



ARCHAEOLOGY

The Newsletter of the Berkshire Archaeological Society

Spring 2016

Vol.18, No.1

Day School Reminder

The Society's annual day school returns to Newbury with another exciting programme of recent archaeological work in Berkshire. It will be held on Saturday 2 April 2016 at St Nicolas Hall Church Hall, Newbury, RG14 5HG, 10.00 a.m. to 4.00 p.m. The cost is £10, payable at the door (please note that lunch is not provided). Please consult the BAS website (www.berksarch.co.uk) or contact Trevor Coombs (tacoombs1@gmail.com) for further details.

Dates for your diary

Wednesday 2 March 2016 Anglo-Saxon Berkshire discussion group, Conference Room 3, 14.00 to 16.00 p.m., organised by Andrew Hutt

Saturday 19 March 2016 Uncovering Winchester by Ben Ford, Main Hall, RISC, 14.00 to 16.00 p.m.

Wednesday 6 April 2016 Anglo-Saxon Berkshire discussion group, Conference Room 3, 14.00 to 16.00 p.m., organised by Andrew Hutt

Saturday 16 April 2016 Bone chemistry and isotope analysis with case histories by Gundula Mueldener, Main Hall, RISC, 14.00 to 16.00 p.m.

From our Chairman

Dear Members

This Newsletter marks a new era for Berkshire Archaeological Society as it introduces a fresh approach to communicating with our members. This has been possible through the work of Tim Lloyd who has designed a new website for the Society, Julie Worsfold who is introducing the Society to Twitter, and Gail Eaton, the new Editor of the Newsletter. The Society Council has gradually increased the number of fieldwork projects, visits, talks, and investigations over recent years and these should be communicated not only to our membership but also the wider 'archaeological fraternity'. This is a specialist and time consuming task and we are very grateful to Tim, Julie, and Gail for the time they are giving to keep all informed.

As we approach our Patron's 90th Birthday with the chance of joining the Queen's Lunch in June, we must also be grateful that Queen Victoria was so passionate about our country's history and laid the foundation for our interest today. Now we look forward to a new season of talks, projects, and visits of which we will receive monthly reminders with the added opportunity to access our bright, new website and Twitter news.

Ann Griffin

BERKSHIRE

Archaeology on Saturdays

Mesolithic and Palaeolithic archaeology in the Kennet Valley

A talk by Cathie Barnett, 12 December

Dr Catherine Barnett described the work of the Kennet Valley Mapping Project, a joint initiative between the University of Reading, Wessex Archaeology, and West Berkshire Council to investigate Upper Palaeolithic and Mesolithic archaeology along a 20 km stretch of the Kennet between Kintbury and Aldermaston. This area is already well-known for early prehistoric hunter-gatherer sites dating from around 14,000 to 5500 years ago, a period of time that encompassed massive climate change from fully arctic to warm conditions in less than ten years.

Sedimentary analysis based on core samples showed that 11,500 years ago the area that is now the Kennet valley was still a barren landscape with an average annual temperature of 25 degrees centigrade. The dominant vegetation was juniper and birch with a few pine trees, and the large animals on which the Upper Palaeolithic hunters depended were reindeer, bison, and horse. Typical artefacts were long flint blades, but as the climate warmed the tools became smaller with the appearance of Mesolithic microliths. The reason for this change was climatic: as the open landscape changed to dense woodland, a new toolkit was required to clear vegetation and hunt smaller animals such as deer, fish, and birds. With this change in economy came the first evidence for human landscape management, with episodic burning to clear the reed beds and open glades in woodland, to encourage new plant growth to attract the animals on which people depended. The survey showed that Mesolithic camp sites, evidenced by the presence of flints and butchered animal bone, were present all along the river floodplain, where not only water birds and fish were available, but movement along the valley bottom was easier than on the wooded slopes.

