

B & DAS newsletter

March 2015

Dear Members,

At the January meeting Jerry Sampson, Cathedral Archaeologist for Wells and St David's, Past President of SANHS, Vice-chairman of SANHS Historic Buildings Committee, published author and nationally distinguished buildings archaeologist, talked about his studies of Anchorites in the West Country. These holy men and women lived as hermits in specially-constructed cells attached to churches or located in churchyards. These cells have mostly been swept away, but close study of the architecture of some churches reveals traces of their existence. Jerry suggested that a systematic survey of churchyards may give evidence of many more of these mysterious people.



The AGM of the Society was held on February 19th. After this, Hannah West gave us a fascinating update on her study of St. John's Hospital and the Friary. Since there is so little evidence of either above ground, we forget how big and important both were in the Mediaeval period. Fortunately the comprehensive 14th century Town records, and the Bishop's records from Wells give a picture of both institutions. Hannah is in the middle of writing her Ph.D. thesis, and we wish her every success with it.

A floor tile from the Friary

Laura Burnett, Finds Liaison Officer with the Southwest Heritage Trust, talked about her work on March 19th. The Portable Antiquities Scheme is now 15 years old and over one million objects have been brought in by the public and recorded nationwide. Objects are usually retained by the finder, but this valuable record shows what has been found and its location. Treasure Trove is another matter, and Laura ran through the complexities of this. A single coin does not have to be declared, but two coins constitute a 'hoard' and have to be valued, and so on.

Dr. Peter E. Cattermole 1950 - 2015

I am saddened to report the death of Peter. He was a chemistry graduate, taught first at Millfield School and later at Winchester College, where became Head of Science. He took early retirement, returned to the family home at Shapwick, and could then develop his many interests in old buildings, music, steam railways and so on. His work for the Bridgwater Civic Society helped to preserve many of the Town's buildings and ensure that developers had proper respect for the past. More recently he pursued his dream for the refurbishment of the Blake Museum, and we have to thank him for the pleasant meeting room that we now enjoy.

Peter's funeral will be held at St. Mary's on April 8th. at 11.00 a.m..

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

Thursday, April 9th. Historic Bridgwater

7.30 p.m. in the Blake Museum.

Derek Gibson of the Bridgwater Civic Society will lead us on an armchair ramble through Bridgwater's past.

Saturday, May 16th. Woodspring Priory and its environs

2.00 p.m. at the Priory. G.R.ST343662 Postcode BS22 9YU.

In place of our usual evening walk in May, we decided to try one in the afternoon. Woodspring Priory is an Augustinian priory now owned by the National Trust and leased by the Landmark Trust. Access is limited by its use for holiday lets but, by chance, this weekend is the Landmark Trust Open Days. Recent investigations around the site have been carried out by Vince Russett and the YCCART, and we are told that an archaeologist will be on hand to tell us about them.

Potted directions: Turn off M5 at J21. Immediately fork left towards Worle (B3440, Queen's Way). Keep on Queen's Way past 3 roundabouts. $\frac{1}{4}$ mile after third roundabout turn right into Newton's Road. This runs into Collum Lane which eventually reaches the Priory.

Saturday, June 20th. The Archaeology of Wells Cathedral

2.00 p.m. at the West Door of Wells Cathedral (inside if it is wet)

Jerry Sampson who is official Archaeologist of the Cathedral will give us a tour. He is also one of the official guides and we are expected to book up and pay about £8 for the tour.

I will send out a booking form when the details are confirmed.

Thursday, July 16th, Annual Dinner at the Enmore Inn. 7.30 p.m.

We will probably have a stroll round that part of the Village beforehand.

I will send out details with the Booking Form.

Saturday, July 18th, CBA Festival of Archaeology. Blake Museum 2.00 p.m.

We plan to have a guided walk around Mediaeval Bridgwater, possibly visiting the Friary & St. John's Hospital sites.

Thursday, September 17th. Cirencester and Chedworth Roman Villa.

8.30 a.m. Bridgwater Bus Station.

Romans again, but no apology! We will visit the Corinium Museum in the Town and then go on to the Roman Villa site. The latter is National Trust and so don't forget your membership card.

I will send out full details with the Booking Form.

OTHER MEETINGS

Tuesday, March 31st. Archaeology of the Cannington By-pass site

Jane Hill, Southwest Heritage Trust. Stolford Church, 7.30 p.m.

This talk was scheduled for January, but was cancelled because Jane was unwell.