

Bulletin

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Articles, accompanied by illustrations if appropriate, and book reviews are invited for publication in the next issue of the *SOAG Bulletin*. Authors are referred to the Notes for Contributors inside the back cover.

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President's Report

2007

Cynthia Graham Kerr

Work at Gatehampton is still going full steam and the dig, under the capable direction of Hazel Williams, continues to attract new members to SOAG. There are usually ten to twelve people each Sunday, digging, washing mysterious bits of pot and making curious drawings. We are very grateful to Robin Cloke who has allowed us onto his land for so long. The news of change of ownership at the end of 2007 was a concern, and meant that recording continued into the winter, well beyond the usual time for finishing the active work. Many thanks to those who sorted and drew and labelled in what were sometimes very cold and difficult conditions. Early signs, happily, are that the dig will be able to continue with the support of new owners.

SOAG members were also involved in the community archaeology project at Brightwell Baldwin, a project for which our chairman, Ian Clarke, managed to attract a £10,000 National Lottery grant. In addition,

SOAG member David Nicholls has been searching, with Simon Townley of the *Victoria County History*, for the sites of the lost Medieval church of Bix Gibwyn and of the Medieval manorial centres of Bix Gibwyn and Bix Brand. David has also led survey teams investigating Greys Mound in Rotherfield Greys, a possible Bronze Age barrow that has fascinated him since his childhood in the 1950s.

2007 was a significant year for me personally, since I moved from my 14th-century thatched cottage in Whitchurch Hill to Woodbine Cottage in Goring, a house which is only about 100 years old. However, there is history to be discovered even here. Long-standing SOAG members Pat Preece and John White often remind us of the history to be found in words. 'Woodbine' is an old word for 'honeysuckle'.

Finally, I would like to finish with a very warm welcome to new members of SOAG.

Meetings and Visits

Butser Ancient Farm

Janet Sharpe

Sunday 17 June 2007 saw 15 SOAG members gather at the site of Butser Ancient Farm at Chalton, four miles south of Petersfield in Hampshire. SOAG last visited the Farm in July 1992 and a lot of changes have taken place since then, the most important of which being the premature death of Butser's founder and leading light, Peter Reynolds, in Turkey in September 2001.

Prompted by administrative difficulties, the Farm had been obliged to leave its previous extensive premises at Butser Hill in the nearby Queen Elizabeth Country Park at the beginning of the 1990s, to downsize at its present location at Bascomb Copse. When we visited in 1992, the new site was becoming well-established with a wide range of early domesticated animals on view, two completed Iron Age roundhouses and a third under construction, and a field system containing stands of a variety of Iron Age crops: various wheats, two- and six-row barley, legumes and flax. A herb garden had been planted in the form of a labyrinth, and an industrial area included pottery kilns and furnaces for iron smelting. Peter greeted us and showed us around, as always full of enthusiasm for the project and with great plans for the future.

Alas, the plans were cut short in 2001, and when we arrived we felt that the Farm had a rather bleak, almost neglected air about it. Apart from a small flock of Soay sheep and some Indian jungle fowl (Iron Age chickens) we could see no animals – and where were the crops? However, this feeling was quickly dispelled when we were greeted by Steve Dyer, one of the four brand new directors (as from April 2007) of Butser

Archaeological Centre Limited, which is run under licence from Christine Shaw, Peter's former partner and the present owner of Butser Ancient Farm. Steve gave us an enthusiastic and informative guided tour of the site with much of Peter's old aplomb. Now under new management, and with a vigorous programme of educational activities, guided tours and special events, and a range of courses for university students and specialists, the future now seems brighter for Butser, despite a continuing and chronic lack of funding.

We began our tour in the octagonal enclosure, which had already been dug on our previous visit. This experimental earthwork, which here replaces the traditional Iron Age-type bank-and-ditch circular farmstead enclosure, has eight equal sides exposed to weathering through eight points of the compass. It was possible to see how the different sections had been colonised differently by weeds – we know from snail evidence that weeds and undergrowth were allowed to grow in the great ditches at Maiden Castle – and this on-going experiment may assist the interpretation of archaeology in the ground.

The buildings within the enclosure are all based on ground plans of postholes of excavated buildings, and have been constructed using the materials and techniques available during the Iron Age (Fig. 1).



Fig.1. A completed Iron Age roundhouse

Photo: Susan Sandford

The roundhouse with the double-ring of postholes is based on an excavation at Moel y Gerrdi in Dyfed, Wales, and the two smaller houses are based on ground plans excavated at the Glastonbury Lake Village in Somerset. The constructions are carefully monitored to record how they weather and decay, and Butser has recently lost its great roundhouse which was based on the plan of one excavated at Longbridge Deverel Cowdown in Wiltshire. This house was under construction during our last visit, but almost 15 years later, when some of the posts had begun to rot at the base, a gale-force wind displaced the roof and the whole structure was dismantled for safety: Steve told us that they learned almost as much about the construction by taking it down as they did putting it up in the first place. This roundhouse is now being replaced by 'The Little Woodbury House', which is another equally large (15m in diameter) building based on a ground plan recovered from Britford, near Salisbury, Wiltshire. The main timbers and roof poles are already in position (Fig. 2), but although the framework is similar, the interpretation of these large buildings has changed. The Longbridge Deverel house was described as a manor house, a chieftain's residence; its replacement will be presented as a community building of some kind, a 'parish hall' perhaps.

From the enclosure we approached the Roman villa reconstruction. This was new to me, but I remembered reading about it in the newspapers when it was being built because the local planning authorities had imposed restrictions that prevented a full interpretation of the ground plan of the villa at Sparsholt, near Winchester, on which it was intended to be based. Because the villa is classed by the authorities as an 'agricultural building', it was not allowed to exceed 6m in height, which precluded the insertion of a clerestory between the corridor and the main roof. The original villa was roofed with Purbeck stone tiles which today are prohibitively expensive, and so these were replaced with reconstituted tiles of the wrong shape and which unfortunately give the building a decidedly modern appearance from the outside.

I was expecting to be disappointed, but instead I was greatly impressed. Disregarding the roof, the villa was reconstructed using Roman building techniques: the lower part of the walls is built of flints bonded with hot lime mortar, and the upper part has a timber framework with wattle and daub (Fig. 3). The floor plan is of a simple corridor villa with a suite of rooms behind, one of which has a hypocaust. Because of the vicissitudes of the English climate, it was decided to enclose the corridor and this has provided a well-lit gallery that could have been used to perform household tasks: a warp-weighted loom has been set up at one end (Fig. 4).



Fig. 2. 'The Little Woodbury House' under construction

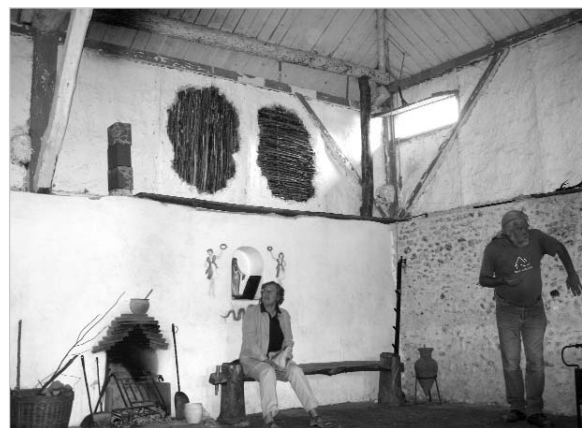


Fig. 3. Reconstructed Roman villa interior. Steve Dyer explaining building techniques.



Fig. 4. The warp-weighted loom set up in the Roman villa
Photos: Susan Sandford

The Roman villa is an experiment in progress. Were the rooms open to the roof or did they have ceilings? Did the fireplace have a chimney? How should the gases from the hypocaust be vented? How were mosaics constructed? Various alternatives are being tried and tested. The Roman villa was one of Peter Reynolds' last projects and it is good to see that it has come to fruition, and good to see that one of the portraits painted on the wall in the heated room bears an uncanny resemblance to the founder of Butser Ancient Farm!

In contrast, the experimental field system was not a success this year, and Steve Dyer announced a total crop failure. It was just possible to see the odd stem of barley among the weeds: the dry spring had delayed germination of the grain but had not inhibited the weed seeds. Butser still collects weather data on a daily basis, and is part of the grid of monthly reporting climate stations dotted across the country. Meteorological data can help explain why crop failures actually occur. However, the situation has not been helped by the complete loss of last year's

harvest: thieves stole the entire cereal crop by cutting the stems just beneath the ears.

Part of the field system is now used as a geophysical research area. This looks just like an area of short-turf grassland, but it contains a number of buried features which recreate archaeological features characteristic of this part of Britain. It is being used as a testing ground for new geophysical survey techniques, and also to demonstrate how resistivity results and their interpretation can be affected by the weather.

We ended up in the garden area for a question-and-answer session, and to examine the herb garden which – although unfortunately not in its originally envisaged labyrinthine layout – produced some surprises, such as the opium poppy.

You can find out more about Butser Ancient Farm by consulting their website at <http://www.butser.org.uk>. This includes details of the new management set-up, information regarding the research programmes at the Farm, and notices of forthcoming courses and events.

**38th SOAG AGM
Lecture 2007
Dr Georgina Muskett on
*Akrotiri: the 'Pompeii'
of the Aegean*
Ian Clarke**

We were delighted to welcome Dr Georgina Muskett from the University of Liverpool to present the guest lecture, *Akrotiri: the 'Pompeii' of the Aegean*, for the 2007 Annual General Meeting on 25 March. Akrotiri is a town in the south of the island of Thera (Santorini) which was destroyed by a cataclysmic volcanic eruption some time around the middle of the second millennium BC. In the late 1960s Thera achieved notoriety as the supposed origin of the Atlantis legend (*Atlantis: the Truth behind the Legend*, by A. G. Galanopoulos and E. Bacon, London, 1969), but the island is much more important to archaeology for the study of the Bronze Age civilisation buried by the volcanic ash. Today, the island is a tourist destination, with houses and hotels grouped around what remains of the rim of the volcano and overlooking the vast, flooded caldera. Cruise ships now moor where once lava and ash erupted.

Professor Spyridon Marinatos, the Greek scholar who discovered Akrotiri and began excavating in 1967, died there in 1974 and was honourably buried at the site to which he had, quite literally, given his life. Excavations have continued under Prof Christos Doumas. Sadly, the Akrotiri excavations have been closed to the public since 2005, following the widely publicised collapse of a new protective canopy, which killed one tourist and injured six others. So, with a beautiful collection of slides, Dr Muskett took us on an exclusive, 'virtual' guided tour of the ancient town. The presentation covered three aspects: the nature of the evidence; whether the island civilisation was Minoan or Cycladic; and the much debated date of the eruption.

Buildings survive to two storeys, preserving much constructional detail, windows and doors. Contents, or their shapes represented by voids in the ash, are preserved. Weights and measures, trade tools and storage jars were found *in situ*. Fragments of wall paintings survived and the frescoes have been reconstructed, although not always reliably, some owing more to artistic 'flights of fancy'. These include:

- In the House of the Ladies, women are depicted with open fronted dresses, heavy make-up and a full head of hair.
- In the West House, a possible priestess is shown in a full-length dress, unlike that of the Minoan snake goddess. She also has heavy make-up and the sides of her head are shaved. Remaining locks of hair

are carefully dressed. Some young men also have largely shaven heads. Another fresco shows armed men carrying tower shields and spears. The same picture depicts a shipwreck, perhaps caused by a tsunami. If this is the case, these people have preserved a history of earthquake activity. A magnificent harbour scene reveals important details of the ships and port activity.

- In Building Complex Delta there is the wonderful Spring Fresco, its timeless design showing a landscape with lilies and swallows (Fig.1). Another room contains frescoes of antelopes and of two young boys, although perhaps not boxing as the guide book says. Reproductions of children from the ancient world are very rare.

civilisation to a sudden end? The date has been hotly debated, for much rests on it. Recently an olive tree was discovered that had been buried alive by the *tephra* (pumice and ash). The newest growth ring of this, which dates to the time of the eruption, was radiocarbon dated in 2006 to 1627-1600 Cal BC, to 95.4% probability.

Georgina Muskett is an Honorary Research Fellow in the School of Archaeology, Classics and Egyptology at the University of Liverpool. She is a specialist in the archaeology and art of the Bronze Age Aegean and has published a number of studies on Mycenaean and Minoan art. She is also a guide lecturer for *Andante Travels*, the archaeological tour company.



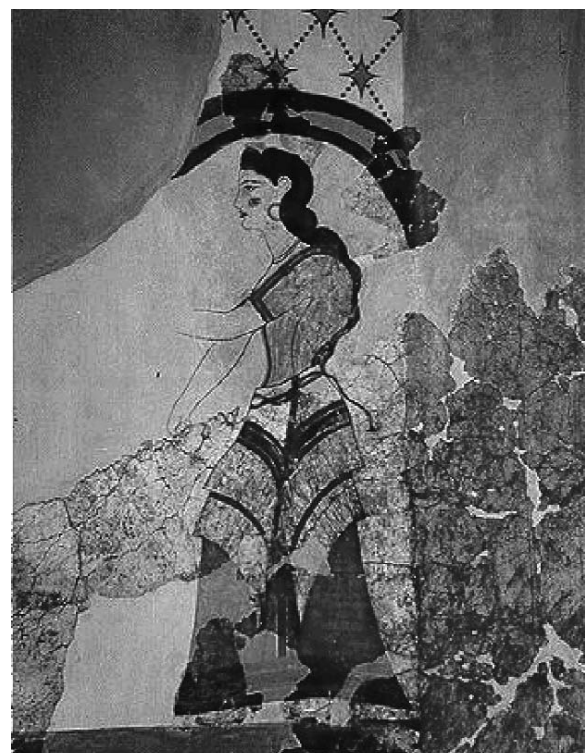
Fig. 1. (Left) Swallows and a lily from the Spring Fresco in Complex Delta

Fig. 2. (Below) Female figure from the House of the Ladies

- In Xeste [Building] 3 we see monkeys playing musical instruments and holding swords. Another fresco shows women, including a 'sore foot' lady, and a veiled lady with red drops in her veil; elsewhere women are picking crocuses, plants long associated with ritual and with health. A priestess figure is flanked by a blue monkey and a griffon. There is beautiful detailing on the women's dresses and necklaces.
- In Xeste 4 was found the remains of a magnificent boars-tusk helmet, now reconstructed, a much-prized article so well known from Homer.

Large quantities of vessels and pottery of all kinds have been recovered, but it is notable that only 10% is Minoan: the clearest indication we have that the civilisation was Cycladic and not an outpost of Crete. There are trading links, but nothing more than that.

The parallels with Pompeii are inescapable, but no bodies have been found and fewer valuables and personal items. The buildings were damaged by the earthquakes that preceded the eruption and it seems that the people had time to pack up and leave. So when was the eruption that brought this island



Reports and Articles

A 'New' Roman Road East of the Thames from Benson to Pangbourne

Janet Sharpe and Phil Carter

Introduction

During a recent but inconclusive investigation into the Iron Age and Romano-British history of Woodcote, which noted the discovery in 1939 of a hoard of 3rd-century Roman coins (Sandford, 2007), attention was drawn to the presence of Broad Street Farm (SU 6325 8240) just to the northwest of the village alongside the narrow road leading down to South Stoke. From the top of the field opposite the farm, a prominent lynchet or terrace can be seen on the hillside to the north-east, north of Dean Wood at SU 6359 8295. This feature and the farm appear to be roughly aligned to the site of Gatehampton Roman villa about 3.5km to the southwest. However, the 1:25,000 Ordnance Survey map, Explorer 3: Chiltern Hills South, published in 1994, shows no other features to suggest the existence of a Roman road on this alignment.

That Broad Street Farm might indicate the presence of a Roman road had previously been proposed by Christine Holmes (1999), who suggested that 'Street' and 'Coldharbour' names and stretches of aligned pathways and parish boundaries could show that a road ran south from Benson to Pangbourne, where she assumed that it would have joined the road thought to run from Silchester to Dorchester-on-Thames via Streatley. Her sketch map (Holmes, 1999: 18) shows a conjectured route branching off from the line of the Dorchester-Henley Roman road as described by Malpas (1987) just south-east of Benson and running almost due south through Broad Street Farm and the hamlet of Cold Harbour (SU 632 798) to the northwest of Whitchurch Hill, and thence to a putative river crossing at Pangbourne.

A close inspection of the 1994 OS Explorer map revealed more place name evidence for the possible existence of a Roman road on this alignment: Coldharbour Farm, about 1km due east of Crowmarsh Gifford, forms a straight line on the map with Broad Street Farm and Cold Harbour to the

south. Not only that, but the line passes neatly through Cart Gap, the name of which suggests an ancient cutting through the massive Iron Age linear earthwork of Grim's Ditch (SU 631 877). Just south of Cart Gap, two small but prominent hills, Wicks Hill and Coblers Hill, lie directly on the alignment and could have been used as sighting points during the construction of a Roman road. Despite Holmes' claim (1999), the alignment does not appear to coincide with parish boundaries or existing pathways, except for a short stretch at Stonycroft Plantation, Whitchurch, and there is only one field boundary more or less on the alignment immediately north of Cart Gap. Nevertheless, the place name evidence is strong.

The association of the name 'Coldharbour' with Roman roads has been in the literature for many years, on the assumption that this place name represents some form of shelter for travellers, some ruined Roman buildings along the line of an old road perhaps. This association was put to the test by Ogden (1966; Hugh Davies, pers. comm.), who applied statistical analysis in an attempt to demonstrate that the distribution of Coldharbour place names clustered towards Roman roads and was not random. He found that the location of places (usually farms or small hamlets) with this name within two miles [3.2km] of a Roman road was statistically significant with a likelihood greater than 95%. The presence of two Coldharbours on the alignment under consideration here is good supporting evidence for the existence of a Roman road. We therefore attempted to demonstrate the presence of this road by dowsing.

Methodology

There is an increasing body of evidence to show that dowsing can be an effective tool for archaeological site surveying. Its use has been discriminated against because as yet there is no 'scientific' explanation for it. However, it appears to work in much the same way as some well-known geophysical techniques, with the dowser responding to electromagnetic changes relating to the differences in water content and/or compaction between undisturbed soil, ditches and buried wall foundations. The side ditches and the compacted but not always metallised (Paul Smith, pers. comm.) central agger of a Roman road produce a characteristic 'signature' of dowsing responses. This method has previously been used to trace stretches of the Silchester to Dorchester-on-Thames Roman

road and the Lower Icknield Way (Sharpe and Carter, 2003, 2006). The validity of the technique was demonstrated by the excavation of a metalled Roman road surface complete with two Roman hobnails during the construction of the Chalgrove to East Ilsley gas pipeline in 2003 where the Silchester-Dorchester road descends from the Sinodun ridge towards the river (Wilson, in press), on exactly the same alignment as that previously determined by dowsing (Sharpe and Carter, 2003).

Two L-shaped metal rods, one held in each hand by the dowser with the long arms pointing forward, will cross and turn inwards (occasionally outwards) at right angles when the edge of a ditch or agger is walked across. The rods simply amplify the tiny muscle responses of the dowser; they do not themselves respond to the stimulus.

Using the OS map to search for footpaths and trackways that cut across the alignment between the two Coldharbours and in each direction beyond them, 31 transects were walked across the line of the conjectured road between the southern perimeter of Benson airfield and Pangbourne, over a distance of about 14km. Different stretches along the line of the road were dowsed between August 2006 and October 2007. The road signature was picked up on each transect and, from the beginning of 2007, the position of the centre of the agger was recorded using a hand-held GPS (Garmin eTrex) to obtain a ten-figure OS grid reference with an approximate margin of error (usually less than 10m). The results were plotted on the 1:25,000 OS map, at which scale the margin of error was insignificant.

Results

The results of the dowsing survey are shown in Table 1. The transects are numbered in linear sequence from north to south, but they were not dowsed in that order. The location coupled with the ten-figure grid reference will enable any of these transect points to be plotted on an OS map. The five transect points with an eight-figure grid reference and no margin of error were plotted without the help of the GPS; the three from Woodcote (19-21) were measured from features marked on the OS map as previously described (Sharpe and Carter, 2006). Both methods give similar results but the GPS is now preferred as it is so much quicker to operate.

When all the transect points are plotted onto the map (Fig. 1), the road is revealed as a remarkably straight, almost due north-south line from the most northerly transect at RAF Benson (transect 1) to Upper Cadley's Farm at Woodcote (transect 17), a distance of about 7.3km. There is, however, a marked 'dogleg' between transects 6 and 12 as the line of the road skirts the two hills, Wicks Hill and Coblers Hill, to the east just to the south of Cart Gap. This dogleg is apparent in Table 1, where the first three figures of

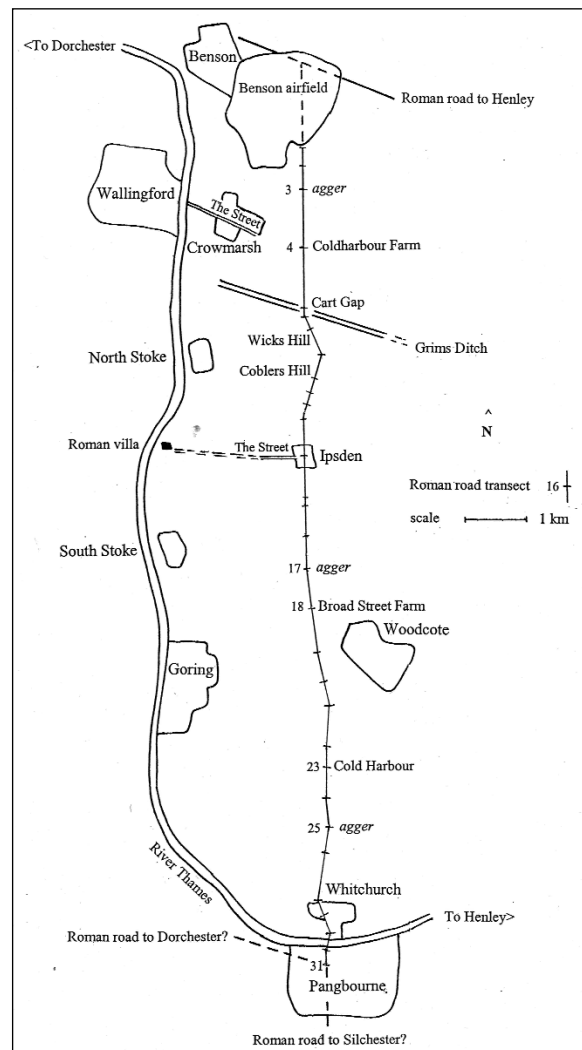


Fig. 1. The Roman road from Benson to Pangbourne

the easting grid references for transects 1-6 and 11-17 are 630; the dogleg reaches its greatest extent eastwards at 633 on the southeast slope of Wicks Hill (transect 8).

