

Black Country Society Annual General Meeting 2022

Website report

The Black Country Society website remains a keyway for members of the public and the Society to engage with the work of the BCS and is the first port of call for people interested in the BCS. During the last four years Brian Ridout has completely redesigned and improved the website, which now has a variety of articles, images and resources available to all, including a fully searchable index of past issues of the *Blackcountryman*, an online shop, events pages and much more. Since the last AGM Brian also completed the huge task of scanning and uploading all past issues of the *Blackcountryman* into the Member's Area. Much credit should go to Brian for his hard work.

Brian's sad and unexpected passing highlighted his point in his 2021 AGM report, that more help will be needed with administration of the website in the future which Dr Simon Briercliffe is leading on from the BCS Committee. We are extremely grateful to Professor Chris Baker who stepped in at short notice to take on temporary management of the site, including learning the software from scratch, and to Andrew Homer who has worked as liaison with the committee and in identifying issues which needed a solution. Between them they have identified and fixed a number of glitches, including in the shop section. He has also begun to look at ways to improve the website from the user's point of view. This includes creating a new Black Country Society Twitter account (@SocietyCountry, <http://twitter.com/SocietyCountry>) which is embedded in the homepage for up-to-the-minute news.

There are several priorities for 2022/23 for the BCS website. Firstly, we hope to establish a more permanent solution for the running of the website, which we hope Chris will remain a key part of. Secondly, in conjunction with the subcommittee looking into the future priorities of the Society, we will look at reorganizing the site to reflect their recommendations. Finally, we will be looking at improving the operation of the shop and membership process as they appear online. During this time, any feedback from BCS members about how they use the site will be gratefully received.

The Society is indebted to Chris and Andrew for their hard work in 2022, and to Brian Ridout for his tremendous contribution to the Black Country Society's online presence over many years.

Simon Briercliffe