



Mapping the town's past



Revealing archaeology: the Thresher map of 1727, with (inset) a modern aerial photograph of part of Winsley; in both images, the church is indicated by the red circle

Lottery funding could help to fund an ambitious project to survey and map Bradford on Avon.

When the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) launched its programme 'All Our Stories', in support of the BBC series *The Great British Story – A People's History*, we applied for grant aid of £10,000 to fund an archaeological project.

The background is the discovery of the Roman villa at St Laurence School in 1999 and the lesser known discovery in 1969 of the buried remains of an Iron Age hillfort at Budbury. These two sites, spanning 700BC to around AD400, stand on high ground overlooking the town. Aerial photographs reveal that the territory farmed by these early communities spread west across the limestone plateau and down the valley sides towards the River Avon.

The ancient field system within Inwood near Farleigh Wick represents a well-preserved part of this ancient landscape and our project seeks to map further evidence, partly by a search of

aerial photographs, partly by commissioning a Lidar (light detection and ranging) survey. This airborne survey technique will map traces of ancient features in the arable land, as well as revealing well-preserved entities in wooded areas, detected by fieldwork but very difficult to survey. The valley sides, where obscured by woodland, also contain the remains of extensive quarrying, believed in part to date from the Roman period. These features should also be revealed by Lidar.

Airborne Lidar measures the height of the ground surface and other features in large areas of landscape, providing a highly detailed and accurate model of the land surface. This enables archaeologists to recognise and record features which are difficult to map. Lidar operates by using a pulsed laser beam which is scanned from side to side as the aircraft flies over the survey area, measuring 20,000 to 100,000 points per second.

In addition, we have two intriguing sources. The first is the large collection of aerial photographs held by the National Monuments Record in Swindon. This includes many

sorties carried out by the RAF between 1942 and 1948, recording the landscape of the UK before it was affected by post-war development and changes in farming practice. In some cases, archaeology that has subsequently been destroyed shows up clearly.

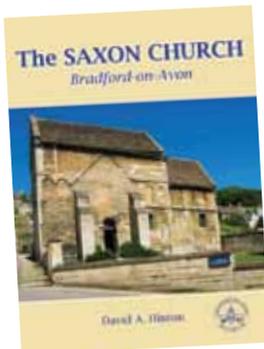
The other source is a survey of the manor of Winsley dating from 1727 and known as the Thresher map. The extract shown above, centred on Winsley village, includes several thick black lines south of the village which we know from fieldwork to be a still surviving part of a prehistoric or Roman field-system. Comparison with the aerial view reveals the problem: a part of the system can be seen in pasture but mostly these ancient features are hidden under tree cover. For reference, the red circle is the location of the church.

If we get the grant aid we will need help from volunteers, so please let me know if you are interested and I will keep you informed of progress.

Roy Canham

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Booklets on sale



The museum publications group has produced a number of new booklets over the past few months – the most recent being David Hinton's guide to the Saxon church (pictured). Thanks to sponsorship secured by Ivor Slocombe, the booklet retails at £2.50. In addition,

The Lost Pubs of Bradford on Avon, by Roger Clark, *Abbey Mill*, by David Gazard, and *Bradford on Avon Printers and Town Directories*, by Roger Jones, as well as Ivor and Roger's booklet on the Christopher Pharmacy, are now all on sale in the museum, TIC and Ex Libris. In addition, a Town Trail map, based on the Preservation Trust's green wall plaques and priced at 20p, has been published in conjunction with the Trust. Visitors have already been spotted walking around Bradford consulting their trail maps with keen interest.

Professor David Hinton, author of our new booklet on the Saxon Church, will give a talk on that subject on Thursday 22 November, at the United Church, St Margaret's Street. The event starts at 7.30pm. Tickets – £3 members, £5 non-members – will be available at the museum, TIC and Ex Libris from 1 November.

