

Newsletter for BSR Members 2025 | November Edition

Dear friends,

After a long, hot summer, I write from a city that is finally beginning to feel a little more autumnal, albeit in Roman style with bright sunshine during the day which means we can still eat our lunch out on the terrace. September and October have been busy and productive, with courses, new residents, visiting patrons and well-attended events. A low-level hum of activity accompanies us through the days and bright talk and laughter overflow at dinner.

Although there is no **fine arts update** in this Newsletter, the department has been very busy with events (inspiring talks by [Helen Cammock](#) and [Suzanne Santoro](#) already this term) and preparations for a [solo show by our British Academy Fellow Eloise Fornieles](#) that opens in the first week of November: when Marta and Eloise have had time to draw breath, an update will follow in the New Year.

In the residence, we continue our ongoing work to **improve and update our buildings and fittings**, expertly managed by Christine Martin and her team, including the final phase of the much needed complete renovation of the windows and shutters across the estate as well as the refitting of some spaces to make new bedrooms, a job that we hope to begin early in 2026.

2026 will be a particularly special year for us here on Via Gramsci, as it marks **125 years** since the founding of the BSR in 1901. We are looking forward to focusing on our own history, building, staff, residents and collections over the course of 2026, in order to celebrate everything the BSR has achieved in its first 125 years and prepare the way for the next 125!

I am delighted that **Francesca Vinti** will be assisting the BSR as Development Consultant through our 125th anniversary year. Francesca has had a long career as Director of Fundraising at the British Film Institute and brings a wealth of experience with her to the BSR, as well as knowing Italy extremely well (she is a native of Milan). We are delighted that she will be working with us on this important project, and with Francesca's help we will be designing an enticing programme over the coming year to celebrate the BSR and plan for its future.

Please as usual enjoy the updates from my colleagues below and thank you once again for your valued support of this precious institution!

Abigail



Helen Cammock at the BSR giving a lecture "Catching Resounding Whispers", 2025, photo by Silvia Calderoni

A Vibrant Start: Welcome Week at the BSR

At the end of September, the BSR came alive with the arrival of our new autumn award-holders. We kicked off the year in true BSR style with a festive reception and dinner in the dining room, where our scholars, artists, and architects joined the Ashby Patrons for an evening of wonderful food, lively conversation, and warm welcomes.



Award Holders with staff members Director Abigail Brundin, Programmes Manager Courtney Quaintance, Peter J Smith Senior Fellow in Archaeology Angela Trentacoste and British Academy Post-Doctoral Fellow Alessandra Tafaro, on their way to Villa Medici for the opening of the new academic Year, 2025

This year's cohort brings an inspiring mix of creative and academic projects — exploring everything from cross-cultural exchange in early modern Asia to the agricultural landscapes of ancient Italy and the social settings of Roman fresco painting. Their energy and curiosity have already filled the BSR's studios, library, and gardens with a renewed sense of purpose and excitement.

The following day, our award-holders were joined by the Ashby Patrons for an expert tour of Trajan's Forums and Markets with Dr Christopher Siwicki, followed by a well-earned lunch of classic Roman pasta (*tonnarelli all'amatriciana* proving a particular favourite).

Since then, the cohort has begun Italian lessons with the ever-enthusiastic Manuela and joined our Peter J. Smith Senior Fellow in Archaeology, Dr Angela Trentacoste, for a walk through some of her favourite archaeological sites in Rome. They also attended our first public lecture of the season, [*Palladio Goes to War*](#), delivered by Guido Beltramini, a distinguished member of our Faculty of Architecture — a fascinating talk that engaged both award-holders and the wider BSR community.

As autumn settles in, our fellows have been enjoying the crisp, sunny days, often lingering on the BSR's terrace at lunchtime after a morning's research in the library or creative work in their studios. Later in October, we visited the Venerable English College for a special tour and a look at highlights from their remarkable collection of books and manuscripts — a fitting continuation to what has already been a vibrant and inspiring start to the year at the BSR.

Courtney Quaintance, Programmes Manager



Award Holders visiting the Venerable English College in Rome, 2025

September was a busy month at BSR!

Between 2nd and 12th of September we welcomed sixteen students from the Universities of Bristol, Cambridge, Durham, Edinburgh, Exeter, Oxford, Reading, Southampton, UCL, Warwick and Winchester selected to participate in our [Undergraduate Ancient Rome Summer School](#), led by Dr Chris Siwicki. The course is a stimulating introduction to the topography of the city, its architecture and art, the latest discoveries and new developments in archaeological approaches. It runs every September and includes visits to sites, monuments and museums of ancient Rome and its vicinity. Usually students who have been on our Undergraduate Ancient Rome Summer School apply for the [City of Rome Postgraduate course](#) later in their studies.



