



SANHS News

The newsletter of the Somerset Archaeological
and Natural History Society

Number 96, Spring 2020



Archaeology, Archive, Historic Buildings, Library,
Local History, Natural History, and Publications

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SANHS Office
Somerset Heritage Centre
Brunel Way
Norton Fitzwarren TA2 6SF
Tel: 01823 27249 Email: office@sanhs.org
Website: www.sanhs.org

Cover Picture: Edward Ellis (TTNCM: 18/1995/22) possibly by Richard Phelps (photo by courtesy of the South West Heritage Trust). The Society’s Museum Collection Fund has recently paid for its restoration - see article on p.13.

Editorial

Andrew Pickering has been at the helm for the last three issues during which time SANHS News has developed a distinctive style whilst retaining a broad range of content. Increasing workload has forced Andrew to relinquish the post and you will, I know, wish to thank him for all his work. So, I am honoured to be given the opportunity to take on this role.

Aligned with the continuing rapid developments in Information Technology, important changes are occurring to the means the Society uses to distribute information to you. The four main vehicles used are:

- the Proceedings, from the next issue available to all members on-line, but only to be distributed in print to those members specifically requesting it upon payment of a modest surcharge;
- the website – which has developed substantially over the past eighteen months, and is also the means of accessing both current and earlier copies of the Proceedings;
- the E-News Bulletin emailed to members;
- this, the annual SANHS News.

For some of you, therefore, apart from the programme of events and governance papers, the News will be the only printed document you receive. This makes it timely to ask you all just what you would like to see in the News. The dilemma is to find a distinctive role which adds something new and fresh for those who regularly access our on-line resources, whilst keeping those without such access fully acquainted with developments.

With coronavirus, we are currently in challenging times. In a historical context, infectious disease is no stranger – there were serious outbreaks of plague in the mid-late seventh century and in 1348-49 (the Black Death) with recurrences through to the Great Plague in London, graphically described by Pepys in 1665. In more recent times, but now fading from personal memory, is the influenza pandemic of 1918-19 (popularly described as Spanish flu). But it is sobering to be reminded that, even with our advanced medical science, infectious disease continues to threaten our way of life.

Some amongst us, will find ourselves largely quarantined for an uncertain period. Frustrating as it may seem, particularly with the improving weather, we are lucky to have interests in which we can continue to engage. If your particular interests are in natural history, your garden offers opportunities to examine nature more closely than you might otherwise have done. For those of you on-line with archaeological and historical interests, the internet offers a boundless range of information to prompt further research. Some might find time to write up work from previous years. Remember that seemingly trivial local information is the foundation upon which broader generalisation can be built. So, I will look to include a section in next year's SANHS News on what we did during this difficult period. Perhaps a short paragraph, perhaps more, please think about what you might contribute. But whatever you do, in so far as you can, keep yourselves safe.

Whether you have views on what you want to see in future issues of SANHS News or you have any contributions, get in touch. For those of you with access to email, contact me at newsletter@sanhs.org

But just as important, I would like to hear from those of you who do not use email. Post to me, care of the SANHS Office, at the Somerset Heritage Centre (address on inside front cover). Comments please on SANHS News content at your earliest convenience, and copy for the next SANHS News at the latest by February 2021. Finally, may I send a big thank you to everyone who has contributed this year and those who have helped me; my apologies for outstanding errors or omissions which are entirely my responsibility.

Most of the articles in this issue were written before the impact of coronavirus became so severe; in many cases projected timescales are likely to be delayed.

Martin Salzer, East Coker, April 2020

From the Chair

Thank you for continuing to support the Society by your membership. I also have to thank everyone who supported Fiona Holmes in her 100-Pot Challenge to raise money for a website manager by way of donations. The total of donations for Fiona's project was almost £1,000; the total number of pots was 177. Her expertise is in sculpture, throwing was a new skill to be learned. At an event held in November at the Cotleigh Brewery, people were entertained by Fiona showing her video journey from start to finish with all her pots on display, the 'quirky' as well as successful. Everyone who donated was entered into the draw that took place at the William De Morgan event in February and four were chosen (see p.35).

We were very grateful to receive a donation for the 2019 production of Proceedings from a Somerset business man who wishes to remain anonymous. It is doubtful if we would have been able to produce this year's publication without this financial help. Another financial benefit was to receive a £500 legacy from a member who had died in the past year. Money left in your will helps to ensure the continuation of the Society. This has been put aside to form the basis of a contingency fund which our interim treasurer is keen to build on. Over the past few years, outgoings have been greater than income; there is now no flesh on the bones, but the trustees are still reluctant to increase membership.

When the GDPR forms were returned to the office, some stated that the respondent didn't wish to receive a copy of the Proceedings. Some members had already said they kept their copy for 2-3 years then donated them to a charity shop as they hadn't the room to keep them. This resulted in the questionnaire sent to all members. Thank you to all who responded.

Mary Siraut has been the editor for the Proceedings for many years and will be handing over to Rob Webley who has worked alongside her this year. Mary has carried out this task as a volunteer and by way of showing our appreciation she has been granted Honorary Membership of the Society. Honorary Membership is granted to those 'of distinction or who

have been benefactors of the Society' and I think you will agree she has definitely been that. Her involvement with the Society will continue in her role as Secretary to the Local History Committee, and of course answering our many questions about the history of the county.

The volunteer thank-you day was attended by nineteen volunteers who split into three groups and were taken on a tour of the town centre by guides from the museum followed by lunch in the Friends Meeting House. Even long-standing residents of the town learnt something new.

The Associated Society day was held in Banwell village hall and representatives gave some very interesting and wide-ranging talks on their groups' activities over the past year. We also saw a video of cavers who have explored the caves including one cavern that is no longer accessible. Following lunch, those who were suitably attired (it was raining very hard) were given a conducted tour of the grounds surrounding the caves. As the bats were hibernating, we were unable to go into the caves. This meeting is important as it brings many diverse members together with the opportunity to share experiences and possibly consider joint events. The Society funds the venue and provides tea and coffee and we like to change the venue each year.

We are indebted to Catherine Dove, one of our members, who has taken on the task of putting the past Proceedings onto the website, and also Robin Cloke and Bill Kelly who have been instrumental in preparing them ready for Catherine. Robin is also still involved in the Know Your Place project on behalf of SANHS.

Unfortunately, our new treasurer has still not managed to join us yet; house moving never goes smoothly, but David Victor continues to cover the areas that we are unable to do, and for this we are eternally grateful.

Chris Jessop, SANHS Chair

SANHS Events & Coronavirus

All SANHS meetings and visits are suspended during the current restrictions resulting from coronavirus.

In so far as we are able, the website will be kept updated. Society Officers with SANHS email addresses will respond to queries where they can.

For those of you without web access, the SANHS Office answer phone will include a direct phone number for the Office Manager.

Post will be collected from the Heritage Centre from time to time, but responses may be severely delayed.

Library News 2019

Our Library, housed at the Somerset Heritage Centre, continues to grow, by purchase, exchange and donations from members. If you're thinking of 'downsizing', please do bear SANHS in mind when weeding your bookshelves!

