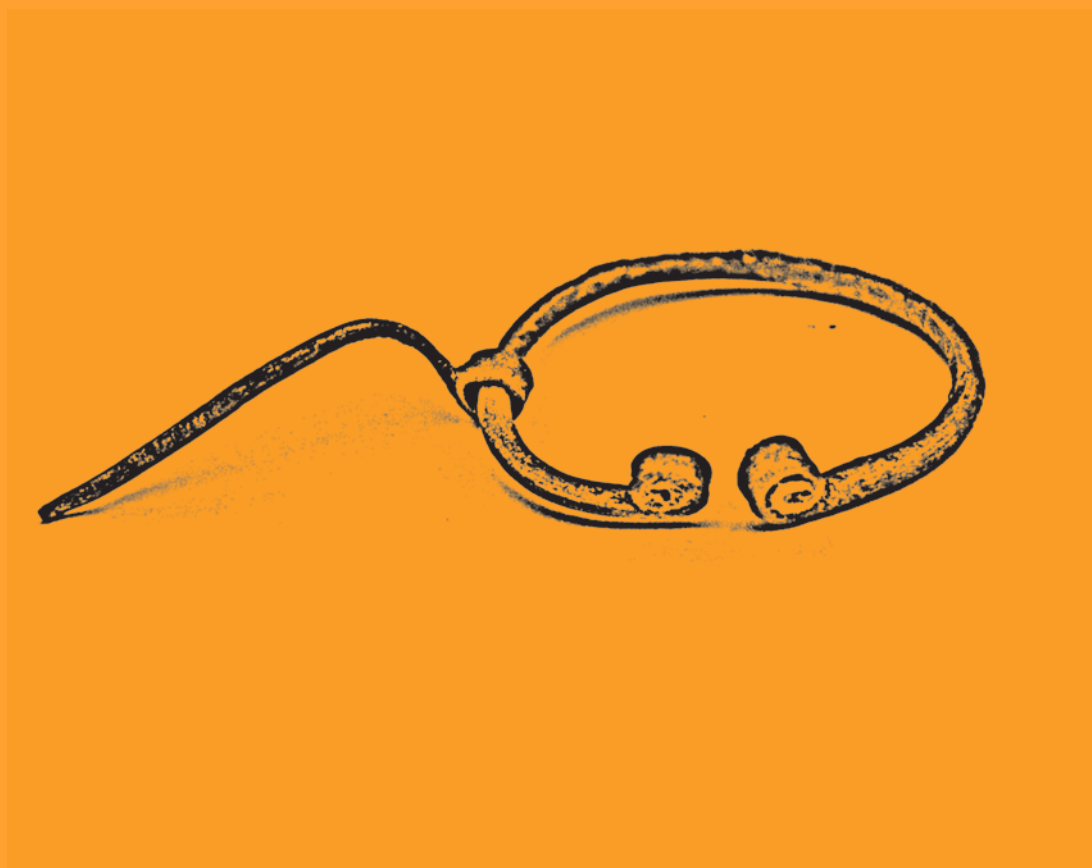


# Bulletin

SOAG



SOAG Bulletin No. 64



South Oxfordshire Archaeological Group 2010



[www.soagarch.org.uk](http://www.soagarch.org.uk)

**SOAG Committee 2009**

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Cynthia Graham Kerr

**Vice-President**

Ian Clarke, Upperton Farm Cottage, Brightwell Baldwin, Oxon OX49 5PB

**Chairman**

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**Honorary Secretary**

David Oliver, 3 Copse Avenue, Caversham, Reading, Berkshire RG4 6LX

**Honorary Treasurer**

John Gibbs, Greensand, Long Wittenham Road, North Moreton, Oxon OX11 9AX

**Membership Secretary**

Mike Vincent, Lockerley, Brightwell Baldwin, Watlington, Oxon. OX49 5NP

**Editorial Team**

Janet Eastment, 4 Beech Close, Bramley, Tadley, Hampshire RG26 5UN

Susan Sandford, Long Close, South Stoke Road, Woodcote, Oxon RG8 0PL

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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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Cover illustration: *Roman penannular brooch from the Gatehampton Roman Villa excavation. See article on p.29.*

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# Marian Fallowfield

1923 – 2010

Sue Sandford

SOAG has learnt with sadness of the death, after a short illness, of Marian Fallowfield. Marian, with her husband Derek, had been a member of SOAG almost from its inception in 1969. After Derek's death in 1989 Marian continued to be a very active member until very recent times.

Marian grew up in Sussex, and her early walks over the Downs gave her an enduring love of the countryside. After their marriage Marian and Derek walked and cycled all over South Oxfordshire from their home in Caversham and shared their interest in archaeology. But Marian was also interested in the urban environment and like her husband was a valued member of the Reading Civic Society. She combined these activities with teaching at Hemdean House and bringing up two children.

Every Friday for thirty years Marian met with two other SOAG members, Mary Kift and Pat Preece, and together they explored the landscape and history of South Oxfordshire and beyond, in the tradition of W.G.Hoskins and Oliver Rackham. Marian was particularly knowledgeable about the local hedges and what their composition might tell us about ancient boundaries. Together Marian, Mary and Pat contributed a number of articles to the *SOAG Bulletin*. These articles typically combine original observation with archival research to alert us to features of the landscape that we might otherwise overlook. We are including one such article in this issue in our 'From the Archives' section.

Marian is survived by her son, Michael, and daughter, Valerie.

