



# ARCHAEOLOGY

The Newsletter of the Berkshire Archaeological Society

Autumn 2012

Vol.14, No.3

## Annual General Meeting 2012

The AGM will take place on Saturday 15 September at RISC, London Street, Reading.  
Refreshments will be served from 2.00 for a 2.30 pm start.

There is a vacancy on the BAS Council for a new **Treasurer**: for more information, please contact the Secretary. All nominations for Council membership, proposed and seconded, must reach the Secretary (Andrew Hutt, 19 Challenor Close, Wokingham RG40 4UJ; [andrew\\_hutt@talktalk.net](mailto:andrew_hutt@talktalk.net)) BEFORE 1 September. Nomination forms were circulated with the previous newsletter.

The AGM will be followed by a talk by Beth Asbury entitled 'Religion and the Egyptian afterlife'.

## BAS Membership

**BAS subscriptions for the year 2012-2013 were due in April.** Will members whose subscriptions are still outstanding please note that if your subscription remains unpaid this will be your last BAS newsletter. If you are unsure of your current status please ask! (Anne Harrison, Membership Secretary, 0118 978 5520, [anne@jaharrison.me.uk](mailto:anne@jaharrison.me.uk) )

## Berkshire Historic Environment Forum 2012

The next meeting of the BHEF will take place on Saturday 6 October at The Cornerstone, Norreys Avenue, Wokingham RG40 1UE from 10.00 am to 4.30 pm, cost £10. The theme of the meeting will be 'Timber-framed buildings: how do we recognise them, what were they for, who lived and worked in them, and how do we protect them?'

Please refer to the previous newsletter for the meeting programme, or visit [www.berksarch.co.uk](http://www.berksarch.co.uk)

## An invitation to attend the Queen's Diamond Jubilee celebrations

A large envelope with the Queen's coat of arms embossed on the back had dropped through the letter boxes of Andrew Hutt and Trevor Coombs. It was Her Majesty's invitation for us both to attend her Diamond Jubilee Thanksgiving Service at St Paul's cathedral on 5 June and to have lunch in the Guildhall afterwards. There was a slightly onerous requirement that we had to be seated in St Pauls by 9.30 am so we would not be in the way of the Really Important People.

Andrew arrived just as the doors were opening at 8.30 and reserved two seats well up the nave so we would have a good view. We were close to the state trumpeters of the Household Cavalry and the Band of the Welsh Guards who played music by Handel, Elgar, Beethoven, Mendelssohn and Debussy, and we were treated to a first class concert. Our 'order of service' gave us the timing of events at five minute intervals. The Queen was preceded by the King of Arms, heralds and pursuivants, followed by the Queen's body guard of the Yeomen of the Guard and then Her Majesty's body guard of the Honourable Corps of Gentlemen at Arms carrying miniature halberds over their shoulders. We knew exactly from where Gilbert and Sullivan had obtained their ideas.

When the royal party returned to the Great West Door, they passed within a few feet of us. We could see how tall and elegant the Duchess of Cambridge was. As Camilla and Charles walked past, the Duchess of Cornwall looked in our direction. Trevor took the liberty of smiling at her and she smiled back, thus making his morning. As the royal party left the cathedral, the guests were formed into a long crocodile and conducted to the Guildhall about ten minutes walk away. The Queen, meanwhile, had nipped into the Mansion House to greet the Lord Mayor before her car rushed her to Westminster Hall where she had lunch with the Really Great and Good. [Cont ...]

B  
E  
R  
K  
S  
H  
I  
R  
E

By this time we were in the main hall of the 12th century Guildhall mixing with the Lesser Great and Good. Andrew talked to the Director of the V&A, whilst Trevor talked to his wife, an art historian interested in archaeology. Trevor moved on to talk to the trauma surgeon who attended accidents and fights in the East End of London. *'You see low life as you never thought it would be'*, was his laconic remark. His wife was a landscape gardener and we discussed the specimen trees one would plant in a new garden. Trevor also met the managing director of Classic FM and took the opportunity to tell him how excruciatingly awful the ads were on his station. He agreed and said, *'Well, it brings in much needed money'*, presumably for the shareholders. By now we were enjoying the Lord Mayor's smoked salmon and wine, whilst we listened to addresses by satellite on a television screen. And then home, suitably overawed with our morning. (**Trevor Coombs**, Chairman)

