



ARCHAEOLOGY

The Newsletter of the Berkshire Archaeological Society

Spring 2009

Vol 11, No 1

DAY SCHOOL REMINDER!

Our annual day school will take place on Saturday 7th March starting at 10.00 a.m. This time the venue is The Cornerstone Hall, Wokingham, Berkshire, RG40 1UE. Admission is £10 per person (no concessions) and you pay at the door!

Archaeological Walks and Visits

Wednesday 27th May 2009: Visit to the excavations at Basing House, Nr. Basingstoke.

There are excavations at Basing House near Basingstoke during the last three weeks of May. I am arranging a visit on 27th May (the last week of the excavations). This will be in either the afternoon or evening depending on numbers. If you would like to come on a Society organised visit please contact me by phone or email with your preference for an afternoon or evening visit.

Thursday 4th June 2009: Grimsbury Castle and Bucklebury Common, north of Thatcham.

We will be looking at an Iron Age hillfort, a drove road and some ancient woodland. This walk will start at 19:00 at the entrance to Grimsbury Castle (NGR. SU51057233) and is some 3-4 km long depending on the chosen route.

Wednesday 17th June 2009: Hurley priory and village.

Hurley was the site of a priory. Excavations in 1930 found features from the original priory church while papers in the Berkshire Archaeological Journal gives detail of the priory and its dissolution. This walk round the village starts at the village church at 19:00.

If you would like to come to these walks, please contact me.

There will be other walks in June and July; they will be advertised in the next newsletter.

Andrew Hutt

Digitising the Berkshire Archaeological Journals

The work of digitising all the journals published by the Society from 1878 to 2008 is now complete. The last pages were scanned in December 2008 and sent off to York. The next steps are for the Archaeology Data Service to put everything published up to volume 70 online; they will be available for free, and for the CBA to make the last 7 journals accessible online via ArchLib; where you will be asked to pay to download articles. I have been assured that this will have been completed by end of February. (Please don't ask which February?).

Andrew Hutt

The first years of the Society

In 2006, as part reorganising the Society's library at Reading University, School of Continuing Education, I deposited a considerable archive of the Society's early papers at the Berkshire Record Office. A few weeks ago, Sabina Sutherland, a Senior Archivist, sent me a revised catalogue of these materials. More interestingly she provided a summary of the early history of the Society. With her evidence, the following is now clear.

The Society was founded in 1871 as the Reading Architectural Association, in February 1872, it changed its name to the Reading Architectural and Archaeological Society, and in December 1873, it changed its name to the Berkshire Architectural and Archaeological Society. This was the organisation which published the first transactions and journals. By 1884, it was known popularly as the Berkshire Archaeological Society; the name which appeared on the front first issue of the Berks, Bucks. And Oxon, Archaeological Journal in 1895.

Andrew Hutt

BERKSHIRE

Meetings

One wet Saturday afternoon about 20 BAS members assembled in the hall of Shaw House, Newbury, for our December meeting and the first group visit to the building. Our visit started with a talk by the Manager of Shaw House. There was a Medieval Manor to the west of the current house. The latter was built in 1581 on the cusp of an architectural change from Medieval to Classical and has elements of both. The courtyard, for example, is Medieval. The house was built for the Dolman family, wealthy cloth merchants from Newbury and owned by them for six generations during the remainder of the Tudor and Stuart periods. During this time it was visited by various Kings and Queens on royal progresses. In 1644 it served as the headquarters for Charles I during the second battle of Newbury. In 1728 the house was sold to the Duke of Chandos. Later it was sold to the Andrews family who, in turn, sold it in 1905 to the Honourable Mrs Kathleen Farquar, a wealthy Edwardian widow.

At the outbreak of World War II the property was requisitioned and used by the British and later the US forces. In February 1943 after Newbury was bombed it was used as emergency accommodation for the local senior school which stayed until 1985 when the building was declared structurally unsafe. At this point the panelling was taken down and numbered in order to preserve it.

West Berkshire's impetus to find a solution started in the 1990s and funding was sought. The first phase of the restoration work was extensive involving repair to the historic fabric of the house, preserving and reusing material where possible. Many traditional building techniques were used to undertake the work. However, the house has not been restored to a particular period. Instead the restoration shows the various changes which have occurred and allows the visitor to experience these.

