



# ARCHAEOLOGY

The Newsletter of the Berkshire Archaeological Society

Winter 2020

Vol. 22, No.4

## Dates for your diary

**Saturday 12 December 2020** Members Talks on Zoom starting at 2.30 p.m. *My year working for the Supreme Council of Antiquities, Egypt*, by Beth Asbury, *Archaeology in schools*, by Maggie Smith, *Grain-Milling in Southern Jordan: Archaeological, Historic and Ethnographic Evidence*, by Alison McQuitty.

**Wednesday 7 January 2021** The Study Group 3 p.m. on Zoom.

**Saturday 16 January 2021** Lecture *Ancient DNA*, Dr Matteo Fumagalli, Imperial College, London.

**Wednesday 3 February 2021** The Study Group 3 p.m.

**Saturday 20 February 2021** Lecture *Bisham*, by Dr Gabor Thomas, University of Reading.

**Wednesday 3 March 2021** The Study Group 3 p.m.

**Saturday 20 March 2021** Lecture *Late Iron Age territorial oppida in Southern Britain: a reinterpretation using new data collected from aerial photographs and lidar*, by Krystyna Truscoe, University of Reading.

**Wednesday 7 April 2021** The Study Group 3 p.m.

**Saturday 17 April 2021** Lecture *Mills in Berkshire*, by Mildred Cookson, The Mills Archive.

## From the Co-Chairs

At this year's AGM a departure from the previous years was adopted when Alison McQuitty and Maggie Smith were elected Co-Chairs. This message is from both of us ! In the past year we have said good-bye to two Trustees – John Chapman and Gail Eaton - and we thank them for all their hard work and dedication and are delighted that Gail continues to produce the Newsletter. We welcome a new Trustee – Keith Abbott – and look forward to working with him over the coming months.

While dealing with COVID restrictions has probably been in everyone's mind and the necessary adjustments they have entailed, our regular autumn lectures are well attended and well received! So we are still moving forward with ideas and we are still engaging with the archaeology community. On behalf of the Society a donation of £200 was made to support the conservation and analysis of the 'Marlow Warrior' artefacts while the website is constantly being updated with information about local archaeology. Sadly, the fieldwork, visits, and other social activities, and 150th birthday celebrations have taken the brunt of the disruptions but even here we are planning for post-COVID times!! A big thank you to all of the Trustees who have ensured that 'the show is kept on the road'.

Maggie has been a BAS member for about 5 years and on the Council for 4 years. She is particularly involved with the Society's School project and a leader of the Outreach Working-Group. We are delighted to be working with each other on the exciting projects we have in the pipeline.

*Alison McQuitty & Maggie Smith*

IN  
BERKSHIRE

## The BAS 2019–20 Annual General Meeting

The BAS AGM was held as a virtual meeting using Zoom on 17 October. 34 members were in attendance. Papers for the meeting were circulated and members voted on the Minutes of the 2019 meeting, the Treasurer's report, and the Council elections beforehand. There were some changes to Council. John Chapman and Gail Eaton resigned and were warmly thanked for their contributions. Maggie Smith was elected co-Chair with Alison McQuitty, and Keith Abbott was elected to fill one of the vacancies. Other officers and Ordinary members are unchanged.

There remains one vacancy and if anyone is interested in joining the Council please get in touch with me.

The meeting was followed by a talk by Andrew Hutt on the investigations at Ankerwycke carried out in association with the National Trust. Thanks are due to Andrew for stepping in at short notice when the booked speaker was unable to come.

*Anne Harrison – Secretary*

## BAS 150 Celebrations

2021 marks 150 years since the Society was founded. Sadly the ongoing pandemic has put paid to the first of the planned celebratory events due to take place in February. However, the BAS 150 working group is working on the following celebratory events to be held later in the year in the hope that they will be able to go

ahead. For the time being please pencil these into your diary:

Sunday 13 June 2021 – Garden Party

Saturday 2 October 2021 – Day School 150

Saturday 13 November – Celebration Dinner.

