



ARCHAEOLOGY

The Newsletter of the Berkshire Archaeological Society

Spring 2022

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Dates for your diary

Please note that unless otherwise advised all Saturday lectures will now take place at RISC, London St, Reading, RG1 4PS with refreshments from 2 pm. Lectures will start at 2:30 pm and will also be streamed live on Zoom. The Zoom link will be emailed in advance.

Non-members are welcome to attend lectures. If wishing to attend online they need to email lectures@berksarch.co.uk by the end of the Wednesday before the lecture.

Tuesday 1st March 2022: Outreach Group 7:30pm on Zoom

Wednesday 2nd March 2022: Study Group 3pm on Zoom

Wednesday 9th March 2022: Study Group Lunch – Email secretary@berksarch.co.uk if you wish to attend.

Saturday 19th March 2022: Lecture: Understanding the Early Medieval Pottery Assemblage from Lyminge, Kent, by Lisa Backhouse, University of Reading

Saturday 2nd April 2022: Day School - St Nicolas' Church Hall, Newbury - Details in this newsletter

Tuesday 5th April 2022: Outreach Group 7.30 pm on Zoom

Wednesday 6th April 2022: Study Group 3 pm on Zoom

Wednesday 13th April 2022: Study Group Lunch

Saturday 23rd April 2022: Lecture: Islands of stone; Neolithic Crannogs in the Outer Hebrides by Professor Duncan Garrow, University of Reading (on Zoom only)

Saturday 30th April 2022: Poster competition - Closing date for entries - Details in this newsletter

Tuesday 3rd May 2022: Outreach Group 7.30 pm on Zoom

Wednesday 4th May 2022: Study Group 3 pm on Zoom

Wednesday 11th May 2022: Study Group Lunch

Saturday 21st May 2022 Visit: Avebury - Details TBA

Tuesday 31st May 2022: Outreach Group 7.30 pm on Zoom

Wednesday 1st June 2022: Study Group 3 pm on Zoom

Wednesday 8th June 2022: Study Group Lunch

Saturday 18th June 2022: Visit: Bisham and the dovecote - Details TBA

IN
BERKSHIRE

From the Chair

I hope this newsletter finds you well and looking forward to the spring.

This is a report of the work of the Management team of Keith Abbott, Anne Harrison and me over the last 3 months.

We have been developing a new way of explaining what the Society does and how it contributes to the development of the archaeology of Berkshire.

The Society's constitution defines its objects as:

To advance the education of the public in the fields of archaeology
and history in the past and present county of Berkshire

Based on our current practice, the Society is addressing the interests of four audiences: 1) the public, 2) those who want to learn more about the archaeology and hence have joined the Society, 3) those members of the Society who want to work as archaeologists and 4) archaeological authorities, contractors, and academics.

The following figure shows the activities and how they contribute to the four audiences. I am sharing this thinking with you so you can help the Society to grow its contribution to the archaeology of Berkshire.

AIMED AT THE PUBLIC	AIMED AT MEMBER ARCHAEOLOGISTS
Communications: website	BAS study group
Outreach: public events	Desktop research: Anchurus
Outreach: poster competition	Desktop research: Berkshire Gazetteer
Outreach: museum and library exhibitions	Desktop research: Iron Age
Outreach: teachers and primary schools	Desktop research: Roman
Outreach: local societies	Desktop research: Early Medieval
Day school: Archaeology of Berkshire	Fieldwork: geophysics
Day School: Berkshire Historic Environment	Fieldwork: small excavations
Spring tour	Fieldwork: buildings
Berkshire Archaeological Journal	Library: Berkshire Archaeology Research
Library: BRO	

AIMED AT MEMBERS	AIMED AT ARCHAEOLOGICAL AUTHORITIES, CONTRACTORS AND ACADEMICS
Archaeology on Saturdays lectures	Partnerships to amplify their outreach activities
BAS social events	Publishing the Berkshire Archaeological Journal on paper and via ADS
Site visits	
Communications: news sheet	
Communications: newsletter	

The Middle Thames Archaeology Partnership (MTAP)

MTAP was established as a result of a project sponsored by local Societies and the University of Reading to survey the archaeology of 12 parishes in the north bend of the River Thames between Twyford and Maidenhead. Since then, MTAP has been involved in several University of Reading projects. The details are on the MTAP website run by the University of Reading: <https://research.reading.ac.uk/middle-thames-archaeology/>

From the University of Reading's point of view, MTAP provides outreach to local organisations interested in heritage. From the local organisations' point of view, it is an opportunity to work with University of Reading.

Last year, at a meeting, Fiona Macdonald, Principal Archaeologist, Berkshire Archaeology posed two questions: *What do partners want to contribute to the partnership?* and *What do partners want to get out of the partnership?* The Society's answer to the first question is a long list of knowledge, skills, and activities that the Society is prepared to share with MTAP members. As its answer to the second question, the Society is looking forward to participating in the projects led by the University of Reading and to developing its knowledge and skills in areas such as post-excavation work.

The Management team is working to establish the Society's relationship with MTAP.

Unlocking Old Windsor project

In 2018, many of you worked on the *Old Windsor Finds project* processing the finds from Brian Hope-Taylor's excavations in the 1950s. The University of Reading and the Berkshire Archaeological Society are currently working together on a proposal to Historic England for an *Unlocking Old Windsor project*. This is the next phase of the work to document Hope-Taylor's work and promote the results to the communities living in and around Old Windsor. Expect to hear more about this in the coming months.

