



ARCHAEOLOGY

The Newsletter of the Berkshire Archaeological Society

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Retirement of Ann Griffin as Chairman

Ann Griffin, our chairman for the last 5 years, has resigned from that position because she has at last found the perfect retirement home and is moving down to Somerset with her family. Ann has been active in the society, archaeology, and in many other fields for many years so her loss will be felt widely.

She joined the Society in 1998, while still working as a head teacher and we recognised from the start that she had the skills we needed on Council. But we were not alone in appreciating her and it was only in 2013 that we finally persuaded her that we needed her more than any other group she was involved in. In her 5+ years as chairman she has overseen the expansion of the society. We now have storage facilities for all our equipment and an expanded field work programme. She has mastered the skill of managing Councils like ours, making sure all are heard and everyone is in agreement. She has chaired successive Day Schools and monthly lectures.

With Ann's local contacts have come opportunities for field work which have enabled BAS to improve its archaeological skill set. She is an ideas person and has initiated a number of projects, some of which will continue after her move. She is driven in her aim of raising the profile of heritage both above and below the ground in Berkshire. We will not lose her completely as she says that as she lives near a station with trains to Reading she will remain a society member and come to some of our meetings.

We thank her for all she has done for the society wish her well in her new home.

Catherine Petts, Anne Harrison

Data Protection - Changes to the Rules

As I am sure you know by now the law on data protection is changing and organisations like BAS will require specific consents from members as to the ways in which we contact you. This is to ensure your personal data held by the Society is protected.

As a member of BAS you will receive the quarterly newsletter and the Journal when published (after a qualifying period of membership). You will also receive information about matters directly related to your membership, such as the notice of the AGM (normally published in the Summer newsletter) and subscription renewal notices. You have already specified on your joining/renewal form whether these items should be sent by email or by post (though the Journal is always delivered to members as a hard copy), but we need you to confirm this. For other communications now sent by email such as the monthly news sheet, notices of meetings, information about other groups, invitations to join BAS activities etc. we MUST have your specific consent for us to be able to continue sending them by email.

A Communication Consent Form is included with this newsletter and every member is asked to fill it in and return it to me, by post or email. If consents are not received then communication with you will be restricted to the specific membership related items as listed above. You may change your preferences at any time by contacting me.

The BAS Data Protection and Privacy Policy will be held on the web and will be reviewed and updated regularly. If you need a printed copy please ask me for it. PLEASE, PLEASE complete the Consent Form and send to me as soon as possible to ensure you continue to get full benefit from your membership of BAS.

Anne Harrison Membership Secretary. membership@berksarch.co.uk

Dates for your diary

Wednesday 6 June The Study Group, Brock Keep, 571 Oxford Road, Reading, 12.30 to 14.30 p.m.

Friday 22 June Visit. Oxford Radiocarbon Accelerator Unit, 2.30 p.m.

BERKSHIRE

Day School

The Day School took place at St Nicolas Church Hall, Newbury on 14 April. Sixty-eight people attended. Proceedings started with a presentation by Sarah Orr on the West Berks Archaeological Service, which she is now leading, on what they do and how we benefit from their work. This was followed by a presentation by Kathleen Leary on Recent Discoveries in East Berkshire which included details of a Neolithic sweat lodge found at the Road Transport Laboratory, Crowthorne, and a Saxon mound lying in an industrial estate at Montem, Slough.

After coffee, John Powell, Wessex Archaeology, told us of Mesolithic flint scatters, an early Neolithic causewayed enclosure, late Neolithic pits, and Late Iron Age/Roman evidence found at Riding Court Farm, Datchet. Then Steve Clark showed us details of a Middle to Late Iron Age and Roman farmstead at Wyford Manor, Boxford and details of the late Roman villa at Mud Hole, Boxford with its exciting mosaic. The morning was completed by a talk by Professor Mike Fulford in which he gave details of three Iron Age sites around Silchester, the Roman brickworks at Little London, and a 1st century temple at Silchester which he excavated for the first time in 2017.

The afternoon started with Professor Martin Bell showing how his project's use of environmental evidence was revealing more about Mesolithic communities in the Kennet Valley. This was followed by Andrew Hutt talking about the Roman temples in and around Berkshire and the contribution they made to Roman society.