● A talk on three centuries of education in Bradford on Avon will take place early in the new year: look out for further details nearer the time.

Group's Jubilee outing



The museum's embroidery group took the Bradford Millennium Embroidery to Salisbury on 1 May for the Queen's Wiltshire Jubilee visit. We shared our marquee with the Wiltshire Music Centre and the Made in Bradford group. Although the Queen didn't visit our display, we all had a good view of Her Majesty and Prince Philip as they made their way around the exhibits in the Cathedral Close. There was much general interest in our tent and we sold 30 copies of the Embroidery booklet. As a group, we've become expert in moving the embroidery over the last ten years!

Gill Winfield

Album tells Lads' story



Some of the images from the Church Lads' Brigade album; you can see more photos on the museum website



One of the museum's recent acquisitions is an Edwardian photo album; curator Roger Clark turns the pages to reveal the history of Bradford's Church Lads' Brigade

The museum has received an album of photographs relating to the Bradford Church Lads' Brigade between 1907 and 1917.

This nationwide militaristic organisation for boys, set up in 1891, was closely allied to the Church of England.

The Bradford Brigade was connected to Christ Church and the Vicar appears in army uniform in some photos. Its drill hall was until recently part of the New Road Garage.

Most photographs are of the camps that the Bradford Lads attended with other units from the south-west, held in Dawlish, Burnham-

on-Sea and West Bay. They feature parades, marching and especially kit inspections in which Bradford seems to have excelled. All the boys, down to the youngest, were armed with a rifle.

Another speciality of the Bradford Brigade was the new technology of wireless telegraphy, with very cumbersome equipment.

Inevitably, some of the older boys went straight into the First World War, a few not to return.

A page about the Bradford Lads' Brigade, including some of the photographs, is on the website at <http://www.bradfordonavonmuseum.co.uk/archives/5134>

When Bradford was a tropical paradise

In the middle of the Jurassic period of Earth history, about 170 million years ago (very roughly!) this area was a clear warm shallow sea, whose bed was shifting underwater

shoals of white calcareous grains and



broken shells, with occasional low, short-lived islands.

For the equivalent today, picture Bradford as the Bahamas – with dinosaurs but no palm trees: they were far in the future.

The shoals and drifts of shell material eventually became the limestone rocks that now form our landscape and our houses.

One band in the series of rocks is largely made up of the remains of a coral reef. The Bradford Coral Bed contains small masses of fossilised colonial corals and the shells of other creatures. Some of the fossils, like the one pictured here, have weathered out from the edge of the plateau of Budbury and have now found their way into the museum's collection.

Garden excavation reaches rock bottom

From the chairman

Our 'summer weather' has not been good for holidaymakers this year. The Tourist Information Centre saw a decline in visitor numbers earlier this year, compared with 2011, and the museum's attendance numbers may well reflect this.

However, the Olympic Games did enjoy remarkably good weather and produced a wonderful 'golden bonus' for the town: a gold medal in the men's 200m kayak event, a golden post box and a display of lots of congratulatory banners – 2012 will be remembered as Ed McKeever's year! We love to record special events in our town's history and Ed's achievement will certainly be a lasting one. We send him our sincere congratulations.

Many readers may know that Trowbridge Museum opened in the Shires within a few months of ours in 1990. The museum is housed in a spacious cloth mill, attracts 25,000 visitors a year, including 3,000 schoolchildren, opens for 30.5 hours a week and has a full-time paid curator, together with other helpers.

The museum is now planning to expand into Courtfield House, formerly Roundstone Prep School, and become part of the 'Trowbridge Cultural Quarter' incorporating the park, new civic centre, cinema and town hall. A reconstructed chemist's shop is planned, based on Aplin's shop. Further details can be seen on the following links:

<http://trowbridgemuseum.co.uk/trowbridge-museum-and-art-gallery-bigger-and-better/>
http://www.thisiswiltshire.co.uk/news/9867091.Cultural_quarter_plan_for_Trowbridge/

At a time when we are considering a campus project for Bradford and the long-term future of our museum, can we learn anything from Trowbridge?