## Archaeology on Saturdays

### Little Voices: recent advances in child bioarchaeology

A talk by Professor Mary Lewis, University of Reading, 19 September 2020

Finding human bones on an excavation offers the archaeologist the Holy Grail of charting the life stories of the individual. This is above and beyond the types of housing or pottery or economy their community adopted. In the last few decades scientific techniques for the analysis of bones have revolutionised the number of stories those bones can tell: stories of health, of sickness, of diet, of origin. This was the backdrop to Professor Mary Lewis's lecture on the bioarchaeology of children which she began with the very practical observation that just as scientific analysis has developed so too have excavation recovery techniques.

It used to be 'accepted wisdom' that children's bones did not survive as well as adult's due to their fragility and tendency to decay quickly in acidic soil. This has been shown to be inaccurate. In fact, very young children's bones show a higher density. With this realisation and the sieving of soil around child skeletons a far greater percentage of bones are found. Professor Lewis then went on to describe the variety of children's bone assemblages she has examined ranging in date from the Roman to Late Victorian. Children's bones can tell much about their individual health but also the health of their community: a condition such as TB which is prevalent amongst a non-adult population is likely to be endemic amongst the community as a whole. This was most strikingly illustrated by the example from Poundbury Camp in Dorset which, in Roman times, was the burial

ground for inhabitants of the civitas capital of Durnovia. Here 364 non-adult skeletons dating from 3rd–5th centuries AD were examined. Examination of the bones showed that the non-adult population suffered from high levels of rickets, scurvy, trauma, and malnutrition: levels similar to those seen in post-medieval industrial communities. This offers a contrasting view to the oft-held conclusions that Romanisation brought great health benefits through better hygiene and nutrition.

Tuberculosis, leprosy, rickets, and malnutrition are conditions which leave graphic markers on the bones. Less commonly, particular conditions can be identified that speak to topics such as mobility and diaspora populations. Again, at Poundbury, several children died from a form of genetic anaemia (thalassemia) only found in Mediterranean countries.

Professor Lewis's latest - and ground-breaking - research has been looking at the onset of menstruation/puberty in historical societies. A large number of assemblages of 10–25 year-olds from various excavations in England has been analysed. The dates range from the 6th century to 17th century AD. The headline conclusions are that while both females and males reached puberty around 10 to 12 years old - as now - the tempo of its onset was far longer than today. On average females did not reach the menarche until 13–16 and in London most women did not have their first menstruation until 17 years of age.

There were many other conclusions drawn and narratives told through Professor Lewis' clear and well-illustrated lecture. After hearing this, the importance of studying children and adolescent bones can be in no doubt!

*Alison McQuitty*

## **The work of the Berkshire Archaeological Society at Ankerwycke**

A talk by Dr Andrew Hutt from the Berkshire Archaeological Society, 17 October 2020

The Society was invited by the National Trust to undertake a geophysical survey and provide a visitor experience for three weeks in June 2019 on its lands at Ankerwycke, which consist of a series of fields in a priory landscape opposite the National Trust's Magna Carta lands at Runnymede. This project was undertaken by some members of the Society and some National Trust volunteers.

A Benedictine nunnery was established on the site in around 1160 CE. The first church was a timber-framed structure with a tile roof. This was later replaced by a building constructed of chalk blocks. There is a seal of Ankerwycke dated to 1194 CE. The Latin script on the outer edge has been translated as 'The Seal of the Church of Saint Mary Magdalene of Ankerwycke'.

The first known map of the site was produced in 1537 in the *Valor Ecclesiastica*. The buildings were not extensive as there were never more than 10 nuns housed there. The site was surrounded by fishponds, watercourses, and ditches.

Following the Dissolution of the Monasteries between 1536 and 1541 it was used as a farm. In 1551 it was leased to Sir Thomas Smith who built a house on the building platform incorporating the Priory buildings and a created a formal garden in the grounds.

