



ARCHAEOLOGY

The Newsletter of the Berkshire Archaeological Society

Autumn 2025

Vol. 27, No.3

Dates for your diary

Venues (unless advised otherwise):

BAS Finds Group (in person and on Zoom) 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 membership@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 2nd September **BAS Finds Group 7:30pm**

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

Wednesday 10th September **BAS Pub Lunch 12:30pm**

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

Tuesday 30th September **BAS Finds Group 7:30pm**

Wednesday 1st October **BAS Study Group 2:30pm**

Wednesday 8th October **BAS Pub Lunch 12:30pm**

Saturday 11th October 2025 **BAS Day School** in Newbury

Saturday 18th October 2025 **BAS Lecture 2:30pm: (Topic TBA)** by *Prof. Richard Bradley*

Tuesday 4th November **BAS Finds Group 7:30pm**

Wednesday 5th November **BAS Study Group 2:30pm**

Wednesday 13th November **BAS Pub Lunch 12:30pm**

Saturday 15th November 2025 **AGM 2:15pm & BAS Lecture 2:30pm: Ivan Margery** by *Dr David Rudling*

Tuesday 2nd December **BAS Finds Group 7:30pm**

Wednesday 3rd December **BAS Study Group 2:30pm**

Saturday 13th December 2025 **Xmas buffet with talks by members**

From the Chair

The last months since the June newsletter have been comparatively quiet. Some members of the Society have been excavating with the University of Reading at Cookham.

The main focus of attention has been the post-excavation work arising from the excavations at Blounts Court and Wickham. This is the first time that the Society has really focussed on post excavation activities and the results look promising as you will see from the reports later in this newsletter.

IN
BERKSHIRE

From the Chair *continued*

In late August/early September the Society will be moving the contents of the BAS store in Woodley to a shed and a garden room at Keith Abbott's house. The Society thanks Keith and Tracy Abbott for taking on this responsibility.

The benefits of this move are:

- The shed will house fieldwork equipment from the Society, the Berkshire Archaeology Research Group and the Maidenhead and Marlow Archaeology and Society
- The garden room will house all the journals, documents and display equipment from the store. Keith is planning to use this as an archaeological workroom so we should have more access to them
- The Society will save money

If you would like to help with this move, please contact either Keith or me.

Last but not least, the **Archaeology in Berkshire Day School 2025** will be held on Saturday 11th October at St Nicolas Church Hall, Newbury. You should receive a poster to this event with your newsletter.

Andrew Hutt

Update on Excavations at Wickham House

This season of excavation ran from April through to the end of June 2025 with 83 individuals participating as volunteers from BAS, other local societies and local residents. In total 8 trenches were opened, 148 contexts identified and 3 (possibly 4) buildings discovered with this previously unresearched Roman roadside settlement and the later Medieval settlement built on top of it.



Figure 1: Trenches reinstated and the last wheelbarrow leaving site...

Memories of this season's BAS excavations at Wickham House may already be starting to fade - but post-

excavation analysis (Post-Ex) activities are already ramping up! All of the finds discovered have now been washed and are currently being sorted into material type categories (e.g. pottery, ceramic building material, iron objects, animal bone etc) ready for post excavation analysis of each assemblage.

The Post-Ex analysis phase of the project was mobilised at a zoom call held on Thursday 14th August where a short update of the discoveries made during the April-June 2025 excavation was followed by details of the initial Post-Ex work packages that will be getting started in the coming weeks, such as:

- Pottery analysis
- Iron object analysis
- Ceramic Building Material analysis

There will also be a wide range of other Post-Ex projects mobilising in the months ahead - all of which require no previous experience or specialist knowledge, and training will be provided to get you started. Artefact assemblages range from Roman/Medieval pottery, metal objects to analysis of environmental soil samples - so you are free to choose any/all areas that are of interest to you!



Figure 2: Finds discovered at various stages of processing in preparation for Post-Ex analysis.

You can volunteer for Post-Ex activities directly by sending an email to keefandtrace@hotmail.com expressing any particular areas of interest/experience you may have.

The first milestone for Post-Ex analysis will be the presentation of a summary of discoveries made and interim interpretation from this season's excavation at Wickham House to be presented at the BAS Day School on 11th October 2025 in Newbury, details of which can be found on the BAS website.

