

Newsletter for BSR Members 2025 | July Edition

Dear friends,

It seems amazing that the weeks and months have flown by to bring us to the July newsletter, and the close of our academic cycle for 2025. It has been a happy year at the BSR, at least from where I sit, with the residence buzzing with all kinds of voices, new and old, and a sense of purpose and momentum as we look ahead and make plans. We are immensely grateful to all our funders and supporters, at every level, who care about this precious institution, its history and its future wellbeing. 2026 will mark the BSR's 125-year anniversary, and we are planning events and outreach across the year to celebrate, and very much hoping to have the chance to see many of you in person too.

I am delighted to have signed a new contract which will keep me in Rome for a few more years, working with this excellent team in this extraordinary institution. I feel privileged to be allowed to be the BSR's custodian for a while longer.

Please join me in celebrating the wonderful work that takes place here in the many contributions below, and thank you as ever for your support.

Warmest wishes,

Abigail



City of Rome students at the Parco degli Acquedotti, 2025, photo by Silvia Calderoni

Excavations at Falerii Novi

Last month saw the fourth season of month-long archaeological excavations of the multi-year project at the Roman town of Falerii Novi, led by the BSR and the universities of London, Harvard and Toronto with the fundamental support of the Soprintendenza Archeologia, Belle Arti e Paesaggio per la Provincia di Viterbo e per L'Etruria Meridionale, the Comune di Fabrica di Roma and the landowner, Sig. Gianluca Mancini.

The team from the BSR and University of London, comprising of staff and professional archaeologists, supported a group of students from the universities of Durham, Kent, London and York. For the third consecutive year we were also delighted to welcome on to the team a summer placement student, an opportunity kindly made possible by the Roman Society. A key part of the research at Falerii Novi is the trench side environmental programme, allowing the large-scale sampling of contexts to recover botanical and faunal remains, which saw the participation of students from Royal Holloway, Nottingham and La Plata, Buenos Aires.



Weekly Student Led Excavation Tour, 2025, photo by Stephen Kay

The 2025 excavations targeted a previously unexplored part of the city, as well as continuing the excavation of the *macellum* (the meat market), a short distance to the west of the forum. The two new trenches opened this summer were located a short distance inside the North Gate, close to the Via Amerina, the *cardo maximus* of the town. Lying immediately to the south of an east-west road, the first trench revealed a previously unknown monumental structure, built in *Opus Quadratum* using the local tuff stone. The deep stratigraphy and early chronological range of the material, including black gloss, suggest an early construction, dating to around the apparent foundation of the city in 241 BC. The structure appeared to have been reused and modified through the following centuries until the area's abandonment in Late Antiquity.

A short distance to the east, on the opposite side of the intersection, the second trench revealed a significant area of production, including waterproof lined vats, wells, cisterns and evidence of smelting. This activity, seemingly dating to the mid-Imperial period, was later continued and expanded through the 4th and 5th centuries AD.