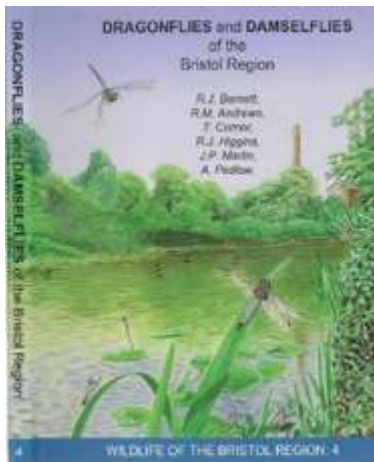
Purchases in 2019 included additions to classic series, such as *Garden birds*, by Mike Toms, (New Naturalist Library series); *The Minehead Road* by John Greed, (Exmoor Studies series); *The Beaker people: isotopes, mobility and diet in prehistoric Britain*, edited by Mike Parker Pearson (et al), (Prehistoric Society Research Papers). *Climate change and British wildlife*, (2018) by Trevor Beebee, and *An intellectual adventurer in archaeology: reflections on the work of Charles Thomas [1928-2016]* (2018) edited by Andy Jones & Henrietta Quinnell are further examples of recent purchases.

We continue to receive journals from about 35 UK societies and institutions in exchange for copies of *Somerset Archaeology and Natural History* (our Proceedings), in addition to a further 50 or so journal subscriptions.

Donations in 2019 included substantial additions to journal runs in the botanical sciences, including titles from the Alpine Garden Society, the Hardy Plant Society and the RHS. A few other donations received last year will

indicate the breadth and depth of the collections:

- Ambrus, Victor & Minnitt, Steve. *Drawing Somerset's past: an illustrated journey through history*. History Press, 2018.
- The Spectator*, vols 1-8 (11th ed.) 1733.
- Sutcliffe, David. *Biographical sketches of Somerset folk singers: parts 1 to 3, for 1903-1916* (unpublished material) – see article on p.11.
- Whimster, Rowan [Ed.] *The new antiquarians: 50 years of archaeological innovation in Wessex*. CBA Research Report, 166, 2011.
- Addis, Bill. *Building: 3000 years of design engineering and construction*, Phaidon Press, 2007.
- Muir, Richard. *Landscape detective: discovering a countryside*. Windgather Press, 2001.



*A recent library acquisition.
See also Natural History Notes on p.32 for a
discussion on Damselflies*

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SANHS members can borrow library books (though not journal parts), and anyone can consult library materials. Search-room staff at the Heritage Centre will be able to bring you what you require, and process loans. Recent acquisitions are also noted on the website.

*Sue Goodman
Deputy Librarian & Chair of SANHS Library committee*

Progress on the Norman Gardens

This time last year we were waiting a response from the National Heritage Lottery Fund to see if our application for £59,000 was successful to enable us to repair the curtain wall and renovate the very overgrown, ivy infested gardens. Thanks to the hard work of Martin Davidson, our then Vice Chairman, with support from Janet Tall of South West Heritage Trust (SWHT) we were successful. Anthony Bruce, a member of SANHS, spent the summer clearing the ivy from the curtain wall and ensuring it didn't grow back, which it hasn't.



Gray's excavated area of keep garden during clearance of vegetation



Chris Webster of SWHT sourced some photographs of the gardens in various guises; they were an orchard up until Harold St George Gray carried out his excavations in the 1920's. The photographs show the gardens at varying stages, one with very few trees but the walls are clearly shown.



Same area after clearance

There was a delay in dealing with the building work; lime mortar has to be used which won't set below 5°C and by the time we were ready to

start repair, winter was almost here. However, it looks as though repair to the main wall will start in May.

The gardens became overgrown with ivy and shrubs that had not previously grown much following the removal of a vast number of large trees which a survey showed to be in a dangerous condition. These shrubs are now being cut back and will need to be pruned annually. From October onwards two volunteers have worked in the garden each week, clearing ivy from the lower walls and removing overgrown vegetation which has revealed the true archaeology of the gardens. There are various plants which thrive in nooks and crannies between the crevices and these need to be removed. Although they give colour to the walls they also cause damage.

Our number of volunteers has grown recently, therefore we hope to have the lower garden ready by spring for visitors to enjoy. We do get excited when we uncover something we weren't aware was there - like a flight of steps under a foot of ivy.

Historic England is involved as it is an Ancient Scheduled Monument, and has been very helpful in advising of ways of dealing with the problems, especially as we want to create a disabled access. At the moment it is only the lower level that is accessible; the higher part of the garden is only accessible via steps or a steep incline. We hope to be able to remedy that.

Once the gardens have been finished, they will be used by SWHT learning team with their schools programme, Mick Aston Young Archaeologists and Castle Hotel who lease the garden from the Society. The latter are very happy for other groups to use the space, including the general public. The garden has to be low maintenance, and hopefully we will be able to form a group to be known as the Friends of the Garden who will be prepared to keep things under control. It is planned that Castle Hotel will manage the lower part of the garden.

Cannington College wish to be involved, not only at this clearing stage, but also as an ongoing part of their programme so with lots of little bits of help, we should have a garden to be proud of for many years to come.

*Chris Jessop
Photos Chris Webster*

Heritage Grants

The Committee distribute two funds: the Maltwood fund, named for its founder, the authoress Katharine Maltwood, and the Gray fund established as a memorial to a former secretary and curator of the Society, Harold St George Gray. The first is dedicated to contributing towards research into the archaeology and history of historic Somerset. Typically, we fund the application of scientific techniques such as carbon-dating and geophysical survey, but also encourage original research and publication of a wide variety of subjects. The Cecil Sharp Project masterminded by David Sutcliffe and featured below is a good example of how a modest grant can help make the difference. The Gray Fund is dedicated to encouraging knowledge of and participation in activities to promote the archaeology and history of Somerset through exhibition, tutorials, publication and similar activities.

Deadlines for applications are 31st January and 31st August each year. Forms and further guidance can be downloaded from the website. Do enquire of David Dawson, davidp@dawsonheritage.co.uk, & Teresa Hall teresahallis@hotmail.com for further advice. We welcome applications from individuals or individuals on behalf of local groups or institutions for specific defined projects seeking contributions up to about £2,000.

David Dawson, Chair of the Heritage Grants Committee

The following three articles all report on activities where SANHS Maltwood Fund contributions enabled additional work to be undertaken.

Somerset Folk Singers

Thanks to a Maltwood grant from SANHS, freelance researcher and SANHS member David Sutcliffe has completed a research project to document the lives of 342 Somerset folksingers who gave songs to the well-known collector Cecil Sharp between 1903-16.

The Edwardian Folk Revival was led by Sharp, Vaughan Williams, Grainger and Holst among others and was an attempt to rediscover English musical identity. Somerset's contribution was over 1,000 folksongs. Ever since the digitisation of the song material collected by Sharp and others within the Vaughan Williams Memorial Library website (www.vwml.org), there has been a need for more information on the singers involved. 'Who were the Folk?' is a recurring question.

