



MINUTES OF THE ASAHRG WINTER MEETING, 16.2.24, 10.15 am-12.45pm

Hybrid at the Wiltshire Museum, Devizes,
with thanks as usual to them for hosting.

Present in person: David Dawson (Chairing), Amanda Chadburn (Secretary), Colin Shell (Representative), Nick Baxter, Ros Cleal, Phil Harding, Gill Swanton, Mike Allen, Martyn Barber.

Present online: Briony Clifton, Melanie Pomeroy-Kellinger, Jonathan Last, Heather Sebire, Matt Leivers (Chair), David Nash, Brian Edwards, Steve Marshall, Jennifer Wexler, David Field, Richard Osgood, Neil Adams (Chair), Katy Whitaker, Susan Greaney.

1. David Dawson welcomed everyone, including Jennifer Wexler who was attending her first meeting.
2. Apologies – Clive Ruggles, Emma Sayer, Claire Selman, Kerry Donaldson, David Sabin, Christina Tsoraki, Nick Snashall, Ben Chan.
3. The minutes of the previous meeting 13.10.23 were agreed.
4. Mattering arising – the new ASAHRG logo had been agreed and is now in use.

The Secretary reported that she had not had any response from the editor of WANHMagazine regarding the Kate Fielden obituary deadlines and that she would chase. **ACTION AC.**

Colin Shell reported that there had been a number of eulogies from Kate Fielden's memorial service which will eventually go into the archives in Wiltshire Museum.

5. Elections and Membership – With regard to *ex officio* members, the Secretary reported she had not had a further response from the Inspector of Ancient Monuments at Historic England, Mel Barge. She had heard nothing from Adrian Green (Salisbury Museum) nor from Cat Jarman (British Archaeology). Becky Banbury in the World Heritage Site Coordination Unit was in position on a temporary basis so will not be joining us as an *ex officio* member.

The Secretary said she would be circulating the updated membership list for 2024 as soon as possible. **ACTION AC.**

6. PRESENTATION 1: Local and exotic sources of sarsen debitage at Stonehenge – David Nash

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2352409X24000348?via%3Dihub>

David talked about his recent research into sarsen debitage at Stonehenge.

[Redacted]

7. Update on latest Governance Proposals for the SAWHS (Stonehenge and Avebury WHS) – David Dawson.

David talked about proposals to update the governance structure of the SAWHS. He and Colin had attended relevant meetings on this subject on our behalf as ASAHRG currently sits on the decision-making groups.

A new charity is proposed to implement the World Heritage Site management plan and would sit under an independent Chair. There may be an interim governance structure to get from where we are now to this new charity.

The question for ASAHRG is do we wish to sit on the new decision-making group of the new charity? For example, do we wish to have ASAHRG sitting as a Trustee? This was put to a vote and the majority of members agreed this, no-one disagreed, and the others (a minority) abstained.

8. Representative's report – Colin Shell

Colin had also attended the same meetings as David Dawson, and added few extra pieces of information. He reminded us that ASAHRG contributes £millions to the World Heritage Site via research grants for excavations and investigations, amongst other things.

He added that it is planned that the charity will be in place within the next two years, but that a new management plan won't be sorted out for another two years (the last one dates to 2015).

He reported that the formal State of Conservation report to UNESCO on Stonehenge had been sent by the DCMS and Historic England to the World Heritage Centre for discussion at the next WH Committee meeting this summer. No local partners have seen the contents of it except for the DCMS and Historic England.

Wiltshire Council has recently reviewed the position of the Independent Chair.

9. (Item 9 was a break).

10. Evora WHS. Update on links – Gill Swanton

Gill had pre-circulated a paper and asked everybody to contact her if there was anything they were interested in or needed to know. **ACTION: ALL.**

11. PRESENTATION 2: Excavations at Boles Barrow, SPTA – Richard Osgood

Richard reported on his project relating to new investigations of Boles Barrow in the Salisbury Plain Training Area.

Members may remember that the Boles Barrow bluestone is on display in Salisbury Museum, and it was also in the British Museum exhibition.

It was first dug in 1801 by William Cunnington, the first ever use of a trowel on an archaeological excavation. In 1864, John Thurnham dug the barrow and found a number of skulls with “combat injuries”. In 1885-6, Cunnington Jnr excavated. David Dawson has found a scrapbook in the museum which relates to those excavations.

The blue stone from Boles Barrow went to Heytesbury House and then to Salisbury Museum, donated by Siegfried Sassoon. Original photographs match with the stone in the Salisbury museum. The best write up on this is by Mike Pitts in his book Henge World, (because there is a question mark as to whether it is the same stone which was excavated by Cunnington).

Richard talked about his excavations in March 2023 which was to investigate the badger prevention mesh over the monument.

[Redacted]

12. Any Members Updates

WHSCU provided a written update (pre-circulated).

Amanda Chadburn talked about her book with Clive Ruggles which will be published in May.

Heather Sebire set out that there would be a lunar research project at Stonehenge in 2024. Clive Ruggles, Fabio Silva and Amanda Chadburn were involved. This related to events around the lunar standstill, and Chimney Rock in the United States is also taking part.

Jennifer Wexler added that there would be some events relating to the Lunar stand still in the autumn, a temporary exhibition, and public facing lectures.

Dave Field flagged his article and Mick Markham about ground axes in WANHM.

Melanie Pomeroy-Kellinger talked about the sad death of our founding member, Mark Corney and also of Bernard Phillips, both of whom had passed away in 2023. Mark's was a sudden death, and he was in the process of undertaking many projects in Wiltshire, for example the writing up of Roman material from Bradford on Avon villa excavated in 2001 and by Roy Canham in 1976. Pete Cox and Julian Richards are pulling together an archive of Mark's material and finds. Bernard Phillips had completed all his write-ups before he passed away.

There was a reminder to make arrangements if you are an independent archaeologist and to provide passwords for archivists and others.

13. Museum Updates – Avebury, Devizes, Salisbury Museums.

David Dawson talked about the proposal for the Devizes Assizes. RIBA 2 plans had been submitted and will be made public next month. There will be fund raising in a couple of years time.

The Alexander Keiller Museum collections are likely to be inaccessible for a while because of flooding. Nothing has been damaged but access is a problem. If you have an urgent need, please talk to Ros and she will try and facilitate matters. The collections may need to go off site, at least temporarily; English Heritage are closely involved. The flooding is the worst ever seen - luckily the lower shelves in the store were never used as a precaution against flooding and this has proved to be very wise.

14. Research Opportunities – None noted.

15. Opportunities for Outreach and Dissemination of Research

Mike Allen talked about Cerne Abbas Giant book which is coming out in September - and there will be a conference in Dorset and Devizes in November on hill figures.

Archaeology in Wiltshire conference will be on the 17th of March.

There is a new book Revisiting Grooved Ware:

<https://www.oxbowbooks.com/979888570326/revisiting-grooved-ware/>

16. Review of Monitoring - field work by Wessex archaeologists and their volunteers is nearly complete on the new Condition Survey.

17. Agree what to Report from this meeting to WHS Steering Committee/ Partnership Panels - it was agreed that the two presentations and ASAHRG's views on the proposed charity and their place in the new governance should be forwarded upwards.

18. AOB

Martyn Barber will leave Historic England at the end of March. In future, others will have to update ASAHRG on any air photographic developments in HE.

19. Neil Adam will chair the next meeting.

20. It was agreed the next meeting would be 3rd May 2024 in Devizes Museum, hybrid.

21. The meeting ended on time.

[Some parts of these minutes are redacted as they discuss as yet unpublished research]