South of Upper Cadley's Farm, the road swings slightly to the east in a straight line as far as Cray's Pond (transects 17-21), a distance of 2.4km. Then there is another almost straight section down to Boundary Farm (transect 24), 1.6km to the south. From there down to the river, the road follows a slightly zigzag course to avoid the worst of the contours. These zigzags are mimicked to a greater extent by the modern road from Whitchurch Hill (B471), slightly to the east, as it descends the steep edge of the Chilterns to Whitchurch and the Thames.

It has been noted elsewhere that Medieval architects liked to build their churches over Roman roads where feasible (Sharpe and Carter, 2006), and the road does indeed appear to pass beneath the parish churches of both Whitchurch (transect 29) and Pangbourne (transect 31) on the opposite side of the river. Almost exactly on the line joining these two

Transect	Location	Grid Ref. (SU)	Error (m)	Date
1	RAF Benson, footpath at SW corner	63024 90426	5	23.09.07
2	RAF Benson, farm track from Clack's Lane	63044 90099	7	23.09.07
3	Crowmarsh, Clack's Lane	63053 89712	6	23.09.07
4	Crowmarsh, Coldharbour Farm on A4130	63044 88705	8	23.09.07
5	Mongewell, Cart Gap in Grim's Ditch	6305 8768	–	26.08.07
6	Mongewell, farm track S of Cart Gap	63066 87509	9	26.08.07
7	Mongewell, bridle path to Sheepcot Farm	63172 87304	8	26.08.07
8	Mongewell, Icknield Way, SE Wicks Hill	63345 86861	9	01.09.07
9	Hailey, Icknield Way, NE Coblers Hill	63244 86481	7	01.09.07
10	Hailey, Icknield Way, SE Coblers Hill	63144 86259	6	26.08.07
11	Hailey, Icknield Way, S of Coblers Hill	63060 86031	9	01.09.07
12	Hailey, road to Ipsden church	63025 85807	9	26.08.07
13	Ipsden, village centre	63051 85167	8	01.09.07
14	Braziers Park, lane from A4074	63061 84418	8	15.09.07
15	Ouseley Barn, lane from A4074	63075 84296	8	15.09.07
16	Ouseley Barn, lay-by on A4074	63074 83798	7	08.09.07
17	Woodcote, Upper Cadley's Farm	63057 83205	5	15.09.07
18	Woodcote, Broad Street Farm	63141 82528	10	06.10.07
19	Woodcote, Beech Lane	6324 8178	–	28.08.06
20	Woodcote, Elvendon Lane	6335 8127	–	09.09.06
21	Cray's Pond, footpath S of Elvendon Lane	6346 8088	–	17.12.06
22	Cray's Pond, Blackbird's Bottom	63398 80189	9	06.10.07
23	Whitchurch Hill, Cold Harbour	63387 79813	9	06.10.07
24	Whitchurch Hill, Boundary Farm	63369 79334	11	11.02.07
25	Whitchurch Hill, Beech Farm	63458 78841	15	11.02.07
26	Whitchurch, NE Stonycroft Plantation	63378 78419	17	11.02.07
27	Whitchurch, bridle path to Hartslock Wood	6325 7753	–	11.02.07
28	Whitchurch, Manor Road	63383 77333	6	29.09.07
29	Whitchurch, St Mary's Church	63479 76974	7	29.09.07
30	Pangbourne, The Wharf	63415 76711	11	29.09.07
31	Pangbourne, St James the Less Church	63392 76407	9	29.09.07

Table 1. The Benson-Pangbourne Roman road as revealed by dowsing

churches, the Roman road signature was dowsed at Pangbourne Wharf (transect 30). It may be no coincidence that the direct line between transects 29 and 30 passes across no fewer than three islands in the Thames below Pangbourne weir, and it may be at this point that we should consider the Roman river crossing to have been.

Discussion

There is no way of telling whether the route of the Roman road from Benson to Pangbourne was laid out from north to south, or vice versa. It may have been planned piecemeal by different authorities such as provincial or local government and local landowners, and it may have incorporated pre-Roman trackways

along part of its length (Dyson, 2003). For the northern straight stretch between Benson and Upper Cadley's Farm, Wicks Hill and Coblers Hill would appear to have formed important sighting points for the road construction as the summits of both hills are directly on the projected line of the route. Although prominent, these are not major hills and it was a surprise to find that the road skirted around them. That this was a true dogleg in the road is supported by the fact that its north and south limbs are represented by three (transects 6-8) and no less than five (transects 8-12) dowsed points in straight lines, respectively.

The northern connection

At its northern end, it is surmised that the road joined (or branched off from) the Roman road running between Dorchester-on-Thames and Henley at a point now somewhere beneath Benson airfield. The route of the Dorchester-Henley road has been described in detail on the basis of old maps and existing boundaries and trackways, supported by surface features and excavated evidence for the agger in places, by Malpas (1987). At Benson, he considers that the road line is marked by the present parish boundary between Ewelme and Benson, which approaches from the southeast along a trackway marking the northern boundary of the housing complex at RAF Benson and continues across the airfield for some 400m before turning north. If the southeast-northwest alignment is projected, it carries the proposed line of the Dorchester-Henley road through the northern fringe of Benson village, across the modern road to Hale Farm and on to Gallows Leaze (where Malpas (1987: 32) reports evidence of road metalling in a ditch cutting) and through Warborough to Dorchester. In 2003, we (Sharpe and Carter, unpublished) used dowsing to confirm that the Dorchester-Henley road does cross the Hale Farm road as predicted by Malpas, and also that the Hale Farm road itself represents the line of another Roman road as he suggested. Malpas (1987: 33) describes this Hale Farm road as 'a kind of short cut' or bypass so that travellers could avoid Dorchester. For most of its length, this road follows the Warborough parish boundary; at Ladybrook Copse (SU 611 941) it crosses the line of the Lower Icknield Way as described by Sharpe and Carter (2006).

The presence of the Dorchester-Henley road along the Ewelme-Benson parish boundary on the east side of Benson airfield was confirmed by dowsing. Dowsing around the northern perimeter of the airfield along the modern Benson-Ewelme road revealed no trace of a Roman road emerging on

the same alignment as the one here described running north from Pangbourne. Fyfield Manor lies directly on this alignment, but no Roman road was detected here. The Dorchester-Henley road was dowsed again as it emerges from the northwest side of the airfield, where it passes under the old cottage at 76 Benson Road (SU 62154 92035, GPS error 6m). The road was dowsed again on the footpath running along the northeastern edge of Benson village at SU 62157 92163 (GPS error 7m). At this point the agger was visible as a slightly raised bank across the adjacent field. It is here suggested that the Pangbourne-Benson road joins the Dorchester-Henley road beneath the airfield at approximately SU 630 918, and continues north to Ladybrook Copse and beyond along the line of the Hale Farm road after a staggered crossroads.

The course of the road

South of the airfield at the Clack's Lane transect (3), the agger was visible running into the field at right angles from the hedgerow on the north side of the lane, along which the dowsing transect was conducted. The modern road surface now cuts through and beneath the line of the Roman road, forming a hollow way that is some 2m below the original Roman road surface. Coldharbour Farm (transect 4 was dowsed alongside the A4130 near the entrance to the farm) lies almost directly over the line of the road, which appears to pass beneath the two westernmost farm buildings. A Romano-British cemetery was discovered at Coldharbour Farm about 0.65km northwest of the farmhouse (SU 624 895) by a metal detectorist, who found a 'lead coffin with human bones', and this cemetery was subsequently excavated by members of the Wallingford Archaeological and Historical Society in the 1990s. The lead coffin was surrounded by about 20 additional burials that were interpreted as a family group; two of the burials had been decapitated and the head placed between the legs. These were reasonably high status burials dating to the late 4th century AD on coin evidence, and are thought to indicate the presence of a villa (as yet unlocated) in the vicinity (Clarke, 1996).



Fig. 2. The agger at Upper Cadley's Farm

Due south of Coldharbour Farm, the Roman road passes through Cart Gap in Grim's Ditch (transect 5) and this breach through the Iron Age earthwork would thus also appear to be of Roman date.

Where the dogleg south of Cart Gap crosses the eastern flank of Wicks Hill along the 90m contour (transect 8), it affords a splendid view along the line of the road as far south as the point where it crosses the ridge between Beech Lane and Elvendon Lane at Woodcote over 5km away. The dogleg approaches the Icknield Way at transect 8 and the south leg of the dogleg follows the line of this ancient trackway (which may have been a precursor of the road along this stretch) fairly closely until at transect 12 the Roman road resumes its southward course and the agger passes directly beneath the pillared porch of Ipsden farmhouse fronting the modern road that runs through the village (transect 13).

There were no visual signs of the Roman road where it was dowsed across rights of way south of Ipsden (transects 14-16), but at Upper Cadley's Farm (transect 17) the agger was clearly visible as it passed beneath a modern hedge line (Fig. 2). The hump of the agger was 7.3m across and it was accentuated by the relatively sparse hedge growing above it compared with the denser vegetation on either side. The agger hump has been completely ploughed out in the field to the north of this hedgerow although it was still dowsable; in the field to the south, the slight rise of the agger could just be seen climbing the slope when viewed from the footpath that approaches it from the southeast.

South of Upper Cadley's Farm the line of the road swings slightly east and crosses the South Stoke Road some 200m northwest of the entrance to Broad Street Farm (transect 18). From Cray's Pond (transect 21) the road turns south again and crosses the minor road leading to the hamlet of Cold Harbour about 125m to the east of the point where this road forks to skirt the settlement. The faint hump of the agger is just discernable in the modern road surface at this point (transect 23). The Roman road does not pass through the centre of Cold Harbour but here is directly on the line between transects 22 (Blackbird's Bottom) and 24 (Boundary Farm).

At Boundary Farm, the name of which may be significant as Roman roads were often later used as boundaries, the road swings about seven degrees to the east and at Beech Farm (transect 25) about 14 degrees to the west to skirt the head of the steep valley running west to Hartslock Wood. Here the agger was visible again, running through the small triangular field immediately north of Beech Farm; just to the north of this field an old cottage appears to have been built squarely across the line of the road.

From Beech Farm the Roman road follows the line of the present footpath along the edge of a field and

then along the eastern boundary of Stonycroft Plantation. Just before the footpath joins the modern B471 between Whitchurch Hill and Whitchurch, the road line disappears into Stonycroft Plantation and runs closely parallel to and just to the west of the B471 to be dowsed again along the bridle path to Hartslock Wood where a wide 'track' joins the bridle path from the north (transect 27). This feature appears to follow the line of the road and it is shown on the OS map as a very narrow field rather than a trackway. In this respect, it resembles the narrow field or 'Slype' at Cadwell Farm, Brightwell Baldwin, which has been shown to coincide with the line of a Roman road (Ian Clarke, pers. comm.). From this point the road veers east again, as does the B471, and the old and new roads run parallel again as far as the north bank of the Thames, where the Roman road was dowsed beneath the west end of St Mary's Church in Whitchurch (transect 29).

The southern connection

On the south side of the Thames, a Roman road was also dowsed beneath the tower of the church of St James the Less in Pangbourne (transect 31). This is here believed to represent the road coming north from Silchester, the exact course of which has long been disputed (Coombs, in press). The recent examination of material at the English Heritage aerial photographic archive at Swindon has revealed the presence of a possible Roman road south of Englefield. The visual evidence for this road as shown by cropmarks extends from a hedgerow at SU 6265 7039 north of Milehouse Cottages in a north-north-westerly direction to another hedgerow at SU 6260 7065, where it changes alignment by 17 degrees and veers north-northeast to intersect the B road leading to Bradfield at SU 6269 7111. This 0.75km stretch of road then continues on the same alignment along the edge of a wood and then as a field boundary for a further 0.58km, where the line is broken by the drive to Englefield House at SU 6281 7167. There is no further aerial photographic evidence for this road north to Pangbourne, but if it is projected on the same alignment it would cross the little River Pang before it widens and turns north near the present-day Hogmoor Bridge, and then continue north towards Tidmarsh church. A Roman villa was discovered about 1km west of Hogmoor Bridge when the M4 motorway was being constructed in 1970 (Sims and Ward, 1990). From St Lawrence's Church in Tidmarsh, it would be logical to expect the Roman road to veer north, perhaps along the line of the A340, to avoid crossing the wider Pang again and to hug the foot of the contours on the west side of the Pang Valley to avoid marshy ground. Such an alignment would bring the road up to Pangbourne church (transect 31) and from there to the Thames crossing which was dowsed at The Wharf (transect 30).

Conclusion

This survey therefore implies that a Roman road ran northwards from Silchester to Pangbourne, where it crossed the river and ran north to Benson, there to join the road to Henley that led on towards Dorchester and ultimately to Alchester and Akeman Street and beyond. Referring to Holmes' (1999) suggestion that a Roman road may have run along this alignment, Hugh Davies, the author of *Roads in Roman Britain* (Tempus, 2002), has commented that this route is much more direct than the conventional one west of the Thames via Streatley, and it keeps the road away from the Thames Valley which is a policy that the Roman surveyors appear to have adopted elsewhere (Davies, pers. comm.).

Regarding the 'conventional' route, there is good evidence for a Roman road south of Dorchester as far as Moulsoford, via Brightwell-cum-Sotwell, Mackney and Cholsey (Coombs, in press; Malpas, 1987; Sharpe and Carter, 2003; Wilson, in press). There is the place name of Streatley to link this road to Pangbourne but as yet little further evidence. However, while dowsing the line of the Roman road through Pangbourne churchyard, a branch was discovered leading off from this just north of the church tower to exit the churchyard near its northwest corner. This branch road was dowsed again in Riverview Road, Pangbourne, where it appears to be heading in the general direction of Streatley. No aerial photographic evidence was found for this Pangbourne-Streatley road, despite an intensive search in the archive at Swindon, but it is possible that the road from Silchester branches into two at Pangbourne, one branch passing west and the other north on either side of the Thames. A Roman cemetery at Shooter's Hill, Pangbourne, discovered during the construction of the Great Western Railway in 1837 and centred at SU 62920 76760 (West Berkshire HER Monument Full Report, MWB3605), would lie close to the proposed route of the Streatley branch.

A search of the on-line version of the Oxfordshire Historic Environment Record for supporting evidence for the Benson-Pangbourne road revealed three scatters of Roman pottery (PRN 17415, 15487, 15520) and a collection of Roman tile (PRN 2012) in the Ipsden area, suggesting widespread Roman activity in this parish. The lane through Ipsden linking it with the A4074 is rather incongruously called 'The Street', and this continues on the other side of the A4074 as a straight farm track leading to Barracks Farm and the B4009. When this line is projected across the road towards the Thames, it reaches the site of a Roman villa known only from crop marks south of North Stoke at SU 607 853 (Oxfordshire HER, PRN 9770). It is suggested that 'The Street' may be a survival of a minor Roman road linking this villa with the north-south Benson-Pangbourne road that

passes through Ipsden. The main road through Crowmarsh Gifford is also known as 'The Street', and it is suggested that this may originally have formed a link between the Roman road, the Roman site that gave rise to the cemetery at Coldharbour Farm, and the ancient ford across the Thames at Wallingford.

Summary

Place name evidence prompted the search for a Roman road between Benson and Pangbourne on the east side of the Thames. The line of the road was surveyed using dowsing and the results were confirmed by the alignment of the dowsed points and the presence of a visible raised agger at at least three locations along the route: Clack's Lane, Upper Cadley's Farm and Beech Farm. This road appears to have been laid out, in typical Roman fashion, in a series of straight stretches on slightly different alignments. The results of the survey provide good evidence for another road to add to the ever-increasing inventory of Roman roads in the area, and suggest the existence of an alternative and possibly main route to Dorchester from the south.

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Brightwell Baldwin Community History and Archaeology Project

A Geophysical Survey at Cadwell Farm

Ian Clarke

Introduction

The Brightwell Baldwin Community History and Archaeology Project (BBCHAP) is a community based project being run in association with the South Oxfordshire Archaeological Group (SOAG). An introduction to the project was published in *South Midlands Archaeology* No. 37 (Clarke, 2007a), in *SOAG Bulletin* No. 61 (Clarke, 2007b) and appears on the SOAG web site at: <http://www.soagarch.org.uk/bbintro.html>. The project utilises the skills and knowledge of local volunteers from Brightwell Baldwin and the surrounding parishes, working alongside SOAG members, and also professional archaeologists and other specialist advisors as necessary. The project is open to all, whether experienced or not.

Early work is being concentrated on two areas of particular interest to the community: Cadwell, in the north of the parish, where we have evidence for Roman occupation and a Deserted Medieval Village (DMV); and the central and southern areas of Brightwell Park, where extensive earthworks also suggest decayed, or moved, earlier settlement. Large parts of these areas are permanently under grass where fieldwalking is of limited use and geophysical survey is essential. In July 2007 SOAG was awarded a National Lottery grant of £10,000 for BBCHAP through 'Awards for All'. The grant was for the purchase of a Geoscan Research RM15D resistance meter and associated electronic support equipment, with a balance of about £1500 to support the project over 12 months. The first use of the new equipment was at Cadwell Farm.

Background

Cadwell Farm is located in the extreme north of the parish of Brightwell Baldwin on low-lying ground where the Upper Greensand gives way to the Gault Clay vale around Chalgrove. There is coin evidence for a Roman presence here (Fraser, 1988; Clarke, 2006). The name Cadwell is clearly Anglo-Saxon in origin, meaning 'Cada's spring', and Cada is mentioned in the bounds of the Anglo-Saxon charter of Brightwell of 887 (S 217). The farm is all that remains of a decayed medieval settlement with separate manor (Allison, K. J., Beresford, M. W., and Hurst, J. G., 1965). The settlement was small in the later Medieval, the holdings there in 1086 being merely three virgates and one plough (Brun the priest) and half a hide and

one plough (Edward), both held of the king. At some point Cadwell was incorporated into Brightwell parish. There is no record of this but the latest historical evidence we have for the separate existence of 'land called Cadwallys' and the 'manor of Cadwallis' is in a bargain and sale with feoffment dated to 3 May 1630 (ORO, E43a; E43b).

In 1975 James Bond carried out a field survey at Cadwell (Bond, 1975). His survey identified the field immediately to the east of the farm buildings as the most likely site for the DMV. At the eastern end of this field, within a copse, is the spring which is the focus for the ancient settlement. The then landowner, the late Mr Bernard Wallis, believed from local tradition that this field was the site of a monastery and renamed it Monastery Field. For at least the previous century it had been known as Home Ground (ORO, E43c), a familiar name for the enclosure nearest a settlement or farmhouse and one with a long history (Field, 1993: 142). Bond noted that there is no documentary evidence for a monastic foundation here. The landowner reported that some time earlier, in the late 1950s or 60s, he had levelled the field before bringing it into cultivation and that considerable stone and tile was encountered. Bond recorded widespread scatter of stone and tile still visible and concentrated in the 'central north' part, near the copse. Monastery was the only field to produce any Medieval pottery and very little post-Medieval pottery was noted. It used to be 4.9ha [12ac] but is now slightly smaller, the eastern boundary having been moved in recent times.

Aerial photographs

The 'humps and bumps' levelled by Mr Wallis show clearly in aerial photographs from the 1940s and 50s which are now in the English Heritage aerial photographic archive at Swindon. An excellent example, taken by the USAAF in low, winter sunlight, is shown in Fig. 1. The picture is an enlargement of Monastery Field: at the bottom is Cadwell Farm and towards the top, at the opposite end of the field, is the copse where the spring emerges; numerous linear and curvilinear earthworks can be seen between the two. The north side of the field (left of the picture) is low lying and was bounded by watercress beds fed from the spring. The south side (right of the picture) is on the lower, gentle slope of the Upper Greensand and was bounded by a hollow way leading to the farm. The cress beds were blocked off by Mr Wallis and are partially filled in. The hollow way has been concreted over.

One feature in particular stands out. This is the large, rectilinear ditch in the north-east corner which, together with the spring copse wrapping around the other two sides, encloses a roughly square area, with



USAAF photo: NMR Swindon

Fig. 1. Monastery field in December 1943 (North is to the left.)

other features within it. The ditch can still be seen as a crop mark on the ground and in satellite images. The area enclosed has a raised platform across its western end. It is in this area that James Bond found the scatter of stone and tile.

We are fortunate indeed that one member of the BBCHAP team, Miss Beryl Moffatt, is a daughter of the late Charles H. Moffatt, the farmer who owned Cadwell Farm before Mr Wallis. She remembers the various earthworks and confirms that the large ditch connected with the cress beds to the north and was clearly once fed from the spring. We can reasonably conclude that it is a moat, and that the area enclosed is most likely the site of Cadwell Manor. A farmhand who worked on the levelling for Mr Wallis confirmed that considerable quantities of stone were removed from the field in this general area, which certainly suggests a substantial manor house building.