An extensive programme of core sampling showed that evidence for the early Mesolithic was contained within a layer of peat or black clay immediately above the natural gravel. These sites are now deeply buried and easily overlooked, and one of the aims of the project was to determine the

extent of the early peat deposits. This was achieved by combining two geophysical techniques (electrical resistivity tomography and ground penetrating radar) to locate the characteristic sediment layers and then to core selected areas. This methodology was successfully used in Victoria Park, Newbury, which was formerly marshland. A possible site was detected near the present boating lake and a 2 x 2 m trench was opened immediately over a Mesolithic site, showing that the methodology worked. This small trench yielded 379 microliths including 21 pristine finished tools, three cores, butchered bones including those of red deer and beaver, hazelnuts, birch and hawthorn charcoal, and a hearth. Samples were taken for dating, particle size analysis, and environmental evidence in the form of micro- and macrofossils, including snails. Post-excavation work has provided two dates for this site, 8430–8240 and 7615–7545 years ago, showing that at least two visits had been made to this spot. The project has increased public awareness of this early period, and has also published guidelines for developers working in the Kennet valley.

Janet Sharpe

The Old Straight Track revisited: understanding and dating patterns of mobility in prehistory

A talk by Professor Martin Bell, 16 January

Speaking to a full house at RISC, Martin began his talk with the contention that landscapes are structured by patterns of movement. Once established, a path tends to be perpetuated and becomes part of the memory set of the people who use it. Earlier studies on trackways in Britain were interrupted by the publication in 1925 of Alfred Watkin's *The Old Straight Track*, the book that introduced the concept of prehistoric trackways as ley lines and spawned a sub-culture of ley line hunters. As a result, archaeologists lost interest in trackways and concentrated instead on excavating sites, with little concern as to how these linked up across the landscape.

Pessimism regarding the true nature of ancient trackways may be overcome by focusing on evidence for patterns of movement from different sources. As an example, Martin described the strings of 'mini-prairies' or glades along hunter-gatherer paths in temperate rainforest on Vancouver Island, Canada, which marked small areas of forest clearance to encourage regrowth, either for food plants or to attract animals to be exploited when the trackway was used again. Sufficient Mesolithic footprints have now been uncovered in the Severn estuary to indicate the direction of trails, probably to and from settlements or along channels in connection with fishing. Neolithic tombs on each side of the Welsh border both lie directly on top of Mesolithic remains, and Martin thinks these sites were on a path or, more likely, intersection points between paths where both goods and genes could be exchanged, later commemorated by the construction of the tombs. Elsewhere there is evidence that barrow alignments mark pre-existing trackways from the Neolithic to Iron Age, and in Denmark, where alignments are associated with causewayed enclosures, they have been used to predict the position of further enclosures.

Increasing evidence for seasonal cattle husbandry in coastal wetlands, where salt marshes provide good summer grazing, shows that Bronze and Iron Age people were regularly moving their animals across the landscape. Late Bronze Age field systems exposed during excavations at Heathrow Terminal Five revealed multiple parallel droveways

all heading in the same direction. Later coaxial field systems had droveways that often led to river floodplains and estuaries, suggesting the seasonal exploitation of grazing. It now appears that some of our 'prehistoric' ridgeways may not be as ancient as was once thought, and that the hollow ways that often run at right angles to the ridgeways are older and represent the seasonal movement of animals between low and high ground. The frequent existence of multiple parallel routes in use at the same time may be explained by the need not to deplete the grazing alongside any one trackway. Optical stimulated luminescence can be used to date sediments at the base of hollow ways, which have been shown to date from at least the Bronze Age.

Some surfaced roads predate the Romans. At Sharpstone near Shrewsbury several incarnations of an Iron Age road were found, starting with a brushwood track, then a metalled road, with a Roman road on top of that. Two Bronze Age posts found beneath the Iron Age roads could indicate an even earlier routeway, and the introduction of horse-drawn chariots in the Bronze Age may suggest that roads by then had become a necessity.

With these and many other examples Martin offered us a glimpse into the history of human movements across the landscape. Look out for his forthcoming book on the subject!

Janet Sharpe

Anglo-Saxon Berkshire Discussion Group

Meeting 2 December 2015

This meeting took the form of three presentations.

Roger Betts and Toby Bainton gave a presentation of their review of Anglo-Saxon cemeteries surrounding Silchester. Their interest was motivated by work by Ken Dark, who identified that there was evidence of the survival of late Roman provincial authorities in cities such as London, Lincoln, York, and maybe Cirencester, and that surrounding London there was a ring of early Saxon sites which could represent evidence of Saxon forces employed by the authorities in London to defend the city (Dark, K. (2000). *Britain and the end of the Roman Empire*. Stroud: Tempus Publishing Ltd, 51–3). The archaeological evidence reveals a ring of early Saxon cemeteries with military grave goods (spears etc.) surrounding the Atrebatas civitas, however, they concluded that there was insufficient evidence to link

them with an organised military presence. Another presentation was about the Saxon graves found at Dyke Hills, near Dorchester.

