



ARCHAEOLOGY

The Newsletter of the Berkshire Archaeological Society

Autumn 2023

Vol. 25, No.3

Dates for your diary

Unless advised otherwise:

BAS Finds Group and BAS Study Group - Woosehill Community Centre, Woosehill Court, Emmview Close, Wokingham, RG41 3DA, and on Zoom.

BAS lunches - The Wheelwright's Arms, Davis Way, Hurst, Reading, RG10 0TR. If you want to come to the lunch, please notify Keith Abbott by the Saturday before the lunch.

Saturday lectures - RISC, London St, Reading, RG1 4PS with refreshments from 2pm. Lectures start at 2:30pm and are live streamed on Zoom. Non-members are welcome to attend lectures. If wishing to attend on Zoom, they need to email [lectures\(at\)berksarch.co.uk](mailto:lectures(at)berksarch.co.uk) by the end of the Wednesday before the lecture.

All meeting Zoom links are emailed in advance and the Zoom session opens 10-15 minutes before the meeting.

Tuesday 5th September 2023: BAS Finds Group: 7:30pm – In person only. See below.

Wednesday 6th September 2023: BAS Study Group: 2:30pm

Wednesday 13th September 2023: BAS Lunch: 12 noon – Still at The Wheelwright's Arms but if you wish to attend, please contact Tony at [tony\[at\]bakkernoguer.eu](mailto:tony[at]bakkernoguer.eu) before Sat 9th September.

Saturday 16th September 2023: Lecture: *West Berks Historic Environment Records & The Lost Gardens of Shaw House* by Beth Asbury

Monday 25th September to Friday 13th October 2023: Wickham House: Geophysics survey If you want to participate, please contact Keith at [keefandtrace\[at\]hotmail.com](mailto:keefandtrace[at]hotmail.com). Also see below.

Tuesday 3rd October 2023: BAS Finds Group 7:30pm

Wednesday 4th October 2023: BAS Study Group: 2:30pm

Wednesday 11th October 2023: BAS Lunch: 12 noon

Saturday 14th October 2023: Lecture: *Sex, Gender, biological relatedness and kinship in early Neolithic Britain* by Professor Chris Fowler, Newcastle University – **On Zoom only.**

Tuesday 31st October 2023: BAS Finds Group 7:30pm

Wednesday 1st November 2023: BAS Study Group: 2:30pm

Wednesday 8th November 2023: BAS Lunch: 12 noon

Saturday 18th November 2023: BAS AGM at 2:15pm followed by lecture: Roman finds from rivers, specifically the Tees at Piercebridge by Prof Hella Eckhardt, Reading University. Both RISC and Zoom will be open from 2pm.

Wednesday 29th November 2023: BAS Christmas Lunch: 12 noon

Tuesday 5th December 2023: BAS Finds Group 7:30pm

Wednesday 6th December 2023: BAS Study Group: 2:30pm

Saturday 9th December 2023: Members' Talks – Subjects and Speakers TBA

IN
BERKSHIRE

From the Chair

I hope you have enjoyed the summer in June and the long autumn we have been having ever since.

This newsletter contains details of what members have been doing over the summer so I will focus on things that the Society is working to bring to fruition in the coming months.

The most significant of these is the BAS constitution. Our current constitution was approved in 2015 and since then much has changed. In the Spring 2022 newsletter, I wrote about the four groups that the Society supports. They are:

- The public who are interested in the archaeology of Berkshire
- Members who want to learn about the archaeology of Berkshire
- Members who want to work as archaeologists
- Archaeological contractors, authorities, and academics

When I came to include these in our new constitution, following the Charity Commission rules, these were reduced to a revised set of objects for the Society which are now stated as being:

The objects of the Society are to provide education to a) the public in the fields of archaeology and history in Berkshire and the surrounding counties and b) those members of the public who want to gain archaeological knowledge and skills so they can carry out archaeological research and fieldwork and, in turn, encourage the public to engage with the archaeology and history of Berkshire and the surrounding counties.