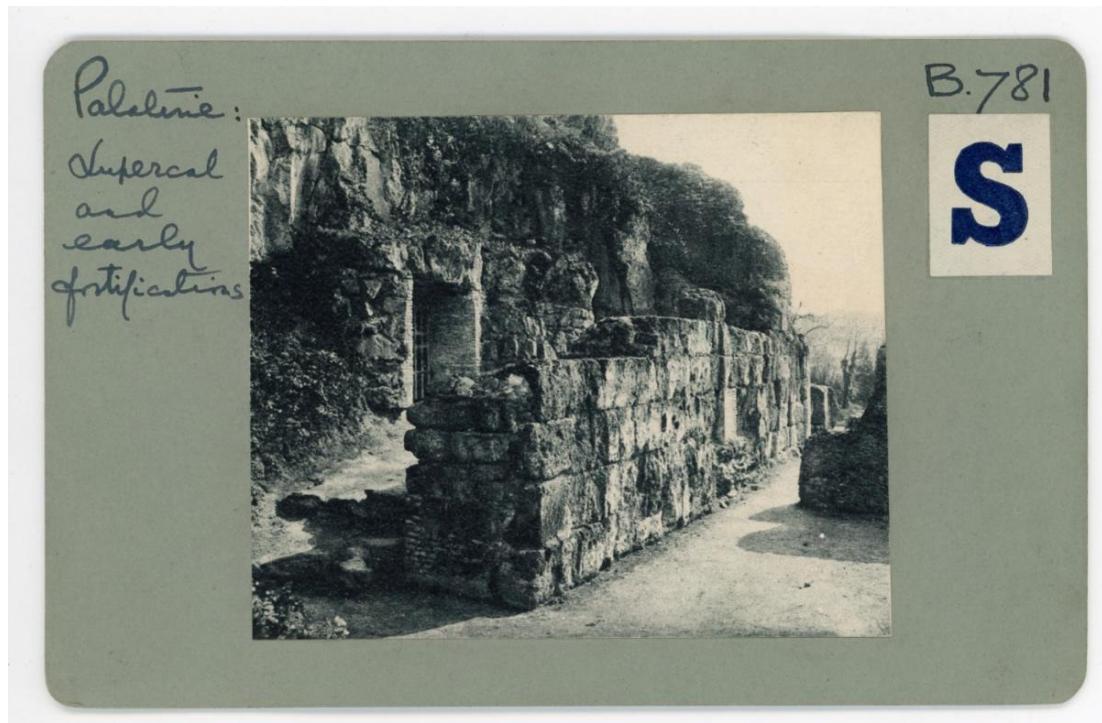
Group photo, 2025, photo by Elena Pomar

Access to and Discoverability of the Research Collections. News and Updates

Two years ago, during spring 2023, we opened the [online catalogue](#) of our archival resources and special collections. Since then, work has been progressing on showcasing hidden treasures and materials from the Research Collections. At the time of writing, in June 2025, our catalogue provides access to 35 collections of archives, photographs, personal papers, artworks and corporate records, as well as to new series and sub-series within specific sections of the larger collections. Principles inherent to archival description teach us that even basic descriptive records about collections in a repository are more beneficial to users than no description at all. We have seen a substantial increase in the use of our collections as a result of these new tools for access.

New additions to the British School at Rome archival resources catalogue include a multi-level description of a selection of lantern slides, index cards, and lecture booklets from the photo library of the [Roman Society Collection](#), which we acquired in the early 2000s. This outstanding collection of teaching materials focused on the ancient Roman world was added to the online catalogue under the curatorial guidance of Zoe Langer, who was appointed on a temporary contract thanks to a generous donation received in 2022. Zoe oversaw the digitisation, cataloguing and publication of a carefully selected group of items on the [BSR Digital Library](#). Another remarkable accession to the catalogue, which complements the Roman

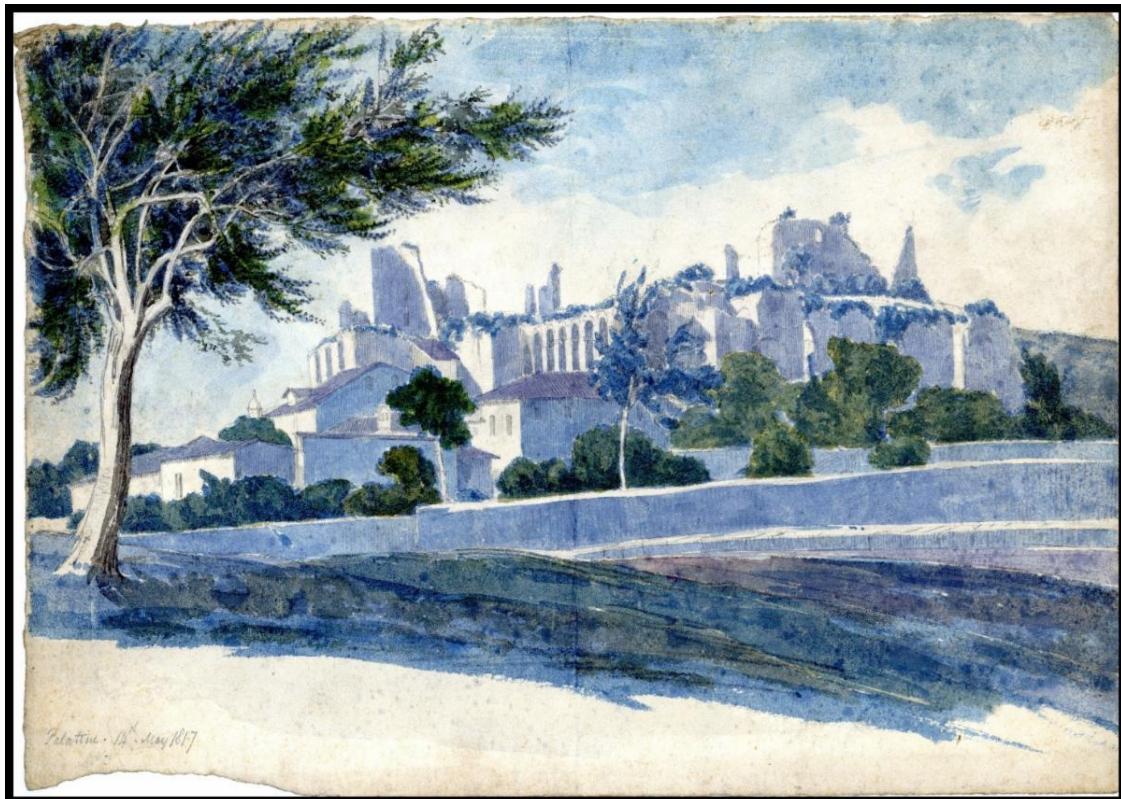
Society *repertoire*, is the British School at Rome Lantern Slide Collection, currently being processed by our dedicated volunteer, Orlando Astuti. Orlando's comprehensive survey of nearly 7,000 slides out of 8,000, which records the titles, authorship, provenance, and context of production for each, will guide users in browsing as yet unexplored items. This collection is supplemented by two typescript and annotated catalogues, forming one of the earliest and most completed finding aids to visual materials assembled at the institutional level. This thorough appraisal enabled the creation of a [collection-level descriptive record](#), which will be expanded further once the assessment is completed.



