

OFFICER'S REPORTS

The Society

2013

Over the year 2013, the Society has been active and vigilant in its concern to work for the preservation and protection of the county's heritage. Two matters in particular have called for the attentions of the BAS Council: the proposed development of a high speed rail link between London and the Midlands, and Bucks County Council's plans for the Museum.

The proposed high speed rail link between London and the Midlands would scythe through the length of the county from Denham in the south, to Turweston in the north. Historic sites of great archaeological interest are threatened with severe damage or total obliteration by the construction process. A BAS Council sub-committee was formed to work for mitigation of the worst effects of the upheavals caused by construction. There were meetings with HS2's archaeological consultants, Cotswold Archaeology, who were appointed to assess the impact in Buckinghamshire and neighbouring counties and have been responsible for surveying the course of the track and compiling an inventory of all sites, buildings, and landscape features within the construction corridor. Through the whole length of the proposed line, BAS is concerned to ensure that, if and when the construction process goes ahead, proper procedures are in place for the disposal of finds, and for rescue archaeology. Marian Miller has been carefully preparing a detailed response to the vast and labyrinthine HS2 Environmental Statement published at the end of the year. BAS is concerned about the probable impact of construction on a number of sensitive sites such as Stoke Mandeville deserted village and church ruins. Michael Farley has been in frequent contact with the local parish council and with HS2 Ltd about the several thousand human remains which would need to be exhumed from the churchyard to be re-interred; it is worth noting incidentally that these remains, treated with due sensitivity and

respect, could be a valuable resource for archaeological research.

The other challenge that has particularly exercised BAS Council has been the planned appointment by Bucks County Council of a Museum Trust to run the County Museum and manage the Collection. It is important to remember that BAS are the owners of most of the Museum buildings and that the lease agreement is with Bucks County Council, not with the Museum Trust. Accordingly, to ensure that the Trust fulfil all the terms of the lease on the buildings, BAS Council established a sub-committee with authorisation to negotiate on behalf of Council and to ensure the terms of the lease are fulfilled. The management of the Museum Collection has also required clarification. Again, the agreement on managing the Collection is between BAS and BCC, and this sub-committee has authorisation from Council to ensure fulfilment of the agreement regarding the Collection.

One difficult decision Council was confronted with in 2013 was by how much membership subscriptions should be raised. For twenty years, the cost of membership had remained the same at £12 per year, but inevitably increasing expenditures were eroding the Society's stock of funds and consuming the income derived from membership. An increase in subscriptions was necessary. The fear obviously was that too great a demand on the goodwill of members would result in a cancellation of subscriptions, yet too little a rise would mean the problem of insufficient income would remain. It is too early to be sure of the effect of the rise in subscriptions chosen, but early signs are that the loyalty of the members has hopefully ensured that there has been no mass migration from the Society.

The Society is fortunate to have a dedicated band of volunteers all generous with their time. Visitors to the Library on Wednesdays will invariably find a group diligently organising the wealth of books

and archives, answering requests from visiting researchers, and administering the membership records and subscriptions. The collection of books and archives has continued to expand; it has been increasingly a challenge to accommodate the volumes and documents into a finite area of storage space. Sales of duplicate or unused stock, and of multiple copies of BAS publications and Records of Bucks have both increased revenue and made space for new additions.

BAS of course must be concerned with the promotion of interest in archaeology and with the enlargement of our stock of knowledge of the archaeology of the county, and so Council have been pleased to support projects and activities with funding grants. Sue Fox, formerly Hon Secretary of the Society, organised a trip for the Young Bucks Archaeologists to West Stow in Suffolk, so it was pleasing for Council to be able to contribute to the costs. At Weston Turville, the local history group are involved in a two year project aided by guidance from Bob Zeepvat, investigating the development and history of the village: this project benefitted from a BAS grant. Finally, there was a donation to the County Archaeological Recording Fund.