The Council is currently assessing what needs to be done to support clause b) above. Once this has been completed you will be asked to approve the new constitution.

I am working with James Peddle to purchase the Society some improved surveying equipment in the form of a new Global Positioning System. We are expecting to have this in place ready for next year's fieldwork.

Finally, the work on the Old Windsor Project, recording the Blounts Court excavation plus sponsoring Keith Abbott at the University of Reading is giving us an in-depth understanding of how to use the Integrated Archaeological Database (IADB) as a tool to record and interpret archaeological fieldwork. Using the IADB, the level of detail we can glean from our fieldwork far exceeds that we have been able to attain using our current methods. You will see the benefits in my report on Blounts Court (see below).

Andrew Hutt

Annual General Meeting 2023

The AGM will take place on **Saturday 18th November 2023** at 2:15 p.m. There will be a face-to-face meeting at RISC with live streaming to those who prefer an on-line meeting. Details of the arrangements will be notified later.

AGM papers will be emailed to members before the meeting and posted to those who have no email address.

All positions on the BAS Council are open for election. For more information, please contact Keith Abbott. All nominations for Council membership, proposed and seconded, must be sent to the Hon. Secretary (Keith Abbott, 5 The Priory, Winnersh, Wokingham, RG41 5DE secretary[at]berksarch.co.uk).

Agenda for the AGM

1. Apologies for Absence
2. Minutes of the AGM held on 15th October 2022
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

After the AGM members will hear a talk on Roman finds from rivers, specifically the Tees at Piercebridge by Prof Hella Eckhardt, Reading University.

BAS Study Group

The Study Group meeting in June started with a presentation by David Thomas, Chair of the Inkpen History Group, on their project to trace the buildings in Inkpen which were in use before 1800. He presented a series of maps dating from 1780 to 1900. This was followed by a presentation of the geophysics results by Andrew Hutt (see below). Keith Abbott then gave a presentation on his Master's Dissertation entitled *Making the Pennies Count*. Finally, Andrew Hutt gave a presentation on the BAS Finds Group (see below).

Andrew Hutt

Fieldwork

Geophysics Survey at Wickham

The intersection of the Roman Road to Bath (Margary 53) with Ermin Street (Margary 41) has long been thought to lie approximately 1.5km to the southeast of Wickham close to the modern day B4000 (Toller 2013), see Figure 1 below. The HER records the interpretation of this evidence found at Wickham as suggesting a Romano-British domestic dwelling or low status farmstead located on Church Hill (a short distance from Ermin Street) dating from the Late-1st century AD through to the Late-3rd century AD.



Regular readers of the BAS Newsletter will have followed the recent series of geophysics fieldwork projects carried out by the Society at the Wormstall Estate, Radley Farm and the Sutton Estate researching the route taken by the Roman Road to Bath. The latest BAS project took place in June/July 2023 close to the centre of Wickham to carry out gradiometer and earth resistance geophysics surveys to locate further evidence of the Roman Road to Bath and Ermin Street and to identify evidence of Romano-British occupation. The project involved over 20 BAS Members, and involved a number of local residents who were provided with training and a warm BAS welcome. The photo shows new BAS member, Chris, who was involved as a schoolboy in 1968 in an excavation of the Road to Bath at Radley Farm, resuming his research of this Roman Road after a 55-year break!

Results of this survey added further evidence suggesting that the Roman Road to Bath does indeed take a more northerly route than previously thought, as shown in figure 2, and intersects with Ermin Street close to the centre of Wickham village. The survey also revealed a number of probable structures aligned with the route of Ermin Street together with areas of less well-defined rectilinear anomalies with the same orientation interpreted as a possible roadside settlement running along Ermin Street close to the intersection with the Road to Bath. This survey evidence aligns with the latest material culture evidence, where a wide spread of Roman coins,

pottery and other artefacts have been discovered by local residents and metal detectorists over many years, have now been collated by BAS and recorded on the Portable Antiquities Scheme database. The dates of coins and other finds suggest that this settlement was active from the Early-1st century AD through to the end of the Roman Period, with a significant peak in activity in the Late-4th century AD and was larger than previously thought.

