



Introduction from the Chair

A lot has changed in buildings archaeology since our last newsletter in autumn 2009. Firstly, after a hiatus the BAG Committee is once more up and running, with a group of faces new and old. The committee is working on a programme of events for 2012 and 2013, and these can be followed in part through our new Facebook page, as well as through the pages of our newsletter and at the IfA Conference.

Secondly, the last three years has seen significant and long-term changes to the planning environment that have directly affected the volume, type, and nature of the buildings archaeology work done in Britain. The publication of PPS 5 in the spring of 2010, alongside a clear Government Vision statement on the value of the Historic Environment, promised a new research- and significance-orientated way of recording archaeology and buildings through the planning system. The general feeling was that this was a significant step forward in clearly managing change to the Historic Environment resource, which of course includes buildings, during the planning and redevelopment processes.¹ However, this has been rapidly over-taken by events; the failure to secure a Heritage Bill was followed by the election of a new Government and the preparation of a new National Planning Policy Framework, due out in the Spring. There has been significant lobbying by the Heritage Sector aimed at retaining the gains perceived to have been made through the publication of PPS 5. It remains to be seen whether this has been successful; if not then it seems likely that there will be less professional recording of historic buildings in the future.

Thirdly, the continuing economic downturn has led to significant job losses across the Heritage Sector, with many professionals directly involved in buildings archaeology (such as Archaeological Unit employees, Archaeological Curators, and Conservation Officers) losing their jobs. FAME and the IfA have been jointly recording the fate of the archaeological market for several years and the latest report, covering the months April-September 2011,² suggested that whilst employment in commercial archaeology had stabilised, this came after the largest job losses in the profession's history. With further cuts promised in local government and the university sectors we are faced with losing a generation of skilled buildings archaeologists and building conservation specialists, at a time of rapid change in the planning environment.

Members of BAG might like to pick up these themes over the next 12 months in the pages of the newsletter, on our Facebook page and at the IfA Conference. If you feel strongly about the future of buildings archaeology you might want to consider joining the BAG committee at our next AGM. Whatever the economic, political and professional climate, BAG will continue to provide a forum within which these and many other issues relating to Buildings Archaeology can be discussed and debated.

Michael Nevell, University of Salford

1) *Realising the Benefits of Planning-Led Investigation in the Historic Environment: A Framework for Delivery. A report by the Southport Group.* Reading, Institute for Archaeology, July 2011.

2) Landward Research, 2011, *State of the Archaeological Market – October 2011.* Landward Research Ltd, Sheffield.

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[University of Salford](#)

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Building Services,
British Museum

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Karen Averby,
[Archangel Heritage](#)

Events Coordinator:

Frank Green, [New
Forest National Park
Archaeologist](#)

Standards and Guidance:

Bob Hill, [HBAS](#)

Education Officers:

Vacant

Newsletter Editor:

Edward James,
[BEAMS Ltd](#)

Newsletter Assistant:

Vacant

Ordinary Members:

Vacancies

AGM

The Buildings Archaeology Group AGM will be held at lunchtime on Thursday 19 April 2012 at the IfA Conference in Oxford. Please come and get involved.

Committee Vacancies

The Buildings Archaeology Group is back up and running, but we need your help to make it as good as possible!

As one of the largest special interest groups within the IfA, the BAG is hoping to provide a comprehensive service for all those engaged professionally with the historic built environment.

To help us achieve that aim we are keen to recruit additional volunteers to the committee. In particular we are looking for people interested in education and CPD and who might be able to assist with the organisation of events with an educational theme; people interested in contributing to the publication of the newsletter and other documents; and those who are able to assist with the updating of our standards and guidance.

We are also very keen to hear from you if you'd like to get involved but are not sure how or where you might be useful. It doesn't matter, the more the merrier— especially at the after meeting pub trips!

Other ways to get involved

BAG is also keen to offer its services for consultations and book reviews. It would be very much appreciated if those members of the group who would be interested in making themselves available for answering consultations or for writing book reviews for this newsletter could please get in contact with the group at groups@archaeologists.net

Thank you

As editor, I would like to offer my thanks to those who have contributed to this, the first edition of the BAG Newsletter for over two years. The contributions are excellent, and some were produced at very short notice. Thank you very much, and I look forward to many more to come.