Isobel Maclean gave a presentation on the excavation of an Anglo-Saxon cemetery at Burghfield which revealed some 50 graves, 33 of which contained grave goods including shield bosses, spears and knives but no swords dating from the 6th and 7th centuries.

Andrew Hutt

Meeting 4 January 2016

This meeting started with a presentation by Ann Griffin on the four Anglo-Saxon hundreds of Charlton, Beynhurst, Bray, and Ripplemere which stretch along the Thames from Henley on Thames to Old Windsor and run south to the Bagshot plateau. Her method of working was to start from the Domesday Book and work

backwards in time to identify early Saxon churches, landowners, and settlements.

This was followed by a presentation by Andrew Hutt on the late Roman and 5th to 7th century archaeological evidence from Silchester.

Andrew Hutt took the Berkshire Archaeology Research Library boxes for Anglo-Saxons and Early Medieval periods to the meeting; members can borrow books from the library and share their own books with others.

Andrew Hutt

Meeting 2 February 2016

This meeting took the form of four presentations.

Andrew Hutt gave a presentation of who was doing what in our study of Anglo-Saxon Berkshire. This showed that members of the group were researching seven groups of sites which may represent the remains of Anglo-

Saxon communities, for example Ann Griffin is looking at sites in four hundreds in Eastern Berkshire. It also showed that these same people were also researching a number of different subject areas; as outlined below. This review showed that we have more than enough to do so we would be pleased to welcome newcomers to the group.

Gillian Jordan and Margaret Boltwood gave a brief presentation of their work on Anglo-Saxon food, growing crops, keeping animals, fishing and hunting.

Isobel Maclean gave a presentation on dating grave goods using a combination of measuring them and radio carbon dating the contexts in which they were found.

Finally Gail Eaton gave a presentation on minsters and late Anglo-Saxon churches.

Andrew Hutt

Fieldwork projects

Last year the Society managed to carry out four fieldwork projects at Knowl Hill, Blounts Court, La Hyde, and Caversham. The first of these resulted in a presentation that Ann Griffin is giving to various meetings in and around Maidenhead. The write-ups for the other three projects have still to be completed.

The fieldwork for 2016 includes more work at Blounts Court, La Hyde, and Caversham Park.

In the table opposite, the names in bold identify the project leaders who are members of Council. Please contact them if you want a copy of their project plan or want to join their project.

The benefits of archaeological fieldwork is that it

provides communities with tangible evidence of their local heritage and the Society with team building opportunities, which help ensure that the membership works together in a friendly and constructive atmosphere.

The Society supports archaeological fieldwork with an on-site presence so that as fieldwork is progressing people living nearby can come along and see what is happening. This on-site presence takes the form of a gazebo or tent with notice boards, evidence from the site, and somebody to answer questions. If you fancy sitting on an archaeological site and explaining the site to visitors, please come and join us.

Andrew Hutt

Celebrating the Queen's 90th Birthday

Sometime in the late 19th century, Queen Victoria kindly signed a letter agreeing to be the Patron of the Berkshire Archaeological Society. The letter is now part of the Society's archive held in the Berkshire Record Office. Since then each monarch in turn has continued to be our Patron. With Queen Elizabeth this has resulted in members of the Society being invited to garden parties at Buckingham Palace, and in 2013 Trevor Coombs and I went to St Paul's to celebrate the Queen's Diamond Jubilee.

Queen Elizabeth has acted as Patron to a large number of organisations and this year the country is celebrating the Queen's 90th birthday. The celebrations include a service at St Paul's, Trooping the Colour, and, as a

finale, on 12 June 2016, a Patron's Lunch in the Mall attended by representatives of all the organisations who have the Queen as their patron. Details of this event can be found on a website at:

<http://www.thepatronslunch.com>

So far 6 members of the Society: John Chapman, Colin Forrestal, Andrew and Anne Hutt, and John and Pat Edwards have agreed to attend this event to represent the Society. There may be an opportunity to purchase more tickets to this event so if you would like to come along let me know. Tickets cost £150 per head, the proceeds of the event go to some of the charities the Queen supports.