Undergraduate Ancient Rome Summer School Students, 2025

From 15th to 21st September we ran the third [Reading Rome Architecture Summer School](#). This year the tutors Niall McLaughlin and Yeoryia Manolopoulou chose 'Frames and Portals' as the theme of the course and gave a public lecture titled '[On Drawing](#)'. We are extremely grateful to the following architecture practices for sponsoring places on this year's course: ADAM Architecture, Bell Phillips Architects, Hopkins Architects, John Robertson Architects, Material Index, Purcell Architecture, Reich and Hall Architects, Sheppard Robson and Stiff + Trevillion. Thanks to the generous support of the Royal Commission for the Exhibition of 1851, we were able in partnership with the Paradigm Network, to offer fully sponsored places on the Summer School to young architects – or soon to be architects – working in Black or Asian led practices or from Black or Asian backgrounds.

It is thanks to the generosity of the sponsors of the Reading Rome course that we are able to offer a three-month annual Rome Scholarship in Architecture. In 2024 we launched the [Six Month Fund](#) with the goal of extending the duration of the Scholarship from three months to six months. All contributions to the fund are

hugely appreciated, and in 2026-27, thanks to match funding from donors, the Rome Scholarship will indeed be extended to six months.



Reading Rome Students, 2025, Photo by Nicholas Berardo



Reading Rome Students, 2025, Photo by Nicholas Berardo

On 25th September we were delighted to welcome back to the BSR some of our loyal Ashby Patrons. To thank our Patrons for their ongoing support we arranged a presentation of fascinating architectural material

from the archives, a visit to Castello Ruspoli in Vignanello with its beautiful 'giardino all'Italiana' and a tour of the Fori Imperiali and of the Markets of Trajan led by Dr Chris Siwicki.

On 2nd October we were in London for the yearly Architecture Talk & Reception, with presentations by four Architecture Alumni from the previous academic year. Molly Judd, Mojan Kavosh, Thomas McLucas and Jakub Ryn, who all spoke about the research they carried out while at the BSR. It was a lovely evening, and we are once again grateful to the Chair of the Faculty of Architecture Bob Allies for hosting the event at Allies & Morrison.

Stefania Peterlini, Research Support and Development Officer



Ashby Patrons visiting the Research Collections, 2025

The BSR Library at History Day 2025

This year, the BSR library is present again at Senate House (University of London) on Tuesday 4 November during the [History Day](#) fair. From 11am to 4pm, libraries from London, the United Kingdom and (thanks to us) overseas specialising in history will showcase and discuss their collections and their projects. Friends, former fellows and award-holders are most welcome to stop by and say hello to the Head of Research Collections, Professor Raphaële Mouren, who will be happy to tell you about all the exciting projects we have been developing in the department: the creation of our Rare Books and Special Collections room, our platform for virtual exhibitions, our research projects on

Giovambattista Piranesi, William Gell and the Roman Society, the conservation project on the architectural drawings collections, our brand new Digital Humanities Centre and many others.

See you in London!

Raphaële Mouren, Head of Research Collections

From Excavation to Analysis: Updates from Falerii Novi and Beyond

After a busy summer of excavation at **Falerii Novi**, as described in the previous newsletter, the focus of the research has now turned to post-excavation analysis. Over the next few months, specialists will gather in the recently refitted archaeology laboratory at the BSR to process the finds from the season. Already exciting results are emerging from organic residue analysis conducted during the season on site by a team from Yale University, led by Professor Andrew Koh, which seeks to identify the contents of some of the vessels recovered during the excavation.

The team of specialists was also joined this year by **Emma Richard-Tremeau** who is undertaking her doctoral studies at the BSR supported by a Doctoral Training Partnership at Durham University funded by the Northern Bridge Consortium ([read her recent blog for the BSR here](#)). Emma's research focuses on the production and inter-regional trade of Roman ceramics in the Tiber Valley during the Roman imperial period, therefore she was able to gain valuable onsite experience at Falerii Novi under the guidance of the projects lead ceramicist, BSR Research Fellow Dr Letizia Ceccarelli.

We also look forward to welcoming **Bertie Handley** to the BSR, recent awardee of a new Collaborative Doctoral Award hosted by the Institute of Classical Studies and the BSR, supported by the London Arts & Humanities Partnership (LAHP). Bertie's research over the next 3 years will focus on developing a new interdisciplinary methodology to study the ancient funerary landscape of Falerii Novi.

In October the team undertook a third season of research at the ***vicus of Furfo*** in the Abruzzo region, a joint research project with the Università degli studi dell'Aquila, the Soprintendenza ABAP per le province di L'Aquila e Teramo and the Comune di Barisciano. The fieldwork led by the BSR is systematically mapping the settlement using a range of non-invasive survey techniques. This year the data collection was further enhanced through the use of a multispectral drone, a recent addition to the prospection equipment at the BSR. This has allowed the team to collection high resolution imagery of the landscape around the settlement, with the aim of mapping associated features such as roads and cemeteries associated to the settlement. Further mapping is planned over the course of the next few months thanks to the award of a grant by the Aerial Archaeology Research Group.



Furfo Geophysics, Photo Sara Fabbri

Finally, after a year of supporting the BSR's archaeology projects, Chris Whittaker departed at the end of July to commence a PhD in the Faculty of History at Oxford University. We wish him well in his studies and hope to welcome him back in the future. The position of Archaeology Survey Technician has been filled by **Dr Sara Fabbri**, a recent doctoral graduate from the University of Perugia.

Stephen Kay, Archaeology Manager



Sara Fabbri, photo by Luana Rigolli