The approach to the moat crossing was along a straight track from the hollow way to the south. The crossing is still visible as a break in the crop mark.

None of the other earthworks are now visible on the ground. Of particular interest is a curving bank and ditch that encloses a large area bounded by the hollow way on the south side and another linear ditch on the east side. Beryl Moffatt confirms that these

were all prominent features before the levelling.

A number of small linear ditches and banks are consistent with the field being divided up into a number of enclosures, perhaps for medieval crofts. A curving bank that forms a part circle near the middle of the picture is enigmatic in a Medieval context and could just possibly be a remnant of a prehistoric feature.

Geophysics

An attempt to explore the rectilinear ditch area with a Geoscan Research FM18 fluxgate gradiometer produced no useful data and it was clear that the levelling operation had blurred the magnetic response of the archaeology. By contrast, a survey of the same area using the Geoscan Research RM15D twin-probe resistance meter was immediately successful, so this technique was used exclusively over the whole field up to the farm curtilage. A total of 100 20x20m grids was completed, covering 4ha. Probe spacing was 0.5m, traverse and sample intervals were 1m; background resistance was low (c.10Ω) so a gain of 10 was used; settling time was 0.5s. A small area was tested with a 1m probe spacing but this did not give such good results.

The survey was completed by BBCHAP local volunteers over 11 days between 10 September and 26 November, 2007, so averaging nine grids per day. Since they started as complete beginners, this was a remarkable achievement.

The first 20 grids covered the area of the rectilinear ditch in the north-east corner. Surface conditions were very dry following a long period with no rain and some variability of contact resistance was encountered. The raw data showed high frequency 'noise' superimposed on the archaeological response, so to remove this the data was de-spiked and repeat low-pass filtered using a 3x3m window. A period of heavy rain followed and the remainder of the survey was completed in varying conditions of dampness, reflected in some imperfections in matching and probably some suppression of the archaeological response. Appropriate offsets and edge matching were applied and finally a high-pass filter to reduce the geological background response. The Geoplot processed data is shown in Fig. 3 alongside a second aerial photograph (Fig. 2) for direct comparison.

Interpretation

The geophysical data show a high degree of correlation with the features in the aerial photographs. In general, we found that large ditches showed up as high resistance features, indicating better drainage than the surrounds. The following interpretations are inevitably provisional at this early stage of the project.



USAAF photo: NMR Swindon
 Fig. 2. Monastery Field in December 1943.
 (North is to the left. The image has been cropped and scaled for direct comparison with the geophysical data in Fig 3.)

The large, rectilinear ditch in the north-east corner shows up well. If we are right in interpreting this as a Medieval moat, then the features in the western area of the moated enclosure could be the footings of buildings, probably the manor house, built on the raised platform.

The south, sloping side of the field is enclosed by a large, curving, single bank with possibly an external ditch. A linear ditch to the east seems to be part of this enclosure. The adjacent field, south of the hollow way, is significantly higher with a large lynchet for much of its length, indicating a boundary of considerable antiquity. If this is part of the same enclosure boundary, then the form is a rough D-shape, which together with the scale of the earthworks suggests an Iron Age date. Within this south enclosure is a line of small, rectangular enclosures fronting onto a curving track running east-west, which are likely to be Medieval croft enclosures. There are also in this area some faint traces of a number of circular features (not visible in the processed data of Fig. 3) that may be Iron Age round houses. We are probably looking at continuity of occupation of the D-shaped enclosure from the Iron Age right through to the late Medieval period and the eventual decay of the settlement.

The geophysics reveals that the roughly circular feature in the middle of the field extends into the curved ditch and bank on its south side and forms a complete horseshoe shape with an opening to the east. Measurement shows that the feature on the geophysics is outside the bank showing in the aerial photo and so is probably an external ditch. The

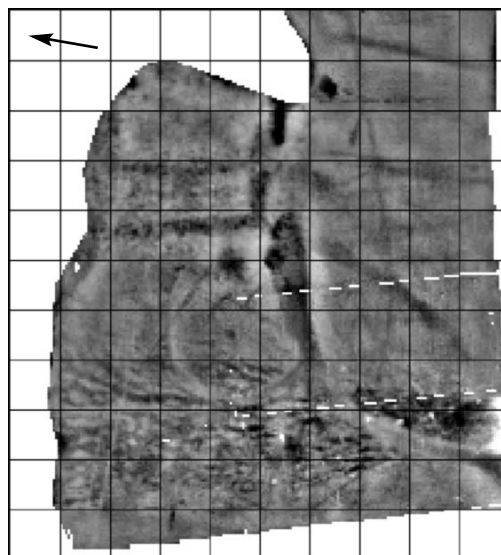


Fig. 3. Twin-probe resistance survey of Monastery Field completed in 2007.
 (North is to the left. Grids are 20x20m. Dark is high resistance.)

precise chronological relationship is not entirely clear, but given the proximity of the two features it seems likely that the horseshoe shaped enclosure predates the large curved bank and could be a remnant of an earlier Prehistoric enclosure or monument.

From the north-west corner of the field (bottom left of Fig. 3) are two straight, parallel lines about 5m apart, running due east across the field towards and across the moated enclosure. These are clearly the ditches of a Roman road. It lines up with an ancient straight track to the west of Cadwell Farm, now ploughed out but still visible as a crop mark. Beryl Moffatt recalls that the latter was an avenue in her day, lined with elm trees. The landowners and the project team had suspected this might be a Roman road, so it is good to have this theory confirmed. The road may simply have led to the spring, a possible sacred site, or it may have extended beyond the spring to join another ancient road that led to a ford over Chalgrove Brook, formerly known as Stratford (Clarke, 2006). A geophysical survey on the far side of the spring may resolve this issue. We should note that the spring would have emerged further north in the Roman period; it has cut deeply into the hillside over time, much aided now by a colony of badgers.

Overlying all the earlier archaeology are the clear imprints of the modern footpath that now runs straight across the field, and its predecessor that curved to avoid the moat.

A final point of geological interest is a fan-shaped feature running south to north across the field under the 'Iron Age' bank (bottom of Fig. 3) which is interpreted as a palaeo-flood-channel.

Conclusion

The remarkable results from the geophysical survey confirm that, despite levelling and ploughing operations in modern times, a significant amount of archaeology has survived. The data helps us considerably in interpreting the surface features visible in the early aerial photographs and has revealed a complex, multi-period site with clear occupation at least back to the Iron Age and possibly earlier. The exercise shows once again the importance of large area surveys on such sites and the excellent results that can be achieved with the twin-probe resistance meter. The technique is slow, in our case averaging close to 0.4ha per day, but well suited to amateur groups of highly motivated volunteers exploring the archaeology of their home landscape. In 2008 we hope to put in one or two exploratory trenches to try to confirm some of the provisional interpretations and look for dating evidence.

Acknowledgements

A community project's success is entirely dependent on the enthusiasm and skill of its volunteers. I would like to thank all who took part in the survey and congratulate them on their remarkable achievement. Thanks are obviously due to the National Lottery for the generous grant through 'Awards for All' for the purchase of the geophysics equipment. And finally I must thank the landowners, Richard and Kellie Davey, for their enthusiastic support. We are very fortunate that they have once more returned Monastery Field to permanent pasture.

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- E43b, E43/1/1D/16 Bargain and sale with feoffment 3 May 1630.
- E43c, E43/1/1/E2 The Brightwell estate the property of William F Lowndes Stone Esq. (c.1847).

Brightwell Baldwin Community History and Archaeology Project

The Hundred Rolls Survey of Cadwell: a Snapshot of a Medieval Hamlet

Kaz Greenham, Brightwell Baldwin Archivist

This translation of the Hundred Rolls survey of Cadwell is taken from the *History of Brightwell Baldwin*, a collection of writings and papers collated by the late Anthony Fraser of Brightwell and held in the Brightwell Baldwin archives. It provides a unique snapshot of this deserted Oxfordshire hamlet, the focus of BBCHAP research in 2007, and a glimpse into rural life in the latter half of the 13th century.

Note: For a general introduction to the Hundred Rolls survey of 1274-75, commissioned by Edward I, see Ian Clarke's article in SOAG Bulletin No. 58 (2003): 15-20. [Ed.]

Lord of the Manor

John Salvein holds by inheritance half a hide of land with its appurtenances in the hamlet of Cadwell for socage [holding land in return for rent, rather than service] from Lord Ellis de Wytefeld in chief, paying to the same Ellis annually 40/s for everything and owes suit of court at the Ewelme Hundred.

[Note: The de Wytefeld (or Witefeld) family had held it since the end of the 12th Century (Oxon Fines, p2, 4).]

Villeins

Germanus de Cadewell holds from John Salvein in the same hamlet a virgate of land with appurtenances for which he pays 10/s a year, suit of court; provides two men for one day to hoe the lord's corn at his own cost, to mow for two days with one man at his own cost and carry all the lord's hay with the rest of the villeins at his cost, and he shall reap in the autumn for one day with two men at his own cost. Item, he shall reap in the autumn for two days with four men the lord providing food twice daily; he shall carry the lord's corn in autumn for two days with one cart and

one horse and be fed by the lord twice a day. He shall find two cartloads of wood against the feast of the Nativity for the food of the lord and he shall harrow for one day with two horses at fixed times with food provided by the lord.

Walter Bleggy holds a croft and half a virgate of land for which he pays 7/s p.a. and he shall perform for the half virgate of land half the services performed by the aforesaid Germanus. For the aforesaid croft he shall reap the lord's corn in the autumn for two days with one man with meals provided twice daily and he shall mow for half a day at his own cost and for a full day for the lord's food.

Richard at the corner holds half a virgate for which he pays 5/s yearly and half the services in everything which the aforesaid Germanus performs.

Agnes daughter of Reginald holds half a virgate for 5/s p.a. and half the aforesaid services.

And it should be known that the mowers should have 3d from the lord for drinking and each one of them each day he mows shall have as much grass as he can lift with his scythe without the scythe breaking.

Walter le Acreman holds a messuage and four and a half acres of land paying 4/s yearly and suit of court, hoeing with one man for a day at his own cost, turning and lifting all the lord's hay with the rest of his

neighbours and he shall have the lord's ale to drink and he shall eat with him and he shall help to make a haystack from the lord's own meadow at his own cost. In the autumn he shall reap the lord's corn for a day with one man, the lord providing two meals a day. He shall help to pull the lord's flax for a day with one man for his own food.

Alice the widow of Cissor holds a messuage and two acres for which she pays 2/5d p.a. with suit of court, she shall weed with one man for a day without food and turn and lift the hay and make a stack as does Walter Acreman and in the same way she shall reap with one man for a day in the autumn without food and for two days with one man with food. She shall help pull the lord's flax with the aforesaid Walter.

Free tenants

Robert de Cadewell holds half a virgate with appurtenances from Richard de Cymeterio in the hamlet of Cadwell, Richard being the mesne tenant between him and John Salvein, rendering Richard 1d and John Salvein 5/s and suit of court at Ewelme Hundred and the aforesaid Richard owes court to the aforesaid John Salvein.

Bartholomew son of Walter of Stretford holds by inheritance three acres of the demesne of John Salvein paying 4d yearly for everything.

Brightwell Baldwin Community History and Archaeology Project

Cadwell and Monastery Field: What's in a Name?

Ian Clarke

Incorporating historical research by David Viall

Introduction

In 2007, the Brightwell Baldwin Community History and Archaeology Project (BBCHAP) carried out a survey of a field at Cadwell (see earlier article: *Geophysical Survey at Cadwell Farm*). This field was renamed 'Monastery' by Mr Bernard Wallis who bought Cadwell in 1955; before that it was known as 'Home Ground'. The latter fieldname certainly dates from the mid 19th century (ORO, E43a) but could be much older, providing evidence for locating the manor house and settlement to this field (Field, 1993). Either way, 'Home Ground' has a much older provenance than 'Monastery'.

James Bond, who surveyed Cadwell in 1975, noted: 'The landowner (Mr Bernard Wallis) believes from local tradition that this field was the site of a monastery. [There is] no documentary evidence for this, nor, as far as I know, did the land ever belong to a monastic body elsewhere' (Bond, 1975). James Bond was then Assistant County Archaeologist of Oxfordshire and is widely recognised as an expert on the monasteries – his *Monastic Landscapes* synthesises a lifetime's work on the subject (Bond, 2004) – so his statement carries some weight. However, new evidence can always emerge and James would be the first to concede this. So how might this 'local tradition' of a monastery have arisen?

SOAG member and BBCHAP historical researcher David Viall of Chalgrove has suggested three possible sources. The first concerns a payment of tithes from Chalgrove Manor (and other nearby manors) to the Abbey of Bec in Normandy; the second is a holding at Brightwell by the Abbey of Missenden; and the third is the well-known record in the Domesday survey of 'Brun the priest' holding land at Cadwell. In this article I present David's three hypotheses and try to draw some conclusions.

1. The Bec Tithes of Chalgrove

The Abbey of Bec was founded in Normandy by the Crispin family, who were closely related to the Dukes of Normandy. Miles Crispin, a blood brother of William the Conqueror, was made constable of the Castle of Wallingford, which he rebuilt in stone. He was granted many manors of the Honor of Wallingford, one of which was Chalgrove. *[SOAG members might like to note that he also held Gatehampton. Ed.]*

The historical records, which passed to St George's Chapel at Windsor after the alienation of the Monastery of Bec, show that by 1087 Miles Crispin had granted the tithes of his Honor of Wallingford manors in respect of his demesne lands, to the Abbey of Bec. From Chalgrove, he granted the great tithe of corn and hay. The Domesday survey (DB) records that the Abbey of Bec also held two and a half hides in Swyncombe of Miles, with land for two and a half ploughs and 10 acres of meadow.

By 1226 the manor of Chalgrove had become divided into more or less equal moieties, the manors of the Barentynes and the de Plessis. The historical records of these manors contain frequent references to the 'Bec tithes' or 'Bec harvest' payable from the lords' demesne holdings, but the description of the 'Bec lands' is not sufficiently detailed (nor as yet deciphered) to locate them within the two manors. However, the 1841 tithe map and index of Chalgrove does give a detailed account of the 'Bec lands' for corn and hay within the Manor, both in size and location, from which the tithes were then payable to the Chapel of St George, Windsor. The record is valuable in defining the likely demesne holdings of the early Lords of Chalgrove. It shows that much of these demesne lands bordered the Chalgrove brook, from the Mill Lane right through to the boundary with Cadwell, which by then was part of Brightwell Baldwin.

David Viall suggests that, given the proximity of the demesne lands and meadows in Chalgrove and the Bec holding at Swyncombe, it is possible that Monastery Field at Cadwell may have been within Miles Crispin's wider lordly demesne of Chalgrove and therefore part of the 'Bec lands'. In which case it could have become known as 'monastic land', perhaps giving rise over time to the tradition of a monastery there.

2. Land at Brightwell held by the Abbey of Missenden

The Abbey of Missenden had several aristocratic patrons at its foundation, one of whom was an early Lord of Chalgrove, Peter Boterel, of the line of the Dukes of Brittany. He, before 1166 and likely c.1164, granted a virgate of land at Brightwell to the Abbey of Missenden. The deed of this gift by Peter Boterel to

the Abbey does not survive in the Missenden Cartulary, but fortunately an entry records Peter's gift in a Papal Bull of confirmation of a later date (MC, 891).

The virgate in Brightwell is also listed in an Inquisition Post Mortem (IPM) of 1356 of Edmund de Bereford, Lord of Brightwell and one half of Chalgrove manors (Cal Inq, 249), and in an IPM of his son John, also of 1356 (Cal Inq, 321). In Edmund's IPM he is recorded as holding a messuage and 30 acres of land in Brightwell of the Abbot of Missenden by service of seven shillings yearly. Thus a messuage has been added to the original grant. His son John's IPM shows him holding a messuage at Brightwell with a dovecot and a virgate of land held of the Abbot of Missenden by service of seven shillings yearly. So a dovecot has been added in the interim. [30 acres = one virgate.]

David Viall suggests that it is just possible that the existing dovecot in Brightwell Park is the one listed in John de Bereford's IPM of 1356, or is perhaps a later replacement built on the same site. If so, it would locate the site of the messuage and the virgate of land that Peter Boterel granted to the Abbey c.1164. He also suggests that the holding by the Abbey of Missenden of this virgate in Brightwell Park might explain the name of Monastery Field nearby towards Cadwell.

3. Domesday and Brun the priest

Under 'Oxfordshire, XIII The Land of the Canons of Oxford and other Clerks', the Domesday survey of 1086 (DB) records just two holdings at Cadwell:

'Brun the priest holds of the king 3 virgates of land in Cadwell, [There is] land for 1 plough. This [plough] is there in demesne. It was worth 20s; now 30s. The same man held it in the time of King Edward'.

'Edward holds half a hide of the king. There was 1 plough. It was worth 20s; now 6s.'

Brun is holding directly of the king and had been there from before the Conquest. David Viall suggests that it is possible that Brun had a priest's cell or even a small Saxon church at Cadwell, which cell or church could have been built with stone from earlier Roman buildings, or perhaps built (or rebuilt) later in stone by a local lord. It is then possible that the record of 'Brun the priest' and perhaps a folk-memory of a stone-built cell or church, could have given rise to the local 'monastic tradition'.

Review of the three hypotheses

The obvious weakness of the 'Bec lands' case is that it is pure conjecture. There is no documentary evidence for Miles Crispin holding Cadwell, or indeed Brightwell and no record of 'Bec lands' in these manors. The best that can be offered for this line of argument is a monastic tradition established 'by association' with a neighbouring manor, which is tenuous to say the least.

For the Abbey of Missenden case, this would only make sense if Monastery Field were part of the Missenden virgate, but the documents all locate the virgate in Brightwell, not Cadwell. So this argument again reduces to a monastic tradition established 'by association' with a neighbouring manor. If the Missenden virgate was in Brightwell Park, this is sufficiently remote from Monastery Field as to make such an association unlikely. Incidentally, the same argument can be applied to the Abbot of Dorchester, who held far more land in Brightwell than the Abbot of Missenden: in 1306 the Abbot of Dorchester was the highest tax payer there.

We may briefly consider here David's theory of the dovecot. The landowners think the extant dovecot dates from the 16th century. Having recently taken a closer look, I think this is quite possible. Indeed the architectural details could place it even earlier, although perhaps not as early 1356. David is right to suggest that it could have replaced an earlier, perhaps wooden one, but only excavation could reveal this. Intriguing though the theory is, we are unlikely to be able to prove that it is the site of John de Bereford's dovecot.

With 'Brun the priest' and his possible stone cell or church, we do at least have something tangible. What can we glean from the brief entry in Domesday?

The name Brun is descriptive – inevitably we are reminded of G. K. Chesterton's Father Brown – but not particularly helpful as it could originate from anywhere across northern Europe. It does derive from the Germanic however and is of some antiquity, so one might be tempted to favour a Saxon ancestry. There was a Bruno, Brun or Braun who was Duke of Saxony from 866-880 and who died fighting the Vikings: legend says he was the founder of Brunswick and ancestor of the Counts of Brunswick (Reuter, 1992). Whether our Brun had this exalted ancestry we will never know.

What we do know is that Brun was a priest, not an abbot or a monk, and Domesday does not mix them up. In the listing he is shown as one of the 'other Clerks', which suggests he was a 'Clerk in Holy Orders' and may indicate that he did not have a ministry. He is holding land directly from the king and it is possible that he was a clerk to King Edward the Confessor, perhaps for the royal vill of Benson. Edward favoured Norman clerics, so Brun may have come from Normandy. His reward is a plot of land nearby on the royal estate, which he can farm and where he can raise his family – most priests were married at this time (Cambell, 1986: 150). The typical holding for a priest was two virgates (Poole, 1955: 60), so Brun's holding is generous but not excessively so. Three virgates are adequate to support him and his family but we can safely say that it is totally inadequate to support a monastery.

As to any stone built cell or church, only excavation could hope to reveal this. But if we are right that Brun did not have a ministry then such is unlikely.

Cadwell for the Cadwellians

Two of David's hypotheses rely on indirect evidence from the larger (and more heavily researched) manors of Chalgrove and Brightwell. With Cadwell long reduced to a single farmhouse and being part of the modern parish of Brightwell Baldwin, it is all too easy to forget that it was once a manor and hamlet in its own right. We should let Cadwell speak for itself.

Referring first to the Domesday record: we have discussed above Brun's holding, likely to have supported a family. We may note that Edward's half a hide is also held directly from the king. The hide was the standard measure for assessing taxation and service and there is broad agreement that the Domesday hide was four virgates of about 30 acres, i.e. about 120 acres in total. Edward's land appears run down and has been devalued. With no villeins, bordars or slaves listed, Cadwell appears a rather empty settlement in 1086.

It is instructive to compare the Domesday holdings with those listed some 200 years later in the Hundred Rolls. (See earlier article: *The Hundred Rolls Survey of Cadwell: a Snapshot of a Medieval Hamlet.*) The latter records that half a hide is held by John Salvein, the lord of the manor, which we may equate with that held by Edward in 1086. The total held by six villeins and two free tenants comes to two and a half virgates and nine and a half acres which is about 2.8 virgates in total, which is close enough to equate it with the three virgates held by Brun the priest in 1086, now divided up between John Salvein's villeins and free tenants. So by 1275 Cadwell is still the same size as in 1086, but now appears as a thriving hamlet with a resident lord of the manor, six villeins and two free tenants. With retainers and families, this could represent a population of perhaps 40 to 50.

