



# ARCHAEOLOGY

The Newsletter of the Berkshire Archaeological Society

Autumn 2019

Vol.20, No.3

## Dates for your diary

**Saturday 21 September 2019 AGM** followed by Lecture **The Saxon Period Burials from Guildown Avenue, Guildford**, by Dr Ceri Falys, Osteoarchaeologist, Thames Valley Archaeological Services. Main Hall, RISC, 14 p.m. to 16 p.m.

**Wednesday 2 October 2019 The Study Group.** Brock Keep, 571 Oxford Road, Reading, 12.00 p.m. for 12.30 p.m. to 14.30 p.m.

**October 2019 BAS visit to Avebury and other nearby sites.** Date to be confirmed.

**Saturday 29 October 2019** Lecture **Mesolithic–Neolithic histories in the Colne Valley: narrating an everyday landscape**, by Samantha Brummage.

**Wednesday 6 November 2019 The Study Group.**

**Saturday 16 November 2019** Lecture **Boxford Roman Villa**, by Matt Nicol. Cotswold Archaeology.

**Wednesday 4 December 2019 The Study Group.**

**Saturday 14th December 2019 Members talks.**

## From the Chair

Over the summer the Society has enjoyed visits to this year's excavations at Silchester and High Wood. Visits when archaeological work – digging - is underway are always particularly interesting since the process – not just the results – of archaeology can be understood. We thank Anne Harrison, Harry Johnson, and Anne Helmore for making these arrangements as well as the dig teams for welcoming the Society.

The last issue included trailers for the Society's presence at the East Reading Festival and Anckerwyke: at the latter not only for fieldwork but also as a participant in the national Festival of Archaeology. Reports on these activities appear in this issue but John Sharpe and Andrew Hutt are to be thanked for spear-heading both ventures. Needless to say, there are many more individuals without whom neither venture would have been such a success. Thank you all.

As the swallows return to Africa so we move inside to RISC and our regular autumn/winter series of lectures. I encourage you all to attend as the line-up this year suits a huge range of interests: Mesolithic to medieval; landscapes to lipids. There is also the opportunity to have your say about the choice of future visits and lectures as well as the burning issues of the day, e.g. plans for Reading Gaol. Our September lecture is preceded by the Annual General Meeting and I look forward to seeing you there.

*Alison McQuitty*

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## Annual General Meeting 2019

The AGM will take place on Saturday 21 September 2018 at RISC, London Street, Reading. Refreshments will be served from 2.00 p.m. for a prompt 2.30 p.m. start.

All positions on the BAS Council are open for election. For more information, please contact Anne Harrison. All nominations for Council membership, proposed and seconded, must be sent to the Hon. Secretary (Anne Harrison, 2 Murdoch Road, Wokingham, RG40 2DA; secretary@berksarch.co.uk).

### Agenda for the AGM

1. Apologies for Absence
2. Minutes of the AGM held on 15 September 2018
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

The AGM will be followed by a talk on *The Saxon Period Burials from Guildown Avenue, Guildford*, by Dr Ceri Falys, Osteoarchaeologist, Thames Valley Archaeological Services.

*Anne Harrison, Hon. Secretary*

## Berkshire Archaeological Journal volume 84

This volume of the journal is now with the printers; I am expecting to take delivery of printed copies on 6 September.

This issue contains several papers that describe Iron Age and Roman iron-working sites. It also describes an Early Medieval boat burial found at Burfield and details of the trade in monumental stone found in church yards and burial grounds round Reading.

If you were a fully paid-up member of the Society on 31 December 2018 you are entitled to a free copy. You will be able to collect your copy at the Annual General Meeting otherwise you will have to wait until it is delivered by hand or by post. If you would like to help with hand deliveries and hence save the Society money please contact me.

*Andrew Hutt*

## The Study Group

The April study group meeting was devoted to *Iron working in the Berkshire Region in the Iron Age and Roman periods*. This presentation arose from my work editing the latest issue of Berkshire Archaeological Journal which contains several articles on Iron Age iron working, together with material about Roman iron working in the area.