Edward James—Editor

The Great Barn and Harmondsworth saved by English Heritage

English Heritage has recently taken into guardianship the Great Barn at Harmondsworth – one of the great buildings of England – securing its future. It is Grade I listed and, according to EH, the barn ranks alongside the Houses of Parliament and Westminster Abbey for its exceptional architectural and historic interest. This may seem to be over-egging the cake, but I wish I had a pound for everyone who has walked into the barn for the first time and said ‘Wow’!



The Great Barn of Harmondsworth in the sunshine. Credit: Justine Bayley.

The barn was built in 1426/7 by Winchester College as part of its manor farm at Harmondsworth and was used to store grain. Its size and structure evoke the space and shape of a timber cathedral – it has 12 bays, is nearly 60 metres long, 12 metres wide and 11 metres tall. The barn is a masterpiece of carpentry, contains one of the best interiors of the medieval age, and for its age is remarkably intact. It is a reminder of a pre-industrial age when farming the rich land around was the backbone of the local economy; its agricultural use continued into the 1970s. Since then it has had several owners, some good and some less so, but now can look forward to continuing care and maintenance.

When it last changed hands six years ago local MP, John McDonnell convened a meeting of local residents to found the Friends of the Great Barn at Harmondsworth. Their objectives were to secure its preservation both as a heritage building and for community use, to promote public access to it, to provide information on the history of the Barn and its surroundings, and to advise and assist the Barn’s owners. Until recently this had been done in a limited way, mainly through Open House weekends, but now the Friends are working closely with English Heritage, undertaking day-to-day care of the barn and will be opening it to the public. In 2012 the opening hours are 10am – 5pm on the second and fourth Sunday, from April to October. Entry is free; come and see how wonderful it is for yourselves!

Justine Bayley

Secretary, Friends of the Great Barn at Harmondsworth

Howcroft, High Street, Harmondsworth, Middx UB7 0AQ

mail@justine-bayley.co.uk

Recent Planning Application Refusals at Appeal

There have been two recent planning decisions at appeal which the committee feel it is worth drawing your attention to, both regarding the refusal of permission to install 'green technology' in historic buildings. In this case: photovoltaic solar power units onto roofs.

St Paulinus Church, Ollerton, Northamptonshire—15 November 2011

The proposal was to install a bank of cells onto the south facing roof of the Grade II listed church. The appeal was dismissed by the Planning Inspectorate on the grounds that their installation would result in the irreplaceable loss of historic fabric, and would erode the historic character of the building. More information can be found [here](#)

Firsby Manor, Firsby, Spilsby—26 January 2012

The proposal was to install 10 solar roof panels on the south facing wing. The appeal was dismissed on the grounds that their installation would harm the manor house's historic visual integrity, especially when viewed from the grounds, and would therefore "fail to preserve the special architectural or historic interest" of the building. More information on this case can be found [here](#)



Solar Panels on a roof. Source: Wikimedia Commons.

English Heritage Angel Awards, 31 October 2011

Two members of the committee attended the first English Heritage Angel Awards at Andrew Lloyd Webber's Palace Theatre on Monday 31st of October. The awards, funded by English Heritage and the Andrew Lloyd Webber Foundation celebrated "*the work of individuals and groups who have saved a significant historic building or place that was at risk of being lost forever*" (English Heritage).

The four categories for the awards were; Best Rescue of a Place of Worship, Best Worship of an Industrial Building or Site, Best Rescue of any other Category on the English Heritage Heritage at Risk Register, and Best Craftsmanship Employed on a Heritage Rescue. Over 200 entries were reduced to 16 by English Heritage, which were then judged by English Heritage CEO Simon Thurley, Melvyn Bragg, Charles Moore (from The Telegraph), Bettany Hughes and the Bishop of London, the Rt. Rev. Richard Chartres.

It was a glamorous event hosted by the TV presenter Clare Balding, and awards were presented by celebrities including Graham Norton, Michael Winner and Danielle Hope, as well as Andrew Lloyd Webber and judges Melvyn Bragg, Charles Moore and Simon Thurley.

The event was the first of its kind for England's built heritage, and the public celebration and recognition of the people and skills that are involved with its conservation is certainly welcome.

More information about the winners of the awards can be found at <http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/caring/heritage-at-risk/English-Heritage-Angel-Awards/winners/>.