Andrew Hutt

Archaeology on Saturdays

Members' Talks

Saturday 11th December 2021

Blounts Court, by Nigel Spencer

From Nigel we learned that the house had been built around 1350, bought by Thomas Blount in 1360 and renamed Blounts Court. The building was repeatedly extended over the centuries. After various private owners, Blounts Court was acquired by Johnson Matthey Plc in 1975, who own it to this day, using it as their Technology Centre.

In 2013, BAS conducted a geophysical survey on the lawns to the front east of the house, where parch marks had been observed. The results indicated the remains of a building of approximately 30m by 12m. In 2014, excavation started, and revealed the remains of a floor with chalk block foundations, and Georgian walling. We saw photographs of these excavated remains – always so exciting to see what geophysical 'blobs' turn out to be! In 2015, an auger survey showed the extent of the chalk floor, and further excavations revealed a mortared flint wall.

In 2016, findings suggested that the Georgian wall was the border of a garden. Variations in the mortared flint wall suggested different stages of construction, and so five separate mortar samples were sent for dating. In 2017, radiocarbon dates showed that the wall was predominantly Roman, and was demolished in the 10th century. The building with the chalk floor was dated to the 16th-17th centuries.

A picture showing the trenches with the resistivity survey results as background illustrated what had been found, and where, in relation to Blounts Court. Another picture by Tim Lloyd, of a reconstruction of Blounts Court in the 16th-17th centuries and showing a barn/building on the chalk floor, brought to life the geophysical survey and excavation results.

2018 was Johnson Matthey's 200th year of trading. Nigel and Andrew Hutt gave a talk about BAS's work and findings at Blounts Court.

In 2019, excavation revealed the end of the Georgian wall, which was cut into a substantial dressed flint faced wall, which is in line with the existing south end of Blounts Court. A photograph showed us that where the Georgian wall met the 'new' wall there was a single course of

brickwork, laid in a square pattern and with a concrete infill, resembling the base for a pillar.

We all know what happened in 2020-2021; Covid-19 affected everything!

In 2022, it is hoped that further excavations will reveal more information about the interesting 'new' wall, and nearby geophysical anomalies.

The Steventon Causeway, by Catherine Petts

Catherine started her talk by showing a photograph of the Causeway entitled 'The View from my Front Door'. Steventon had been in Berkshire, until boundary changes placed it in Oxfordshire. Catherine described the area as 'wet', with Steventon being a 'spring' village on the edge of the North Wessex Downs.

We looked at an aerial photograph of Steventon, with the Causeway, clearly visible because of the trees that grow along it, running from south-west to north-east through the village. The Causeway runs between St. Michael's Church in the east and The Green in the west, but, as Catherine went on to explain, there seems to be no clear reason why the Causeway was built.

We saw photographs of the Causeway, paved with limestone and lined with trees. A diagram of a cross-section showed small banks and ditches to either side of the larger bank of the Causeway, which appears to be raised between 3 and 5 feet above the surrounding area. The limestone paved path, which is 6 feet in width, runs along the top of the Causeway bank, which is considerably wider, at about 24 feet across. With the Causeway being nearly 1 mile in length, we were able to comprehend the very large number of man-hours, and associated cost, which would have been involved in building this structure.

And yet, as Catherine explained, there is nothing in the ancient records to say by whom or why the Causeway was built. She talked of the myths surrounding 'jolly monks', and how some people had thought that the Causeway had been built to link St. Michael's Church with another religious building. But there had only ever been two monks at Steventon, and it did not seem likely that this huge and expensive undertaking would have been arranged for their benefit.

We looked at a map which showed how the Causeway appeared to have preceded the village, which it divides into two. We looked at LiDAR images of Steventon and the surrounding area. Catherine suggested that the Causeway, which clearly predates the village, may have been a prehistoric boundary bank. She talked of Bronze Age and Iron Age settlements nearby, who could have included this good grazing land in their territories.

I hope that one day excavations at the Causeway will reveal dateable artefacts and other evidence to explain this rather lovely, but mysterious structure!

Runnymede, learning geophysics: the results, by Andrew Hutt

Andrew described the 2021 BAS geophysics training and survey project at Runnymede, Surrey. The project involved the owners of the land; the National Trust (NT), as well as Surrey County Archaeological Unit.

The project involved 29 learners, ranging from students to the newly retired. They learned about geophysics techniques, and the currently known archaeology of the fields at Runnymede. They then got hands-on experience of collecting geophysical data at Runnymede. Keith Abbott taught the use of an earth resistance meter, and Ewan Montgomery taught how to use a gradiometer. According to Andrew, he himself just 'stomped around and got in the way', but I'm sure that wasn't true! Back indoors, the learners saw how the data they had collected provided more information about the archaeology at Runnymede.

We looked at an image of the NT's Historic Environment Record for Runnymede, and saw various features that had once existed there, such as Egham racecourse. An aerial photograph showed where the Magna Carta was probably signed; once an island, now just slightly raised land with trees around part of it.

A diagram of the surveyor's grid showed the two areas that were surveyed. We saw the Area 1 gradiometer results, with anomalies at its north end on the edge of the 'island', and then very little towards the middle, with just a couple of linear features that may have been ditches. The Area 1 earth resistance results showed a similar picture of 'busy' areas at the edge of the 'island', with little going on in the middle. Area 2, on the edge of the 'island', showed many features, possibly ditches and pits that had been dug and then filled in, as well as areas of burning. The earth resistance results confirmed this picture of much activity.