David's research places the singers in their geographical setting (South Somerset, Mendips, Exmoor, Bridgwater etc) and also in their socio-economic context with extensive notes on gloving, river trade, brick and tiles, sailcloth, peat working, withies and collieries. Special maps add interest too.

A new website www.cecilsharpspeople.org.uk provides biographical sketches of the folk singers, musicians and dancers who gave their songs, tunes and dances to Cecil Sharp. In his notes Sharp left many statements and clues about the performers – more information than any other collector. It has been possible to identify and reconstruct the lives of nearly all performers. Researchers and performers can use this latest research to recreate the social context of song collection at the time. The website will run for three years to test its usefulness and will be maintained by David; it is a non-commercial website.

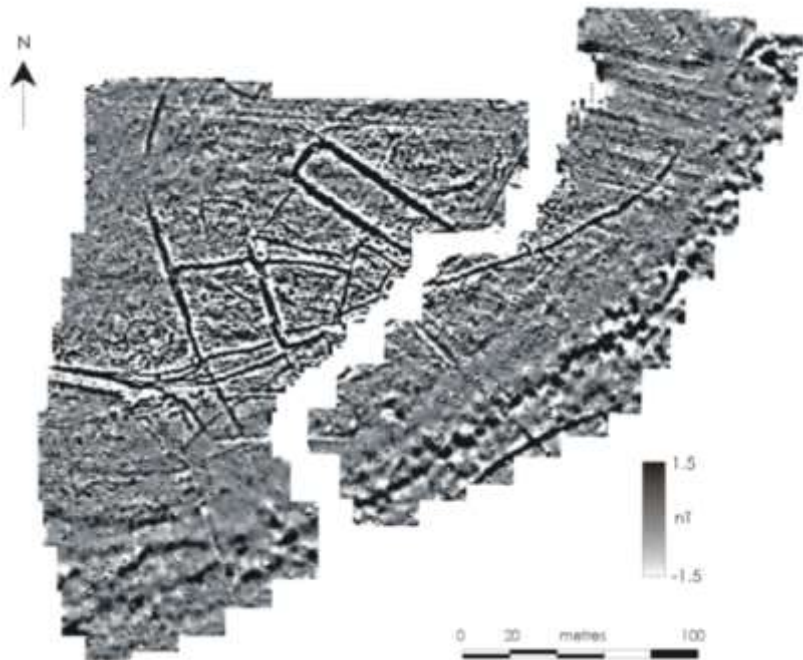
The research findings are also accessible at the SANHS library and Somerset Heritage Centre. See Library News on p.6. David is now extending his research to all the other counties in the UK which Sharp visited and can be contacted for further information through the SANHS Office.

Enclosure at Park, Pitney

The SANHS Maltwood Fund supported the work necessary to obtain a radiocarbon date for an artefact from this site.

Aerial photographs indicated a rectilinear feature, possibly a Neolithic cursus or mortuary enclosure, at Park near Pitney. Sites of this type are rare in this part of the south-west. South Somerset Archaeological Research Group (SSARG) carried out a gradiometer survey which identified anomalies including the rectangular enclosure. A trial excavation across one of the side ditches during 2017 recovered a single sherd of Beaker domestic ware from one of the lower fills, and burnt flint and two fragments of animal bone from the base. The tentative date from the pottery was consistent with a Neolithic feature, whilst the enclosure plan and ditch profile were similar to that of the Middle Neolithic elongated enclosure at Netherfield Farm, South Petherton.

One of the animal bone fragments found was a very large cattle radius. Whilst it cannot be shown completely beyond doubt, it is consistent with an aurochs, the large wild cattle which inhabited the woodlands which spread after the last Ice Age. Their remains are not common, but are associated elsewhere with Neolithic ceremonial settings. They appear to have disappeared during the Middle Bronze Age, with the latest recorded example in Britain being from Somerset. SSARG are grateful to the Maltwood Fund for support to obtain a radiocarbon date for this



Geophysical survey, Park, showing the north-west to south-east aligned enclosure in the centre of the plot (Courtesy of Liz Caldwell). Other features are of Late Iron Age and Romano-British date.

bone. It enabled us to add a dated example of aurochs to a limited British distribution, as well as provide better dating for the Park enclosure. In the event it returned a date of 3491-3126 cal BC (95% probability). This Middle Neolithic date is entirely consistent with enclosures of this type, and the date spans the range of construction and use of the Netherfield Farm enclosure.

Clare Randall, SSARG

Human Remains near Westbury sub-Mendip

A SANHS Maltwood Fund grant supported the osteoarchaeological analysis.

In July 2019 the Westbury Society Archaeology Group, assisted by members of other community archaeology groups, carried out a careful excavation of a human skeleton on a previously reported Roman-period site.

The burial was of a 40+ year old male, who had been placed on his left side facing East in a shallow grave cut lying roughly North-South. There were no grave goods other than a small copper alloy pin found close to the skull, possibly used to pin a shroud. Osteoarchaeological examination showed he was about 5'8" tall and radiocarbon dating revealed a date of death most likely 475-535 calAD.



The post-Roman date is interesting, suggesting that occupation of a rural Roman-period site may have carried on for at least 60 years after the departure of the legions. It is also worth noting that the date relates to the skeleton found about 5km away at Coxley by Balch & Wicks in 1941, and recently dated to 401-538 calAD.

On a less positive note, the partial outline of a possible Roman-period bath-house shown on a previous geophysics survey turned out to be geology! The search for the elusive bath-house continues...

Teresa Hall, Westbury Society Archaeology Group

News from the Museum Collection Panel

We have been delighted with the uses being made of our collection as a key part of the county collection to enhance our knowledge of the archaeology and natural history of Somerset. These range from the work of the Rare Plants Group in researching, conserving and expanding our dried plant reference collection to a variety of work on skeletal remains as explained in the study day organised jointly by the Archaeology Committee and the South West Heritage Trust on 30th November last.

Two portraits from our collection of oil paintings have been conserved and will be going on display in the Museum of Somerset in the near future. That of Edward Ellis, conserved at a cost of £3,659.67 from the Museum Collection Fund, will join the portrait of his sister, Hannah. The article which follows is extracted from reports compiled by Amal Khreisheh who has curated the project on our behalf, and in turn based on historical research by Mary Siraut.

The Panel is currently reviewing the collection management policy.

David Dawson, Secretary to the Museum Collection Panel

Hannah & Edward Ellis & the artist Richard Phelps

Hannah and Edward Ellis

The portrait of Hannah Ellis, Mrs Joseph Metford (1722-1798) is probably by John Phelps or Richard Phelps. The painting shows her standing from the waist up. The colours have probably faded but she is wearing a plain yellow silk dress with open bodice [a la Française] and matching stomacher both with simple frills at the neck edge. Her hair is dressed close to her head and covered with a simple muslin cap. A blue shawl is draped around her covering her left arm. Given the way in which both right sleeve and shawl are obscured in the bottom corners of the picture, it is possible she was wearing panniers under her skirt. Her body is in three-quarter view.