There are some very significant differences between the two museums, including available space, funding support and facilities to attract large numbers of visitors. Trowbridge appears to be investing heavily in its cultural heritage – but what investment is Bradford making? Could we be in danger of taking our rich heritage for granted? To what extent can volunteer-run organisations deliver the products and services that our 21st century residents and visitors require or expect?

These questions are important and require a wider debate than just within the museum. I invite you to think about them and talk about them to other people, including those who are involved in running other organisations in Bradford or representing the interests of those who live and work in the town.

Mervyn Harris
Chairman
01225 863440



The fully excavated trench at Budbury (main picture), with work in progress earlier this summer (above) and some of the pottery, bone and other fragments found on site (right)



A summer of excavation in a Bradford back garden has revealed a medieval cobbled lane, or holloway, overlaying the line of an Iron Age hillfort ditch.

The first dig in the garden of Jane and Peter Mann's medieval house at Budbury was carried out in 2009, when tree planting revealed a cobbled area and prompted a four-week excavation of part of the garden. A second, small excavation was carried out last autumn. This summer, Jane and a team of willing helpers excavated a third, two-metre-square area, with the aim of revealing the position of the outer ditch of Budbury hillfort.

The main photo above is of the latest trench with medieval cobbled areas at bottom left and top left of the picture. The orange-coloured soil area, or sondage, in the middle of the photo, shows the side of the Iron Age hillfort ditch as it slopes downwards and away beneath the soil wall of the trench. The original Iron Age ditch was cut into the bedrock – which must have been very hard work.

Several excavation trenches were dug in 1969, when the new houses at Budbury were built. Jane explained: "Following these excavations, the hillfort ditches were speculated to run in certain directions around the Budbury area. We can now plot the outer ditch as running slightly differently from the speculation, which was our aim. We find it probably runs straight



through our garden, with the outer edges at the boundaries of our garden walls."

The dig also revealed a medieval cobbled area above the ditch, which could have been laid over the top of the ditch to stabilise it. It was then probably used as a trackway. Lower down, in the deepest part of the sondage, a number of larger stones were found. They were worn and rounded, indicating that they had been walked on – natural stone has sharp, unworn edges – and were laid horizontally. This layer is thought to be some sort of track, laid even earlier, possibly pre-Norman Conquest.

Jane added: "We started the dig on 15 July, and had to contend with quite a lot of wet weather over the summer. But it became quite addictive: you feel as though you've been in another world. We also have 11 seed trays of pottery, bone, clay pipe etc – all of which has to be washed and labelled!"

The excavation took place with support from Roy Canham, former county archaeologist and museum trustee, and fellow excavators Sophie Hawke, Becky Clarke and Sue Walton.

Museum voice at area board

As plans progress for a community 'campus' in Bradford on Avon, we are delighted that Debbie Stupples, from Bradford TIC, will be representing the museum at meetings of the Shadow Community Operations Board. This group includes representatives from Wiltshire Council, Bradford on Avon Town Council, the local area board, Bradford United FC,

Bradford on Avon Community Area Network, as well as Debbie, representing the TIC, the museum and the Preservation Trust.

The aim is to create campuses that deliver more for local communities, and at this stage the priority is to define community needs, rather than determine the location of the services provided.

Bath visitors welcomed

Volunteers from the Museum of Bath at Work (MOBAW) visited Bradford on Avon at the beginning of July. Pam and Ivor Slocombe gave the party a guided tour of the town followed by a talk in the Museum, with tea and cakes afterwards in the meeting room. Our own stewards were also invited to the tea party and a good time was had by all.



MOBAW director Stuart Burroughs (pictured above with Ivor) thanked us for an enjoyable afternoon and has invited our stewards for a return visit in the near future. MOBAW also generously made a donation to our museum. Thank you to all those involved, especially Pam and Ivor for ensuring such a successful visit and to Jessica and Georgina Hawke for making and serving the delicious cupcakes and tea.

