



ARCHAEOLOGY

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE BERKSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Winter 2006

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ARCHAEOLOGY IN BERKSHIRE ANNUAL DAY SCHOOL 3 MARCH 2007

Members will not need reminding that after the huge success of last year's Day School on the west side of the county this year's event will be held on the east side at Ranelagh School, Ranelagh Drive, Bracknell at 10.00 a.m. Admission is £10 per person (no concessions) and you pay at the door!

PROGRAMME

10.00 – 10.05	Welcome by the Chairman (Dr. Andrew Hutt, Berkshire Archaeological Society).
10.05 – 10.30	Thames – Solent Research Frame Work & local archaeology. (Duncan Coe, West Berkshire Archaeology Officer).
10.30 – 11.00	A long consideration of a Cookham farmstead. (Bob Hill, Wessex Archaeology).
11.00 – 11.30	COFFEE
11.30 – 12.00	Archaeology at Victorian Ambarrow Court, Sandhurst; a school and community project. (Agostina Hawkins, Bracknell Forest Borough Council, Archaeology Officer).
12.00 – 12.30	Earthworks in the Pang Valley Woodland. (Dick Greenaway).
2.30 – 1.00	The Environment Agency: working with archaeologists along the Thames. (Stephen Kemp, Archaeologist, The Environment Agency).
1.00 – 2.00	LUNCH
2.00 – 2.30	Silchester 2006. (Professor Mike Fulford).
2.30 – 3.00	Archaeological investigations at Peacock Farm, Bracknell. (Melanie Pomeroy-Kellinger, Oxford Archaeology).
3.00 – 3.30	TEA
3.30 – 4.00	Herschel Park, Slough – the investigation and restoration of a Victorian landscape. (Elias Kupfermann).
4.00 – 4.25	Excavations in Reading. (Foundations Archaeology).
4.25 – 4.35	Chairman concludes. (Dr. Andrew Hutt).

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

This year's AGM took place at the RISC premises, 39 London Street, Reading on Saturday 16th September. The outgoing Chairman, Catherine Petts, started by reviewing the changes she had overseen during her 5 years in office. The Society has seen the field group become independent, changed the organisation of the Day School, changed meeting venues, and taken steps towards becoming a charity. Over the past year the Society has had a successful series of lectures. This year the decision was made not to hold the Day School at the university. It was held instead in a community hall in Thatcham and, with reduced costs and charges, attendance doubled. Thanks were given to Trevor Coombs for the additional work he put in to make this possible. There was another successful Spring Tour in 2005 with numbers again rising, and thanks were given to Barrie Randall for organising this. Thanks were also given to John Hyams who stepped down as editor of this newsletter earlier this year and a welcome was given to Julie Worsfold who has taken over this role and since produced 2 newsletters. Particular thanks were expressed to Janet and Richard Firth who have also stepped down after many years service to the Society. In the 1980s Janet reactivated the Field Group and was now writing up the Spencer's Farm excavation. More recently they have both served as librarians, rescuing and cataloguing the Library and moving it to drier and more extensive premises. They also served on the Council. Finally Catherine thanked all those who serve and have served on the Council during her term of office.

Members were reminded that the figures on the Treasurer's report related to a 15 month period as due to the move to charitable status the year end had moved to 31st March. The Treasurer's report indicated a reasonably healthy financial position and was unanimously accepted.

The Society's officers were elected as follows and without dissent – Andrew Hutt as Chairman, Catherine Petts as Hon. Secretary and Bob Bywater-Lees as Hon. Treasurer. Council members also elected unanimously were, Sylvia Chumbley, Trevor Coombs, Edna Goodburn, Jo Graham, Anne Harrison, Luke Over, Barrie Randall, Griselda Truscott-Wickes and Julie Worsfold.

BERKSHIRE

From the Chairman...

Following the AGM in September I would like to thank all those members of the Council and the Society who voted for me to become chairman. I would also like to thank Catherine Petts for creating a Society which for several years has run successful Saturday Lecture Programmes, Day Schools and Spring Tours.

As chairman, I see my first objective is to work with Catherine Petts, Trevor Coombs, Barrie Randall and members of Council to ensure the success of this year's Saturday Lecture Programme, Day School and Spring Tour. I am also working for the Society to become a registered charity and following my letter to all members in October, the Society Special General Meeting in October approved the changes requested by the Charity Commission so we maybe a step nearer to meeting this goal.

In addition to becoming chairman, I have also taken over the role of librarian and over the coming months expect to put forward proposals to encourage members to get involved in the interpretation of the archaeology found in and around Berkshire and hence visit our libraries more often.