Two more phases of work are planned once sufficient funding is available. Both involve changes to the grounds during which archaeological investigations will be carried out.

We were left to explore the premises at our own pace and we all met up in the café afterwards to share our experiences.

At our January meeting Tom Wilson of Atkins Heritage spoke to us about 'Society and the pace of change in Iron Age settlements near Dorchester-on-Thames'. The excavations were conducted by 101 archaeologists over a 6 year period around the natural gas pipeline from Chalgrove to East Ilsley. There were 32 small excavation sites and two larger excavation sites in the vicinities of Berwick Salome and Brightwell-cum-Sotwell. The excavations produced a lot of data dating from the Early Iron Age through to the Roman era, but with limitations as the trenches were only 30 metres wide.

At Berwick Salome there was evidence of between 12 and 22 round houses in the form of post holes and ring gullies, but

the archaeology was indeterminate. There was no indication of round houses in the late Iron Age. The largest dated to the Middle Iron Age and was 17.5 metres in diameter. The average diameter was 12 metres. The smaller round houses are thought to have been ancillary buildings. Such may be indicative of farmsteads. A grain storage pit was also found. The evidence of round houses at Brightwell-cum-Sotwell also matched this pattern, the average diameter being 11 metres and the smallest 6. The construction of the round houses was mainly the same throughout the different periods although there was evidence of some changes which may be improvements in design. The doors to the round houses faced eastwards varying between 81 and 117 degrees. It is difficult to determine if this is so that they face the sunrise or keep out of the prevailing wind. But one of the round houses had an entrance facing south. The reason for this is unknown. Was it used for storage or as a workshop or for shamanistic purposes?

Evidence of horses, cattle, sheep, pigs, spelt wheat, barley, emmer wheat, rye and oats were also found. Cattle were probably the most important animals, although sheep the most prevalent, although there is evidence that there was a decline in sheep relative to cattle. In the Early Iron Age sheep were slaughtered young, by the Middle Iron Age they were kept for several years before slaughtering. Pigs were semi-feral and killed between 18 months and 2 years of age. Horses were also slaughtered.

The treatment of human remains after death may be indicative of changes occurring in society. Early and Middle Iron Age burials revealed partial and disarticulated remains of many individuals, whilst Late Iron Age burials were individual and included artefacts. Burials also became less crouched and more supine.

The two brooches, two pins and two rings found in Berwick Salome and the two brooches found at Brightwell-cum-Sotwell were all dated to the Late Iron Age, again denoting an increasing concern with self expression.

The study concludes that the settlements and landscapes developed at varying speeds in different areas. There were differences between Berwick Salome and Brightwell-cum-Sotwell for example. The settlements were networked rather than independent. It is suspected that each settlement had its specialisation, but no evidence for this has been found. There is no evidence of social stratification until the end of the Iron Age. However, there is a caveat in as much as the different building sizes may indicate different levels of wealth. The economy is believed to have developed without any social changes until just before the Roman invasion. There were changes to the economic and social landscape in the 1st century in the wake of the Roman conquest, but the landscape stagnated in the 2nd and 3rd centuries.

The Editor

The Archaeology Festival, Cardiff 2009

The Festival is beginning to be somewhat of a tradition since this is its second year organised by Current Archaeology. Archaeologists of all persuasions descended on Cardiff for a weekend crammed with lectures and events. The talks were presented in two basic streams, being Roman and Medieval, but interpretation of the streams was loose and pre-history and Vikings also made an appearance. With twelve lectures each day in each of two locations, there was no lack of choice. Talks which stand out in my mind were an elegant discourse on polished jade stone axes from high in the Swiss mountains, and another on how to build a castle. Saturday evening also saw the presentation of the Current Archaeology awards, and on Sunday there was a performance of specially composed 'Neanderthal' music. An added bonus was the lack of snow in Cardiff when the rest of the country was still suffering. Next year's Festival will be in the British Museum on the 27th to 28th February 2010. Put the date in your diaries now!

Anne Harrison

Jo Graham, 1911-2009



Jo Graham died on 13 January 2009. She was 97 and still an active member of the BAS, serving on Council and regularly attending meetings and other events. She had been a member of the Society since 1954. She was a founder member of both the Society's field group in 1958 and of the Maidenhead Archaeological

and Historical Society in 1960. She was a volunteer at the Museum of London until 2000.

