



ARCHAEOLOGY

The Newsletter of the Berkshire Archaeological Society

Summer 2014

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From our chairman

Dear Members,

As I undertake the position of Chairman of the Society this is a good time to review the Council's aims and responsibilities to our members. The Council started by conducting a 'Post-it Note' poll where observations about existing practice and potential future practice was brainstormed. Besides maintaining the current practice of publishing journals, day schools and conferences, organising the Annual Tour, visits and walks and the programme of lectures, new ideas were mentioned. These comprised setting up a working group to investigate specific eras of Wider Berkshire's archaeology, devising an outreach programme for Berkshire students and undertaking field work.

A new member of the Council asked why don't we ask BARG to join BAS? He was given the task of asking each member of the past and present committees of both groups if that was their wish, and by and large the answer was negative.

So, while maintaining the present activities our society is going to develop a number of working groups to enable members to contribute to the work of the Society, and programmes of fieldwork and building surveys.

How can you help? Follow the news of these ventures as they appear in our newsletter and respond enthusiastically to encourage us to organise more activities for our Society. Work is already underway with these ideas so now is the time to look at the lumps and bumps in the gardens and fields of Wider Berkshire with thoughts of geophysical survey or even excavation in mind!

Please contact me if you have ideas for developing the scope of our Society to give us a deeper understanding of the Archaeology of Wider Berkshire.

Kindest regards,

Ann Griffin

01628 825288 griffinshiresteps@hotmail.com

PS. Wider Berkshire ignores the artificial political boundary and extends our area from Marlborough to Slough, into North Hampshire and the Vale of the White Horse.

Summer walks and visits

Walk round historic Newbury, 11th June 2014

Jane Burrell has kindly agreed to lead a historic walk round Newbury starting in front of Newbury Museum at 15:00 on 11th June 2014. If you would like to come on this walk please contact Andrew Hutt.

Visit to Cirencester Museum and Chedworth Roman villa, Saturday 28th June 2014

This is an opportunity to take another look at the many Roman artefacts found in Corinium, the civitas capital of the Dobunni and in Late Roman time, the provincial capital of Britannia Prima and to visit Chedworth Roman villa.

Drive to Cirencester, park in the Beeches car park (£2 for parking all day), walk through town and meet at the entrance of the Corinium Museum at 10:00. After time in the museum, it is proposed to walk back to the Bear Inn for lunch and thereafter to drive to Chedworth Roman villa to arrive about 14:00 and spend the afternoon reminding ourselves of the many interesting features found on the site.

If you would like to come on this visit please contact Andrew Hutt.

Visit to Silchester, 27th July 2014

This year's annual visit to Silchester will take place on Sunday 27th July starting 14:00 on the site of the excavations.

If you would like to come on this visit please contact Trevor Coombs.

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Archaeology on Saturdays

Trajan's Aqueduct on 15th February

Michael and Edward O'Neill, film makers, told us how they discovered the source of Trajan's aqueduct under the ruins of the Santa Fiora church close to Lake Sabatinus with the help of academics from the University of Bologna. Trajan (AD 98-117) is thought to have been at the opening of this public work on the 24 June AD 109.

The *nymphaeum* (the collection chamber at the head waters of the spring) and the first 125m of the aqueduct gallery remain in pristine condition as the O'Neill's film showed. The vaulted ceilings of the *nymphaeum* still retain their Egyptian Blue paint which suggests that Trajan declared it open, especially as he paid for it. Documentary evidence in the Papal records confirms the shrine was under the church and was the primary source for Trajan's public works. Professor Lorenzo Quilici of Bologna University confirmed that the brickwork and the waterproof cement lining were characteristic of Trajan's period.