The total recorded Medieval arable is five virgates, or 150 acres. Estate records and landscape features allow us to estimate the maximum arable of late Cadwell at 140 to 150 acres [57 to 61ha], which equates perfectly with the Medieval holding. Despite the risks in comparing Medieval and modern acreage, we are probably safe in saying that the hamlet of Cadwell was never more than about 150 acres in total, excluding meadows.

In summary, the Medieval surveys of Cadwell provide no evidence of a monastic holding or a monastery and, more importantly, no room to support such. And if there was no monastery in 1086, or in 1275 at the height of the monastic period, we can be reasonably confident there never was one. All the evidence we do have confirms that Medieval Cadwell was a small hamlet, just large enough to support a modest lord of

the manor with a few villeins to work his fields and provide a living for themselves, and one or two free tenants. Squeezed between the much larger and richer manors of Chalgrove and Brightwell, it would not survive.

Conclusions

So are we any nearer to finding a source for our 'local tradition' of a monastery at Cadwell? The theories that rely on nearby monastic influences are conjectural and unconvincing, which leaves Brun the priest as the only plausible source. Whenever Monastery Field is discussed Brun the priest is mentioned. He has become a talisman for all who believe in, or want to believe in, the existence of a monastery at Cadwell. He has become the proof that it existed. But has this tradition really been handed down to us from the 11th century? Or has it arisen in modern times, perhaps established within living memory? I believe the latter to be more likely.

It is probable that the tradition became firmly established during the time in which local historians have been working actively at Brightwell and Chalgrove, stimulating interest in the history of the community. However, it is unlikely that this is a conjecture of the historians themselves. It is curious that Tony Fraser never recorded a monastic tradition at Cadwell in his *History of Brightwell Baldwin* (Fraser, 1988). If such had existed, would he not have done so, whether or not he believed in it? Was there ever really a local monastic tradition before Bernard Wallis? Or did he find something in his clearance and levelling of Home Ground that led him to believe there was a monastery there? Was it Wallis himself who created the tradition, enshrining it by renaming the field?

We will probably never know the truth. But such traditions, once established, have a life of their own and can survive the hardest of knocks. Perhaps this one will survive even the archaeologist's trowel.

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Brightwell Baldwin Community History and Archaeology Project

The Animal Bones from Blooms Field

Janet Sharpe

Introduction

The BBCHAP excavation in Blooms Field in the summer of 2006 (Clarke, 2007) produced a total of 259 animal bones (including teeth) and fragments for analysis. The bones were washed and then weighed, and identified as far as possible. The overall weight of

the bone sample was 1546g. The animal species represented and the condition of the bones, including whether the epiphyses (=articular surfaces) were fused or not, and whether there were any signs of butchering, were recorded.

Of the total, 120 bones and bone fragments together weighing 1175g were identified. Although the number of unidentified fragments was greater at 139, their combined weight was considerably less at 371g. This represents only 24% of the total sample by weight, and indicates the small and fragmentary nature of the unidentified fraction.

The vast majority of the bones (227 of 259, 87.6%) came from Context 3, which is described as the silty-clay topsoil overlying the entire trench area.

This can be interpreted as a former plough soil, the contents of which could date from before, during and after the period of occupation of the excavated farmhouse. In contrast, the three sealed contexts beneath this surface layer which yielded animal bone can be interpreted as being broadly contemporary with the building: Context 4 contained just 10 bone fragments, Context 6 contained 10 fragments and Context 7 contained 12 bones and bone fragments.

Results and discussion

Bones were identified from nine animal species. These are listed in Table 1, together with the Number of Identified Specimens (NISP) and Minimum Number of Individuals (MNI) calculated for each one (O'Connor, 2000).

Taxon	NISP	%	MNI	%
Horse	7	5.8	1	5.9
Cow	16	13.3	4	23.5
Pig	36	30.0	3	17.6
Sheep	42	35.0	3	17.6
Dog	1	0.8	1	5.9
Cat	1	0.8	1	5.9
Rabbit	4	3.3	1	5.9
Rat	3	2.5	1	5.9
Chicken	10	8.3	2	11.8
Total	120	99.8	17	100.0

Table 1: Animal bones identified from Blooms Field

The NISP is the number of bones and bone fragments that can be attributed to a particular species, and it assumes that each specimen represents a different individual. In practice, this is extremely unlikely as the mammalian skeleton contains about 200 bones, and it is possible that several or many of the bone fragments came from a single individual. The NISP, therefore, is the maximum number of individuals represented and is probably an overestimate. In contrast, the MNI is probably an underestimate: this is based on the number of identical bones in the sample. For example, the seven horse bones came from different parts of the body and could theoretically have come from the same animal; therefore the MNI = 1. However, the cow bones included four upper left third molar teeth and each animal has only one of these; therefore the MNI = 4. The actual number of individuals probably lies somewhere between these two extremes, even taking into account the unidentified fraction.

Because the three sealed contexts together contained only 12.4% of the total sample, and assuming that the topsoil contained bones that were

derived from contemporary deposits, the sample is here considered as a single assemblage.

Horse: NISP=7; MNI=1

This animal is represented by two vertebral fragments and three teeth from Context 3, a kneecap (patella) from Context 6 and a tarsal bone (the lateral cuneiform, which in life sits on top of the cannon bone = metatarsal III) from Context 7. Both vertebral fragments show signs of butchering and one of them shows an unfused epiphysis, indicating that it came from a young animal. Was this animal butchered for human consumption, or was it merely dismembered after an untimely death?

The three teeth are the upper right first, second and third incisors, which could have come from the same individual and which show moderate wear.

Cow: NISP=16; MNI=4

Cattle are represented by nine bones and seven teeth. Where the ends of long bones are present, the epiphyses are fused: in the case of the radius, this indicates that the animals were at least 15 months old when they died. Eight of the nine bones come from the forelimbs; apart from a pelvic fragment no other parts of the body are represented. Five of the bones show evidence of butchering, having been chopped and sometimes split longitudinally; two of them had been gnawed by a dog.

The four upper left third molar teeth, representing four different animals, show slight, slight, moderate and heavy wear, respectively. The remaining three teeth, also molars, show slight, moderate and heavy wear. This wear pattern is consistent with the animals being over three years of age when they died.

Pig: NISP=36; MNI=3

The sample contained only six pig bones but 30 teeth. Despite the relatively large number only three of the teeth are the same (lower left second incisors), representing three different individuals. None of the bones carry butchery marks but two had been gnawed by dogs. Most are fragmentary and had received a heavy battering in the plough soil. The almost complete tarsal (calcaneum) is unfused and represents a young individual.

The various teeth show very slight to moderate wear; of the 26 teeth in which the state of wear can be determined, one shows no wear at all, indicating that it had not broken through the gum when the animal died, 20 show very slight, and only five show moderate wear. The tooth wear pattern for pigs indicates an age at death range of between about 12 to 18 months. The three canine teeth are all from females.

Sheep: NISP=42; MNI=3

Sheep are the most frequent animals in terms of individual bone fragments, with 34 bones but only eight teeth. Ten of the bones show chop and/or cut

marks; the latter are mostly parallel scratches where meat had been cut from the bone but in two cases the bone had been cut through with a sharp steel blade with a nicked edge. Two of the bones had been gnawed by dogs and one shows the characteristic parallel tooth marks of rat gnawing. All the bones are fused and two distinct size categories of animals are represented: one appears to be similar to a modern, medium-sized sheep, such as the Scottish Blackface, and the other is a smaller animal more akin to a Shetland. The sealed contexts yielded the larger size; the smaller ones were all found in the topsoil. It should be noted that the nominal sheep bones could include some goat bones.

Seven of the eight teeth show moderate to heavy wear, suggesting that the animals were at least three years old or older when they were killed, for mutton rather than lamb.

Dog: NISP=1; MNI=1

The right ulna of an adult, fairly large dog was recovered from the topsoil.

Cat: NISP=1; MNI=1

The farmyard cat was represented by a single tooth, an upper left canine, in the topsoil.

Rabbit: NISP=4; MNI=1

Four rabbit bones were found in the topsoil, none in the sealed contexts. Of these, at least one appears to be relatively recent, and one had been gnawed by a rat.

Rat: NISP=3; MNI=1

The right half of a rat pelvis and two long bones were found in the topsoil.

Chicken: NISP=10; MNI=2

Eight chicken bones were found in the topsoil and one each from Contexts 4 and 7. These are unremarkable except for the right humerus from Context 4, which had been gnawed at both ends by a rat.

Conclusion

Assuming that the bone assemblage in the topsoil is related to the occupation of the farmhouse in Blooms Field, the bones represent a mixed farming economy which was probably spread over a considerable period of time. The number of identified specimens suggests that sheep and pigs were the most frequent animals, representing 35.0 and 30.0% of the total respectively, with cattle following in third place at 13.3%. In contrast, the minimum number of individuals suggests that cattle were most important at 23.5%, followed by sheep and pigs at 17.6% each. All three species appear to have been economically important, and the bone evidence suggests that they were all slaughtered for meat. The pigs appear to have been killed at the age when their rate of growth would have begun to slow down, thus maximising meat production in terms of feed outlay. In contrast, the cattle and sheep were slaughtered well after their

prime age for meat production, and it is possible that these animals were also kept for their secondary products, milk and wool. At least two breeds of sheep were kept, possibly at different times.

Chickens, horses, dogs and cats, and rats, would be expected on any farm. The rabbit is probably intrusive.

The bones suggest that butchering took place *in situ*, and the relative frequency of different elements, such as the predominance of cattle fore limbs and pig teeth, may reflect butchery practices. The overall picture is one of mixed farming, self-sufficiency, and a certain degree of untidiness as evidenced by dog and rat gnawing of some of the bones. Four of the bones from the topsoil but none from the sealed contexts show evidence of charring, suggesting that attempts had been made to control the rubbish by burning.

Appendix: the snails

Thirty snail shells were recovered from Context 7, which overlay the south floor of the building and may represent the first post-demolition fill. The snails comprised 19 *Cepaea* spp., 11 *Trochulus striolatus* and a single *Cornu aspersum*, the common garden snail. *Cepaea nemoralis*, the brown-lipped snail, was represented by at least 15 individuals, seven of which were the five-banded pattern variety, one had a single band, and seven had no bands. *Cepaea hortensis*, the slightly smaller white-lipped snail, was represented by two single-banded shells, and one *Cepaea* sp. was a juvenile that could not be assigned to species. Both *Cepaea* species live in a great variety of different habitats, including gardens, fields and woodland. *Trochulus striolatus*, the strawberry snail, is a common and widespread species in gardens, woodland, hedgerows and waste ground generally. Context 4 yielded a single shell of *Cepaea nemoralis*.

All the snails from the Blooms Field site are typical garden and waste ground species, and are often associated with human habitation.

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Gatehampton Farm Roman Villa Excavation

Interim Report 2007

Hazel Williams

Introduction

In October 2007, just as the digging season ended, the site field was put up for sale. With the future of the site and the project uncertain, the excavation remained open during the winter for essential digging and recording. Little time was available for post excavation analysis but a fuller report of the 2007-2008 excavation will follow in the next *SOAG Bulletin*. The future of the project now looks more positive with new landowners interested in archaeology and the excavation continuing.

A substantial part of the western end of the villa building was already excavated by the end of 2006: part of the stokeroom, two rooms with hypocausts, a central room, the south corridor and part of the north corridor (Fig. 1). This also shows the location of new features on the north and east side of the trench where excavation was focused in 2007. A further trench was excavated 25m to the north of the villa and enclosure, over the line of a possible ditch. In addition, the large quantity of ceramic building material excavated from this part of the villa over the past few years was recorded and added to a database for further analysis (see following article).

Excavation

Stokeroom

Part of the stokeroom remained unexcavated and proved very rewarding for younger diggers who did most of the work in this area. The accumulated deposit of soil and domestic refuse included plenty of large pieces of pottery and animal bone. The two most remarkable finds were discovered by a young SOAG on consecutive Sundays. The first was a Roman spring padlock bolt (Fig. 2). The padlock would have consisted of an iron box with a projecting bar attached. The two 'eyelets' of the spring bolt slid home along the bar. The pointed catch springs engaged within the box until compressed by a key. In fact a Roman key, of the type associated with such a padlock, was discovered nearby in the same deposit when the south side of the stokeroom was excavated (*SOAG Bulletin*, No. 55: 16).

The second find was a decorated copper alloy bracelet: a thin strip 12cm long and 0.4cm wide, with a diameter of 6.5cm (Fig. 3). This probably dates from the 4th century when it was fashionable to wear several on each wrist and it may have been fastened by a clasp or hook.

There are patches of what appears to be a chalk floor surface, covered of course by much soot and charcoal. Found in this deposit was a fragment of shell tempered pottery, probably late 4th-century.

Central room

This large room is 6m square and has a chalk floor.

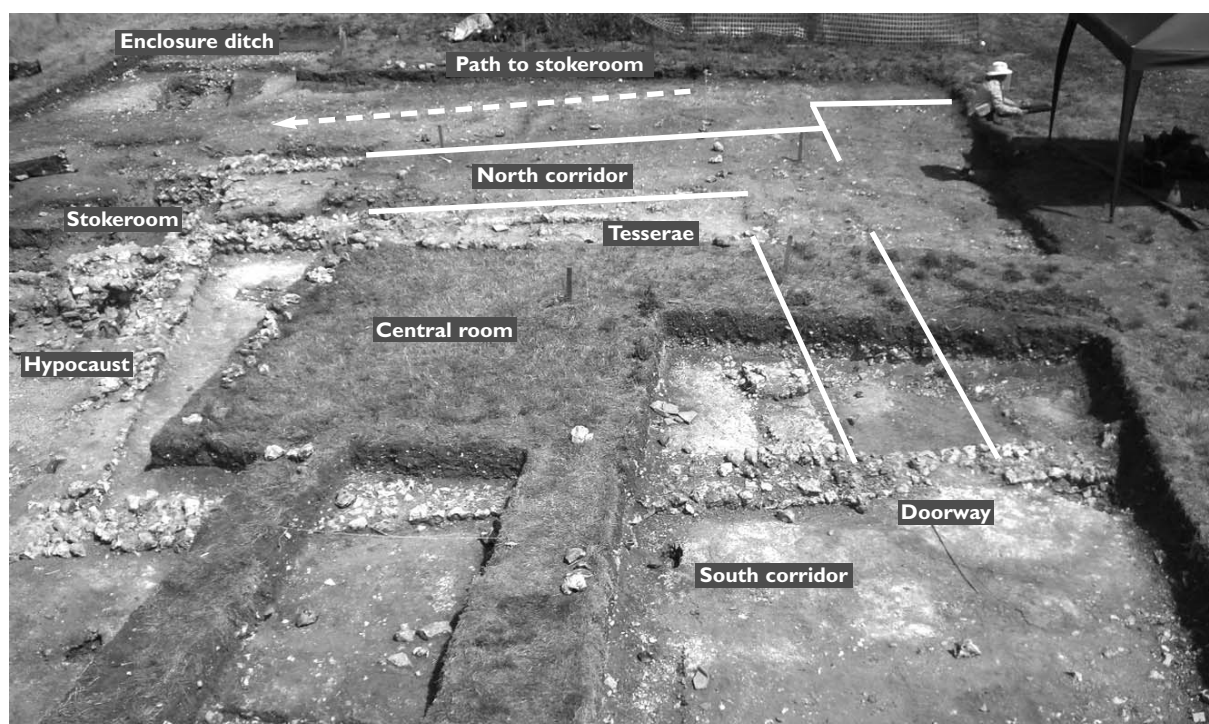


Fig. 1. View north over excavation showing the layout of the building and new features

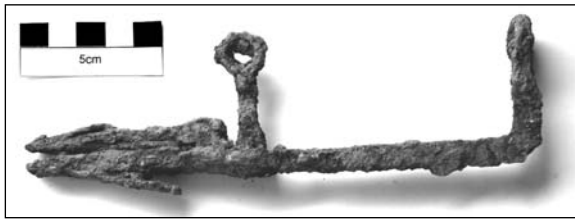


Fig. 2. Spring padlock bolt

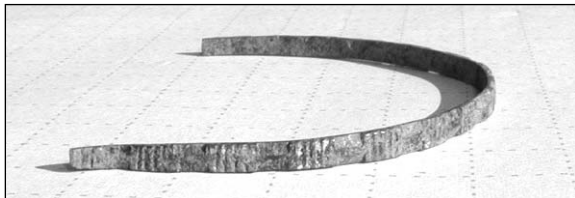


Fig. 3. Copper alloy bracelet



Fig. 4. View of north corridor looking towards stokerroom



Fig. 5. Trier ware



Fig. 6. Shale bracelet

In 2006 an area of tessellated pavement was found close to the doorway in the north-east corner and more has emerged this year. Partly covered by a fall of painted wall plaster, the tessellated area is at least 1m by 1.5m and may extend further into the room under the unexcavated area in the centre. These are large terracotta *tesserae*, made from roughly cut tile.

This room was also the focus of a study of Roman owl pellets (SOAG Bulletin, No. 61: 30); the bones of small mammals originating from Roman owl pellets were found in the rubble and soil above the floor. It was important to obtain further samples, so during the winter of 2007 a small area on the west side of the room was excavated. A team of hardy volunteers sieved minute bones in a cold polytunnel in December and processed even more off site. The effort was worthwhile and SOAG Janet Sharpe has another good sample of these bones for analysis.

North corridor

Over 6m of the corridor on the north side of the building was excavated in 2006, extending eastwards from the stokerroom (Fig. 4). A further area on the north side of the trench remained unexcavated and covered with a deep layer of soil and demolition rubble. The intention was to discover how far the corridor extended. This was a good area for training new diggers, with plenty of interesting finds and eventually, after a lot of trowelling practice, new features appearing.

By the end of 2007 most of the floor surface of the north corridor was exposed, extending for a total length of 8m. At the stokerroom end, the floor has thin patches of concrete, reinforced or repaired in one large hearth area with re-used roof tiles. There is little evidence of a surface at the eastern end, but there are more hearths and burnt occupation areas with lots of charcoal. These burnt deposits about a new feature, an L-shaped wall (discussed below) that marks the eastern end of the corridor. Finds in the demolition layer include a fragment of pottery with a glossy black slip, yellow and white scrolled barbotine decoration and rouletting. This is late 2nd- to mid 3rd-century imported fineware, from Trier in the Mosel region, part of a drinking 'motto' beaker (Fig. 5). Also found were part of a plain shale annular bracelet (Fig. 6) and a well preserved bronze coin of Constantine II AD 331-337 (Fig. 7).

Exterior walls on the north side of the building

The exterior north wall of the corridor was excavated; the wall footings are of flint, packed with chalk stones in places, and are up to three courses high above floor level. The wall is 0.5m wide except for the centre section, 3m long, that is much narrower. This may be an entrance and coincides with a cobbled surface found outside the building at this point.

At the eastern end of the trench, the exterior wall of the corridor abuts a new feature: an L-shaped wall, similar in construction, that projects 0.5m further out on the north side (Fig. 8). This wall also extends southwards at least a metre and probably more, across the end of the north corridor. It may also enclose a new area or room at the eastern end of the trench. This was found to have burnt hearth areas and small deposits of yellow clay and *opus signinum* under layers of flint and tile demolition rubble. The initial impression from the small area so far excavated is that this may be a working area.

New corridor

This new corridor, just over 2m wide, links the north and south corridors. There is a distinct inset doorway giving access from the south corridor. At the northern end it is not yet clear whether there is another doorway or if it simply joins the north corridor at a right angle. It also provides access to the tessellated area and adjacent to this doorway was a deposit of very large flint stones, cut into angular shapes – two are L-shaped – that were probably part of the doorway structure. Large quantities of wall plaster were also found, painted deep red and bright yellow.

Gravel path

A small section 1m wide and 4m long was cut across from the north wall of the building to the enclosure ditch (Fig. 9). The ditch is very close to the building, less than 3m. The intention was to find out more about the relationship between the ditch, the building, and the features and deposits between them. Immediately outside the wall is an accumulated deposit of demolition rubble with a distinct layer of fallen tile on top. Beyond this is a gravel path about 0.75m wide that runs to the back of the stokeroom. With careful trowelling, the path was found to have several layers of renewal and patching. Tucked under one side of the path was a fragment of late 4th-century Alice Holt pottery. Below the gravel there appeared to be a very clean, natural layer of clayey loam but a small section cut during the winter indicates that a cobbled surface lies under this. Both of these deposits appear to be cut by and pre-date the enclosure ditch.

Enclosure ditch

The section across the enclosure ditch was extended eastward and recording completed. The ditch is U-shaped, approximately 2.5m wide and almost 1m deep, cut into a Roman soil surface and the underlying natural gravel. Several pieces of a small glass vessel were found in the accumulated deposit of silty loam lining the ditch. A late 3rd-century radiate coin was also found in a lens of dumped demolition rubble.

Trench 11: two small ditches

This trench was opened to investigate a possible ditch, on a slightly more northerly alignment than the villa enclosure 25m to the south. Indicated by clear



Fig. 7. Bronze coin of Constantine II



Fig. 8. View of exterior walls of villa on north side showing corridor wall meeting the L-shaped section of wall in foreground

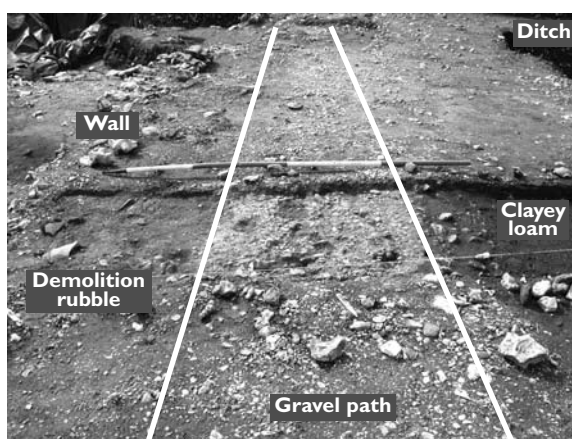


Fig. 9. Gravel path



Fig. 10. View north of Trench 11 showing ditch with Iron Age pottery in foreground, and Roman ditch in extension to trench area in background

crop marks and by the geophysical survey of the area around the villa, a more detailed resistivity survey showed that there were in fact two small ditches, less than 3m apart (Fig. 10). Both ditches are quite small: approximately 0.8m wide and just over 0.5m deep with a bowl-shaped profile. Due to modern disturbance, so far only the lower fill of the more southerly ditch has been excavated. This produced mid-Iron Age pottery including fragments of two rims of 'saucepan pots' (Prof. Michael Fulford and Prof. Richard Bradley, pers. comm.). The second ditch is on a marginally more northerly alignment and the fill included plenty of animal bone, black burnished and Alice Holt pottery, including several pieces of the same vessel.