The Society encourages the publishing of works on the county's archaeology and history. David Noy's fascinating work *Winslow in 1556* gives fascinating insights into the life and work of a small market town in the mid sixteenth century. Thea Van Dam's book *Dearest Ben*, the earlier life of Benjamin Disraeli, was most deservedly reprinted. Stoke Mandeville, the probably doomed victim of HS2's relentless advance, has been the subject of a careful study by Peter Marsden and has continued to sell. The flagship publication is our journal *Records of Buckinghamshire*. This year's volume 53 maintained its high scholarly standards with a wide range of papers covering all eras since the Roman times to the 1950s and all parts of the county, including Aylesbury, Milton Keynes, Winslow, Stowe, Hillesden, Penn, Cliveden, Hedgerley, and Wycombe, and a general study based on the Lay Subsidies of 1327.

In September, the annual Bucks Local History Network conference was held at Dr Challoner's High School in Little Chalfont. BAS was among several local societies that set up a stall to exhibit publications and attract new membership. The theme of the day was Money, Power, and

Landscape in Buckinghamshire, with talks on Roman villas, forests and chases, the great house – especially Hartwell, the gardens at Waddesdon, and conserving the Chilterns. Council was hopeful that venues for the conference should in future be alternately in the north and the south of the county: consequently, it was pleasing that in 2014, the talks shall be given and stalls shall be set up at the Latin School, Buckingham.

Other regular activities were organised over the year. With meticulous attention to detail and boundless enthusiasm, Mike Hardy led a party on the annual Church Crawl, this year into the deep south of the county. George Lamb, as ever inspired and diligent, oversaw the programme of Summer Outings, with visits to Missenden led by Julian Hunt, to Aston Sandford and Rycote under the guidance of Diana and George Gulland, and to Wallingford, led by George Lamb himself. Julian Hunt ensured the regular and varied programme of lectures was delivered over the year, with talks of a high scholarly standard given by Richard Gem, Mike Farley, David Noy, Alison Doggett, and Julian himself.

One important development has been the establishing of the Active Archaeology Group. During the dark evenings of winter, once a week, a group of enthusiasts gathered for a series of workshops at which expert ideas and advice were available from BAS professional archaeologists, such as Bob Zeepvat, Mike Farley, Yvonne Edwards and Gary Marshall. There were field excursions to the Chiltern woodlands and to Stoke Mandeville. The group was formally established at the end of the workshop programme, and has since been involved in a number of activities – a fieldwalking exercise, a geophysical survey of Stoke Mandeville, and contributions to the Chiltern Hillforts Project.

During the year, there have been inevitable changes in the personnel of BAS. Penny Braithwaite had been Hon. Secretary of the Society from the time of the departure of Sue Fox; she has now handed over the responsibility to myself, Michael Ghirelli. Kim Taylor-Moore moved from Buckinghamshire and so no longer serves on the Council, having made an important contribution to the work of the Society, more particularly in cataloguing the Hohler bequest. Nigel Wilson and Nick Crank completed their period of three years service as elected members of Council. To replace them, David Green and John Dodd were

elected to Council. Thea Van Dam has relinquished the post she had filled so honourably as editor of the Newsletter, and deserves our thanks for her diligence and attention to detail. The Society lost a good ally when Sarah Gray departed from the post as Curator of the Museum. We are grateful to her for the care and attention she gave to the BAS collection and the building during tenure. And finally, we heard from Honor Lewington that she intends to finish as Hon Archivist to the Society as from the AGM in May 2014. Her work for the Society has been beyond value. She leaves for the Society an archive collection properly catalogued and organised and a rich source for researchers to exploit. One legacy of hers is the transcription undertaken by herself and her team of volunteers, of all the wills of Stoke Mandeville from the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries. It is going to be very

difficult to find someone with the same expertise, wisdom and enthusiasm, and assuredly impossible to replace her friendly and helpful outlook.

In 2013, Council meetings were held on 6th January, 2nd March, 8th, June, and 5th October, and the AGM fell on the 11th May. These meetings were well attended gatherings where important decisions were made and issues intensely discussed and resolved. Always, the Council members showed themselves deeply committed to advancing our knowledge and understanding of the history and archaeology of Buckinghamshire and to working to the preservation and protection of the county's historic heritage. New members would be welcomed, both on the Council and as volunteers in the library and archives.