Keith Abbott

BAS Volunteers take part in excavations at Cookham Abbey

Archaeological excavations of the Early Medieval settlement at Cookham Abbey next to Holy Trinity Church in the Berkshire village of Cookham have been taking place throughout July and ran until 8th August 2025. This excavation led by the University of Reading started in 2021 and has been supported each year by a strong contingent of volunteer excavators from BAS and other local archaeology societies.



Figure 3. Martin at work exploring a flint surface.

At the heart of the excavation is the University of Reading Archaeology Field School where students are trained in the skills needed for future careers in commercial archaeology. Elements of this training are supported by volunteer excavators, who as well as assisting in training of students also provide training for volunteers new to archaeology field work.

In previous seasons areas of the 8th Century AD settlement, cemetery, a well and a likely water mill have been explored. Details of the archaeological discoveries made during the 2025 season can be found on the University of Reading website:

<https://www.reading.ac.uk/news/2025/Research-News/Cookham-2025-excavations-Tumours-and-trauma-treated-at-Anglo-Saxon-hospice>

Also, a BBC article reveals further details of research led by the University of Reading to investigate the pathology of remains excavated in the abbey's cemetery. This article features BAS member Jane excavating within cemetery itself!

[Unearthing end-of-life care at 8th Century Cookham monastery - BBC News](#)



Figure 4. Faye and Jill excavating within the Early Medieval settlement.

If you are unable to volunteer as an excavator but would still like to be involved in this project, Friends of Cookham Abbey are organising site tours, community activities related to the excavation and are raising funds for post excavation analysis. Details of how to support Friends of Cookham Abbey can be found at:

[Friends of Cookham Abbey | Support the Archaeological Dig](#)

Keith Abbott

Anchurus II release1

Anchurus II is a group of IT applications and manual operations that will enable users to record and interpret excavations. It is being developed by the Society's IT working group.

Release 1 of this system is now complete. This is a single user system which enables its users to:

- Record the results of pre-excavation desktop research and fieldwork including geophysics anomalies, field work survey anomalies and LiDAR anomalies
- Record features of an excavation including, the sites, the trenches, the contexts, the finds, the geopositioned context plans, the geopositioned section drawing, the context stratigraphy matrices and the photographs
- Interpret an excavation in terms of: recording finds by material type, recording find and context date assignments, and aggregating contexts to create sets, groups and phases and in parallel to aggregate context plans into set, group and phase plans and to link finds to sets groups and phases
- The inclusion of the above in excavation reports

This system is being used to interpret the excavations at Blounts Court.

Work is progressing on Release 2. This will provide similar functionality to release 1 but will allow a team of people to work together to record and interpret an excavation.

One of the deliverables from Release 2 will be a website that provides details of Anchurus II and the Anchurus II help system. This is likely to be a WordPress website and I would like some help to develop it. This is largely an editorial task; much of the material has already been drafted; it needs converting into a website. If you would like to help, please contact me.

Andrew Hutt

BAS Study Group

The Study group on 4th June 2025 was cancelled because most people were working at Wickham.

The Study Group meeting on Wednesday 2nd July 2025 listened to a presentation on the contents of Berkshire Archaeological Journal volume 87. This was followed by a discussion on how archaeological contractors such as Wessex Archaeology, Oxford Archaeology and Thames Valley Archaeological Services structured the archaeological reports they published in the journal and the levels of detail in their finds reports. This was helpful because the Society is working on report of excavations at Blounts Court and Wickham.

Andrew Hutt

BAS Finds group

The work of the Finds Group exists to share best practice and acquired specialist knowledge between members of the Society working on post-excavation analysis of ongoing projects. The work of the Finds Group has been complicated because Andrew Hutt is leading work on the Blounts Court finds at the same time that Keith Abbott is leading work on the Wickham finds – but these two projects are at different stages of development and hence have different immediate objectives. To give the Finds Group the increased flexibility required by these two projects future Finds Group meetings will be convened face-to-face in Wokingham and on Zoom.

Blounts Court finds

The Blounts Court finds are all registered in an Anchurus II database. The next steps are to develop statements about the characteristics of the many different find material types and in some cases to hold find identification workshops.