---

## BAS Spring Tour 2012

On Friday 11 May around 30 members of BAS and BARG met at the old Beeline bus station in Reading and headed for Wiltshire, Somerset and Bristol. We passed some notable sites including Stonehenge on the way to our first stop for refreshments at the Wilton Carpet Factory shopping outlet. Some members visited the Italianate church. We made a brief stop to admire the remaining Fovant Badges [military badges cut into the chalk downland] and glimpsed the Westbury White Horse in the distance as we headed for the hexagonal Old Wardour Castle. From there we proceeded to Farleigh Hungerford Castle for a guided tour, before finally driving through Cheddar Gorge and on to our hotel on the front at Weston-super-Mare.



On Saturday we awoke to a bright blue sky and sunshine but a biting wind. We headed to Wells where members took their choice of visiting the cathedral, Vicars' Close, the museum, the Bishop's Palace, or the town and market. Our next visit was to St Mary's Church at Huish Episcopi, one of the 'Quantock Group' with its impressive tower and Romanesque door, but unfortunately it was closed. From there we moved on to Curry Rivel and St Andrew's Church, well known for its 'hunky punks' [carved grotesques] and a tomb surrounded by effigies of the occupant's children. Afterwards members enjoyed a video, a cream tea and a look around the Willows and Wetlands Centre. From there we travelled past the famous Isle of Athelney to Barrow Mump where the more daring climbed up to the ruined church for an excellent view of the still partially flooded Somerset Levels. En route back to our hotel we passed the Willow Man of the West. After dinner John Heritage gave a very interesting

talk on Alfred the Great which was followed by a lively discussion.

Our first visit on Sunday was to the West Somerset Railway where members enjoyed a steam train trip from Bishop's Lydiard through some beautiful scenery to Minehead. From there we proceeded to Dunster where we were free to visit the castle, its gardens and the attractions of the village: the water mill, dovecote, tithe barn, church and yarn market. Our final visit of the day was to Cleve Abbey, where we admired the remains of the tiled floor of the old refectory and the magnificent wooden ceiling of the new one.

Monday's visits began in a stiff cold wind and drizzle which did not dampen an interesting and amusing guided tour of the Clifton Suspension Bridge. When we reached the SS Great Britain it was raining heavily. Fortunately the first part of the tour was inside and by the time members came out onto the deck the rain had ceased for the day. Our next stop was Bristol city centre where members were free to visit the cathedral, the Cabot Tower, the New Room and other places of interest. Our final visit of this tour was to the Bristol Blue Glass factory, where we were treated to a demonstration of glass blowing complete with its history, a video and tea and biscuits.

On behalf of all those who took part in this year's Spring Tour, many and sincere thanks to Keith Goodlake our coach driver for some nifty driving and to Barrie and Annette Randall for researching and organising this trip. (**Julie Worsfold**)

---

*The copy date for the next newsletter is Friday 2 November – please send all contributions to the Editor*

## Summer Walks and Visits

### Eagle House School, Crowthorne

A group of BAS and BARG members met at Eagle House School for a walk and tour led by former teacher Douglas Buchanan on a cool, but mostly rain free, evening on 21 June. The school was built as a doctor's surgery in the 1840s and became a school in the 1880s. We were taken through the grounds to see the Tudor House (built 2003 with the enthusiastic support of Prince Charles), the site of a WWII plane crash and the site of a demolished manor house. Doug's commentary included many amusing anecdotes and tales of life in a prep school. Inside we visited the chapel, a prefabricated building which has been moved twice already, and then the magnificent hall for refreshments. The original owner had spent lavishly on details, such as stained glass, Tudor-style panelling and overmantel carvings. A look into the cellars, used as bomb shelters during the war and now as stock rooms, completed a most entertaining and enjoyable visit. (Anne Harrison)

