

Proceedings of the Somerset Archaeological and Natural History Society 2019

Chairman's report – *Chris Jessop*

Obituary: Reverend Brian William Kirk (20 January 1931 – 29 January 2019) – *Chris Jessop*

Additions to the Library – *S L Goodman and D Bromwich*

Articles and chapters of Somerset interest in non-Somerset books and periodical received in 2019 – *compiled by S L Goodman and D Bromwich*

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PROCEEDINGS OF THE SOMERSET ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY: 2019

SANHS CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2019

In May 2019 we were successful in our application to the National Heritage Lottery for a grant to repair and rejuvenate the Norman Gardens, previously known as the Castle Gardens, and originally the Keep Gardens. These form part of the SANHS estate. Martin Davidson, Vice Chairman, had worked on the bid for almost two years but resigned in July. This meant we had to rethink who was to manage the project. A combined group of members of SANHS and the SWHT was formed to take the project forward. We have had to appoint someone with the appropriate qualifications to oversee the project as Martin had proposed to do this. The repair of the curtain wall has to be done using lime mortar and as this does not set under temperatures of five degrees, it was decided not to commence that part of the project until the Spring. Work on clearing the garden commenced and Duncan Hill and Patrick Stowe were appointed to oversee the project. The outbreak of coronavirus stopped the garden clearance, but the tendering process was able to go ahead. As I write, that is where we are with the project.

In 2019 I reported that Tom Winsborough had joined us as our Hon. Sec. but sadly he had to resign for health issues later in the year. With David Victor resigning at the 2019 AGM as Treasurer, Martin resigning in July and then Tom later in the year it has left us with only the Chairman on the executive. We have recruited a new Hon. Treasurer, but she has not yet taken up post due to house move difficulties. David Victor continues with the main responsibilities of the Treasurer that cannot be handed over to Louisa, our Office Manager. Louisa has run her own company and therefore has past experience. We have also been joined on the Board by Mark Lidster who has worked in building conservation for many years, and Nathanael Williams who has experience of working in community film. Nathanael has offered to make a documentary on the Norman Garden Project once the restrictions on movement have been safely listed. Once available it will be on the website and any further developments and events held there will be added.

These three trustees were co-opted at the January board meeting. We have now had someone come forward to join the board who also has experience with historic buildings, but at this time, that procedure is not complete.

With the outbreak of coronavirus and the subsequent

government advice, all meetings and events of the Society were cancelled. This will have an impact on our finances as we rely on the money that events generate to maintain the society, but it is important that we follow the advice given.

The budget for 2020/21 was prepared by David Victor and showed things were going to be tight financially. We again have to thank David for his continuing efforts despite wanting to withdraw from so much time-consuming work.

It is great pity that the summer programme could not go ahead, it is one of the fullest and varied that I had seen for many, many years. I have to congratulate all of the committees for their hard work in putting their subjects together. Some events were held prior to the restrictions, one such was the afternoon of the William De Morgan talks. This was held in the Heritage Centre to enable some of the Society's collection of William De Morgan ceramics to be on view, along with a handling collection, mainly tiles held by a private individual.

Fiona Holmes' collection of pots, jugs and dishes which she had produced as part of her sponsored '100 pots in 100 days' challenge were also on view, something she did to raise money towards the management of the new website based on our collection of William De Morgan. Her collection can be viewed on our website.

The Archaeology Committee continue with their support for community archaeology groups in the summer, and in November in association with the South West Heritage Trust held a day of talks on Human Remains in Archaeology. Their planned Archaeology Day covering a round up of recent archaeology activity in Somerset was cancelled due to COVID-19. Hopefully that will be rescheduled.

The Natural History Committee had a variety of outdoor visits throughout the summer and interesting talks held inside during the winter.

The Local History Committee held a day's symposium on Victorian Architects and Architecture in Somerset. It covered not only the architects but church restoration and other buildings. They managed to be able to produce all but one of their events before the virus hit.

Historic Buildings had a series of talks at the beginning of 2019, but nothing since. The committee have now appointed a new chairman and they have put a

good programme together, sadly on hold.

The Low Ham Day which covered all four subjects of the society was well received and the next area will be around Mendip, but at present that is postponed, hopefully to be held in November if the situation allows.

At the 2019 AGM, members voted to give Mary Siraut Honorary membership, and, having completed the task of indexing, Mary is no longer involved with the production of the Proceedings but remains the secretary and very active member of the Local History Committee.

Rob Webley our new Proceedings Editor had a baptism by fire; if anything could delay the publication of volume 162, it happened. We eventually mailed out six months late, no fault of Rob's or Mary's. Rob is also part of the group that are looking at developing the means of producing the Proceedings digitally for those that don't require a hard copy.

For some time we have asked for volunteers and again, we have been lucky in Martin Salzer coming forward to take on the task of editor of the newsletter and has done a wonderful job with the draft I have seen. He has a variety of ideas he wishes to discuss before next year and would like feedback from the membership, so please let him have your comments on this year's edition.