The Enclosure Map of 1800 shows the Tudor mansion. But in 1803 the majority of it was demolished and a new mansion built. The Wraysbury tithe map of 1840 shows this new mansion, which was later damaged by fire and then demolished, was a long way north of the Priory. The Ordnance Survey map of 1944 shows the remains of this mansion and a swimming pool.

In 1992 the Royal Commission conducted a survey of the site, the first for its archaeological significance. It showed ridges and furrows and the remains of the Priory. In 2007 Marshall conducted a resistivity survey. The LiDAR survey kindly provided by Richard Miller show shapes very close to those of the Royal Commission survey.

The Society's gradiometer survey conducted in June 2019 showed a large set of anomalies by the River Thames, a garden in the 'Priory field,' and a number of anomalies on an alignment in the 'Black Walnut Tree' field.

The Society's findings and those of Marshall (2007) have been overlaid to show the mediaeval and Tudor landscapes.

The Study Group looked for evidence of the Priory initially by working out where the cloister is, only to find that the

Tudor building was stuck in the middle of it and that the gardens were elsewhere.

The Priory gateway was to the north-west of the Priory. Some of the furrows may be the original river channels. Oxford Archaeology augured here but unfortunately the holes were quite shallow and would probably not have reached down to the river bed.

Work to date shows that the mediaeval landscape consisted of a cloister, the priory church, a chapel for the local community, a chapter house, living and working accommodation, and possibly a garden which it has not been possible to date. The Tudor landscape consisted of the ridge and furrows which were a Tudor infill, the Tudor mansion, and some outhouses. The Priory gateway was still extant at this point. The Georgian landscape is all beyond and to the north of the area the Society has examined. The 20th century landscape shows the swimming pool with a lot of structures around it and some anomalies to the south not previously seen. The anomalies in the 'Black Walnut Tree' field are probably also 20th century structures.

The work undertaken by the Society in June 2019 gave lots of new information matching earlier information which has given both the Society and the National Trust confidence that positions for features are accurate and give a firm basis for moving forward.

Having won some National Lottery money for this site the National Trust plans to install a ferry landing to connect with its lands across the river at Runnymede, create a grass path down the side of the Thames, and a hard path arcing north-east from the proposed landing. As the hard path needs to be dug out by a digger the National Trust needs to know what's underneath. To attract visitors the site needs stories, some of which the Society has already unravelled. Along with employees of Cotswold Archaeology members of the Society will be on site during the forthcoming Festival of Archaeology working on the hard path area, the gateway area and providing a visitor experience.

Many and sincere thanks to Andrew Hutt for an interesting and well delivered talk and for standing in for the scheduled speaker with less than 24 hours' notice.

*Julie Worsfold*

## **Beacons of the Past: Hillforts in the Chilterns Landscape**

A talk by Dr Ed Peveler, 21 November 2020

The developments in remote sensing of archaeological sites, features and earthworks in the landscape have totally revolutionized our sense of how that landscape was used. Dr Peveler (Landscape Heritage Officer) described very clearly how the technique of LiDAR (Light Distance and Ranging) is being employed to examine the areas hidden under the woods and forests of the

Chilterns. Other techniques such as aerial photography simply cannot 'see through trees'. Coupled with the fact that a significant amount of the Chilterns woodland is over 400 years old and therefore classified as 'Ancient Woodland' which is protected, hitherto there has been a gap in our knowledge. For a full description of how LiDAR works see

<https://www.chilternsaonb.org/projects/beacons-of-the-past/what-is-lidar>.

