



BWA *Newsletter*

January 2018

Happy New Year to all of our Members



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A Note from the President

Welcome to the first BWAS Newsletter of 2018 and best wishes to all of our members for the coming year. We look forward to welcoming you to our up and coming series of lectures and events. You will find more information about this year's programme inside and on the BWAS on-line website.

Our AGM talk in early December this year was of particular interest to me as I worked as a conservation officer for most of my career and hence have a special interest in the preservation and recording of historic buildings. Stephen Price gave a fascinating insight into the work of some early members of the Society; architects, antiquarians and artists, who in the late 19th and early 20th centuries went out to record historic buildings at a time of significant change. Medieval churches in particular were at risk not only from falling into decay but from sweeping changes made by architects commissioned to repair and enlarge them to accommodate growing populations. Some of the drawings and paintings made by Society members are the only record we now have of the original appearance these medieval churches and their interiors. The drawings, paintings, photographs and even diaries are now in the safe keeping of the Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery. In the newsletter you will find an excerpt from one of these diaries recording a visit to Sheldon hall in 1888.

In January our annual lunchtime lecture – this is a free public lecture – was given by Teresa Gilmour on the subject of the fantastic Leekfrith Torcs. These were found by a metal detectorist in a field near to Leek in Staffordshire just a little over 12 months ago and on closer examination proved to be the earliest examples of Iron Age gold work ever found in Britain. When we booked Teresa, who is one of the Portable Antiquities Scheme finds liaison officers, Stoke Museums were still trying to raise the £325,000 needed to secure the artefacts so that they could go on permanent display in the Potteries Museum. But, just before Christmas they received sufficient grant aid from the HLF and other bodies to enable them to finalise the purchase. So a good news story all round.

Apart from our lectures and events the Society also publishes annual Transactions. These have been published since 1870 and whilst copies are available in several libraries across our area many county archaeological societies have now made their transactions available on line. It is our aim to do the same this year. We have been trying to assemble a full set which can be sent for scanning which has proved to be quite a challenge as there are significant gaps in our stores. Sorting out the old store rooms has been a bit like an archaeological excavation itself! And, of course it is so easy to get distracted by the temptation to delve into the contents of the early volumes. Descriptions of excursions by train in the Victorian volumes are worthy of study in themselves and it is quite an eye opener to see the wide range of subjects on which papers were published in the early days. I do hope we can bring you more about this topic in future newsletters as I personally find the history of the society and its activities in the early years fascinating.

I do hope you enjoy reading our Newsletter and I hope we can issue another in the summer to keep you up to date. Don't forget you can also follow us on Facebook and Twitter and we have a growing website. We welcome feedback from members and as the new acting president I will be happy for you to make contact with any suggestions for how we can improve our member offer.

Sue Whitehouse

Acting President, BWAS

News from Archaeology Warwickshire

Mansell Farm, Newbold-on-Stour

Excavations in advance of new house building in 2017 exposed a ring ditch which had previously been noted on a geophysical survey. It was assumed to be the remains of a barrow dating from the Bronze Age. However, the archaeologists were in for a surprise when one arc of the ditch was found to contain five crouched burials and the ring ditch turned out to have two small 'causeways' across it. Therefore it is now considered to be a small henge, or to use the more technical archaeological term, a hengiform monument. The geology of the site was unusual for Warwickshire being of Lias limestone which is not very acidic and had not dissolved the skeletons too badly. Analysis of the bones suggests that the burials were five adults, two of these were certainly male and it is possible that they are a family group. Such sites are rare finds in Warwickshire although a group of 4 was excavated at Bidford-on-Avon in 2015. The site was run by Nigel Page.

Excavations adjacent to The Lunt Roman fort, Baginton

A very large area was excavated to the east of the Lunt Roman fort in advance of the construction of a new Jaguar Land Rover facility. Evaluation in 2012 identified a cremation cemetery. It was thought likely that this was associated with the Roman fort and likely to be early and mainly for Roman soldiers, although The Lunt is known to have had a vicus.