People

One of the most important aspects of the Gatehampton excavation is to provide opportunity for people of all ages and ability to experience real archaeology and this was a record year for participation (Fig. 11). 77 volunteers dug at Gatehampton in 2007: 25 SOAG diggers from the previous year; 27 new SOAG members; and 25 day diggers (those who live too far away to join the group or who dug for just a day or two). We were particularly pleased to welcome several families, including 11 children, a great success as they seemed to discover all the best finds! The site was open for two Sundays during the Council for British Archaeology's National Archaeology Week in July for visitors to see work in progress or join in the excavation, which many did.



Fig. 11. The dig in September 2007

Training

Basic training was provided for new diggers and all participants were encouraged to add to their excavation skills in a range of on-site activities including excavation, recording, planning, surveying and finds processing. Several SOAGs used their dig experience as part of their course credits for undergraduate courses at the University of Bristol and the University of Nottingham. Others are attending courses at the Universities of Reading, Oxford and Oxford Brookes.

Acknowledgements

Our greatest debt is to Robin Cloke, the landowner who has done so much to make this excavation project possible over many years. His efforts to ensure that the site field was passed to new owners equally interested in archaeology are much appreciated. Our long association with Robin will continue, however, as only part of the villa lies within the area sold. Robin continues to provide practical help, storage for our tools and parking, and is also still fully involved in the excavation project. Our thanks go also to Paul Smith, the Oxfordshire County Archaeologist and Tim Allen, Oxford Archaeology, for their help and advice. Thanks also to Professors Michael Fulford and Richard Bradley for their comments on the mid-Iron Age pottery. Cynthia Graham Kerr, co-director and founder of the Gatehampton excavation in the early 90s, continues to dig: her knowledge of archaeology and of the early years of the excavation is invaluable.

This has been an unusual year at Gatehampton. After a substantial amount of work completed in the summer of 2007 the team were faced with the urgent need to re-open the site during the winter to complete any outstanding recording and digging in case our access to the site was curtailed. The diggers responded with great enthusiasm and worked very hard, sometimes in rain, sleet and frost, to ensure that the work was completed. Many tackled unfamiliar tasks and acquired new excavation skills in the process. I must thank everyone for their efforts, which have produced some good archaeology and plenty of new questions to answer in 2008.

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Gatehampton Farm Roman Villa Excavation

Ceramic Building Material Recording at Gatehampton

John Hefferan

Introduction

The many rubble sacks of Ceramic Building Material (CBM) at Gatehampton had to be recorded quickly last year in case we got evicted (CBM is rightly classed as a bulk find). We chose to record the data as a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet, since most PCs now have that software.

These notes on that recording exercise cover:

- The terminology used in our database
- The CBM recording process at Gatehampton (which is similar to that used by Reading University for the Integrated Archaeological Data Base, AIDB)
- Some comments on the accuracy of the data
- Some of the interesting CBM finds
- Ideas on what we could do next

Ceramic Building Material is the term used for clay building material such as bricks, floor tiles, roof tiles and flue tiles. CBM is common at most Roman sites in Britain, but it is little studied. No one seems to get excited about CBM the way they do with pottery. Why are there so few books on tiles compared to the many books on pots?

The reason may be that CBM is cheap stuff, often poorly made, finished only with a wet cloth and sometimes carelessly trimmed with a few knife strokes. No one is going to get excited about the elegance of *tegula* design.

But exactly because CBM was cheap and cheerful, the builders didn't mind a few defects. (The modern builder's slogan "They'll never notice!" springs to mind. The tile makers certainly didn't waste tiles just because they had a few small blemishes or errors. They prodded the tiles with their boots to see if they were dry enough to fire, they scratched them with sticks, and they scrawled the odd bit of graffiti. Tiles that were marred with animal paw prints or children's bare footprints were not thrown away.

So from such marks on CBM we can learn a lot about the life of ordinary people around the tile maker's worksite. Research by Dr Peter Warry indicates that we may be able to date contexts from roof tile design, as we can with the more exotic Samian ware. (See bibliography.)

Glossary

Brick is the term used for all flat rectangular CBM material; for example, the big floor tiles known as *bipedales* (two feet square) *sesquipedes* (one and a half feet long), probably used for bonding courses on walls, and the smaller tiles used to make the hypocaust pillars, known as *pilae*. Brick-sized Roman bricks are rare, and we haven't found any at Gatehampton. Signs of burning, or soot, or mortar can indicate usage.

Flue tiles are the box tiles plastered behind the walls over the hypocaust. They were stacked like square tubes, to draw hot air up through the hot room walls, to heat the walls and to act as chimneys. They often have a characteristic combed or rolled pattern on the outside to help the wall plaster stick and we have found both square or round holes cut at flue junctions.

Tegulae are the flat roof tiles with raised sides or shoulders. They were laid side by side, overlapping the rows below like modern roof tiles, and have cut and shaped corners to help the rows fit together. The evolving design of these corners is now proposed as a means of dating *tegulae*, and we are providing Peter Warry with access to our corners to help build up his evidence.

Imbrex tiles are curved and are used to stop rain getting through the gaps between the *tegulae*. They also overlap, and are slightly conical. If they are not conical then they are probably ridge tile (see below).

Ridge tile has been included as a CBM type. Basically any *imbrex* shard with an obvious long straight side has been recorded as a possible ridge tile, although with little confidence as identification is difficult. Apparently ridge tiles are normally much heavier than *imbrex* and not conical. As a row of normal *imbrex* tiles, mortared in, would be adequate for the ridge, why would they bother with another type?

Pipe shards are usually only identifiable as (water) piping if they have been wiped around the curve, rather than along it, when wet. One possible pipe shard was found, still to be confirmed as it might just be an *imbrex* shard.

Unident(ified) is the term used for CBM that cannot be assigned to one of the above. That usually means it's a very small piece or a frost flake that has only one finished face.

Note that the CBM *tesserae* from the site have not yet been included in this database.

Gatehampton CBM recording process

On site, one or more paper record sheets for each context is used to record numbers of each type and their weight (Fig. 1).

From each finds tray (or rubble sack or bucket!) the CBM is sorted into type, roughly cleaned and checked for interesting marks or anything unusual.

To reduce weighing errors, much of the CBM is weighed in batches of up to about 5kg. Interesting pieces are recorded individually and marked with their context number. We retain on site these pieces and all flue tiles for later analysis.

Any *tegula* corners are also context numbered and kept for Peter Warry to record in his database and marked PW in the record (Fig. 2). Some other pieces are also retained for Peter's expert opinion.

After recording, all the CBM material that is not to be retained is heaped outside to be re-deposited later in the backfill.

Off site, the paper record book is copied as raw data into an Excel spreadsheet.

In the Excel spreadsheet, pivot tables are used to process the raw data into summary totals for each CBM type in each context, and to generate derived data from those summaries (Tables 1 and 2). (Thanks to Stuart Pooley for his Excel expertise here.)

Fig. 1. A typical CBM paper record sheet



Fig. 2. Tegula Type C corner cutaway (160-260AD). Note knife cut marks and finger marks on shoulder.

CBM type	Data	Total	Average weight of piece (g)
Brick	Sum of Number of pieces	725	
	Sum of Weight (g)	297,825	411
Flue	Sum of Number of pieces	1,070	
	Sum of Weight (g)	286,400	268
Imbrex	Sum of Number of pieces	779	
	Sum of Weight (g)	140,580	180
Pipe	Sum of Number of pieces	1	
	Sum of Weight (g)	100	100
Ridge	Sum of Number of pieces	23	
	Sum of Weight (g)	12,900	561
Tegula	Sum of Number of pieces	1,632	
	Sum of Weight (g)	480,010	294
Unident	Sum of Number of pieces	483	
	Sum of Weight (g)	26,600	55
Total Sum of Number of pieces		4,713	
Total Sum of Weight (g)		1,244,415	264

Table 1. Derived data from all 2007 CBM records

Number of retained pieces		
Retained?	CBM type	Total
PWV only	Brick	1
	Flue	1
	Ridge	6
	Tegula	66
	Unident	2
PWV + Yes	Pipe?	1
	Tegula	14
	Unident	1
Yes	Brick	26
	Flue	774
	Imbrex	16
	Ridge	1
	Tegula	75
Yes?	Unident	25
	Flue	10
Total		1019

Table 2. Derived data from 2007 retained CBM

Peter Warry has pointed out that the summary totals show our ratio, by weight, of *tegula* to *imbrex* is 3.4 to 1, instead of the “very approximately” normal roof ratio of 2.5 to 1. This probably shows that our totals include some reused *tegulae*, possibly to give a level course in a wall or as *pilae* in the hypocaust, since several pieces have mortar attached.

Accuracy

There are several sources of inaccuracy in the recording, as well as human error, and discarded unmarked CBM cannot be recovered to check doubtful entries. But as only generalities can be deduced from bulk find records, the accuracy of recording is within acceptable limits. The key error sources are:

- Not all CBM is actually collected from a trench – a quick look at the spoil heap on any site shows that. But hopefully only a small fraction of the total CBM weight is lost in this way, and that fraction is mitigated by other errors that tend towards overweighing.
- Sorting into CBM types is quite accurate, after a bit of experience. Small shards can be identified if even a tiny finished surface is there, even in a dark poly-tunnel. The assumption is that the bulk of the material will tend to cancel out errors in typing – although typing of ridge tile and pipe shards might be more error prone.

- The sorted CBM is weighed using a small spring balance. The scale reading is judged to about $\pm 100\text{g}$. Given the CBM bulk, and multiple weighing, this is acceptable.
- The main problem with weighing accuracy is field conditions. Pottery soaks up water like a sponge, so a wet day can notably increase recorded weights. And although loose dirt is brushed off the CBM, some mortar, cement and other materials are bound to be included in the weight. But such accretions might be significant and would anyway take a serious effort to remove. Once again, sheer bulk makes the error acceptable.

Interesting finds

Human and animal prints are quite common, and show that animals, children and adults were moving about wherever the tiles were laid out to dry (Figs 3 and 4).

Generally the paw prints are from domestic animals, mostly dogs, which suggests that the tiles were made and dried near the farm. This may also indicate that the tilers were part time farm workers.

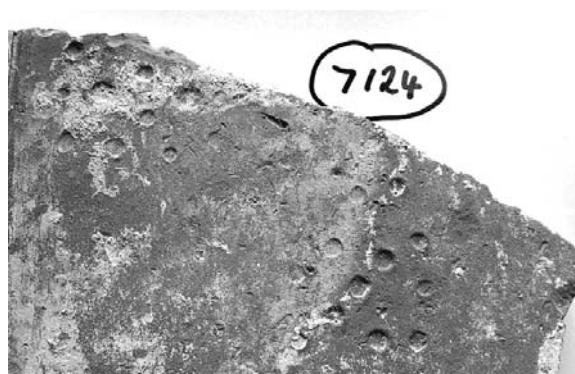


Fig.3. Hobnail shoe marks



Fig.4. A dog paw print. Note the claw marks.

The star CBM find in 2007 was the nearly whole tegula from trench 7 (Fig. 5). This measures about 16in [38.4cm] by 11.5in [27.6cm] and is smaller than the usual 18in [43cm] tegula. There were also some large pieces of *pilae* indicating a *pila* size of about 8in [20cm] square.

We have had a few tegulae that are curved in one plane, perhaps to fit on a barrelled roof, but more likely just suffering from potter's droop, since they were almost certainly stacked on their sides in the kiln. We have also had four tegulae with *in situ* roofing nails. (As an aside, the Romans appear not to have recycled their nails. You'd think that the iron would be worth saving, even without the several minutes needed to make each new nail by hand. Any suggestions?)

Very few tiles with firing temperature errors have been seen so far. Too cool a kiln results in a blue sandwich layer in the red fabric, too hot results in a hard purple fabric like an engineering brick. So the Gatehampton tilers seem to have been quite skilled at their craft.

What's next?

The raw data recording is being continued in 2008, as even more CBM is lifted. This will be transferred to the database to refine the summary data.

CBM records from earlier years will also be copied to this database as time permits.

Starting later this year, we plan to assemble a reference collection of CBM types at Gatehampton – particularly for the flue tiles.



Fig.5. A whole tegula (bottom left shoulder is missing)

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Warry, P. (2006) *Tegulae: Manufacture, Typology and Use in Roman Britain*. Oxford: Archaeopress. Primarily about tegulae, a thorough treatment including tile manufacture, roof construction and economics of the Roman brick industry and dating proposals based on design.



From the SOAG archives –
late 3rd-century coin
Obv: Radiate head
Rev: Eagle, CONSECRATIO



From the SOAG archives –
AD 330-335 coin:
Obv: Constantinopolis
Rev: Victory

Greys Mound

David Nicholls

In the 1950s, a school friend invited me to visit his farm, situated west of Henley-on-Thames, to look at a large mound in one of his father's fields. He knew of my interest and participation in field archaeology. I visited the site, then under cultivation, and was surprised that the mound had not been marked on any Ordnance Survey maps. I asked questions and searched documents and maps, but could find no reference in any records. Later I contacted the late C. W. Phillips of the OS, who had helped me on another local project. He visited the site, and it was duly plotted as a mound, possibly a motte.

To date, no reports have been found of investigations into the mound during the 18th- and 19th-century period of antiquarian interest, but examination of a 1940s' RAF aerial photograph at the English Heritage aerial photographic archive at Swindon indicated an intrusion dip.

So, this has simmered for fifty odd years! During that time I have frequently re-visited the site. With the landowner's permission, and SOAG's full support, I decided early last year that I would carry out investigations. Greys Mound, pointedly in Barrow Field, is situated on high rising ground at just under 95m or 305ft, Grid Ref. SU 727816, on land belonging to Cowfields Farm. It lies at a distance of two and a half miles [4km] west of the River Thames in a direct line, but about three miles [4.6km] on a logical walking route. The soil is heavy and consists of gravel with clay. The drift geology here is older river gravels of the Radler and Harefield terrace deposits of the Quarternary period.

In recent years the field has been leased to a local syndicate for a game shoot. Whilst not particularly destructive to the mound, this has had a bearing on surface conditions, and it was necessary for us to arrange for the shifting of some 40 large straw



Fig.1. The mound in Barrow Field. The line of bales can be seen to the left.

bales overlying the mound before we could commence work. The line of these had also created a deep furrow (Fig. 1).

We considered the possible reasons for the mound. Was it a Norman motte or castle mound; a boundary mound between parishes or estates; a mound for supporting a trestle or sunk post windmill; – or a barrow? The first two options were very unlikely, as no documentary evidence supported this. I have been involved with historical windmill construction for the last thirty years, and to my eye the position and character of the mound did not really support this possibility. So the strong probability was a barrow, despite the fact that barrows of this size are very rare in this region.

After removal of the straw bales, the vegetation covering the immediate area was cut, to provide a clear site to enable pegging out ready for a level-ling survey. This was set with a base line north and south, with radiating primary compass points extending to 40m from an assumed centre of the mound. Readings were taken at every 2m, and the results have been plotted (Fig. 2) with the kind help of Professor Nancy Nichols of Reading University. This is an excellent way to present information on contours. By explanation, the difference in height can be seen from the darker area on the south side to the higher natural ground to the north, as well as through the mound centre. The greatest height variation is presently 2.31m [7.55ft].

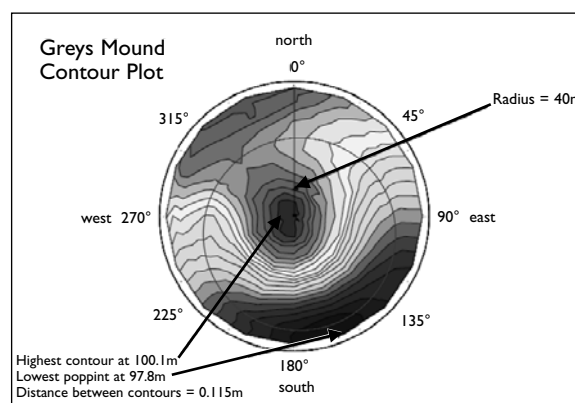


Fig.2. Contour plot of Greys Mound

Janet Sharpe and Phil Carter from SOAG were invited to come over to test the area with dowsing. I am convinced that positive anomalies can be detected by the use of this simple technology, and this certainly proved to be the case, for a remarkably consistent circle of responses were obtained over an overall diameter of approximately 76m [248ft]. Readings indicated a possible ditch or bank system of about 8m wide [26ft]: a very large construction indeed.

Gerard Latham from Wallingford, a competent and experienced amateur geophysicist, kindly accepted our invitation to bring over his TR/CIA resistivity

equipment to carry out a full resistivity survey of the site. The area was pegged out, based on our initial survey plot, and this was further extended to provide a plotting area of 48 20x20m grids, therefore covering an area of 18,500sqm, or approaching four and a half acres. Actually, using the equipment during April 2007 was very difficult work, due to the hard and compact nature of the surface, but we were rewarded with exciting results. The images obtained after various filtering, showed a high resistance central core of approximately 25-26m [81-85ft] with an overall outer ring of some 64m [210ft] – but with additional intriguing features. This is a very large earthwork, and appears to be not just one feature but a series of constructions over a number of years.

Our conclusions are that it is probably dateable to the Middle or Late Bronze Age, and that the primary feature is a bowl barrow of considerable size. Interpretation of the data is not straightforward however, and I would like to quote Paul Smith's interesting letter to us last year, after a site visit, in which he outlines the problems of interpreting geophysical results from other sites in similar circumstances.

Some research has been carried out over the years on climatic effects on resistivity surveys on various lithologies. Most of them have involved chalk, and while your area is on the sixth to seventh terrace plateau gravel deposits, these are obviously overlying chalk and I do not know how deep the gravel deposits are at this point. Interestingly, the mound is also at the very apex of a fan of clay-with-flints which spreads out south eastward from its narrowest point near the mound. This may also have an effect on the results. Surprisingly, very little research has been carried out on gravels, but the work on chalk sites has shown some interesting results that may support the types of responses you have.

On smaller ditches of the type you would normally associate with a barrow, for example, the evidence suggested that climate would have a marked effect. On a ditch of a bell barrow on Hog's Back Ridge in Surrey, when conditions of water deficit developed in the drier months of the year, its resistivity anomaly rapidly increased. A detailed analysis showed that this was not simply due to water deficit and the ditch filling, but to the fact that its relatively coarse texture blocked the capillary movement of moisture from the natural chalk to the topsoil, while at the same time this moisture maintained the lower part of the filling at a fairly low resistivity. Another example of extreme sensitivity of resistivity to topsoil depth in conditions of water deficit was observed on a site near Compton in Surrey. Clear linear positive anomalies were interpreted as building walls, but on excavation proved to be shallow gullies. Having said all that, you could be correct, and perhaps the positive anomalies outside the mound are a kerb or bank. But at the moment

I think I would veer on the side of climatic effect producing positive anomalies over parts of the ditches – especially where the fill is of a very coarse texture.

I do however have one concern about the mound. I checked the First Edition OS map and it is not there. For a mound of this size that is extremely unusual, for the Ordnance surveyors were usually very good at putting antiquarian remains on their maps and this mound may have been even more obvious in the landscape than it is now. It would be very useful if you can find any earlier documentary evidence that shows it or refers to it in any way.

Two further geophysical investigations have been conducted since. In May 2008, we undertook a magnetometer survey (Fig. 3) with help from the Northmoor Trust at Little Wittenham, who kindly allowed us to use their instrument at a very low cost, and from Alistair Bartlett of Bartlett Clark Consultancy, who gave free instruction in its use. We are very grateful for this support. However, downloading the data after our survey was delayed, due to various factors, and the results have been rather disappointing. However, this is due to the nature of the soil here, which does not suit this type of instrument. Conditions are too dense, too compact and solid. A magnetometer instrument is better suited to lighter alluvial conditions and chalk. We have obtained no new information except that, surprisingly, two pipe runs appear to cross near the mound.



Fig. 3. Mike Green with the magnetometer

However, a further survey was conducted, thanks again to Gerard Latham. He had purchased additional equipment consisting of a series of electrodes, which are set out in a line to enable a cross section or profile to be obtained, using the Wenner Array. These are linked up to the TR/CIA meter. We set out a 30m line, on level ground, to the west of the centre of the mound, centred over the assumed ring bank. This provided us with a reading to a depth of 3.5m [11ft]. This type of instrument has been developed from use in the oil exploration industry. The results are of great interest, and are exciting. We lack experience, and are awaiting further guidance in the interpretation of this data, but our

conclusion, at present, is that we appear to have a deep inner ditch – low resistivity, at the tail of the mound, bounded by the outer bank – high resistivity, then with a further weaker resistance area outside that. These have been plotted on a general feature drawing, along with the dowsing ring survey.

We chose the position for this section for two reasons: the instrument had not been used before, and Gerard wanted a reasonably level surface to try it out; and the position would indicate, we hoped, a typical cross-section of primary features. This I believe it has done.

