



ARCHAEOLOGY

The Newsletter of the Berkshire Archaeological Society

Autumn 2017

Vol.19, No.3

Dates for your diary

Saturday 2 September 2017 Visit to Silchester temples and Roman tiling at Little London, 2.10 p.m., in the car park.

Wednesday 6 September 2017 Anglo-Saxon Discussion Group, Conference Room 3, 14.00 to 16.00 p.m., organised by Andrew Hutt.

Saturday 16 September 2017 BAS AGM and Lecture, Long Wittenham and the context of power by Adam McBride, Main Hall, RISC, 14.00 to 16.00 p.m.

Saturday 30 September to Friday 13 October 2017 Living in the Berkshire Iron Age, Brock Keep, Oxford Road, Reading.

Saturday 21 October 2017 Lecture Shakespeare's London theatre land, by Julian Bowsher, Main Hall, RISC, 14.00 to 16.00 p.m.

Wednesday 1 November 2017 Anglo-Saxon Discussion Group, Conference Room 3, 14.00 to 16.00 p.m., organised by Andrew Hutt.

Saturday 18 November 2017 Lecture My work as a dendrochronologist, by Martin Bridge, Main Hall, RISC, 14.00 to 16.00 p.m.

Wednesday 6 December 2017 Anglo-Saxon Discussion Group, Conference Room 3, 14.00 to 16.00 p.m., organised by Andrew Hutt.

Saturday 9 December 2017 Lecture by BAS Members: Tim Lloyd, European caves; Mathew Fittock, RB pipe clay figurines; Andrew Hutt, Roman corn mill, Provence, Main Hall, RISC, 14.00 to 16.00 p.m.

From our Chairman

Dear Members

Society members have enjoyed an active summer engaged in the opportunities offered by the Society. Our work at Blounts Court for several years came to a climax with our participation in the owner's, Johnson Matthey, celebration of 200 hundred years of industry. Following our excavation of the medieval site which included an unexpected Roman wall, Andrew Hutt and Nigel Spencer were invited to speak at the company's formal dinner. A resistivity survey was carried out by Martin Labram's team near Pangbourne, and an excavation led by Andrew Hutt excavated farm building foundations at Cholsey.

Members of the Anglo-Saxon Discussion Group visited the Reading Museum Store in its quest to see the finds from the 1950's excavation of the last Saxon king's palace at Old Windsor but the complexity of the records and 400 boxes of finds revealed that this would be a huge task. There was a short article about this in BAJVol 55 by the excavator, Brian Hope Taylor.

Looking forward, the Society has been offered a fantastic opportunity to display its work in Reading at Brock Keep on the Oxford Road in October and an exciting programme of talks have been arranged by Trevor Coombs for the Autumn. However, although we have received no offers to organise the Spring Tour next year we are still hoping that this annual treat for many of us will be continued with the proposed visit to West Wales. Please offer your help.

Ann Griffin

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Annual General Meeting 2017

The AGM of the Berkshire Archaeological Society will take place on Saturday 16 September 2017 at RISC, London Street, Reading. Refreshments will be served from 2.00 p.m. for a 2.30 p.m. start.

All positions on the BAS Council are open for election, but there are specific vacancies for a new Tour Leader and for an archivist/librarian. For more information, contact Ann Griffin. All nominations for Council membership, proposed and seconded, should be sent to the Honorary Secretary (Anne Harrison, 2 Murdoch Road, Wokingham, Berks, email: anne@jaharrison.me.uk). The AGM will be followed by a talk by Adam McBride on Long Wittenham and the context of power.

The Agenda for the AGM

- 1) Apologies for Absence
- 2) Minutes of the AGM held on 17th September 2016
- 3) Matters Arising
- 4) Chairman's Report
- 5) Treasurer's Report
- 6) Librarian's Report
- 7) Election of Officers of the Society
- 8) Election of Council Members
- 9) Appointment of the Independent Examiner
- 10) Any Other Business

Anne Harrison, Honorary Secretary

Fieldwork Projects

Johnson Matthey's 200th anniversary celebrations

For the last five years, members of the BAS and BARG have been conducting fieldwork at Blounts Court. This year was the company's 200th anniversary.

On 19 July, at the start of the celebrations, involving some 300 people in a marquee, Nigel Spencer and Andrew Hutt gave brief presentations about our work. Nigel summarised the development of the house and the families who had lived in it. Andrew explained the archaeology: a Roman boundary wall; a medieval building built on the wall; a large medieval barn; and a Georgian garden with a wall and flower beds.



