



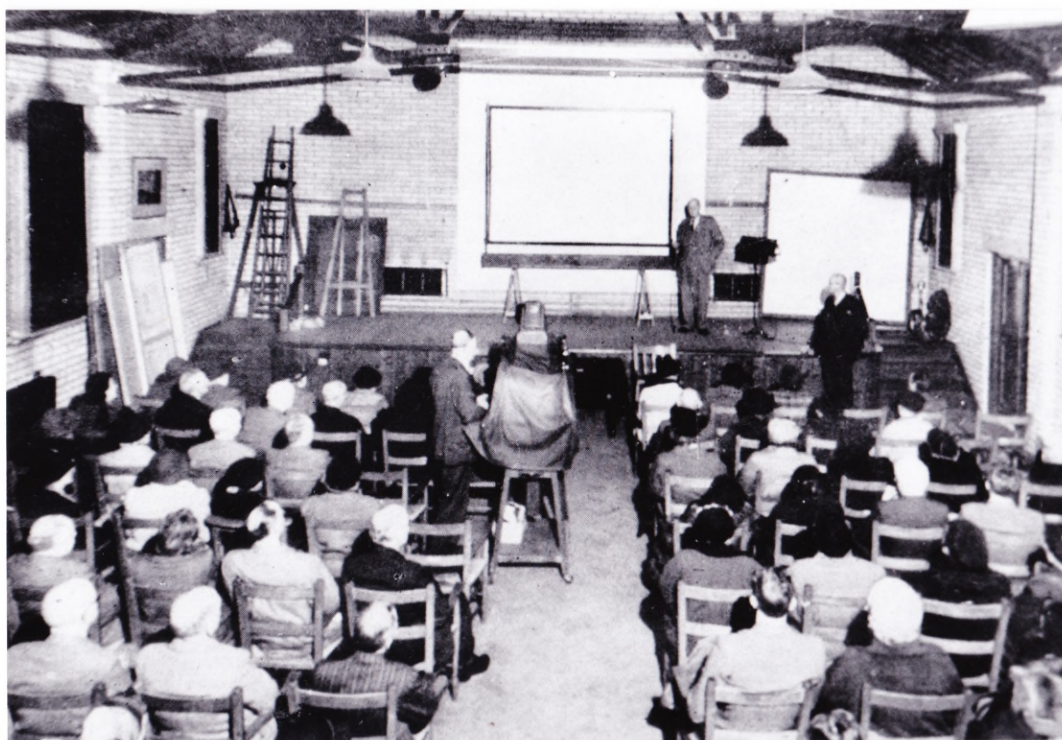
BOURNEMOUTH NATURAL SCIENCE SOCIETY & MUSEUM



1 GUINEA

WINTER 1920 - 2020

CELEBRATING 100 YEARS 'AT HOME'



Dear Members, As you know, we will be celebrating 100 years at 39 Christchurch Road next year. We will be arranging a series of special lectures throughout the year. However, we would also like you to join us at a special event on **Saturday 8th February 2020**. Each of our sections will be exhibiting a particular highlight of their collection or a chosen theme, looking back over the last 100 years and also forward to future developments. **A buffet lunch will be available 12.30-2pm** to which we will invite other guests who have supported us. **After 2pm members of the public** may share in our centenary celebrations. Do mark it in your diary and do let us know if you have other ideas of how we can celebrate this event or images which might be of interest to other members. *Grenham Ireland*

The Past - 39 Christchurch Road

The BNSS building was built in 1880 for John Cassels and his wife with their five children as their family home. John had taken a long lease of a large plot of land extending to about an acre fronting Christchurch Road from the Meyrick Estate. The house was built in the Italianate style, which had become popular after the building of Osborne House by Queen Victoria & Prince Albert although not common in Bournemouth.



Notice the vegetation

There were four principal rooms, domestic offices and a WC on the ground floor, five principal and two secondary bedrooms on the first floor, plus a bathroom equipped with hot water, and a further WC. In the basement were the domestic rooms and three staff bedrooms. A two-storey wing containing an invalid-suite appears to have been added to the side of the house late in the build, and possibly as an afterthought. It was equipped with modern conveniences, including mains drainage, mains water and possibly mains gas, but there was no mains electricity available at this time. The house was called Bassendean, possibly a reference to John Cassels' Scottish family roots, being the name of a manor house on the Scottish borders.

We know that John Cassels was born around 1821 in Durham and that as an adult he spent time in Bombay as a merchant. The first record of him living in Bournemouth is in the late 1860s. He soon became an important person in the rapidly expanding town and was involved with the 'Board of Improvement Commissioners' (a pre-Council body which had the role of developing the town and its facilities). The town, at the time the house was completed in 1880, was much smaller than now, with a population of only about 16,000 people.