Ed James



Graham Norton presents Graham Forge with the award for best craftsmanship employed on a heritage rescue for works to The Smythe Barn, Westenhanger, Kent © English Heritage: James O Davies.

policy and standards

Professionalism and Competency in Buildings Archaeology

Business and professional matters within archaeology are seldom covered within the journals and other publications that are directed at the profession. The Building Archaeology Group of IfA has decided that in these times of stricture for commercial practices this is something that should be addressed. This is the first of what is hoped will be a series of articles that will at least make members think, if not verge on the controversial.

Where are we?

Probably the largest part of the UK's archaeological profession works within or for the development and property industry. That encompasses everything from new road and railway projects, through airports, pipelines and mineral extraction, to more traditional building sites, both in town and country. Along with traditional digging, this includes work such as pre-development appraisals, area character assessments, building recording, and all the other tangential items of work that go to support or augment other aspects of the property market, such as the planning and similar regulatory regimes. It is this market that pays the salaries of most of the profession, especially the commercial archaeological contractor and their subsidiaries, and underpins the role of local authority and similar archaeologists.

However, there is more than a degree of detachment with which these same archaeologists regard the commercial world within which they work and which pays their wages. Because of this detachment there is little or no understanding, or even interest in wanting to discover, how parallel professions in the property and development industry work or manage themselves. This extends to the belief that the standards that archaeologists work to and the form in which they deliver their products are the only ones that exist and matter.

For those archaeologists working directly with the historic built environment this is even more significant, both in terms of the quality of the survey and appraisal work that is undertaken and how the results of their work is delivered. This is particularly important when working with buildings as they all too often seen as an easy piece of work that anybody can assess with no more than a background knowledge of architectural styles and how to recognise a brick. Some even consider that being a member of the IfA building archaeology group (BAG) is an endorsement or even a qualification that the person is capable of working with historic buildings, which it is not.

All construction and development professions require practitioners to be able to demonstrate a full and proper competency in knowledge, understanding and practice methods before one accepts a commission from a client, and archaeology is no different. For instance, would a 'digger' straight out of the field be considered suitable or competent to restore a gilded metal Roman helmet? Buildings of whatever type are no different and the professional guidelines of the IfA and BAG require each member to have the correct competency for the work that they do.

Why are we where we are?

Archaeologists working within the built environment sector need to go well beyond navel gazing about the competency we consider necessary to undertake our work. We need to begin to understand how the other professions in the construction and development sector have changed their standards and working practices in recent years. That difference is often seen in the way archaeologists are regarded by the other professionals with whom we work, as can be seen by our general lack of inclusion within the consultancy teams of many of the projects on which we work. The involvement of an archaeologist is usually seen as a necessary nuisance and we are often regarded as just another subbie with the same status as other groundworkers such as piling contractors.

Many in our profession hide behind the view that we are working in archaeology and so the way other businesses and professions work does not apply to us. If that is the case the word archaeology destroys the laws of economics in one blow. This applies to all commercial working from marketing, through contract negotiations, to what and how we deliver the end results of our work.

As a profession, we seldom think in the way our clients do, or consider what they want or the standards to which they work. We still have a very introverted view of business life and prefer to think we are part of academe where our role is merely to protect our heritage by recording it in some way. Because of this, we are facing a loss of market share of the built environment sector through an influx of non archaeological firms taking work from archaeologists by demonstrating less myopic professional views, competencies and standards. We are no longer alone in this market and as business becomes tighter more firms will grow sideways into our sector and it will then be just a matter of time before that expands into all aspects of archaeology.

Going Beyond Basics

To maintain and even increase the proportion of the market share of historic environment services that archaeologists can provide, we need to widen and improve our professional thinking and standards of working. Our professionalism needs to be at least at the level that our fellow organisations such as architects, surveyors or engineers work to, and which is reflected in the standard of the product they deliver. It is going to mean we need to sell ourselves as something more than a heritage superhero riding to the rescue of a pile of crumbling bricks and timber. A comic book image will only result in us being seen as entertainment and not taken seriously as professionals.

Much of this will involve new and additional training and skill development for the firms and practitioners involved. Across the development and construction sector there is a very wide range of day and longer courses and training modules being provided on virtually every aspect of professional service delivery, from project management, service delivery or marketing, through to added value provision and client development. It is CPD for the individual, but it is also something that archaeological organisations need to appreciate as necessary to maintain and develop their share of the market.