Index card catalogue from the Roman Society Collection

Manon Rabillard and Ian Dooley, respectively from the École des Chartes in Paris and the Institute of English Studies (School of Advanced Study, University of London), made significant contributions to the unveiling of two other unique collections in the BSR holdings: the [British School at Rome Print Collection](#) and the [Joseph Woods Drawing Collection](#). These artworks, not yet known outside institutional boundaries, are unparalleled acquisitions for research in British Art history and architectural and landscape studies. Throughout its history, the School has accumulated numerous prints executed by Scholars in Printmaking and Engraving during their tenure as award recipients. Over 530 items are currently in our possession. Similarly to the [Rome Scholars in Architecture Series](#), this material is essential to form an understanding the history of the Rome Prize. Together with the scholars' files, Registers, Faculty minutes, and other correspondence from the Administrative Archive, they offer a comprehensive account of British support for creative industries throughout the 20th century.

Thematic collections gifted by passionate individuals demonstrate the breadth of genres represented in the archival collections. [The Roman Forum 20th Century Press Photograph Collection](#) and the Ancient Rome in Film Daybill Poster Collection, donated by Lynette Jensen and Liam Jensen, add valuable strength to an already familiar and well-represented subject in the BSR Research Collections. These collections, however, offer new angles to the interpretation and reading of the same topic through non-conventional materials.



Palatine Hill, 14 May 1817, Joseph Woods Drawing Collection

Another significant addition to the Administrative Archive is the materials relating to the institutional activities carried out during [J. B. Ward-Perkins Directorship](#) from 1945 to 1974. The documents described so far span seven years from 1945 to 1952 and concern the post-war era, including the restitution of German Libraries in Rome, the commencement of British excavations in Libya, and the acquisition of the Air Photograph Collection.

During his placement as part of the Masters in Building History at the University of Cambridge in Autumn 2023, Nils Oudshoorn carried out the description of a group of records within the Series '[Design and construction, 1911-1923](#)' in the Administrative Archive. This documentation reveals key information on the early history of our building, including its design and construction process, which will also be of interest in the field of post-colonial studies.

Some of the archaeological excavation records were re-processed according to a workflow which singles out and describe the phases of the reorganisation, including conservation activities. The projects done so far benefitted from the work of Eugenia Sisto (Warburg Institute, School of Advanced Study, University of London), Mathilde Chabrilangeas and Inès Contact-Garcia, from the Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Sciences de l'Information et des Bibliothèques (Enssib, Lyon), for records relating to excavations carried out in [Gravina](#) and [Narce](#). Acqua Claudia, Ager Faliscus, Acqua Claudia and Ponte di Nona are under assessment though they align with current procedures.



