



ARCHAEOLOGY

The Newsletter of the Berkshire Archaeological Society

Winter 2013

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The Annual General Meeting

This year's AGM took place at the start of the 21st September meeting at RISC, London Street, Reading. Highlights of the meeting were the Chairman's very positive report, the acceptance of the accounts for the year 2012-2013, and the annual election of officers, Council members and trustees.

The current officers of the Society are: Chairman, Ann Griffin; Secretary, none elected; Treasurer, Andrew Hutt. The Council members and trustees are: Dave Carless, John Chapman (Chair Berkshire Historic Environment Forum), Anne Harrison (Membership Secretary), Ron Knowles (Tour Organiser), Catherine Petts (Journal Editor), Barrie Randall and Griselda Truscott-Wickes.

The positions of Secretary, Newsletter editor and Librarian remains vacant: in the meantime, all queries relating to the Newsletter or the Libraries should be directed to Andrew Hutt.

ARCHAEOLOGY IN BERKSHIRE DAY SCHOOL

The Society will be hosting an exciting selection of talks at the Annual Day School on Saturday 1 March 2014 at St Nicolas Church Hall, Newbury RG14 5HG from 10.00 am to 4.30 pm.

The programme includes news from Horton Quarry, Professor Fulford talking about Iron Age Silchester, and presentations on farming and settlements landscapes in the Silchester hinterland, aerial photography and remote sensing, Iron Age metal working in Slough and a Roman villa near Boxford.

No advance booking is needed; the cost is £10.00, payable at the door. Parking for the disabled is adjacent and there is plenty of space in local car parks. Please bring a packed lunch or eat out in Wokingham.
Trevor Coombs

More Dates for your Diary

BAS Saturday afternoon talks coming up are:

Mesolithic Archaeology in the Severn Estuary by Professor Martin Bell (Reading University) on 14 December 2013 at RISC, London Street, Reading RG1 4PS, at 2.00 for a 2.30 pm start

Mummy portraits from Roman Egypt by Professor Brian Sparkes on 11 January 2014 at 2pm *to be held at Oakwood Centre Woodley, RG5 4JB*

Exploring Trajan's aquaduct, by Ted and Mick O'Neil on 15 February 2014 at RISC, London Street, Reading RG1 4PS, at 2.00 for a 2.30 pm start

Old Windsor, by Dr David Lewis on 15 March 2014, at RISC, London Street, Reading RG1 4PS, at 2.00 for a 2.30 pm start

Roman Social life, by Dr. Hella Eckardt on 19 April 2014 at RISC, London Street, Reading RG1 4PS, at 2.00 for a 2.30 pm start

BERKSHIRE

Accounts of Saturday talks

Saxons in the Thames Valley

The BAS AGM lecture on 21 September was presented by Katie Meheux (University College London), who regaled us with a fact-packed tour of Anglo-Saxon Reading. Much information can be gleaned online from 'grey literature' reports, historic environment records (HERs) and the Portable Antiquities Scheme website, in addition to documentary sources such as Anglo-Saxon charters and numerous other historical records.

The Romans left a late coin scatter to mark their presence, and a sub-Roman cemetery was found at Crane Wharf by the Kennet. The sub-Roman and early Anglo-Saxon periods were straddled by a cemetery at Earley, which yielded double-animal headed buckles with military connotations, better known from Dorchester-on-Thames. Scatters of Saxon pottery have been found over most of Reading and there was a settlement and cemetery in the Forbury area in the 7th to 8th centuries: two burials found near the Rising Sun pub showed evidence of hard labour and arrested development due to food shortages, so this was not a wealthy settlement. Reading is thought to have been one of the *ingas* groups found along the Thames at river confluences and fords, which probably represented small tribal or clan units; other examples are at Sonning and Goring.

The Vikings attacked Reading in 871 and took control for a year: their presence is attested by burials containing characteristic Viking weaponry, and ritual deposits in the Thames. There may have been a Viking settlement in the Abbey/prison area, built on a promontory in former marshland at the confluence of the Thames and Kennet. As an interesting aside, Katie commented on the name of Vastern Road: was this derived from *vasters*, meaning Viking defences, or *wasterns*, wasteland? Later Saxon Reading was probably a royal estate with a minster church and an important nunnery. It expanded and became a boom town under Edward the Confessor and had its own mint. By the time of the Norman conquest, the king had 'given away' Southcote, a former Northcote and various other 'cotes', showing that Reading had already spread over a wide area.

Janet Sharpe

Reconstructing Ancient Rome

On 19 October Dr Matthew Nicholls (Classics Department, University of Reading) talked about his project on the digital reconstruction of the city of Rome in the year AD 315. Whereas architectural and archaeological site plans present 2D images of buildings

and artistic attempts to reconstruct buildings from these plans only offer a fixed point of view, 3D models enable the building to be viewed from all sides.

A model of the entire city of ancient Rome was commissioned by Mussolini in 1935, designed by the archaeologist Italo Gismondi to a scale of 1:250 and constructed in plaster by Pierino Di Carlo. They continued to work on the model until 1973. It measures 17m square and is currently displayed in Rome. Impressive though this is, it is fragile, expensive and impossible to modify in the light of new archaeological discoveries.

