



Bwas Newsletter

Summer 2018

Welcome to our Summer Newsletter



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A Note from the President



I have been looking at the very first published Transactions for the Society. The very first edition is entitled *Birmingham and Midland Institute – Archaeological Section – Transactions, Excursions and Reports 1870 (printed for subscribers only)*. It is a little larger than A4 size and bound in soft grey covers. Back in the 19th century subscribers would have arranged to have their transactions bound in hard covers. There is a wonderful set of early volumes in the BMI library. The pages have large margins allowing for cutting and binding. Let's step inside....

First page is an engraving by A E Everitt - a view of St Martins' Church and Moat Lane taken from a sketch made in 1853 (left). On the next page a map based on the Westley map of 1731 and an image of the Parsonage – demolished in 1825. Clearly the town was changing and historic places being lost, damaged and altered.

It is worth quoting from the introductory paragraphs of the Inaugural address of the first President; Samuel Timmins. Sam, as he preferred to be called, had inherited wealth from his father in the form of a tin plate manufactory in Hurst Street and grew up to become a Shakespearian scholar and antiquarian, hobnobbing with the great and good of the town. *"Old Birmingham will furnish so much material for the work of the Archaeological Section of the Midland Institute"*. He then goes on to explain the reasons why such a society is desirable in such a busy and flourishing town. *"Birmingham has too often been looked on as a modern town. Compared with Coventry and Kenilworth and Warwick its claims to antiquity seem rare and small. Still if we take the trouble to look back we find our own town has an antiquity and a clear and definite history not often equalled or surpassed."* Warming to his subject he gives a history of Birmingham from Domesday through to the visit of Leland in 1538. Then leaping forward to the 'last century', (the 18th century of course), he refers to the commercial fame of the city and lists the likes of Boulton, Watt and Baskerville amongst those who *"laboured to extend our reputation for manufactures of the highest class"*. Then he tells his audience that we know but little of the history of Birmingham and extolls the need to know more. *"Hence, some of us hold it necessary in the highest degree that an Archaeological Society should exist, to explore the past and to preserve what is passing for future use."*

The first paper in the Transactions relates to St Martin's Church and change is clearly afoot. Mr J Thackray refers to proposals to 'restore' the entire fabric of the church which threatens the destruction of the medieval and later features of the building which he goes on to describe at length with reference to archives and historical records.

Some of the fears and concerns raised in this first edition of Transactions could just as easily apply today as demand for new development and modernisation of the city continues to threaten its architectural and archaeological heritage. I feel Timmins and his colleagues are looking down upon us, prodding us into action maybe?

The 1870 volume also gives us a vivid description of early excursions undertaken by the Society. A trip to Hereford in June took in the Bishop's Place, Cathedral, Church of All Saints and Blackfriars. The second excursion went to Kenilworth, when more than a 100 people turned up at New Street Station to catch the train to Coventry at 9.30am! Arriving at Coventry 'conveyances' were ready and waiting to take the group on to visit Stoneleigh Abbey and Kenilworth Castle ending at 6pm with dinner at the King's Arms Hotel, (photo right) getting back to New Street at 9pm. That was a long day! A third excursion to Malvern in September was a special walking tour up to Hereford Beacon camp, a trip which "*only a few ladies could be expected to join*"!!



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This first edition of the Society Transactions has been an inspiration. First of all it reminds us that the Society will have its 150th Birthday in 2020. Something we must think about celebrating. Secondly, those who established the Society, there were 192 original subscribers, were clearly concerned about the impact of rapid change on the heritage of the town. The need to explore the past and to preserve what is passing for future use is just as much an issue today as it was 1870. Perhaps even more so as resources seem to be increasingly scarce to support our museums, archives, buildings conservation and archaeological services. Timmins also mentions James Watt as one of that group of men who laboured to extend the reputation of Birmingham and in 2019 we commemorate the 200th anniversary of his death. And finally – those excursions must have been quite something, even those in which the ladies may have been considered too delicate to take part! We had a successful visit to Kenilworth Abbey and Castle in the spring and hope in future to plan more excursions and start looking at more opportunities for the people of Birmingham and Warwickshire to get involved with the archaeology and heritage of the area.