If all this activity to such an advanced age was remarkable it should not surprise us; the first 40 years of her life reads like a novel. Jo was born in Haiphong, Vietnam (formerly French Indo-China), where her father was the manager of an international telegraph company. He later took up a post in Hong Kong. Jo's mother died there when Jo was only 6 years old. Jo was then looked after by a Chinese amah and remembers chatting in Chinese with the amah's children. Like other colonial children Jo was sent back to England to be educated. When she left school she returned to Hong Kong to be with her father.

Eventually the family returned to England and her father bought a hotel in Christchurch where Jo met her husband, Roddy, a civil engineer employed by the Sudan Railways. They had two daughters, Susan and Julie, who stayed in England when Jo and Roddy went to the Sudan where their son, Jamie was born. When the Italians invaded the Sudan from Abyssinia (Ethiopia) in the Second World War Jo, Roddy and Jamie had to make their escape. They encountered many hardships on a difficult journey but finally made it to South Africa and boarded a ship at Cape Town. On the way home the convoy in which they were travelling was attacked by German U-boats. They arrived safely England in March 1944 and, re-united with Susan and Julie, they lived first in Ealing. It was cold after the Sudan and Jo remembered rationing and sheltering under the kitchen table during German V1 bombing attacks. From Ealing they moved to Maidenhead where she lived for the rest of her life.

When and why Jo's interest in archaeology started is not known, but for over 50 years she was at the heart of archaeology in Berkshire. She was a member of the BAS for over 50 years and was a member of Council for about 50 of those years. Later, under the old BAS constitution, Jo was elected a vice-President, an honorary position that recognised her remarkable service to the Society and which entitled her to attend all Council meetings and for the rest of her life, even when increasing frailty made attendance more difficult, she rarely missed a meeting. In recent years this was thanks to her friend Edna Goodburn, who brought her to meetings in her wheelchair. Jo was at our November meeting at RISC, as ever, ready with a question for the speaker at the end of the talk. She only missed the 2008 Spring Tour because of a fall a few days before it started. She was looking forward to the Day School in March.

She was a founder member of the Berkshire Field Research Group (BFRG), formed as the field group of the Society and which later became the independent Berkshire Archaeological Research Group (BARG). She was excavating as a member of the group even before its inaugural meeting in June 1958. From April to November 1958, Jo was digging at an early

Roman site in Strand Castle Gravel Pit, Cookham. In the same year she was also working with other members of the BFRG in Rotherfield Peppard at Highlands Farm with John Wymer. From 1966 to 1970 she worked from time to time at Spencer's Farm.

Her major contribution to archaeology in Berkshire, however, was through her excavations with the Maidenhead Archaeological and Historical Society, a society she helped to found in 1960. The list of excavations she took part in with them from 1960 until the Society ceased major excavations in the late 1980s is a roll call of archaeology in East Berkshire at that time; Robins Hood Arbour (1958-60), Cox Green Roman villa, the Roman pottery kilns at Camley Gardens (1964), the Belgic site at Knowle Hill, the Roman cemetery at Bray are just some of the major sites she was involved in, and there was an even longer list of smaller excavations. Despite her undoubted expertise, Jo never wished to direct or supervise an excavation. But Griselda Truscott-Wickes remembers being put in her charge on her first excavation, a prehistoric site at Ufton Nervet, directed by Bill Manning from Reading Museum. She remembers feeling quite terrified of her at first, but not for long. Jo had a sharp mind but was essentially a kind person.

Archaeology also had its lighter side. Jo was keen on producing home made wines, which she served when she hosted committee meetings of the Maidenhead Society. On one occasion within half an hour the majority of the committee were nearly asleep, so potent were her wines. Many will also remember her driving around in her bright yellow Ford Anglia ex-Post Office Telephones van.

In the 1980s the nature of archaeology changed, with PPG 16, Developer funding and the growth of commercial archaeology, societies like Maidenhead and the BFRG no longer had the opportunities to undertake the excavations they had previously done. By this time Jo had reached her 80s and might have been expected to accept this as the end of her active life as an archaeologist, but she began to travel every week to the Museum of London Archaeological Service warehouse in Limehouse to assist in the processing of objects from their various London excavations. She made light of the lengthy train & underground journey and continued once a week until she was nearly 90 when increasing frailty finally made the journey impossible. Jo was a steward at St George's Chapel, Windsor Castle and at the Maidenhead Heritage Centre, of which she was, again, a founder member.