Hannah Ellis (TTNCM: 18/1995/21) probably by Richard Phelps (photo by courtesy of South West Heritage Trust)

Hannah was one of the daughters of Hugh Ellis a Quaker yeoman of Uffculme, Devon. Others married into the Were family of Wellington cloth merchants.

Hannah married Joseph Metford, apothecary of Taunton, at Spiceland Quaker Meeting on 30 April 1753. She had four children: Joseph, William, Hugh (d. age 2) and Ellis. Joseph and Ellis married Hannah and Ann Nickleson, sisters of Elizabeth who married John Jeffery MP.

The portrait of Edward Ellis (see front cover) shows him standing in front of a window. In his right hand he is carrying a red squirrel which is eating a nut and is attached to him by a collar and chain which Edward holds in his left hand. Squirrels were commonly kept as children's pets at this date. Edward is said to have been born 1720. In the portrait he has yet to be breeched, an event that usually happened at about 7 or 8 years of age. He may have died young. If he was the brother of Hannah he must have done so as Hannah is recorded later as having only surviving sisters.

The artist Richard Phelps (1718-1785)

Richard Phelps is little known today but was a prolific portrait painter and a designer of follies in West Somerset. He came from a very modest background, but when he died was worth c. £1,500 and left 260 prints, 50 oil paintings, 80 drawings and sketches of his own and nine waste canvases, gold rings, silver plate and a quantity of walnut and mahogany furniture.

The younger Richard Phelps probably learnt his craft from his father and seems to have started by painting for churches like Richard the elder; possibly he contributed to some of his father's altarpieces. It is not known how much work of this kind he did, but his royal arms of 1743 for Minehead church survives. However, the younger Richard's painterly talents were for portraits and it is for his portraits of west Somerset landowners that he best known now - if he is known at all. He painted Margaret Trevelyan, wife of Alexander Luttrell, Peregrine Palmer of Fairfield, Thomas Dyke Acland as a boy and Margaret Luttrell, wife of Henry Fownes at least twice. Most of these probably date from the 1750s or later. There are three known works in the Somerset Heritage Centre including two members of the Ellis family. There were probably many other commissions but these either do not survive or have not been identified as his work. From his inventory he was a prolific painter.

He must have come to the attention of the Luttrell family at an early stage and had several commissions for portraits. However, there are no known portraits of male members of the family or late works, but these have presumably been lost. Much later he sketched Henry Fownes Luttrell from memory over a year after his death.

Fungi Foray at Montacute

Natural History Section Field Trip - 11th October 2019

In anticipation that the warm wet weather of the preceding days would encourage a number of species of toadstools to appear, a dozen members met in the car park of Montacute House before setting off into the Parkland for a Fungi Foray. It was a pleasure to welcome Henry Jackson, the youngest member present and his family, who were local to the area, on their first SANHS field trip despite the wet weather.

The parkland part of the estate is a large area of grassland that is carefully managed by grazing with sheep and cattle for the benefit of the rich invertebrate fauna that is present. It also contains a number of veteran tree

species including the Oaks (*Quercus robur* and *Q. cerris*) that, important in their own right, also provide suitable habitats for woodpeckers and owls as well as a number of bat species. Any large branches that fall are left to decay on site to provide a habitat for invertebrates and fungi.



*Above: Exidea thuretiana White Brain Jelly Fungus
Photo Henry Jackson*

*Below: Mycena sp.
On fallen, decaying oak branch
Photo Henry Jackson*



Our findings started with Henry finding two specimens on fallen and decaying timber which was encouraging as it coincided with the fine rain stopping as we made our way around the parkland.



*Above: Schizophyllum commune Split Gill Fungus
Photo Stephen Parker*

*Below: Ascocoryne sarcoides
Purple Jelly Fungus
Photo Keith Gould*



Lunch was taken sitting on a conveniently fallen tree which provided two interesting specimens, a split gill and a jelly fungus (previous page).

The storm damaged Lime tree (*Tillia cordata*), one of the common lime trees in the Lime Avenue planted around 1853, gave a good example to discuss the benefits of such natural damage to a tree enabling a wealth of wildlife to take advantage of the habitats created within the trunk and with the branch left to decay on the ground.



*Storm damage discussion
Photo Stephen Parker*

The area also proved very productive in the search for galls, a relatively new activity for the field trips and on this site was most successful. The galls were produced by a range of organisms including mites, midges, aphids, fungi, with wasp species causing 14 different types of gall. These included the 'hedgehog' galls of *Neuroterus saliens* and *Andricus grossulariae*, both of these species are relatively recent arrivals in Britain (2004 and 2000

respectively). There was also a superabundance of knopper galls induced by the gall-wasp *Andricus quercuscalicis* which was first recorded in Britain in the 1960s and is now very widespread.

The photo of the *Neuroterus saliens* 'pasty gall' was the first record for the sexual generation of *N.saliens* in Vice County 5 (South Somerset) whilst 11 of the galls recorded were first records for the 10km square ST51 and the leaf-roll galls of the rapidly spreading *Trioza centranthi* on Red Valerian (*Centranthus ruber*) were found just outside the car park.



*Neuroterus saliens
First record of 'pasty' gall for VC5
Photo Keith Gould*

A successful day concluded with 30 species of fungi together with the 36 sorts of gall recorded.

Karen Turvey, Natural History Section

St Andrew's Church, Taunton

One of the highlights of our autumn symposium on Victorian architects and architecture was a visit to St Andrew's church, one of Taunton's architectural gems, but which many of those attending the event had never seen.

The church was built to replace the 1846 St James's chapel of ease in Kingston Rd by the Revd Frederick Jeremiah Smith with at least £3,000 of his own money, promised at a thanksgiving service for the treaty of Berlin in 1878. It was his last great act of generosity in Taunton, which he had furnished with churches and schools. He died in 1884 and his coffin was accompanied to the cemetery by schoolchildren from almost every school in Taunton.

In 1879 Rowbarton ecclesiastical district was formed and the orchard of Rowbarton House on Kingston Road was bought as a site for the new church. A vicar was appointed in 1880 from which date the registers begin. The original church, designed by John Houghton Spencer, was completed in 1881 and consecrated on 14 July with 500 seats, all free. The church was built of Westleigh



stone lined inside with polychromatic brickwork. The church was furnished with an east window by Hardman, a stenciled ceiling, and an altar table by Taunton master cabinet maker Arthur Steevens. In



1883 an organ was installed, rebuilt in the later 1920s by Osmond of Taunton, and in 1885 windows were installed in memory of Revd Smith.

The vicar was assisted by a curate by 1884 when the church was overcrowded and people were being turned away. An iron chapel of ease at Chip Lane was suggested as a solution but instead it was decided to extend St Andrews in 1892 on donated land. On 14 July 1893, exactly 12 years after the original

consecration, the extension was consecrated increasing the seating capacity to c. 700. The extension was designed by Edmund Buckle in 1892 and comprised an additional south aisle, a west narthex the full width of the church, a new north sacristy and choir vestry, an enlarged chancel and two staircases to the semi-basement vestry built under the chancel taking advantage of the sloping ground.