Candlelight, 1921, by Lilian Whitehead (Rome Scholar in Engraving, 1921-1924)

We greatly appreciate contributions from interns and volunteers, which are essential to the work we do to expand our collections and make them accessible. One of the consequences of making archival collections more visible online has been the increase of requests to access them for research purposes. In response to this, in January 2025 we opened a new dedicated Reading Room, providing a space for readers to consult our resources with the assistance of our Library and Archive staff throughout their consultation.

In the future, our goal is to enhance access to the BSR institutional memory by expanding the descriptions in other series and sub-series, particularly those related to Governance records. Following the successful outcome of the [International Air Archaeology Conference](#) hosted at the BSR on the 22nd of May 2025, we plan to provide a more accurate description of the [Bradford/Jones/Trump papers](#) deposited at the BSR in early 2006. Last but not least, we are working on a contribution to [Archives Hub](#), which brings together archival descriptions from the UK's archives.

Alessandra Giovenco, Archivist



Exhibition of archival materials from the BSR Research Collection organised for the International Air Archaeology Conference at the BSR, 22nd of May 2025

Artist Fellows at the BSR: A Season of Creative Exchange and Reflection

Over the past few months, the BSR's artist fellows have been deeply engaged in a wide range of projects, both within the School and in collaboration with some of Rome's most important cultural institutions. Their contributions have not only enriched the city's artistic life but have also laid the groundwork for research that will continue to evolve in the months and years ahead.

As always, this account offers just a glimpse into that vibrant world—but it is a privilege to be able to share it.

In May, we launched our annual final group exhibition, showcasing work by BSR fellows Can Gun, Sophio Medoidze, Cathie Pilkington, and Ash Tower, alongside Rome-based artists Cristina Lavosi and Andrea Mauti. Titled *Cloistered*, the exhibition ran through the end of June and explored the cultural and spatial dynamics often associated with foreign academies in Rome. The BSR, like other such institutions, provides a rich context for artistic research and development, yet it can also engender a sense of retreat. Life in residence can resemble a voluntary withdrawal, echoing monastic traditions, where artists become absorbed in their practice while remaining somewhat distanced from the city's contemporary cultural rhythms.



Cloistered, installation view, 2025, photo by Roberto Apa

As part of the Cloistered project, each artist was paired with a writer (a curator, poet, or academic) who produced a text in response to the work. These reflections, by Fabiola Fiocco, Eloise Fornieles, Matthew Fox, Eleonora Milani, Donatella Saroli, and Samuel Waweru, were published in a booklet available to visitors throughout the show.

Coinciding with the exhibition, our Summer Open Studios on 11 and 12 June marked the start of the summer season, a key moment for fellows to present their research to the Roman public.

Among the highlights was work by Eva Sajovic, the first BSR–UAL Fine Arts Fellow, who presented tapestries from her project *Rise and Fall of a Temple*. The work interrogates the ideological underpinnings of empire, tracing their origins to Ancient Rome and asking what might emerge from their collapse. As 2024–25 BSR Rome Fellow James Drysdale Miller observes, "Her work invites us to question the relationship between temples and weapons, warriors, priests and craftsmen. Footage of the assembly (and collapse) of a cardboard temple on the steps of the British School, disarticulated tapestries of swords and Renaissance leaders, and woollen figures who descend the studio's walls transform quarried stone and hammered iron into softer (less harsh, less durable) materials."



Eva Sajovic, *The Rise and Fall of a temple*, photo by Luana Rigolli

Another compelling contribution came from Ian Law, who created a site-specific installation that responded to the history of his studio. Drawing on archival photographs of sculptors at work in the same space, Law uncovered the original workstation used by resident sculptors at the BSR. This historic feature included a floor drain through which waste from carved stone or wood was discarded, now hidden beneath a modern grating. Through his intervention, Law resurrected a tangible connection to the building's early history and its legacy as a site of making.



Ian Law, *untitled*, photo by Luana Rigolli

Our former fellows continue to be active on the wider Roman stage. One standout example is the participation of Ruaidhri Ryan, 2022 Augusta Scholar, in the third edition of the Festival delle Accademie Straniere, curated by Saverio Verini at MACRO. As part of the festival, BA Post-Doctoral fellows Eloise Fornieles and Alessandra Tafaro led a workshop titled *The Writing is on the Wall*. Drawing on visual prompts from the Ancient Graffiti Project Archive as well as contemporary Roman graffiti, participants were invited to create their own contributions—both textual and visual—on a shared wall. The workshop offered a historical and hands-on approach to ancient graffiti culture, while also celebrating the collective and cultural value of graffiti in the city today.