Sadly the family only lived in the house for a few months before moving to the Channel Islands. John died in 1884 and his obituary stated he had a long-term illness, so it is assumed his poor health was the reason for the move. The house was then let to a series of tenants before being sold to the Fiennes family (possibly related to Ralph Fiennes etc) around 1887. By the 1911 census the house had changed hands again, and was owned by a Mrs Oldfield.

The Bournemouth Natural Science Society was formed in 1903, and had rented various premises, before occupying some rooms in The Municipal College at The Lansdowne (now the Bournemouth and Poole College), just prior to the start of World War 1. In 1919 the College needed the rooms for their own use, and gave the BNSS Notice to Quit.

This prompted an urgent search for new premises, ultimately resulting in the purchase of the long lease on 39 Christchurch Road in late 1919, followed soon after by a purchase of the freehold from the Meyrick Estate. Some minor works were felt necessary to adapt the house to use by the Society, including removing the internal



wall between the two main reception rooms to form a large members' room, where lectures could be held. These were completed during the winter of 1919-20, and the building was formally opened to the membership on 7th February 1920.

By the late 1920s the membership had grown to over 600 and the need for a larger room to hold lectures became paramount. The outcome was the decision to build a new lecture hall in the space at the back of the wing and to the side of the existing building, with access through one of the original but smaller reception rooms. At the same time the central hall was enlarged by removing the old servants' staircase and incorporating the area by removing the separating walls. This was completed in 1929 and is essentially the building you see today.

During World War 2 the lecture hall was used by the ARP (Air Raid Precautions) organisation as a hub for the Air Raid Wardens, as well an Auxiliary Centre for people bombed out of their houses.

In 1960, a 48-foot-wide strip of the BNSS garden on the western side was sold off to enable the redevelopment of the adjoining site for flats. Although regrettable it did enable the society to undertake mounting repairs.

In 1976 the building was listed as being of historical and architectural interest.

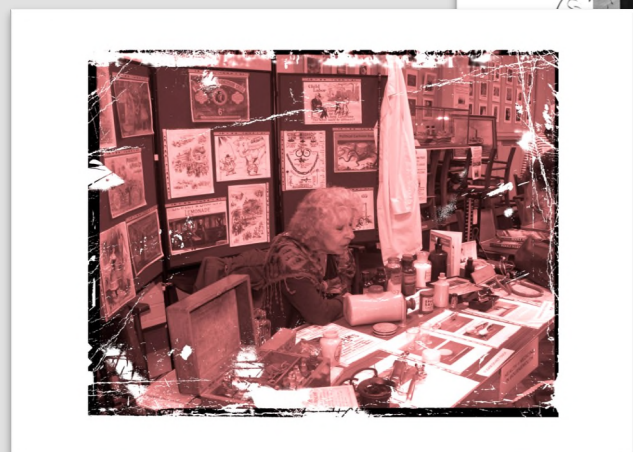
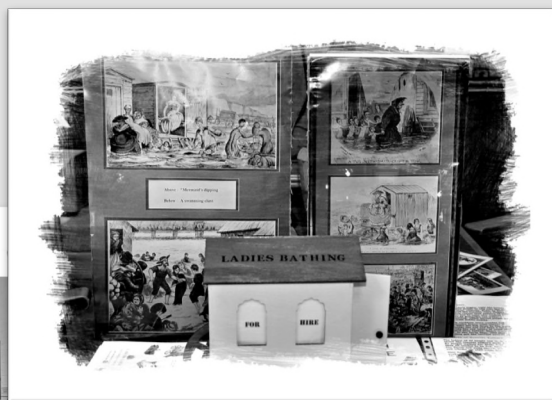
On the 8th February 2020 we will be celebrating our centenary in the building and a special event will take place. See details elsewhere in this newsletter.

Colin Lord Dec 2019

The BNSS presented a special **'Victorian Weekend'**, giving a picture of life for the average family just over 100 years ago, rather apposite as we approach our anniversary. A tremendous collection of artefacts was on show – music boxes, trams, old sepia photographs featuring Bournemouth, dolls houses, toys galore, steam engines, bathing machines and so on.



Our visitors seemed to love the experience, particularly the children, who we noted, often stayed for many hours, playing some of the games, many of which we recall from our youth. No social media or iPads on show here. Thank you to Sue for organising this fabulous collection, and the many volunteers who helped to run this event and for bringing these many beautiful objects together.



YE Young Explorers The Future

The young explorers programme has always been very important to me. I was one of the first explorers and I loved it! Since January I have been volunteering and helping Steve Limburn to continue inspiring young children to be passionate about science.