### Knowl Hill Walk

On a grey, rainy evening on 4 July a group of ten BARG and BAS members met in the lay-by by the now redundant Seven Stars public house and barn, which is to be redeveloped as three dwellings. The aim was to walk through the countryside which BARG has been researching by geophysics over the last three years. From the top of Knowl Hill Common we could see where the geophysics results and artefacts from molehills indicated an Iron Age settlement and a long-lost tithe barn. The five cottages marked on the 1609 map were still in use. Walking along a cart track to Littlewick Green we saw the vast wheat fields on the river terrace where we have found evidence of Iron Age and Roman settlement. Once we had entered Littlewick Green near Ivor Novello's house 'Redroofs', we hung up our raincoats at 'The Cricketers' and looked forward to another season of research. (Ann Griffin)

### A walk round Warfield

On a pleasant evening on 19 July members met in north Bracknell for a walk led by Hugh Barty-King, the Bracknell Forest Ranger and Footpath Officer. Our walk took in the history of Warfield, from the Iron Age farmsteads nearby to the old tracks and lanes that crossed the parish to the village itself. Warfield is a scattered community with its heart as a ribbon development along the Forest Road. Having driven that way many times, it was a revelation that there were so many old buildings along there, including the wheelwright, the baker, the old police station and the animal pound, along with a few attractive timber-framed houses. The walk took us back into the edge of Bracknell and the site of the Thomas Lawrence brick works, which had been operating until 1985 and is now covered by a housing estate. One of the clay pits is still there, hidden away, the site of a protected newt colony.

Hugh's knowledgeable commentary was fascinating and BAS is most grateful to him for giving up his evening to show us this area. The sad fact is that much of the open land we walked through will be developed for housing in the near future. (Anne Harrison)

### Silchester

There was a good turn out for the BAS visit to the annual University of Reading excavation at Insula IX in Silchester on 28 July. We were issued with head sets and Prof. Mike Fulford invited us to climb onto the raised walkways, from where we could hear every word of his description of the site as he wandered around pointing out different features while talking into a microphone.

This is the 16th season of excavation in Insula IX. The excavation area contained only timber buildings with post holes or beam slots, and covers about 25% of the area of the complete insula. The east side of the trench shows the edge of the north-south Roman street, where lines in the gravel mark the successive remetalling of this street again and again, resulting in a 1.5 m build-up of the road surface over the four to five centuries of Roman occupation. The north side of the trench is defined by the east-west street, and the next east-west street on the south side of the insula shows as a slight bank in the adjacent field. The west half of the trench has now been excavated down to Iron Age levels and the gravel bedrock is exposed in places; the east half is still in the early Roman levels. The Roman north-south street grid replaced a pre-Roman northwest-southeast grid. A large Iron Age ditch on this orientation preceded a metalled road that became a major thoroughfare in the late 1st century BC. Another, slightly later, Iron Age road was constructed at right angles to this, and this latter road then curved to head east: it is suspected that it originally ran beneath the line of the Roman east-west street but later turned to avoid this and run parallel to it instead. There is no sharp cut-off between Iron Age and Roman occupation: round houses were still being built at the end of the 1st century AD and a massive rectangular Iron Age building still under excavation, possibly the home of an Atrabatic sub-chief, is expected to reach over 20 m in length.

Early military artefacts and a possible military latrine pit argue for a short-lived and early Roman take-over of the Iron Age town. The town was densely occupied during the latter part of the 1st century AD. Much of the way of life has been revealed by the contents of wells – one currently being investigated has yielded blackberry and apple pips and the burial of a cat in a large jar – and the numerous finds, among which are brooches, beads, a toilet set (comprising ear scoop, tweezers and nail cleaner), various drinking vessels and gaming pieces including a weighted dice! (Janet Sharpe)

---

## ***BAS Autumn and Winter Saturday Afternoon Meetings at 2.00 for 2.30 pm***

***20 October at RISC: Judy Dewey (Wallingford Museum) – Wallingford, from burgh to borough***

***17 November at the Berkshire Record Office: Peter Durrant (BRO) – Ancient maps in the Berkshire Record Office***

***8 December at RISC: Anne Dodd (Oxford Archaeology) – The Anglo-Saxons in the Thames Valley***

## Other Society Meetings

### Berkshire Archaeological Research Group (BARG)

Wednesday 3 October: The BARG Autumn Quarterly Open Meeting will be held in Room 3 at RISC, London Street, Reading (**please note the change of venue**) from 7.30-9.30 pm. Mike Green and Nancy Nichols of the South Oxfordshire Archaeological Group will present an overview of recent SOAG projects, including the search for the lost medieval church of Bix Gibwyn and investigations into what is probably a Bronze Age mound near Rotherfield Greys. After the break, Trevor Ottlewski will talk about Ashridge (Wokingham), its manor, farm house and lost park.

