

Our New Chair – an introduction



Having been elected as Chair of SSARG at the AGM in April, I thought that for the Chair's Bit in the SSARG Newsletter, I would ease my way in with some information about my background. My initial training and employment was in the construction industry as a site engineer/surveyor working on various sites in the East Midlands where I was brought up. This gave me an early interest in looking into holes in the ground, but with only a passing interest in archaeology (it wasn't encouraged in the construction industry in the 60s and was usually dug through or destroyed to prevent any delays), although as part of my studies I did a module in Building History. At the age of 24 I then gave it all up and joined the Royal Navy for the next wonderful 26 years during which, as I travelled, my interest in matters historical grew, especially the way ordinary

people lived their lives - my interests are definitely not in memorising lists of kings and queens and the affairs of state! I retired from the Navy in 1996 but still worked at Yeovilton. I cast around for something to occupy my mind, and eventually found an HND course in Practical Archaeology at Yeovil College which I was allowed to attend on a part-time basis. On day one, I met two celebrated SSARG members, Clare Randall, now our Research Director and also the greatly missed Duncan Black, and became involved shortly afterwards with the South Cadbury Environs Project from which SSARG evolved. When the course moved to Bournemouth University before I could complete it, I looked for another option and was eventually accepted onto the MA in Landscape Archaeology at Bristol University which I completed in 2002. Since then I have been with SSARG from its inception at a meeting in the pub in South Cadbury, as well as having an otherwise normal life in West Chinnock near Crewkerne.

On a different note, many of you will be aware that Doug Gurdzynski, who was the instigator of our work at Tithe Mead, passed away a little while ago. After the shock of his sudden death, his family came to visit us last year during our dig and presented us with Doug's resistivity equipment that he had purchased in order to progress his archaeology. We were touched by this generous gesture, and in his memory have donated £100 to Water Aid, his favourite charity. Unfortunately, the equipment was not complete and despite our and the family's best efforts, we have been unable to locate the specialised cable that links the zimmer frame with the remote probes, without which it cannot operate. To replace the cable will cost about £240 which will be a big hit on our reserves. So I would like to launch an appeal in Doug's memory for funds to go towards the purchase of the cable and thus double our capacity for resistivity surveying. Anyone wishing to contribute can forward donations to me at High Ridge, Higher St, West Chinnock, Somerset TA18 7QA. Cheques preferred, made out to South Somerset Archaeological Research Group, or cash of course can be passed to any of the Committee.

Neil Tinkley
May 2016