In conclusion, the evidence appears to suggest that King John's barons placed camps around the edge of the island and left the centre to be used as a display area, and for jousting.

Andrew went on to talk about what BAS hopes to do at Runnymede in 2022. Details of the WWII Anti-Aircraft (AA) trenches are to be studied to confirm that the

anomaly in Area 1 represents an AA trench. There is to be more geophysics around the edge of the 'island', and one of the pits at the north end of Area 1 is to be excavated, to recover environmental evidence and, hopefully, artefacts!

Joan Burrow-Newton

Sutton Hoo

A talk by Dr Jennifer Foster, University of Reading on Saturday 15th January 2022.

Jennifer Foster gave us a spirited and well-illustrated talk on the Anglo-Saxon ship burial at Sutton Hoo in Suffolk.

The Sutton Hoo Estate was bought in 1926 by the Pretty family. Mrs Edith Pretty became fascinated by the mounds there and in 1939 she asked the local archaeologist Basil Brown to excavate Mound 1, with a few helpers. Once the site's significance became evident, eminent archaeologists joined in including Charles Phillips, O.G.S. Crawford, Stuart and Peggy Piggott and William Grimes.

The first find was the ship. No wood survived but the many iron rivets remained in place and the memory of the wood remained in the sand. The burial was found inside the ship, which had been hauled up from the river Deben. It mattered that the river and sea were visible from the burial site, in keeping with the Germanic and European burial tradition.

The finds were spectacular. They included a silver dish from Constantinople, a Coptic bowl, silver bowls, cups, spoons and ladles and the famous purse lid and buckle. The latter both show magnificent cloisonné work (inlay) with garnets carefully cut to fit inside the gold design, with stamped foil placed behind them for extra effect. The garnets came from India and the Czech Republic. The burial body had decayed in the acidic soil but was located by a high-phosphate area without finds. The person was clearly a warrior, equipped with helmet, sword, shield, axe-hammer, spears and pikes and maybe a sceptre. There was evidence of feasting at the burial: a cauldron, buckets and bottles for drinking, drinking horns (from aurochs, clearly imported as these giant cattle had died out in Britain by then) and maplewood drinking cups. There was a bowl, perhaps for handwashing, and a curious large iron candlestand which may have been lit as a signal or incorporated in the burial ritual.

The burial feast would probably have been accompanied by a recitation (like Beowulf) and music. A maplewood lyre with six strings and tuning pegs was found in a beaver skin bag and has since been reconstructed. People were entertained at feasts like this from the Late Bronze Age onwards in Europe, with drinking horns and gaming pieces appearing in the Iron Age. Anglo-Saxon warrior burials typically had many hand weapons and, as in the 5th and 6th centuries, these equated with manhood. This burial rite had died out by AD 800.

The Sutton Hoo ship was originally dated to AD 650-660 by coin evidence but is now redated to AD 625. All the objects are pagan except for two 'Paul' and 'Saul' silver spoons, possibly of Christian origin. The most likely king in the burial is now thought to be Raedwald (d. AD 624-5). The probable burial ritual is hinted at in Beowulf where the writer, describing another burial, refers to "wayfarers widely visible". The ship would have been brought up from the sea and the river Deben, the body placed in it surrounded by the treasures, then a wooden cabin built over this, and everything earthed up to a mound.

So where did these Anglo-Saxons live? At West Stow Anglo-Saxon village (some way away and open to the public) houses have been reconstructed using the post-holes of an earlier excavation, giving a good impression of a settlement. At Rendlesham (5km away) a huge hoard was found in 2016 at a 'King's Palace', suggesting the Sutton Hoo grave's occupant may have lived there.

At present an excavation is taking place at Sutton Hoo ahead of a new gallery, which has found settlement evidence from the Bronze Age to the Romans. The acidic sandy soil may have been more fertile for settlement then. A viewing tower is proposed for the whole Sutton Hoo site and there is an excavation ahead of this too. In 1983, excavations to the east exposed further Anglo-Saxon mounds and a flat cemetery from 500 years later. Postholes for a possible gallows were uncovered together with beheaded bodies. Similar Anglo-Saxon mound excavations took place in Taplow (1883, dating to AD 620), at Prittlewell (near Southend, 2003) and at Montem Mound (Slough, 2016). Taplow and Prittlewell revealed similar material to Sutton Hoo, as did the Staffordshire Hoard (2009, found in a flat field), showing that cloisonné inlay techniques were widespread in Britain then.

A new replica ship is currently under construction by the Sutton Hoo Ship's Company. It will be 32m long with an 18m long keel made from a single oak tree and progress in the workshop can be watched from a viewing gallery. Jennifer gave her approval to the film 'The Dig' starring Ralph Fiennes (Basil Brown) and Carey Mulligan (Edith Pretty) where, before filming, the actors were all taught to excavate correctly. The film was filmed 'backwards' with the fibreglass ship gradually filling with soil. The original excavators at Sutton Hoo did an excellent job, many going on to careers in archaeology, although sadly Basil Brown was side-lined, despite his expertise. Edith Pretty died in 1942, after donating the finds to the British Museum where they are one of the star attractions.

Jennifer's talk was colourful and enthusiastic and has certainly left me keen to revisit the site and to see the construction of the replica Sutton Hoo ship in progress.