Michael Ghirelli, Honorary Secretary

The Library

ADDITIONS TO THE SOCIETY'S LIBRARY AND ARCHIVE 2013

1. Books

- ACLAND, Sir H.W. *Health in the Village* (refers to Marsh Gibbon). 1884.
- BOURNE END RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION. *The Way It Was: a selection from the Bourne End Residents Association photographic collection*. 1985.
- BRIGGS, A. *Secret Days*. 2011.
- EBBLEWHITE, E.A. (ed.) *Parish Registers of Great Hampden from 1557–1812* (includes monumental inscriptions, name index and list of rectors). 1888.
- GREAT HORWOOD GROUP. *Great Horwood Past and Present*. 2012
- HAY, D. *The Man in the Hot Seat*. 1969. (biography of James Martin).
- HS1 LTD. *Tracks and Traces: the Archaeology of High Speed 1*. 2011.
- INSTITUTION OF MECHANICAL ENGINEERS. *Engineering Heritage Awards* (includes Lacey Green windmill). 2013.
- ISON, L. & W. *English Architecture through the Ages*. 1966.
- MARSHALL, G. *A View of Medieval Chesham*. 2013.
- MARSHALL, G. *Tales of Medieval Chesham*. 2013.
- MEAD, A.F. *Days of Glory – the story of Glory Mill, Wooburn Green, Bucks*. 2011. (This volume includes COX, R.A. *Memories of Glory Mill 1919–1965*).
- MEAD, W.A. *Introducing the Finnish Economic Society*. 2013.
- MORLEY, M. & K. *The Great Upheaval. An Account of the Enclosure of Wingrave and Rousham in 1798*. 1994.
- NOY, D. *Winslow in 1556. The survey of the manor*. 2013.
- OLIVER, R. *Ordnance Survey Maps – a concise guide for historians*. 1993.
- OLYMPIC DELIVERY AUTHORITY. *Renewing the Past: Unearthing the history of the Olympic Park site*. 2012.
- PAYNE-GAPOSCHKIN, C. *The Dyer's Hand – an autobiography*. n.d.
- RAYNER, P. *Memories of Maids Moreton*. 1998.
- ROTHSCHILD ARCHIVE. *The Rothschild Archive Review of the Year April 2011 to March 2012*. 2013.
- SHARP, S. (ed.) *The Haddenham Chronicles*, issue number 11. 2013.
- SLATER, J. *Famous People of the Chilterns*. 2013.
- STRUDWICK, V. *Hilltop Village: Brill 'Super Montem' in Tudor Times*. 2010.
- STRUTT, S. *A History of the Culden Faw Estate. (Culham/Hambleden/Fawley)*. 2013.
- TAYLOR, J.A. *Walking Wounded: The life and poetry of Vernon Scannell*. 2013.
- THROSSELL, E. *Hartwell, Bucks.*, vol. 2, part 2. 2012.
- VERNEY, M. *Memoirs of the Verney family from the Restoration to the Revolution 1660–1696* (four vols). 1970.
- WARNER, M. *Long Crendon in Camera*. 1990.
- WESTLAKE, R. *British Battallions on the Western Front January–June 1915*. 2001.

2. CDs.

SHRIMPTON, E. *Bucks Church Heraldry*

3. Theses/Dissertations

- HOLMES, A. *Early Modern Life and People in the Hilltop Settlement of Prestwood*. 2011.
- TAYOR-MOORE, K. *Borderlands: the Bucks/Northants Border c.650–c.1350* (2 vols). 2012.

4. Catalogues

- PHILLIPS. *Catalogue of Contents of the Abbey, Aston Abbots 7–9 November 1989*.
- TOWER, TOWER & BURRELL. *Collection of Family Portraits, Pictures and Miniatures at Ashridge, Hertfordshire*. 2003.

5. BAS Buildings Group reports

Building history:

- MILLER, M. *Uplands, Cryers Hill, nr. High Wycombe*. September 2013.