Andrew Hutt

Fieldwork Projects

Project title	Objectives and status	Leader/Status/Timescale
Garden project	To encourage everybody to collect and identify small finds that they find while gardening at home	Ann Griffin Jan to Dec 2015
James Edward Austen-Leigh and Knowl Hill	To research the relationship between James Edward Austen-Leigh, the nephew of Jane Austen, and Knowl Hill	Ann Griffin /Deborah Loe Completed Mar 2015
Blounts Court 2015	Geophysics, auger survey, and excavation of building R3 at Blounts Court This is a joint project with the Berkshire Archaeology Research Group	Andrew Hutt / Ann Griffin / Nigel Spencer Work completed April 2015, write up ongoing
La Hyde DMV, Purley geophysics	Geophysics survey of the site of La Hyde, west of Purley on Thames The plan for this project is still being discussed	Andrew Hutt / John Chapman Work completed June 2015, write up awaits the completion of the 2016 fieldwork
Caversham Park 2015	Geophysics survey of the grounds in front of Caversham Park House	Andrew Hutt Work completed July 2015, write up awaits completion of 2016 fieldwork
Blounts Court 2016	Excavation of a trench to investigate a mortared flint foundation found in 2015 The plan for this project is being prepared	Andrew Hutt Work scheduled for April 2016
La Hyde 2016	Geophysics survey of the fields to the east of the fields surveyed in 2015 The plan for this project is being prepared	Andrew Hutt Work scheduled for June 2016
Caversham Park 2016	Excavation of a trench to investigate an anomaly in the 2015 geophysics survey results which may be associated with the 16th century house The plan for this project is being prepared	Andrew Hutt Work scheduled for July 2016
Woolley Hall geophysics	Geophysics survey of Woolley Hall fields Plan required	Ann Griffin / Andrew Hutt No date
Streatley Meadow excavation	Excavation of trench in Streatley Meadows Plan required	Ann Griffin / Trevor Coombs No date

New look to the BAS website and News Sheet

Over the past few months the BAS Publicity Group has been reviewing the Society's communication strategy. The website now has a new look incorporating 'posts' to highlight news and events as well a simplified menu structure. The aim is to keep this dynamic and regularly updated so as to make it more useful to members and hopefully attract some new ones! Click or type in berksarch.co.uk to take a look.

Another goal of the project has been a new format for the monthly news sheet. This will continue to land in your in-box each month, highlighting recent news and upcoming events. Now it will allow you to click on links and go directly to further information on the website.

Tim Lloyd

BAS moves to Twitter

Another outcome is that, on behalf of the Society, Julie Worsfold has set up a Twitter account.

For the uninitiated Twitter is a means of electronic communication using a maximum of 140 characters, a 'Tweet'. Twitter users choose other Twitter users to 'follow'. The 'Tweets' and 'Retweets' of those you follow appear on your Twitter feed, which you can review at your leisure. It is the archaeological community's favoured means of electronic communication. One of the advantages, besides being a brief message, is that many use links to web sites with interesting articles related to the 'Tweeted' or 'Retweeted' topic. So this is a great way of keeping pace with news and developments within the archaeological community.

After a trial period and a subsequent cull on Twitter, Berks Arch Soc is following: Historic England; Historic England Archaeology; Historic England Planning Advice; The Royal Archaeological Institute; Lindisfarne Heritage; The British Museum; University of Central Lancaster University; Post Medieval Archaeology; Past Horizons; Oxford Archaeology; MOLA (Museum of London Archaeology); The Festival of Archaeology; Medieval Archaeology; Wessex Archaeology; University of York Archaeology; Archaeology News; Antiquity; ADS (The Archaeology Data Service); The ClfA (The Chartered Institute for Archaeology); and The CBA

(Council for British Archaeology).

I regularly review the 'tweets' from these organisations on the Berks Arch Soc's Twitter feed for anything of substance from within the UK which would be of interest. I then 'retweet' these items. I am also, of course, on behalf of the Society, tweeting news of our forthcoming events, etc.

If you are already on Twitter please start to follow us, Berks Arch Soc. To tweet us directly, [@BerksArchSoc](https://twitter.com/BerksArchSoc).

If you are not yet on Twitter and would like to follow us then you need to set up an account. Go to www.twitter.com, use the 'New to Twitter? Sign Up' box and follow the instructions. Before you do this it is a good idea to think up a user name for yourself and have one or two backups in case your ideal user name is already in use. However, Twitter will suggest some user names for you. It is not vital but you may also like to have a small photo of yourself to add. (Note this can be added after set up at any time you wish through View Profile, then Edit Profile.)

