

The Chairman's Report

In the last issue of *Camertonia*, my predecessor as Chair, Henry Lowe, was writing at the start of the pandemic when there was great uncertainty about what this would mean for all of us. Some of us were wondering what this would mean for BACAS itself. It was clear all our activities would cease, at least for a time, and would be difficult to hold whenever the lockdown eased. Would our members continue to be members without any lectures, excursions, or fieldwork?

We had a lecture on 12 March 2020, but on 16 March the PM announced it was time to stop all non-essential contact, and on 17 March the committee decided to suspend all activities. Our AGM the previous month turned out to be our last live one for over 2 years until April 2022, though we did hold one on Zoom in November 2021.



Just before the pandemic was about to take off, BACAS had decided to become a Charitable Incorporated Organisation. The change went through smoothly and we are now in a position where we can function more like a business, whereby BACAS can take on contracts and the trustees no longer have unlimited liability.

There were a small number of good things to come out of the lockdown. In partnership with Bristol Museums, and two local archaeological societies, Bristol and Avon, and Bristol and Gloucestershire, we set up a series of free online lectures, called Archaeology Online. Bristol Museums provided the platform subscription that enabled us to reach large numbers of people from around the world, and the three societies shared speaker costs. The first lecture, Cat Jarman on the Great Viking Army, was a sellout and had viewers from North America, Europe and Australia. The first 5 lectures reached 1496 people in 20 countries. We realised we were on to something. In 2022, Archaeology Online was a principal reason for Bristol Museums winning a CBA Archaeological Achievement Award.

The committee switched to meeting on Zoom. The interaction may not have been as good, but the meetings were shorter and there was a lot less travelling!

Geophysics was the first activity to restart, with limited numbers, and wiping down of equipment between each person. Gradually, excursions and excavations resumed, and then we finally got live lectures back at BRLSI in December 2021.

My concern that membership would dwindle turned out to be unfounded. The opposite happened – it has grown! The society's finances are also looking healthy. We continue to support the Bathscape project (supported by the National Lottery Heritage Fund) and we are grateful to them for the provision of new geophysics equipment and computers. This issue of *Camertonia* contains reports on a number of projects carried out during the first two years of the pandemic. As we learn to live with Covid, we now need to consider how we grow the society's activities.

John Richards
Chairman

Clive Peacock Memorial Awards

Clive was a very active member of BACAS and the Committee decided to grant, in his memory, an annual award to the nominated member who is considered to have made the most important contribution to the Society during the previous year.

The Clive Peacock Award for 2021...

Henry Lowe made the presentation at the February 2021 Special General Meeting on Zoom: He said "This year's winner not only managed to squeeze in a successful project in collaboration with the National Trust but also represented the society in the establishment of the online lecture series. The winner is ... **Tim Lunt**. As it was on Zoom, Henry continued "I'm sorry I can't be there to hand the prize to Tim in person but I'm reliably informed he now has his own copy of the History of Britain in Maps."



Figure 1
A rather fuzzypicture captured live on screen, of a happy Tim Lunt holding his new prize copy of The History of Britain in Maps, by Philip Parker.

The Clive Peacock Award for 2022...

Henry Lowe made the presentation at the April 2022 Annual General Meeting: "This evening it gives me great pleasure to make the Clive Peacock Award to **Fiona Medland**. Actually, I think Fiona was standing in a trench armed with a shovel when we first met at the Durley Hill site. Perhaps you remember her featuring in the national media when she found possibly the oldest mosaic in the Roman Baths during the Archway Project.

"Fiona is currently leader of the Paul's Wood project of geophysics and excavation. She has helped develop the technique used for finding vaults under church floors. She has led excursions to Somerset churches, is a member of the Lectures and Excursions sub-committee, and now the new Honorary Secretary."



Figure 2
Fiona had been unable to attend the AGM so she received her award, a copy of The World of Stonehenge by Duncan Garrow and Neil Wilkin, from our new chairman John Richards at a later committee meeting.