The geology of the Bracciano Region near Lake Sabatinus is volcanic and the aqueduct captured all its water from the northern and eastern sides of the basin (for map see: *aqueduct hunter.com*). From the source at Santa Fiora the water flows north of the lake and follows the western edge of the lake before it turns south towards Rome. Outside Rome the water tumbles down the steep slopes of the Janiculum Hill and was used to power a chain of flour mills in the second century AD. The water now enters Rome at St. Pancras Gate. Trajan was so pleased with the success of his work that he minted a special *sestertium* which shows a figure of the river god Danubius which appeared as a statue in the *nymphaeum* and as a moulding on Trajan's column.

The year 109 was an important year for Trajan who opened three public works in succession, the Trajan monumental baths near the Coliseum, his personal *naumachia* (an artificial lake on which Roman naval battles were re-enacted) and the Aqua Traiana which improved the health of the citizens of Rome. **(Trevor Coombs)**

Roman Berkshire on 15th March

On 15 March 2014, Dr Andrew Hutt of this Society presented a summary of his study of social, political and economic changes in Romano-British Berkshire, based on a large body of archaeological and documentary evidence. It is hoped to publish this material in a forthcoming issue of the Berkshire Archaeological Journal.

Setting the scene with an outline of Roman government, both in Rome and in the provinces, Andrew began his survey of Roman Berkshire with the Late Iron Age and Early Roman periods from before AD 43 to AD 75. Caesar had established

a relationship with the ruling classes of southern Britain in 55 and 54 BC, and there is inscriptional evidence to suggest that Cogidubnus was established as king of the Atrebates by the Romans following the conquest in AD 43. To begin with, his kingdom may have extended from Chichester in the south-west to include Bath, Frilford and Wanborough in Surrey, these boundary sites being marked by major temples. During the reign of Cogidubnus, Silchester was defended by the Inner Earthwork and the forum and temples were first built in the late AD 40s. The landscape of Berkshire at that time consisted of clusters of settlements interspersed with 'empty' areas without villas that included the metal-working site at Wickham Bushes to the south-east, the river crossing at Staines and perhaps also the Berkshire Downs with its ancient tradition of transhumance agriculture. These areas may have come under direct imperial control, so that the eastern and western parts of Cogidubnus's kingdom were managed by Roman authorities. Meanwhile the road network was established and Silchester developed into an urban community while the rural areas remained essentially Iron Age in character.

After the death of Cogidubnus, Vespasian appointed Agricola as governor of Britannia and he played a major role in the creation of civitates or tribal territories. The Atrebatian kingdom was probably reduced in area to correspond approximately to that of pre-1974 Berkshire and the civitas was governed from the forum-basilica in Silchester by an *ordo* formed of wealthy villa-owning Romano-British elite. Villas underwent a long period of steady development until about AD 260 when the rate of development slowed, to take off again around AD 300 to 350, after which it declined rapidly. Hadrian's reforms had brought the conquest of new territories to an end and the flow of booty into the state coffers ceased. As a result taxation was increased. After AD 220 the army became a major political force and the empire became destabilised under numerous successive weak emperors. This situation resulted in a downturn in the economy and many sites in Roman Berkshire fell out of use due to inflation.

Roman Britain became part of the breakaway Gallic empire from AD 260-274, and then was ruled by the usurpers Carausius and Allectus. Coins found in Roman Berkshire reflect both these short-lived empires. Roman authority was restored by Constantius in AD 296 and for a while the economy boomed once more. Some monumental villas were built such as Littlecote, but after around AD 350 the economy again went into decline, the Romano-British elite began to wield power for themselves and gradually Berkshire ceased to be Roman. **(Janet Sharpe)**

The Society supports the Reading Abbey Project

In January, the Society sent a letter to Reading Borough Council to support their bid for lottery funds to conserve and repair the Abbey Ruins and Abbey Gateway and thereby make them attractive places where people can relax, gain an understanding of medieval Reading, enjoy community activities such as plays and concerts and the atmosphere of one of the oldest heritage sites in Berkshire. **(Andrew Hutt)**

Annual General Meeting

The AGM of the Society will take place on Saturday 20 September 2014 at RISC, 35-39 London Road, Reading. Refreshments will be served from 2.00 pm for a 2.30 pm start.