Jill York

How Did The Earliest European Hunter-Gatherers Survive?

A talk by Professor Rob Hosfield, University of Reading, on Saturday 19th February 2022.

Rob Hosfield's talk took us beyond the 'stone and bone' artefacts of Lower Palaeolithic archaeology, to describe the life of hominids living between 1.5 and 0.5 million years ago, when the European climate was seasonal and temperate. Rob's seasonal perspective would indicate how such people managed to survive.

Such hominids almost certainly lived in groups of around twenty to thirty. They had large brains, only 10 – 15% smaller than ours, and had developed an effective technology in stone. They must have communicated with each other, probably not with language as we know it, but well enough to live together successfully. They faced predators such as wolves and hyenas, and at times scimitar-toothed cats and giant hyenas.

Their climate fluctuated dramatically. Cores taken from ocean floors and the Arctic show variation from very warm (hippos in the Thames, for example) to cold enough for ice a mile thick all over Britain. Hominids first appeared in Europe about 1.5 million years ago, dispersed at first only around the Mediterranean, but spreading by about 0.5 million years ago north of the Pyrenees and the Alps and into southern Britain.

A seasonal approach recognises the challenges and opportunities for life at different times of the year. Although archaeological sites of the period can be dated only to within c.50,000 years, the remains of small animals can indicate, through their known climatic tolerances, the contemporary climate.

Beginning his seasonal survey with the **spring**, Rob suggested that early hominids probably saw childbirth tending to occur in late spring. (Conception is likely to have been concentrated in late summer when people were best fed and at their healthiest.) Compared with the offspring of great apes, hominid infants experienced dramatic early brain-growth, requiring early weaning and a good supply of solid food.

Dental wear on skeletons shows that most people died in their twenties and thirties. Without significant numbers of grandparents, the food for weaned infants was probably provided by siblings. Spring would have brought an abundance of food sources (e.g., the eggs and young of other species) which were reasonably safe for children to forage for.

Seasonal synchrony of reproduction seems to enhance the support by males of pregnant females and makes it harder for a single male to dominate several females. This may constitute the beginning of pair-bonding: a theory supported by a reduction in sexual bimorphism

(differences between the sizes etc. of the sexes). It would fit in with the custom of food-sharing more generally. Springtime probably saw early palaeolithic groups moving into smaller core territories where food was abundant, in order to get through the period of giving birth and early infancy. Females probably initiated such moves.

Remains of snakes, voles, and molluscs (for example) show the ambient **summer** temperature in typical palaeolithic sites in Britain of 15 – 20°C, with 20 – 25° in Germany and 20 – 28° in Spain. Summer would have provided not only plenty of food, but significantly longer days for hunting and gathering. The season would have been a key learning period for early teenagers while there was less pressure on them simply to acquire food. They would have developed technical skills (making stone tools and wooden spears), acquired knowledge (for example about fungi and animal tracking), and possibly how to make fire.

Glimpses of summer activities can be found in the archaeological record. At a site known as Charco Hondo near Madrid, tool-making material has been found on a plateau, though the stones for the tools had been gathered in riverbeds below and beyond the plateau. Young adults would probably have accompanied such expeditions.

At Schöningen in Germany, high-quality spears have been found, with shafts well polished to improve their aerodynamic behaviour when thrown. Growth-rings in the wood show that it was acquired in the summer, wood being easier to work when 'green'.

The period between 500,000 and 300,000 years ago saw various appearances of hominids in Britain. The different phases show particular predominating shapes of hand-axes, probably indicating copying by unskilled younger people of their elders' work.

Summer, despite relative richness of resources, cannot have been idyllic. Work on reptiles in southern Europe shows that the climate was often very dry, producing its own challenges. In summer, herd-forming animals tend to split into smaller groups which are harder to find. It must be remembered that at least 50% of hunts are unsuccessful.

In **autumn**, many prey animals such as deer, horse and bison gather in larger groups for rutting (concentrated evidence of autumnal bison remains has been found). Larger groups moving together are easier to track. Such herds may have attracted more than one hominid hunting group, thus offering the chance of inter-breeding. Finds of bones have shown cut-marks on the bones which produce the most meat, indicating that the carcasses were hunted rather than scavenged. Occasional evidence of

skinning is another sign that hominids killed the prey before other predators reached it.

It seems that (for example) a hunted group of a stallion with some mares would have provided 400 – 1000 kg of food, in addition to other valuable resources such as fat, marrow and skins. Autumn was the best time for hunting: the prey was in better condition than during the winter. Food must have been stockpiled for the leaner months ahead. Without evidence of storage pits or drying racks, one must suppose that meat was buried in the ground or stored in cold water (a practice used by modern Inuit). Experimental archaeology indicates that a large haunch of horsemeat kept in a pond can still be nutritious many weeks later.

Winter temperatures would have been around 7 – 11° (Britain), 0.5 – 13° (Germany), or 2 – 12° (Spain). In addition to lower temperatures, hominids would have faced wind-chill and rain. Mathematical modelling on skeletons shows that, even allowing for greater muscle-mass and increased metabolic rate, hominids would have required some kind of insulation. Body hair, extra brown adipose tissue, or clothing are all possible. Keeping the young warm would have been critical. Seasonal migration from north to south to seek a warmer climate is unlikely, given the necessary distances. Occasional glimpses of skinned herbivores are found, sometimes of beaver or bear. These suggest some kind of clothing; although without treatment, hides would quickly have become useless. Treated hides – using fat, for example – would have lasted for months and could be used as covers during sleep. Though few examples exist of rock or cave shelters, tree-throw pits and fallen trees could have been used. Traces survive of making fire with pyrite or flint, though the use of fire has its drawbacks, particularly the effort of gathering fuel. Fire was probably not a constant companion, but a luxury used when really necessary.