BAG realises that there is a potential demand for training to be provided that is more specifically directed towards our own sector. If members of BAG or IfA in general are able to identify what professional and business skills are lacking and where targeted training should be developed, we will be glad to hear from you. As contact, please send your comments to the BAG address at the IfA.

Bob Hill—Historic Building Advisory Service

features

For this inaugural newsletter for the re-born Buildings Archaeology Group we have two excellent contributions with which to get us started and provide the momentum for many more to come. First, **Jacqui Martinez** from the [Oxford Preservation Trust](#) informs us of their efforts to conserve and restore the Scheduled Rewley Road Railway Swing Bridge in Oxford, and gives us an overview of some of the issues that needed to be overcome, and also how a project like this can engage the wider community—not just those immediately involved. **Frank Green** of the [New Forest National Park Authority](#), meanwhile, brings to our attention the vital role the New Forest played in the Second World War, and how a new project funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund aims to map and catalogue the myriad war time sites the area contains.

Oxford Rewley Road Railway Swing Bridge: *Communicating the Value of a Redundant Industrial Relic*

In a time of sustainable development, when new planning policies are increasingly calling for every structure to have a purpose, the plight of redundant industrial relics is becoming more prominent. In this climate there is a growing need for restoration projects involving industrial structures that cannot easily provide viable economic regeneration opportunities to investigate a wider range of values and to find ways to communicate their importance effectively to the public.



Oxford Rewley Road LNWR Station Forecourt in 1914. Credit: Oxfordshire County Libraries

One such structure is the Oxford Rewley Road Railway Swing Bridge. While the bridge does not look like much in its current state, it is in fact a Scheduled Ancient Monument and holds significant heritage value. Nestled within a modern housing estate alongside the Sheepwash Channel, a busy navigable waterway that cuts between the Thames and the Oxford Canal, these values are not easily distinguishable. The restoration of this structure is currently being undertaken by the Oxford Preservation Trust, an organisation that is all too aware that in the current climate this restoration project must go far beyond the remit of mere physical restoration. The Trust recognises the need to find a way to interpret and communicate the unique values associated with this structure to a wider public in order to secure its on-going preservation and allow it to effectively tell its story.

The Oxford Rewley Road Swing Bridge is the last physical reminder of the now non-existent London Birmingham Railway (LBR) backed Buckinghamshire Railway line (later by the London Midland Scottish

Railway (LMS)). Designed in 1850 by Robert Stephenson it was an ingenious, cost effective method of allowing the Buckinghamshire Railway to enter Oxford over the Sheepwash Channel. The bridge is mounted on a substantial cast iron turntable comprising a bed of sixteen cast iron rollers and an upper cast iron track assembly (GW Conservation 2011, 3). Motion is derived from a series of toothed cast-iron gears or pinions from two cast iron windlass mechanisms which allowed the bridge to be turned by hand (RPS 2003, 13). The over deck and fixed approach spans have undergone several subsequent periods of modernisation in the late 19th Century and again in the 1940's (RPS 2003, 10). Surprisingly, however, the turntable mechanism survives intact from the bridge's original period of construction.

The bridge was constructed at a time of great railway expansion. Brunel and Stephenson, working for the Great Western Railway (GWR) and the LBR controlled Buckinghamshire Railway respectively, were battling to be the first to provide a rail link to Oxford. The Buckinghamshire Railway, for which Stephenson worked, was part of a wider strategy by LBR to block the GWR aspirations to reach the industrial heartlands of Birmingham and Wolverhampton (RPS 2003, 9). While the LBR's plans to block the GWR were unsuccessful it did result in the amalgamation of the LBR and a number of other concerns into the London & North Western Railway (LNWR), a conclusion that indirectly resulted in the eventual demise of Brunel's broad gauge railway and a series of events that put Oxford at the centre of an epic battle for railway dominance (RPS 2003, 9).