On historic public houses:

BRAITHWAITE, P. & TAYLOR-MOORE, K. Radcliffe-cum-Chackmore. 2012
 CARR, R., MOIR, S. & MOIR, V. Wendover. 2012
 CARTER, L., HART, A., NASH, J., ROY, R. & SWINBURNE, P. Tingewick.
 SCOTT, J. & STEWKLEY LOCAL HISTORY GROUP. Stewkley. 2012.

On the impact of HS2:

FARLEY, M., TAYLOR-MOORE, K. & MARSDEN, P. The Deserted Medieval Village at Doddershall. 2013.
 FARLEY, M., MARSDEN, P., NICHOLL, S., PEPLER, K. & SHELDON, J. Earthworks at Doddershall. 2012.
 MOIR, S., MOIR, V., PEPLER, K. & MARSDEN, P. Road Farm Barn, Wendover. 2012.

6. BAS 2013 church crawl notes

HARDY, M. relating to:
 Colnbrook, St. Thomas's
 Datchet, St. Mary's
 Denham, St. Mary's
 Horton, St. Michael's
 Iver Heath, St. Margaret's
 Wraysbury, St. Andrew's

7. Additional Items

Journals and 9 other smaller items were also added to stock. These included pamphlets, church guides, and newspaper cuttings.

*Marian Miller
 Hon. Librarian*

ON-LINE ACTIVITIES

The Society's website is at www.bucksas.org.uk

The main work of 2014 has been the addition of increasing numbers of on-line publications to the society's website. In all, 192 articles from seven back editions of *Records of Bucks* are now available on-line. These can be read on-screen or downloaded and printed locally. The additions made in 2014 are:

- *Records* volume 12 parts 1-3 from the years 1927–29, whose leading article 'Concerning an 18th-century village fire and a Bucks spa', by Margaret Verney, tells of the disastrous fire in Marsh Gibbon in 1740.
- *Records* volume 19 parts 1 and 2 from 1972–73, with the leading article 'The medieval building and repair of the chancels of Datchet, Iver, Langley and Wraysbury churches' by Shelagh Bond.
- *Records* volume 25, from 1983, with 'Iron-age occupation, a Middle-Saxon cemetery, and 12th to 19th-century urban occupation: Excavations in George Street, Aylesbury, 1981', by David Allen and C.H. Dalwood.

These bring 61 articles back into circulation, most of them out-of-print for many years. As they say, 'all [past] human life is there'!

The process of scanning and digitising old volumes of *Records of Bucks* is being streamlined. It is hoped that this will increase the number of volumes coming on-line in future years. To access the articles already available on-line, go to www.bucksas.org.uk/onlinerecords

A first for the website is the on-line publication of the society's pamphlet 'Last chance for Stoke Mandeville's deserted village?', which looks at the likely destructive effect of the HS2 high-speed rail line if construction goes ahead. Again this can be read on-screen or printed locally at no cost.

Six reports by members of the society on historic buildings and archaeological sites, with accompanying summary web pages, were also published on the website during 2014:

- Old Keepers, Hedgerley – part of a former brickworks.
- The White Horse, Hedgerley – an early brick cottage that became a public house.
- Doddershall Lodge – which is directly in the path of HS2.
- Westbury Causeway – a historic landscape gradually disappearing.
- Sharpenhoe – Iron Age fort or rabbit warren?
- The 12th-century font at Stone – a controversy.

New web pages were also added for the society's Active Archaeology Group, formed in Autumn 2013. By the end of the year the group had started a winter lecture series and two projects: an investigation of Hogshaw deserted village, north-west of Aylesbury, and a series of surveys of 'Hillforts' in Buckinghamshire and the Chilterns. More information about the group's activities can be found on their web pages at www.bucksas.org.uk/aag.html

The society's web pages on the impact that the construction of the HS2 high-speed rail line would have on the county's historic environment were also reorganised. To see how particular places are affected, click the placenames on the map at www.bucksas.org.uk/hbgprojects/hs2places.html

Finally, the website is regularly updated with details of all society activities – including winter lectures, summer outings, and the Bucks Local History Network Conference. These can be found through the Events page at www.bucksas.org.uk/events.html

Peter Marsden