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. We especially need people willing to act as Membership Secretary and to help with organising lectures and excursions – or maybe help with our Newsletter?

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.

BWAS Lecture Programme 2018-19

We have a really exciting programme of lectures planned for this year kicking off with the return of Richard Bradley from Worcestershire Archaeology who earlier this year gave us an excellent talk on the archaeological discoveries from Broadway arising from works to implement a flood alleviation scheme. This time he will be telling us about a site a bit closer to home at Meriden Quarry.

For our November meeting we shall be returning to the Market Hall Museum in the heart of Warwick for a catch up on recent work undertaken by Archaeology Warwickshire at Baginton, near Coventry. There seems to be so much exciting archaeology taking place in the county at the moment it is hard to keep up so at this lecture we should also be treated to some hot of the press revelations! By the way – Warwick is very easy to get to by train from Birmingham so why not join us if you didn't make the trip last year. We even get a chance for tea and coffee at the museum.

In December our AGM speaker will be Nick Daffern, who will be plunging us into the ice-age – let's hope the weather outside is kinder!

Don't forget that our lectures are open to non-members (£3 on the door), so why not bring along a friend? All lectures are held at the Birmingham and Midland Institute in Margaret Street, central Birmingham with the exception of the November lecture which will be held in the Market Hall Museum in Warwick. Lectures start at 7pm.

October 2nd 2018 7pm

Speaker: Richard Bradley

Barrows and Burnt Mounds: Investigations at Meriden Quarry, 2013-2015



Excavation and watching-brief work by Worcestershire Archaeology over a number of years of quarry extraction has identified multiple phases of activity, mainly of prehistoric date. This has included well-preserved palaeoenvironmental deposits, Mesolithic flint working debris, late Neolithic and Bronze Age burnt mounds associated with a sequence of peat formation, Bronze Age and Iron Age timber lined features, and a monumental complex incorporating a post-built palisade with at least three round barrows. Work at the quarry is ongoing but this talk focuses on discoveries during 2013-2015.

Richard Bradley is a project officer working for Worcestershire Archaeology.

WARWICK MUSEUM LECTURE

November 6th 2018 7pm

Speaker: Nigel Page

WOW! what a site!

An update on the excavation of Roman and Anglo-Saxon cemeteries at Baginton

An archaeological excavation was carried out on land at Whitley South, Baginton, Warwickshire in 2017, on high ground overlooking the River Sowe and Coventry to the North. The excavation revealed a series of possible Neolithic pits with flint artefacts, a Bronze Age round barrow, a Roman cremation cemetery and houses and a small cemetery of Anglo-Saxon date.

The Roman cremation cemetery contained over 60 burials, some with offering pots, personal items and cremation urns, which was likely to have been associated with the Lunt Roman Fort, c.350m to the west.

Remains of five Anglo-Saxon houses and twelve burials were also recorded. Some of the graves contained grave goods, which included complete pots and a hanging bowl.

Conservation work on the numerous metal objects recovered has revealed not only how they would have looked when made and used, but it has also thrown up some surprises.

AGM Night

December 4th 2018 6.45pm

Speaker: Nick Daffern

The Ice Age and Palaeolithic West Midlands a.k.a The Original West Midlands Safari Park

The West Midlands is often overlooked in favour of the east and south-east of England but this talk aims to show that the West Midlands has an incredibly important part to play in the story of Britain during the Pleistocene!

The talk will look at the fascinating Ice Age history of the West Midlands covering its climate and landscape over the last one million years and the animals and humans (both archaic and modern!) who lived and hunted here. An overview will be given of the results of a 2013 English Heritage-funded reassessment of the Palaeolithic in Worcestershire 'which (excuse the pun!) has snowballed into research that has implications for the wider West Midlands and the potential for future work that everyone can get involved in to enhance our understanding of these lost landscapes.