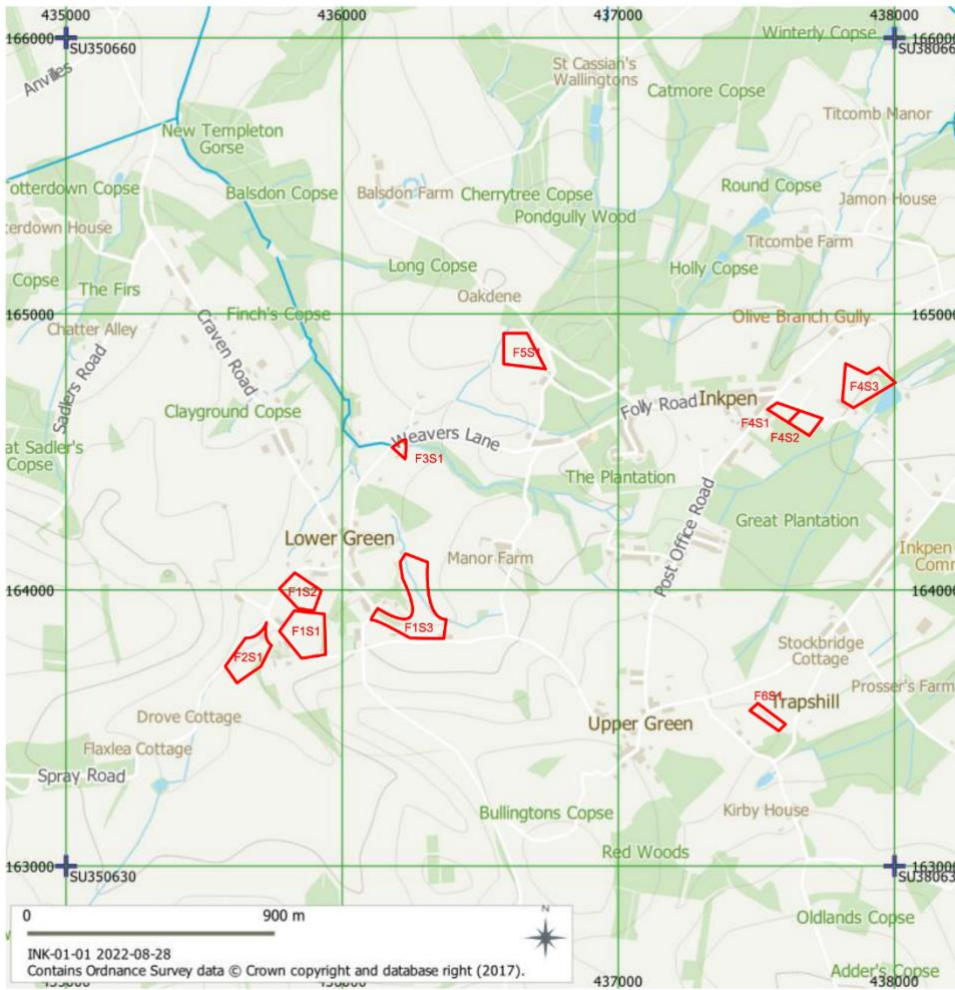
To follow up these exciting results, a further geophysics survey at Wickham will be taking place from Monday 25th September to Friday 13th October to further explore the extent of this settlement. Members who are keen to take part should contact Keith (keefandtrace[at]hotmail.com).