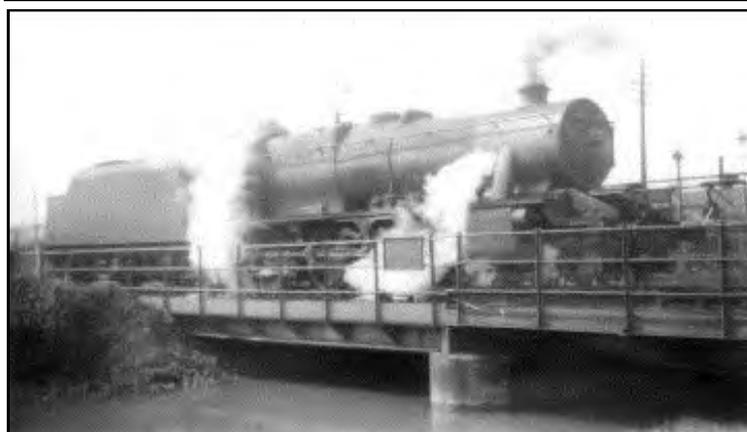
The LBR/LNWR backed Buckinghamshire Railway was also historically connected to the Great Exhibition, held at Crystal Palace in Hyde Park in 1851.

Not only did the railway line open in time to transport passengers to this momentous event, but the station was also constructed by the engineers Fox and Henderson, to the same design as their most famous endeavour - Crystal Palace (RPS 2003, 9). Due to the loss of Crystal Palace by fire in 1936 and the decision to move the Rewley Road Station from its position opposite the current GWR station on Rewley Road to the Buckinghamshire Railway museum in Quainton in 1999, the Oxford Swing Bridge is now the only piece of this important connection between Oxford and the Great Exhibition to remain in situ.

Considering it as one of only two scheduled Swing Bridges in England, the last significant hand-operated main-line rail Swing Bridge in existence in Britain, and given its association with Robert Stephenson the historical value of this structure cannot be disputed. However, this dilapidated structure has a much wider role to play than merely the evidence directly connected to its physical fabric. A role that will only be



Rotating Span and Windlass. Credit: KT Bruce.



LMS locomotive 8106 reversing into 'Shiple' Siding, over the Swing Bridge in May 1942. Credit: R H G Simpson.



Oxford Rewley Road Swing Bridge, as it stands today. Credit: Oxford Preservation Trust.

realised if it is restored in-situ. The Swing Bridge has a direct connection to the changing transportation history of Oxford and its surrounds. Transportation developments in the 18th century, with the construction of the Oxford Canal in 1790 and the coming of the railway, had a significant impact on the size and structure of Oxford as a city. These improvements to the transportation system saw Oxford's population grow from under 12,000 in 1801 to over 49,000 by 1901 (Bond 2010, 106) and had a direct impact on the urban landscape of the City. The Swing Bridge is able to provide a visual aid in the story of these changes and relates directly to the people whose lives it affected.

From a social perspective the bridge tells the story of those individuals that constructed it and were employed to physically turn it, as well as their families who may have worked on the railways, lived in railway owned properties or used the lines for both commercial and leisure activities. The stories of these individuals are woven into the very fabric of the structure and these collective memories create a social value that cannot be maintained if the bridge is removed from its original position or left to decay beyond recognition. But its redundant remains are also significant for their ability to provide shape and understanding to our ever changing world. The bridge is not only the last remaining hand-operated railway bridge in the country, but it also provides a much needed visual reminder of the path that this, now absent, railway line once took. Today, the area of Rewley Road is a densely packed residential area, but only a few decades ago it was an area bustling with railway and related industrial activity, a history that has almost entirely disappeared. The importance of the Swing Bridge as the final tangible link to this part of Oxford's past must not be forgotten.

The opportunity to restore the Swing Bridge came about due to plans by Chiltern Railways for 'Project Evergreen 3', proposing to construct a new railway between Bicester and Oxford. When plans emerged in 2010 the Trust argued that Chiltern Railways' plans for a new and enlarged bridge structure on the modern railway line, which runs alongside this historic structure, could have a detrimental impact on the setting and integrity of the Swing Bridge. Understanding the importance of upgrading the modern railway line, but with the fate of the Swing Bridge at the forefront of their argument, successful agreement was reached with

Chiltern Railways that will see the company support plans for the restoration project both financially and in kind.