If any of you have any ideas that could improve the Society and the services that it offers to its members and to the public then please contact me.

Andrew Hutt

MEETINGS

After the A.G.M. in September Steve Clarke of BARG. gave a talk on the characteristics of the Anglo-Saxon landscape of the Middle Thames Valley from Medenham to Kew. This area marks the transition from Mercia to Wessex and although its geology is varied it had both the characteristics of 'Temperate' meaning vast areas of unploughed land and 'Temperate Savannah' being the flux between open fields and woodland.

Steve explained that land use is influenced by both economic and social factors and that there is a correlation between geography, land use and place names. As the approach to recording land use in the Domesday Book is inconsistent, place names are more reliable for tracing former uses of the land. From this we could see that no parish was dominated by a single land use type. Indeed the names confirmed that South-East Berkshire, North-West Surrey and the area around Hounslow are famed for late medieval heaths, and that the good quality land by the Thames was planned countryside.

In Anglo-Saxon and Medieval times the Thames would have been wider and shallower (i.e. less braided). The 100 year flood plain data from the Environment Agency cannot be used to accurately back track, but this nonetheless gives an idea of marshy land and paleo-channels. The 100 year flood plain is very extensive being 4km in width. Within this there are significant dry island promontories usually made of gravel. The letter combinations eg or ee are the most common element in place names before 730 A.D. and there is a correlation between these and the dry islands. It may be that these place names were chosen in the 6th century when the world became cooler and wetter due to volcanic activity (the Dark Ages).

Steve reviewed 4 local cases studies, Cookham, Waltham, the Godley Hundred and South Buckinghamshire and showed that

Access to the Society's libraries

In early November, Janet and Richard Firth handed responsibility for the libraries to Andrew Hutt. During the handover, it has become apparent that the Society owns two interesting, well organised but under used libraries. I offer whole hearted thanks to Janet and Richard for the hard work they have done in these libraries to get them into this state; the challenge for Society members is to make better use of these resources.

To use the BAS Berkshire Record Office library all you need to do is visit the Berkshire Record Office, get a reading ticket and then go into the library. Once there, you will find a wall of cupboards with shelves full of the Society's books, with an index in a binder at the bottom of the third cupboard of shelves. For the most part the books are organised in author-name alphabetical order.

Access to the BAS School of Continuing Education Library is more complicated so it is best to phone me to discuss arrangements for your visit rather than just arriving at the School on spec. My contact details are on the last page of the newsletter.

Andrew Hutt

wood and heath landscapes were closely interwoven. By the late Anglo-Saxon period Cookham, Windsor, Bray and Staines were nucleated. Other areas were really farmsteads. The Parish boundaries had solidified by the late 12th century by which time a lot of 'tidying up' had taken place and the 19th century parishes we know today are pretty much the medieval ones. Smaller units tend to have richer lands whilst larger units tend to have more sparsely used lands. The Anglo-Saxon landscape probably had many hedgerows indicating a structured landscape. Much of the land was wood pasture but this was nonetheless managed.

Julie Worsfold

The October lecture by Hugh Davies entitled *from Trackways to Motorways* gave members of the Society glimpses of the tracks and roads used by people to move through the landscape over time. These glimpses included the Mesolithic footprints found at Goldcliff on the River Severn; Neolithic timber trackways as at Flag Fen in East Anglia, Iron Age trackways inside Danebury Hillfort; Roman roads, Medieval roads as shown on Goth's map dating from 1350; General Wades military roads across the Scottish highlands; the roads of Thomas Telford and Macadam in the 18th and 19th centuries and modern motorways. As a way of presenting the dilemmas concerning modern road building Hugh touched up on the development of traffic during the 20th century and the various attempts to curb traffic accidents. Many thanks to Hugh for presenting this mass of information in an informative and thought provoking lecture.

Andrew Hutt

Membership Renewal Reminder

If with this copy of the newsletter you receive a Membership Renewal Form this is as a reminder that it is now time for you to pay your membership subscription for this year. Many thanks.

Archaeological Investigations at Kintbury Sewage Treatment Works

Background

In the late 1940's when the existing sewage treatment works were first constructed at Kintbury, Mesolithic (Middle Stone Age 10,000BC – 4,000BC) flint tools and a series of Romano-British (AD43-AD410) rubbish pits were discovered. In the following years a more detailed investigation of the land adjacent to the sewage works revealed evidence of a Romano-British bath house.

Thames Water approached the West Berkshire Council Archaeology Service earlier this year to seek our opinion about some proposed upgrading works that might have an impact on the archaeological interest at the site. An initial field evaluation demonstrated that important Mesolithic and probable early Roman features did survive there.

