



ARCHAEOLOGY

The Newsletter of the Berkshire Archaeological Society

Summer 2025

Vol. 27, No.2

Dates for your diary

Venues (unless advised otherwise):

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

BAS Lunches - The Wheelwright's Arms, Davis Way, Hurst, Reading, RG10 0TR. If you want to come to the lunch, please notify Tim Lloyd (tim.lloyd@berksarch.co.uk) 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 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.

Wednesday 2nd July 2025 **BAS Study Group 2:30pm** BAS Journal volume 87

SUMMER BREAK

Tuesday 2nd September **BAS Finds Group 7:30pm** meeting TBC

Wednesday 3rd September **BAS Study Group 2:30pm** agenda TBA

Saturday 20th September 2025 **BAS Lecture 2:30pm: Medieval Ritual Landscape Project** by Dr Rob Webley

SAVE THE DATE Saturday 11th October 2025 **BAS Day School** in Newbury

From the Chair

The Wickham excavation

For the last 3 months, the main focus of the Society's attention is the excavations at Wickham led by Keith Abbott. Lots of you have been involved and he has kept us informed, on a daily basis, with blogs on the website and You Tube.

Berkshire Archaeological Journal

For my part, my main focus of attention has been the publication of Berkshire Archaeological Journal volume 87 with 16 articles describing Berkshire archaeology dating from Bronze Age to modern times plus 3 articles recording the activities of the Society from April 2021 to March 2024. Those of you who were BAS members on 19th October 2024 will receive a free paper copy of this journal delivered to your door. Those of you who joined the Society after that date will be able to buy a copy or download free articles from the Archaeology Data Service at some time in the future.

Andrew Hutt

IN
BERKSHIRE

BAS Excavations at Wickham House – April/June 2025

Recent analysis of Wickham's material culture assemblage and extensive geophysics surveys undertaken by BAS suggest it was the location of a Roman period settlement at the intersection of Ermin Street (RR41) and the Road to Bath (RR53).

The daily blog of the excavation and the video updates on YouTube have been widely viewed and can be accessed via the BAS website at www.berksarch.co.uk.

This excavation focuses on geophysics anomalies seen to the east of Wickham interpreted as sizeable rectilinear paddocks with a lane and likely buildings adjacent to (and aligned with) Ermin Street. The objectives of this excavation are to reveal evidence of the settlement's morphology, its function(s), chronology of occupation and the identities of its past occupants.

The project has now completed 32 of the planned 42 days of excavation with more than 70 individuals taking part so far. Some 44% of participants in the excavation had little or no prior archaeological excavation experience, so a big focus has been to provide the necessary training and guidance to develop the skills needed to ensure that the archaeology is recorded to a high standard. To date four trenches have been opened revealing a previously unknown Medieval manor house built on top of the Roman road, and within the Roman occupation levels, two roadside buildings, the Roman road and its roadside ditch. Also excavated were the ditches of the lane branching off the Roman road to access paddocks and an industrial area where evidence of iron/lead/copper production/working has been found.



A comprehensive assemblage of bulk/small finds as well as bulk/spot environmental samples have been collected for post-excavation analysis. Small finds include an iron stylus, a copper alloy stylus/hair pin, glass fragments, a Colchester Derivative brooch, a number of coins from the 1st-4th centuries AD, a spindle whorl and a glass 'melon' bead. Bulk finds to date consist of Roman/Medieval pottery, CBM, iron production waste, general iron artefacts and of animal bone. Some 300L of bulk soil samples from occupation contexts/ditches for flotation/residue analysis and around 50 spot samples from occupation/industrial surfaces for XRF/microscope analysis have also been gathered for post-excavation analysis.



The site tour on 5th June was supported by 90 visitors who viewed a display of artefacts recovered, heard a lecture covering the discoveries made during the excavation at the nearby 10th century AD St Swithun's church and were taken on a tour of the trenches excavated. This event also raised some £900 towards the cost of ongoing repairs to the church thanks to the generosity of visitors.



Whilst it is still too early for definitive interpretations, the volume of Roman period of finds at this site are hoped to shed much light on the function of this part of the settlement at Wickham and the identities of its past occupants. It is hoped that the results of the excavation will shed new light on roadside settlement in West Berkshire during the Roman period.

Once the excavation itself has completed post-excavation analysis will start where there will be opportunities for volunteers to assist with the identification/dating of pottery and other artefacts, the environmental analysis of soil samples taken and the development of the stratigraphic analysis of the excavations themselves. If you are interested in getting involved in post-excavation analysis, please get in touch with Keith Abbott via the BAS website or keefandtrace@hotmail.com as new volunteers are always welcome.