The young explorers program runs all year and covers 12 different topics varying from pond-dipping to physics for beginners. Always finishes with the Christmas party. The variety of topics keeps even the youngest of exploring interested and having a great time every month.

The session begins at 10 and you are divided into two groups; one group is upstairs, another is downstairs (in the lecture hall). After about an hour there is a 20-minute break where there is a free juice for children and an opportunity to try Jacqui's amazing cakes and dinosaur biscuits! After the break you swap groups and learn even more about the chosen topic in a new, fresh concept. Everyone is always so disappointed to leave at 12:30 at the end of the session.



There is one person who we could not do without, and that is Steve Limburn. After years of working at museums including the Natural History Museum plus teaching in schools, Steve has chosen Young Explorers. YE are so lucky to have Steve guiding the future generations of scientists and archaeologists. He always gives so much to the programme when teaching, and also behind-the-scenes planning upcoming sessions. Thank you Steve for everything.

What an amazing year it has been. In September, we had John Smith, our local Roman, come in to talk about Roman soldiers, and to correct Hollywood's mistakes! Steve brought in his extensive military uniforms which lots of the Explorers got to try on! Many of the Explorers came to the BNSS's Victorian Open Weekend which was a great success and they love all the crafts as well as the exhibitions! We have just had the fascinating topic of 'Birds and Flight'. Liberty Centre came in and flew four different birds of prey including a Golden Eagle. Steve also did his well loved cockroach flying demonstration which causes fear among the parents and excitement for the children!

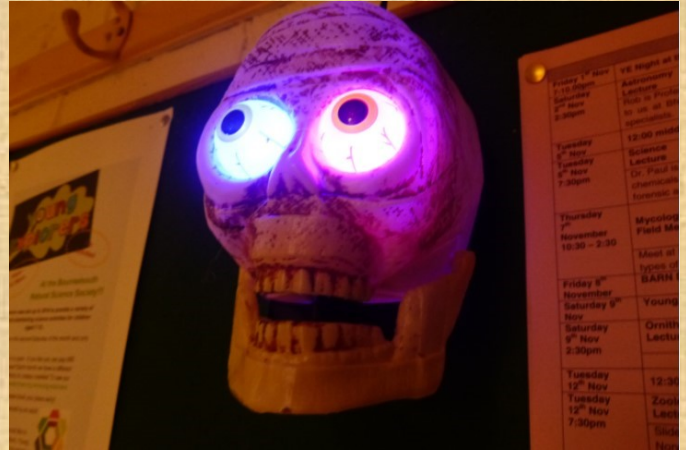
Looking ahead, we will be concluding our year with the Christmas party where we will play games and quizzes. Merry Christmas, Happy Chanukah, Happy Kwanzaa and Happy New Year!

From Sophia Whelan Aged 13

(Do look out for Sophia at this year's BBC Royal Institute Christmas lectures, which she will be attending - and hopefully volunteering. The subject is Maths.)

Young Explorers Night at the Museum

We love our museum but it can be a bit spooky at times, even during the day, so imagine it at night in the dark! The perfect venue for our Halloween-themed evening. Children and adults dressed up and came armed with torches for an evening of frights and fun. We made bats and skeletons and studied skulls. Bryan talked about our mummy and Steve told some make-you-jump stories and tested parents' Halloween history knowledge! We had haunting sound effects and ghoulish food (thanks Jacqui for outdoing yourself yet again!) The children ended the night by searching the museum from top to bottom in the dark looking for treats. What a great night! We hope to repeat the event next year. We had loads of positive feedback such as this message



Anna Cuccia

Osmington Mill September 2019



Gerry Duggan

THE PRESENT - TAHEMAA TRANSFORMED

Work continues on the 'Tahemaa Transformed' project to clean and conserve Tahemaa's coffin. The top side of the coffin is now nearly completely cleaned, exposing the beautiful colours of the paintwork underneath. The cleaning process has also revealed new images not seen for many decades. While working on an area of dense, black dirt (most likely caused by soot from old gas lamps and fireplaces) we discovered an unusual face. Was he a priest? An embalmer? An artist? We don't yet know, but the image is



unique and unlike any other human interpretations seen on the coffin. Ian was there to catch the action on camera as it unfolded! Another new image discovered lines on the top her head. The area, also initially completely opaque with dirt, revealed what we believe to be a scarab beetle holding the sun, a symbol of resurrection to the Ancient Egyptians.