### South Oxfordshire Archaeological Group (SOAG)

Meetings are held at Goring Heath Parish Hall, Whitchurch Hill, at 7.30 for 7.45 pm. Visitors £3, members free. For more details visit the SOAG website at <http://www.soagarch.org.uk>.

Thursday 27 September: 'Footsteps in the past: prehistoric intertidal archaeology in the Severn Estuary', a talk by Martin Bell (University of Reading).

Thursday 25 October: 'A bird's eye view: archaeological aerial survey', a talk by Helen Winton (English Heritage).

Thursday 22 November: 'Saxon Reading: new discoveries and interpretations', a talk by Katie Meheux (University College London).

### Marlow Archaeological Society (MAS)

Meetings are held in the Garden Room, Liston Hall, Marlow, starting at 8.00 pm. Visitors £3.50, members £2.50. See the MAS website at <http://www.marlow-archaeology.org>.

Thursday 20 September: 'Manors and manorial documents in South Bucks and East Berks', a talk by Sarah Charlton.

Thursday 18 October: 'The archaeology of Rochester Cathedral', a talk by Graham Keevill.

Thursday 29 November: 'A hidage to nothing? Military organisation and the origin of the shires in southern England'. David Roffe will describe how the *Burghal Hidage* and later local government reorganisation resulted in the counties we know today.

---

## Adult Education: Autumn Term 2012

### WEA Reading Branch

Courses are held at the Hamilton Centre, 135 Bulmershe Road, Reading. Ten two-hour meetings cost £85.00. Website: <http://southern.wea.org.uk>.

#### Courses include:

Archaeology of the British Isles, by Mark Anderson, starting on Monday 24 September at 10.30 am.

The apogee of ancient Egypt, by John Billman, starting on Wednesday 26 September at 2.00 pm.

### Oxford University Courses in Reading

Evening courses are now held at the London Road Campus, Reading, from 7.00-9.00 pm. Ten meetings cost £145.00. Consult the website: [www.conted.ox.ac.uk/](http://www.conted.ox.ac.uk/) for more details, also for archaeology courses held in Oxford.

#### Courses include:

The human legacy: the rise of modern man and the origins of behaviour and art, by Wei Chu, starting on Monday 1 October.

Archaeology and ethics, by Fay Stevens, starting on Tuesday 2 October.

Who were the Celts? by Jennifer Foster, starting on Wednesday 3 October.

African archaeology: from caves to capitals, by Mark Anderson, starting on Thursday 4 October.

### Oxford University Course at Woodley

At Waingels College, Waingels Road, Woodley, from 7.15-9.15 pm: Ten meetings, cost £145.00.

How Britain joined the Roman Empire, by Roger Goodburn, starting on Thursday 27 September.

## 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:** Trevor Coombs  
01491 873 166  
t.coombs1@btoopenworld.com

**Secretary:** Andrew Hutt  
0118 9732 882  
andrew\_hutt@talktalk.net

**Treasurer:** Catherine Petts  
01235 831 463  
catherine@petts.co.uk

**Programme Organiser:**  
Trevor Coombs

**Day School Organiser:**  
Trevor Coombs

**Excursion Organiser:**  
Barrie Randall  
0118 983 2607  
banda.burghfield@hotmail.co.uk

**Newsletter Editor:** Janet Sharpe  
01491 202 552  
janet@jrsrharpe83.plus.com

**Librarians:** to be announced

**For more information about the Society and membership details contact the Secretary: Andrew Hutt on 0118 973 2882.**

[www.berksarch.co.uk](http://www.berksarch.co.uk)  
email: [info@berksarch.co.uk](mailto:info@berksarch.co.uk)