Please find enclosed a form for nominations for Council. Completed forms with proposers and seconders (and the approval of the nominee) must be received by the Acting Secretary, Andrew Hutt, by email (andrew_hutt@talktalk.net) or by post (19 Challenor Close, Wokingham RG40 4UJ) by **1 September 2014**.

Working for the Society

In March 2014, the Society's Council agreed to extend the activities of the Society so that members can undertake archaeological research and fieldwork in and around Berkshire.

As a result of this decision, the Council also agreed to encourage members to take an active role in running the Society. To this end the Council has established a number of working groups and invites the members of Society to join at least one group.

What is a working group?

Technically, a working group is a group of the Society's members with the knowledge, skills and equipment to carry out designated tasks on behalf of the Society.

Each working group will have a leader who is a member of Council and have a membership who actually does the work and some floating members who, over time, can be encouraged to take a more prominent role.

From the Society's point of view a group represents something that the Society invests in and needs in order to meet its objectives. For this reason, the Society will provide moneys to cover a group's training and equipment. These expenditures must be approved by the Council and managed by the Treasurer.

The working groups

- **Meetings working group:** led by the meetings organiser with a membership of: the people responsible for booking rooms, managing the door, the display and audio equipment, the visual displays, refreshments and preparing the room (tables and chairs). It is suggested that Trevor leads this group
- **Newsletter working group:** led by the newsletter editor, with a membership of: the membership secretary providing a list of members and people responsible for providing input, arranging the printing and distributing newsletters. Andrew Hutt is the acting newsletter editor.
- **Tour working group:** led by the tour organiser: with a membership of the 3 other people can sign cheques for the tour account and those who provide support on the tour itself. Ron Knowles is the tour organiser.
- **Journal working group:** led by the journal editor, with a membership of people performing the roles of final copy editor, proof reader and journal distributors. Catherine Petts and Andrew Hutt are jointly leading this working group
- **Library working group:** led by the librarian, with a membership of the experts who advise on the contents of the library and the many people holding Research Library boxes. Andrew Hutt is currently the Society's acting librarian
- **Berkshire Building Record working group:** with a group leader and membership of people surveying buildings using the tick box method and leaders of other external groups who have agreed to work with the Society. Barrie Randall is leading this group
- **Geophysics and surveying working group:** led by a group leader with a membership of people involved in geophysics surveys, topographical surveys, woodland surveys etc. It is proposed that Andrew Hutt leads this group
- **Excavation and post excavation working group:** led by a group leader with a membership of people interested in excavating trenches and test pits and processing the resulting finds. It is proposed that Ann Griffin leads this group

Joining a working group

Please join a working group or groups by sending an email to Anne Harrison, the membership secretary, or filling in the *Joining a working group form* and returning it to Anne Harrison by post.

From our working groups

Interested in Historic Buildings?

Nine members attended a training session on the 22nd March at the Purley Barn. After a fascinating and informative presentation by Dr Andy Moir about timber buildings with details of their construction and how to recognise types of roofs and to date carpentry joints, we walked around the historic barn with Dr Moir pointing out examples (and testing our knowledge). We all found it a very enlightening experience.



Andy Moir and a group surveying the Purley Barn

Seven members who attended the training session made a field visit to Rose Street in Wokingham on Sunday 13th April. Split into two teams each taking one side of the street and then swapping over, the teams took their time closely examining the exterior of the buildings, referring to the text of the Listed Building designation, discussing the features of the building and their possible dates and what alterations had subsequently been made. All together a very interesting morning followed by a discussion of their findings over a sociable lunch in a local hostelry. One team was invited into a building. In the future both teams plan to obtain permission to gain access for detailed investigation of further buildings.