# Vice-President's Report 2009

Ian Clarke

*(This is an edited version of the report presented to the 2010 AGM. On 1 July, 2009, retired Chairman Ian Clarke was appointed as Vice-President of SOAG and will act in lieu until such time as a new President is appointed. No Chairman was elected at the 2009 AGM, so the Vice-President compiled this address from the reports of committee members.)*

At the 40th Annual General Meeting on 29 March 2009 we celebrated 40 years of SOAG and the leadership of our esteemed Founder and President, Cynthia Graham Kerr. Cyn was honoured by the granting of the title of President Emeritus, which title she will hold for life. At her request, the celebrations were kept simple, comprising a special tea with celebration cake and sparkling wine. The meeting was well attended and Cyn was once more the centre of a circle of friends and archaeologists. Unknown to all but a very few, this was to be her last attendance at a SOAG event. Shortly afterwards she moved to a care home near Wantage and later in the year to one in the small market town of Bungay, in Suffolk, to be near her son, Alistair.

The Group continued its principal activities of evening lectures from September to March and occasional events in the summer, together with an enhanced programme of fieldwork.

A high-quality lecture programme was put together by Nancy Nichols and David Nicholls. The lectures were well advertised in the *SOAG Messenger*, where subsequent discussions of the events were also published. Our venue, the Goring Heath Parish Hall, is beautifully maintained and continues to attract favourable comment from new members and visiting lecturers alike. Whilst attendance this year has been generally good, a number of our members have commented on the difficulty of getting to the venue, not wishing to drive on dark winter nights and there being no public transport available. The Membership Secretary can now put members in touch with those able to offer lifts, although this has rarely been taken up. We have reviewed alternative venues in urban centres but, mindful of the need to control costs, have not found an affordable and suitable alternative.

The venue and increased publicity for events will, however, remain on the SOAG Committee's agenda. Tea, coffee and biscuits are once again available on a regular basis, thanks to Rebecca Morrisson, with assistance from David Cox.

Two SOAG visits were arranged this year, organised mainly by Nancy Nichols. In July a group of 16 SOAG members visited Ufton Court, a Tudor Manor House in Berkshire to the west of Reading. In anticipation that we would be finding such a building at our dig in Brightwell Park, Ian Clarke, the BBCHAP project leader, has this year been explaining to us the development of Medieval manor houses. The tour of Ufton therefore gave us the chance to inspect one of the best-preserved examples extant, and our guide, Anthony Branfoot, encouraged much discussion during the tour. The visit was followed by an excellent lunch at the Fox and Hounds pub near Theale. The high attendance has encouraged us to plan at least one summer visit for 2010. In December an evening visit was arranged by invitation to Oxbow Books in Oxford, the leading purveyors of specialist books on archaeology and history. SOAG's three project leaders displayed some of the most interesting finds from their sites, and Oxbow provided pre-Christmas refreshments. Best of all, we had the opportunity to browse and buy from Oxbow's extensive book collection.

A principal feature of the SOAG projects led by David Nicholls at both Rotherfield Greys and Bix has been our collaboration with the University of Reading's Archaeology Department. Under the supervision of Dr Tim Astin we have had access to a Bartington magnetometer and also a Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR) system, along with Tim's expertise in analysing the results. In addition the University has adopted both sites for field projects by several undergraduate and Masters students. The relationship has worked well with the boundaries of responsibilities being well respected. It has provided much needed opportunities for SOAG members to gain training and experience in the use of the equipment.

Our collaborative work in 2008 had confirmed the Mound that was the initial object of our study (now referred to as Greys 1) to be almost certainly of Bronze Age origin, possibly earlier, and to have an intriguing internal structure. In 2009 we turned our attention to the wider landscape, both immediately adjacent to the Mound and in the nearby fields. Using all available techniques, the geophysical survey of the Greys 1 field was extended (to be completed in 2010). We also commenced an in-depth study of a 'quarry' like feature on the edge of this field, since geophysics had raised the possibility of this being the site of another ancient mound, since destroyed. The quarry data is still being analysed. A University student, with SOAG assistance, has been studying the underlying geology of the whole area, which is known to lie on ancient fluvial terraces of the Thames.

Janet Eastment led fieldwalking on an adjacent field, Row Croft, after it had been ploughed. This field yielded a significant haul of mainly Bronze Age artefacts but included some good quality Neolithic tools and maybe Mesolithic ones. It was an excellent training exercise for many SOAG members.

Google Earth images of a field 200m away (now Greys 2) hinted at circular features, as a result of which we conducted a magnetometry survey. This survey proved inconclusive, but a dowsing survey conducted by Janet Sharpe yielded positive results which aligned well with the Google Earth features.

In summary, the Rotherfield Greys area is showing every sign of being a significant landscape for Bronze Age activity with the potential to reward SOAG with several years more study. Special thanks are due to Gerard Latham and Geoff Deakin for geophysics, and the landowners for support and access.

At Bix and in collaboration with the University, SOAG, again under the leadership of David Nicholls, undertook further geophysical studies of the area around the Medieval graves, found in 2008 in the garden of Chapel Cottages, in the hope of locating remains of the 'lost' Medieval church of Bix Gibwyn. A SOAG team cleared derelict areas of the garden and in September in a three-day exercise, our University colleagues conducted a GPR survey of an extended garden area. Preliminary results suggest that we may be seeing the outlines of the church in the garden and running under the house. In addition a joint SOAG/University team conducted a wide area magnetometry survey in the fields adjacent to the garden. Early analysis of the results suggests possible evidence of Iron Age activity.