Tahemaa continues to reveal her secrets and we continue to conserve and research her as part of the 'Tahemaa Transformed' project. We are still fundraising for the purchase of her new display case so please make a donation at www.tahemaa.com. The new display case will be made from conservation-grade materials, have UV filtered and toughened glass and contain passive environmental controls to keep Tahemaa in a safe and controlled environment allowing her to continue to amaze us for many decades to come.

Bethany Palumbo

Lantern Update

The lantern has now been glazed and painted so with the exception of a few minor items, like giving the glass a good clean, is essentially complete.

The new larger capacity drain pipe that runs through the roof to connect the rainwater gutter around the lantern to the main downpipe has been installed. It still needs to be connected to the rainwater gutter but is otherwise ready to go.



The ongoing issue is the availability of suitable ridge tiles. Even before work started not all the ridge tiles on the roof were original and despite all efforts more have been lost during the re-roof process. It seems likely the original

ridge tiles came from a local tile works and were probably made in small numbers because an extensive search of reclamation sites around the country has come up with nothing. Our architect is currently in discussion with the Conservation Officer on an acceptable solution.

With the scaffold removed from the first floor landing the space is once again bathed in natural light and we look forward to the day when the scaffold lid, still in place above the lantern, is finally removed.

Colin Lord



THE PAST SOME BNSS FIELD TRIPS



Glastonbury, July 1926



THE FUTURE:

BNSS Development Day



On the last Saturday in October we held a Development Day with an external facilitator Judy Niner and spent time reflecting on financial sustainability and fundraising. Judy has significant experience in helping both big and small charities with these challenges. This activity formed part of our our Heritage Lottery Fund application project. In the morning the Trustees and others closely involved with fundraising attended and in the afternoon other Members joined in a wider discussion.

While our Society continues to function successfully there is a pressing need to renovate our building's facilities and invest in key resources such as a new audio visual system. We are always at risk with our building that unforeseen events can impact our finances adversely.

We spent time reviewing our financial sustainability and our income streams. Judy challenged us to consider how we can improve our resilience and use our assets more effectively. As an example we discussed whether our hall could be utilised more, perhaps for a wedding venue, albeit this would need significant refurbishment and would change our existing schedule of use.

Time was spent looking at the significant inventory of fundraising ideas we have considered in the past and Judy shared her experience on where these have worked and where they have not. Legacies are of course an important source of income and we discussed how to ensure these are used appropriately for specific outcomes.

Applications to trusts and foundations were also covered with some guidance on the time needed and the targeting of applications. These can be used for specific projects but do not address our day-to-day running and maintenance costs.

We grappled with what pace of change is best for the society, can we afford to continue to organically evolve or do we need to plumb for a more rapid transition which will not suit everybody. This in turn leads to us consider our core strategy and vision of what the Society will look like in 20 years' time.

Further sessions to develop our fundraising strategy and plan will be held and if you want to be involved please talk to a Trustee. While these are not necessarily easy issues to grapple with, ensuring we operate on a firm financial footing is fundamental to all our other activities.

Malcolm Hadley



As preparations begin to celebrate our 100 years 'At Home', we are rightfully celebrating our centenary. Surely there are few places, anywhere, with so much in such a small space, where every science, every nature subject is covered, plus history, astronomy, Egyptology, archeology, valuable documents, fossils, geology, together with eggs, moths, butterflies, birds, - anything and everything that arouses curiosity.



We have field trips, 80 talks a year, annual coach trip, special events, open weekends, museum, guided tours for visitors, a building requiring constant attention, a full-time caretaker, gardens, looking after 270 members, newsletter, and all of this on a budget of about £50,000 per annum. To put this into perspective, the Dorset County Museum in Dorchester is about to spend over sixteen million pounds.



The Centenary will be fulsome, but all the committees agree - yes, the BNSS will be looking back but will also be looking to the future. The Trustees are fully aware of the many diverse opinions of where we should go and they are of course open to suggestions. Talks for the forthcoming years will often reflect this, the past and the future, and we will celebrate on **8th February**. Do come along. Maybe there will be a VIP or two.

We talk much about contributions at our Open Weekends and talks, and they bring in about £4,000 a year. Legacies however, have potential for a substantial income, even with just a percentage of an estate, and they can, if desired, be left for a specific purpose and even named after someone. We will return to this subject at a later date.

Do you have any old pictures or features about the BNSS that we could use? Do you have any old pictures of naturalists in the field, or Barton on Sea, or the New Forest? BNSS member Manny Hinge is making what he hopes to be the definitive series of films about the Forest - its geology, history, wildlife, people, anything. If so please send to me.



If at any time you wish to know. Hard copies are keep sending pictures or submitting articles, however short, on any subject you wish, even if salacious or critical. Keep sending to



edit this newsletter, just let us available at the BNSS. Please

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