Elizabeth Jackson in Rose Street., Wokingham

Another training session is being held at the Purley Barn on Saturday 24th May and if you are interested in historic buildings why not come and join us - you do not have to commit in advance to becoming a recorder in the Berkshire Building Recording project but do not be surprised if you just want to have a try after the session! (**Barrie Randall**)

Report from the Berkshire Building Recording Working Group, for further details and to join the group contact Barrie Randall (email: banda.burghfield@hotmail.co.uk).

A geophysics survey

At their March meeting the Council approved a plan for a gradiometer survey of the garden behind Catherine Pett's 15th century house in Steventon using the Society's Bartington 601 gradiometer (see below)

The work took place at the end of March and surveyed four partial 10m x 10m squares. Unfortunately, there were no assessable results because of interference from metalwork.. (**Andrew Hutt**)



Andrew Hutt using the Society's Bartington 601 gradiometer in Catherine Pett's garden

Berkshire Archaeological Journal: Volume 81

Volume 81 of the Berkshire Archaeological Journal has now been printed.

Everybody who was a paid up member of the Society on 15th March 2014 will receive a free copy, however, given the cost of postage most of the copies are being delivered by hand over the next few weeks. If you have not received your copy by the end of June please let me know.

For non-members the cost of this issue of the journal is £10 for those living in the UK and £15.00 for those living overseas, including postage.

Thanks are due to Catherine Petts and Andrew Hutt who are the editors and to Beth Ashbury, Janet Firth, Anne Harrison, Ron Knowles, David Nicholls, Glenys Rampley, Brita Sensicall, and Julie Worsfold for proof reading the papers in this issue of the journal. (**Andrew Hutt**)

Roman Archaeology Conference

This international conference took place at Reading University from 27th to 30 March 2014 with five streams of lectures on Roman archaeology given by presenters from across the world. This note gives an overview of some of the lectures which I attended.

Opening session

The opening session was by Frazer Hunter on the Late Roman silver found on Traprain Law in East Lothian, Scotland. His overall conclusion was that the treasure, which can be viewed in Edinburgh, was deposited in the late 4th / early 5th century, was probably more valuable as bullion than as art and, while it could have been collected during raids, the fact that it was cut into pieces with uniform Roman standard weights suggest that it was more likely to be the result of the elite English paying off the Scots.

Day 1

The first day, I spent most of the day in a session on *Recent work on the Roman frontiers*.

One lecture in this session interpreted a line of forts constructed along the Rhine delta in the early 1st century as representing the remains of a fortified supply line to support the Roman invasion of Britain.

Another lecture identified a large number of Roman army practice camps near Bonn and Xanten. The form of the camps paralleled the camp found at Sills Burn South, Northumberland (see http://www.roman-britain.org/places/sills_burn.htm). An analysis of the camps shows that Roman military surveyors were using standard sizes for the overall camp layout and for the corners and gateways.

Andrew Birley presented an interesting lecture on Vindolanda on Hadrian's Wall, which gave insights into the impact of the Diocletian reforms in circa AD 285 when the Roman forces were separated into *limitanei*, army units responsible for frontier duties, and *comitatus*, units which formed the mobile field army. Most of the troops on Hadrian's Wall, including those at Vindolanda, were assigned to the *limitanei*. Andrew compared the artefacts found in the fort and in the adjacent vicus (town) before and after these reforms. This showed that before the reforms, most of the activity of men and women was in the vicus and, after the reforms had taken effect, most of the activity was in the fort. This is not surprising but it was interesting to see that our expectations are supported by the archaeological evidence.

In the late afternoon, I went to a session entitled *Augustus: How to Build an Empire* with papers which highlighted the impact of his emperorship on Rome, in Spain and in Germany. This confirmed my understanding that many of the norms which were introduced into Britain in the 1st century were based on Augustan innovations.

Day 2

I spent the whole of the second day in the session entitled *New Approaches to the Romano-British countryside*; a session chaired by Neil Holbrook of Cotswold Archaeology and Mike Fulford with papers by many people working in our area.