The day finished with two presentations from Oxford Archaeology. Alex Davies started by telling us about work at Shinfield, which revealed a Beaker barrow, a Bronze Age ritual site where a tree was revered, and an Early Iron Age settlement. But this was just a warm-up, he then revealed details of a long lived-in landscape at

Great Western Park, Didcot with evidence of settlement in the Middle and Late Bronze Ages, Early, Middle and Late Iron Ages, and the Roman period. Not to be outdone, Carl Chapness then told us about excavations at Winterbrook, Wallingford, with Neolithic pits, a Bronze Age enclosure, Mid Bronze Age burials, Early to Middle Iron Age settlements, and evidence of Saxon and Early Medieval activity.



Detail of the Boxford mosaic showing Hercules battling a centaur and Cupid

A key feature of these presentations was the large scale of much of the fieldwork which was presented which shows that developers in our region are investing significant sums so that our heritage can be investigated and recorded.

Thanks are due to our speakers, and those who helped organise the event. Special thanks are due to Trevor Coombs for organising the programme and to Maggie Smith who single-handed kept us supplied with refreshments.

Andrew Hutt

Archaeology on Saturdays

Travel and communication in Anglo-Saxon England

A talk by Stuart Brookes, UCL and University of Durham, 17 March 2018

This talk formed part of a project to reconstruct the Anglo-Saxon landscape through the creation of the 'Early Medieval Atlas' (www.ucl.ac.uk/early-medieval-atlas), with a longer term view of investigating social complexity, material culture, cognitive landscapes, and kingdom formation. Three methods were used to investigate overland routeways: physical evidence (from

excavations), textual sources, and cartographic methods.

Excavations in Kent during the construction of HS1 showed long term continuity in the use of trackways, with Iron Age ditched roads subsequently used by both the Romans and the Anglo-Saxons. Some of these transhumant routes running between pastures and settlements were thousands of years old. Excavation at White Horse Stone in the same area demonstrated that the Anglo-Saxons were capable of building roads *de novo*. At least three different hollow ways were excavated beneath the Pilgrims Way: the one more or

less beneath the modern track was C14-dated to the 7th–10th centuries, suggesting that permanent long-distance routes had been established by this time. Rare wayside markers, such as Copleston Cross in Devon, can also be used to date Saxon roads. The deposition of caches of weapons at river crossings was relatively frequent between the 8th and 11th centuries and these can pinpoint where roads and rivers converged.

Remote sensing, especially LiDAR, has been used to identify Anglo-Saxon roads in various places, including Ewelme in South Oxfordshire where braided tracks converged on the Icknield Way, which only became established as a permanent route in relatively modern times. Other local examples included Cadwell and Long Wittenham in South Oxfordshire.

Routeways can also be plotted by the movement of objects. When Early, Middle, and Late Anglo-Saxon find spots were compared with the Roman road system, it was possible to determine when parts of this network fell out of use. In the Early Anglo-Saxon period most finds were associated with Roman roads although some 'holes' had already appeared in the network and over time these patches got bigger and more numerous. By the Middle period in the 7th to 9th centuries, find hotspots showed a drift away from the Roman network with the development of new routeways. The abandonment of the Roman road system took place at different rates in different places: East Anglia and Mercia held on to their Roman roads for longer than elsewhere. Much of the Roman road network has survived to the present day: some 2,763 km as A roads, 978 km as B roads, and 6,093 km as tracks.

Textual sources include legal documents of the mid-7th century and narrative sources, e.g. the itineraries of Edward I. Place names can provide useful clues for the existence of old roads. Rather than using existing place names at their face value, it is necessary to work back through documents to find the earliest recorded form of a name. For example, Sturton Grange could be traced back through eight different forms of the name to Stretun(e) meaning street/settlement.

Anglo-Saxon charters often describe landmarks along estate boundaries and these may include features relating to old roads, such as 'ealden straet'. Most date to the 10th century when many land grants were taking place. With the defining of property boundaries, formerly braided tracks were forced to follow a single line and permanent routes were established. Many charters have now been digitised.

Cartographic evidence

Tools such as PageRank were used to determine the top 100 nodes on the Roman road network. Only 30% of Roman towns were situated within 5 km of a nodal point, but these included all *civitas* capitals and *colonia*. There was no correlation between Roman towns and waterways, suggesting that the Romans tended not to use the rivers for transport. In contrast, the early medieval network showed that 40% of the towns were connected with nodes and rivers, indicating that the

Anglo-Saxons were using the rivers to a much greater extent than the Romans.