The 4 year project aims to enrich the existing HER (Historical Environment Records) database by adding the details and/or existence of features identified by the LiDAR whether they be field-systems, enclosures, hill forts, temples, or WWI trenches. Emphasis is being put on the Iron Age and arguably that period's most iconic monuments – hillforts. A previously unknown hillfort was identified this summer and additional details of known hill forts have been recorded e.g. at Pulpit Hill a wattle fence surrounding the ramparts. Dr Peveler showed and discussed several images and 'talked through' the possible interpretations of the lines and dots and wiggles! Some examples were the almost crenelated outline of WWI practice trenches dug into geology that parallels the Western Front; the rectangular depression of a prototype for the inclined-plane eventually constructed on the Grand Union Canal that allowed canal boats to be moved more swiftly up and down a hill than would have been the case if they were worked through locks; the Nissen Hut bases of WWII barracks; chalk-pits at the corners of fields – the chalk would have been used to lime the fields.

Dr Peveler discussed the challenges of the project e.g. the difficulty of interpretation from LiDAR evidence alone

and the sheer quantity of information that the LiDAR images throw up. To date 10,000 possible archaeological sites have been identified and this is the most extensive survey in Britain. Another discussion surrounding dates has been the date at which features should be deemed too late for entry into the HER. Are the traces of a 4-wheel drive track, i.e. late 20<sup>th</sup> century, that is no longer used, eligible? Dr Peveler has adopted the principle that the Project will 'record earthworks that attest to activity which has now ceased'. Following this principle envelope-shaped marks within a field are recorded and are evidence of a ploughing technique that was common in the 1930–70s but is no longer used. It was the conversations with farmers from that time that led to the insight in interpretation. Dr Peveler emphasized how pivotal the skills, experience, and local knowledge of volunteers has been.

As well as the use of LiDAR, the involvement of volunteers – Citizen Scientists – in helping to analyse and input data and the tireless outreach and training that Dr Peveler and Dr Wendy Morrison (Project Manager) have undertaken, makes this Project incredibly exciting and distinctive. The heritage is indeed for everyone! There is global volunteer involvement and a live portal to the output maps and data of the project. It can be accessed through [chilternsbeacons.org](http://chilternsbeacons.org). To date volunteers have contributed 3,750 hours to the project. BAS members were encouraged to join in with the activities.

*Alison McQuitty*

## Field Work

### **Priory Field, Ankerwycke: results of the 2020 resistivity survey Field work**

Following our geophysics survey at Ankerwycke in 2019, the National Trust invited us back to carry out further work; so, in October 2020, a small Covid compliant team of 5 undertook a resistivity survey in Priory Field. The objectives of our work were:

To identify any further archaeology before National Trust started building a ferry landing and paths so that visitors to their site at Runnymede can cross the River Thames by ferry and visit Ankerwycke.

To support a visitor experience at Ankerwycke during the Festival of Archaeology.

Over the week, the visitor experience attracted 50 people and during our survey the National Trust took photographs and film of our work.

The resistivity survey results (see below) identified a number of anomalies. From top to bottom of the plot, they are:

On the upper right: anomalies which represent the remains of the priory gateway, plus, just to the south, some ancillary buildings.

On the left, a small rectangle of points which probably represent the remains of a boat house. The River Thames runs along the left of the plot.