Nick Daffern is an archaeologist, palynologist (pollen specialist!) and environmental archaeologist with a particular focus and passion for the Pleistocene of the West Midlands. He is Associate Director for Archaeology and Heritage at Wardell Armstrong



Looking forward to 2019 we shall be having talks on the archaeology of HS2 – the new high speed rail link from London which passes through Warwickshire and then the east side of Birmingham up to Curzon Street Station. Archaeological works are currently underway so we should find out the most recent discoveries from our speaker. This will be our lunchtime lecture in January. Later on in the year we shall find out about hill forts that aren't hill forts; we shall be commemorating the 200th anniversary of the death of the industrial pioneer James Watt and finding out about an Anglo-Saxon Hall discovered in Shropshire. So watch this space or keep up to date by looking at our website at <https://bwash-online.co.uk/> or following us on Facebook and Twitter.

Dates for your 2019 Diary

January 8th 2019 1pm ANNUAL LUNCHTIME LECTURE

Speaker - TBC

The Archaeology of HS2

February 5th 2019 7pm

Speaker: Shelagh Norton

When is a hillfort not a hillfort? Marsh-forts in North Shropshire

March 5th 2019 7pm

Speaker: Dr Jim Andrew

James Watt, engineer - 1736 to 1819

April 2nd 2019 7pm

Speaker: Dr Roger White

Excavations of an Anglo Saxon Hall site at Atcham, Shropshire

Birmingham Heritage Week 6–16 Sept 2018

BWAS will be hosting a Walk around Medieval Yardley on Saturday 15 September 2018.

On behalf of the Society Mike Hodder and Sue Whitehouse will be leading a leisurely 2.5 mile stroll around the village of Yardley. Discover the hidden history of the area including two medieval moats that once surrounded manor houses, ridges remaining from medieval ploughing, and the historic buildings of old Yardley including (exterior only) St Edburgha's church and the timber-framed old grammar school.

The walk will take place twice during the day, starting from Blakesley Hall (Blakesley Road, Birmingham B25 8RN) at 11:30 and 2:00.

The walk is free, but please phone Blakesley Hall 0121 348 8120 to reserve your place.

Find out more about all of the events and activities available during Birmingham heritage Week at <http://birminghamheritageweek.co.uk/>

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Festival of Archaeology – Fringe events??

The Festival of Archaeology is taking a year off in 2018 as part of a plan for a bigger and better festival to form part of 75th anniversary of the Council for British Archaeology next year.

The Festival of Archaeology has been running for 27 years - from a single day in 1990 to two weeks in 2017. Last year over 1,000 events were put on by 318 organisers across the UK there are plans to build on this success for 2019. To do this a new fundraising strategy is being developed to secure the future of the festival.

In the meantime some festival organisers, including Archaeology Warwickshire, were already putting together plans for events in 2018. So don't despair – there are interesting things going on during July in our area so WE can carry on celebrating archaeology this summer.

There will be events on at the Market Hall Museum in Warwick:

12th July Show and Tell Archaeological Finds Market Hall Museum 1pm - 1.30pm FREE #
14th July Family History: Exploring Record Offices County Record Office 10.15am - 12.45pm £12
18th July Finding a Roman Farmstead Market Hall Museum 7pm - 9pm £7.50
23rd July A View from a Hill Market Hall Museum 7pm - 9pm £7.50
26th July Rural Settlement Life along the Fosse Way Market Hall Museum 7pm - 9pm £7.50
30th July Behind the Scenes: Store Tour Museum Stores 10.30am -12noon £7.50
31st July Warwick's Roman Past Market Hall Museum 7pm -9pm £7.50

Booking Details:

Events must be booked in advance unless stated #

online at <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/o/heritage-and-culture-warwickshire-6137347795>

or by phone Market Hall Museum 01926 412500, County Record Office 01926 738959.