BAS Study Group

At the Wednesday, 5th March 2025 Study Group meeting, Keith took the floor and presented the Wickham Geophysics results and his view of how the site would be excavated.

Ground Penetrating Radar

On Wednesday 2nd April, the meeting started with a presentation by Philip Rawstron on the work he was doing on Ground Penetrating Radar. The main focus of his work has not been collecting data but processing and interpreting data. To do this, he used data from the survey of an Early Christian Church/Roman Villa site at Labastide-du-Temple in southern France. He then showed how he had processed their raw data to produce similar results.

From the Society's point of view this is a significant step forward. The next steps are to hire some equipment, collect some data, process it and interpret it.

Gragson, T. L., Thompson, V. D. and Leigh. D.S. 2016 [Ground penetrating radar data used in discovery of the early Christian church of Notre Dame de Baudes near Labastide-du-Temple, France - ScienceDirect](#)

Anchurus II

This presentation was followed by a brief presentation by Andrew Hutt of the Anchurus II software the Society's IT group are producing and a demonstration of the Draw IO tool for drawing stratigraphy.

Learning QGIS

On Wednesday 7th May, Martin Labram led a learning session so that 8 people who had registered for the event could learn how to use QGIS to develop maps to record the results of desktop research and geopositioned context and trench plans as part of an excavation post excavation project.

Martin carefully introduced us to:

- The overall capabilities of QGIS
- How to load digital maps developed by third parties into QGIS
- How to load a list of points in a CSV file so they overlay a map and to use them to create lines and polygons
- How to use styles to highlight points, lines and polygons
- How to apply decorations such as Compass signs, scale bars and copyright statements to a map
- How to load geophysics result and context plans into a system, geo-position them and annotate them

I congratulate Martin for pulling all this material together and presenting it to us.

Martin and I expect to run this learning event in the future so if you want to register for the next event, please send me an email.

Andrew Hutt

BAS Finds group

There have been Finds Group meetings on 4th March, 1st April 2025 and 6th May 2025. In each case the focus of attention was registering finds. The current state of registrations is shown below. I am expecting to complete finds registrations by mid-July. If anybody would like to come to help achieve this goal by working with me, please send me an email.

Andrew Hutt

Material type	Characteristics	Registered bags
CBM roof tile	Done	Lots to do
CBM Floor tile	To do	Some to do
CBM Brick	To do	68 pieces
CBM Drain pipe	To do	9 pieces
CBM Mortar	To do	19 bags, 89 pieces
Pottery	To do	200 pieces
Stone	To do	12 pieces done
Roofing slate	To do	7 pieces
Concrete	To do	2 pieces
Daub	To do	3 pieces
Coal	To do	6 pieces
Flint	To do	Combined with worked flint
Worked flint	To do	39 pieces done, more to do
Glass	Done	100 pieces
Clay pipe	Done	31 pieces
Metalwork	To do	12 to do
Nails	Done	20 done out of 60?
Iron Slag	To do	1 piece
Animal bone	To do	68 one, more to do
Oyster shells	Done	43 pieces
Wood	To do	4 pieces
Charcoal	To do	To do

BAS Subscriptions Due

At the BAS AGM in October members passed a resolution to increase the annual subscription to £20 for an Individual member and £25 for two or more members at the same address. This change came into effect for payments for the year 2025-6.

BAS has been operating at a slowly accumulating loss over the last few years. We need to raise revenue without eating into legacy funds that we are holding for specific initiatives, such as educational sponsorship or equipment purchase. Like any organisation, our costs for items such as equipment storage, website maintenance and room hire for lectures have been going up. The membership fee has not increased at all for at least 10 years so we hope you will understand that we need to take this action now to ensure a secure future for the society.

For any questions, please contact Anne Harrison at: treasurer@berksarch.co.uk.

Other Local Societies

See the links below for details of their activities:

[Berkshire Archaeology Research Group](#)

[Maidenhead Archaeological and Historical Society](#)

[Marlow Archaeology Group](#)

[South Oxfordshire Archaeological Group](#)

[Thames Valley Ancient Egypt Society](#)

The copy date for the next issue of this newsletter is 27th August 2025. Please send any articles to newsletter@berksarch.co.uk

BERKSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY



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
chair@berksarch.co.uk

Secretary:
Keith Abbott
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Treasurer: Anne Harrison
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For more contacts and more information about the Society visit:
www.berksarch.co.uk

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