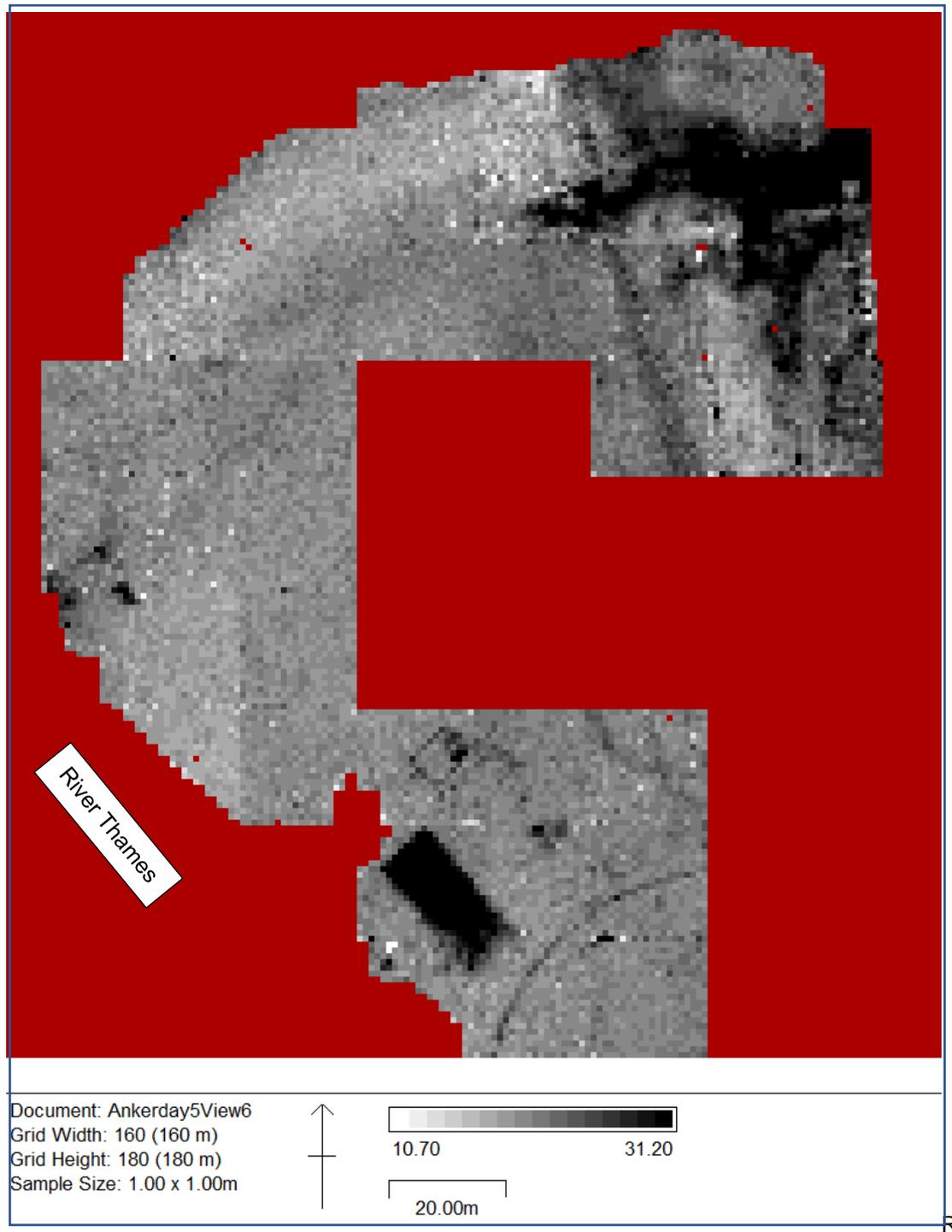
Below that, a large black rectangle: the remains of a 19<sup>th</sup> century swimming pool.

Just to the north of the swimming pool a small anomaly which represents the remains of a house. This is confirmed by a crop mark found on Google Earth.

The semi-circular anomaly to the bottom right of the swimming pool, is probably a drain from the Tudor house built after the Priory was dissolved by Henry VIII.

Thanks are due to Tim Lloyd, Martin Labram, Ewan Montgomery, and Keith Abbott who helped me carry out this work.

Andrew Hutt



## The Wormstall 2021 Project

As a result of working on the Thatcham data collection area of Berkshire Roman Project 2, Keith Abbott got interested in the intersection of the Roman roads from Silchester to Cirencester and Silchester to Bath. In his work published in *Land of the Atrebatas*, Hugh Davies identified Wormstall Wood as being the likely site of this

road junction. Knowing this, Keith Abbott contacted the owner of the Wormstall estate which led to Keith and I being invited to visit the estate. The owner took us on a tour of the estate and afterwards over tea and cake, he revealed that many years earlier a metal detector rally had found Roman coins in his fields. As a result of this