Worcester Museum – Ice Age Exhibition.

Those of you planning to attend our AGM Lecture in December may like to have a sneak preview of Ice-Age Worcestershire this summer!

Worcester City Museum and Art Gallery - Saturday 16th June - Saturday 8th September 2018

Over this enormous timespan there were many changes in climate, from woolly mammoths roaming icy tundra in Bromsgrove, to prehistoric lions hunting the grasslands beneath Bredon Hill. Humans came and went with the warming and cooling of the climate. Lost Landscapes of Worcestershire will bring this little known period of our prehistory to life through the Ice Age exhibition and many associated events and activities. Visit Ice Age and come face to face with a Neanderthal, crawl inside our Ice Age shelter and meet Fluffy the Woolly Mammoth.

The Ice Age exhibition is part of Lost Landscapes; a joint project between Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology Service and Museums Worcestershire, with funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund. For more information about the Lost Landscapes project see: www.iceageworcestershire.wordpress.com

Excursion Report

Excursion to Kenilworth Abbey and Barn Museum

Saturday the 5th May was a gloriously sunny day for our excursion to Kenilworth Abbey. Members enjoyed an excellent tour of the site with our guide for the day was Jan Cooper, Chairman of the Kenilworth History and Archaeological Society. We started at the parish church dedicated to St Nicholas which has an exceptionally fine Romanesque doorway, originally part of the Abbey and most likely relocated here during Elizabethan times when so much improvement work was also taking place at the nearby castle to impress the Queen.



We then moved on to the most complete surviving element of the Abbey complex; the Tantara Gatehouse. Kenilworth Abbey was founded by Geoffrey de Clinton in 1119, and was made an Abbey in 1448. Those who lived there were Augustinians and were not monks but canons meaning they were all ordained priests or younger men and boys, novices, who were training to be priests. The Gatehouse entrance to the Abbey was originally two storey but the upper floors were destroyed in 1538 when the monastery was suppressed but much of interest survives included a splendid vaulted passageway through which all

visitors, travelling by cart or on foot would need to pass when visiting. Two rooms survive; inner and outer chambers to which we were unable gain access but Jan informed us that proposals were in hand to conserve and open up these rooms to visitors once the necessary funds have been raised. Once completed the Gatehouse will provide new display space for medieval tiles and stonework which were recovered from the Abbey site during excavations in the 20th century. By the way, the results of these excavations were published in our own Society transactions reference Carey Hill, E: Kenilworth Abbey, Volume LII, OUP 1930.

Moving on from the gatehouse we walked around to the site of the cloister. Here a wall has been constructed, a lapidarium, where carved stonework is on display. The site underwent major excavations in the 1920s and the remains are considerable but today largely reburied. Most of the site of the church nave is today a memorial garden for cremations but the scale of the long, narrow nave of the Abbey church can be readily appreciated even though it is cut in two by a Victorian boundary wall!

Walking along the site of the nave we eventually came to the crossing where the remains of piers survive on the north side. Then clambering up a bank we turned into the park beyond the church yard where the remains of the Abbey are preserved underground. Whilst on our tour we were entertained by quotes from the Barnwell Observances. All monastic houses had what was effectively a book of rules which regulated daily life and acceptable behaviour. Whilst the book of rules for Kenilworth is lost those for Barnwell (Cambridge) give a vivid picture of what life was like in an abbey at the time. For example, whittling was strictly forbidden in the choir and in the refectory there were strict rules about making sure the table linen was kept clean. But the rules also give us a picture of a life that was perhaps hard work but far from lacking in comfort. Food seems to have been varied and plentiful for example and the health of the canons was ensured by regular 'bleeding' and attention to hygiene including flushing latrines.