Map regression was used to reconstruct ancient road networks by working backwards through time using a series of maps of the same area. Field names can also indicate the position of early roads, such as 'South of Portway' near Dorchester on Thames. The valley called Hollandtide Bottom, east of Berrick Salome, carried a road (*holandene* = hollow valley road) in the 10th century, but this is now impassable in winter.

Circuitscape was used to determine the most logical routes between places according to topography, such as long distance routes that followed geological formations. The Romans used the grain of the land where possible to create long distance roads but elsewhere they cut across the grain and this related to social factors such as meeting places, markets, and fairs.

The Anglo-Saxons modified the Roman road network for their own use and they used the rivers much more. The outcome was the foundation of the Early Medieval towns that survive today.

Janet Sharpe

The 'works of the old men' in Arabia

A talk by Professor David Kennedy, Saturday 21 April 2018

Professor Kennedy talked about his work in Jordan and Saudi Arabia using aerial reconnaissance and high resolution satellite imagery. This has revealed a huge number of sites in the volcanic lava fields – one of the world's most inhospitable landscapes.



Image courtesy of the NY Times

The 'old men' are what the local Bedouin call the ancient inhabitants of the area. When the famous Gertrude Bell travelled across Jordan she made no mention of any archaeological sites among the lava fields but, when viewed from the air, it is now apparent that the area is covered in low structures – possibly as old as the Neolithic. They come in various shapes which have been categorised as resembling 'keyholes', 'gates', 'kites', and so on. The latter appear to be shaped to control and capture animals – probably the herds of gazelle that still roam over this barren landscape.

Professor Kennedy began his investigations from old aerial photographs, then through satellite images, but later was able to enlist the help of the Jordanian Air Force to acquire higher resolution photographs. Another personal contact then lead him to western Saudi Arabia where an influential patron provided a helicopter and launched a research programme that is still in progress.

The structures here appear to be more sophisticated than those in Jordan but the basic shapes are repeated, with local variations.

The project has had international publicity but the details remain confidential for now.

Andrew Hutt

The Study Group

February 2018: Anglo-Saxon wars

The February 2018 meeting was devoted to a presentation on *Warfare in and around Berkshire AD 410 to 600* by Andrew Hutt. This was based on Jim Storr's recent book: *King Arthur's Wars. The Anglo-Saxon conquest of England*. Andrew summarised the evidence of warfare that Jim Storr had used, namely: contemporary documents (*the Notitia Dignatatum* and *the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*), earthworks built to attack and defend territory, and place name evidence. He interpreted the earthwork evidence by suggesting that the Roman roads were key to many of the campaigns fought across England between the Saxon and British as they enabled both defenders and attackers to move large bodies of armed men across the land. Andrew then focused on two areas of fighting identified by Storr, which probably influenced Anglo-Saxon Berkshire. In Sussex around Arundel, the South Saxons established an enclave which the British managed to restrict to a coastal strip of land south east of Winchester. In the Thames Valley a long campaign saw the Saxons fight their way from the Thames though St Albans to the Oxford Clay Vale and then fight their way from Abingdon over the Berkshire Downs into the Kennet Valley to overrun Silchester circa 590. If Storr is right, this places

most of the early Anglo-Saxon settlement along the River Thames, such as at Taplow and Abingdon, as being evidence of foederati settled by the British to defend British lands in the Thames and Kennet valleys and by implication on to the south-west into Dorset.

March 2018: Geophysics

At the March meeting, Andrew Hutt gave a presentation on the technology of geophysics. This covered the capabilities of resistivity meters, magnetometers, ground penetrating radar, and magnetic susceptibility meters. This was followed by comments of the global positioning systems and guide lines on writing fieldwork reports.

April 2018: Stratigraphy and the Harris Matrix

The April meeting was a workshop run by Alison McQuitty. She started by defining key terms used by excavators: stratigraphy, context, matrix, inclusions, and Harris matrix. She then got everybody working in pairs to draw Harris Matrices of archaeological sections recording an excavation she carried out in Jordan. We thank Alison for an interesting, informative, and fun afternoon.