The Bix project is part sponsored by Victoria County History: Oxfordshire and we will continue collaborating with them in their research into the Medieval history of the Medieval Bix parishes. Our grateful thanks go to the owner Lord Alvingham and the occupants of Chapel Cottages for allowing this work.

At Gatehampton, Hazel William's team spent much time on preparation for backfilling a large area of the excavation, marking the end of an important phase of the project. The area included the suite of heated rooms forming a small bathhouse at the western end of the villa. Features such as the *opus signinum* floors, box-tiles *in situ* and *pillae* stacks of the hypocaust, have been of great interest and inspiration to diggers and visitors for many years. They are still well preserved and are now securely backfilled.

We completed our investigation of the boundary ditches and cobbled areas north of the villa enclosure, which has revealed evidence of Roman and Iron Age activity in the landscape around the villa.

The project continues to provide basic training and opportunities for beginners and young people to experience all aspects of on-site activity. Students from Bristol and other universities use their Gatehampton experience for course credits, with more experienced diggers taking responsibility for their own trench areas. The dig continues to attract new members and visitors from a wide area.

We are delighted to have good relationship with the new landowners and are grateful for their help and encouragement. They are keen for the excavation to continue.

Ian Clarke's BBCHAP project continued, with the southern end of Brightwell Park being surveyed with the resistance meter, confirming that the approach to the old manor house from the village was via a straight, formal drive from the High Street, entering the Park just to the east of the churchyard. The survey also revealed the full southern extent of the formal manor house gardens, together with evidence for the old rectory and its enclosure that once occupied the south-east corner of the Park.

In the summer, a two-week excavation was aimed at what we thought might be the entrance porch to the old manor house. The building remains revealed did not fit with this theory and we now think that what we found may be part of a north-west wing of the old manor house, built along the north side of a courtyard, with the house then some 7-8m to the

east of our trench. If this is right, then by extending our trench to the south in 2010 we will hope to find the gatehouse to the courtyard. We are most grateful to landowners Nigel and Tessa Mogg for their continued support and encouragement and for use of the magnificent dovecote for a field base.

In the field of publications and publicity, *SOAG Bulletin* No. 63 was produced by the Publications Team led by Hon. Editor Sue Sandford and Graphics Designer Janet Eastment. Alongside members' wide-ranging articles and reports on our field archaeology, this year's issue featured the citation honouring Cynthia Graham Kerr on taking Emeritus status after 40 years at the head of SOAG, and a tribute by Hazel Williams for Cyn's 25 years of fieldwork at Gatehampton.

The newsletter, *SOAG Messenger*, continues to advertise our lecture and visits programme and convey regular news and reviews of our archaeology projects. Under Editor Mike Green, we have seen a significant increase in the number of articles being contributed by SOAG members, with many more pictures to add interest and amusement. At ten issues per annum, and now typically six A4 pages per issue, it is a very prominent and important member benefit.

The SOAG website, under the excellent supervision of Webmaster Steve Gibson, continues to be a key public face for SOAG, playing a major role in advertising our activities to the world outside. However, this year we have not been sufficiently rigorous in keeping the descriptions of our project activities up to date. The committee needs to resolve how this can be done better in future. In fact publicity in general for SOAG and its activities needs to be the focus of greater attention in the future in order to maintain, or increase, membership, and to improve attendance at our public lectures.

Concerning administration, the Committee recognised during the year that rising running costs and increased field activity was impacting on our cash balance. Hon. Treasurer John Gibbs, with the help of the Committee, has established a more formal budgeting process to give better information and help keep control of costs for the future. The underlying principle of our operation is that subscription receipts must cover the 'core' costs of running the Group, but that field projects will require additional funding from other sources. It became clear that membership fees would have to be increased for 2010 and this was communicated to the membership in December. Under Membership Secretary Mike Vincent the membership database has been much

improved and is helping us to keep better track of progress and identify issues quickly when members do not renew. With a postcode listing we can also find potential lifts to lectures for members.

Hon. Secretary Dave Oliver has devised a simple form that any member can use for recording and reporting details of new archaeological features and sites that emerge. Over time, this will build into an important database of sites for possible future investigation by SOAG. Information from it will be communicated to the County Archaeologist to link into the Heritage Environment Record and County planning process.

Behind the scenes, Sue Sandford and Janet Sharpe continued their meticulous work of cataloguing and securing SOAG's archives, including absorbing the remaining paperwork from Cyn's personal files. The papers will be stored at the County Museums Resource Centre at Standlake. In retirement, Cyn donated her personal library of archaeological books which were put on sale to members.

The Committee have coped remarkably well through the year without a Chairman by rotating the chair for both committee and lecture meetings, but by the end of the year an inevitable loss of continuity and direction was showing. It is therefore with a considerable sense of relief that we hear that Dave Oliver is willing to take on the Chairmanship for 2010-11. I must pay tribute to all the members of the Committee for dealing with this difficult situation so well and I offer my grateful thanks to them.

I thank also the many others who have contributed to another successful year for SOAG, not least the members of the field teams and those who attend our lectures. But whether or not you attend lectures or take part in field activities, your support is valued and vital to SOAG. It is the shared interest of all our members in the diverse aspects of archaeology that is the very reason for our existence.