Following detailed discussions with Thames Water it was agreed to redesign the proposed development works to avoid the area of Mesolithic interest.

The current investigations

The area of Roman interest has been subject to detailed archaeological investigation and recording. These investigations are now complete and the archaeological team (Berkshire Archaeological Services) will be analysing the material recovered and the results will be published in due course. Although a great deal more analysis is required it is possible to report on the provisional findings of the investigation.

The earliest features discovered are two small early Bronze Age (2350 – 1500BC) pits which contained fragments of pottery vessels known as a collared urn, decorated with a fine cord impression. Early Bronze Age features are very rare, especially in valley floor locations.

The main phase of activity appears to be late Iron Age to early Roman (100BC – 100AD) in date. The features include a probable enclosure boundary with a massive entrance feature marked by two large posts, each about 50cm in diameter and probably standing to a height of several metres. Inside the enclosure and contained within their own fenced compound were three kilns. We are not sure what they were used for at this stage, but the absence of metalworking debris suggests that they were for some kind of food production process.

Duncan Coe

Archaeology Officer, West Berkshire Council

Solent - Thames Research Framework

This project (reported in earlier editions of the newsletter) is now progressing at some pace. Period summaries for each county in the project area are being written and it is hoped that all of these will be available on the project website:

(www.buckscc.gov.uk/bcc/content/index.jsp?contentid=-222423834).

by the end of November.

These reports will then be used by the period authors to produce summaries for each period that cover the whole region. These will also be made available on the project website at some point in early 2007.

In order to turn these research assessments into an agenda that all sections of the archaeological community can sign up to it will be necessary to hold a comprehensive consultation exercise in the middle of 2007. Part of this will be a seminar held in Berkshire (probably in Reading) in April/May for all interested parties to attend. This seminar will allow the County assessments and period summaries to be examined and for ideas about future research directions to be discussed. A firm date or venue for this seminar has not yet been set, but it will be an important opportunity for the archaeological community in Berkshire to get together to discuss what has been achieved and where our energies should be directed in future years. If you want to be involved in this process please come along.

In the meantime if you would like to contribute to the project please take a look at the papers as and when they are published on the website and let us have your comments. It is important that as many people as possible contribute to this project.

Duncan Coe

Archaeology Officer, West Berkshire Council

News from Berkshire Archaeology

In addition to the two permanent team members David Thomason (Archaeology Officer) and Teresa Hocking (SMR Officer), whilst Fiona Macdonald is on maternity leave, Berkshire Archaeology has two new part-time team members, Mary O'Donoghue (Archaeology Officer) and Mike Lang Hall (Consultant). Mary has done archaeological fieldwork in Ireland and more recently worked for Thames Valley Archaeological Services. Mike will be acting in a consultancy role, and returns to Berkshire Archaeology after being involved in the early months of its formation in 2004.

Oxford Archaeology carried out an archaeological evaluation at Peacock Farm, Peacock Lane, Bracknell between January and March 2006. An area of late Iron Age and early Roman settlement activity was observed at the site, consisting of a series of enclosure ditches to the south west of Jennett's Hill and several smaller features. These features are probably associated with wider settlement activity located on Jennett's Hill. Several small prehistoric ditches were also identified and limited post-medieval activity associated with former field systems. Finds recovered during the evaluation include: pottery of late Iron Age and Roman date and post-medieval date; worked flint and burnt unworked flint; post-medieval building material; fired clay; slag and animal bone. Further archaeological work is now scheduled at the site.

Reminder - Berkshire Archaeology has 'Open House' every Thursday afternoon from 12.00 to 4.00pm at their office on the 3rd floor of Reading Central Library. Just drop in to discuss any aspect of archaeology in the area or to consult the Sites and Monuments Record (SMR).

Teresa Hocking

SMR Officer, Berkshire Archaeology

BAS Archaeology Working Group

Andrew Hutt, our new Chairman, has identified a gap in archaeological work in Berkshire. There are a large number of published and unpublished reports which have not been collectively examined to show what they now tell us about the archaeology of our part of the country. To this end Andrew is proposing to set up the above. For further details please see insert accompanying this newsletter, or contact Andrew on: 0118 973 2882.

Wanted: old maps and road atlases

In order to reinterpret the archaeology in and around Berkshire we need to publish maps showing the distribution of the archaeology. This naturally raises questions of Ordinance Survey copyright and the payment of royalties. In order to avoid conflict with the Ordinance Survey I would like to hear from anybody who has maps and road atlases of Berkshire and the surrounding counties published before 1956.