Neil Holbrook started the session with a paper which characterised rural settlements in terms of the structures found on sites - round and/or rectangular buildings, and the artefacts found on sites: coins/no coins, brooches/ no brooches etc and explained how the number of rural settlements reached a peak in circa AD 150-200.

Steve Rippon presented a paper which showed that as much as 60% of the Roman landscape probably continued in use into the 8th century, but thereafter there were significant changes.

After this, a team led by Reading University presented their work to review all the available evidence in Britain and create a database of Romano-British rural settlement sites. They are working through Britain, region by region and so far have completed most of the regions south and east of the Foss Way. Their eventual aim is to make the database available on the Archaeology Data Service. Three papers based on this work were presented by Alex Smith, Tom Brindle and Mike Fulford.

Day 3

The conference was to end at 13:00 so I spent the morning in the session on *Recent work on Roman Britain*.

The session started with a paper by Mike Fulford on Silchester which was similar to the one he gave at the Day School.

This was followed by a paper on Roman London by Julian Hill which highlighted the large amount of material which had been deposited along the River Walbrook in London as land make up. Most of the material was removed in the 1960s but the recent excavations of what remains have revealed some 400 writing tablets and other materials which parallel the finds of similar deposits excavated at Vindolanda.

The last paper I was able to hear was by Kris Lockyear and highlighted the work being done in Hertfordshire to establish community archaeology, geophysics and landscape archaeology projects in Hertfordshire. As part of this effort they have been awarded a Lottery Grant for £40,000 and purchased a large wheeled gradiometer and have used it to survey the Roman town at St Albans and many other sites.

This parallels the route we are starting to take in the Society so I am looking forward to organising some meetings with this team.

I encourage more members of the Society to attend conferences like this and thereby gain a better understanding of how our local archaeology fits into a wider context..

(Andrew Hutt)

Training events

Geophysics and Surveying training

On Friday 13th June, the Society will be running a training event at the Royal Oak, Knowl Hill. Meet in the pub car park at 10:00 and be prepared to spend at least five hours on site including lunch at the pub.

The objective of the day is to take people who have little or no experience of laying out survey grids and carrying out a gradiometer survey through a combination of training and hands on experience.

People will work in teams of three to layout a survey grid and carry out a gradiometer survey of at least two 20m x 20m grid squares. Those people who want use the gradiometer must be completely metal free, down to the level of no metal eyelets in boots and hats.

Attendance at this event is restricted to the six people. More events will be planned to ensure that everybody who wants to can attend this training.

Please contact Andrew Hutt to book a place on this and future events.

Wessex Academy for Field Archaeology (Wafa)

This is a new venture by the Council of British Archaeology Wessex to provide training opportunities for adults and children. They are organising a number of one day events:

Saturday 24 May 2014: **How to study a landscape** led by Julian Richards

Saturday and Sunday 7/8 June 2014: **Snails and soils** and a pit excavation led by Dr. Mike Allen

Saturday 21 - 22nd June 2014: **Earthwork recognition and survey** led by Mark Corney

Saturday 5 July 2014: **Geophysics survey** leader to be confirmed

For more details and booking details see the Wafa website:

<http://www.wafa.org.uk/courses-available/wafa-day-schools/>

Kent Field School

17 - 18 May 2014: **Aerial Survey for Archaeologists.**

May Bank Holiday 24 - 26 May 2014: **Surveying for Archaeologists**

28 -29 June 2014: **Landscape Archaeology**

12 - 20 July 2014: **Excavation of Bronze Age barrows at Hollingbourne in Kent**

2 - 17 August 2014: **Excavation of a Roman villa and bath-house in Faversham**

11 - 17 August 2014: **Training Week for Students at Faversham in Kent**

For more details and booking details see: <http://www.kafs.co.uk/courses.aspx>

Input to the newsletter

If you have an archaeological story which you feel would interest the Society, please send it to Andrew Hutt the acting newsletter editor by August 2014.

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:

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