Sophie Hawke

Keep up with us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/BradfordOnAvonMuseum Do visit the page, 'like' it and share with your Facebook friends!

Who's who

The museum trustees are:

John Banks: 01225 863134

Roy Canham: 01225 866748

Chris Dale (Hon Treasurer):
01225 862198

Mervyn Harris (Hon Chairman):
01225 863440

Sophie Hawke: 01225 863934

Ivor Slocombe: 01225 862525

Gill Winfield: 01225 868179

Kate Turnbull: 01225 866328

Other roles:

Roger Clark (Hon Curator):
01225 865785

Peter Leach (Town Council liaison): 01225 309065

Anne Willis (Hon Secretary):
01225 865865

Joceline Bury
(PR & Newsletter): 01225 867348

Architect's work recorded landmarks



The house at Little Ashley now belonging to museum trustee John Banks

An archive of sketches made by architect and antiquarian J. T. Irvine (1825-1900) includes numerous drawings of old buildings in Bradford on Avon – including a sketch of a house now owned by museum trustee John Banks.

James Thomas Irvine was born in the Shetlands and trained as an architect with George Gilbert Scott from the age of 14. He remained with the firm and worked on the restoration of Wells Cathedral and Bath Abbey. He was an enthusiastic archaeologist and antiquarian, and toured the local area sketching old buildings and monuments.

The archive he created is now held at the Bath Central Library but is owned by the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland whose permission is required to reproduce any of the drawings.

Irvine is particularly remembered in Bradford for his early work on the conservation of the Saxon Church soon after it was 'rediscovered'. He resigned, however, before the work was finished because he disagreed with the decision to demolish the schoolmaster's house on the

south side of the church. Bath Library has a box full of his drawings of the church and the related correspondence, much of which was published in an article by H.M. Taylor in *The Archaeological Journal*.

Apart from the Saxon Church, there are many other sketches of Bradford's landmarks: The Shambles, the Clerk's House, Holy Trinity Church and churchyard monuments, the Tithe Barn, Barton Farm with the granary and barn, the Bridge and lock-up. Of special interest is the sketch of an unnamed house, recently identified as that belonging to John Banks at Little Ashley.

In all, apart from the Saxon Church, there are over fifty sketches of buildings and monuments covering quite a wide range of villages in west Wiltshire. Their value lies especially in the early date when they were done (many in the 1860s) and in their scrupulous accuracy.

I would be pleased to make the full list available to anyone who might be interested.

Ivor Slocombe

Keeping up with website changes

The website changes frequently with the addition of new pages and editing of previous ones when new pictures and information become available. There has also been some rearrangement recently, in order to make it easier to find your way around our growing site.

Stephanie Laslett, who produced the wonderful shop histories displayed around Bradford during the Jubilee celebrations, is contributing more pictures and information to the free magazine *A Local Life*: don't forget to check it out.

A visitor commented recently that our site is much better than those of many very large museums. It is perhaps

one way of compensating for having a very small museum!

It was only to be expected that a large number of the enquiries that come into the museum's website are from people seeking information about their family history. Without a massive archive and a huge database, we can only supply a small amount of information and point the enquirer in useful directions. A large number of names are scattered about the website of course. They can be found by using the 'search' facility which is included on every page.

Recently added pages include:
Bradford in the 1960s: <http://www.bradfordonavonmuseum.co.uk/archives/5152>
The Wadman Trophy: <http://www.bradfordonavonmuseum.co.uk/archives/5125>
Explore Wingfield: <http://www.bradfordonavonmuseum.co.uk/archives/5107>

Roger Clark

Bradford on Avon Museum needs you: call Anne Willis on 01225 865856 if you would like to become a member of the Museum Society – or pick up a form in the library or museum