The June study group meeting discussed three subjects. There was a summary of the results of the excavations at Blounts Court in April. This was followed by an

overview of the changes being made to the BAS Gazetteer to allow more control over the way information is displayed on maps with different scales. The last part of the meeting was a presentation on the work to be carried out at Ankerwycke priory in July.

In the autumn it is proposed to hold 4 meetings of the Study Group. The first meeting on the 4th September presented the results from the geophysics survey at Ankerwycke (see below).

*Andrew Hutt*

## Visits

### BAS Visit to the Silchester Baths Excavations

June 2019

On the hottest June afternoon of the year around 20 BAS members assembled in the public car park at Silchester and made their way across to the Roman baths on the other side of the site. There, members were

given a guided tour of this year's excavations by Professor Mike Fulford.

To the west of the site they are excavating a couple of hot/warm rooms. It was possible to see the different levels the floor had been at over time, the latest level being almost at modern ground level. During the excavation they found pieces of tesserae, indicating that

these rooms would have had mosaic floors. They also found some pieces of pilae from the hypocaust system, but not as many as anticipated. It is suspected that many of the pilae disappeared during the Antiquarians' excavations of the baths in 1903–4. Nonetheless, 6.5 tonnes of ceramic building material had been uncovered in the first two weeks of this excavation, compared with 10 tonnes for the whole of last season. Tantalizing sections of an earlier rectangular building – still Roman – are evident beneath the structures of the main bath complex.



Further west the team had started to excavate a rubbish dump of material from the baths in the hope that this will throw light on the various phases of their decoration.

To the east they are excavating the palaestra where they have found a drain, and further east still is another trench in which they are excavating the waste area where a stream flows out. This area incorporates a ditch, which may be the boundary ditch from the earlier Iron Age occupation of the site. The levels are water-logged which promises to produce further environmental evidence – to date little is known of the fuel used to heat the baths. Flotation to recover the environmental evidence is being carried out on all archaeological levels within the site.

After a refreshment break for tea and cake, members joined Professor Fulford to see how soil is processed through flotation to look for very small items and

environmental waste. They examined some of the finds discovered from this process, and also from the excavations and from trawling through the spoil heap left by the Antiquarians. The finds included a small copper link chain, a small ring, a pair of tweezers, a stylus for use with a wax tablet, and a few exquisite bone pins.



For many members the visit concluded with the purchase of some of the publications on Silchester.



Many thanks to Professor Fulford and the team for an interesting and enjoyable afternoon.

*Julie Worsfold and Alison McQuitty*

## Projects

### Ankerwycke geophysics survey

From 12 to 28 July the Society led a geophysics survey of Ankerwycke priory. The land is owned by the National Trust and in addition to carrying out the survey the Society manned a visitor experience which gave us an opportunity to meet a lot of the local people.

In all, some 100 20m x 20m grids (c.4 hectares) were surveyed using the gradiometer and 30 20m x 20m grids

(c.1.2 hectares) were surveyed using the resistivity meter. Forty-nine anomalies were identified.

The results have shown that this is a site with four landscapes:

- a medieval landscape centred on Ankerwycke priory

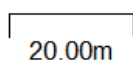
- a Tudor landscape centred on a mansion, which incorporated some of the priory buildings
- a Georgian landscape centred on Ankerwycke house, which was sited some 150m north of the priory and Tudor buildings

- a 20th century landscape, which included a swimming pool alongside the River Thames.

