



Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Buckinghamshire Archaeological Society 2017

The meeting opened at the County Museum, Aylesbury, 6th May 2017 at 2pm. The president of the Society, Richard Gem, took the chair.

Attendance

Richard Gem, Peter Marsden, Jasmine Reeks, Simon Reeks, Doug Stuckey, Veronica Stagnell, Valerie Moir, David Church, David Hillier, Trudi Ball, Harry Ball, Pat Kent, Rosemary Jury, Julia Wise, Bob Zeepvat, Yvonne Edwards, Ed Kendrick, Tony Sargeant, Cynthia Fitzjohn, Barbara Hurman, Sue Gill, Bill Willett, Ken Wallis, Diana Gulland, Peter Gulland, Sarah Gray, Roger Bettridge, Bruce Lewington, Barney Tyrwhit-Drake, Pauline Hey, Michael Hardy, Betty Hardy, John Dodd, M Dodd, Marianne De Groot, Peta De Groot, Corry Cashman, Marian Miller, Bronwen Lee, Steve Sharp. Richard de Peyer, Julian Hunt, Nigel Wilson, Michael Ghirelli, George Lamb, Glynis Pellatt.

Item 1. Apologies

Dr Richard Davies, Carys Gadsden, Eliza Alqassar, Elizabeth Oliver, Warren Whyte, Bryan Moseley, John Sheldon, Peter Jarvis, Maureen Brown, Bruce Alexander

Item 2. Minutes of the AGM 7th May 2016

These were read and approved with no amendments. Richard Gem signed the minutes as a true and accurate record of proceedings.

Item 3. Matters arising

There were no matters arising.

Item 4. Officers Reports

- i) **Hon. Secretary: Sarah Gray**
Nothing to report.
- ii) **Hon. Treasurer: Harry Ball**
The annual report and accounts were published in the Spring Newsletter on pages 12-17. There were no questions

- iii) **Hon Librarian Julian Hunt and Hon Archivist Roger Bettridge:**
The report was published in the Spring Newsletter on pages 33 to 37. There were no questions.
- iv) **Associate Editor of Records of Bucks Bob Zeepvat:**
Records of Bucks was published and made available to members at the AGM.
- v) **Hon Membership Secretary Bronwen Lee:**
The report was published in the Spring edition of the newsletter. There were no questions.

Item 5. President's remarks 2017

In 2015 the historic site of Quarrendon, comprising the scheduled ancient monument together with a surrounding buffer of land, lying on the right bank of the River Thame to the north west of Aylesbury, was vested in the Buckinghamshire Conservation Trust – a body set up by the County Council with support from our Society and on which I represent the Society. This vesting followed several years of, often frustrating, negotiations with the consortium responsible for the adjacent major development sites at Berryfields and Buckingham Park. Since then, the Trust has embarked on a programme of repair and consolidation of hedges, fences and gates, necessary following on from a period of several years when little maintenance has been carried out. The Trust is also in the process of seeking grant aid towards the consolidation of the ruins of the medieval St Peter's Chapel. There is public access to the land along existing footpaths, and the aim of the Trust is to promote public access, understanding and enjoyment of the site. At the same time, the land is in agricultural use by two tenant farmers, for sheep grazing and arable, and this use will continue, ensuring that the land is properly managed, and also helping to generate income for the Trust.

These factors, continuing agricultural use, public access and the adjacency of new housing developments, need to be managed so as to secure mutual respect among the different users for each other and for the integrity of the site. A key to developing such respect, in the view of the Trust, is through promoting public understanding. With this in mind, the Trust has invited our Society to join in arranging an open day at Quarrendon on Sunday 9th July, with the aim of making the historic site better known among the communities living around its edge at Berryfields, Buckingham Park and Quarrendon. These communities have been selected because, living alongside the site and using it as an amenity, we hope that they will become familiar with this part of their local heritage and be partners in protecting it. A secondary reason is that, without current vehicular access to the site, it is not possible to arrange transport to it from Aylesbury, as the Society did on the previous open day we arranged ten years ago.

The day is being planned by a joint steering group, representing the Society and the Trust. The overall format on the day will be, not to provide guided tours as such, but to have on hand volunteers who can speak to visitors and answer questions. We will also have, we hope, a series of presentations: environmental, archaeological and so forth. In addition we are aiming to produce a short and informative guide booklet to the site. If there are any members of the audience who would like to participate in the event as volunteers, perhaps they would make themselves known to Mike Farley – their help would be greatly appreciated.