The south tower with its short broach spire is now enclosed within the church fabric. The original south wall was replaced by a third arcade and several fine stained glass windows were installed including the *Te Deum* by Lavers and Westlake. Among the furnishings are a Derbyshire alabaster font on an Irish green marble column



with a brightly coloured, carved cover, and a lectern supported by an angel, both now at the west end of the nave. In 1897—8 a new road, Greenway Avenue, was built along the south side of the church separating it from the vicarage and the school.

A memorial oak chancel screen with rood was installed to the 53 men of the parish killed in the First World War and behind it hang seven sanctuary lamps. In 1936 the clock with two gilded skeleton dials was placed in the tower with connected dials in the church and vestry.

From its beginning the church had a close connection with the railway and was sometimes called the railway church. In 1893 collections were taken for the Great Western Railway's widows and orphans fund. In the 1920s the company gave money to enlarge St Andrew's school. A 2002 stained glass window in the north aisle of GWR locomotive 2913 by Clare M. Green commemorates those links.

Mary Siraut, Secretary Local History Committee

The Early Dunster Project

Building Recording progress at Dunster



Wicket gate in main gates at the Castle

The Early Dunster Project is now well under way and has been granted a two year extension by Historic England, due now to complete in September 2022. This extension was requested because of the extraordinary number of properties found to have evidence of early fabric. In view of the age of the buildings, there have been numerous alterations over the centuries and this, together with the wish to record as many of these early features as possible, has created more work than first envisaged.

The most complex to date has been the Castle gatehouse which is known to have been built in the early 1420s with major works in the C18th and C19th. The south elevation of the building follows the line

of the curtain wall around the lower ward, and on the north east side there is evidence of a barbican wall. The building is part buried in the steep bank rising up to the Castle. The gates with their towers may have originated in the C13th and are very impressive indeed. From old records, work seems to have been carried out on them 1417 possibly incorporating the ironwork. As these may be among the oldest gates in the country, we are hoping that it will be possible to dendro-date (tree -ring date) them under this project and they have now been assessed for this.

Another major piece of work has been the study of the Old Priory Buildings. The roof trusses had been dendro-dated by Time Team to 1455 for the south block. This has an exceptionally fine arch-braced collar roof with 3 tiers of wind bracing from eaves to apex. The west block has an estimated date of 1270 - 1302 for the roof timbers. This latter has one tier of wind bracing and arch- braced trusses. This date is very early for this type of construction with an arch-braced cranked collar and trace of one cruck leg. The wind bracing in this wing is of a square section 12 x 14cm unlike the flat chamfered wind braces in the other range.



Smoke blackening to cruck roof with infill panel

structures. A number of these had been previously recorded by Cdr. E.D.H. Williams and Ron Gilson who carried out work in the 1970s and 80s. Early dates had been confirmed by Time Team who visited Dunster over a number of years. This is a wonderful opportunity to study such early structures and the work has

Further work on the houses and shops has also thrown up many examples of cruck



Profile of leg of cruck truss



Cross passage in open hall house

been greatly enhanced by our first-class photographer, Tony Harding who has also constructed a model Open Hall house based on one of our surveys and now on display in Dunster Museum.

We are hoping to show more of our work in an exhibition in Dunster Church and are planning a big event on 27th September 2020 with talks from experts and visits to some of the properties investigated. Every participant will receive a copy of the building report which they have helped with and, as per normal practice, a copy will be lodged at the Somerset Record Office. Anyone interested in helping with the project

should contact Mary Ewing through the SANHS office in the first instance.

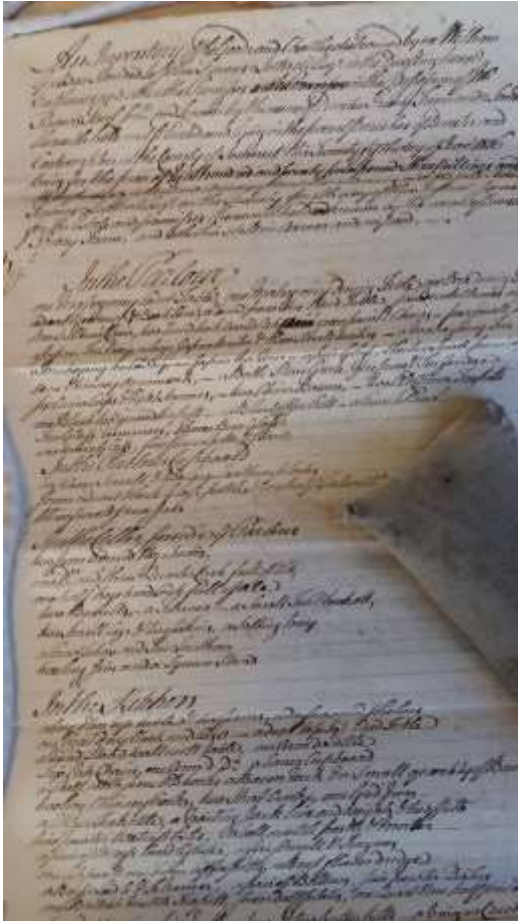
Mary Ewing

Photos: Tony Harding, Alison Bunning, Maggie Dinning

Dunster Priory Farm and Mr Thomas Paul

The Somerset Heritage Centre at Taunton holds many fascinating records and amongst them is a long Inventory **DD/L/1/30/28B/2** (25 June 1816) for Priory Farm, Dunster, found while doing research for the Early Dunster project. Inventories, usually made to accompany a will, are a wonderful glimpse into people's houses and give us, a sometimes surprisingly detailed, idea of how a household worked.

This particular inventory, however, was drawn up not as the result of someone's death but because of an over-exuberant lifestyle! One of the joys of research is coming to know various personalities as they emerge from documents. Some leap out of the pages at you – others approach more slowly as little by little you gather information and their story unfolds; some have long histories – others just a brief snapshot of their lives and then they are gone.



1816 Copy of Priory Farm Inventory

Thomas Paul first appears in the Dunster archives in 1797 when he submitted the highest bid for the lease of Dunster Priory Farm which had been put up for auction after the death of the previous tenant Mr William Pincombe. Priory Farm at this date was 170 acres and a good dairy and grazing farm and his farmhouse was built within the ruins of the priory north of the church. He occupied it for the next 20 years and became important enough to be collecting the Land Tax for the area – a task he was still undertaking in 1816. It is therefore rather puzzling that at some point he seems to have stopped paying his rent although given that he was owing a considerable amount of money to other creditors it is perhaps not surprising!