Excavation revealed over sixty burials, many in pots some of which had been damaged by medieval ploughing. Items within burials included complete pots, two mirrors, two glass bottles, brooches, the odd coin (one definitely of Vespasian), pins, an intaglio ring and the remains of at least two copper bound boxes. The star feature was a large pit with 23 near complete pots and an oil lamp. Luckily, human bone also survived well.

The remains of a prehistoric barrow and several pits were also uncovered and Anglo-Saxon features were exposed, including several sunken featured buildings. A small inhumation cemetery was also excavated although no traces of bone were noted because of acidic geology. Finds included two complete Saxon pots, a shield boss and a crushed copper alloy bowl with hanging cord around its lip that were so well preserved that it looked like you could tie your shoes with it!



The Newbold on Stour site being excavated, giving a good indication of its modest size



One of the brooches from Baginton after conservation



Archaeologist Rob Jones excavates the first part of a rather good pit at Baginton.



The final view, 23 pots and an oil lamp later

Bryn Gethin

Other Sites

Further work was also carried out on numerous sites last year including medieval village remains at Upper Quinton and Long Marston. Also a large Romano-British site at Southam and a Roman site in Warwick that includes the foundations of an entire Roman aisled barn. Some of these sites will be reported on in a later BWAS newsletter.

Note : A more detailed account of these excavations with more pictures will shortly be posted on the BWAS on-line web site.

Transactions 2018

After a somewhat difficult period the Society is again receiving a good number of articles for publication. Five reports have been refereed to date and final versions are being prepared. Three of these concern multi-period archaeological investigations in Warwickshire, while two concern Birmingham — the excavation of an eighteenth- to nineteenth-century burial ground, and records of lost buildings associated with the Baskerville family. Most of these reports should be grant aided. Several other reports are expected shortly — almost certainly more than will fill the next volume of the *Transactions*. The use of colour was introduced into the last volume of the *Transactions* and the current publication costs should allow this to continue. The cover is now also reproduced in colour and it is hoped that suitable plates associated with the contents of each volume will become available for this each time.

Della Hooke, Honorary Editor

Past Transactions – getting on line!

The Society has been publishing annual Transactions since it was established back in 1870. The earlier volumes contained reports on sites that had been excavated recently, as they still do, but also details of the activities of the Society including reports on excursions and details of meetings, Society members and Society finances.

In more recent times the principle aim of publishing the Transactions has been to provide a place for local archaeological discoveries to be reported. A lot of this work has been undertaken in the context of new development where conditions on planning applications require archaeological research to be undertaken in advance of building works and for the results of that work to be made available to the public and other researchers.

Many county archaeological societies have now made this information available on line by scanning their transactions. Even though some of the archaeological works recorded in Transactions were undertaken in quite different circumstances to those done nowadays the results are still very relevant to for today's archaeologists and can help with the interpretation of sites and the finds from them.

BWAS is therefore embarking on a major programme to get all of our Transactions, published over 10 years ago, available on line during 2018 through the Archaeological Data Service web site. We are now seeking an organisation to manage and undertake the scanning and cataloguing project. Ideally, we'd like to find an opportunity for a student placement to help with this work thus also providing valuable training and experience for a young archaeologist.

We shall keep you up to date on this exciting project in our next newsletter.

Lectures

Tuesday 6th February 2018 7pm

Speaker: Mike Shaw

Medieval Town Planning: exploring the topography, origins and development of medieval towns

Mike Shaw is currently undertaking a PhD at the University of Birmingham looking at methodologies for the study of the topography, origins and development of medieval towns, including the modern technologies, such as geographic information systems. His work has concentrated on the historic towns of Cheshire and the East Midlands town of Northampton but he will be comparing these to examples from the West Midlands and England in general to emphasise recurring patterns of development.