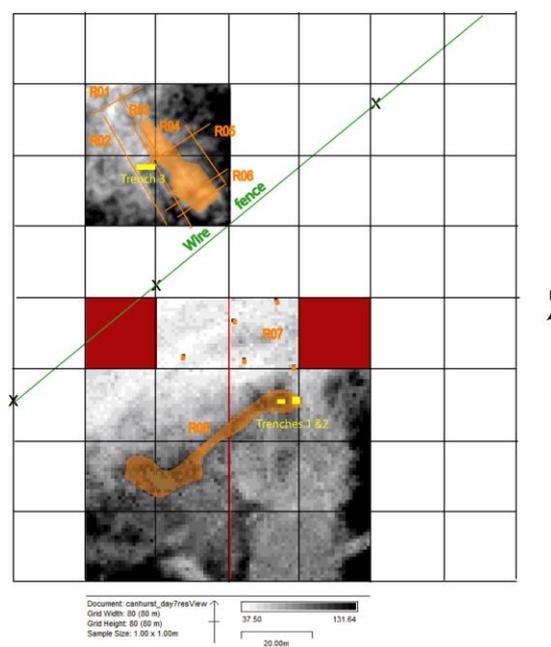
Andrew Hutt

Fieldwork

An excavation in Knowl Hill

On Tuesday 10 April, after it had been raining for several days, a group of us started work at Knowl Hill to investigate the anomalies found in a geophysics survey of the site in 2014. The site consisted of two paddocks separated by a wire fence. We reinstated the 2014 survey grid and started to investigate the 'S' shaped anomaly in the southern paddock by opening our first trench; it filled with water draining out of the field. After that we laid out trench 2 on the northern end of the anomaly and augered a line of 5 bore holes across the southern end. These proved that the 'S' shaped anomaly was either natural or may be a dump of clay material.

The next week we opened trench 3 across a series of anomalies which probably represent the remains of the banks and ditches of a field system. This trench revealed the remains of ditch about 1 m wide and 20 mm deep under the plough soil with a small pottery sherd in the ditch fill. Since no obvious or significant human activity was revealed we closed the trenches.



Is it worth pointing out that trench 2 was located at the presumed junction of the anomaly and a linear feature that extended approximately N–S across the whole hilltop. As well as the anomalies there were surface finds

of burnt flint that were postulated as being signs of human activity. And, that nearby a Romano-British structure had been excavated in the 1930s.

Andrew Hutt

Visits

BAS members are invited to visit the Oxford Radiocarbon Accelerator Unit at the School of

Achaeology, 1 South Parks Rd, Oxford, OX1 3TG, on 22 June. To book please contact Trevor Coombs.

Archaeology in and around Berkshire

Evidence for Roman activity in the area of Braywick Court School, Hibbert Road, Maidenhead

During December 2017, AOC Archaeology Group carried out an excavation at Braywick Court School, Maidenhead. This short article details the results of the excavation, focusing on a small assemblage of extremely well-preserved Roman ceramic building material (CBM), which indicates that a heated Roman building, perhaps a villa or bathhouse, stood close to the site.

The Upper and Middle Thames region, in which the site is located, was a focus for human activity throughout prehistory. Examples of significant sites in the immediate area of the school include a Mesolithic site at Moor Farm, 650 m to the south-west, and a Neolithic site at Cannon Hill, which lies 250 m to the south. Exploitation of the area continued into the Roman period and a Late Iron Age or Early Romano-British settlement has been identified at Weir Bank Stud Farm, Bray, approximately 1.5 km to the south east of the school. This article suggests that the area around the school may also have been home to a grander Roman building, comparable to others found within what is now Maidenhead and perhaps even to the Roman Villa further upstream at Yewden.

During the course of the excavation, only one period of activity was observed, dating to the post-medieval period and consisting of a series of intercutting pits and layers. However, within a layer of subsoil, there were five examples of well-preserved, residual Roman CBM: three very large fragments of box flue tile, a form of CBM associated with cavity walling for circulating heat; a very large brick fragment; and a tile fragment, which may have formed part of a *tegula* or flanged roof tile. Three different fabrics can be identified, which probably reflect a diverse range of clay sources within a short distance of the site and perhaps also the close proximity of the River Thames, which may have allowed for the wider provincial supply of certain clay tile fabrics.

The box tile (26 mm thick), is decorated in a keyed narrow 8 comb criss-cross design. The full width of the

tile survives (160 mm) and it is pointed in pink *opus signinum*, a waterproof mortar. The large brick fragment (>220 mm x 40 mm) weighs 2 kg. Its dimensions exceed that of the smallest *bessalis* brick form, leading to its interpretation as a possible *pedalis* (a brick measuring one Roman square foot) or rectangular *lydian* brick. It is backed by burnt *opus caementatum*, a black-brown mortar. Evidence for burning on the brick combined with the presence of the box flue tile suggest that both came from a heated building. Furthermore, the presence of waterproof *opus signinum* adhered to the box flue tile would suggest that heated water was involved.