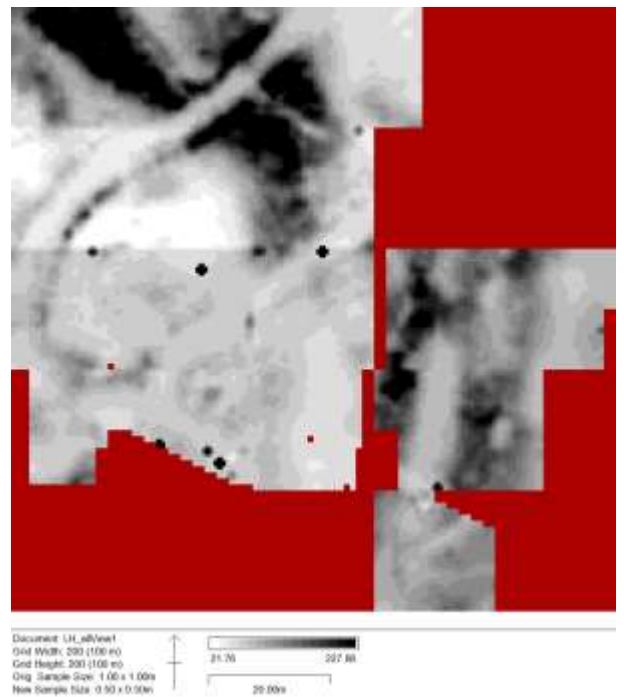
An interpretation of Blounts Court showing the medieval buildings and the house as it was in 1500 (by Tim Lloyd)

Later that week, as part of another Johnson Matthey event, a small exhibition of posters summarised the work, with a display of finds.

Geophysics survey at La Hyde

In mid June 2017, Martin Labram led a small team carrying out a resistivity survey at La Hyde using the

Society's TAR-3 meter. The results (see below) show, on the left, evidence of a ditch, and on the right, a number of small buildings and a trackway.



Results of the resistivity survey at La Hyde 2017

Excavations at West Field Farm, Cholsey

In late June - early July 2017, five trenches were excavated in the garden to the east of West Field Farm house in Cholsey. This was the site where, in December 2016, the Society carried out a resistivity survey and identified a number of anomalies. The trenches revealed the remains of a wall that extended into the garden from the farm house and a building with a fine brick floor which was probably a greenhouse or a dairy. They also revealed paths and borders around the building.

Andrew Hutt

The Society's Iron Age exhibition at Brock Keep October 2017

Brock Keep, a large 19th c. military building on Oxford Road, is the home to an arts group: Openhand Openspace. The Society is working with them to reposition Brock Keep as an arts and heritage centre.

Our first contribution is an exhibition: *Living in the Iron Age in and around Berkshire*. It will run from Saturday 30 September to Friday 13 October and be open on weekdays 15:00 to 19:30 p.m. and at weekends 11:00 to 17:00 p.m. (closed 8 October). There will also be two lectures (see poster). All members of the Society are

invited to come along see what is on offer. Also, bring along young children and grandchildren; they can build model roundhouses and hillfort ramparts.

I would welcome some help in setting this exhibition up being on site when the exhibition is open to the public, and in taking it down. If you would like to help please send an email to anne@jaharrison.me.uk, copying in andrew_hutt@talktalk.net.

Andrew Hutt

Visits

Visit to Wessex Archaeology HQ and Marden Henge

A party of ten members travelled to Wessex Archaeology to hear about their latest excavations and then on to Marden Henge, being excavated by Dr Jim Leary of the University of Reading.

Wessex Archaeology have excavated two MOD sites at Larkhill and Bulford, Wiltshire, prior to houses being built for soldiers' return from Germany.

Larkhill was the site for training Commonwealth and British troops in trench warfare before and during WW1. Trenches and tunnels had been dug to a depth of 2.5 m. 8.5 km of the trenches were excavated to check for Neolithic remains and to find clues about how soldiers had lived in them. Apart from the Army issue of enamel mugs and plates, there were all sorts of 'comfort food' remains. Toffee tins from Melbourne, Australia, and Mackintosh and Pascall from Britain, jam jars (from W.P. Hartley Ltd), and pipes and tins that held tobacco, cigarettes, and cigars. Corned beef, sardines, and golden syrup were favourite foods, whilst whiskey, beer, and lemonade were soldiers' choice drinks.

Tunnels were dug to create command and medical centres, and often to undermine enemy positions and blow them up. Miners and sappers who had dug these tunnels had left their names inscribed on the walls. Wessex Archaeology are researching the military careers and lives of the men to be published later. Perhaps the most unexpected item was the old MG car which had been dumped in one of the trenches.