Mike was Black Country Archaeologist until his retirement in 2014. Previously he carried out a survey of the historic towns of Cheshire from 1997-9, and before then spent many years excavating Anglo-Saxon and Medieval sites in Northampton and Northamptonshire.

Tuesday 6th March 2018 7pm

Speaker: Richard Bradley

A Broad View: investigations on the Broadway flood alleviation scheme

Excavation and watching-brief work by Worcestershire Archaeology uncovered a large multi-period site with at least 8000 years of activity. This included scatters of Mesolithic to early Neolithic flint debris, a complete Beaker and associated grave goods, a Bronze Age to Iron Age farmstead represented by a series of roundhouses and large enclosure ditches, Roman droveways and enclosures, multiple burials and post-built buildings, Saxon finds and the remains of medieval agriculture. The project commenced at the end of September 2016 and should be complete in early 2018, and was undertaken on behalf of the Environment Agency.

Tuesday 10th April 2018 7pm

Speaker: Ellen McAdam

A short history of Birmingham Museums

Birmingham cautiously considered the need for a civic museum for several decades. The first objects in the collection pre-date even Aston Hall, acquired by the city in 1864. However, urged on by Dawson and supported by Chamberlain and Kendrick, the city took the plunge, and the first phase of the Museum and Art Gallery, cunningly funded by the profits from municipal gas, opened in 1885. From that point onwards the museum service developed one of the three great civic collections of the UK, on a par with those of Glasgow and Liverpool and universally acknowledged as internationally important. I will tell the 150-year story of Birmingham Museums – its brilliant ups and disastrous downs - through its collection, its buildings and its people.

Excursions

Thursday 8th March

Llanthony Secunda, Gloucester

We have been invited to join the West Midlands Historic Buildings Trust on an excursion to Llanthony Secunda in Gloucester City Centre on 8th March. You will find a booking form and more information about this visit at the back of the newsletter. Please do make sure you get your booking form to the organiser by 22nd February. Note also that this is a construction site visit so sensible shoes are required! Hard hats can be provided.

Saturday 5th May

Kenilworth Abbey and Barn Museum

This will be an afternoon exclusive BWAS member guided tour of the remains of Kenilworth Abbey and a special opportunity to see inside the Kenilworth Barn Museum. Our hosts for the excursion will be Kenilworth Heritage and Archaeological Society. There is also an option to have a guided tour of the nearby Castle (entrance fee for non EH members) after the abbey visit.

Please complete your booking form as soon as possible to secure a place.

A Visit to Sheldon Hall Saturday 16 April 1888

Following in the footsteps of early archaeological society excursionists – below is a diary extract recording a visit by a group of Society members to Sheldon Hall. Those present were: Mr and Mrs Wright Wilson, JA Cossins (the architect), Mr and Mrs James Whitfield, Jimmy Whitfield, SH Baker and Oliver Baker (the artists). Whilst this was not an official Society outing they may well have been doing a reconnaissance for an excursion. We hope you enjoy reading it as it conjures an image of life and the countryside of what is now a largely built up part of the city. The Bell is still there but is now the Ginger Tree take away and the White Hart is still a public house. Sheldon Hall is a carvery restaurant.

[Marston Green station – arrived at the Bell, a pretty little roadside inn, arranged for tea on our return and set off across fields towards the White Hart at Tile Cross]