The Trust acknowledges that in order to accomplish the task of bringing this redundant industrial structure back to life it must fully examine the variety and significance of the values attached to it and use this information to provide a framework for its preservation and interpretation. The Trust is keen for this restoration project to focus on more than just the physical restoration of the bridge itself, but also to incorporate a wider remit of public engagement and education. The Trust has, with the help of volunteers, been keeping the site of the Swing Bridge clear for some years, in an attempt to minimise further deterioration, and this volunteer involvement will continue into the main restoration project.



Volunteers clearing the Swing Bridge Site in 2011. Credit: Oxford Preservation Trust.

The inclusion of volunteer assistance within the project will be extremely important and, of course, interesting to those individuals that have a keen interest in railways, engineering, heritage and history, but what about everyone else? A series of lectures and forums that investigate the social and local implications of the Railway and the Oxford Rewley Road Swing Bridge are planned. This will encourage a wider understanding of the impact and values associated with the bridge, ranging from the historical importance of the structure itself, to the stories of the individuals whose lives were shaped by the events of this turbulent and exciting period in Oxford's history, and a better understanding of the growth of transportation and industry in the City. Working with local experts, the project will bring the structure alive for those who may not be interested in the nuts and bolts of its historic fabric, but instead can relate to the stories it has to tell of the people connected with it and the impact it had on the development of Oxford.

This approach aims to balance the lack of viable economic benefit that this structure can offer with a well understood set of heritage values. After restoration the Bridge will continue to be used for educational purposes, both by the Trust and the wider community and, if successful, will transform this otherwise misunderstood and currently aesthetically unappealing structure into something that is properly appreciated at both a local and national level.

Jacqui Martinez—Oxford Preservation Trust

References:

RPS Planning Transport and Environment (2003), *Former LNWR Swing Bridge, Oxford – Feasibility Study*.
GW Conservation (2011), *L&NWR Railway Swing Bridge Oxford - Condition Survey & Repair Proposals*.
Bond, J (2010), Towns 1700-1900: Nodality, Growth and Decay in K. Tiller & G. Darkes (eds) *An Historical Atlas of Oxfordshire*, *Oxfordshire Record Society*, Vol. 67, p 106.

Locating, assessing and conserving Second World War structures in the New Forest

Whilst the New Forest area is well-known for its wildlife and heritage landscape, few people realise the important role that the New Forest played in World War II. Its strategic location on the south coast meant that the New Forest was crucial in a range of operations and was home to a wide range of World War II installations. Whilst some of these are still visible today, many have been hidden by soil and vegetation or lost during land management activities.

The current archaeological records provide details of only a small proportion of the actual sites and artefacts that are present in the Forest. Pilot studies using LiDAR (Light Detection and Ranging) initially carried out on 34 square km of the forest (<http://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/index.cfm?articleid=100631>) and then extended to 374 square km on the Crown Land, managed by the Forestry Commission and funded through a higher level Stewardship Scheme, have demonstrated that this remote surveying technique has the potential for uncovering large numbers of World War 2 sites. Coupling this with standard procedures for 'National Mapping' using aerial photographs from the 1920s and in particular those of the Luftwaffe and RAF from the 1940s provides a really significant evidence base from which verification on the ground can take place.

The New Forest National Park has now been awarded £550,000 from the Heritage Lottery Fund towards a £750,000 Second World War project that will involve the acquisition of the remaining LiDAR data for the rest of the National Park and adjacent areas (outside the 'Crown Land'). National Mapping of 400 square km will take place to English Heritage standards for those areas of the National Park where this work has not already been undertaken. All of this will be brought together in a desk based assessment, to be disseminated and to inform the County HER and to be available through the National Monuments Records.

A major objective of the project is to identify the Second World War sites, so that they can be assessed using standard criteria, largely along the lines of those used for the Monument Protection Programme. Their rarity, significance, vulnerability, and their conservation needs will be assessed; whether features are actively eroding or decaying. Their management context will be identified so that any threats or conservation issues they face are described and understood and programmes of protection and conservation can be undertaken.

This work will also be informed by the use of



Laser Scanning Longbotton target shelter. Credit: Laura Basell NFNPA in conjunction/collaboration with University of Southampton Palaeoenvironmental Laboratory.

untapped information, historical research of war diaries in the

National Archives and through the oral history element of the project. The memories of those who were here in the New Forest in any way, whether they be evacuees, local residents, or military personnel; either from this country or from abroad will be invaluable. Those involved in the war period are now reaching their 80s and 90s and so it is critical to capture these memories during the next few years, so that otherwise unrecorded sites, not identified through the desk based assessment, national mapping programme and LiDAR that they know about can where ever possible be located on the ground.