In summary, a seasonal perspective of the life of early palaeolithic Europeans allows us to construct a picture of what their life was like. In addition to having a powerful build and being manually dexterous, they must have been supremely cognitively skilled.

If you would like to know more:

Rob's book: *'The Earliest Europeans – A Year in the Life: Seasonal survival strategies in the Lower Palaeolithic'* is available open access at:

https://books.casematepublishers.com/The_Earliest_Europeans.pdf

Where copyright permits you can find post-print copies of Rob's other publications at:

<http://centaur.reading.ac.uk/view/creators/90000911.html>

Toby Bainton

Middle Thames Archaeology Partnership (MTAP)

Cookham: Queen Cynethryth's Abbey and an Anglo-Saxon Power Struggle

A fundraising talk hosted by Maidenhead Archaeological and Historical Society (MAHS) and given on Zoom on Wednesday 26th January by Dr Gabor Thomas to members of all local societies which form the Middle Thames Archaeological Partnership (MTAP).

Historical background and context

In Anglo-Saxon times the Thames was a conduit for goods, ideas, and knowledge. In the Upper Thames area around Oxford and Dorchester Anglo-Saxon cemeteries are full of grave goods, often containing exquisite Kentish items, reflecting the hierarchy of the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms at the time.

In the 7th and 8th centuries A.D. the kingdom of Mercia expanded south. So that by the time of the reign of King Offa (757-796 A.D.) its southern border extended to the Thames and then east to London. Consequently, the Thames had become crucial in the 8th century A.D. geopolitics between Mercia and Wessex.

According to historical sources by the end of the 7th century A.D. a series of monastic settlements had been established on the Thames. However, given limited archaeological excavation the quality of information about them is poor and uneven. Unlike nowadays monasteries in this era were fully engaged with the wider world and trade. They were both established and run by well-connected people. So, to be fully functional they needed to be highly connected, which the traffic and trade along the Thames provided.

Founded by royal families and treated as family assets, in northern Europe the monasteries were a driving force behind Christianisation. They were centres of religious life, pilgrimage and spirituality, learning and culture, and either mixed or single sex communities. They were also major landowners active in production and trade.

Between 740 and 757 A.D. King Aethelbald of Mercia gave Cookham minster to Christ Church, Canterbury in a geopolitical move to control the Thames. After 760 A.D. it was annexed by King Cynewulf of Wessex and in 779 A.D. it was captured by King Offa of Mercia. In 798 A.D. Cookham was ceded to 'Abbess' Cynethryth, Offa's widow in return for 110 hides of land (approx. 13,000 acres) in Kent. As the mother of Offa's successor, she was crucial to secure power going down Offa's line. She was also a woman of some importance being the only queen in Western Europe to have coins minted in her own name at this time. Later in the Viking era a Burghal Hidage fort was built on Sashes island to the north in a strategic attempt to control Viking progress up the Thames. In 990 A.D. King Aethelred II held a witan at Cookham, indicating that it was still an important royal

holding then. But by the Domesday book (c. 1085-6 A.D.) Cookham minster is listed as having only 2 hides (approx. 240 acres), a common theme in Anglo-Saxon monasticism.

The Archaeology

Marlow Archaeological Society (MAS) excavated at Cookham Paddock in 2005 revealing Anglo-Saxon occupation. Some commercial work in other areas of the village has indicated that the Anglo-Saxon occupation might be polyfocal.

Prior to the 2021 excavations QUEST, an agency of Reading University, conducted a palaeoenvironmental survey, coring to map the geology and morphology of the site. It determined that Holy Trinity church and the core of Cookham lie on a gravel island. Indicating that the Anglo-Saxons built proud of the flood plain. The harbour in the paddock hinted at in the 2005 excavations was proved to be an inlet but is most probably Mesolithic in date and had probably silted up long before the Anglo-Saxon occupation. The magnetometry survey showed lots of disturbance at the top of the paddock, but the rest was not that promising, although a couple of faint linear signs turned out to be very important. Magnetometry is not suitable for this site and the plan is to conduct both resistivity and ground penetrating radar surveys this year (2022) to sharpen up the geophysics. Six pilot trenches were opened in 2021 to sample some of the indistinct features as there was not enough time to look at 100% of them.

Trench 1

Revealed a north-south ditch, intercutting pits, a metalised trackway, a flint pad which may have been a support structure for a timber building, hearth material and domestic refuse, all of which were firmly Middle-Saxon.

Trench 2

Contained two east-west ditches, postholes from a timber building, gravel building footings, and evidence of phasing.

Trench 3

Revealed a large midden, more postholes, and an in-situ hearth with evidence of metal working.

Trench 4

Contained some sherds of pottery, some bone, an iron suspension ring, and an east-west ditch which may have been a boundary or a water channel. On site water management would have been necessary.

Trench 5

Revealed part of a human skull and some other human bones and an east-west ditch which had been recut indicating that it had been a long-lived boundary.

Trench 6

Contained a small pit with domestic refuse, animal bone and metalworking slag.