Court proceedings in London were eventually taken against Mr Paul for a debt of £1000. He was found guilty and it is

this that probably precipitated both the Inventory and the subsequent auction of his Priory Farm goods. In the same bundle as the Inventory is a Writ to collect the £1000 issued by the Sheriff of Somerset, John Goodford, Esquire, dated 28th June 1816. However, four days earlier on 24th June 1816 Mr Luttrell's Steward (William Gale) had distrained "the Cattle Goods and Chattles" of Thomas Paul of Dunster Priory Farm for the sum of eight hundred and seventy seven pounds three shillings and three pence for rent and arrears of rent due to John Fownes Luttrell with the Inventory taken on 25th June. Mr Luttrell himself seems not to have been in Somerset at the time, communicating with his steward by letter.



There was probably very little warning given before this seizure took place since cattle, sheep and horses belonging to other farmers were still in the Priory Farm fields and there are some letters of protest so we can assume the house and its contents are all as they would have been on a normal working day. Judging by the furnishings it would seem that Mr Paul enjoyed a lavish and comfortable lifestyle and was not short of money when buying furniture!

The enumerator grouped similar items together as he went round the various rooms so we can see that the Parlour was clearly the main room for socialising. It was comfortably well-furnished and its fire grate was one of the fashionable “Bath” type with a basket flanked by flat-topped hobs (The Georgian Group Guides No. 9 Fireplaces: https://georgiangroup.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/The_Georgian_Group_Guides_N9_Fireplaces-s.pdf).

The Kitchen fireplace by contrast is still furnished with chimney crooks and a Spit with all its furnishings although there is also a Grid iron probably used for flat bottomed pans. However only kettles are in the fireplace, all the saucepans and pots are neatly stowed away in “the passage outside the Little Sitting Room”. The Little Sitting Room itself seems to have been where the ironing was done. The main bedroom over the Parlour had a 4-post Mahogany bedstead and lavish Moroccan curtains and all the other bedrooms also contained at least one 4-post bed. There was plenty of cider in the Cider Cellar, but the Dairy looks to have been the most active and best provisioned room with 16 milk pans, some milk coolers and a quantity of butter making equipment.

The farm itself appears to have been thriving. It was well stocked with cows and sheep, its fields full of crops as well as three plough horses, two saddle horses and several colts in the Priory Grounds.

The auction itself took place on 5th July 1816, several days after the Sheriff issued his Writ; however, John Fownes Luttrell was quite definite that any money arising from it was due to him and should not go to any other creditors. The Somerset Heritage Centre archives also hold (**DD/L/1/2/2/67**) the copy draft of a carefully worded Indemnity given by Mr Luttrell to the Sheriff and written the day before the auction on 4th July 1816, saying quite categorically that since Mr Luttrell's Steward had distrained the goods for non-payment of rent before the Writ was issued they were his (Mr. Luttrell's) property and not Thomas Paul's and he therefore had the right to keep any proceeds arising from their sale.



The bankruptcy, loss of his livelihood and no relief for his creditors must have been a terrible blow to Thomas Paul. Mr Oatway took over the lease of Priory Farm (now 187 acres) with its empty farmhouse now stripped of all its furnishings, but what became of Mr Paul is not known although the Parish Records show a Thomas Paul (presumably his son) married Joan Escott in Dunster in 1819 so it may be that some of the family stayed in the area.

Jill Strobridge

Charles Edmund Giles, Somerset Architect

Following the SANHS General Meeting on 7th December 2019, we were treated to a thought-provoking lecture by Julian Orbach, SANHS President 2018-19, on the Somerset architect Charles Edmund Giles (1822 – 1881). The following brief summary has been prepared from notes kindly provided by Julian; look forward to reading a full account in a future issue of the Proceedings (ed).

Whilst not ranking nationally amongst the top Victorian architects, Giles was one of the most significant Somerset architects of his time with a considerable



*All Saints, Kingweston C.E. Giles 1851-55
Photo Julian Orbach*

volume of work not only in Somerset but also well beyond. We are not limited solely to describing his work, notwithstanding that there is much of interest in that; because, before he died, he produced an autobiography which reveals much about his aspirations, disappointments and concerns.

Charles Edmund Giles was born in Frome in 1822, son of a builder. Following schooling in Frome and Bridgwater, in 1836, at what we would regard as the tender age of 14, he was sent to London as a pupil of Henry Shaw. It can be no coincidence that Giles's elder brother had commissioned Shaw to build a Tudor Victorian House. Giles view of Shaw was less than complimentary, but his autobiography is critical of most of

those with whom he worked. For reasons undisclosed, he then moved on as a pupil of another London architect.

Aged 20, he returned to Frome. On his return he describes his father's business as being in a mess, but somehow £500 was found for him to join in partnership with the Somerset County Surveyor, Richard Carver. Carver had also been apprenticed in London albeit some thirty years earlier, and had, by the time Giles joined him, established a fair-sized practice, particularly with country houses for the gentry to the west of Taunton. But Carver's style was now

becoming outdated, and Giles was highly disparaging of his partner.

Notwithstanding the difficulties in his professional relationship with Carver, in 1848 he married Carver's daughter Jane. His pre-occupation with his financial situation emerges from his autobiography – he notes that Jane came with £1000 to which was added a further £400 following the death of a sister. Following a honeymoon in Europe he moved into No. 14 The Crescent, Taunton.



Kings College, Taunton. C.E. Giles 1867-69. Photos Julian Orbach

He was a founder member of the Somersetshire Archaeological and Natural History Society in 1849, and indeed appears to have been largely responsible for its inception. At the time of the first annual meeting he was one of two secretaries of the Archaeology Group and contributed various items to the display of artefacts that accompanied the early annual meetings. He contributed four articles to Volume I of the Proceedings, and his name appears frequently in that volume. Some 300 members are named in Volume I, of which some 60 were clergy: the society meetings would undoubtedly have given him ample opportunities to approach both secular and ecclesiastical clients. Volume II contains a substantive report by Giles on the state of the tower of St. Mary Magdalene, Taunton and Volume III reports that Giles had been commissioned as architect for this work, but with Benjamin Ferrey (diocesan architect) as the consulting architect: it is to the latter that the work is today attributed.

Nether Stowey church was built under the joint names of Carver and Giles, and shows the 'modernising' influence that Giles had brought to the partnership. But around this time, he left the partnership with Carver and set up his own practice, moving out to Stoke St. Gregory. A few years later, in 1856 he moved his practice to London, although the majority of his work remained in and around Taunton. To this period can be ascribed churches at KIngweston, Long Load, Bathealton and Isle Brewers. Readers of the News may remember that a picture of Isle Brewers appeared on the front cover of issue 92 (2016), together with an article about its renowned incumbent, Joseph Wolff. Giles secular work included schools at Charlton Mackrell and Taunton, and Stuckey banks (latterly National Westminster) at both Taunton and Wells. Outside Somerset, he had commissions for churches at Ventnor (IOW) and in Lincolnshire and the Cambridge – Norfolk borders.



1865 was the peak of his career; he recalled in his autobiography earning some £600, the most ever. At this time, he was in partnership with former pupil, Richard Gane and to this period can be attributed what is probably his best work – Abbey Mill at Bradford on Avon. Illness increasingly affected him; he sold out to Gane and retired in 1873. It was during this period of retirement that he wrote his autobiography. He travelled in Europe for his health, and died in Rome in 1881.

