilterns*. 2013.
- CHILTERN'S CONSERVATION BOARD (various authors). *Our Common Heritage*. 2015.
- COOK, R. with TUNKS, D. *Buckingham Voices*. 2001.
- DUNLEAVY, B. *The Lost Streets of Wolverton*. 2012.
- DUNLEAVY, B. (ed.) *First Impressions: Contemporary Accounts of Victorian Wolverton*. 2013.
- DUNLEAVY, B. *Manno's Manor. A History of Wolverton to 1838*. 2013.
- HALLIWELL, J.O. *Dictionary of Archaic Words*. 1989.
- HENIG, M. *The Heirs of King Verica-Culture and Politics in Roman Britain*. 2010.
- HUTTON, B. *Recording Standing Buildings*. 1986.
- JOHNSON, M. *Holy Trinity Church, Cookham '... in Ages Past'*. 2005.
- KELLY, D.J. *Buckinghamshire Spies and Subversives*. 2015.
- LEWIS, D. *British Historic Towns Atlas volume IV. Windsor and Eton (with CD of maps)*. 2015.
- MARSHALL, GARY & OXFORD ARCHAEOLOGY. *Archaeological Survey of the Ashridge Estate. Volume VI Area E-Ringshall Copse, Wards Hurst Farm, Dockeywood AND Volume X Area I –Hudnall Common*. 2015.
- MEAD, W.R. *Towards a Commonplace Geography*. 2015.
- MURRAY, C. *Exploring England's Heritage: Oxfordshire to Buckinghamshire*. 1994.
- OVER, L. & TYRRELL, C. *A Millennium in the Royal Borough (Windsor and Eton)*. 1999.
- PALMER, S. *Buckinghamshire Water Colours*. 1922.
- QUICK, P. *War Memorials and War Graves volume 13, Burnham and area*.
- RAYMOND, S.A. *Words from Wills and other Probate Records 1500–1800 a Glossary*. 2004.
- SIMPSON, S. *Sir Henry Lee (1533–1611): Elizabethan Courtier*. 2014.
- STEANE, J. & AYRES, J. *Traditional Buildings in the Oxford Region c.1300–1840*. 2013.
- TAYLOR, J.A. *Stony Stratford during the First World War*. 2014.

2. BAS probate group

- LEWINGTON, H. CD and Excel spreadsheet of transcribed wills from Stoke Mandeville.

3. BAS reports on the impact of HS2

- FARLEY, M. & MARSDEN, P. *Twyford Village Earthworks. Historic Landscape Report*. 2011.

4. BAS Active Archaeology Group reports

- The Knights Hospitallers' Preceptory at Hogshaw-Geophysical Survey Interim Report. 2015.

5. Sale Catalogues

- Estate agents' details for Medmenham Abbey,

Old Thatch (Bourne End) and Courns Wood (Walters Ash).

6. Miscellaneous Archives

ANON (probably Revd. BURGESS). 'The Roman Villa' an Account of Some Excavations made on the site of the Roman Buildings or Villa at Dell's Farm, Latimer, Bucks 1864–5.

EVELEIGH, S. The history of main roads and road transport in Bucks and surrounding counties with emphasis on the development of turnpikes.

MARSHALL, GARRY. Re-ordering and cataloguing of the Society's own archive. Also, catalogues of the Allen, Hohler, Funnell and Payne collections.

7. Theses/dissertations

CHIBNALL, J. The roads of Bucks 1675–1913 with special reference to the turnpike roads of the county. 1963.

8. Additional Items

Journals and 31 other smaller items were also added to stock. These included transcribed records, newsletters from other groups and societies, a conservation area appraisal, letters, articles, reports, obituaries, booklets, pamphlets, church and historic house guides, town guides and heritage trail leaflets and newspaper cuttings.

Marian Miller. Hon. Librarian 2015.

ON-LINE ACTIVITIES

The Society's website remains our primary on-line platform, with more than 300 articles available for free download, or simply to read on-line. These cover a huge range both in time and subject: the earliest is from 1854 and a report about gold coins found at Whaddon Chase; the most recent from 2015 and is a major survey of Buckinghamshire pots, potters, and potteries over a period of 700 years.

Many more are in the pipeline. The majority of back editions of *Records of Bucks* have now been scanned into digital form and the technical work of adding these to the website will be done over the next few years.

Meanwhile the digital index to our whole 'intellectual property' – many thousands of articles and reports – is also there on the website, enabling access to printed copies held in the Society's Library and the Centre for Bucks Studies.

- The website is at www.bucksas.org.uk

The Society has also put a toe in the water of 'social media', as Marian Miller, our Librarian during the first half of 2016 ran a 'Twitter' account as a way of publicising BAS and other local society

events. Marian's 'tweets' won 225 'followers' – not massive by world standards, but significant for a society that itself has around 400 members. The new 2016 Library Team has yet to follow Marian's lead, but it's worth checking:

- The Society's Twitter account is [@bucksarchsoc](https://twitter.com/bucksarchsoc)

Meanwhile, the Society's Active Archaeology Group (AAG) also started a 'web log' (or simply 'blog' for short). This is a running diary of the group's activities, which began with surveys – the major Knights Hospitallers' manor site at Hogshaw for instance – then moved on to small excavations, at Hobbs Hill and on the Wendover Arm Canal. Anyone can view this, and you can sign up to receive every new entry automatically by email.

- The Active Archaeology Group's 'blog' is at www.basaag.blogspot.co.uk

It appears the Society is gradually joining the digital future...

Peter Marsden