Artefacts

Pottery

Mainly locally produced organic tempered wares with some imports from other parts of England and near mainland Europe, dating the settlement to the 8th-9th centuries A.D.

Coinage

Some Sceatta, which are silver coins, minted by the Frisians and Anglo-Saxons. Their presence indicates the site may have been a centre of trade.

Dress accessories

Dominated by bronze pins which would have fastened delicate veils. A delicate bronze bracelet was also found.

Iron tools and fittings

A suspension ring, an axe head, a knife, a saw blade, nails, and various fittings. Given the ironworking slag it is likely that some of these were produced on site.

Other/small finds

Bone combs and window glass. The latter was pioneered in Anglo-Saxon monasteries in this period. The small piece of green glass is the first discovered in this area.

The artefacts were very comparable to those found during the excavations at Lymping, Kent.

Animal bone

The full report had not been received. However, initial findings indicated that the species representation was unusual. It was dominated by pig, which is for consumption only as you can't do anything else with it. The presence of deer bones indicates the elite pastime of hunting. Both meats give the site a clear high-status signature.

The Future

The areas investigated to date show both domestic and industrial use and are clear evidence for a busy Anglo-Saxon settlement. However, to date only keyholes into the archaeology have been investigated raising many more questions, such as, 'What was at Cookham prior to the monastery?', 'What were the Anglo-Saxon churches in this area built with?'. There was Roman influence in Kent where they used stone.

So, there is an exciting agenda to build around this site, not just for the immediate area but by linking it to other parts of England and Europe.

Cookham Abbey is likely to be the focus of MTAP work for the next three years. The plan is to excavate the whole site for which a minimum of £60,000 is needed and donations are welcome!

If you would like to know more:

<https://research.reading.ac.uk/middle-thames-archaeology/projects/cookham-excavations/>

You can now download the PDF of the interim report on the August 2021 excavation at Cookham Church Paddock at:

<https://research.reading.ac.uk/middle-thames-archaeology/wp-content/uploads/sites/180/2022/02/Cookham-2021-Interim-final.pdf>

Gabor's 20-minute interview to Time Team on the 2021 excavations at Cookham Church Paddock:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VBhKqzUW1L4>

Julie Worsfold

BAS Study Group

December 2021 meeting

The December meeting of the Study Group started with a tutorial by Andrew Hutt on using Microsoft Word to produce project proposals and reports. This touched upon many of the finer points of how to use Word such as the use of styles, headings, and multi-level lists (this creates a unified section numbering throughout a document), rulers and tabs to position text and figures, inserting, cropping rotating and scaling pictures and more. If anybody else wants help with using Word, please contact Andrew.

This was followed by a talk by Keith Abbott on the Roman coins found at Wormstall.



A copper-alloy nummus of Constantine II minted in Lugdunum (Lyon) and dated to A.D. 317-330

January 2022 meeting

The meeting started with a presentation by Andrew Hutt of the proposal for an Unlocking Old Windsor project. This is a proposal for a partnership between the University of Reading and the Society for the next phase of the work to document Brian Hope-Taylor's excavations at Old Windsor. It was presented to the Study Group members because they will be invited to work on the project. Therefore, it was important to gain their buy-in, so their views are reflected in the final proposal presented to Historic England.

This was followed by a brainstorm in response to the question: What social benefits have you gained from being a member of BAS? The results are interesting insofar as they recorded comments such as:

- A good way to learn how other people lived in the past, perspectives of former lives
- A good way to meet people who share a common interest
- Learning new skills and being part of a team in an area of personal interest
- Good way of meeting interesting people, learning about local history to build a connection with the wider community

The meeting ended with a presentation by Keith Abbott on the geophysics survey at Radley Farm.

February 2022 meeting

This meeting started with a presentation by Andrew Hutt on the Middle Thames Archaeological Partnership (see above).

Then, there was a brainstorm in response to the question: *What heritage sites do you take visitors to?* The sites mentioned in the responses included: Silchester, Avebury, Piddington (in Buckinghamshire) Butser Farm, Fishbourne, Arborfield, Cliveden, Taplow Mound, Dorchester Abbey, Windsor Castle, West Kennet Long Barrow, Reading Abbey and Grim's Bank, Wallingford.

This was followed by a presentation by Nigel Spencer on the surveys at Arborfield Mill and Hall Farm.

Andrew Hutt

BAS Outreach Group

We thank Alison McQuitty for developing the Society's outreach capabilities while she was our chair and co-chair. However, given the wider understanding of outreach (see 'From the Chair', above), she has decided to focus on making a success of the Poster Competition and has retired as leader of the Outreach Group.

A recent review of Historic England funding priorities by Keith Abbott has shown that during the Covid-19 lockdown, they have made significant changes to their funding programmes. Their focus has shifted from funding archaeological excavations and investigations to building local capability so that local communities can carry out archaeology fieldwork which is locally significant and helping communities develop a sense of place.

In response to these changes, the Society is changing the scope of its outreach activities. The focus of attention is moving towards engagement with local communities. If this goes well, the Outreach Group will liaise with several town and parish councils and local societies.

In order to make this work, the BAS Outreach Group will meet on Zoom on a Tuesday evening before a BAS Study Group meeting. If you are interested in helping to promote the archaeology and history of your local area to your fellow townfolk and parishioners and some of the other activities listed in the figure in 'From the chair', above, please come along to the next BAS Outreach Group meeting.