Figure 1. Revised route of the Roman Road to Bath (Open Streetmap, 2023)

Keith Abbott

Geophysics Surveys at Inkpen



Map of Inkpen showing the geophysics survey sites.

The Society has been working with David Thomas Chair of the Inkpen History Group, to carry out geophysics surveys of empty spaces on the 1795 Tithe map which may reveal evidence of earlier activity (see map). In area F1S1 we found

evidence of the water main to cottages by the church and some evidence of land use. In area F2S1, we found evidence of several buildings. In area F3S1, we were looking for evidence of an early mill. We found it by walking down the stream from the road by The Plantation. The remains took the form of a 3m high dam which the stream had cut through and below it what may be the remains of a building. At F4S1, we found evidence of a building and at F5S2, which is next to F5S1, we found a house platform and the remains of another building. These results are encouraging. There is more to be done at Inkpen in the future.

Andrew Hutt

Post-excavation work - Blounts Court

Over the last months I have been working to record the excavations we carried out at Blounts Court from 2014 to 2019 in the Integrated Archaeological Database (IADB). So far, I have recorded the evidence collected from 9 trenches: 171 context records and 468 bulk find records. I am now working to interpret this evidence by producing a matrix (printed size some 1m wide and 0.5m high) showing the phases of use of the site and contexts and hence finds which provide the supporting evidence.

The phases of use and features found on the site are:

- Roman work in the form of:
 - A Roman wall dating from circa AD 125
 - The construction trench used to build the wall
 - Evidence that there may have been some land clearance and wood burning before the Roman wall was built
- A medieval wall with a fine flint facing on the south side dating from the 1480s. This aligns to the south wall of Blounts Court House, which has a roof joist dendrochronology date of 1430 and hence gives us insights into the land use at that time
- 16th -17th century work including:
 - A timber barn some 30m x 12m with a low chalk block wall supporting a timber superstructure and a chalk floor
 - Evidence that it was built on the site of an earlier garden
 - An adjacent building
- Georgian work which included
 - The demolition of the 16th-17th century barn and the probable removal of the superstructure of the barn to the grounds of Blounts Court Farm where it remains today
 - A Georgian flint and brick wall
 - Evidence of a construction trench used to build the wall and finds of the food eaten by the workmen and their pipe smoking
 - A path and maybe garden on the east side of the Georgian wall
 - Plantings on the west (house) side of the Georgian wall
- Early Victorian work in the form of:
 - A gateway leading through to the east side of the Georgian wall. This suggests that part of the medieval wall was demolished at this time
- Post 1870 work when the Georgian wall, the Victorian gateway and the remaining section of the medieval wall were demolished and the grounds we see today were first laid out

I should add that I could not have reached these conclusions without using the IADB. The next steps are to process the finds (see the BAS Finds Group below) and complete the report.

Andrew Hutt

BAS Finds Group

The first meeting of the BAS Finds Group will be on Tuesday 5th September at 7:30 pm at Woosehill. This will be a face-to-face meeting with a focus on handling finds so it will not be on Zoom.

The format of the meeting will be with a long table down the room on which we can display and handle the finds with a laptop and projector connected to the IADB so we can look at and change the finds records.

The main focus of the September meeting will be:

- Brief discussion on the workings of the group

- Blounts Court Metalwork – with a focus on nails. Martin Labram is putting together some slides
- Blounts Court Glass

Over the next 3 months we will be dealing with the other finds types from Blount Court. In alphabetical order they are: Bone, CBM (Ceramic Building Materials), Organic, Pottery and Stone. My suspicion is that over the winter months we will need to run both CBM and Pottery workshops with our experts.

So far seven people have signed up for the BAS Finds Group. If you would like to join, please send me an email or come along on the 5th of September.

Andrew Hutt

Old Windsor Project - Progress

The documentary work at the Museum Store will finish in September. Eight sessions have been completed so far with the final on Thursday, September 7th. Fifteen people have taken part attending up to three times each. Boxes have been checked and the contents listed, including documents, photographs, and x-rays.

