



Bolsterstone Archaeology and Heritage Group

ANNUAL REPORT

October 2020 – September 2021

What a strange year we have gone through – but we have learnt so many new skills! We haven't been able to meet now since the spring of 2020, but we have got together in smaller groups in different ways. We are so pleased to be back together again this autumn.

We weren't able to get together for our 2020 AGM in October but members were sent the annual report, financial statement and list of committee members, and asked to respond with their approval or any queries – four members confirmed they were satisfied with the content of the documents.

Membership in 2020 was 25, though we know there is a significant interest in archaeology and heritage in the area which we have been trying to grow through the year, and for which we received a grant from the Sheffield Lakeland Landscape Partnership. Through having zoom talks and more advertising, we have no less than 16 new members so our total membership is now 41. This is really fantastic growth and we need to make sure we keep the interest going.

The Committee has managed to meet every 2 months throughout 2021 despite the challenges. We have met both on zoom and socially distanced in a garden which worked well when the weather was on our side. We have a full committee, but that doesn't mean you cannot stand if you would like to join us – we can have elections! There are also lots of small ways to help and share the load, such as making refreshments at meetings or selling raffle tickets...please consider if and how you could help.

To update on the grants we have received over the last year - the Bridge Community Shop grant to study flints from Broomhead and Midhope Moors was finalised with a talk by Tim Cockrell on 20 January 2021. With the funds from Stocksbridge Town Council to design and print publicity leaflets and bookmarks, we still need to give bookmarks to schools to hand out to students when the timing is right. Our grant from the Sheffield Lakeland Landscape Partnership was to cover some of our overheads for 2021 on room hire, speakers' expenses and insurance, with the strap-line 'Growing a Community Group'. Through this we hoped to increase our membership, which has been very successful (see later). Finally we have received a significant sum from Sheffield Town Trust, to enable Tim Cockrell to do some further fieldwork and bring together the wide range of evidence he now has for the prehistoric landscape around Sheffield – this is ongoing. We are very grateful to all these organisations for their support.

The talks we arranged from January to June 2021 were all on zoom and worked so well because they were facilitated by member Andy Heath - he allowed us to share his zoom contract, he set up each session in a very professional way, and he has a special interest in ensuring these events work for everyone, particularly by helping those who were new to zoom, or who need subtitles or transcripts. While people

were waiting for the talks to start, a slideshow of BAHG activity was played – with a few reminiscences. All the talks were recorded and have been uploaded to YouTube. Andy also devised a feedback form, which enabled us to collect data on people's opinions, where they heard about the talk, and so on. We now have a Facebook site (thanks to Dorothy Whittaker and Daphne Mather) with over 480 followers, where the talks have been advertised, alongside email and Look Local.

We had a wide range of talks, kicking off in January by Tim Cockrell talking about his work on Broomhead Moor which generated lots of interest and cautions about dangers on the moors such as ordnance. The moors also featured in the February talk by Anna Badcock, who described how the PDNPA deals with wildfires and their impact on archaeology. In March we had two presenters from York University, Toby Pillatt and Harold Mytum, both experts in recording and digitising gravestones, and their talk has led us to start planning a project to record the styles and materials of the Victorian gravestones in Bolsterstone churchyard.

Maria Smith gave us a fascinating overview in April of the saving and renovation of the once derelict Dronfield Hall Barn, now a successful exhibition and social space, and a great example of how this can be done. In May we had a talk from Bob Johnston from the University of Sheffield on his research on Skomer Island in Wales – an island covered in hut circles and field systems which are riddled with rabbit burrows – it was an example of what can be found out against the odds. In June we heard from Robert Davies about the work going on at the North Lees estate near Hathersage using NLHF money; there is a lot of archaeology on the estate from cairns and hut circles to a Romano-British settlement site, which will be resurveyed and geophysied. The July talk was scheduled to be about the dissolution of the monasteries by Sam Bromage, but unfortunately he was not well and had to cancel.

A couple of the talks attracted an incredible 70 plus listeners, the rest around 40, and feedback was mostly very positive and helpful.

As well as the talks, we usually arrange some excursions and walks. Ruth Morgan led a guided walk around



Bolsterstone on 29 July in the Festival of Archaeology, outlining the excavations and history of buildings in the village, and out along Heads Lane, talking about some of the characters and places in the valleys on either side. A group of 12 people went on a walk with Tim Cockrell on 14 August along the Dukes Road on Broomhead Moor, looking at circular features, cupmarked stones and boundary markers.

The committee commissioned Tim Cockrell to lead a walkover survey of Emlin Moor (across the valley from Duke's Road) both to record any archaeology and to train members, and this was due to be done in February-March 2021. He has permission from the Fitzwilliam estate and Natural England. But of course Covid regulations meant that it had to be postponed to early 2022.



Tim has been working through the year recording cupmarked stones on Spout House and Bent Hills, with help from BAHG members – in all weathers – some of us were caught in a blizzard in January!

He has also now completed a large number of archaeological reports describing his analysis of flint assemblages from Broomhead, Midhope and Wigtwizzle – all are available on the BAHG website at <https://bolsterstoneheritage.weebly.com/reports.html>. His analysis of the flint finds from Midhope Moors (thanks to a grant from the Bridge Community Shop) has been

published in volume 30 of the Transactions of the Hunter Archaeological Society.



Ruth Morgan has been involved in a study of Bitholmes Wood organised by the SLLP, but last winter's survey work was unable to go ahead. She is also recording boundary markers on the moors.

You may be interested to know that South Yorkshire Archaeology Service has government funding for a one year contract to establish the procedure and start the development of a Local Heritage List for South Yorkshire. Everyone needs to think about buildings or sites which are not listed or scheduled, and which are important to the community, which could be put forward. Being on

the list will give them an element of protection.

We are an affiliate organisation with the CBA (Council for British Archaeology) and receive an excellent Archaeology magazine every two months which is available for members to read – look out for copies at meetings, along with other books which are available to borrow. We also have a representative on Bolsterstone Community Forum and keep them informed of our activities.

By joining BAHG you not only have the opportunity to hear some fascinating talks and visit interesting places, but you are also kept informed of events by email and can borrow a range of books and magazines we have collected. Do tell us if there are topics you would like to hear more about or places we could visit. A feedback form is available on zoom and at in-person meetings and we'd like to hear your thoughts. We have a full programme of talks planned for the coming year but we always welcome new ideas - do get more involved if you want to.