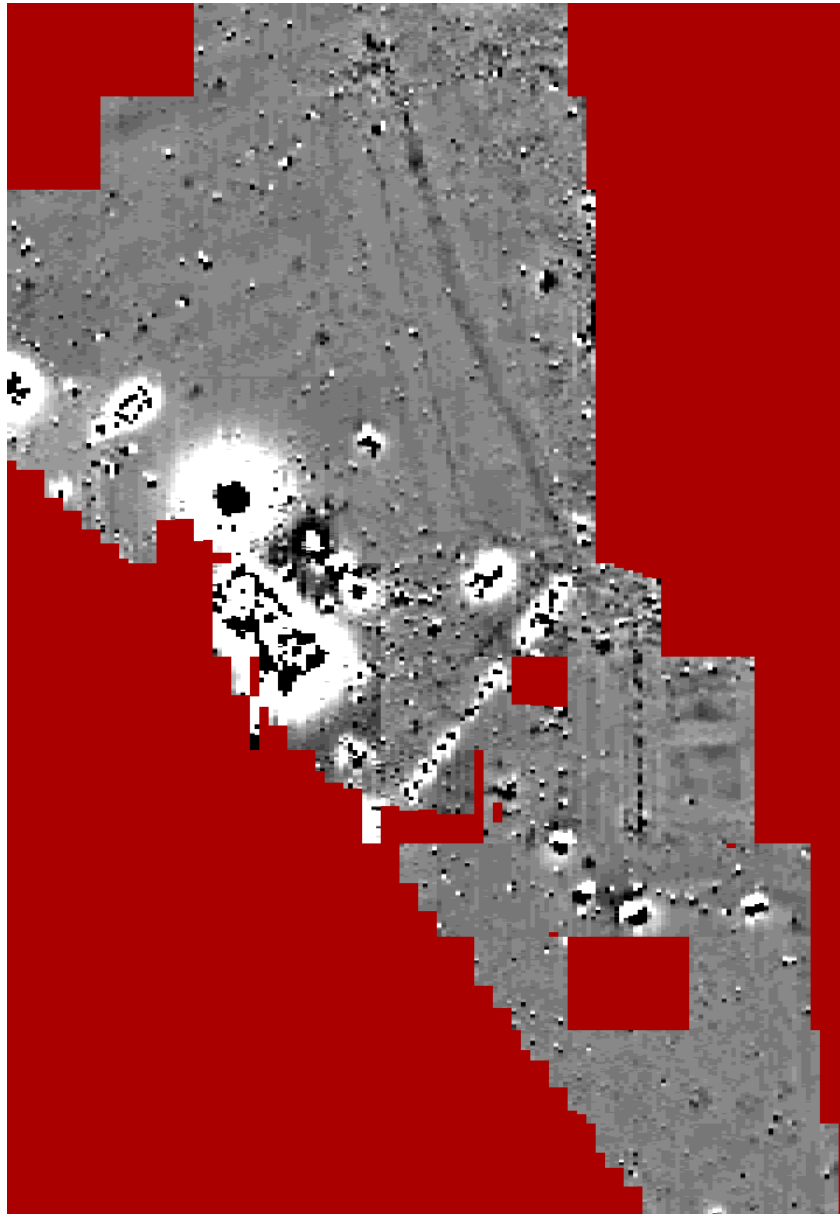
Andrew Hutt



Document: Res2View  
 Grid Width: 180 (180 m)  
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*Ankerwycke: the resistivity survey results.  
 The cross anomaly may represent the remains of the priory cloister*



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 Grid Height: 1040 (260 m)  
 Sample Size: 1.00 x 0.25m



*Ankerwycke: Results of the gradiometer survey.  
 The large anomaly is the 20th century swimming pool*

### **Survey of Hall Farm**

For the last 12 months, Nigel Spencer has been working to persuade the University of Reading to allow us to survey fields at Hall Farm and at last we can start work. We are planning to survey the first of 5 fields starting either the 16th or 23rd September depending on the farmer. The objective of our work is to see if we can identify the medieval remains of Arborfield village – the first maps mark them as being to the north of the River Loddon and this is where we are going to start. As usual, our survey is likely to involve establishing a survey grid,

then a gradiometer survey followed by a resistivity survey.