The Bulford excavation contained some archaeologically important finds. This was a large area that had been stripped of topsoil, which immediately showed a Saxon grave yard of 150 inhumations and two henges c.25 m across close together. This is the first time that two henges have been found so close together. On examination they were confirmed to be Early Bronze Age round barrows, which had been ploughed flat. The ditches contained stone and flint axes and a fine disc-shaped knife. The most interesting find was a chalk block that had been hollowed out to make a bowl. There were bones of red deer and aurochs that had been used for digging. One ditch had a wolf or dog's skull deposited, which might have been used in a

ritual. Finds from the Saxon graves were equally exciting. A complete bronze spearhead came to light in a male grave, and from the female graves came polychrome glass beads, a decorated comb, and a bronze cylindrical work box complete with a lid and small chain. (For pictures of these artefacts see Wessex Archaeology's blogs on Larkhill and Bulford.)

Dr Jim Leary met us at Marden Henge and we were taken to excavations three miles away on Cats Brain Hill (SU 121636). The topsoil had been removed to reveal two wide ditches forming a 'U' shape and within was the rectangular outline of a Long Barrow. Jim believes it is from the Early Neolithic, possibly dating to 3,700 BC. There are no internal stone slabs to divide the barrow into 'rooms' as at West Kennet Long Barrow, but Jim thinks the builders may have used wood to partition it and support the soil heaped on top.

Visit to Stonor Park

The visit was attended by 21 people. It included a very comprehensive tour of the house, grounds, chapel, and gardens and was led by Georgina Stoner, who gave a detailed description of her family history, as well as the house, grounds, and the chapel.

Nigel Spence



Stonor Park

Future Visits

Visit to Silchester temples and Roman Tiley at Little London

This will be on Saturday 2 September, starting at 2.30 p.m. in Insula 30. Mike Fulford will give us a guided tour. Members should arrive at Silchester carpark by 2.10 p.m. since a 1 km walk along the drove way is necessary to reach Insula 30. We will then be taken to Little London where Mike will give a talk on what has been found at the tiley. Directions and parking information will be sent later. Please let Trevor Coombs know if you will be coming, at: tacombs1@gmail.com

Anglo-Saxon Discussion Group

The June meeting was devoted to a presentation by Martin Labram on the work he has been doing on the BAS gazetteer and the maps that he is able to produce. He showed us that we have a working system which conforms to the MIDAS data standards laid down by Historic England, and will allow us to record details of sites across the Berkshire Region. There were no meetings of the group in July or August. Also, there will not be a meeting in October as this coincides with events at Brock Keep.

Archaeology in and around Berkshire

SOAG

There will be an open day at the Roman Villa site at Gatehampton Farm near Goring-on-Thames, on Sunday 24 September from 1.30 to 3.30 p.m.

28 September, **The Landscape of the Norman Conquest** by Trevor Rowley at 7.30pm (for 7.45) at the Goring Heath Parish Hall, Whitchurch Hill.

Berkshire Archaeology Research Group

28 September, **Excavations at Elizabeth House (St John's College) Oxford – a Neolithic henge, Medieval Farm and the victims of the St Brice's Day' Massacre?**, by Dr Steve Ford, followed by **Lambourn's evolution: AD 300 – AD 2017**, by Bob Brewer, at 7.30 p.m. in the De Vitre room, The Cornerstone, Norreys Ave, Wokingham.

Archaeology in Marlow (AiM)

28 September, **Highwood: the mound and other enigmas**, by Andrew Allum (SOAG). See <http://www.archaeologyinmarlow.org>

Marlow Archaeology Society (MAS)

13 September, **Investigating travel and communication in Anglo-Saxon England**, by Stuart Brookes.

12 October, **Verulamium revisited** by Kris Lockyear.

See <http://www.marlowarchaeology.org>

Input to the newsletter

If you have an archaeological story that you feel would interest the Society, please send it to Gail Eaton by 1 November 2017 at: georginagaileaton@gmail.com

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
griffinshirsteps@hotmail.com

Secretary: Anne Harrison
0118 978 5520
anne@jaharrison.me.uk

Treasurer: Andrew Hutt
0118 973 2882
andrew_hutt@talktalk.net

Membership secretary: Anne Harrison

Programme Organiser:
Trevor Coombs

Day School Organiser:
Trevor Coombs

Tour Organiser: Vacant

Newsletter Editor: Gail Eaton 0118 939 1056
georginagaileaton@gmail.com

Librarian acting: Andrew Hutt
For more information about the Society and membership details contact the Chairman: Ann Griffin.

www.berksarch.co.uk

email: info@berksarch.co.uk

twitter: Berks Arch Soc