# Meetings and Visits

## Lectures 2009 – 2010

### 2009

22 January

Dr Jill Greenaway

**'The Thames Water Collection'**

22 February

Cyril McCombe MBE

**'Small Town Foundries – Boom or Bust'**

29 March

**SOAG 40th Annual General Meeting and Anniversary Celebration**

**Review of SOAG Archaeology 2008-2009**

23 April

Sarah Morton MSc

(Museums Resource Centre, Standlake)

**'Site Conservation of Archaeological Objects'**

24 September

Steven Mithen FBA

(Professor of Early Prehistory, University of Reading)

**'To the Islands: Reconstructing Mesolithic Settlement in Western Scotland'**

22 October

Peter Crow (Centre for Human and Ecological Sciences, Forestry Commission)

**'Let There Be Light: The Use of Lasers to Reveal Hidden Woodland'**

26 November

Angela Care Evans (Former Head of Anglo-Saxon Department of the British Museum)

**'Sutton Hoo – 70 Years Later: An Archaeological Retrospective'**

### 2010

28 January

Steve Allen

(Wood Conservator, York Archaeological Trust)

**'Boats, Bowls and Buildings: Recent Work in the Conservation Lab'**

25 February

Paul Smith

(Oxfordshire County Archaeologist)

**'Review of Recent Archaeology in South Oxfordshire'**

28 March

**SOAG 41st Annual General Meeting**

**Review of SOAG Archaeology 2009-10**

### Visits 2009

22 July

**Guided Tour of Ufton Court, Berkshire**

2nd December

**Visit to Oxbow Books, Oxford**

## Oxfordshire Past 2010

**Mike Green**

On 5 June 2010 the 16th annual Oxpast conference was hosted by the Bensington Society ('Bensington' is an early name for Benson) and chaired as usual by Oxfordshire's County Archaeologist, Paul Smith. The spacious village hall provided plenty of room for displays by local societies, prominent amongst which was SOAG. Thanks are especially due to committee members Keith Lowndes and Dave Oliver for manning the SOAG stand during the meeting. There were at least 13 SOAG members in the audience, and

amongst the speakers was Ian Clarke, SOAG Vice-President and leader of the Brightwell Baldwin Community History and Archaeology Project (BBCHAP).

After the conference was opened by Janet Burt, chairman of the Historical Group of the Bensington Society, the first presentation was by Paul Smith, who described three of the more significant recent projects in the county. Two of these provided new and rare, for Oxfordshire, evidence of activity in the Beaker Period, which runs approximately from the mid to late 3rd millennium BC, i.e. the late Neolithic, and is characterised by a particular style of burial pottery which is found across much of northern Europe including Britain. The first find, at



**Winterbrook, Cholsey**, on a dig by Thames Valley Archaeology Services (TVAS), was of a 4-year-old infant, dated 2250-2000BC, with a characteristic beaker at its feet. The second find was at **Whitelands Farm**, southwest of Bicester, which featured a 6in [15cm] tall beaker, decorated all over with comb impressions of a style commonly found near the middle Rhine. Paul said that it was almost certain that both burials were of local farming folk, buried without ostentation, which raises the question: was the beaker style an imported fashion, or were these immigrants from continental Europe? He drew our attention to a joint project to tackle this question by the Universities of Sheffield, Bradford and Durham, and the Max Planck Institute in Germany. They plan to resolve the issue by conducting a large scale isotopic analysis of the teeth in skeletons from many beaker burials across Europe, which should tell us the geographical origins of the individuals.

The third dig described by Paul was a recent development-driven dig near **Thame** of an early Bronze Age ring ditch. The existence of the ditch has been hinted at by crop marks for many years but when these were subjected to geophysical survey nothing was found. Ironically, however, a ring ditch was found only 100m away (!) and it is this that was excavated early in 2010 by TVAS. The site was excavated using the quadrant method and was revealed to be a typical disc barrow some 50m in diameter. There was no mound remaining, but there was evidence of a ditch encircled by an external bank. There were no burials and very few finds, although of note were a stone hammer dated 2000-1800BC made of picrite, sourced from a known quarry in Cwm Mawr near Hissington in Powys, and two side-looped spearheads, dated 1700-1500BC, in the upper levels of the ditch fill, probably part of a formal closure ceremony.

The talk before the coffee break was by Graham Keevill about the work of the community group 'Parishes Against Gravel Extraction' (PAGE) which was first set up in 2003 to resist gravel extraction to the north-east of Dorchester (<http://www.pagecampaign.org>). It was successful, but now they suspect that local extraction is back on the agenda at other local sites. PAGE's goal is to get in ahead of any formal planning applications with improved data about archaeology in two threatened areas: west of **Warborough**; and to the south-east of **Dorchester**. Self-funded, and using community resources as well as experts, their approach has been to conduct long-transect magnetometry surveys. Extrapolations from known archaeology in nearby fields has enabled them to identify likely late Iron Age/Romano-British features in both areas.

After coffee SOAG's Ian Clarke gave a presentation which described the BBCHAP work in **Brightwell Park**, the subject matter of his talk being covered elsewhere in this and previous *SOAG Bulletins*. In her summing up at the end of the conference our host Janet Burt described the project as 'a fascinating piece of detective work'. What is particularly worthy of comment about Ian's talk, however, were his concluding remarks in which he outlined the general approach he advises for a community archaeology project such as this. In brief his message was: begin with a critical reappraisal of the primary and secondary documentary sources, earlier archaeological work, and in particular local history, local knowledge and anecdotal evidence; follow this with extensive and repeated landscape reconnaissance followed by targeted, large area geophysics; then run targeted and limited excavations, 'Time Team' style, with good project designs, on-site training and equipment. Also very important for a community project is to focus on areas of special interest to the community (and the landowners) and, in summary, to aim to do good archaeology – but have fun doing it!