If you would like to join this effort please send me a list of days you could be available from 16th September to 1st October. If you have any questions or would like a copy of the proposal for this work, please contact me: [andrew\\_hutt@talktalk.net](mailto:andrew_hutt@talktalk.net)

*Andrew Hutt*

## Berkshire Historic Environment Day School: Local Archives

**The Day School has been cancelled.** Whilst trying to complete the programme for this day school on the 26th October 2019 in the Barn, Purley on Thames, in response to our enquiries we have found very few societies or individuals willing to share details of how they are managing and developing their archives. Faced with this, we have taken the view that members of these same societies are unlikely to want to attend the event, so we have cancelled it.

Our efforts have also shown us that while many people have material they would like to archive, they are not aware of the different ways of going about it. As a result, we are offering the following:

A presentation: *Managing and Developing your local Heritage Archive*, which explains the alternative ways of archiving artefacts and documents and presenting them to local communities and people who are interested in researching their local history. This is an hour-long presentation aimed at members of a local history or heritage society.

An interactive workshop: *Archiving*, which will start with a short presentation about archiving documents and other materials in the hands of a Society and then to identify the documents that the Society has that it wants to archive, and develop a programme of work to scan documents and present them to the public. This is aimed at the committees of local history and archaeology groups and societies.

Results will be available from November 2019 onwards.

We are also inviting those involved in developing and managing archives to create a working group to share details of what they are doing and learning from each other. If this interests you please send an email to David Cliffe (email: [chairman@blha.org.uk](mailto:chairman@blha.org.uk)) with a summary of what you are doing and any further help you may want.

We will be looking at the email responses in early November to decide on the best way of taking things forward, and will get back to those who have responded

*Andrew Hutt, John Chapman, David Cliffe and Ann Smith*

## East Reading Festival



*Reading's Mayor and Matt Rodda MP visit the Heritage Quarter at East Reading Festival*

Thanks to everyone who helped make the Heritage Quarter possible. Without the generous sponsorship from Blandy and Blandy and Haslams, Berkshire Archaeological Society who organised it, the groups who prepared their presentations, and especially to the people who came and engaged with the public. The other organisations involved were; Beacons of the Past, Berkshire Archaeology, Berkshire Archaeological Research Group, Museum of English Rural Life, Oxford Archaeology, Reading Museum, and Thames Valley Archaeological Services.

We got very good feedback from people who attended with comments like, 'we were the biggest and most interesting section of the festival'. Not bad for our first attempt at putting together something like this.

I spent most of the time working in the children's area as that is about my level of knowledge of archaeology.

What was clear was that you got best results by going out and engaging with people as they walked by. My tack was to go and ask children to help me to put together a history timeline. It was surprising how many it was possible to distract from the candy floss and bouncy castle to come and think about history. The huge gap between the foundation of Jericho and the building of the pyramids was a surprise to us all. Otzi the iceman was a hit, with many people having heard of him.



*Set up and ready for the public!*

Once children had started to think about time I was able to ask the children how people found out about the past and explain that were people called archaeologists and how they looked at things that were left behind to know about how people lived. We looked at a modern rubbish bucket, where they pretended to be archaeologists in the future trying to work out how people lived from what they left behind. By now most children were hooked on the subject and if there was space on the BAS stall, I'd move them on to making Iron Age hut models. Some were asking questions that I couldn't answer so I took them to meet the professional archaeologists from Oxford Archaeology and Thames Valley Archaeological

Services to answer their questions or just to meet a real life archaeologist. Several children assured me that they wanted to be archaeologists when they grew up.