On Wednesday, September 6th a special meeting of the Study Group will review progress and begin to look ahead to future work. I hope that as many as possible of the Museum Store volunteers will be able to come and perhaps say a few words about their individual experiences and the most interesting items they have come across. Tea, coffee, and biscuits will be available and there is a small charge of £2 per person to cover the room rent. All members of BAS are welcome to attend Study Group meetings.



Recently started is work to transcribe the information from the master context list into spreadsheets and then to load them into the IADB. Volunteers have already begun this work, but more are needed as we hope to be able to upload by the end of the month.

Anne Harrison

Site visits

In July BAS members were invited to visit two very different archaeological sites:

Ankerwycke Excavations Open Evening, 27th July 2023

Visitors were welcomed by National Trust Archaeologist, James Brown, and his team. James explained the history of the site, with reference to BAS's geophysical surveys (See Harry Farmer's 'Runnymede Explored Archaeological Investigations' in the last edition of this newsletter). We learned about the 12th century St Mary's Priory, a Benedictine nunnery. The way of life of the nuns, as contrasted to that of monks, is of interest to those studying historical gender differences. In the 16th century, after the Dissolution of the monasteries, a Tudor house was built, incorporating part of the Priory. In the 19th century, a Georgian Mansion was built elsewhere on the site, with the Tudor house demolished to make way for pleasure grounds. Part of the Priory structure was kept, most probably as a folly, which was fashionable at the time. In the 1950s the Georgian Mansion burnt down and was demolished, but the Priory remains are still there today.

The tour started with a visit to the Ankerwycke Yew, said to be at least 1,400 years old and possibly more. So, the Yew was there when the Magna Carta was sealed at Runnymede, just across the Thames from Ankerwycke. James told us that visitors to Ankerwycke often walked past the Yew, and on reaching the excavations, asked where it was!

In sight of the Priory remains, we stopped to look at the Runnymede Explored Project display board which described last years' excavations. Trench 1 had revealed a corner of the Priory cloister, and Trench 2 showed part of the retaining wall of the Tudor garden, with coursing of English bond (See John Harrison's 'Bricks in Berkshire' in the last edition of this newsletter), as well as part of one of the gravel paths which formed a cross. Fragments of patterned floor tiles from the



Decorative carved chalk, from inside the 12th century priory
Photo: Joan Burrow-Newton

Priory were found here. One fragment was dated to 1350-1390 and identified as being manufactured at the Penn Tileries in Buckinghamshire.

The Priory remains have been quietly crumbling away for years. In 2019, I saw lumps of chalk which had fallen from the walls lying in the grass. Cliveden Conservation is now working to preserve the remains, which some people thought might have been a Georgian folly constructed from blocks of the demolished Priory, rather than original 12th century walls.

The 2023 trench by the Priory remains showed that it was indeed part of the original structure. We saw regular chalk blocks that formed a 12th century wall, and by its side, Tudor bricks that had been laid to support a wooden staircase. Underpinning the chalk block wall were Tudor bricks, showing repair work done in the 16th century when the Priory was incorporated into the Tudor house.

Back at the Runnymede Explored Project display board, finds had been laid out for us to see, including the Penn tile, as

described above, carved chalk that had once decorated the inside of the Priory, and Tudor potsherds and metalwork. Phil Kenning's lovely illustrations showed a reconstructed Priory complete with cloister, and nuns in the refectory! Another illustration showed the Tudor house with its walled garden, and the gravel paths forming a cross.

Ufton Bridge Mesolithic Excavation Open Day, 28th July 2023

Arriving early at the site, I immediately went to the finds' display table to look at Mesolithic flint tools found in 2022. Jennifer and her helpers explained the finds, which included animal bones, beaver teeth, and roe and red deer antlers. The flint tools included a hammer stone (used for flint knapping), beautiful tranchet axe heads, microliths and a strike-a-light (used for starting fires). Replica Mesolithic composite tools, made by Will Attard, showed how the tiny, exquisitely crafted microliths were fixed into grooves in wood with birch bark pitch, to make barbed arrows, harpoons and other tools.