One of the few upstanding remains on the site is part of the back wall of the Chapter House, now fenced off in the open park area. This wall actually survives about 6 metres high but much of it is now buried below ground. From here our group walked around the site of the cloister and refectory until we reached the so called 'Barn' where the Kenilworth History and Archaeological Society have a small museum with displays about the Abbey on ground floor and other archaeological finds and historical exhibition material on the first floor. The barn building is something of a mystery. Whilst most of the other monastic buildings on the site were destroyed after the dissolution this buildings survived. It certainly was used as a barn and cowshed in more recent times but its monastic use is uncertain. Originally a single story building it was given a second floor accessed by an external staircase at some point in its history. Could it have been the workshop of a stone mason with a drawing office on the upper floor and workshops below? Or maybe it was a strong room for the safekeeping of valuables? We may never know but the use of the building was the subject of much discussion as member explored the displays.



Some members continued their afternoon with a guided tour around Kenilworth Castle. We hope to organise more excursions in future and would welcome your feedback and ideas by completing the enclosed members questionnaire.

WALL Roman Site Museum – 2018 opening days and times.

The small but excellent museum at Wall Roman Site (Letocetum) near Lichfield contains displays of objects found in excavations on the baths and mansio and other sites in the area including a Roman cemetery. Opening of the museum is only made possible by the dedication of the Friends of Letocetum volunteer group so please show your support. Admission is free, and it is open from 11am to 4 pm on the following days this year:

July 28, 29; August 4, 5, 11, 12, 18, 19, 25, 26, 27; September 29, 30; October 27, 28

The museum is on Watling Street in Wall village WS14 0AW. There is a car park a short distance from the Museum. The excavated remains of the baths and mansio (English Heritage/National Trust: open all the time) are close to the Museum and a guidebook can be purchased at the Museum. The nearest railway stations are at Lichfield (about 2.5 miles) and Shenstone (1.5 miles). There is no weekend bus service.

News from High Speed Two

HS2 has undertaken a geophysical survey across the route of the new railway line in North Warwickshire and parts of Solihull, the results from these large scale surveys are now being analysed by some leading specialists in geophysics. Non-intrusive survey has included multiple techniques; Magnetometer with LiDAR, UAV (drones) and detailed aerial photograph analysis, resulting in a number of potential new settlement areas being revealed, several in Warwickshire.