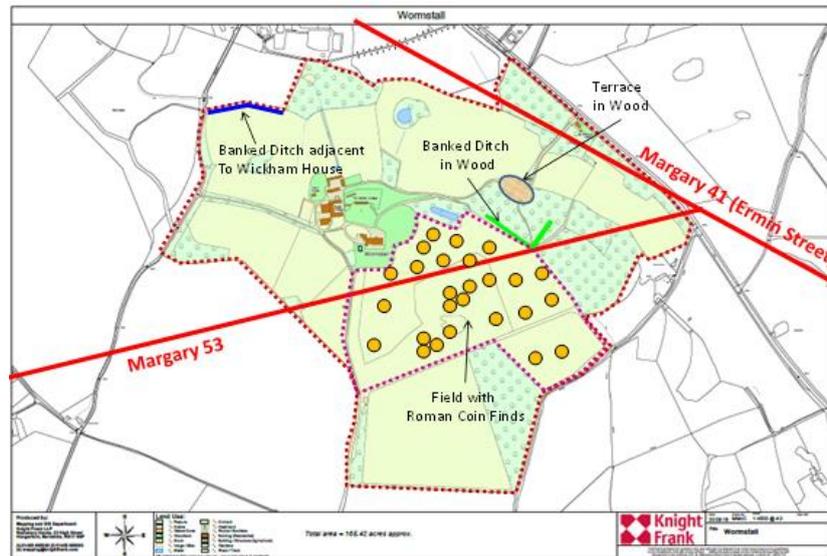
and later discussions, Keith has produced a plan for fieldwork at Wormstall which includes 3 work packages which are:

- 1) To identify and catalogue the Roman coins;
- 2) To carry out a woodland survey of Wormstall Wood – there is no LIDAR data which we can use;

- 3) To carry out a geophysics survey of the field where the coins were found.

Given the Covid situation, the fieldwork is unlikely to start until February 2021. If you are interested please contact Keith via Anne Harrison.

*Andrew Hutt*



*The evidence found on the Wormstall estate on 29 September 2020 (Wormstall Estate Map 30 September 2016)*

## BAS Study Group

The study group has held meetings in September, October, and November with several different subjects being discussed.

Keith Abbott's work on Roman sites round Mildenhall, led him to give the study group a presentation comparing the sizes of the insula found at Cunetio (Mildenhall), Silchester, Caerwent, and Venta Icenorum (outside Norwich).

Andrew Hutt's work round Wantage led him to give a presentation of how the capabilities of the BAS Gazetteer enables us to generate maps to present sites on different scale maps. For example, on small-scale maps, Wantage is shown as a single point (Map 1) while on a large-scale map shows the 14 sites found within the modern town (Map 2).

The work of translating Hugh Davies' account of the Roman Road in the Berkshire Region into lines of British National Grid references and hence into the BAS gazetteer and on to maps (Map 3) led to presentations in September and October. However, there is now more to

do, because this work has spawned several new Roman road projects.

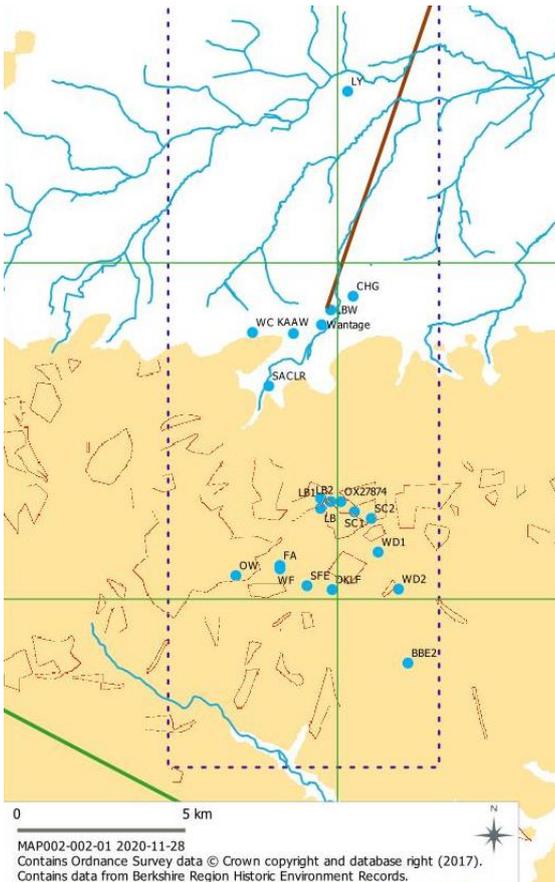
One area of interest is the junction between the Roman road from Silchester to Cirencester and the road along the Kennet Valley to Bath. Hugh Davies identified Wormstall Wood as a likely location for this junction (see above).