I am particularly interested in maps published by Bartholomews in their half-inch contoured series for Salisbury Plain, Oxford and Herts. and any road atlas or large scale map which shows the 500 ft contour. My contact details are on the last page of the newsletter. - *Andrew Hutt*

Spring Tour – 27th to 30th April 2007

There are still some twin and double places left on the Spring Tour to the South-West of England. For those concerned about mobility issues Barrie Randall has visited each of the sites and advises that all are accessible. If you are interested in joining us on this tour please contact Barrie on 0118 983 2607.

ADULT EDUCATION – PART-TIME COURSES SPRING TERM, 2007

READING UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF CONTINUING EDUCATION

Morning Courses

Experimental archaeology: living the past.
Bath: its literature, archaeology, music and art.

Living traditions of the afterlife: mortuary practices from around the world.

Afternoon Courses

Titans, Olympians and heroes: the myths and legends of ancient Greece.

Celtic religion.

Evening Courses

The meaning of mankind; anthropology and the ancient world.

The face of eternity: the practice of body preservation.

Identifying archaeological artefacts from the last 10,000 years.

Ancient Egypt before the pyramids: an introduction to early Egyptian culture and society.

Day Schools

Planets.

Purity and order in ancient Egyptian Society.

The Sumerians.

Bath: from ancient to Austen.

Practical Archaeology

Geology and archaeology: keeping your feet dry and living on the hill.

Yesterday's rubbish or today's treasure?

Identification of archaeological artefacts.

Other event

Art and archaeology in Rome: a study tour.

Details from: The School of Continuing Education, University of Reading, London Road, Reading, RG1 5AQ. Tel: 0118 378 8347. E-mail: continuing-education@reading.ac.uk

Web site: www.reading.ac.uk/conted

OXFORD UNIVERSITY DEPARTMENT FOR CONTINUING EDUCATION

Morning Courses

Globalism and Empire: Near East and Eastern Mediterranean in the 2nd Millennium B.C.

Hannibal.

Pots, Palstaves and Spindle Whorls: The Technology of Artifacts.

The Crusades: Impact and Legacy.

Afternoon Courses

Celts and the Iron Age in Britain.

The Archaeology of Island Cultures – Lecture Series.

Evening Courses

Death and Burial in Ancient Egypt.

Introduction to Archaeology.

The Archaeology of Prehistoric Europe: Ideas and Theories.

Day and Weekend Schools

Characterisation in practice.

Environmental Assessment and the Cultural Heritage.

Health and Safety for Archaeologists.

Information Skills for Heritage Professionals.

Managing Change in Natural and Cultural Diversity.

Marine Development-led Archaeology: an introduction to approaches and methods.

Medieval Archaeology from Dark Age to Renaissance.

Post Excavation Assessment.

Prehistoric Landscapes of England.

Ravenna: Art, Archaeology and History, A.D. 400-750.

The Ancient Near East.

The Rural Historic Environment: New Perspectives.

Online

Exploring Roman Britain (Online).

Origins of Human Behaviour (Online).

Details from: OUDCE, 1, Wellington Square, Oxford, OX1 2JA. Tel: 01865 270360; Fax: 01865 270309 email: enquiries@conted.ox.ac.uk

Web site: www.conted.ox.ac.uk

OU DCE – Outside Oxford

Minoans and Mycenaeans. (*Venue: United Reformed Church, West Street, Maidenhead*). **Enrolments:** Liz Crathorne, 35 Allenby Road, Maidenhead, SL6 5BE. Tel: 01628 63220

BERKSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY



Patron: H.M. THE QUEEN

President: Professor

Michael Fulford FBA FSA

The Society was founded in 1871 and for over 200 years has encouraged and supported archaeological activities in Berkshire

Everybody with an interest in archaeology is welcome to attend our meetings and join the Society. It does not matter whether your interest in archaeology is new found or long standing, the Society offers activities from regular lectures and outings to opportunities for fieldwork and excavation. All members receive a regular newsletter, full of news about events in Berkshire. The Berkshire Archaeological Journal is also free to members.

Officers of the Society

Chairman: Andrew Hutt

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andrew_hutt@tinyonline.co.uk

Secretary: Catherine Petts

Programme Organiser:
vacant

Day School Organiser:
Trevor Coombs

Excursion Organiser:
Barry Randall

Newsletter Editor:
Julie Worsfold

Librarian:
Andrew Hutt

For more information about the Society and membership details contact the Secretary: Catherine Petts on 01235 831463.

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