Shonie Millward-Usher has also volunteered to manage the website as a volunteer but will need to have some input from Louisa once restrictions are lifted on social distancing.

Sue Goodman, Trustee, Chairman of the Library Committee and Deputy Librarian took on the role of Membership Officer early last year. She has now taken on responsibility for the monthly e-bulletin that members

receive via email. She is also involved in the working group looking at the production of Proceedings and how to keep them for members' use only for the first two years. I have great admiration for Sue, her ability to take on these tasks as a volunteer is very much appreciated.

Robin Cloke and Bill Kelly have spent many hours digitising the past Proceedings and Catherine Dove is now putting them onto the website for public use. They will not be entered until two years after publication.

We have other volunteers who also warrant a big thank you for helping with hand delivery of some of the mailings saving the society a considerable sum, but also the preparation of the mailing. This is the reason we have a volunteers' thank you day, to bring the committees and all volunteers together. In 2019 they had a conducted tour of the town centre led by the town tours volunteers from the Museum of Somerset before a buffet lunch. For 2020 Shonie Millward-Usher has agreed to do a PowerPoint presentation of the extensive tunnels under Taunton.

The Associated Societies day was held at Banwell where various Associated Societies gave presentations on their past year and plans for the future. As the bats were hibernating, we were unable to visit the caves, but those suitably attired (it was pouring) visited the many interesting buildings and follies in the grounds.

As always, Louisa our Office Manager has kept me on my toes to ensure we maintain a legal and safe management of the society and has continued to be supportive when things have been tough; I owe her a big vote of thanks.

Chris Jessop

**OBITUARY: REVEREND BRIAN WILLIAM KIRK
(20 JANUARY 1931 – 29 JANUARY 2019)**

As a radar technician in the Royal Navy, Brian journeyed to the Arctic Circle, the Baltic Sea and the Mediterranean and much enjoyed the physical life that the service required. He played squash, tennis, cricket, boxed, and played rugby for Northampton in his youth.

He was born and grew up in Northampton, where he attended Northampton Grammar School, later gaining a BD degree at King's College, London, through his studies for the ministry. He became something of a scholar minister as he set down for posterity the vital story of dissent in Taunton when he wrote *The Taunton Dissenting Academy*, published by the Society in 2005. He had already researched and written *A History of Taunton United Reformed Church*, published in 1999, and the history of the chapel in Bishops Hull. He was referred to in scholarly bibliographies and recognised for his six contributions to the *Dictionary of National Biography*.

Prior to moving to Somerset as minister of Taunton URC, Brian served in two churches: in Hendon, London, where he was also the Chaplain of Colindale T.B. Hospital and of Hendon Police College, and in Hertfordshire.

Once established in Somerset, he became the Free Church Chaplain of Musgrove Park Hospital, Chaplain of Tone Vale Hospital, and Chaplain of the Taunton Royal Naval Association.

Education was something else Brian gave time to. He was governor at Selworthy Special School, and chaired the board of governors, as well as being a governor of Somerset College of Arts and Technology. He represented the Free Churches on Somerset Education Committee as well as serving on the Libraries, Museums and Records committee of Somerset County Council.

The London Churches Council on Gambling was another group that Brian also supported.

He had many interests: rugby and cricket, butterflies and moths, lichens and all aspects of natural history. He collected hellebores and cyclamens, and grew lilies from seed. In retirement he founded the Stogumber History Society, which he organised and led for many years, enjoying and becoming knowledgeable about local history.

Brian became chairman of the Natural History Committee in 1980, a position he held until 1989, and



Brian Kirk (far left) in the presence of Her Majesty the Queen at the Museum of Somerset in 1987, with Glyn Court (adjacent) and Stephen Minnitt (far right)

again in 1992-5. He was Vice Chairman of Council from 1983 until 1984 and Chairman 1984-88 and having fulfilled the allotted years stood down from the Council. In 1991 he was elected as a trustee which then became known as a Custodian Trustee in 2001 due to some changes in the Charities Act of 1993, a position held until his death. Brian was also active and supportive in plans to restore and preserve the Castle, home of the Society.

At the 2012 AGM, the membership voted to award Brian honorary life membership in appreciation of his commitment and work carried out for the Society.

As his health gradually deteriorated, Brian was less of a visual presence at meetings but he never lost sight of the importance of keeping up to date with what was happening in the life of the Society. Early in 2018, Brian's signature was required to a document. By then he had not been driving for some time. I offered to visit

and get the required signature and take the opportunity to introduce myself as the proposed next Chairman of the Society. I had met Brian on a few occasions in the office, but didn't think he would remember. I was wrong. He remembered he had told me he had made a mistake in a book we were discussing that he had written. The following half an hour could have been very stressful, Brian asked so many questions about what was happening within the society, but he was such a gentle, patient man it was a pleasure.