Finally, the study group reviewed both the proposal and the results of the Ankerwycke 2020 geophysics survey.

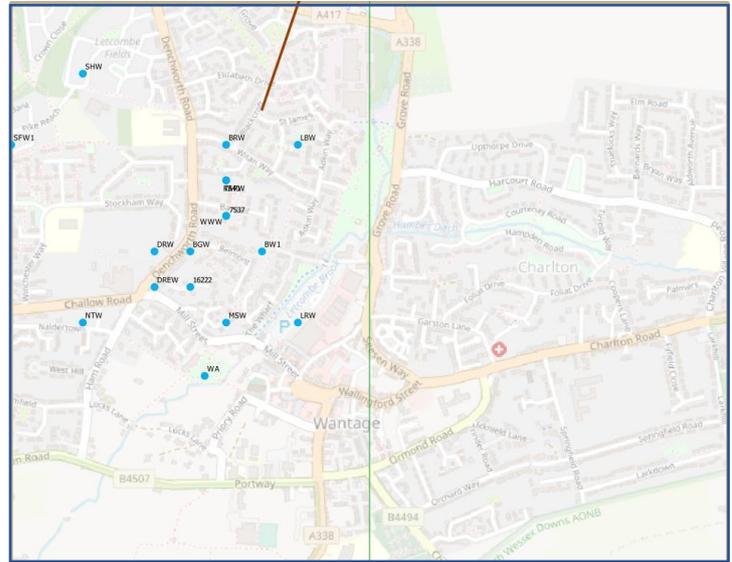
The Study Group will meet on Zoom on:

- 6 January 2021
  - 3 February 2021
  - 3 March 2021
  - 7 April 2021
- All meetings will start at 15:00.