The combination of using all the available sources of information and data should provide the most comprehensive archive of war time information about the New Forest and fill the significant gap in data that was not filled by the *Defence of Britain Project*. Pilot studies of the conservation needs of some of the Second World War structures on the Crown Land have already been undertaken by the New Forest National Park funded by the New Forest Higher Level Stewardship Scheme for managing the 'Open Forest'. This has involved obtaining structural engineers reports and repair method statements.



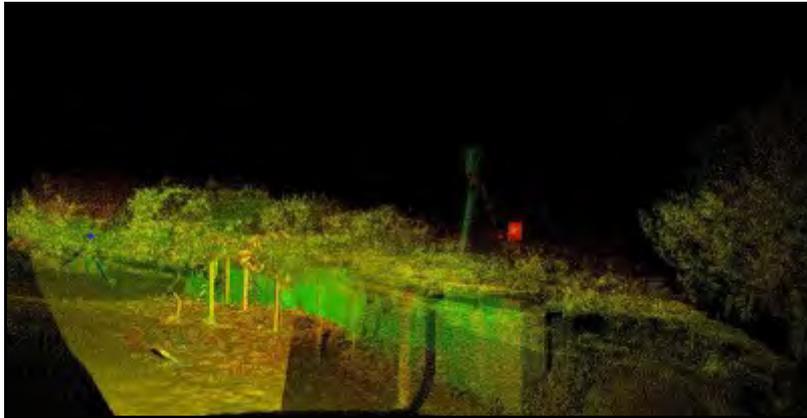
Longbottom observers hut. Credit: Mark Stephenson, NFNPA in conjunction/collaboration with University of Southampton

It is now clear that some structures can be conserved relatively easily at no great cost. A good example of this is the repair of the Longbottom observers Hut originally built for observing target practice in the First World War and reused in the Second World War. The repairs will simply require the replacement of missing bricks from the turned brick arch, some repairs to internal brickwork and some minor repointing all in a weak hydraulic lime (see illustration).



Longbottom target shelter.

Credit: Laura Basell. NFNPA in conjunction/collaboration with University of Southampton Palaeoenvironmental Laboratory.



Laser Scan Longbottom target shelter and observers hut in background in red. Credit: Laura Basell NFNPA in conjunction/collaboration with University of Southampton Palaeo-environmental Laboratory.

At the other end of the conservation spectrum, also part of the target range on the same site at Longbottom, the remains of the shelter for the operators of the target is in a poor condition. This has now been identified as not economically and physically possible to be conserved and repaired. The roof of the structure was constructed involving a thin layer of concrete bedded on corrugated iron and reinforced with old iron bedsteads and other substandard materials. The roof was then covered with soil and vegetation. (see attached illustration). To retain the structure intact would require the roofs complete re-build and thus the creation of a replica of the original which is not good conservation practice. Because of its position on the open forest it is now considered a dangerous structure that is not easily left to decay in to the open landscape. As a consequence this has been three dimensionally recorded (see illustration) to provide the most comprehensive record possible prior to the removal of the roof.

Book Reviews

For future editions of the Newsletter, the BAG Committee is keen to hear from people who would be interested in providing reviews of books which would then appear in print. We regularly receive requests for book reviews, and have one or two outstanding already since starting the group up again. If you are interested please get in touch with us at our email address or the IfA postal address. If you could please provide a bit of background information about yourself and your areas of expertise it would be very useful in selecting the best candidates for material to be reviewed by. We look forward to hearing from you!

Review of 'Ancoats: Cradle of Industrialisation' by

Michael E. Rose with Keith Falconer and Julian Holder.

English Heritage, Swindon.

As with all the books in English Heritage's 'popular' format 'Informed Conservation' series, this is beautifully produced with excellent and frequent photographs creating a visual treat. The text flows well and chronicles the development of Ancoats from green fields dominated by Ancoats Hall, to the pioneering industrial suburb with its iconic cotton mills, canals and densely packed workers' housing. But there was lots of other industry here along with commercial endeavour, with engineering works, a large scale glass industry, domestic scale workshops, and warehousing getting a mention. Ancoats was home to many thousands of people in the 19th and 20th centuries and the book portrays the character of the population and the facilities at their disposal, such as schools, a swimming bath, churches, and pubs.