Ian's talk was followed by Gary Marshall from the National Trust. The house at **Greys Court** north of Henley has been closed to the public for two years (the second year being needed once they found asbestos!), only recently re-opening. Much has been known about the 'people history' of Greys Court, but the detailed history of the buildings has apparently always been a bit vague, with only half a page being devoted to the topic in the site's previous brochure! The main focus of the work was the house itself, the roof of which was stripped back to its timbers. The oldest parts of the house, now the kitchen area, date from around 1450, but, thanks to dendro-dating, which can be very precise, much of the subsequent development of the house can now be closely tied to known people and events: a wonderful example of how archaeology can enrich the story of a place and bring it to life. In addition to the work on the house, Gary talked us through a significant reinterpretation of the other structures on the site, notably the Medieval towers and the curtain walls. Most of this work is yet to be published and one can only hope that we don't have too long to wait for a monograph to be available to the public.

In the final session before lunch Tony Dodd from the Oxford Architectural and Historical Society (OAHS) described two significant online developments for Oxfordshire's historians and archaeologists. The archive of Oxoniensia is now fully online at <http://www.oxoniensia.org> and there is a new website devoted to Oxfordshire's history: <http://oxfordshirehistory.modhist.ox.ac.uk>.

As seems to happen every year at Oxpast the weather was perfect, so people dispersed for lunch, either outside the venue itself; to the local pub; or, in the case of several SOAG members (including the author!), to the banks of the nearby Thames.

In the afternoon the first talk was given by Dr Steven Ford from TVAS who described the archaeology undertaken at the site of the former Rivers Night Club in **Benson**, which was demolished in 1999 prior to redevelopment as a housing estate. This offered a rare opportunity to examine settlement patterns in a key location very close to the Thames. The earliest evidence of settlement found was a group of small round dwellings which may be early Neolithic (3,600-3,300BC), plus concentrations of cereals and hazelnuts confirming early settled farming. A gap then exists until evidence of late Bronze Age activity and then another gap till the Roman period, represented by sherds of pottery and a ditch which was probably a field boundary. But perhaps the most intriguing discovery was evidence of early Saxon sunken-floor buildings, not large enough to be hall-houses, carbon dated to 549-659AD. There has always been uncertainty about the precise boundary between Wessex and Mercia in this period, and some pottery finds that seem to originate in Leicestershire lend support to the theory of Mercian control.

**Benson** has been well served by local historians and before the afternoon tea break Peter Clarke, President of the Bensington Society, took the opportunity to promote a number of their publications ([www.benson.smugmug.com](http://www.benson.smugmug.com)). But prior to doing so he gave us a summary of the three features that have driven Benson's history. First, Benson is sited on the alluvial plain so has always been blessed with good agriculture, although knowledge of its exploitation in pre-history has been weak, hence his particular interest in the work described by the previous speaker. Second, for most of history Benson has been on the way to somewhere: the wharf on the river has always been important, and in the coaching era Benson was a stop on the routes to Oxford and also routes to the South-West. This came to an end, of course, when the railway passed Benson by. And third, Benson has always had an air of independence, which dates from the 13th century when the land passed from the king eventually down to 12 local tenants, since when "there has never been a baron or a squire".

The final talk of the day was by David Radford, Archaeologist for the **City of Oxford**, who, as last year, updated us on the most recent activity within the city boundaries. And 'boundaries' was his first topic. The textbook picture of the route of Oxford's Medieval city walls (credited to John Blair) is of the Primary Burh walls developed by either Alfred the Great or Edmond the Elder and completed before

919AD, being then extended to the east in the 13th century. (They are still magnificently on display in the grounds of New College). But the route of the walls is irregular – certainly not the archetypal rectilinear alignment one might expect of a Saxon Burh, and current thinking is that its odd configuration results from the incorporation and retention of pre-existing features. David gave us a whistle-stop tour of specific locations that are being rethought, but spent most of his allotted time describing excavations just to the east of the North Gate (the Saxon tower in the Cornmarket being the most visible extant remains of this). Excavation here was driven by the modernisation of student accommodation which afforded an opportunity to follow the lines of the Medieval walls and foundations under floorboards and through cellars. In the second half of his talk David reminded us that the site of the Radcliffe Infirmary has now been cleared to make way for one of the largest expansions of the University in modern times. This is a very large geoarchaeological excavation; geologically the area being Ipswichian Cold Period gravels and Devonian Sands and, as such, contiguous with the geology of the University Parks to the east. A number of large ring ditches and other features have been recorded which align with a linear cemetery excavated some time ago in the Parks. In addition a barrow, 60m across and surrounded by a 3m wide ditch, has been excavated. This has been hard to date, there being no pottery finds, although a few bones are awaiting carbon dating, but the best current guess is Late Bronze Age, perhaps around 800BC. Finally David remarked that Oxford City's archaeology has been somewhat ad hoc and event-driven over the years, but he announced that an Oxford City Archaeology Plan is in development which will soon be available online.

The meeting concluded with a presentation to Paul Smith, who is retiring in a few months, thanking him in particular for his role in launching Oxpast 16 years ago, and for overseeing its growth from a tentative meeting at which, as he put it, 'it felt as though there were more speakers than audience!' to the highly regarded fixture of the archaeology calendar that it has become. Retiring he may be, but Paul said he nevertheless hoped to play some role in future Oxpasts.