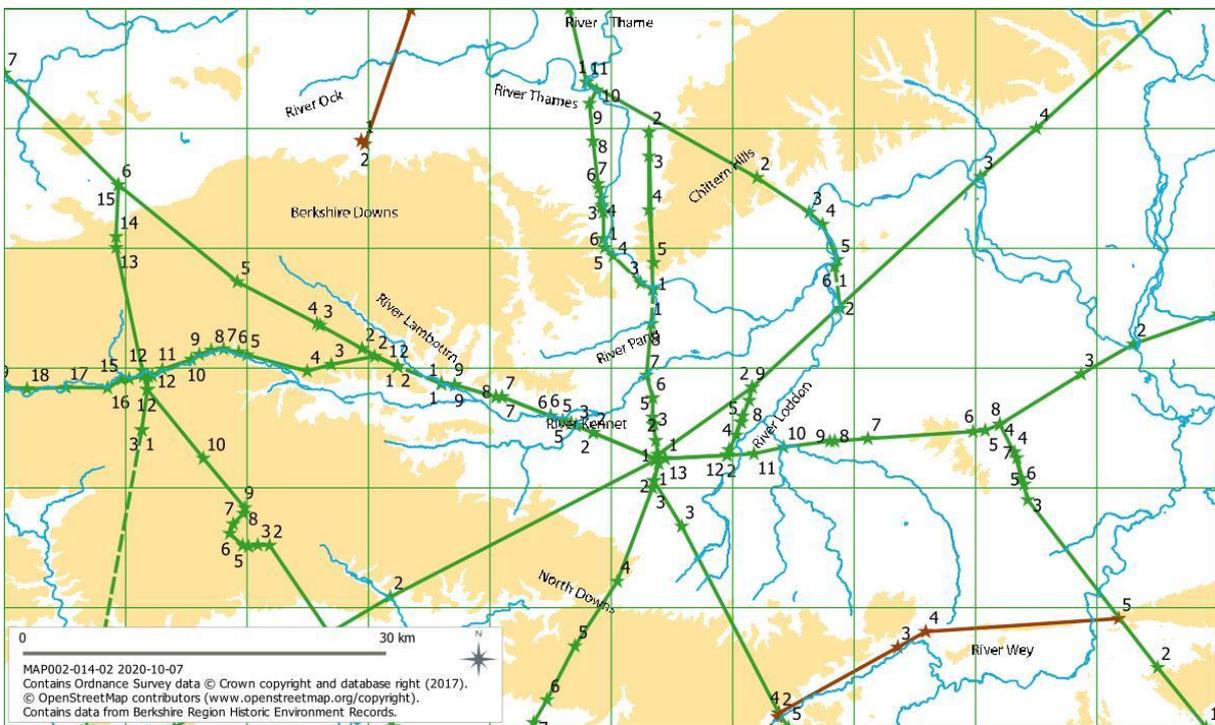
*Andrew Hutt*



Map 1 The Roman sites in the Wantage data collection area



Map 2 Roman Sites in Wantage



Map 3. Roman roads in the Berkshire Region showing the points where either evidence has been found or a road is believed to run.

## Do you take notes at meetings?

This might sound like a really strange question. We all enjoy reading the reviews of the lectures we have attended either in the newsletter or online, especially when we have not been able to attend them. These reviews are written by a member of the Society, and in recent times they have usually been written by one very reliable member.

Now the Society is looking to form a group of members who are willing to take notes during lectures and write them up into a review to be published through the usual channels.

If you are interested in making a contribution to the Society in this way please contact me via [lectures@berksarch.co.uk](mailto:lectures@berksarch.co.uk).

The more members this group has the less frequently you will be requested to do this!

Thank you

Julie Worsfold

## Marlow Warlord Crowd Funding Appeal

Some of you will be aware from recent coverage in the local press of the discovery this summer of the 'Marlow Warlord' a 6<sup>th</sup> century sentinel burial on a site above the Thames by a team from the University of Reading led by Dr Gabor Thomas, assistant professor of archaeology and an early medieval specialist. See: <https://www.mymarlow.co.uk/2020/10/the-marlow-warlord-exciting-anglo-saxon-burial-site-discovered/>

Gabor is due to give the Society a lecture on this subject in February 2021, although, evidently, we had to be a bit cagey about the title when this was agreed at the end of August! In the meantime, he is trying to raise £7,000 through crowdfunding for finds conservation work and analysis, which will develop the story. Here is Gabor's message to the Society on 10 October:

'I hope that you caught the press coverage of the Marlow Warlord last week. It was rather a media storm in the end, one which I think really helped to put the archaeology of our local area on the map – I was able to clarify in radio interviews that the burial was found on the Berkshire side of the river!

Please consider donating to this project. Our crowdfunding page is: <https://reading.hubbub.net/p/marlowwarlord/>

If we achieve our total and the planned analysis and conservation does go ahead, then it will be possible to generate a long, lasting legacy for this remarkable Berkshire discovery. My talk to members next year will also be correspondingly richer in content and interpretation.'

Julie Worsfold

## Ashmolean Museum, Oxford

A special display, Lasers, Hoarding and Roman Gold Coinage, opens until March 2021.

### 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:

**Co-Chairs:** Alison McQuitty and Maggie Smith  
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