Andrew Hutt

Other news

Harness your creative abilities and love of heritage and win £300!

I am delighted to announce that, thanks to the work and ideas of dedicated BAS Trustees and members (Keith Abbott, Beth Asbury, Anne Harrison, Andrew Hutt, Tim Lloyd, Deborah Pope, Maggie Smith, Julie Worsfold & Jill York), **Berkshire Archaeological Society is launching a poster competition.** This competition will include sites in those parts of Berkshire

which became parts of other counties in 1974. The competition is open to all – including artists, photographers, professionals, amateurs, teachers, and students. The only stipulation is that you must be over the age of 18. Group as well as individual entries are accepted, but there is only one prize per winning entry.

The invitation is to design a poster that inspires and informs, that shows your enthusiasm and interest for the archaeology of Berkshire. A selection of the entries will also be displayed by the Society at its events and meetings and used in its publicity material. The deadline is 30th April 2022. A panel of judges will select three winners and prizes will be awarded as follows:

- First prize £300
- Second prize £150
- Third prize £100

The judges are Professor Mike Fulford, Camilla & Ross Lovell, and Tim Lloyd. The winner will be announced in late June 2022.

All entrants will be granted, until 31st March 2023, the facilities given to members of the Society to attend lectures, go on visits and receive newsletters and communications. Please pass on this information to anyone you think might be interested.

For further details please go to: www.berksarch.co.uk

Alison McQuitty

Harness your creative abilities and love of heritage and win £300!

Design a poster for Berkshire Archaeological Society (BAS) to be displayed at meetings and in publicity material for the society. Choose one of two themes:

- Life in Roman Thatcham
- One (or more) archaeological site(s) in Berkshire that are special to you

First prize £300
Second prize £150
Third prize £100

All entrants will be granted, until 31st March 2023, the facilities given to members of the Society to attend lectures, go on visits and receive newsletters and communications.

The poster needs to inspire curiosity about the subject, be factually accurate, visually appealing/attention grabbing and appeal to both archaeologists and the general public

Entrants will be given an information pack about the themes but you can also use your own research. The competition is open to anyone over the age of 18. There may be a group submission but there is only one application per individual/group and one prize! Winners will be notified late June 2022.

Download application form and information pack from www.berksarch.co.uk

Deadline 30th April 2022

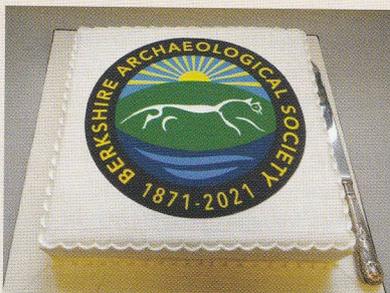
BAS in Current Archaeology

'Edible Archaeology' is a long running feature in Current Archaeology and over the years has featured some amazing edible structures from a recreation of Stonehenge and onwards.

Perhaps our cake is quite simple compared to many, but after the magazine devoted a whole article to the 175th anniversary of the Sussex Archaeological Society, I felt that our anniversary also deserved a mention. So, I submitted a photo of the cake and a few words, and it was published in the January issue.

EDIBLE ARCHAEOLOGY

The Sussex Archaeology Society is not the only one celebrating an anniversary this year. The Berkshire Archaeological Society is celebrating its 150th anniversary this year. Not with quite the fanfare and celebrations we had planned, but we have managed a virtual Garden Party and a commemorative Day School,



complete with cake, which even if it does not match the ingenuity of some of the cakes you have featured, does show our badge with pride.

Catherine Petts

Membership subscriptions 2022-23

Subscriptions to the Society are due in April 2022 for the year to April 2023, except for those who joined after 1 January 2022. Subscription rates are £15 for an individual and £20 for a couple at the same address and are due on 6th April. Correspondence should be sent to me at the address below. Please note that your membership will lapse if the subscription is not paid by July 31st 2022.

A number of members already pay by Standing Order or the equivalent, and we are most grateful to them for this. If you would like to pay electronically direct to the Society's account in future, please ask me for the details. **A renewal form is enclosed with this newsletter** for use by 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

2 Murdoch Road, Wokingham, RG40 2DA

Tel: 0118 978 5520, Email: membership@berksarch.co.uk

Obituary – Barrie Randall

In late November 2021 the Society heard of the death of Barrie Randall. Barrie had been a very active member of the Society and had served on the Council.

Assisted by his wife, Annette, he organised and ran the BAS Spring Tours from 2004 to 2014, visiting sites in Wiltshire; Salisbury; East Anglia; Somerset and Devon; South Wales; North Wales; the Northern Borders; Durham and Newcastle; Wiltshire; Somerset and Bristol; North-West England; Kent and Sussex. He worked very hard to make each tour a success. He and Annette visited potential hotels and sites in the area before pulling the tour together. He checked out the health and safety, produced risk assessments and arranged the insurance. He also did lots of research into the heritage of the sites we were visiting, producing from this a very informative and readable guide to accompany each tour. Members who were fortunate enough to take part fondly remember these tours and the conversations and events shared with fellow BAS members whilst on them.