# Reports and Articles

## Greys Mound

### Greys Mound: the Bigger Picture

David Nicholls

*This site, the first evidence of which was a low mound, about 60m across, has intrigued the author since the 1950s, and has been the subject of a SOAG investigation since 2007 (Nicholls, 2008; Nicholls, 2009).*

#### Introduction

During 2009, a wide range of non-intrusive geophysical investigations continued, following previous work carried out in 2007 and 2008 (Nicholls, 2009). This was augmented by the further involvement of Reading University under the direction of the Rev Dr Tim Astin, when Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR) and magnetometry scans provided a mounting volume of data on this important site. We have again benefited by receiving the invaluable support of two SOAG experts in the geophysics field, Geoff Deakin and Gerard Latham, who have covered and re-covered a widening survey of the primary area and other fields where indications of prehistoric activity are suspected. One of these sites has been labelled Greys 2. Two students have adopted the Greys site for degree subjects. An increasing number of SOAG members have participated in various field activities, including the first successful fieldwalk under the direction of member Janet Eastment, for her own degree dissertation for Bristol University.

#### Geophysical Surveys

At the end of May and beginning of June, 2009, the season's fieldwork began, with Tim Astin directing an extensive magnetometry survey of the primary site and adjoining areas with a coverage of 64 20m x 20m grids. He was helped by SOAG members Mike Green, Nancy Nichols and others. Part of this area to the east of the mound and at the edge of the field had not been previously surveyed by any geophysics

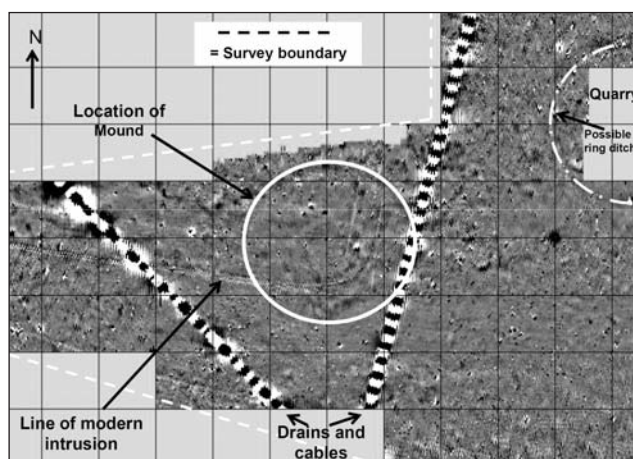


Fig. 1. 2009 Magnetometry survey of Greys I field

technique, and the new scan revealed tantalising imaging around the quarry/copse (Fig. 1).

Here a possible outer ring ditch of a possible second destroyed mound surrounded the pit. Apart from this feature, the magnetometry scan revealed evidence of an oblong construction over the central mound area which may be attributable to a later period of history. A Medieval structure, perhaps of timber, is one conjecture. Imaging for the dramatic mound features revealed by earlier resistivity and GPR scanning was not repeated (Fig. 2).

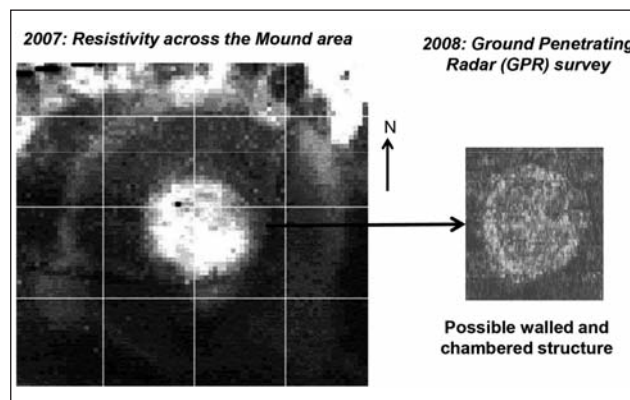


Fig. 2. 2007-8 survey pictures of the Mound at Greys I

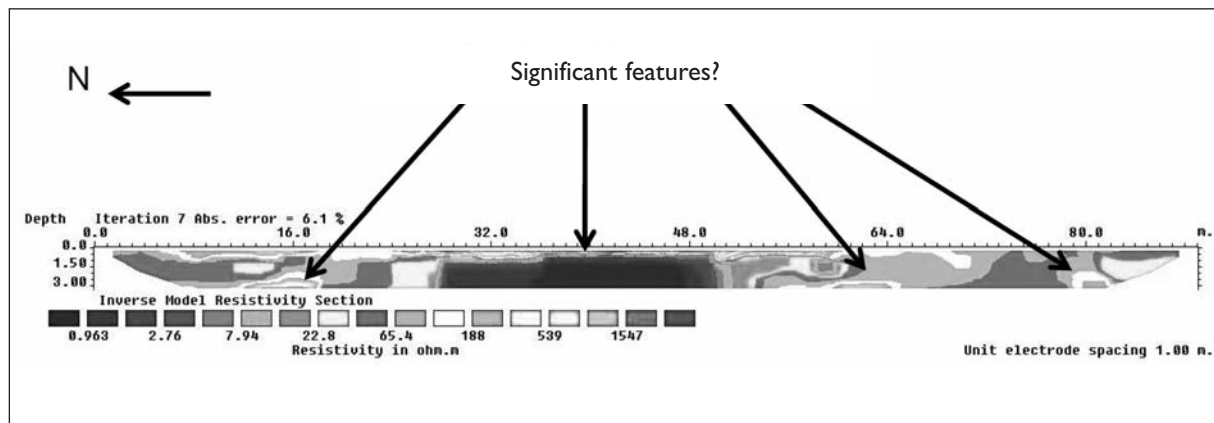


Fig.3. 2009 resistivity pseudosection (vertical slice) across the edge of the 'quarry'

It was decided that the ring feature around the quarry justified further investigation. Mike Green led a small SOAG team in clearing the undergrowth on the edge of the pit to enable a long resistivity pseudosection to be made with a transect length of 89m orientated on a north/south alignment. This was undertaken by Gerard Latham, aided by eight SOAG members. The resulting data is intriguing and appears to confirm the probability of a ring ditch (Fig. 3). The results are somewhat difficult to interpret but the information gathered has been very useful for further corroboration and analysis.

