

A Letter from Honor Lewington

To all BAS Members and Friends.

August 2014

May I thank you all for the wonderful retirement present you gave me at the AGM. I was astonished at such a substantial amount on the cheque, and charmed by the bouquet and the kind words on the card.

My association with BAS began in 2004 when I arrived at the BAS Library to help Librarian/Archivist Diana Gulland and her assistant Alan Dell. I was given the task of cataloguing John Chenevix Trench's papers. This took 4 years.

In May 2008, on the retirement of Brian Davis from the combined post of Treasurer and Membership Secretary, Council decided to split the post, Nicola Savage was elected Treasurer, and I was elected Membership Secretary, a post which I held until May 2012, and I continued to help Diana and Alan in the Library every Wednesday. Chasing subscriptions became a way of life.

In May 2012, when Diana Gulland stepped down from her post, I found myself stepping into her shoes as both Archivist and 'acting Librarian' by default - and what shoes to fill! The help and encouragement given to me from Diana herself, BAS Council, BAS ordinary members, volunteers, and Sarah Gray and her obliging Museum staff was extraordinary and much appreciated.

Late in 2011 it became apparent that Stoke Mandeville old parish church and the mediaeval village site would eventually be obliterated by HS2. Encouraged by Chairman Peter Marsden, I ran a course of BAS Palaeography workshops which took place early 2012. Five willing participants from the workshops agreed to join the new BAS Probate Group and together we transcribed all the available probate documents of Stoke Mandeville. These documents enabled us to find out more about mediaeval and early modern Stoke Mandeville and the inhabitants who were buried in the old churchyard. The task is now finished and the transcribed wills and inventories may be consulted in BAS Library. Thank-you BAS Probate Group! We now hope to 'do' Twyford wills - new volunteers would be very welcome, please contact 'BAS Probate Group' via BAS Library.

These last 10 years serving the BAS Library have been very rewarding, and I would particularly like to thank Bronwen Lee, who in May 2012 took over as Membership Secretary after helping me in the job, and Marian Miller, who in Jan. 2013 agreed to become Librarian, for their friendship and support.

I am missing the Library already. However this year I shall be very busy spending your gift to me on a bespoke bookshelf, and I look forward with relish to my next decision - just which books shall I put on it.? What luxury!

Best wishes and many thanks,

Honor Lewington