

Council for British Archaeology

Press Release

For immediate release

Leading TV historians pay tribute to “the world’s oldest archaeologist”



TV historians, Michael Wood and Dan Snow joined the Council for British Archaeology (CBA) and leading lights in the heritage sector at the British Academy last night to pay tribute to Beatrice de Cardi, the first Secretary of the CBA, who celebrates her 100th birthday this year.

Michael Wood, presenting the 34th CBA Beatrice de Cardi Lecture, described her as “**part-Miss Marple and part-Indiana Jones**”, reflecting a career spanning decades of archaeological discovery. She started as secretary to legendary archaeologist, Sir Mortimer Wheeler in the 1930s, moving on to travel across the Far East in the 1940s and 50s until tribal unrest led her to “hop across the border to south-eastern Iran only to be pounced on by the Iranian secret police”. She went on to lead the Council for British Archaeology in the aftermath of the Second World War, “**The bombing of London had alerted everyone to the need for concerted action to bully the government into allowing time for excavations in historic towns.**” An eminent archaeologist in her own right, Beatrice undertook pioneering archaeological fieldwork in areas such as Afghanistan, Beluchistan and the lower Gulf, identifying Indus sites and the remains of civilisations “from the stone age to the oil age”.

Dr Mike Heyworth MBE, Director of the Council for British Archaeology celebrated her contribution to the British Archaeology profession:

“Beatrice was a real inspiration to generations of archaeologists in her role as CBA Secretary for 25 years, putting them in touch with excavations around the country and helping to kickstart their lifelong involvement with archaeology. We set up the lectures in 1974 to honour her contribution and she has attended every one - she’s still an inspiration to us all in archaeology today.”

Photos:

Leading historians Dan Snow and Michael Wood paid tribute to Beatrice de Cardi, “the world’s oldest archaeologist” and first Secretary of the Council for British Archaeology who celebrates her 100th birthday this year.

From left: Dan Snow, Beatrice de Cardi, Michael Wood, Mike Heyworth, CBA Director

Heritage sector leaders came together at the British Academy to pay tribute to Beatrice de Cardi, first Secretary of the Council for British Archaeology and eminent archaeologist, in her 100th year.

From left: Mike Heyworth, Council for British Archaeology; Peter Hinton, Institute for Archaeologists; John Lewis, Society of Antiquaries of London, Peter Wakelin, National Museum of Wales; Stewart Bryant, Association of Local Government Archaeological Officers; Ian Barnes, National Trust; Matthew Slocombe, Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings; Roger Bland, British Museum and Portable Antiquities Scheme.

Beatrice de Cardi, first Secretary of the Council for British Archaeology.

Notes for editors

Beatrice de Cardi

Beatrice de Cardi was Secretary of the Council for British Archaeology from 1949 to 1973. In order to recognise her outstanding contribution to the CBA and to archaeology generally, the Council decided in 1976 to inaugurate a series of lectures, to be called after her. The speakers are given the freedom to discuss their own approach to any aspect of British archaeology. A list of lectures is available on the CBA's website at: <http://new.archaeologyuk.org/events/beatrice-de-cardi-lecture-and-cba-wgm-2014>

The Council for British Archaeology (CBA) www.archaeologyUK.org

For almost 70 years the Council for British Archaeology, as an educational charity, has been promoting archaeology for all and is the leading voice for the public interest in archaeology. Active both in Westminster and with grassroots community groups, the CBA works with the voluntary sector and across archaeology to safeguard the UK's historic environment and make the case to decision makers that archaeology matters.