Marta Pellerini, Visual Art Residency and Programme Curator



Live, Live, Live!, Festival delle Accademie e Istituti di Cultura straniera a Roma 2025, curated by Saverio Verini

MACRO, Rome © 2025 Azienda Speciale Palaexpo / Ph. Monkeys Video Lab

Notes from the Shed – Archaeological Materials News

Last year, thanks to funding from the British Academy, the BSR was able to acquire new equipment for the analysis of archaeological ceramics, bones, and plant remains, and to undertake some refurbishment of our materials study space, affectionately known as the 'pottery shed' (or 'bone shed', depending on who you ask!). Our most exciting new acquisition is a hand-held pXRF (portable X-ray fluorescence) analyser, an instrument used to measure the chemical compositional measurement of different materials in the lab and on site.



Archaeology Manager Stephen Kay analysing wall plaster with the pXRF on-site at Falerii Novi

Alongside this, we have a new microscope equipped with a publication-quality camera, and small equipment for taking bioarchaeological samples. Additionally, thanks to some serious new shelving, we are now able to keep more material accessible for study and analysis – shelf space now occupied by our freshly re-boxed animal bone reference collection and recently packed with the new artefacts from the 2025 Falerii Novi excavations.

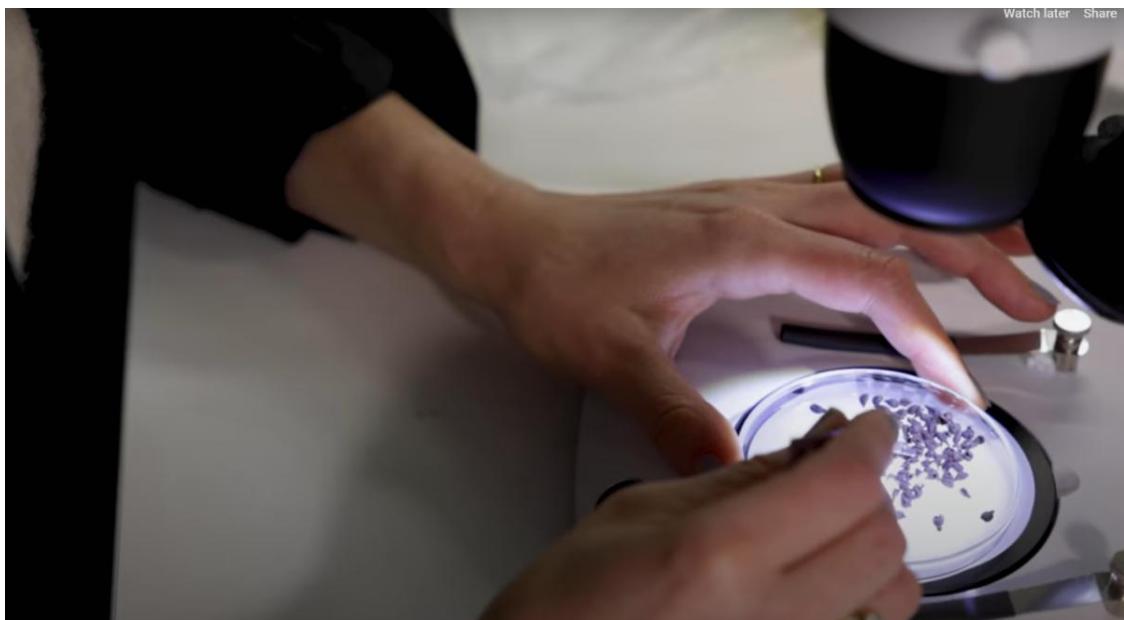


The BSR animal bone reference collection re-boxed and awaiting new labels

These developments are supporting exciting new partnerships and projects. Dozens of researchers and students have benefited from these upgrades over the last academic year, which supported activities ranging from the hands-on identification of plant remains by students on our Environmental Archaeology Trench-Side field school, to the archaeometric analysis of ceramics through a Northern Bridge Doctoral Training Partnership. Soon the space will be buzzing with the many specialists who collaborate in analysis of the finds from Falerii Novi. We look forward to new collaborations, research avenues and results in the future!

For a peek inside our study space, check out the Archaeology segment of the video [here](#).