Because the overall diameter appeared to extend into the adjoining field to the east, Row Croft, it was decided to scan the area of the anticipated segment extension by further resistivity surveying. This was undertaken by Geoff Deakin. No discernible continuation was revealed. Surprisingly, faint features were observed which indicated a slight reverse in the arc of the apparent ditch. This may be attributable to weak conductivity due to lack of ground moisture. This area may be re-investigated. Completion of resistivity scanning overall included coverage of the eastern and northern edge of the field beyond the game shoot set-aside area. No features of note were recorded by Geoff Deakin, except two probable pits.

At the same time as this work, and extending into August, further GPR scanning and other investigations were started by Reading University MSc student Rafael Korczynski. He undertook to survey an area to the west of the centre of the mound (including the interesting double circular features located on the outer ring ditch, first revealed in 2007) and a further

east/west transect scan. Reading University also benefited by the adoption of the site for the testing in the field of various mathematical computer software programmes with differing probing.

Korczynski then undertook GPR radial transect scanning in three positions through the possible ditch position surrounding the quarry: to the north-west, south-west and west. Following this, a short, shallow trial trench was excavated to the north-west of the pit, in an attempt to determine soil stratification (Fig. 4). Intriguingly, the northern side of this excavation appeared to indicate the edge of a ditch at a depth of approximately 350mm: a dip slope.

As part of his geomorphological study of the immediate landscape, Korczynski core sampled, by hand auguring, areas surrounding and inside the quarry pit, aided by SOAG members. Coring depth in the base of the pit extended to 2.5m, thereby reaching an overall depth of some 6m below the average landscape surface. Surprisingly, no gravel



Fig. 4. Possible evidence of a ditch around the 'quarry'



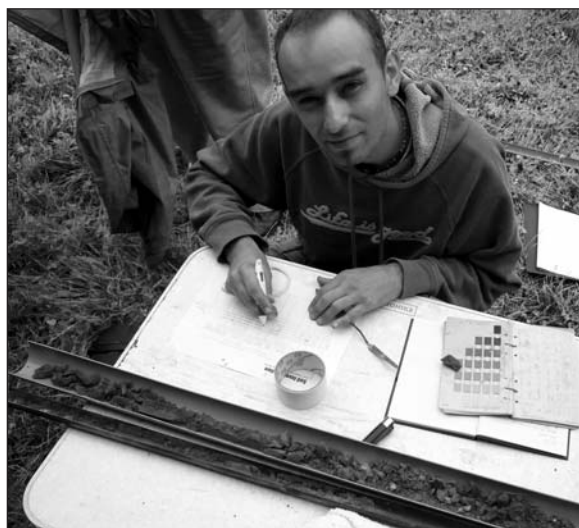


Fig. 5. Rafael Korczynski analysing a cored sample from near the 'quarry'

horizons were revealed, or chalk, but fine silting deposits of greensand were extracted (Fig. 5).

The continuing wide-ranging investigations are helping to compile a picture of the landscape surrounding the primary features of this location, and its probable development in the Prehistoric period. The indications are that constructed features were significant from the late Neolithic period, but that the area was also seeing much human activity for a considerable time before this. Recovery of artefacts from fieldwalking has made an important contribution. Janet Eastment organised a successful systematic fieldwalking day in August when 12 SOAG members participated in a surface scan of Row Croft field, primarily of the northern part, although this was extended on a loose basis to cover the entire field (Fig. 6).

A 100m wide area was closely examined (see below).



Fig. 6. Fieldwalking in Row Croft field, adjacent to Greys 1

## Greys 2

Whilst studying aerial and Google satellite imaging, a SOAG member observed that two further possible barrow ring ditches existed in a field some 350m north of Barrow Field (Fig. 7).



Fig. 7. Google Earth images of Greys 2 showing weak ring features

This field was under separate ownership, but permission was obtained to visit in

order to decide whether a geophysical scan might confirm these features. The site is on high ground with commanding views to the north and north-west. The contour level is at 97m, 1m higher than Barrow Field. From the surface, a very slight rise could be detected over one of these features. Gerard Latham again kindly accepted our invitation to participate, leading a resistivity scan. An area covering eight 20m x 20m grids was set out in November. The result of this survey was disappointing, revealing no imaging to support the possibility of barrows; Gerard's conclusion was that the data was attributable to varying geology. A subsequent magnetometry survey lead by Geoff Deakin was equally inconclusive.

Upon further invitation, Korczynski undertook a magnetometry scan and, whilst revealing no overall features, concluded that some faint variation was possible to two grids, indicating possible disturbance of some kind. This writer was convinced that the Google imaging was not accidental and that the weak ring features shown on the latest (2009) Google pictures were of a size typical of Early Bronze Age barrows. Perhaps dowsing could obtain a reaction if an experienced exponent would accept the challenge? This was offered to and willingly accepted by Janet Sharpe and Phil Carter, who scanned the area of the grids in November.

