

6th November 2019 07.30pm at the McDonald Institute of Archaeology, Downing Street, University of Cambridge

Cambridge Archaeology Field Group (CAFG) - Fortieth year Celebrations.

Re: Chairman's speech and welcome

CAFG welcome you here and thank you for coming to celebrate our fortieth year.

CAFG is now in its forty-first Year and I have to thank so many people who have helped and supported us over the years, many are here tonight. If when I'm finished I have missed you out please accept my apology.

First, I will start with the present. We are here in the McDonald with thanks to the Director – Cyprian Broodbank in allowing us to use these facilities and for making me an affiliated Scholar of the Department in order that I can run CAFG. This appointment was instigated by Charly French upon my retirement from the University and who I thank most sincerely. Also to Jody Joy for allowing us to use the display cabinet in the Museum and James Walpole for organising the VW prize applications from last year's second year students.

Another archaeological unit from which we have received excellent support is Oxford Archaeology East and Jigsaw at Bar Hill. Paul Spoerry, the Director, is also our President and Bar Hill is where we meet on Wednesday evenings, except on the first Wednesday of the month during term for organised talks, in the McDonald Institute Seminar Room at the University of Cambridge. One person at Bar Hill who has our particular thanks is Carole Fletcher, who looked after us every Wednesday before we were allowed a key, and continues to help us with our queries.

We are also grateful over many years to the Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC), who supported us for many years before Bar Hill, allowing us to use the storage facilities in the house on Castle Hill and later the new CCC Archaeological Unit at Fulbourn.

There have been many changes over the years but we have always had a very strong committee with long standing members, e.g. Susan May secretary has been with us for 30+ years and is exceptional at the job and keeps us all informed. Mike Coles has been with the Group virtually from the start, has been a mainstay especially as Field Officer before handing over to Terry Dymott who has carried the job with the same enthusiasm. Terry was the backbone for the Heritage Lottery grant for our work at Wimpole (see publication on www.cafg.net). This took up much of his time and he dedicated his life to it but the rewards were well worth all the hard work and effort. I thank the National Trust at Wimpole and Angus Wainwright for allowing us to work there over many years in order to build an overview picture of the landscape history and archaeology. To Dudley for his expertise as our treasurer to ensure that we keep fluid in finance. For IT - I thank Peter for our website: he is very valuable in the age of technology. 40yrs ago we just had sheets of typed paper for our results, in a metal filing cabinet. How things have changed in the age of Computing. Then there is me - I have been in right from the start, forming the group with others in 1978 and I have been chair for 38yrs. I would not be able to chair the Group without those just mentioned, especially now that I live in Hampshire. I suppose I'm really an armchair archaeologist - now I live away. The other great support comes from new committee members Bill and June who provide accommodation when I'm in Cambridge; without this support the Group's future would be difficult to maintain. We are very grateful for the many speakers who have given their time freely over the years, they are too numerous to mention as individuals.

A Power-Point pictorial potted history of CAFG over 40yrs will be running throughout the evening in the seminar room and I'm most grateful to Mike Coles for putting this together.

One person we must celebrate as a stalwart of the group is the late John Alexander who became and was our president for many years. John was a great inspiration to the Group and very much in favour of local amateur groups. He was a pioneer in local evening classes and courses in archaeology and he also used amateurs on the Roman site at Castle Hill. He always showed great enthusiasm, encouragement and direction, his input kept the Group focused and on track and he is very much missed by CAFG.

Most of our work has been in south west Cambridgeshire - Mike Coles will give an overview on our 40yrs of fieldwork. Terry Dymott will give an overview of our Heritage Lottery grant for our long term work at Wimpole Hall –'Wimpole: silent voices and deserted homes'.

When we first started out as an amateur outreach group which involved the public, mainly as John Alexander was very keen on local volunteers in archaeology at the time of rescue archaeology, we decided that it would be good to have a qualification. In the 1980s a course was run by the Extramural Board of the University on landscape history and field archaeology at Impington Village College, tutored by David Trump. In the 3rd year, students had to produce a dissertation on their own subject - this course eventually was the start of what is available today at ICE Madingley Hall.

The Valerie Whittaker Bursary Prize: Valerie was a founder member of the Group in 1978 and did a great deal of work on plotting field finds and maps. Unfortunately, she died fairly young 14 yrs ago, but left a legacy to CAFG, to award each year a prize for archaeology, aiming mainly at persons developing an interest in archaeology, or help in any form to encourage young people in archaeology. We worked with the 6th form colleges, but unfortunately now archaeology is no longer taught and our source of applicants dried up. This year we changed our approach by going to the University of Cambridge Archaeology Department and asked if they would recommend for the prize up to five students from year two of three year (BA Honours) in Archaeology. Their research projects were sent to us, marked and one student selected for the VW prize, and I will be presenting the prize this evening to Leigha Crothall the winner for 2019. I thank John Waterhouse for organising the prize together with James Walpole the Undergraduate Administrator at the Department of Archaeology at the University of Cambridge.

Finally, without the support of so many over 41 years we would not be active, still going and be here today to celebrate. I thank all those present and many others most sincerely for their dedicated support to the Group, which members very much appreciate. Looking towards the future, a meeting in 2019 discussed 'the way forward' to address the issues that we are getting older, especially the committee, and have at present no younger members coming into the Group; also Cambridge has a very mobile population. The combination of these will affect our future survival if not resolved. But I sincerely hope and believe that with the support we now receive from various sources (as mentioned above), we can continue to go forward and survive at least into the near future.

Barrie Fuller

Chair CAFG

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