Jo participated in three seasons of excavations in St. Lucia, investigating Carib Indian sites. She also went on many archaeological tours in the UK and overseas. Her constant companion on these trips was Edna Goodburn. The country they visited most was Jordan. Jo's favourite archaeological site there was the ancient red rock city of Petra, which she only managed to visit once but to which she always wanted to return. Jo and Edna were members of the Anglo-Jordanian Society and regularly travelled to London for meetings.

When the history of archaeology in Berkshire comes to be written, Jo's name will feature largely. There can be few excavations undertaken by local societies in east Berkshire in the second half of the twentieth century in which Jo did not have some involvement.

All the societies Jo was involved with and the Museum of London were well represented at her funeral on 22 January. It was truly the end of an era.

Catherine Petts with thanks to Trevor Jones, Luke Over, Edna Goodburn, Janet Firth and Griselda Truscott-Wickes. Photo: Sylvia Chumbley

ADULT EDUCATION – PART-TIME COURSES SUMMER TERM, 2009

READING UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF CONTINUING EDUCATION

Morning Courses

Humps and bumps: archaeological landscapes

Evening Courses

Egyptian hieroglyphs: a further introduction

Bodies of evidence: forensic archaeology

Dayschools

Ancient Egypt and the Aegean

Other courses

The prehistoric environment of the Avebury Landscape

Details from: The School of Continuing Education, University of Reading, London Road, Reading, RG1 5AQ. Tel: 0118 378 8347. E-mail: continuing-education@reading.ac.uk

Web site: www.reading.ac.uk/conted

OXFORD UNIVERSITY DEPARTMENT FOR CONTINUING EDUCATION

Evening Courses

How Humans Colonised the World

Day and Weekend Schools

An Introduction to Architecture for Archaeologists

Archaeology Survey Week

Area Assessments of the Historic Environments

Building Survey Week

Excavation Week 1

Historic Gardens, Parks and Designed Landscapes: Identifying Threats and Develop

Medieval and Post-Medieval Ceramics – Technological Aspects

Planning and the Historic Environment: Sharing Church Space and the Pastoral

Public Enquiry Workshop

Short Course in Radiocarbon Dating

Stone Tools in Archaeology – A Practical Introduction

The Rural Historic Environment: Heritage Management of the Countryside in the 21st Century

Online

Exploring Roman Britain

Origins of Human Behaviour

Pompeii and the Cities of the Roman World

Ritual and Religion in Prehistory

Vikings: Raiders, Traders and Settlers

Summer Schools

The Archaeology of Medieval English Palaces

Masterpieces of Egyptian Art

Archaeology and Religion in Ancient Israel and Judah

Economy and Society in the Early Middle Ages

Exploring Ancient Egypt through the Nile Delta

The Seventeenth Century English Village

The Architectural Development of the English Parish Church

Assyria: Gods, Kings and Scholars in Ancient Iraq

Details from: OUDCE, 1, Wellington Square, Oxford, OX1 2JA.

Tel: 01865 270360; Fax: 01865 270309 email: enquiries@conted.ox.ac.uk

Web site: www.conted.ox.ac.uk

Spring Tour

If you are interested in joining the Society's Spring Tour to North Wales based on Llandudno from 15th to 18th May 2009, please contact Barrie Randall on 0118 983 2607.

Newsletter distribution

Email distribution of the Society's newsletter is now up and running. If you have elected to receive the newsletter by email, please make sure the Society has your current email address.

BERKSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY



Patron: H.M. THE QUEEN
President: Professor
Michael Fulford 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: Andrew Hutt

0118 973 2882

andrew_hutt@talktalk.net

Secretary: Trevor Coombs

01491 873 166

t.coombs1@btopenworld.com

Treasurer: Catherine Petts

01235 831 463

catherine@petts.co.uk

Programme Organiser:

Andrew Hutt

Day School Organiser:

Trevor Coombs

Excursion Organiser:

Barrie Randall

0118 983 2607

banda.burghfield@hotmail.com

Newsletter Editor:

Julie Worsfold

0118 926 2270

jlw@imagesmad.co.uk

Librarian: Andrew Hutt

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

www.berksarch.co.uk

email info@berksarch.co.uk