*Building an Iron Age Hut with the BAS*

*John Sharpe*

### **Proposed Visit to Avebury**

Anne Helmore has organised a visit to Avebury in October. Josh Pollard will lead the walk around the site, which will include a visit to the Sanctuary (with its great

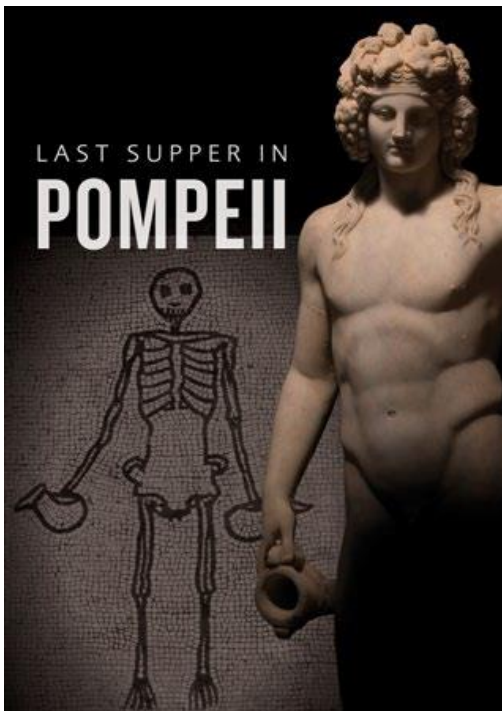
vista), Avebury henge, and possibly West Kennet long barrow. For more details please contact Anne Helmore at [annehelmore1@btinternet.com](mailto:annehelmore1@btinternet.com).



## Archaeology in and around Berkshire

### **Last supper in Pompeii**

This exhibition at the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford is open until 12th January and is well worth a visit.



This is largely concerned with food eaten by the Romans, its preparation, and how and where it was consumed.

The website notes:

‘See over 400 rare objects, including fine masterpieces of Roman art which range from the luxury furnishings of Roman dining rooms to the carbonised food that was on the table when the volcano erupted. Everything from the exquisite mosaics and frescoes in the villas of the wealthy to the remains found in kitchen drains, show what the Pompeians loved to eat and drink. This remarkable exhibition provides an extraordinary insight into their everyday lives.’

As part of the exhibition there are artefacts from Silchester



*Cooking Pot with lapilli from Pompeii*

## Talks by other groups

**Marlow Archaeology**, Main Room, Liston Hall, Marlow, SL7 1DD, 8 p.m. Members of AIM and MAS £3.00, visitors £4.50.

Thursday 12 September **Anglo-Saxon Estates and Defences**, by Dr Ryan Lavelle, reader in Early Medieval History, University of Winchester.

**South Oxfordshire Archaeology Group (SOAG)**, Goring Heath Parish Hall, Whitchurch Hill, 7.30 for 7.45 p.m.

Thursday 16 September **What archaeology can you find with a metal detector**, by Robert Wadley of Oxford Blues.

Thursday 24 October **Hampton Court Palace: Initial results from selected excavations and building recording works**, Ben Ford (Oxford Archaeology).

Thursday 28 November **SOAG'S 50th Birthday Celebrations**.

## **The Wallingford Historical and Archaeological Society (TWHAS)**

See <http://www.twhas.org.uk>

Wednesday 11 September **Latest thinking on Roman Dorchester-on-Thames: from origins to demise**, by Paul Booth.

## **Whitchurch & Goring Heath History Society**

See <http://whitchurchonthames.com/diary.php>

Thursday 19 September **Beacons of the Past - The Chilterns LIDAR project**, Stephen Barker.

**Basingstoke Archaeological and Historical Society (BAHS)** Church Cottage, Church Square, Basingstoke, 7.30 p.m.

Thursday 10 October **Art and Artefacts in Anglo-Saxon Wessex**, by Professor David Hinton, Southampton University.

Thursday 14 November **Life and Death in the Dorset Iron Age**, by Dr Miles Russell, Bournemouth University.

Thursday 12 December **Rural Settlement in Roman Britain**, by Professor Mike Fulford, Reading University.

## Input to the newsletter

If you have an archaeological story that you feel would interest the Society, please send it to Gail Eaton by November 2019 at: [newsletter@berksarch.co.uk](mailto:newsletter@berksarch.co.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 newfound 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:

**Chair:** Alison McQuitty  
[chairman@berksarch.co.uk](mailto:chairman@berksarch.co.uk)

**Secretary:** Anne Harrison  
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For more information about the Society and membership details contact the Membership Secretary.

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