His autobiography shows him as a man seemingly continually disappointed with those with whom he worked and acutely sensitive to his financial condition. Today, as an architect responsible for some 150 buildings, many of which survive, most would regard him as successful. Remember, wherever you are in Somerset, you are likely to be close to one of his commissions.

Although the original of his autobiography was purchased by the Getty Foundation, a manuscript version remains in the SANHS collection. It gives insight into the life of a middle-ranking architect, albeit seemingly one with greater aspirations. Collectively across the country, these second-tier architects must have been responsible for most of the architect-designed buildings of their time. But his concerns were probably shared more widely, by other Victorian professionals at this level – outwardly successful, but always acutely aware of the precipice of financial ruin that was lurking nearby.

Julian expressed the hope that the Giles autobiography might one-day be published; as arguably Giles was the man responsible for the creation of SANHS, perhaps one day it will fall to the Society to do just that.

William De Morgan – Potter & Novelist

The SANHS De Morgan Event

A capacity audience assembled at the Somerset Heritage Centre on the afternoon of Saturday 28th February, 2020 to be entertained and educated on the subject of William De Morgan and his ceramics. One of our members has produced a synopsis of De Morgan and his work (see below), so here follows just a brief outline of the event.

David Dawson, SANHS ceramic specialist, opened the afternoon by explaining that it was through Francis Colthurst that SANHS had a special interest in De Morgan's works. Francis Colthurst (1874-1945) was a member of a wealthy Bridgwater family well-known through their involvement with the brickmaking trade. Francis, however, had an artistic leaning and studied at the Royal Academy Schools in London. Although a competent artist in his own right, he was an avid collector of ceramics. His collection was divided at his death: part came to the Somerset Archaeological and Natural History Society for 'the citizens and town of Taunton'; part of that bequest is on display in the Museum of Somerset. It includes dishes, jugs and tiles by De Morgan, mainly acquired through Morris and Co, London.

Julian Orbach, SANHS President 2018-19, showed how the works of De Morgan (1839-1917) fitted within the general Arts and Crafts Movement and, in particular, with the works of William Morris (1834 - 1896). De Morgan first met Morris at the Red House, Bexleyheath, Kent, and remained part of the Morris inner circle thereafter. Whereas in the early days Morris specialised in textiles and wallpaper, but put his hand to a very wide range of crafts, De Morgan was a

ceramics specialist and perfectionist. Perfection and commercial success are rarely good bedfellows; even when, for example, De Morgan received a substantial commission from P&O to provide tiled displays for ocean liners, the venture was commercially unsound.

During the break we were given the opportunity to see at close hand a stunning collection of De Morgan ceramics (pots and tiles) from the SANHS and South West Heritage Trust collections. There was also a handling collection put together by Rob Higgins (our third speaker) which included the works of both Morris and De Morgan. Finally, the pots produced by Fiona Holmes for the 100-Pot Challenge were on display (see page 37). Chris Jessop, SANHS Chair, described the collections as ‘a riot of colour’.

The second session was opened by Professor Rob Higgins, tile and architectural ceramics specialist. Rob blended artistic content with descriptions of the highly specialised processes involved in the production of the finished articles. He described recent scientific analysis which has provided a new insight into some of the effects that De Morgan achieved. Rob illustrated a number of De Morgan’s works, for example a tiled fire surround in the rooms of Charles Dodgson (better known as Lewis Carroll) in Christ Church College, Oxford. On Dodgson’s death, the college authorities removed the tiles, and it is only through good fortune that they survived, now displayed in the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford.

Sarah Hardy, Curator Manager of the De Morgan Foundation, described the Foundation and its extensive collection of De Morgan artwork. The Foundation does not have a museum of its own, but displays its collection through a number of long-term loans to museums and galleries across the country. The Foundation website www.demorgan.org.uk details where the collection can be found, accompanied by exquisite photographs of the exhibits. And members with a broader interest in the Arts and Craft Movement will find on the same website corresponding information about the paintings of Evelyn De Morgan (née Pickering), De Morgan’s wife.

When the formal proceedings drew to a close the speakers stayed on and gave generously of their time answering numerous informal questions. An event that we will remember for a long time.

A Brief Outline of the Life of William De Morgan

William Frend De Morgan (16 November 1839 – 15 January 1917) was an

English potter, tile designer and novelist. A lifelong friend of the socialist and artistic innovator William Morris, he designed tiles, stained glass and furniture for Morris and Co. from 1863 to 1872. His tiles are often based on medieval designs or Islamic patterns, and he experimented with innovative glazes and firing techniques. Galleons and fish were popular motifs, as were "fantastical" birds and other animals. Many of De Morgan's tile designs were planned to create intricate patterns when several tiles were laid together. In contrast to other craftsmen of the age, his work is exuberant, even playful, and far outlived the man himself.

Hence the interest today in this most quixotic artist. Just open a book (*The Designs of William De Morgan*, newly added to the SANHS Library at Somerset Heritage Centre) and study William's animals: birds, snakes, dragons - they are never passive but full of expression and movement. In this writer's case, it was the fish that did it. Staring vacantly at a vase in our collection, from De Morgan's Merton Abbey period, around 1882: suddenly the image of a fish appeared behind the deadly net, itself appearing all too menacingly around the surface of the vase. How was this complex design achieved? De Morgan described himself as a scientist first and foremost, continually experimenting with new techniques and tricks. For example, by starving the kiln of oxygen during firing and varying the temperature, he 'rediscovered' the ancient Persian technique of making lusterware. Important commissions followed through the latter part of the nineteenth century: ocean-going luxury liners, Leighton House Kensington, but also altogether humbler sites such as Postman's Park near St Pauls, where his ceramic tiles commemorate the lives of ordinary heroes.

By 1904 William's career as a ceramicist was over; former employees the Passenger brothers took over his designs which appeared under different marques for twenty years more. This most versatile artist turned to novel writing: *Joseph Vance* appeared in 1906 and was a huge success on both sides of the Atlantic. William ruefully observed how much greater was his success with the pen than the kiln.

It may be of interest to add that Augustus De Morgan, William's father, was a distinguished mathematician, and one of the Honorary and Corresponding Members of SANHS listed in the early volumes of the Proceedings (ed).

Natural History Notes

We round off this issue with our regular feature from Dr Philip Radford. Pictures all by the author.

Last June I was delighted to watch several Beautiful Demoiselle damselflies in flight by Quantock streams. In the air, they resemble blue butterflies, which flit from perch to perch. Females have a dark green colour and can be incredibly hard to spot when at rest on waterside vegetation. While Beautiful Demoiselles are insects of fast-flowing streams, the somewhat similar Banded Demoiselles frequent slow-moving waters and rivers. We are fortunate to have good populations of both demoiselle species in Somerset.

On the Levels, most dragonflies and damselflies had a good season, particularly the Golden-ringed, as well as Southern Hawkers, Emperors and Common Darters. Migrant Hawkers, however, appeared to be in lower numbers than usual, at least in the Quantock area.