But beyond this event, I have been wondering whether the Society might take a longer-term practical interest in developing our understanding of the Quarrendon site. In very brief outline, for those who may not be familiar with it, the history of the site is as follows. According to otherwise unsubstantiated medieval tradition, there was an Anglo-Saxon royal manor on the site. Later in the middle ages the core area was occupied by a village settlement of farmsteads, grouped around irregular greens and connected by sunken roadways; there was also a stone chapel. In the early modern period the village was deserted, the land was enclosed for sheep, and a moated manor house was built surrounded by elaborate gardens fed by a managed water system; this work is taken to be associated with the Elizabethan courtier Sir Henry Lee (1533-1611). Subsequently the land reverted to tenanted farmland, with a farmhouse where once the manor house had stood. This long history is represented today mainly by a palimpsest of grass-covered earthworks that can stimulate the imagination as to what once was there and provide a key to understanding England's medieval and early modern past. The Society first took an interest in Quarrendon in our earliest days, when in 1859 Archdeacon Bickersteth published a paper on St Peter's chapel in the second volume of *Records of Bucks* (now available online on our web site). But the most important contribution to current understanding of the site has been the 2001 paper by Paul Everson in *Records* 41, 'Peasants, Peers and Graziers: the Landscape of Quarrendon'. The latter provides an essential platform for all further research: but there are no structures for carrying such research forward unless it is our Society and its members.

A good start has been made recently by the Active Archaeology Group through a field-walking event organised by Mike Farley and Eliza Alqassar on 2nd April just passed. The field that was walked by a group of twenty volunteers was one under plough immediately south of the moated manor site. The material gathered is currently being sorted by Mike Farley and Barbara Hurman.

However, potentially there is much more that might be done on site, through non-intrusive means, to help answer a range of questions. One of these relates to the extensive Tudor gardens. From the Everson survey we have a good plan of the earthworks

defining the outline of the gardens; but still we do not know anything about the planting within them. I can envisage that this deficit might be addressed through two means. One would be through geophysical survey that might reveal paths, planting pits for trees and such features (the Active Archaeology Group's work at Hogshaw has shown that results may be obtained through this type of survey). Another means would be through a programme of sampling the sediments in the moat to see whether pollen grains might indicate the sort of plants being cultivated nearby: but for this, of course, specialist partners would be required. Unfortunately the big question about the plan of the manor house itself cannot be researched at present through geophysical survey, since the site is covered with demolition rubble from the modern farm buildings that have stood in the area. However, it might be possible in future to obtain scheduled monument consent to clear that demolition rubble down to the top surface of archaeologically significant levels.

A third area that might be susceptible to geophysical survey is that of the graveyard attached to the chapel. Current features on the site reveal little of the extent of that graveyard which, with the chapel, may belong among the early features in the development of Quarrendon. But archaeological fieldwork is not the only area of potential research: there are also documentary sources. For the church and churchyard these may include, for example, visitations and wills. Any such records may exist in different archives, since in the middle ages Quarrendon lay in the diocese of Lincoln, but from the 16th century onwards in the diocese of Oxford

Turning to manorial documents: in *Records* 49 (2009), in a note entitled 'New Light on Quarrendon', Sarah Charlton drew attention to the fact that the manorial records for Quarrendon are to be found in the Dillon Collection at the Oxfordshire Record Office. These include account rolls, court rolls and rent rolls, covering variously among them the period from the 14th century through to the 17th. In her note she concluded with the words: 'until these records have been analysed and studied in depth, the history of the rise and fall of Quarrendon will remain incomplete. It is to be hoped that someone will rise to the challenge.' To the best of my knowledge, no one yet has done so.

So, both as regards archaeological fieldwork and documentary research, there are important fields of research to which our Society might contribute, and I very much hope that we may find our way to do so in practical ways. I leave you with that thought to be mulled over.

Item 6 Votes of thanks

The president moved the following votes of thanks. In the first place I extend the Society's grateful thanks to **Sarah Gray** who is standing down as Hon. Secretary after a year attempting to balance the responsibilities of this role with the many other things in which

she has been actively engaged for the Society. She will be continuing with the latter, but is relinquishing the Secretary's role.