In contrast, digital 3D models can be adapted and rotated and viewed from any angle. Walls can be removed and buildings sectioned to reveal internal details such as staircases, and the models can be altered to explore different hypotheses relating to their construction. Fine details can be added to give a vivid impression of an ancient building. We were shown a digital reconstruction of the Library of Celsus at Ephesus which the viewer can 'enter' and open the book cupboards to see the scrolls inside. Such reconstructions are favoured by TV companies and Dr Nicholls has been commissioned to produce several, including a 3D reconstruction of the Roman fort of Inchtuthil in Scotland. His project on the entire city of Rome has taken five years so far and work is continuing. The choice was made to show all the buildings in pristine condition, although some would have been nearly 500 years old by AD 315. However, the depth of archaeological information is not uniform across the city. Whereas the structure of many public buildings is well-known, there remain large gaps in the city plan which require much guesswork and conjecture. Clues are provided by rare survivals of Roman buildings and fragments of a unique marble, 1:240 scale map of Rome, the *Forma Urbis Romae*, made in the early 3rd century. Most of this has subsequently been destroyed and what remains was likened to '10% of a jigsaw with no box lid'. The reconstruction is primarily used for teaching purposes but also has research applications. For example, the changing effects of light and shade in buildings at different times of the day have been studied to understand when they may have been used to best effect.

Digital reconstruction can be attempted by anyone with a computer and the free software Sketchup was recommended as a good user-friendly starting tool. Dr Nicholl's next project is a digital reconstruction of Silchester – watch this space!

Janet Sharpe

Interested in recording Berkshire's Historic Buildings?

There will be a meeting of Berkshire Building Recording project on Saturday 15 February 2014 in the Main Hall at RISC starting 11am and ending in time for lunch. This meeting is open to everybody.

The objectives of the meeting is to review what people who came on the training course in September 2013 have done and to plan work in 2014 which will enable us to record at least 100 buildings.

For more details contact Barrie Randall

Names on War Memorials

With the centenary of the Great War upon us, the public's attention is being drawn to both the archaeology and social history of communities which have contributed to military service. Berkshire has had a very special place in these aspects of our heritage, in army camps, regiments, hospitals, manufactories and battle sites with interest going back well into Saxon times. One particular set of objects is war memorials. Mostly they date from the First and Second World Wars but there are many for the Boer War and even back as far as the Civil War. Reading in particular has the Maiwand Lion in Forbury Gardens which lists the names of all the men of the 66th(Berkshire) Regiment of Foot who died in the 2nd Afghan war. Many local communities are taking a special interest in their war memorials at this time and trying to find out more about the men and women from these communities who served and died. For the past twenty years John Chapman has been researching the men who served with the Royal Berkshire Regiment and its predecessors, the 49th and 66th Foot, as well as men from the county who served in other regiments and has built up a database of around 140,000 names, with particular concern for those whose names appear on our county war memorials.

Having acquired so much valuable data he has been anxious to find a way such that his results could be preserved for posterity and also for all the other researchers across the county to preserve their data. About a year ago he approached Andrew Hutt for advice and guidance. Andrew concluded that although the information John had collected was socially significant its ongoing maintenance was probably outside the remit of the Berkshire Archaeological Society and as a result started working with John to develop an understanding of what he had achieved. This work has resulted in a document which describes the architecture of a large scale information system which is capable of supporting details of more than 7 million people and hence could be the basis for a nation-wide system. This work is attracting attention from a number of different organisations including the Imperial War Museum, the Commonwealth War Graves Commission and several councils in and around Berkshire as it includes what they have been trying to do without suffering the limitations which their charters impose.

If anyone is interested in working with John , Andrew and others on the development of this system and/or adding to the information that John has collected please contact John Chapman.

Conferences and courses

Theoretical Archaeology Group

This year's Theoretical Archaeology Group Conference is on 16th, 17th and 18th December at Bournemouth University at Poole.

This conference offers you the opportunity to delve into areas of archaeology that you will never hear discussed at Society meeting or on many university courses. For example, there are sessions on: prehistoric/Roman salt-production site;; bioarchaeology of bones; cognitive development as represented in the material culture; acoustic and pre-historic art; and hunter-gather landscapes. It also offers the opportunity to hear many of the country's best archaeologists talking about their recent research and to meet lots of interesting people and discuss their work with them.

Andrew and Anne Hutt are going to this conference so you won't be the only people from Berkshire Archaeological Society. For more details and registration go to: <http://microsites.bournemouth.ac.uk/tag2013>.

Roman Berkshire: A study in power and economics

Do you want to know more about the Romans in Berkshire? If so, this may interest you.

In January 2014, Andrew Hutt is teaching this course on behalf of the Reading Branch of the Workers Education Association. It runs on Wednesday mornings starting 15/1/2014 and ending 26/3/2014.

The course uses a combination of Roman documentary evidence and Roman archaeological evidence found in and around Berkshire to explain how society and economics changed over time and how power was shared between the Roman authorities and the Romano-British.

It will take the form of a workshop; those coming on the course will be encouraged to collect details of sites, interpret the archaeological evidence and develop their own views of the social and economic changes experienced by people living in and around Berkshire. If you want to enrol go to: <https://enrolonline.wea.org.uk/Online/2013/CourseInfo.aspx?ActivityID=296905>

The Roman Army - how it worked and what it did in Britain.

Following a brief general introduction, our investigations will concentrate mainly on the army of the first two centuries AD., with an emphasis on its work in Britain. First we shall examine the structure of the fighting forces, the differing characters of the legions and auxiliary troops, and their organisation and personnel. Also we shall look at the Roman fleet, and the special tasks which it undertook. We shall examine the successive stages of military careers from recruitment to discharge. Contemporary records of the many activities include literature, inscriptions on stone and day-to-day records on wooden tablets; and end-of-service diplomas. We shall examine marching camps forts, fortresses and other military installations, many of which are still visible or have been excavated, especially in northern England, Wales and Scotland. We shall link these to various military campaigns and their role in the security of the Province.

This is an Oxford University Course run by Bracknell and Wokingham College. If you want to enrol go to: <http://www.bracknell.ac.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.

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