Angela Trentacoste, Peter J Smith Senior Fellow in Archaeology



Smith Senior Fellow Angela Trentacoste at work on a seed sample with the new microscope

Opening Doors: New Awards, Open Access, and a Year of Ideas

As summer sets in, we look back with real affection on the 2024–25 cohort of BSR award-holders in architecture, the humanities, and visual art. This has been a year rich in ideas, collaboration, and community. From informal chats over espresso to lively lectures and shared meals in our cozy dining room and on our breezy terrace, the conversations have been as rewarding as the research. Our fellows pursued topics as wide-ranging as Iron Age horse burials in Veneto, contemporary street art in Italy, the reception of the mythological Medea, migration and cultural assimilation, and the aesthetics of decorative masonry in interwar Italy.

We were thrilled to introduce several new awards this year across all three of our disciplines. The Robert Adam Rome Scholarship in Architecture and the Jill Franklin Fellowship in Romanesque Architectural History brought fresh energy to our architectural programme, with fellows fully embracing the opportunities offered by Rome and its surroundings. The six-month Sykes Award supported a historian of early modern dress exploring Italy from Dante to the present day. Meanwhile, the Rebecca Scott Rome Residency welcomed an artist from North-West England, deepening the regional breadth of our fine arts community.

We bade our fellows farewell with a lunch around the common table—an opportunity to share memories and a few words from our Director—followed by gelato for everyone, a welcome indulgence in the Roman heat.

Looking ahead, we are excited to announce that from 2026, our peer-reviewed journal *Papers of the British School at Rome* (PBSR) will be published fully open access with [Open Book Publishers](#), the leading independent open access publisher of academic research in the Humanities and Social Sciences in the UK. This collaboration marks an exciting new chapter in our commitment to accessible, world-class research.

Here's to the year ahead!

Courtney Quaintance, Programmes Manager



Group photo with staff and award-holders, 2025, photo by Silvia Calderoni

Update from the Development Office

We are very grateful to our Ashby Patrons, old friends who have been supporting the BSR over the years as well as new friends who have joined us more recently. We look forward to welcoming them to Rome in September for the next *Ashby Weekend* (25-27 September 2025).

Ashby Patrons are historically an important part of our community. Thomas Ashby was the first Rome Scholar at the BSR back in 1901 and later became its third Director. He played a huge part in shaping what the BSR is today: a transformative interdisciplinary community producing world-class research and practice in the heart of Rome. In Ashby's time, his vision became reality thanks to the generosity of individuals, universities, and livery companies who helped create scholarships and supplied much-needed resources

for research. Today, our Ashby Patrons continue that spirit of support, helping to keep world-class research and creative work thriving at the BSR.

Ashby Patrons pay an annual fee of £2,000+. Their generous unrestricted donations provide vital support for activities which might otherwise remain unfunded. Along with the usual perks of Personal Membership, Ashby Patrons are invited to an annual *Ashby Weekend* in Rome. It's a chance to meet current award-holders, explore the city with expert guides and enjoy a themed programme in great company. It's a relaxed and inspiring few days with like-minded people who care deeply about the arts and research and an opportunity for BSR staff to thank our Patrons for their philanthropic contributions. If you love Rome, Italian culture and would like to become an Ashby Patron and join us in time for this September's *Ashby Weekend*, or if you would like to learn more about how to support the BSR in other ways, please contact our Development Officer, Stefania Peterlini (development@bsrome.it).



Ashby Patrons Visit, April 2024

A transformational legacy

Aside from unrestricted and restricted donations, another impactful way of supporting the BSR is through legacies or gifts left in wills. Legacies provide long-term financial stability and allow us to plan for significant, impactful projects. We are very grateful to the late Dr Hazel Thomas for her generous support over the years and for including the BSR in her will. Dr Thomas held a *Rome Fellowship* at the BSR in 1978-79. After completing her Oxford D.Phil. on medieval Perugia she set aside academic pursuits for other things, but remained a BSR member all her life. Dr Thomas' very generous legacy of £120,000 is being put towards work on a new family flat at the BSR which will have an enormous impact on future fellows and their families.

BSR staff celebrate thanks to a generous member

On the evening of 30TH June BSR staff celebrated the end of the academic year with an informal reception in the BSR courtyard. The party was organized thanks to the generosity of Prof. John Osborne, an Ashby Patron and true BSR friend. Here are some photos of the reception!

Stefania Peterlini, Research Support and Development Officer



Staff party, 2025