Then we must thank our Ordinary Members of Council and Trustees who at this AGM complete their three-year term: **Kim Biddulph, George Lamb** and **Nigel Wilson** - also to **Nicola Powell** who has already stood down because of other commitments. These have all made valuable contributions to the work of the Society: in George's case over many years in different capacities, such that he is very much a custodian of our collective identity. Nigel in particular has kept a wary eye for us on the activities of our local authorities in Buckinghamshire and their impact on the historic environment: we hope he will continue to do so, even if not as an elected member of Council

We are no less appreciative of the continuing contributions of our ongoing Officers and Ordinary Members of Council, without whom our work would come to a standstill: **Peter Marsden** as Chair; **Harry Ball** as Treasurer; **John Broad** as Editor; **Julian Hunt** and **Roger Bettridge** as Librarian and Archivist within a collective team; **Bronwen Lee** as Membership Secretary; and our elected Council Members: **Eliza Alqassar, Yvonne Edwards, Pauline Hey, Sandy Kidd** and **Charles le Quesne**.

In addition to these, our other helpers in various appointed roles help to keep the wheels running smoothly: **Bob Zeepvat** our hard-working Associate Editor of *Records of Bucks*; **Michael Ghirelli** who is responsible for our *Newsletter* and adds to its interest issue by issue; **Julian Hunt** who in addition to his role as Librarian is the enthusiastic organiser of our lecture programme; to him also together with **Sarah Gray, George Lamb, and Diana and Peter Gulland** for organising our summer outings; **Michael Hardy** for arranging the annual church crawl; **Pauline Hey** for leading the (very) Active Archaeology Group; **David Thorpe** for organising the Local History Network conference – and all the others who have helped in many ways.

To all these I invite the meeting to express its thanks in the customary way.

Item 7a. Re-elections of the Society's officers

i) **Hon. President:**

Richard Gem was proposed by Peter Marsden and seconded by Peter Gulland.
He was re-elected unanimously

ii) **Hon. Chair of Council:**

Peter Marsden was proposed by Richard Gem and seconded by Michael Ghirelli.
He was re-elected unanimously

- iii) **Hon. Treasurer:**
Harry Ball was proposed by Sarah Gray and seconded by Nigel Wilson.
He was re-elected unanimously
- iv) **Hon. Librarian:**
Julian Hunt was proposed by Diana Gulland and seconded by Peter Gulland.
He was re-elected unanimously
- v) **Hon. Archivist:**
Roger Bettridge was proposed by Michael Ghirelli and seconded by Bronwen Lee. He was re-elected unanimously.
- vi) **Hon Membership secretary:**
Bronwen Lee was proposed by Peter Marsden and seconded by Michael Ghirelli. She was re-elected unanimously
- vii) **Hon. Editor of Records:**
John Broad was proposed by Bob Zeevpat and seconded by Michael Ghirelli.
He was re-elected unanimously

Item 7b. Election of an Officer of the Society.

A new Hon. Secretary was elected, arising from the resignation of Sarah Gray. Doug Stuckey was proposed by Peter Marsden and seconded by Pauline Hey. He was elected unanimously

Item 7c(i) Re-election of Ordinary Members of council

Council comprises nine Ordinary Members, who are each eligible for election then re-election for a maximum continuous term of 3 years. Serving members eligible for re-election were:

Eliza Alqassar, Yvonne Edwards, Pauline Hey, Sandy Kidd and Charles Le Quesne
All were re-elected unanimously.

Item 7c (ii) Election of new ordinary members of Council

Four new Ordinary Members were elected to serve for three years:
David Hillier was proposed by Sarah Gray and seconded by Diana Gulland;
John Dodd was proposed by Peter Marsden and seconded by Julian Hunt;
Sarah Gray was proposed by Roger Bettridge and seconded by Julian Hunt;
Michael Ghirelli was proposed by Sarah Gray and seconded by Peter Marsden;
all were elected to council unanimously.

Item 8 Re-election of Honorary Independent Examiner

Mrs B J Dharamshi was proposed by Richard Gem and seconded by Diana Gulland. She was re-elected unanimously

Item 9

Vice Presidents serve until their resignation or removal by an AGM.

The society's current Vice-Presidents are: Lord Cottesloe, CVDawes, ME Farley, H Hanley, M Hart, DC Mynard and Mrs D Gulland

Item 10. Any other business

No items having been notified not less than 10 days before the meeting, the President closed the meeting.

Minutes taken by Glynis Pellatt

Presentation and Refreshments

After the close of business, there was a presentation:

Sarah Gray

spoke on:

**A Century of Unexpected Treasures: the Society's
Museum Collections.**