As we move towards these workshops, I would like help with the following:

- Labelling 100 Blounts Court pottery finds so they can be taken to a finds workshop
- Comparing roof tile with our Roof tile reference collection. This parallels work on Wickham CBM tile and will allow us to run a joint Blounts Court/Wickham CBM workshop with Kevin Hayward
- Review the Blounts Court flint collection (68) pieces to confirm what was actually worked flint and what was building stone

If you would like to help with this please contact me at andrew_hutt@talktalk.net

Blounts Court

Work on recording and interpreting the Blounts Court excavation is progressing quickly.

An Anchurus II release 1 system has been loaded with all of the contexts and most of the finds. The only remaining finds are nails, metalwork and charcoal.

Work is progressing on the interpretation of the site. This is supported by an Interpretation spreadsheet and database table. The former allow you to identify phases of occupation and use of the site, the latter allows you to identify features such as the Roman wall, the Tudor barn and the Georgian wall. It also allows you to identify changes in use of land around and between these structures.

To date this work has been used to identify and record 5 phases of occupation. They are:

- Phase 5: Modern landscaping and construction: 1850 to 2025
- Phase 4: Georgian to Early Victorian: 1725-1850
- Phase 3: Tudor to Georgian: 1500-1725
- Phase 2: Medieval: 1350 to 1500
- Phase 1: Roman and post Roman: 125 to 1500

And 36 groups of archaeological evidence.

The main benefit of using Anchurus II release 1 is that it records all the reasoning showing how the contexts and finds from the site contribute to these interpretations. The contribution of finds is particularly significant, for example, although 11 sherds of Roman Oxfordshire pottery were found on site, only 1 sherd was found in a Phase 1 Roman and Medieval context, the rest was brought on to the site with soil used to raise ground levels.

To move forward, I would like help with:

1. Using Draw IO to upgrade 16 stratigraphic matrices
2. Using QGIS to upgrade context plans

Doing this will allow us to visualise the interpretation of the site.

Andrew Hutt

Wickham House finds

Keith held an online Zoom meeting on Thursday 14th August 2025 to recruit volunteers to work on the post-ex analysis for the assemblage of finds discovered during the Apr-Jun 2025 season. Work on some material types has already started, but there is plenty of work to be done across an interesting range of material types covering the Roman through to Post-Medieval periods. If you would like to get involved in the post-ex for this project, please let me know.



Figure 5: Finds from Wickham House drying after being washed off site.

For CBM 4x 9L boxes of artefacts were discovered that have been washed and bagged by context. Jo Skerry has volunteered to lead this workstream and is undertaking an initial assessment of the Roman period CBM sub-assemblage. The next step is to mobilise volunteers recruited at the kick-off meeting to weigh, sort and record CBM artefacts using the guidance received from Kevin Hayward at the Blounts Court CBM workshop to be arranged in coming weeks.

For the pottery assemblage 5x 9L boxes of pottery have been washed and bagged by context. Keith to lead this analysis. To date 2500 (of an estimated x3500) sherds have been numbered of which 300 sherds have been weighed, measured, data recorded and sorted by fabric colour ready for pottery specialist assessment. Work is also underway to assign newly recruited volunteers to continue with weighing, measuring, data recording and sorting by fabric colour ready for pottery specialist assessment.



Figure 6: Pottery sherds numbered ready for data collection

Analysis of the iron object assemblage is being led by Nigel Bennet and his team of newly recruited volunteers. Excavations revealed 1x 9L box of iron artefacts, for which the next step is to weigh, measure and record characteristics by context using Katie Manby's nail typology. Unidentifiable objects will be selected for x-ray imaging in collaboration with the Blounts Court assemblage.

Work to analyse smaller material type assemblages are also underway for animal bone (Paula Levick/Andrew Roberts), coins (Lindsey Bedford), clay pipe (Geoff Anderson) and glass (Peter Clifford) making good progress.

If you would like to take part in post-excavation analysis for the Wickham House project, please send an email to keefandtrace@hotmail.com

Andrew Hutt and Keith Abbott

BAS Annual General Meeting

To be held on Saturday 15th November at 2:15pm at RISC, London St, Reading, RG1 4PS.

It will be followed by a normal lecture as detailed above. Requests for Zoom access should be sent to membership@berksarch.co.uk by Wednesday 12th November

Nominations for BAS Council members to be sent to secretary@berksarch.co.uk by 1st November.

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 November 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
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Secretary:
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For more contacts and more information about the Society visit:
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