The evidence presented above suggests that a Roman building existed in close proximity to the site and that part of this building's function was related to heating, specifically the heating of water. It is possible that the evidence relates either to a villa, a small bath house, or a building with an industrial purpose. This potential building would fit into the wider Roman landscape of occupation on either side of the Thames and it is even possible that a grand villa, such as the example at Yewden, once stood close to this location.

Helen Chittock (AOC Archaeology), *Ian Cipin* (AOC Archaeology), and *Kevin Hayward* (Pre-Construct Archaeology)

Acknowledgements

On behalf of AOC Archaeology Group, the authors would like to thank Archaeology Collective for providing the opportunity to carry out this work on behalf of EW Beard Ltd, who provided the funding needed to do so. The overall project managers were Joe Abrams, Sally Jones and Rebecca Emms for Archaeology Collective and Catherine Edwards for AOC Archaeology, and advice was provided by Roland Smith, Archaeology Officer for Berkshire Archaeology. Ian Cipin supervised the investigations for AOC Archaeology. Expert assessments of the finds from the site were provided by Kylie McDermott, Les Capon and Chris Jarrett. Kevin Hayward assessed the Roman CBM, on which this article has focussed. Many thanks are also due to the field staff who carried out the excavation.

Reading Abbey Revealed

Saturday 16 June 2018, 11.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m.

The re-opening of the Abbey Ruins will be celebrated at the Abbey Quarter with activities and entertainment for all ages. Alongside this a 'Water Fest' will take place in Forbury Gardens, the Abbey ruins, and along the Kennet. For more information see: <https://www.readingabbeyquarter.org.uk/whats-on/reading-abbey-revealed>

Berkshire Archaeology Research Group, De Vitre Room, The Cornerstone, Norreys Ave, Wokingham, 7.30 p.m.

Thursday 21 June 2018 BARG Summer Quarterly Open Meeting followed by the AGM. Dr Kate Tucker will be discussing the Magdalen Hill Archaeological Research Project, based in Winchester. Previously excavated by *Time Team*, the new project undertaken by the University of Winchester discovered more to this multiphase site. Originally a leprosy hospital in the mid-twelfth century the site was later remodelled to become almshouses in the sixteenth century and more recently a WW1 transit camp.

Marlow Archaeology, Main Room, Liston Hall, Marlow, SL7 1DD, 8 p.m.

Thursday 14 June 'Cox Green Roman Villa'. This is a short film about the rescue dig that took place near Maidenhead in the 1950s, before a large housing estate was built on the site.

Input to the newsletter

If you have an archaeological story that you feel would interest the Society, please send it to Gail Eaton by August 2018 at: newsletter@berksarch.co.uk

BERKSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY



Patron: H.M. THE QUEEN

President: Professor

Michael Fulford CBE FBA FSA

The Society was founded in 1871 and for over 100 years has encouraged and supported archaeological activities in Berkshire.

Everybody with an interest in archaeology is welcome to attend our meetings and join the Society. It does not matter whether your interest in archaeology is new found or long standing, the Society offers activities from regular lectures and outings to post-excavation research.

All members receive a regular newsletter, full of news about events in Berkshire. The Berkshire Archaeological Journal is also free to members.

Officers of the Society:

Chairman: vacant

Secretary: Anne Harrison
secretary@berksarch.co.uk

Treasurer: Andrew Hutt
treasurer@berksarch.co.uk

Membership Secretary: Anne Harrison
membership@berksarch.co.uk

Programme Organiser:
Trevor Coombs
programme@berksarch.co.uk

Day School Organiser:
Trevor Coombs
dayschool@berksarch.co.uk

Tour Organiser: Vacant

Newsletter Editor: Gail Eaton
newsletter@berksarch.co.uk

Website: Tim Lloyd
website@berksarch.co.uk

Librarian acting: Andrew Hutt
librarian@berksarch.co.uk

For more information about the Society and membership details contact the Membership Secretary.

www.berksarch.co.uk

email: info@berksarch.co.uk

twitter: Berks Arch Soc