Beautiful Demoiselle
Calopteryx virgo

Adders too are in low numbers, with few being seen over Somerset Exmoor, the Mendips or the Quantock Hills. The reason for the decline is uncertain as habitats have not altered significantly in their previous strongholds. For adders, spring and later summer are the

exciting times; that is, soon after emerging from hibernation and, later, when females are about to give birth and love to bask in the sun.

I saw my first Small Tortoiseshell butterfly in flight on 23rd February 2019, while an ex-hibernation Peacock was seen a day later. It was a good year for brimstones with two males in flight on 1st April. I am always delighted, in July, if I see a Silver-washed Fritillary on the wing; happily, these handsome insects usually fare well in Quantock woods because of the presence of violet species which are the food plants required by the lava. In the course of the summer, I noted good numbers of Painted Ladies; were these butterflies mainly

immigrants or home-bred? Anyway, there is no shortage of thistles in Somerset, with thistles being the food plant for the Painted Lady.

In general, moths seemed to be scarce last summer. I was pleased, however, to see an Elephant Hawk-moth caterpillar. The larva feeds at night on willow herb, bedstraw or fuchsia; it is often attracted to gardens, much to the annoyance of fuchsia-lovers!



Female Adder
Vipera berus

Hedgehogs are far from common locally these days; a few years ago, the animals were so often seen squashed flat on our roads. I was particularly interested, therefore, to find a 'nest' of four half-grown hogs in mid-September. I wondered



Elephant Hawk-moth caterpillar
Deilephila elpenor

if they were mature enough to survive the coming winter. Certainly, one of the hogs did not survive as I found a narrow strip of hedgehog skin, evidently the remains of a fresh kill. I suspect that either a badger or a red fox had recently enjoyed a hedgehog meal.

I am always pleased to see a Song Thrush in my garden, perhaps cracking open a snail or pulling at

an earthworm. I was surprised, however, to see one of the birds investigating a heap of fallen petals of Bloody Cranesbill in my garden, and then start to eat them; at least twelve of the petals were swallowed before the bird flew off. I suspected that there would be some associated insects which were the attraction, but none were to be found. Cranesbill petals are slightly aromatic; possibly, the aromatic chemicals could help in deterring feather mites. There could be no food value in the petals.

It is sad that Turtle Doves now only breed in England in very small numbers; I suspect that the bird may now be extinct as a Somerset breeder. Some twenty years ago, Turtle Doves regularly nested over the Quantocks. I recall seeing the flimsy-looking (but strong) twig nests in hawthorn trees on Bagborough and Lydeard Hill, always associated with the highly attractive purring song of the doves; the song was often heard in and around wooded areas near several Somerset villages. Turtle Doves, of course, are migrants which winter well to the south in Africa; many of the birds get shot, legally or illegally, on their passage through Italy, France or Spain, while netting or trapping is commonplace on Mediterranean islands. Otherwise, as the doves are seed-eaters, a contributory factor may be a general shortage of weed seeds, at least in England. Unfortunately for the doves, they are said to be delicious when roasted!

For the last two years I have been disappointed to find no winter aconites to cheer the winter gloom. I have suspected that mice have been disturbing the tuberous roots, and perhaps eating them. The plants are highly poisonous to humans; can mice be tolerant of them?



Winter Aconite
Eranthis hyemalis



Spindle Tree berries
Euonymus europaeus Aug. 2019

Another plant I find very attractive is spindle tree. A profusion of glistening-red seed capsules are formed in later summer, characteristically in drooping clusters. Spindle seeds are not ripe until late autumn; probably they are poisonous for people, although some birds do eat them on occasions; birds known to take them are Robins, Black Birds and Song Thrushes,

while Great Tits and Long-tailed Tits are possible.

Those who are interested in fungi always enjoy a walk in a birch wood in October. Razorstrop brackets are sure to be seen, often in large numbers, while the spectacularly-coloured fly agaric is



Razorstrop Bracket
Piptoporus betulinus



Fly Agaric
Amanita muscaria

commonly birch-associated. Walking in mixed woodland, I always look out for club-foot, with its very tapered stalk: quite a unique agaric. Of course, all decaying wood should be investigated as, so often, tiers of the remarkable common sulphur tuft will be found.



Cep
Boletus edulis

Then, thinking of edible fungi, mature beech may well have growths of ceps nearby. The cep is the most tasty fungus I have eaten, and it is large and fleshy too. Many people search pastures for their breakfast field mushroom.

Another good edible fungus is the parasol, with a sweet-tasting flesh. As with all so called edible fungi, parasols do not agree with everyone. One should only try a very small portion at first; plenty of people cannot tolerate even field or 'shop' mushrooms.



Parasol *Macrolepiota procera*

Dr Philip Radford

The 100-Pot Challenge

Many of you will have been aware of the sponsored challenge that Fiona Holmes set herself to make one hundred pots in one hundred days. Sculpture is Fiona's speciality, she had never thrown a pot, but her father is a skilled and well-known potter. Her creative star had waned and she wanted to do something to bring back its sparkle.

Having had the opportunity to view the SANHS collection of William De Morgan ceramics, thanks to Amal, one of the South West Heritage Trust curators, she drew her inspiration from them. In total, one hundred and seventy pots were made.

The sponsorship was to provide finance to fund a website manager to get the SANHS website up and performing. In total just under a thousand pounds was raised. Everyone who sponsored Fiona was entered into a draw held at the William De Morgan event on the 22nd February at the Heritage Centre where her pots were on view alongside the De Morgan collections.

Fiona donated four pots from her collection for the draw and these were chosen by David Dawson and myself. The winners were Annette English, Jos Holloway, Phil Hocking, and Harptree Local History Society.

We are very grateful to Fiona for the amount of time she put into the project and the financial boost it gave to the website fund. The good news is, it not only gave people a great deal of enjoyment, but also re-awoke Fiona's creative star.

Chris Jessop, SANHS Chair



Somerset Archaeological And Natural History Society

Chair	Christine Jessop (Welfare matters)	chairman@sanhs.org
Historic Buildings Committee	Lizzie Induni	historicbuildings@sanhs.org
Local History Committee	John Page	localhistory@sanhs.org
Library Committee	David Bromwich (Hon. Librarian)	honlibrarian@sanhs.org
Proceedings	Rob Webley	ProceedingsEditor@sanhs.org
Membership Officer	Sue Goodman	membershipofficer@sanhs.org
Editor of the e-bulletin	Sue Goodman	e-bulletin@sanhs.org
Editor of SANHS News	Martin Salzer	newsletter@sanhs.org
Office & Web site Manager	Louisa Gillett	office@sanhs.org

Somerset Heritage Centre, Brunel Way, Norton Fitzwarren, Taunton TA2 6SF
Telephone 01823 272429

The SANHS office is normally open on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday & Thursday from 9am to 3pm. **However, during the current coronavirus restrictions, the office is closed, but the Office Manager can be contacted on 07531 898272.**