If you have any questions about BAS on Twitter please email me at twitter@berksarch.co.uk

I look forward to seeing you on Twitter soon.

Julie Worsfold

Archaeology in and around Berkshire

Boxford BARG Lectures in the coming year

As part of the Boxford Roman project BARG are hosting a series of lectures over the next couple of years, to be held in the new Boxford Village Hall. There is a great line up of distinguished speakers and all BAS members and guests are very welcome to come along. The first talk was on Wednesday 10 February when Neil Holbrook, Chief Executive of Cotswold Archaeology gave a lecture on 'The Villa in Roman Britain: Design, Evolution and Use'.

On 15 June, when Dr Sam Moorhead, National Finds Adviser from the Coins and Medals Department in the British Museum will be giving the second talk (title to be announced later but possibly something along the lines of 'Feeding the Rhineland? The Coinage of the House of Valentinian (AD 364–78) in the Thames Valley').

To bring the first season of talks to a close the third lecture will be by Julian Richards, television and radio presenter, writer, and archaeologist, on 9 November.

All lectures will be in Boxford Village Hall, Lambourn Valley Road RG20 8DD and start at 7.30 p.m. A large turnout is expected so places will be on a first come first served basis; to reserve your seats email Joy Appleton at: parishcouncil@boxford.org.uk.

To keep informed about the talks, events and opportunities to participate in the project we are urging people to subscribe to the blog which can be found at <http://boxford.org.uk/category/big-dig->

[2015/](#). This only requires an email address which will not be passed on and you can unsubscribe very easily.

South Oxfordshire Archaeological Group (SOAG)

Excavation of Roman site

SOAG is asking for volunteers to help find out about at the mysterious Roman site in woodland at Highwood, Harpsden. Initial work in 2015 mainly served both to reveal the potential significance of the site but just how enigmatic it still is. The nature and wide date spread of finds, and for example the type of cut bones, leads us, and professionals, to consider that it could well be a temple site, very vulnerable, and of significance. Excavations will be resuming on 11 March 2016. Digging sessions will run every other weekend from March until the end of June. If you are interested please contact:

Mike Vincent on 07974 445142
David Nicholls on 01189 474903
or email to: highwood@soagarch.org.uk

Westgate Excavations

Oxford Archaeology is organising an exhibition on the recent excavations at the Westgate site in Oxford (site of the Greyfriars friary complex). The Exhibition will be called 'Westgate Oxford: the so far', it will showcase all the recent discoveries and initial site interpretations. It is Free and will be open Mon–Sat 10 a.m. – 5 p.m. from the 4th March to 29th April 2016 in the ground floor Gallery in Oxford Town Hall, St Aldates, Oxford, OX1 1BX.

Membership subscriptions

Subscriptions to the Society are due in April 2016 for the year to April 2017, except for those who joined after 1 January 2016. Subscription rates are £15 for an individual and £20 for a couple at the same address and are due on 10 April.

A number of members already pay by Standing Order or the equivalent, and we are most grateful to them for this. A renewal form is enclosed with this newsletter for those who prefer to pay by cheque, and also to record any changes in a member's name, address, telephone number or email. The latter is particularly important as the bulk of communication with you now is carried out electronically.

Thank you.

Anne Harrison - Membership Secretary - anne@jaharrison.me.uk

Input to the newsletter

If you have an archaeological story which you feel would interest the Society, please send it to Gail Eaton by 1 April 2016.

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: Ann Griffin

01628 825 288

griffinshiresteps@hotmail.com

Secretary acting: Andrew Hutt

Treasurer: Andrew Hutt

0118 973 2882

andrew_hutt@talktalk.net

Membership secretary:

Anne Harrison

0118 978 5520

anne@jaharrison.me.uk

Programme Organiser:

Trevor Coombs

Day School Organiser:

Trevor Coombs

Tour Organiser:

Ron Knowles

0118 939 4044

ronknowles2@btopenworld.com

Newsletter Editor acting:

Andrew Hutt, see above

Librarian acting:

Andrew Hutt see above

For more information about the Society and membership details contact the Chairman: Ann Griffin
01628 825 288

www.berksarch.co.uk

email: info@berksarch.co.uk