I was not active within the Society in Brian's more involved years, but I am sure I would have enjoyed working with him. His commitment to public services was driven by his faith to make the world a better and more loving place to live in.

Chris Jessop

ADDITIONS TO THE LIBRARY 2019

COMPILED BY S.L. GOODMAN & D. BROMWICH

DONATIONS BY J. G. PAGE

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- Barker, N., *The Oxford University Press and the spread of learning 1478-1978: an illustrated history* (Oxford University Press, 1978)
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- Barton, N., *English Heritage book of Stone Age Britain* (Batsford/English Heritage, 1997)
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- , *Lost brasses* (David & Charles, 1976)
- Birley, R., *The building of Hadrian's Wall* (2nd edn, Roman Army Museum Publications, 1994)
- , *Garrison life on the Roman frontier* (2nd edn, Roman Army Museum Publications, 1994)
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- Calinescu, A. (ed.), *Ancient jewelry and archaeology* (Indiana U.P., 1996)
- Cartledge, P. (ed.), *The Cambridge illustrated history of Greece* (Cambridge U.P., 1998)
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- Coatsworth, E. & Pinder, M., *The art of the Anglo-Saxon goldsmith: fine metalwork in Anglo-Saxon England – its practice and practitioners* (Boydell Press, 2002)
- Collins, R., *Early medieval Europe, 300-1000* (2nd edn, Macmillan, 1999)
- Concannon, T., *A traditional history of the Bronze Age in Western Europe* (Butser Ancient Farm, 1998)
- Craddock, P. T. & Hughes, M. J. (ed.), *Furnaces and smelting technology in antiquity* (British Museum, 1996)
- Croom, A. T., *Roman clothing and fashion* (Tempus, 2000)

- Cull, J., *Roman Woodchester, its villa and mosaic* (Pitkin Guides, 2000)
- Cunliffe, B., *English Heritage book of Danebury* (Batsford/English Heritage, 1993)
- , *The extraordinary voyage of Pytheas the Greek* (Penguin Books, 2002)
- , *Fishbourne Roman palace* (Tempus, 1998)
- De la Bédoyère, G., *Voices of imperial Rome* (Tempus, 2000)
- Delaney, F., *The Celts* (BBC, 1986)
- Desroches-Noblecourt, C., *Tutankhamen: life and death of a Pharaoh* (Penguin Books, 1965)
- Drennan, R. D., *Statistics for archaeologists – a commonsense approach* (Plenum Press, 1996)
- Dyer, J., *Ancient Britain* (Routledge, 1997)
- Dyer, S., *Cocks Farm, Abinger Hammer, Surrey* (Surrey Archaeological Society, 1997)
- Ellis, P. B., *Celt and Roman: the Celts in Italy* (Constable, 1998)
- Everson, P. & Williamson, T. (eds), *The archaeology of landscape: studies presented to Christopher Taylor* (Manchester University Press, 1998)
- Fisher, M. J. & Fisher, D. E., *Mysteries of lost empires* (Channel 4 Books, 2000)
- Fowler, P. & Blackwell, I., *The land of Lettice Sweetapple: an English countryside explored* (Tempus, 1998)
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- Laing, J., *Art and society in Roman Britain* (Sutton Publishing, 1997)
- Leakey, R. & Lewin, R., *Origins reconsidered: in search of what makes us human* (Abacus, 1993)
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- McKee, A., *Tarquin’s ship: the Etruscan wreck in Campese Bay* (Souvenir Press, 1985)
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- Miller, H., *Secrets of the dead* (Channel 4 Books, 2000)
- Moore, J. & Scott, E. (ed.) *Invisible people and processes: writing gender and childhood into European archaeology* (Leicester University Press, 1997)
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- Nappo, S., *Pompeii* (Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1998)
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- Eden, L., *Hope Bourne’s Reflections in Words – an anthology* (Exmoor Study no. 4, Exmoor Society, 2018) [D. Bromwich]
- Finn, R. W., *Domesday Book: a guide* (Phillimore, 1986) [J. Polak]
- Fowkes, D. V. & Potter, G. R., *William Senior’s survey of the estates of the first and second Earls of Devonshire, c. 1600-28* (Derbyshire Record Society, vol. 13, 1988) [J. Polak]
- The Garden* (R.H.S., 2016-2018) [E. Honnor]
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- Graham, M., *Fosse Way: a missing link?* (personal work, 2005) [The Author]
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- Greed, J., *The Minehead road: between Exmoor and the Quantocks* (Exmoor Study, no. 3, Exmoor Society, 2018) [S. L. Goodman]
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- Roberts, S. K., *Recovery and restoration in an English county: Devon local administration, 1646-1670* (University of Exeter, 1985) [J. Polak]
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- The Spectator*, vols 1-8 (11th edn, J. Tonson, 1733) [J. Polak]
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