Taking the lane to the right, there soon came into view the object of our visit, which we see through the trees, looking quaint and old. We pass on, eager to view the interior, of which there seems to be some doubt about, as two of our number had been over some weeks before, and although they were then able to gain admission, they were not certain of being able to do so again as the woman in charge was not very ready in granting them permission on their former visit, but as our artist friends wanted to make some sketches, we decided to go past the drive, down the lane by the side of the Hall to enable them to do so. Having settled themselves to work with their sketch books, the rest of us walked round the back and saw all we could. As it seemed likely the sketches would take some time, we decided to walk across the fields to



look at the Mill on the river Cole... [they get inside Babbs Mill and walked on to Kingshurst Hall and its moat] We once more started towards the Hall, which we soon reached, and found our artist friends had made some delightful sketches, which we admired. Sitting and standing around the stile we discussed the question as to whether the woman in charge of the Hall would be pleasant or otherwise. Our lady friends, having partaken of some refreshments in the shape of biscuits produced from the pocket of one of our Artists friends which

proved to be very sustaining though not over clean but the artist who was kind enough to offer them said he hated fastidiousness and especially so where food was concerned. After this we summoned up our courage and approached the drive. Our friend the architect knocked at the old Oak door which was a good specimen and had on the original iron fittings. Presenting his card, he asked in the kindest and most polite manner permission for himself and friends to see the interior. Much to his surprise permission was readily granted and we were asked to walk in... We were shown into what was we suppose the Dining Hall. This room had one of the finest old Carved Oak Chimney pieces we had ever seen. It was very beautifully executed and reached from the ceiling down to the floor. It was in a very good state of preservation, but had recently been varnished which did not add to its beauty. The room was panelled round and painted a light green... Returning to the Hall we ascended the staircase which was beautifully carved and very much admired. It was recently painted by Jonathan Pratt and exhibited at the Society of Artists... [And so returned to the station at Marston Green via the Bell for tea.]

Drawing by SH Baker of Sheldon Hall – given a covering of snow to turn it into Christmas Greetings.

The future of Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery

Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery is the most visited civic museum in England. The original Museum & Art Gallery opened in 1885 in the Council House, with the aid of donations from wealthy manufacturers. The Council House Extension was built in two phases between 1908-19 to provide Council offices and an extension of the Museum & Art Gallery, funded by a bequest from newspaper proprietor John Feeney. Both parts of the building are Grade II* Listed. On the night of 22 November 1940 a 500lb bomb damaged the Feeney Galleries and the Bridge joining them to the 1885 building. There have been many other, albeit less dramatic, modifications to the buildings over the years. These contribute to difficulties with access and orientation that affect both the visitor experience and the museum's operations.

The infrastructure of the Council House Complex is in urgent need of renewal. Birmingham Museums Trust will take this opportunity to improve access and visitor facilities, including a bigger and better tea-room. We will also create completely new displays. Birmingham's collection is of international importance, one of the three great civic collections of the UK. It includes around 1 million objects covering almost every imaginable subject area. This is a chance to rethink how we can use this vast cultural asset for the young and superdiverse population of the city-region, contributing to learning, health and well-being, and place-making.

Our research shows that audiences want to see more about Birmingham in the new displays. We will engage with individuals and community groups to explore ways of using the collection to tell stories that attract both local and international visitors. Themes will include the history of the city, its internationally important art and decorative art collections, and the cultures of the world. For the first time we will also be looking at the wider history and archaeology of the West Midlands, with story displays on topics such as the palaeoenvironment, early settlers, the Portable Antiquities Scheme, the Roman Empire and life in a medieval moated manor. And, of course, the Staffordshire Hoard.

As well as the galleries, BMAG houses all BMT's back of house functions and some collection stores. These will be relocated to a new stores and headquarters building. We are planning this new facility in two phases. Phase 1 will enable the redevelopment of the Council House Complex to take place by moving staff and around 40,000 collection objects out of the building. Phase 2 will accommodate the rest of the collection, currently stored in the Museums Collections Centre.

The new facility will offer greater public access to the collection, both physically and intellectually. Physical access will be via guided tours and object study spaces, including a reference library and archive room. We will also offer learning programmes, apprenticeships, volunteering opportunities and greatly enhanced on-line access, not just to digital images of objects but to our archives. Moving a major collection involves a meticulous process of inventory, matching objects against their primary records. This offers us the chance to upgrade and digitise our documentation, which contains material of importance in its own right. The process will enhance our knowledge and understanding of the collection, providing a sound footing for future interpretation and research.