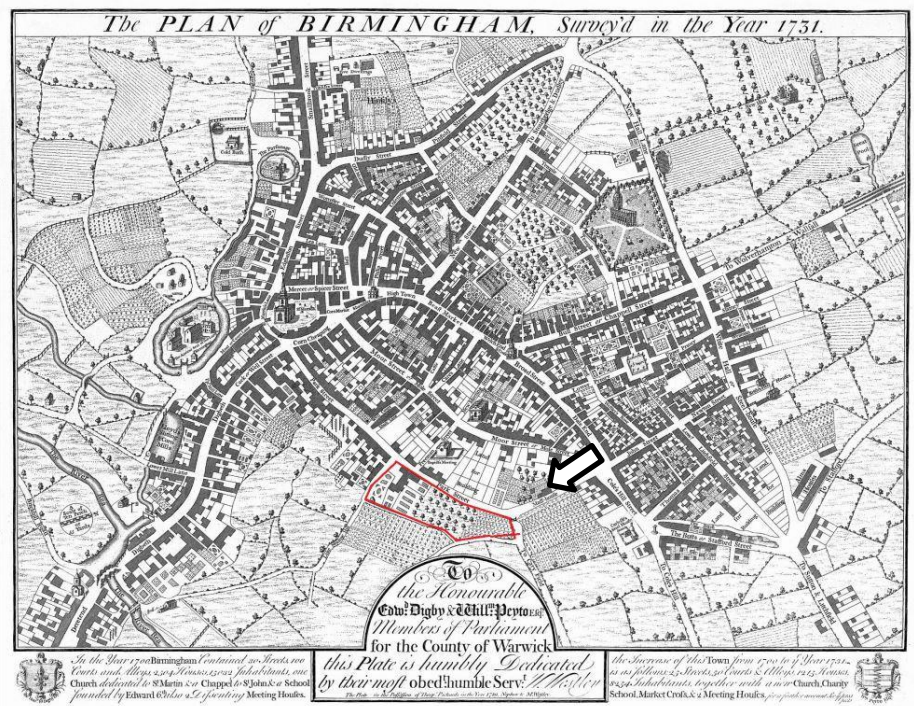


The limited trial trenching / field evaluation undertaken thus far has yielded limited archaeological evidence other than a possible medieval hollow way near Burton Green, however, trial trenches at Coleshill have suggested a possible Romano British settlement and this site is due to be excavated shortly. Large scale evaluation in the form of more extensive trial trench excavations will follow over the summer once the survey data has been analysed and interpreted.

In Birmingham the trial trench evaluation at Park Street former burial ground has confirmed the date and significance of the 19th century overflow burial ground, that should contain in excess of 8000 human burials. The work so far has given an idea of the general layout of the burial ground and the condition of the remains. This site will be excavated from July 2018 to 2019 /2020 depending of the number of burials and monuments found. Below is a historic map dated 1731 showing Park Street with the site of the burial ground outlined (indicated with an arrow). HS2 will also be investigating this area and the areas to the immediate east and west.

Further archaeological evaluation and possible mitigation will also take place around the Curzon Street area, where it is hoped that some industrial remains of the Old Curzon Street Goods Station (sheds and roundhouse) will remain in situ. Also, archaeological investigations to the west of Park Street may examine the post medieval and medieval layout of the eastern edge of Birmingham and the edge of the medieval parkland.

Thanks to Tony Hanna from HS2 for this update



See it for Free

This summer we would like to encourage members to get out and about to explore the vast wealth of archaeological sites you can 'See for Free' in Birmingham and Warwickshire. If you haven't had a look yet we would urge you to look at the BWAS-online website to find out more. <https://bwas-online.co.uk/home/see-it-for-free/>

See it for Free aims to increase awareness of some less well-known, but freely-accessible, archaeological remains in Birmingham, Solihull, Coventry and Warwickshire by encouraging people to visit and explore them. The 13 sites included in the project are in the countryside and city suburbs and range from prehistoric monuments and Roman roads to medieval castles and wartime gun emplacements, so there should be something to interest everyone.

The website contains information on how to access and explore sites bringing together information from a range of sources to help people find out more about each site, encouraging further in depth personal exploration. Each site is illustrated with photographs and easy to understand instructions on how to find and identify features of interest in the field. Information is available as a pdf download or can be viewed on a smartphone or tablet on site.

The project highlights the wide range and large quantity of archaeological remains that have been recorded by archaeologists and historians over generations but are often underappreciated today. Building an understanding of this legacy within local communities will help sustain an interest in younger generations and hopefully contribute towards the longer term protection and interpretation of such, often vulnerable, sites into the future.

Here is a list of sites you can explore

1. Wappenbury Iron Age camp
2. Gannow Green moated site
3. Brinklow motte and bailey castle
4. Handsworth WWII gun placements
5. Sutton Park Roman road
6. Mancetter Roman site
7. Yardley Village / Kents Moat
8. Moseley Bog burnt mounds
9. Hob Ditch Iron Age / Roman earthwork
10. Beaudesert motte & bailey
11. Wormleighton DMV
12. Berkswell – Norman crypt and village (right)
13. Oakley Wood prehistoric earthworks



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:

Acting President Ms. Sue Whitehouse Vice Presidents Dr. Mike Hodder Dr. Della Hooke Ms. Stephanie Ratkai Honorary Officers Secretary -Mr. Mick Bridgman Treasurer - Thomas Dimambro Editor (Transactions) - Dr. Della Hooke	Assistant Secretary - Mr. Bryn Gethin Excursions Secretary - Ms. Caroline Rann Committee Members Dr. Peter King Dr. Ellen McAdam Mr George Demidowicz
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