Barrie was an architect and as Leader, Berkshire Historic Building Recording Project helped build the Society's interest in the study of heritage buildings. In October 2015 fifteen members participated in his historic buildings survey of the St Mary's Butts Castle Street Conservation Area in Reading, from Broad Street Mall to Bridge Street. Again, Barrie provided a detailed guide to the area, maps of the streets, and a glossary of architectural terms to help participants record what they

saw on pre-prepared worksheets. At the end of the survey Barrie had arranged for the group a guided tour of St Mary's Church (1796), the site of an early Reading Gaol. Barrie was also keen to help with other building surveys which were taking place locally (e.g., Rose Street, Wokingham), and to arrange visits further afield, e.g., to the Chiltern Open Air Museum, and the Weald and Downland Open Air Museum. In readiness for these trips, he had put together comprehensive visit notes and made them available on a memory stick. Barrie was also aware of the need to train people in the field of building archaeology. He was keen to put on training events to help new members of the working group. So, he compiled and made available an interactive PowerPoint guide to accessing and using the Building Archaeology Research Database (BARD). Sadly, in March 2016 Barrie stood down as Leader, Berkshire Historic Building Recording Project for health reasons.

Barrie was also interested in the safeguarding policy which BAS put together in 2015. As he met the requirements, he became the Designated Safeguarding Person for the Society. In addition, he successfully completed the Certificate in Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults course. Indeed, his last contribution to the Council was in March 2018 when he presented his report, 'The protection of vulnerable adults – guidance for activity leaders' which was accepted.

Even when Barrie was no longer able to attend BAS meetings in person, he kept in touch. For instance, he reported to Council on the proposals for re-routing the A303 at Stonehenge – urging BAS to add its voice to the public responses.

Barrie will be remembered as a lovely and friendly man who did a lot of important work for BAS which was always solidly based and supported by evidence - the tours, the historic building recording, and the safeguarding policy.

My thanks to Andrew Hutt, Catherine Petts, and Maggie Smith for their recollections of Barrie and their contributions to his obituary.

Julie Worsfold

Day School

The Day School will take place on Saturday 2nd April 2022 in St Nicolas Church Hall, Newbury, RG14 5HG, starting at 10:00 and ending at 16:30.

The programme for the day includes:

Roman Berkshire - recent highlights,

Mike Fulford

Roman Landscape Characterisation and Prediction Project (RoLCAP)

Paul Chadwick, University of Oxford

The Old Sarum to Alchester road

Bob Brewer, Berkshire Archaeological Society

The Roman temple at High Wood

Alan Hall, SOAG

Berkshire Roman Project 2

Andrew Hutt, Berkshire Archaeological Society

Roman finds

Phil Smither, PAS Liaison Officer, Berkshire

Tickets for this event are £11. Buy them from:

<https://www.ticketsource.co.uk/berkshire-archaeological-society/t-rejnxj>

If there is another Covid-19 outbreak, this event will be presented on Zoom.

Looking forward to an interesting day.

Andrew Hutt

Talks by other groups

Maidenhead Archaeological and Historical Society (MAHS)

All talks start at 8pm. There is a fee of £3 for non-members. For further information and access to the Zoom link, please email: paul@c21networks.co.uk

Wednesday 30th March 2022 - Zoom

Speaker: Colin Oakes

Title: The London That Never Was: Plans that Never Came to Fruition

Marlow Archaeology Group (MAG)

<http://marlowarch.co.uk>

All talks start at 8pm. Talks on Zoom can be booked via the website.

Thursday 17th March 2022 - Zoom

Speaker: Warren Bailie, Guard Archaeology

Title: Dunragit - The Prehistoric Heart of Galloway

Wednesday 13th April 2022 - At Liston Hall, Marlow

Speaker: James Mather

Title: The Sword, the Lord, and the Hoard - A metal detecting perspective

This talk is for members of archaeology societies only and booking details will be issued later.

Tuesday 31st May, 8pm – At Liston Hall, Marlow. This talk may also be live streamed by Zoom

Speaker: Mike Bryan

Title: Roman Britain and Where to Find It

South Oxfordshire Archaeological Group (SOAG)

<http://www.soagarch.org.uk>

For this season SOAG is running a mixture of online and in-person lectures. All start at 7.30pm (unless stated otherwise) and are open to all.

The in-person lectures are held at the **Sonning Common Village Hall**, donations at the door are appreciated.

Non-members who wish to attend online meetings should email events@soagarch.org.uk to receive registration details.

Thursday Mar 24th 2022 (Sonning Common Village Hall)

Lecture by: Dr Gabor Thomas (University of Reading)

Title: 'Life and Death on an early medieval frontier: new Anglo-Saxon discoveries from the Berkshire stretch of the Middle Thames.'

Thursday April 28th 2022

SOAG AGM, followed by:

Lecture by: Richard Oram, (Oxfordshire County Archaeologist)

Title: 'Review of recent archaeology in Oxfordshire'

Input to the Newsletter

If you have an archaeological story, you feel would interest the Society and would like included in the next newsletter, please send it to Julie Worsfold at newsletter@berksarch.co.uk before Saturday 28th May 2022. Thank you.

BERKSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY



Patron: H.M. THE QUEEN

President: Professor Michael Fulford
CBE FBA FSA

The Society was founded in 1871 and for over 150 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 newly found or long standing, the Society offers activities from regular lectures, an annual Day School (conference) and visits to excavations and research.

All members receive a monthly e-news sheet with news of the Society's events and other events in Berkshire, this quarterly newsletter and a free copy of The Berkshire Archaeological Journal published by the Society.

Officers of the Society:

Chair: Andrew Hutt
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Secretary:
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For more contacts and more information about the Society visit: www.berksarch.co.uk



@BerksArchSoc