Our plans include reordering the West Midlands archaeology holdings in a standard archaeological archive format. Recent work by Mike Hodder has shown how much larger and more important this collection area is than had previously been realised. Birmingham Museums Trust would welcome any support that BWAS

can offer in planning and executing this project, either as a society or through the contributions of individual volunteers.

Ellen McAdam

The illustration on the front of our newsletter is one of the most recent architect's proposal drawings for the refurbished BMAG.

News from the Past **(Council for British Archaeology West Midlands)**

Saturday 17 February 2018, 10:00am to 3:30pm

Carrs Lane Church Centre, Carrs Lane, Birmingham B4 7SX

Don't miss this annual roundup, which consists of short illustrated talks and displays on recent work on sites and finds ranging in date from the Ice Age onwards, throughout the West Midlands region. This year the talks include Palaeolithic Worcestershire; prehistoric, Roman and Anglo-Saxon sites at Baginton in Warwickshire and Broadway in Worcestershire; Roman remains in Warmington, Warwickshire; Cannock Chase through Time; Mortimer's Cross battlefield; and BWAS President Sue Whitehouse on the Society's See it for Free initiative.

Cost (includes tea and coffee, but please bring your own lunch): £15 CBA WM members, £20 non-members.

To book a place, contact Caroline Mosley, CBA West Midlands, 16 Beverley Court Road, Quinton, Birmingham B32 1HD; 0778 694 1059; nftp.cbawm@gmail.com

For further details, see www.archaeologyuk.org/cbawm/meetings.php

Why not join our committee?

We currently have vacancies on our committee and would very much like to hear from anyone willing to give just a few hours a month to help us build a more active and vibrant society.

At the moment we are in need of a new Honorary Treasurer and a Membership Secretary to be co-opted to the committee as soon as possible. To find out more about the Honorary Treasurer role take a look at our web site for details.

If you think you would like to join us on the committee please either write to me at the BMI mailing address or use the contact form on the website and I will get back to you for a chat.

Sue Whitehouse

Acting President.

Society contacts / trustees

List of members serving as Officers and Members of the Committee, all of whom act as Trustees of the Charity, as of the Annual General Meeting which took place on 5 December 2017:

<p>Acting President Ms. Sue Whitehouse</p> <p>Vice Presidents Dr. Mike Hodder Dr. Della Hooke Ms. Stephanie Ratkai</p> <p>Honorary Officers</p> <p>Secretary Mr. Mick Bridgman</p> <p>Treasurer Vacancy</p> <p>Editor (Transactions) Dr. Della Hooke</p>	<p>Assistant Secretary (for newsletter) Mr. Bryn Gethin</p> <p>Excursions Secretary Ms. Caroline Rann</p> <p>Committee Members</p> <p>Dr. Peter King Dr. Ellen McAdam Ms. Tracey Thorne Mr George Demidowicz</p>
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Follow us on line at: www.bwas-online.co.uk

Facebook: Birmingham and Warwickshire Archaeological Society

Twitter: @TBAWAS

Our mailing address: Birmingham and Midland Institute, 9 Margaret Street, Birmingham, B3 B3S

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

The new General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) comes into force on 25 May 2018 across all EU member states. The UK Government's Data Protection Bill 2017 brings this into UK law so this will not be affected by Brexit.

Data protection laws ensure that personal information is handled appropriately and securely by organisations including businesses, government agencies and charities.

We therefore need you to complete the form at the end of this newsletter and return it to us so that we can continue to send you information about our activities.



VISIT TO LLANTHONY SECUNDA PRIORY, GLOUCESTER DOCKS.

THURSDAY 8TH MARCH 2018 AT 11 AM.