If we are correct in our interpretation, the very deep ditch is extremely unusual, and, as far as I can ascertain, is somewhat unique, if this is a bowl barrow. I have not found any barrow reports recording quite such a depth. We are advised that the lower left and right high resistance readings on the image obtained are a normal function of the applied software. Following this, we shall be taking further section profiles during the summer with one extending the present reading across the mound and on to the outer ring on the opposite side, and a further survey to the south to determine whether the ditch system is continuous.

It is my belief that we have a very interesting site indeed, and it is remarkable that no previous archaeological investigations have apparently been conducted into its purpose. To reiterate, our provisional conclusion is that it is a Middle to Late Bronze Age barrow, but it can only be verified by peripheral trial excavation to obtain environmental and dating evidence. The site is not particularly threatened, but, nevertheless, it may be that it should be put under protection by scheduling if further information can be extracted as to its exact purpose and date.

We cannot know yet why this barrow complex was constructed here. No other known barrow sites are recorded in the vicinity: the nearest are the low-lying groups on the river terraces at Dorchester and, nearer to home, Goring, where there are trace examples as well as random Bronze Age finds. Northwards in the county, in the Cotswolds, barrow groups were surveyed by Andrew Mudd in 1984, and results of his work published in *Round Barrows of the Cotswolds*. Here he noted that barrows were mainly concentrated on land over 150m [500ft]. The late James Dyer also wrote a paper on 'Barrows of the Chilterns' for the Royal Archaeological Institute in 1961. The vast majority are recorded from the eastern Chilterns, but run in a long line on high ground westwards from Royston. No barrows are plotted west of Watlington, and even the five examples here were not visited by the author. It is primarily on the river plains that Bronze Age sites appear to exist in this area. Is it that higher land barrows in this area have simply not been recorded

or found? Have they been lost to intensive agriculture and building? I suspect this may be the case, and that they were not of sufficient physical size to create interest. However, during searches at the archives at Swindon, I was very surprised to find excellent aerial photographs of two superb and large disc or saucer barrows at Bix, north of Henley, and I noted several much smaller barrows on high ground at Binfield Heath, between Henley and Reading, where one would expect to find them. Neither of these areas is in the Historic Environment Record. A lot of work needs to be done to record barrow sites in this area. When I was a boy, two apparent disc barrows were pointed out to me at Ipsden. Further groupings occur, of course, south of Reading, mainly on the heathlands, then on to the downlands and plains to the west.

Where do we go from here? Over the last six months, I have been endeavouring to obtain funding to carry out trial excavations. We require some £7,500.00 to undertake this. We have agreed with Paul Smith that such activity at Greys Mound should be limited to peripheral investigation, at least initially, for full excavation is a very large undertaking requiring professional participation, if not direction. We have received financial support, so far, from the Chilterns Conservation Board at Chinnor and are immensely grateful to them, as well as to the Robert Kiln Charitable Trust for a generous grant. My hope is that we shall be in a position to continue with our investigations in the spring of 2009. Paul Smith made an interesting comment when I visited him recently. He said that we should consider that we might be dealing with a princely burial site – an Anglo Saxon *hlaew*. I wonder.

I believe Greys Mound – a probable Mid to Late Bronze Age site – will prove to be of considerable interest, and one which may yield data of particular importance for the history of this area.

Acknowledgments

I am immensely grateful to Paul Smith for his support and interest, and to all those who have helped in this intriguing investigation, in whatever way they could, in particular to Mike Green, Nancy Nichols, Ian Clarke, Gerard Latham, Phil Carter and Janet Sharpe, my wife, Diana, and other members of SOAG. Special thanks go to the landowners, Mr and Mrs Sam Samuels.



From the SOAG archives – AD 330-348 coin. Mint: London PLN
Obv: CONSTANTINUS PF AVG Rev: GENIO POPVLI ROMANI

Crowmarsh Leper Hospital

Pat Preece

Leprosy is nowadays only to be found in more remote parts of the world and there is a cure. In the Early Medieval period there was an outbreak of the disease, one theory being that it was brought back by the Crusaders. So at that time quite a number of leper hospitals were founded, probably at least 300 in England. Locally, Oxford had two, Windsor had one, Reading had one at the gates of the Abbey, and Wallingford had the Crowmarsh Leper Hospital.

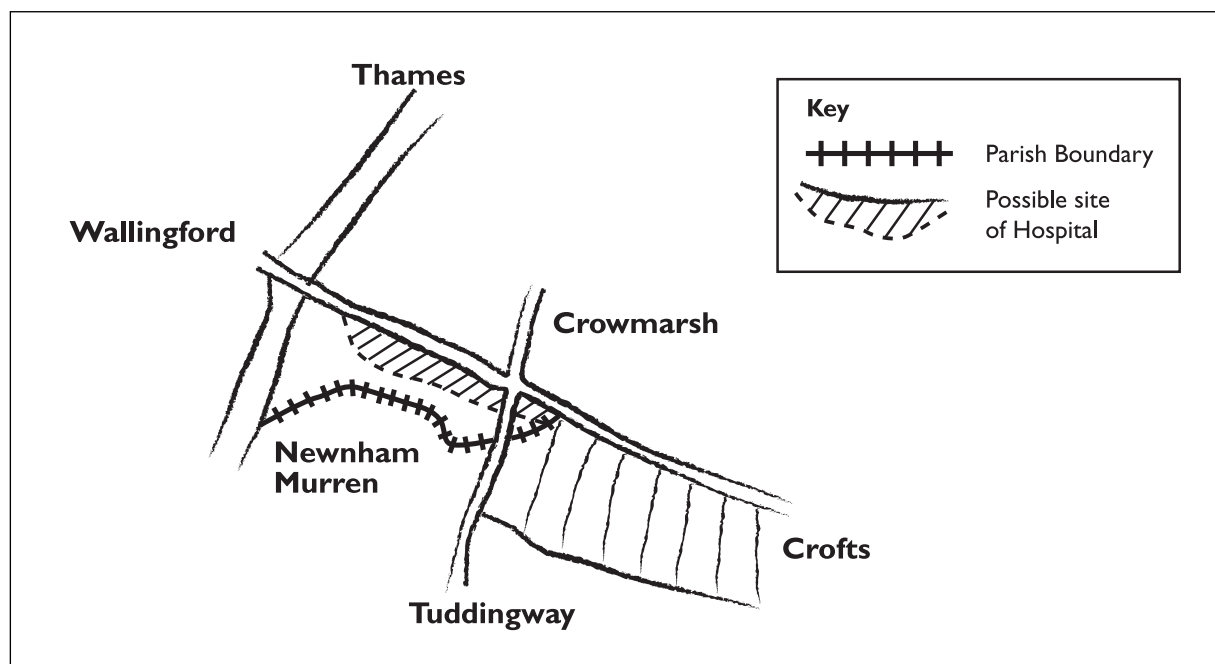
The position of the Crowmarsh hospital can be ascertained from two Reading Abbey charters of 1220, where it is described as 'next to the crofts nearest the hospital of Crawmers' (Kemp, 1986: 384). An article in *SOAG Bulletin*, No. 55, entitled *Fall of the House of Morin*, by Mary Kift and Marian Fallowfield, includes a map showing the site of the hospital. The site is on the south side of The Street in Crowmarsh almost opposite the church. It is now covered by cottages with the route of the Tuddingway passing by (Preece, 2002: 29). The crofts were a series of rectangular fields abutting The Street and actually in the old parish of Newnham Murren; one area is still known as 'Croft'. The parish boundary left the road just before the site of the hospital and went across the meadows. So the hospital was in Crowmarsh. Was a boundary change made to accommodate the leper hospital within Crowmarsh? The hospital was dedicated to St Mary Magdalen, a common dedication for such places.

It seems likely that the lepers would have begged by the side of the Tuddingway, which carried traffic at that period. They begged because most were incapable of working, even if employers were willing to have them. An interesting side to the working life of a leper was that Richard of Wallingford, the 14th-century Abbot of St Albans, mathematician and clock designer, was himself leprous (Kift, 2001: 22; Sandford, 2006: 30-32).

The hospital was within a short distance of Wallingford Bridge. Carole Rawcliffe writes, 'with its promise of a safer transition to paradise for both patient and patron the *leprosarium* [leper hospital] in turn represented a spiritual bridge'. And the Medieval leper stood poised 'upon the bridge of heaven above the sea of this world' (Rawcliffe, 2006: 311). Apart from the spiritual side, the traffic over the bridge might have provided a source of charitable giving, and the arches might have provided shelter. Some of the arches of Wallingford Bridge are thought to be early. Many leper hospitals apparently were sited by bridges; Rawcliffe cites at least nine.

The earliest reference to Crowmarsh Hospital was in 1142 when Queen Matilda gave it lands in Benson (Pedgley and Pedgley, 1990: 104). It may be that the lands were local as the 'Honour of Benson' included Crowmarsh. An 'Honour' was a grouping of several Knights' Fees under the administration of a lord and honorial court.

Despite the many references to lepers being segregated, this does not seem to have happened to any great extent. In fact, many lived at home until their disease became very apparent, chiefly when the face was affected. Sometimes spouses joined the patients in hospital (Rawcliffe, 2006: 190).



Sketch map of Leper Hospital and surroundings from the Tithe Award

Grants and alms would have kept the hospital going. In this respect it resembled a small abbey. In 1282 an oak was given for making shingles for the roof of the chapel (Pedgley and Pedgley, 1990: 105). It seems likely that the buildings may have resembled a small abbey with a chapel; wooden buildings as living quarters for the male and female lepers; a house for the chaplain or master of the hospital; and farm buildings. The chapel was probably considered the most important part of the hospital. In some of the institutions the beds of the very sick had a view of the altar. There would have been a programme of prayers during the day in the belief that this would help alleviate if not the disease itself then at least the suffering it caused. Evidence for a farm being attached to the hospital comes from a description of the premises in a document in the Berkshire Record Office (BRO, D/EH,T66/1) for the transfer of the property in 1556, after the dissolution of the monasteries. Apart from the 'religious house', there were 'meadows, feedinge [presumably pasture], stables, barnes, dovehouse, orchards, gardens, land and comens [commons]'. A modern resident who lives near the churchyard believes her house to be on the site of one of the barns of the leper hospital. This means that the hospital buildings were on both sides of the road.

In Medieval times it was a source of pride that money and goods were given not only to the hospitals but also to the lepers in the community. At Reading Abbey the abbot supplied each leper in the town with a daily allowance of half a two pound loaf, a measure of grain and half a gallon of middling ale. This was later increased to one loaf and one gallon and five pence each month from the almoner on feast days to enable the purchase of 'extra relishes' (Rawcliffe, 2006: 322). As well as these purchases each resident at the leper hospital in Reading was entitled to a hood, a tunic, a cloak and a blanket annually, and several yards of linen for undergarments. Although no records survive of similar provision, it seems possible that the same charity might have existed at Crowmarsh. In the 14th century William de Vartrull gave arrears of wheat to William, the chaplain of the Crowmarsh Leper Hospital (BRO, W/TH, d4).

When Henry III visited Wallingford Castle in 1226 he granted protection to the tenants and property of every kind belonging to the Hospital. He also directed that his subjects were, in effect, to be kind to lepers and to 'bestow on them their substance'; in the Pedgleys' words, 'to see that they were well fed and looked after' (Pedgley and Pedgley, 1990: 105). Land was often given. For example, John Hulberd of Wallingford gave, in 1280, to the 'lepper hospital of Marie Magdellene of Crawmersse one acre of arable in Northfield of Neweham lying next to the hospitals land' (BRO, W/TH d5). The amount of land owned by the hospital is unknown, but the farming of it must have contributed to its upkeep.

The river may have played an important part in the life of the hospital as one of the remedies used was bathing. It may be that the religious side of the treatment of lepers had some bearing here. The Old Testament (11 Kings Ch 5 vs 1-14) tells of Naaman, the leper captain of the Syrian army who was healed by bathing seven times in the Jordan. The reading of this may have influenced the treatment. The discovery of immersion tanks at the Hospital of St John in Oxford is indicative, and certainly lepers were immersed in tubs with herbs added to the water (Rawcliffe, 2006: 229). In addition, fish from the river would probably have formed part of the patients' diet.

Carole Rawcliffe suggests that leprosy started to die out after the Black Death when the reduced population was better fed and therefore had better resistance to the disease. Certainly after the 15th century it became rare. It seems likely that, as happened elsewhere, the hospital was used for victims of the plague, which was certainly rife in Mongewell, and tuberculosis, which was becoming prevalent. At the time of the Black Death Mongewell had so few people left that it was granted tax relief of one third. It is highly possible that Newnham Murren was deserted at that time, with the neighbouring parishes also being affected.

In the mid 16th century the hospital side seems to have declined and it became known as 'the free chapel or hospital'. After Henry VIII dissolved the monasteries the hospital and site were owned by a series of people: in 1557 by Edward Skinner; in 1577 by Walter Hildesley of Howberry Farm (Pedgley and Pedgley, 1990: 105); and in the 17th century by John Gregory, who also bought Howberry Farm (Oxfordshire Record Office, Misc. Str III/1). This suggests that the last owners may have used the buildings for agricultural purposes. Finally, all was demolished, and there is no record of anything surviving.

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Field Names

Pat Preece

Glossary

Assart – a piece of land taken from waste or woodland

Croft – enclosed piece of land, usually with a dwelling

Dumble – a hollow

Furlong – main division of a common field. Originally meaning the length of a furrow (furrow long), the word was applied to a block of strips that were the same length

Ground – a large area of grassland at a distance from a farm

Leys or lea – meadow or pasture

Mead – meadow

Parrock – paddock or small enclosed field

Pightle, piddle, pickle – small enclosure

Plat – small piece of land

Wick – land used for special purposes

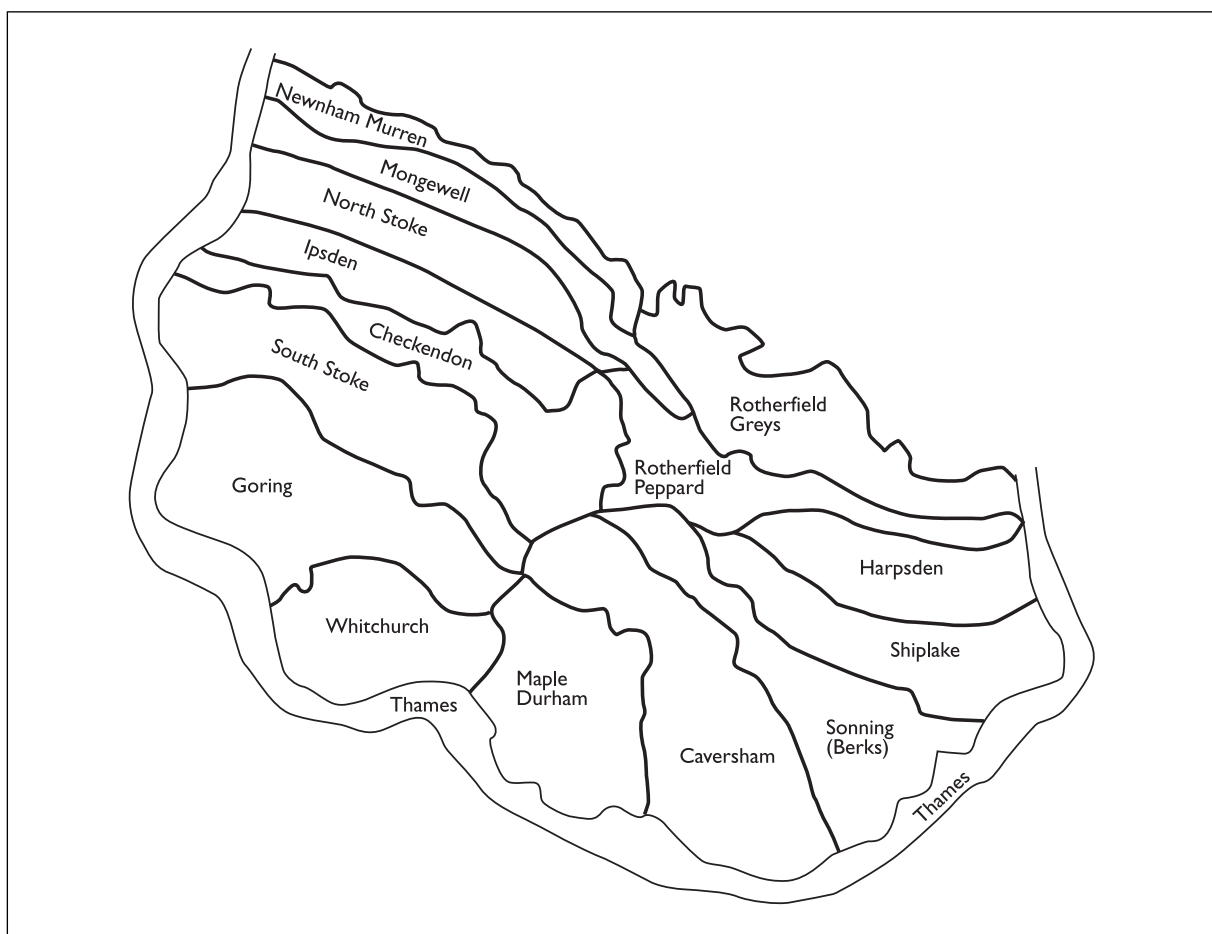
Layout of local fields

The parishes with which I am dealing are the original ones that existed mostly until the end of the 19th century. The map illustrates these before many were divided and others amalgamated.

The fields of the local parishes could be divided into three parts: the meadows by the riverside; the open fields on the dip slope; and the wooded hills, mostly with small fields. Traditionally, until the 19th century, the meadows were divided by lot. They were more valuable than other fields as the hay crop supplied food for the beasts. There were relatively few meadows and pasture land and the riverside meadows were particularly valuable as the flooding from the river brought on the grass.

The open fields are still mostly undivided, though some have been enclosed. Some parishes, for example South Stoke and Checkendon, still had the open fields divided into strips at the time of the Tithe Awards in the mid 19th century. These strips were marked by banks, stakes and possibly stones.

The 1694 Ipsden Court Rolls state that 'no person shall plough up any mere banks and land [is to be] staked out by Hallowtide next'. ('Meer' is from Old English (ge)maere, meaning 'boundary').



Sketch map showing old parishes of South Oxfordshire

The South Stoke Court Rolls record that in 1783 jurors of the court met to view the fields and set bound stones or land marks. At the edges of fields in Woodcote (then part of South Stoke parish) several large sarsens have been found, which could well have been marker stones.

On the hills above the open fields there are many smaller fields probably assarted from the woodlands, most of which were enclosed by the 14th century (Roden, 1966: 225-238). In the hilly districts two sorts of lynchets are found. One is where there was ploughing on a steep slope and the soil accumulated as the plough turned. An example of this, mentioned in the Eynsham Cartulary in 1366 (Salter, 1908: 119) for South Stoke parish, is still visible today north of Dean Farm, and marked on the Ordnance Survey map with hachures. The other type of lynchet is found as a series of terraces on steep hillsides. These are thought to be man-made and to have originated before the Black Death, when a rise in population necessitated more land to feed the increased numbers of people. Terrace lynchets can be found near Bottom Farm in Checkendon and are subject to a preservation order.

Field names

Most of the following field names are from the Tithe Awards of the various parishes and can be found in the Oxfordshire Record Office. This is probably the last time the majority were mapped. The map used for the present exercise is OS Explorer 171 at 1:25000. A division into types of field names has been attempted. No Caversham names will be found, as these have been covered in previous *SOAG Bulletins* (Preece, 1993; Kift, 1995).

Our ancestors were very knowledgeable about the countryside and noticed features that we would miss. There are many common names for fields denoting their shape or position, such as Long Ground, Little Field and Great Field. The open fields were often named North, South, East or West Field according to their position relative to the village. There are though, rarer descriptive names, some dating back to Saxon times:

Picked or Peaked. This is a field with a point. Peaked Ground (SU 675790) is in Mapledurham. It comes to a point at the north near Nuney Wood. Picked Field (610802) in Goring is pointed towards the west.

Upper and Lower Andrews Heron near Trench Green in Mapledurham presented a puzzle at first, since it is not near the river, so a reference to the bird was unlikely. In fact it means 'land in an angle or corner' from the Old English *hyrne*, a horn, corner or angle (Field, 1989). The field is triangular in shape, but the identity of Andrews is unknown to me.

Sharpleys (630803) is in Goring. In 1308 it was called 'Sharpelith' (Gambier Parry, 1932: 65), which means a sharply sloping meadow – which it is.

Round and Square Pages (690769). These names also describe the shape of the fields. In the 13th century William Page obtained, for twenty marks and a lease of one mark annually, a virgate of land in Mapledurham Chazey (Cooke, 1925: 68). There were three Page fields and they are listed in the Tithe Award as thirty-five acres. Allowing for the variation in old acres they are still roughly the original virgate.

Tickle Down (612870) is in North Stoke and still named on the modern OS map. A Terrier of 1600 lists 'Stikledowne furlong'. This gives a clue to the name which probably comes from Old English *sticol*, meaning 'steep'; which it is!

Binditch (644785) in Whitchurch is enclosed by the banks and ditches of Bozdown Iron Age camp. The name means 'inside the ditch', the 'bin' element of the name coming from Old English *binnan*, meaning 'within' (Gelling, 1971: 63).

Another characteristic noted by people of the past was the vegetation:

Applepie Pightle (670780) is in Mapledurham. 'Applepie' was a local name in parts of southern England for the Great Willowherb, *Epilobium hirsutum* (Field, 1989).

Rattle Furlong (625863) in North Stoke is first mentioned in the Marmion Papers of 1389 as 'Ratyl Furlong'. This is thought by a friend to be a reference to a form of grass called 'ratstail'.