Focusing on the Ancoats Conservation area, the book is particularly interested in telling the story of recent regeneration to arrest decades of decline, and it does this very well. It was painful to see, in the last decades of the 20th century, gap sites appearing in the Conservation Area as empty buildings were vandalised or set on fire and demolished. To bring the area back from this slow but remorseless death by a thousand cuts has been a remarkable achievement by heritage agencies, grant giving bodies, the City Council, specialists in architecture and history, and of course local people with a passion for preserving their neighbourhood. A number of key architectural buildings have been successfully and sympathetically converted for residential or office use and several more have been made secure for future occupation. Many gap sites have new buildings, often with bold architectural statements.

The book touches on the very important archaeology that has been carried out on workers' housing, particularly the very poorest houses such as back-to-backs which no longer exist in Manchester. The example of excavation that is highlighted is the extensive excavation undertaken by the University of Manchester Archaeology Unit (UMAU) at Loom Street. It is disappointing therefore to see the one photograph, from the many pieces of archaeological investigation that have been undertaken, given the wrong caption. Figure 40 is actually of the excavation by Oxford Archaeology North of George Leigh Street and not Loom Street. Indeed more recognition of the rich archaeological resource of the area would

have been welcome, not just in terms of workers' housing but of spectacular archaeological remains revealed at the Percival Vickers glass works site, Soho Iron Works, and the numerous investigations of textile mills and their power systems (engine beds, flues, chimneys and boiler houses). Consultation with the Historic Environment Record held by Greater Manchester Archaeological Unit might have enhanced this aspect of the publication. The role of GMAU in using the planning system to secure the archaeological excavations and historic buildings surveys would have been worth a mention. Ian Miller and Chris Wild's *AG Murray and the Cotton Mills of Ancoats* and Mike Nevell's *Manchester: the Hidden History* give excellent accounts of the wealth of information on the industrial period in Manchester that can be derived from archaeology.

The end chapter of the book is quite positive about the future and the success of the regeneration of the area. Yet it is sobering to note that two of the four organisations sponsoring the book, and represented by logos on the back cover, no longer exist (Heritage Works and Northwest Regional Development Agency). UMAU has closed down and GMAU is also to suffer this fate. The worthy aspiration of Manchester becoming a World Heritage Site has faltered. Furthermore, the apartment market that drove much of the new development and successful conversions of historic buildings has nose-dived in the economic recession. The grade 2 listed Ancoats Hospital, an iconic and rare survival of a historic building between the Rochdale and Ashton Canals, was due to be refurbished for residential use through enabling development. But key grant money for this part of Urban Splash's ambitious New Islington scheme has not materialised leaving the future very uncertain for this building.

So much good work has been achieved in Ancoats to protect key buildings and protect the character of the area. This book gives an excellent account of this and one can only hope that the economy will recover enough to allow completion of the vision for the area's regeneration.

Norman Redhead

County Archaeologist

Events

Institute for Archaeology Conference

18 –20 April 2012 [IfA Annual Conference and Training Event](#). Theme: Working in Partnership.

(Remember: the BAG AGM will be held at lunchtime on Thursday. Please come along!)

Other

27 September 2012: [CCRI Rural Policy Conference—Adapting Rural Policy for a Sustainable Future](#)

The Buildings Archaeology Group is also planning a number of possible events of its own, and will notify you of these in due course.

Correspondence

Please feel free to write to us concerning any issues or ideas regarding the archaeology of buildings, the conservation of the built environment or any other relevant matter. Our postal and email addresses are:

Buildings Archaeology Group
Institute for Archaeologists
SHES
Whiteknights
University of Reading
PO Box 227
Reading
RG6 6AB

groups@archaeologists.net



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The next issue—Summer 2012

The next issue of the BAG Newsletter will be the Summer 2012 issue. This issue will have Industrial Buildings and Heritage as a theme for its contents in view of the recent findings by English Heritage regarding our Industrial Heritage at Risk: <http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/caring/heritage-at-risk/industrial-heritage-at-risk/>. If you would like to contribute a feature, some news, or a relevant book review, you would be very welcome, so please send them to the IfA at the address above. The deadline for submissions will be 13 May 2012.