Llanthony Secunda Priory, St. Mary, is a former Augustinian Priory which was founded in 1136 as a refuge for the monks of St. John's Llanthony in the mountains near Hay on Wye. The Gloucester Priory received many endowments and lands in the following centuries and as it was under the protection of Gloucester Castle it prospered far more than the remote monastery in Wales.

The Priory is located within Gloucester Docks and has recently been subject to an extensive archaeological investigation as preparation for a £4m HLF funded project to restore and conserve Llanthony's six Grade 1 listed buildings and structures.

Our visit will be guided by Andy Hutchings of Croft Building and Conservation who are involved in the work at Llanthony (Andy was site manager for us on our successful Weavers' Cottages project which completed last year). Hard hats will be provided, if you do not own one, but please wear strong shoes.

The delights to explore at Llanthony include architecture from Medieval, Georgian and Victorian periods - and this visit is a great opportunity to view these at close quarters and also to learn some of the site's archaeological secrets. It has a fascinating past.

To ensure you can join with us for this interesting excursion please contact Philip Adams, at 36, Beauty Bank, Old Hill, B64 7HZ. 01384 562472 or 07746052324 by 22nd February '18. The visit costs £10 per person and cheques should be made payable to WMHBT.

Llanthony Secunda Priory visit Thursday 8th March 2018. Please reserve.....places @ £10 =£.....

I enclose a cheque for £.....

Name.....Address.....

.....Tel. No.....

If you are happy to be contacted by email please include below:

Email address

Names in party.....



BWAS

Birmingham and Warwickshire
Archaeological Society

Excursion: Guided tour of the Ruins of Kenilworth Abbey and visit to the old Barn now Kenilworth Barn Museum

Saturday 5th May 2018 guided tour starts at 1pm in Abbey Fields

The excursion to Abbey fields will start at 1pm on Saturday 5th May 2017 meeting at the Abbey Ruins located in Abbey Fields about 150 meters from Bridge Street. The guided Tour will be given by Jan Cooper, Chair of Kenilworth Heritage and Archaeological Society.

The guided tour will then continue by walking the short distance to visit the historic barn which is now home to the Kenilworth Barn Museum and Heritage Centre. Members will have the chance to learn more about the history of the abbey where an interpretation of Kenilworth Priory (later Abbey) with some beautifully carved and decorated stones and tiles on display which have been found during excavations of the site.

The tour will take approximately 2 hours. The excursion is £5 per person to members and includes a donation to KHAS.

Members will also have the option of visiting Kenilworth Castle from 3pm which is open until 6pm (entrance English Heritage non-members £10.70 concessions £9.60). A guided tour by KHAS at the castle can be arranged on request.

Free 2 hours parking available at Abbey Fields Car Park Bridge Street, £1.80 for 3 hours thereafter. Castle car parking costs refunded on admission.

Booking Form for the Excursion to Kenilworth Abbey & Barn on the 5th May 2017:

Name:

Address:

Email:

Telephone number:

Any special requirements:

Tick here if you would also like to book a place on the guided tour of the castle:

I enclose a cheque made out to 'Birmingham and Warwickshire Archaeological Society' for £

Please book by Friday 27th April to secure your place. Send to Birmingham and Warwickshire Archaeological Society, Birmingham and Midland Institute, 9 Margaret Street, Birmingham B3 3BS

Opt in Consent Form to Receive Information from BWAS

From time to time we would like to send you information about our lectures and excursions and news about archaeology in Birmingham and Warwickshire. Please indicate your preference for receipt of this information by completing this form.

Name:

Email:

(Please supply your email address if you would like to receive information from us by email)

Address:

Post Code:

Tick this box if you would like to receive information from us by post

Tick this box if you would like to receive information from us by email

Please return this form to us so that we can continue to send you information about our activities:

by email to the Secretary at michael.bridgman@cantab.net

by post to: Birmingham and Warwickshire Archaeological Society, Birmingham and Midland Institute, 9 Margaret Street, Birmingham B3 3BS