Professor Martin Bell started the tour by explaining the site. It was a hunter-gatherer campsite on the edge of a former river channel of the Kennet and was occupied about 10,000 years ago. The 2023 trench cut through the palaeo-river channel and across a gravel mound on which the Mesolithic people had lived. In 2022 what appeared to be a flint working area was found, with masses of debitage (the waste from making flint tools), as well as tools damaged while being made and then discarded.

Martin explained that while the Mesolithic people very probably ate fish from the river, no bones had been found as these were very fragile and had likely decayed long ago. Many snail shells had been found, but with no evidence (such as charring), to show that these were eaten.



Mesolithic tranchet axe head
Photo: Joan Burrow-Newton

At the end of the tour, I returned to the finds' table for another look at the lovely flint tools. Also on display were plaster casts of footprints, taken before the prints were washed away by the sea, from a Mesolithic site at Goldcliff, Monmouthshire. In contrast to the small Mesolithic footprints, a plaster cast of an Aurochs' hoofprint showed how massive were these animals, which were hunted and eaten by Mesolithic people.

Joan Burrow-Newton

An exhibition, 'Uncovering Runnymede & Ankerwycke' is at Chertsey Museum, The Cedars, 33 Windsor Street, Chertsey, Surrey, KT16 8AT (Open Tues - Fri - 12.30pm - 4.30pm and Sat 11am - 4pm) until Saturday 7th October. <https://tinyurl.com/4ebup9ct>.

Talks by other groups

Berkshire Archaeological Research Group (BARG)

BARG holds quarterly evening meetings in person at The Cornerstone, Norreys Ave, Wokingham RG40 1UE. £3 fee for non-members. None are listed at the time of writing, but if interested please keep an eye on: <http://www.barg-online.org>

Maidenhead Archaeological and Historical Society (MAHS)

Talks are usually on the last Wednesday in the month on Zoom - 7.50pm for start at 8pm.

£3 fee for non-members. For the list of forthcoming talks and to book:

<https://www.ticketsource.co.uk/maidenhead-archaeological-and-historical-society>

For more information please email: paul(at)c21networks.co.uk

Marlow Archaeology Group (MAG)

Talks are once a month on varying Thursdays and start at 8pm. For more information and to book those on Zoom: <https://www.marlowarch.co.uk>

South Oxfordshire Archaeological Group (SOAG)

Talks now run from October to April (except January) on the first Thursday in the month starting at 7.30pm and are either in-person at **Sonning Common Village Hall or on Zoom**. Talks are open to all although donations at the door are appreciated. For more information:

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

West Berkshire Museum

Offers talks and courses. Information at:

https://booking.westberks.gov.uk/heritage_events.html#?location=West%20Berkshire%20Museum

It is also possible to sign up for event information on this page.

Input to the quarterly newsletter and monthly e-newsheet – 'What's On'

My thanks to all the contributors to this newsletter and to Anne Harrison for proof-reading.

If you have an archaeological story, you feel would interest the Society, please email it to Tim Lloyd, who produces 'What's On', the Society's monthly e-newsheet, at [webmaster\(at\)berksarch.co.uk](mailto:webmaster(at)berksarch.co.uk) and to me at [newsletter\(at\)berksarch.co.uk](mailto:newsletter(at)berksarch.co.uk) by the 27th of the month.

Please submit your text and images separately as this makes them much easier for Tim and me to handle than when the images are embedded in the text.

The copy date for the next edition of this publication, the Society's quarterly newsletter, is Monday, 27th November 2023.

Thank you,

Julie Worsfold

BERKSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY



Patron: Her Late Majesty 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:

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