Wimble Field (651833) is in Checkendon. A survey of 1563 which can be found in the Public Record Office (SP 12/34) describes 'Wymble feilde' as containing eight acres. The name means 'a field where dogstail grass grows' from Old English *windel-streaw*, 'some kind of coarse grass or reed'. Apparently this was common on old grasslands and often planted on hills (Field, 1989). I suppose a dog's tail was thicker than a rat's, but these are odd descriptions!

Farrington is in Mapledurham south of Trench Green. This means a 'ferny hill', probably here a reference to bracken.

There are other unusual names worth noting:

Catsbrain (623830). This name for a hill in South Stoke is thought to be a reference to the soil, which must have been out of the ordinary for it to be noted. In 1270 this six acre field is named 'Cattesbrayn' (Salter, 1907: 274). John Field describes it as 'land consisting of rough clay mixed with pebbles' (Field, 1989).

Childs Lands (620828) in Goring were, according to John Field (1989), the land of a young nobleman in Saxon times. 'Childesland' is mentioned in a 1345 agreement in Norman French between Eynsham Abbey and the tenants of Goring (Gambier Parry, 1932: 171). The three fields were tenanted by the Passelewe family of South Stoke for several centuries (Preece, 1996: 19).

Great Nutrice (616814) is in Goring. Could this be the land mentioned in 1293 (Gambier Parry, 1932) as belonging to 'Alice the Nurse' (Old French *nutrice*, 'nurse')?

Turtle Field (642875) is in Mongewell. Again this is conjecture, but as it is a high point could it be a corruption of 'toot' meaning 'a look-out point' (Old English *tot*, 'a projection')?

Pinnocks Field (680809) in Checkendon is first found in 1230 (Preece, 2006: 24). 'Pinnock' means 'sparrow'. Were there many sparrows here, or did the name come from an individual named Pinnock?

Fields can be named after owners or tenants, many such names going back many centuries. Many cannot be identified, but the following are a few that can be:

Bodys Park (675806) in Checkendon is named after a family first mentioned in 1342 (Salter, 1930: 35) and which remained in the area until the 17th century. The 'park' part of the name may be a contraction of 'parrock' or 'paddock' as there never was a park, although the lane that skirts it is known as Park Lane.

Edmunds Ground (666832) is also in Checkendon. In 1666 Thomas Emans is listed in a Rental to be found in the Oxfordshire Record Office (DD Oxon C9) as owning this land. The field is now built over, but some of the gardens appear to delineate strips. Despite the fields on the hills being relatively small, they were still often divided in this way.

Long Roxalls (617816) is named after a Medieval family of which little is known. There is a reference to 'terram Wroxale' in 1349 (Gambier Parry, 1932: 149).

Drovers Dean (627780). In a deed of 1451 William Drover is named as holding two virgates of land in an area near Bottom Farm, Mapledurham (Cooke, 1925). He apparently came from Reading and is believed to have been a barber. A curiosity of the lease was that it used the official seal of the town of Reading because, he said, his own seal 'was unknown to most people'.

Witchelows (639849) is in Ipsden. The first mention of 'Wichelo' is in 1298 when a Richard Wycchele held land in this area (Salter, 1930: 35).

These fields represent a small number of the hundreds of field names found in these few parishes.

Sadly, few of these names are used nowadays, although some farmers do show an interest in the names of their fields. The origin of many of these names show that the fields were very early, possibly Saxon. The parishes were probably Saxon estates before the arrival of the Normans. Two parishes have Saxon charters. One is Whitchurch, which is impossible to trace, and the other is Newnham Murren, which sadly has no interesting field names.

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From the SOAG archives – Gallic Empire c.268-274 coin
Obv: Victorinus or Tetricus I Rev: LAETITIA (AVG)

Discovering Ancient Woodland

Pat Preece

Woods 200 years old have been described as ancient. In that case, the majority of local woods fall into that category. In fact, most of the woods in the Oxfordshire Chilterns probably date back to at least the Medieval period. The following is a rough guide to recognising an ancient wood.

In most of the local woods it is no good looking at the trees, as most of them are beech which has been grown as timber for various purposes and felled at regular intervals. Some old coppices survive, their large stools dating back several hundred years. A 'stool' is the base of a tree that has been regularly cut for poles and stakes over a long period of time. The Elvendon valley has some old coppice, mostly hazel, with here and there an old stool of beech. These old beech stools can also be found near Nettlebed. Locally, trees are not, on the whole, a guide to the age of a wood.

The first guide may be the names of woods. A few of these definitely date from Saxon times. Bear Wood, near Witheridge Hill, has a name derived from the Old English for a small wood or woodland swine pasture (Gelling and Cole, 2000: 221). Bur Wood on the Shiplake boundary comes from the same source. Rumerhedge Wood (AD 1153 *Ruchmarehegge*) is also from Old English, in this case meaning 'rough boundary hedge' (Salter, 1948: 25-26). The commonly found name 'grove' (OE 'graf') means a small coppiced wood probably enclosed with a ditch and bank, topped possibly with a hedge.

There are many woodland names that can be traced back to Medieval times. These woods would probably have been in existence long centuries before, but got their names from their Medieval owners. Abbots Wood, given to Eynsham Abbey in 1109, (Salter, 1907: 36) is an example. Browns Wood, Neals Wood and Griggs Wood are others. A clue to this is that the name of the wood ends in 's', the possessive ending.

One guide that is universal is the bank and ditch surrounding the wood: 'the wider the older' is a good rule of thumb. Some of the banks are as much as ten feet wide, but perhaps only three feet high. If a bank is narrow and pointed the probability is that it is Victorian, though it may be replacing an older bank. It was one of the woodman's tasks to maintain the 'mounds' as they are called in some of the records. In 1650 there was a covenant to 'fence, ditch and mound in the coppices' (*Book of Evidences*). The reference to the coppices is interesting because one should also note the banks running through the woods, dividing them into separate coppices that

would have been cut in rotation. Some of these banks might also be parish boundaries, thus dating back very many centuries.

Coppices have tracks or woodways running through them along which the coppice wood was removed. Tracks that are regular, or even on a grid pattern, are found in more recent woodlands. Bellmans Covert in Checkendon is an example. The ways here look as though drawn with a ruler, and the first mention of 'Bailmans underwood' is in the 18th century. Before then it appears it was arable. The old woods have irregular networks of tracks that have developed over long periods. A typical series of tracks is to be found in the woods around Haw Farm in Goring. These woods were certainly coppices in the Medieval period. The Ordnance Survey First Series 6 inch maps are better guides than later ones, since unfortunately many of the tracks have been lost.

Another guide is the vegetation underfoot in the woods. Bluebells and dogs mercury in profusion are common ancient woodland indicators, as are wood anemones, wood spurge, wood sorrel and yellow archangel. These are to be found where sufficient sunlight has penetrated the beech woods. If you stray into wetter woods, as are found in Berkshire, ancient woodland indicators may be wild daffodils and the early dog violet, *Viola reichenbachiana*. When I was a girl in Beenham there were wild daffodils in a coppice near the church.

As you walk through the woods, notice all these indicators of age – and also the springiness underfoot. The more spongy, the more centuries' worth of accumulated leaf-mould. Enjoy your woods; we are very lucky to have them still.

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From the SOAG archives – AD 330-335 coin
Obv: Constantine I Rev: GLORIA EXERCTIVS Two standards

Pi, Chips and a Beaker of Ale: More Musings of an Armchair Archaeologist

John White

As a scientist, one of the attractions that I find in archaeology is that since many of the conclusions that have been published are not proofs, it is possible for me to develop my own theories by re-examining all the information. The disadvantage is that the established theory is generally taken as law, and so my sanity in challenging it tends to be questioned! I often wonder if the Piltdown Man was the revenge for some person's rejected idea. Personally I am just pleased when as an amateur, with the time and lack of pressure that that allows, I think I have reached a better conclusion than the professionals have done. My criterion for a theory is that it should fit what is known and should be simple.

As a local Goring example there is the first Roman structure to be excavated at Gatehampton. It was identified as a grain dryer because both a heating system and the remains of grain were found. However, after considering farming techniques and grain drying, I am happier with an alternative theory. Grain drying only became necessary with the advent of modern mechanized farming. Before then crops were harvested by hand and the stooks were set up in the fields to dry. It was only after the crops had dried that the grain could be easily separated and the chaff winnowed away. It is therefore unlikely that in Roman times there would either have been wet grain to dry, or that it would be economic to have dedicated stone-built grain dryers for the rare wet year when they might be needed.

Descriptions of rural life reveal that beer was the main drink, used because it avoided the health problems of drinking polluted water. Beer has a long history: it was brewed back in prehistoric times. According to one theory it was beer that was the offering in the beakers in the grave goods that gave the Beaker People their name. If true this would give brewing a good claim to the title of 'the oldest profession'!

To make beer the grain has to be malted, a germination process requiring moisture and warmth. So logically the structure at Gatehampton is more likely to be a malt-house than a grain dryer. Indeed, similar subsequent Roman discoveries in the Wallingford area have been identified as being malt-houses. However, I do not think even that is the

whole answer. I visited Morrells Brewery in Oxford and Brakspears in Henley before they were closed down. The keys to their processes were a good supply of water and a building providing a constant warm temperature for the fermentation process. Beer, especially when in open vessels, does not stay drinkable for any length of time, so the batch process to make it would have to be continuously repeated. And that I believe finally answers the question of the use of the Gatehampton building – not a grain dryer, not just a malt-house, but a brewery, continuously in use to satisfy the thirsts of the villa's inhabitants, and probably built separate from the villa because of the process odours.

This conclusion about the use of the building is simply a theory, but also I think logically the correct one. It is certainly not a fact. Only for a few structures, such as public baths, can their use be considered a fact without any contemporary documentary evidence. The only fact in this case is the discovery at Gatehampton of Roman masonry with a heating system and the remains of grain.

When examining popular theories the first thing to check is that the logic used is not faulty. For example, folklore had it that thunderstorms cause milk to go sour. However, this is a *non sequitur*. The truth is that warm humid weather conditions are the real cause of both thunderstorms and sour milk. Similarly, there were reports in the late 1940s that the birth rate in Belgium had increased due to the greater number of storks nesting and the increased height of the hemline above the ground. Both are delightful theories, but wrong. The truth is that the end of World War II had brought peace and better prosperity, and these were the real cause of all three observations.

There is evidence that some developments in mathematics were Arab inventions. Algorithm and algebra stem from Arabic words, and x, the symbol for an unknown, is derived from 'shay', the Arabic for 'thing', via transliteration to the Spanish 'xay'. However, I do not believe the theory that the zero in mathematics was an Arab invention, even though its use started to spread through Europe from the Middle East at the end of the first millennium AD. In my view this is another interesting problem for an 'armchair archaeologist'.

Numbering systems provide an interesting indicator of the development of cultures. Some primitive tribes had only three words for numbers in their language, translating as 'one', 'two' and 'many', which were sufficient for a hunter-gatherer lifestyle. More advanced cultures had more elaborate numbering systems. Some peoples used a base of five and some a base of 20, depending on whether they were counting on the fingers of one hand or on the digits of both hands and feet. The Maya used the base

of 20, from which one might conclude that originally they did not wear shoes. However, both the Celts and the Danes also used a vigesimal system which has left traces in the English 'score' and the French 'quatre-vingts'. In some parts of the Middle East, for example Babylon, 60 was used as the base, which was carried through into money and weight systems, there being 60 *mina* to 1 *talent*. Most, however, used a base of 10, the total digits of both hands, and both the Romans and Greeks used this system.

Spoken languages developed before any written form, so words for the numbers predate any symbols for them. In some early Greek texts numbers were written out in full as words. This was a lengthy procedure so when in the Middle East it was necessary to keep accounts this was done by inscribing pictograms on clay tablets. To indicate multiple objects, for example two cows, two pictograms representing a cow would be shown.

As civilization developed so did the systems of numeration. The Egyptians used a decimal system with six symbols: for a unit, 10, 100, 1000, 10,000 and 100,000. Numbers were then expressed by use of groups of these symbols repeated as necessary. There was also a seventh symbol used to denote fractions. The Babylonians had a similar decimal system of numbers, but only with symbols up to that for 1000. As mentioned above they also had a second system based on powers of 60 which allowed very large numbers to be expressed.

The Ancient Greeks also had two main systems of numbers. The first, known as the Attic system, was only used for cardinal numbers. Numbers up to 50,000 were expressed using combinations of signs which were the first letters of the words for the numbers five, 10, 100, 1000 and 10,000 as well as one for a single unit. A similar first letter system of symbols was also used for coinage and weight. The system was also used in other parts of Greece outside Attica, the precise form of the symbols used depending on those in the local alphabet.

The first 'modern' alphabet was devised by the Phoenicians around about 1000 BC. This had 22 letters and like today's English alphabet was soon established as having an accepted fixed order. The letters became associated with the number of their position in the alphabet, just as today when paragraphs are often labelled a, b, c, d... instead of 1, 2, 3, 4... The difference was that in the Phoenician system after the symbol used for 10 the next was for 20 then 30, 40, 50 up to 90, and then for the hundreds 100, 200... until all symbols had been used. Multiple symbols were used in combination: for example, 134 would be shown by the symbols for 4, 30 and 100 in a group. A similar system was used by the Hebrews.

The Ancient Greeks recognised the drawbacks of this system and corrected them in their second system of numbers. They added various old forms of letters, which were later to disappear from the literary alphabet, to give a total of 27 letters. These were divided into three sets of nine to represent the units 1 to 9, the tens 10 to 90 and the hundreds 100 to 900. Then by adding a distinguishing mark such as a sloping stroke before the letter they went through the alphabet again for numbers 1000 upwards. The date of the introduction of this system is uncertain. It appears to be in use in 450 BC but there is some evidence that it even dates back to the 8th century BC.

The Greeks had variations of their systems so that they could express very large numbers. The English word 'myriad' comes from the Greek *myrias* meaning 'countless'. The Greek plural *myrioi* was used for the number 10,000 or the 'first myriad'. Myriads could be used in a multiplicative fashion, with the 'second myriad' being 100,000,000. Archimedes in his work *Sand-reckoner* takes this as the basic unit to develop a system for even larger numbers. The fact that he is known to have developed his own system of numbers means that other systems were being used by Greek mathematicians.

While much has been learned from the study of surviving texts I think experimental work can also give a lot of information. When a Roman boat was excavated recently a number of tools were found. The archaeologists who found the tools could not identify them, but modern carpenters had no difficulty in saying what each would have been used for. In the same way I think the 'tools' used by Ancient Greek mathematicians can be identified by modern scientists.

In today's world where there are (silicon) chips with everything it might be thought that things are very different from in Classical times. Actually there has not been any great change. Computers do multiplication by repeated addition, and division by repeated subtraction. When I started work in industry I used an electrical calculator in which the same principles were used, although it worked through gears and cogwheels, making a noise which justified the description 'number-cruncher'. In Classical times calculations were also done by repeated addition or subtraction, using the equipment indicated by the term 'calculation'. In Latin *calculus* means 'pebble' and sums were done by adding or removing sets of pebbles representing the numbers.

In Ancient Greece a simple calculation such as adding four to six could have been done by taking four pebbles from one pot and adding them to the pot which contained the six pebbles. The rules

dictate that when the number of pebbles in a pot exceed nine then 10 pebbles are removed and one is added to the pot representing the next power of 10. In this example the answer would be recorded translated into the 'alphabetic' symbol for 10, so there would be no trace of the empty 'units' pot.

While Greek mathematicians could do smaller sums by mental arithmetic or using tables, they also worked on much larger calculations using much larger numbers, for example calculating the circumference of the world, in which they achieved an amazingly accurate result. To do this, the 'alphabetic' numbers would be 'decoded' into pebbles in pots representing 1000s, 100s, tens and units for the operands and then re-coded into the 'alphabetic' form after the calculation had been done. Working in this way the mathematician would use empty pots as a zero in a power of ten, but normally this would never be seen in the answer.

In mathematics there are two types of zero: one real and one imaginary. The real zero is a number, being for instance the number of apples left when they have all been eaten. This zero was well known in the ancient world, the Romans using the words *nihil* or *nil* for it. The Romans also had a word for 'nobody' and their mythology describes the chaos that could be caused when a man called himself 'Nobody'.

The imaginary zero is the one used in the number system used now, and only arises because of the way we choose to represent the numbers. For example, for the number 2008 the zeros are just position indicators so that the figure 2 is recognised as meaning 2000. In the Old World this type of numeration was used in India before about AD 750. This system then spread through the Middle East to Europe, bringing with it new sets of symbols for the numbers one to nine, and also a little confusion as there were local differences in the meanings given to the symbols. Thus '8' represents the number four in Bengali and '7' represents the number six in Arabic symbols.

My theory is that the Greek mathematician would do his calculations with pebbles in rows of pots as his working numbers. For example, to represent 2008 he could have eight pebbles in the right-hand pot, nothing in the next two pots and then two pebbles in the fourth pot. He is therefore working with zeros but probably would never actually record them. This would be the case unless the problem was so large that it had to be done in parts, or unless his calculations were interrupted, for example by the Romans invading or by his wife telling him to clear his toys away because the Euclids were coming round for pi and chips.

The simplest way for the mathematician to record where he had reached in his calculation would be to

draw, on a wax tablet, rows of circles to represent the pots, and to write the letters for one to nine to show the numbers of pebbles in each. Zeros, or empty pots, would just be shown as a circle. For pots with pebbles in them it would not be necessary to show the circle as well as the number symbol, so the complete number could be written in a format similar to that used today, with a circle representing each zero. This process would leave no archaeological traces: it is just the complexity of the calculations done that convinces me that the Greek mathematicians worked with zeros hundreds of years before they were 'officially invented'. There were Greek cities, such as Alexandria, throughout the Middle East where scientists and mathematicians worked, so I believe the probability is high that the use of zero by Arab mathematicians came to them from the Greeks.

However, the first use of zero for position marking may not have been in the Old World at all. Janet Sharpe, in her talks on South America before Columbus, has described the use in Peru of *quipus*, knots on strings, to indicate numbers, with sections without knots to show zero. These have been reliably dated to the start of the Wari empire around AD 500, but I understand from Janet that recent excavations at Caral have yielded examples of *quipu* strings at a site that has been carbon dated to c.2700-2100 BC. These earlier *quipus* have not yet been deciphered, but could be the oldest use found of the zero as part of a number.

The most interesting system of numerals is, I think, the Roman one, which is still in use after more than 2500 years. For some purposes, such as for calculations, the system is not very good, but for others, such as recording dates, it is excellent. For dates on buildings the curly modern symbols, such as 0, 3, 6, 8 and 9 are so similar that when they become worn they can be easily confused. The Roman ones, V, X, L, C, D and M are each so different that they remain decipherable. Following this tradition on buildings Roman numerals are also used with the very latest technology, for example to show copyright dates on DVDs. They are even used on some coins, including one British 2008 commemorative issue.

Most items which are in use for long periods of time get modified, and Roman numerals are no exception. The most obvious change was the introduction of the subtractive convention which was done to make the numerals more efficient in use. Initially for number systems which just used additive groups of symbols, the order in which they were listed would not make any difference to the number represented. Then when the convention developed of writing first the symbols for the largest number units, for example C before X, it would be realised that the sign XC could be used to represent the

number X less than C, that is 90. The most visible of this, being seen now on clockfaces, is the use of IV for four in place of the original IIII. This, however, was not 'Classical' at all, only being introduced in Medieval times.

The Romans, being practical people, did not generally make much use of fractions, as half a slave or half a horse was of no use to them. Money was a different matter, and many coins were named by their relationship to others. The most spectacular example of this is the *sestertius*, which was a quarter of a *denarius*. A *denarius* was valued at 10 *asses* (not the animal but from the coin *as*, the Latin for copper or bronze). A quarter of a *denarius* was therefore two and a half *asses*, but the Romans abbreviated this to half a third (*as*) or *sesterce*. Another notable use of abbreviations is in the Roman measure of distance. A mile was a 1000 (of) paces or *mille passuum*, for which the abbreviation used was not as in the English fashion *mille* but *passuum*.

In spite of its 'compound' nature, being valued at two and a half *asses*, the *sesterce* was the standard unit of Roman currency. The probable reason for this is that it was the lowest value silver coin in normal use. Variations of the name were used for larger sums. The basic masculine noun, *sestertius*, with a cardinal number was used for amounts up to 2000 *sesterces*. For larger sums the neuter plural noun, *sestertia*, with distributive numerals, was used to mean a 1000 *sesterces*, and for even larger fortunes the genitive plural of the neuter noun, *sestertium*, was used with adverbial numbers to mean a 100,000 *sesterces*.

This Roman system is very similar to the first Greek system, with letters used for the symbol. However, while the origin of the Greek letters is known: they are the first letter of the word used for the number (examples are *pi* for *pente*, 'five', and *delta* for *deka*, '10'), many of the letters used in the Roman system are a mystery. A note in the *Oxford English Dictionary* says that D may be a truncated form to represent half of an ancient symbol for 1000, but other than that the symbol L was not derived from a letter, its origin is unknown.

This is where I claim a success for this armchair archaeologist. In fact once the answer is seen it becomes almost impossible to believe that it has not been seen before. I think it would certainly make a good subject for a primary school lesson. In my view, the Greeks had a civilisation but the Romans had an empire. To the Greeks all foreigners were barbarians. That was the name the Greeks gave them because they thought the foreign languages were just a continuous 'bar-bar-bar-bar...'. The Romans, however, with their empire,

had to deal with foreigners, people whose language they could not speak. The obvious way to do this, which is still used by today's package tourists, is to use hand signals.

The clues are there. The Latin word *digitus*, 'finger', was also used to mean a single number symbol, and the Latin word *manus*, 'hand' was also used for a complete number. A little experimentation will show how it can be done. Simply using the digits on the hands only gives one to 10, which does not get one very far. However, with the addition of a simple convention, all numbers below 100 can easily be signalled. This convention is that the right hand is used for units and the left hand for 10s, both hands being used up to twice if necessary. If the hands are palms down, then pictograms representing what the signaller sees lead directly to the letters used in Roman numerals.

A practical trial will show how this works. Start by holding both hands in front with palms down and fists closed. Numbers one to four are then represented by extending the fingers of the right hand, as Roman numbers I to IIII. For five the right hand thumb is also extended. The shape seen from the right thumb and index finger is a V. For numbers above five the fist is closed again and the additional numbers of fingers shown. For 10 the sign would be the thumb and finger extended twice. To write this clearly, one 'V' could be rotated through 180 degrees. To speed up writing, the vertices can be made to coincide – giving the letter X. According to the postulated convention, 10s would be signalled by the fingers of the left hand. For 50 all left fingers and the thumb would be extended. The shape seen formed by the left thumb and index finger is then an L, a symbol of unknown origin according to the OED.

For numbers of 100 and above it would be reasonable to assume that trading in such quantities would demand language, so the derivation of the symbols could be the first letter of the words, the same method as used for the Greek numeration but using the Latin words. For 100 and 1000 this would give C from *centum* and M from *mille*. For 500 there is no need to postulate carving up an old symbol because the Latin for 'a half of 1000' is *dimidium mille*, for which the first letter, *mirabile dictu*, is D.

And that in just two paragraphs explains the origins of Roman numerals. Of course I cannot prove its correctness, but it fits all what I know of the system, and it is simple.

And now for another beaker of ale...

From the Archives: the 'Roman Well' near Ipsden

Janet Sharpe

After the foundation of SOAG on 22 May 1969, members wasted little time before embarking on their first excavation at a purported Roman well between Ipsden and Stoke Row (SU 6527 8499). This well, also known as St Berin's Well, was first visited by SOAG on the evening of **11 July 1969** under the guidance of Dr C. Slade. Cyn's logbook for this date reports: "We then drove to St Berin's Well and met Mr and Mrs Noel Baker, who kindly conducted us to the Well. This is halfway down a wooded slope, is 110 feet [33.5m] deep and has been pronounced to be Roman, and [is] a dry well. In 1861 a demented woman threw her child down, she was retrieved unhurt, and the well had had bricks built half over the top. It is in an excellent state. We all looked down with a torch and Dr Slade suggested excavating a little at one side."

19 July 1969: "Six members went on an expedition to the Well. Mr and Mrs Sheridan had already excavated a trench at an angle of 270 degrees and another at 30 degrees approx., and we continued work on these and exposed all the rim of the well. A hurricane lamp was let down for 92 feet [28m] (we then came to the end of the string but not the bottom of the well) and the light did not flicker. We noticed the walls seemed to be cut out of solid ground and [were] only flint-lined near the top."

27 August 1969: "Seven members, with Dr and Mrs Slade, made a further expedition to the Well, and let down Tweedledum (hurricane lamp) to the bottom. This showed a depth of 110 feet [33.5m] approx. Within a foot or two of the bottom the light was abruptly extinguished... Dr Slade gave an impromptu and most welcome lecture on how to conduct a dig... We are most grateful for this and hope to act on it soon. He said it was a difficult site and worth doing. We showed him a few bits of medieval tiles found near."

Side-tracked by visiting digs at Burghfield and Maidenhead, and by looking for a Roman road at Nuffield Church, SOAG next returned to the well on

4 October 1969: "Five members visited the Well site and measured out the first box [trench]. Notes were made and we dug the first layer. This produced a possible wall, a heap of tumble and a large Bone, around [which], but not necessarily associated with, were shards of pottery of various ages. The site is difficult being on the slope. Mr Baker regaled us with a great deal of information during lunch, which showed the well had been explored by Mr E. Reade about 100 years ago, and he noticed niches in the wall (for candles or tools?), and the legend of the child was confirmed as more than legend."

13 October 1969: "Three members visited the Well and dug an extension to the previous box. More flint was exposed and a number of small bones and pieces of pottery found."

On **21 October 1969:** "Three members including Dr Slade ... visited the well to inspect the new box and discuss it. Dr Slade said most of the pottery found was medieval and was pleased with our progress."

According to the logbook entry for **3 April 1970**, bad weather appears to have hampered progress during the winter of 1969-70 although Gunny Sheridan had been making enquiries about "the tessellated pavement said to exist by the Well" and "A further box has been dug at the Well".

The next recorded visit was on **26 April 1970:** "Ten members and their children and friends attended a dig at the Well and continued in Box 2. We were delighted to welcome two new members... Luckily the rain held off and we were able to clear the box, finding a tooth (boar?), three shards and ... a whole lot of bones, apparently dog... Dr Slade and his wife and two visitors arrived just as we were packing up so we showed them the site and Dr Slade complimented us on its improvement. He thought the pottery medieval and said to continue, lowering the floor and keeping records of the layers."

During the summer of 1970, SOAG members were investigating a possible badger pit or folly in the grounds of Hardwick House but work at the well continued. On **10 May 1970:** "Six members and two visitors continued the dig at the Well in Box 2, and we extracted many more bones and some pottery. A small trench 4 feet [1.2m] wide was dug from one side to the wellhead to try and discover any change in strata; some pottery was found and, curiously, a large round stone. The work is hard and heavy as there are many flints in the clayey soil."

27 May 1970: "Two members went to the Well and continued the trench in Box 2. It is now almost one foot [0.3m] deep and an odd stone and a piece of mortar were found [at] the well end, and also another piece of pottery."

And on **19 July 1970:** "Six members, five visitors and two experts with equipment ['pot-holers'] visited the Well. We continued digging in the main Box ... Cynthia found some more bones in the Dog's Corner ... Simon and Harry [Jones] had a private box a little way off where they had found a few bits of pottery before and cleared a four foot [1.2m] box and found a large assortment of medieval and more modern pottery, bones, bits of metal including a donkey's (?) shoe and a lid with a figure on it. Harry made use of his newly-made metal detector which worked well. Mr Jim Hamwood and his safety officer let a powerful torch down the well and we all looked with binoculars. There is a collection of flint, bricks and a few pieces of wood. They seem solid and would account for the story of the well being 'filled in'. We noticed and examined by the light various niches on the way, they could have held planks for working.

The well is about 114 feet [34.7m] deep (a stone took three seconds). The tackle-experts are quite prepared to descend if Mr Baker will let them; they also tried a grapnel and found the well sides very hard, and of chalk. This is a great step forward and thanks are due to Felicity Hannaford for her help in obtaining the experts, who have given their services free to the Group. The flint top of the old well could be clearly seen."

Exploration of a moat at Lilley Farm, Mapledurham, then attracted SOAG's attention and only one more visit was paid to the well that year, on **16 August 1970**: "Six members and a visitor did some more excavation at the Well. The trench was deepened about 4 inches [10.2cm] for a foot [0.3m] at one end as Harry's detector seemed to signify a change in tone there; the far corner was continued, no finds, and an assortment of oddments, bones, china etc, nothing very old, was found at Harry's square further out. A few pieces of pottery various were in the Well trench, also two large flints which had been fired and a sort of brick-like piece. The old road and the flat platform were examined and as we seemed at a stop we left and went in search of the Reade Memorial..."

The next visit to the well was made on **17 April 1971**: "Seven members drove to the Well and made a thorough inspection of the site. We walked it right round to show Clive [Hart], who with Gunny is directing the site, and other members who had not seen it before, the various terraces and old roads. A few oddments of tile, etc were found and the well looked into...[Gunny] produced most welcome tea and biscuits, and the pottery and bones from the Well, and Clive took charge of [this material] to record and identify it."

On **16 May 1971**: "Thirteen members (including two visitors) met at the Well and dug in Box 1. More bones of the 'dog' were found and several pieces of medieval pottery on top of the layer of yellow clay. It was noted the corner where the bones were has a disturbed layer of loam, chalk and flint. The small box under the elder was also dug and a variety of bones, china and glass and eggshell (!) was found. The well-side of the box was levelled down to clay."

31 May 1971: "Three members explored around the Well, noting earthworks, the hollow-way, etc. The excavations were tidied up ready for section drawing and photographing. A little digging was done and some medieval sherds found... Upon viewing the hill across from the Well, it was noticed that terraces or lynchets were visible as the sun was at just the right angle."

5 June 1971: "Five members...went to the Well. Clive made a section drawing of the side of Box 1, and we all dug at a small box (2) in the opposite corner. Here about six or seven sherds of pottery were found, including one 2nd-century Roman sherd decorated with combing. The hole by the well was filled in and Bill [Fowler] said the well had a flint top years ago."

27 June 1971: "Five members filled in Box 2 at the Well and tidied it up, leaving the section side of Box 1 exposed. We also started a new box in line with Box 1 and this was trowelled down to the second layer. We looked at the lynchets and other marks on the surrounding fields and considered a box on the platform area."

18 July 1971: "Seven members continued the dig at the Well, trowelling out the new box, but no finds as yet – except flints!"

6 November 1971: "...Clive went on to the Well and found Gunny and about ten friends filling in Trench 2 and opening a new one on the platform."

28 November 1971: "An attempt was made to continue at the Well but it was so muddy that it was decided to fill in the trench and close up for the winter."

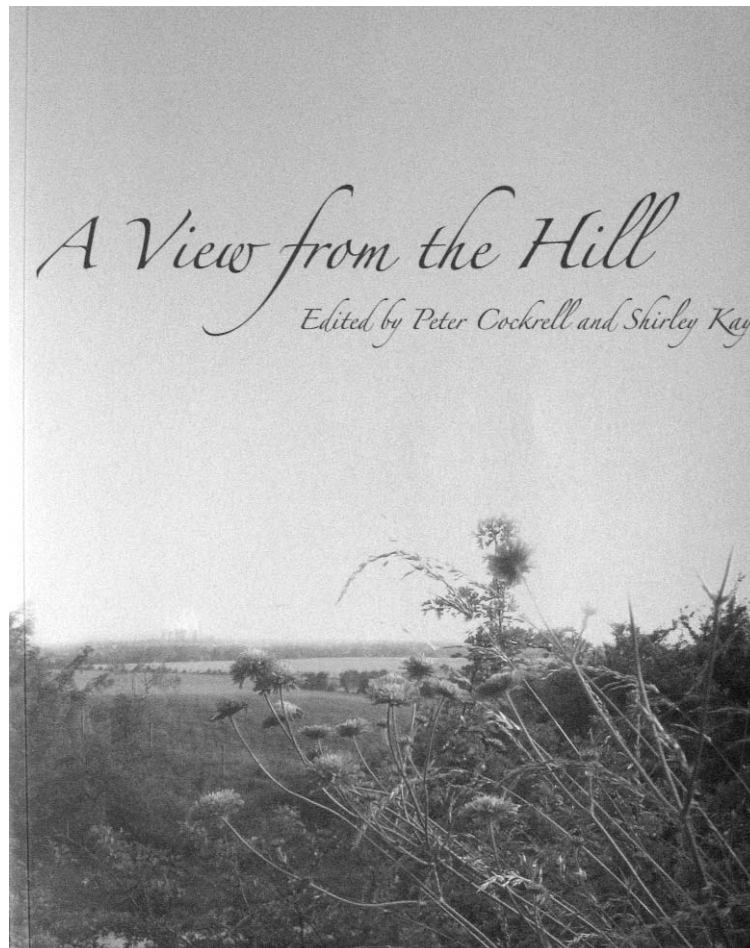
In fact, the site now appears to have been closed up for good, as no further records are found in Cyn's logbook.

What exactly did SOAG find at this site? It is listed as a 'Medieval Well' in the Oxfordshire Historic Environment Record (PRN 1012), where it is described as follows: "The brick bee-hive shaped cover of this well has collapsed revealing a narrow shaft, the top few feet of which are steened with flint. The well is doubtfully Roman and probably served two half-timbered cottages close by. Collection of medieval pottery and Roman tile found". So we still don't know for sure! Anyone who is interested in following-up this mystery is welcome to consult the site notes and drawings, which are housed in the SOAG Archives, ref. 4.5.



From the SOAG archives –
AD 330-348 coin
Obv: VRBS ROMA
Rev: Wolf & twins

Book Review



A View from the Hill

Edited by Peter Cockrell and Shirley Kay

A Blewbury Village Society Publication by the Local Environment Group

Published by the Blewbury Village Society, 2006
151 pp., £12.99

A View from the Hill

Blewburton Hill is set in the north-eastern corner of the North Wessex Downs and overlooks the Thames Valley floodplain, and is set on the same level as Brightwell Barrow and Wittenham Clumps. *A View from the Hill* has been written by the Blewbury Village Society's Environment Group to emphasise and raise funds for the preservation of the countryside from Blewburton Hill in the north to Lowbury Hill in the south, and between Churn Knob in the west and Kingstanding Hill in the east.

The first half of the book is written by different members of the Society to show the environment and general make-up of the area. The geology of the area shows that Blewburton Hill is made up of Lower Chalk overlying Greensand, thus, although most rainfall will evaporate, enough infiltrates the chalk to feed springs from the Astons to Blewbury. The availability of this water has made the area ideal for growing crops and grass. The Hill itself was defended by several banks and ditches as a barrier to marauding bands in ancient times.

The rich grassland around the Hill makes it ideal for plants, including orchids, and wildlife. Birds of prey are common, as are skylarks and corn buntings. Thirty-eight species of butterflies have been recorded. The position of the Hill may relate to two important ancient trackways in the vicinity, the Ridgeway and the Icknield Way, which have along their routes sites from Neolithic, Bronze Age and Roman times, perhaps with some connection to the White Horse at Uffington and Wayland's Smithy. The chalk-cut White Horse is the only one in the country to date from the Late Bronze Age.

Flint nodules were used to make up the majority of the stonework in the four churches in the area. The 11th-century church of St Michael's, Blewbury, is the oldest and shows that not until the end of the 14th century was stone, called Headington Hard, quarried to reinforce areas around windows and doors. By the 18th century, when supplies of this stone were running out, other stone was transported from Bath by the new cross-country canal system to carry on the building work in the area. The importance of horses for transport is shown by the large number of horseshoes found.

The second half of the book is devoted more to the history and archaeology of the area. Standing archaeology around Blewbury is limited, owing to the use of the plough over many centuries. This is shown at Lowbury Hill, for example, where only a

surrounding earth bank remains of an important Roman temple site. Digs from 1844 to 1914 have unearthed many finds for the Reading Museum, for the most part coins, jewellery and oyster shells.

It seems that in Mesolithic times the area around Blewbury was covered by a forest of pine and birch, and the hunter-gatherers found food from deer, wild pigs and aurochs. As the Neolithic age passed towards the Bronze Age, the new availability of metal allowed tree clearance to increase and more crops to be grown, but not until around 750 BC did this gain any significance when iron tools began to be made. This bringing of new land into production seems to have caused the clearance of the inhabitants of Blewburton Hill, so the Romans had no defences to overcome when they entered the area. Indeed, for the sake of spring water, it appears that they too lived down in the lowlands. It does seem that the move south by the Catuvellaunians to include Blewburton Hill within their territory was put to an end by their defeat by the Romans, and the area once again continued under the rule of the Atrebates. It appears that the Romans were very active in the Blewbury area, with the temple at Lowbury Hill; an important fort at Dorchester; and settlements at Aston Tirrold, Brightwell-cum-Sotwell and elsewhere.

After the departure of the Romans came the Dark Ages, leaving the countryside with smaller farms and no villages or churches. There was a complete loss of Roman infrastructure in terms of trade, taxation and a judicial system. The country was ripe for takeover and the early Saxons soon made their mark around Abingdon, Blewbury and Dorchester with Germanic-style cemeteries and settlements. This can be shown by the use of the decaying Blewburton Hill fort burial ground and others at Didcot, Berinsfield and Long Wittenham. A man of some importance to the Saxons was buried on Lowbury Hill.

Although the end of the Roman period in the region meant less demand for agricultural products, apparently there was little disruption in rural life and farmers may even have increased production of cattle and sheep.

The visit of St Birinus to this country in AD 634 to convert people to Christian life was very important to this area. After a meeting with the King of Wessex, Cynegils, at Churn Knob, the King consented to baptism in the Thames near Dorchester. As a thanks offering, Cynegils gave Birinus a parcel of land at Dorchester, on which he built his cathedral, now Dorchester Abbey. On his death in AD 649, Birinus was laid to rest in Winchester Cathedral.

The Battle of Ashdown in 871 was reputedly fought south of Lowbury Hill, and was fought between Saxons (led by Alfred) and the Danes. Alfred did not take the upper hand in this battle until King Ethelred arrived, and his lateness was apparently due to his taking mass in the Church of All Saints at Aston Upthorpe. After the battle, the Danes ran away and were slain in their thousands in Deans Bottom (or should it be Danes Bottom?) to the east of Lowbury Hill.

The coming of William following the Battle of Hastings in 1066 coincided with misery for the population in terms of disease, crop failure and bad weather, exacerbated by William's aim to tax the conquered nation heavily to fund his other exploits. This tax was to be increased still further in 1085 by compilation of the Domesday Book. Basically, William wanted to know all the holdings of land held by his nobles, and all the changes that were made following the conquest. This was done by dividing England into shires, and shires into hundreds, hence

the Blewbury Hundred. All land belonged to the King, but tenures to Normans or Englishmen could be redeemed by a fixed quota of knights. The people beneath the aristocracy, the working population, consisted of villeins, cottars and slaves. Coinage was based on the penny, a silver coin that could be cut into smaller pieces.

In the last 1000 years, Blewburton Hill has only been used to grow crops and feed animals, and life in Blewbury and the neighbouring villages continued relatively unchanged until the early 20th century.

This book is profusely illustrated in colour with photographs, old maps and drawings. The 26 short chapters are all written by local experts, including three by Paul Smith and one by Tim Allen. The book is a delightful read, both for the naturalist and the historian, whether local or national, and I would thoroughly encourage everyone to buy a copy.

Phil Carter

NOTES FOR CONTRIBUTORS

Contributions are invited for the next issue of the *SOAG Bulletin*. Articles should preferably describe original field or documentary research undertaken by the author and priority will be given to items relevant to South Oxfordshire. Short reports of SOAG visits and other meetings and conferences, book reviews and correspondence are also invited.

Authors are reminded that copies of the *SOAG Bulletin* are sent to the six legal deposit libraries in the United Kingdom, to local libraries, Oxford Archaeology, the Institute of Archaeology (Oxford) and the Oxfordshire Museums Service. The reputation of SOAG therefore rests largely on the quality of the *SOAG Bulletin*.

In order to ease the burden on the editorial and production team, it would be appreciated if potential authors would also bear the following points in mind:

- Articles are accepted at the discretion of the Editor, who reserves the right to edit material prior to publication.
- Contributions should ideally be between 500 and 2000 words in length. With the agreement of the author, shorter articles may be published in the *SOAG Messenger*. Longer items will be accepted depending on the availability of space.
- Articles should not have been previously published elsewhere.
- Articles should be submitted in Microsoft Word format, preferably by email. However, cleanly typed and/or clearly handwritten articles will be accepted. When sending copy by email, please ensure that you include 'SOAG Bulletin' in the email title and include a few lines of text in the message: unidentified attachments will not be opened.
- Please be as concise as possible, omit non-relevant material and avoid needless repetition.
- Illustrations are welcomed, if appropriate. Drawings and photographs are also invited for consideration for the front cover. Maps, drawings and photographs may be submitted in paper or electronic format as separate attachments. Photographs and original artwork will be returned to authors after publication if requested.
- The text should be single-spaced; the title and author name(s) should be centred in bold; main headings should be placed left in bold; subheadings should be placed left in bold italics. Numbered figure captions should be provided and placed in the text to indicate the approximate position of illustrations.

- Metric units must be used where feasible. When imperial measurements are used, as in documentary studies, the metric equivalents should be added in square brackets if appropriate. For measurements, do not insert a space between the number and the dimension, e.g. 5.3m.
- Pounds, shillings and pence need not be converted into pounds and new pence.
- Numbers in the text (unless given as actual units of measurement) should be spelt out as words up to and including ten and given in numerals if more than ten.
- For references, see examples below. The author's principles will be followed when items do not lend themselves to this system, subject to discussion.

e.g. Articles from journals and magazines:

Margary, I. D. (1943) Roman roads with small side ditches. *Antiquaries Journal*, 23: 7-8.

e.g. Books:

Henig, M. and Booth, P. (2000) *Roman Oxfordshire*. Stroud: Sutton.

e.g. Chapters from edited books:

Karali, L. (1996) Marine invertebrates and Minoan art. In: Reese, D. S. (ed.) *Pleistocene and Holocene fauna of Crete*. Wisconsin: Prehistory Press. pp.413-419.

- The use of footnotes is discouraged.

Please send all contributions to the SOAG Editor Susan Sandford (postal address inside front cover; email address: susansandford@mac.com) before 28 February for publication in that year.



Patron: Prof. Malcolm Airs

SOAG was established in 1969 and now has over 150 members. The aims of the Group are to promote an active interest in archaeology and its allied disciplines, particularly in South Oxfordshire. It works in close cooperation with the County Archaeologist and Oxford Archaeology, is a member of the Council for Independent Archaeology and is affiliated to the Council for British Archaeology South Midlands Group.

- Monthly meetings are held from September to April when lectures by professional speakers and members are given in an informal atmosphere
- There are opportunities for members to take part in excavations, fieldwalking, surveys and post-excavation work. Visits are made to places of interest in the summer – sometimes to sites not open to the public
- Members receive the annual *SOAG Bulletin*, which contains reports of the Group's activities and original articles focused on South Oxfordshire, and the monthly *SOAG Messenger*, which carries details of forthcoming events and brief news items
- Experts and complete beginners of all ages are warmly welcomed as new members

Contact Details

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