Where geophysics failed, dowsing produced remarkably consistent confirmatory results almost identical to the scaled-up positions of the rings in the image. A further detailed wider landscape geophysical survey will be undertaken in 2010. Interestingly, this field has received planning permission for use as a secular burial ground. It is therefore important to establish whether it was also in use in the Prehistoric period for the same purpose, before the evidence is destroyed.

## Conclusions

Consistent and wide-ranging investigations in this area of Rotherfield Greys continue to provide evidence of previously unrecorded Prehistoric activity with a commencement of feature building, at least, in the late Neolithic period. Reading University involvement, under the direction of Tim Astin, will continue, and permissions have been granted by adjacent field owners to extend wide geophysical surveys covering some fifty acres to the north. Professor Richard Bradley of Reading University, one of the UK's leading prehistorians, has expressed an interesting interim opinion: that the data so far obtained on the Greys Mound site confirms it as a significant late Neolithic and early Bronze Age complex of some importance. In 2010 we hope to conduct two small excavations to sample ditch construction to Greys Mound and the possible quarry ditch. Further fieldwalking for 2010 is planned, as well as an extension of the geophysical survey of the game cover area.

## Acknowledgments

We would like to thank landowners Sue and Sam Samuels, Mr and Mrs Alexander Hood and Mr and Mrs John Webb for permission to work on their land; Tim Astin of Reading University for his help, interest and advice; Rafael Korczynski; Geoff Deakin and Gerard Latham, for their ongoing support and expertise; Mike Green and Nancy Nichols for tremendous support and professionalism in so many ways; Janet Eastment for the fieldwalking planning and execution; and all SOAG members who have helped so much. Janet and Phil were, as usual, a pleasure to work with and must be congratulated on their findings. It has been great teamwork – frequently working in wonderful weather conditions. Once again I would like to thank my wife Diana for her help in the field, in preliminary work, and with background support in so many ways.

The Robert Kiln Trust kindly made a further grant towards our work in 2009, which has enabled this further progress. We are grateful for their grant of £500.00.

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## Fieldwalking at Greys Mound

Janet Eastment

On 29 August 2009, a warm and sunny Bank Holiday Saturday, a group of SOAGs met to participate in a fieldwalking survey in the field adjacent to Greys Mound (Fig. 1).

The survey took two forms. The top end of the field was marked out in 20m x 20m grids and each was walked in 2m transects with the finds for each grid collected separately. A total of 10 grids were surveyed in this manner. Since we were restricted by time, the remainder of the field was walked in wide parallel lines by the team.



Fig. 1. Surveying the grids

Initial results indicate a high quantity of worked flint is present in this field, with several diagnostic tool types of the Bronze Age represented (Fig. 2). These include scrapers, borers, and cutting tools. Work on identifying and cataloguing these flints is currently being undertaken.



Fig. 2. An example of the worked flint collected from Row Croft field

## The Search for the Missing Church of St Michael's, Bix Gibwyn, Bix: Concluded?

Report 2009-2010

David Nicholls

Initial fieldwork was conducted over two seasons, 2007 and 2008. Extensive wide area geophysical surveying and trial trenching were carried out in 2008 and reported (Nicholls, 2009). Following this, it was agreed with the Victoria County History (VCH) that, because of the promising yet inconclusive results obtained from the limited November 2008 excavation, further research should be undertaken at Keeper's Cottage (Fig. 1). Was this the precise location for the missing church of Bix Gibwyn?

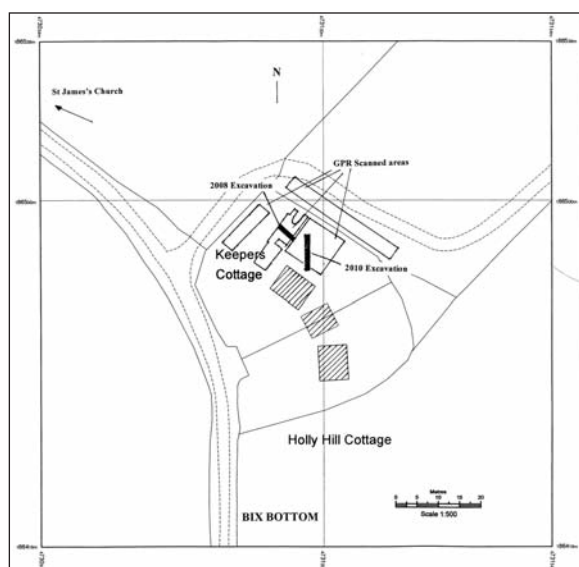


Fig. 1. Site Plan

It was resolved that if approval could be obtained from the landowner, Major General Lord Alvingham, and his tenants, Jane and Paul Wyatt, the first task would be to conduct further geophysical surveys using a gradiometer for potential comparative data to the resistivity results previously obtained. The latter had yielded nothing to indicate foundation features. Unexpectedly, we were provided with the opportunity of extending the range of search equipment through contact by SOAG member Professor Nancy Nichols with the Reverend Dr Tim Astin of the Department of Archaeology at the University of Reading, and the 'adoption' of the geophysical elements of the search project by undergraduate Matt Berry for a dissertation (Berry, unpublished). This involvement provided access to Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR) equipment which proved to be the most effective tool in yielding promising imaging of linear features.

Permission was granted to proceed with the survey work and, in preparation for GPR scanning, SOAG members initially cleared an area of waste ground adjacent to the north-west of the garden. Matt Berry first conducted an extensive gradiometry survey covering some thirty 30 x 30m grids (some of which were partial) to the north, north-west and north-east of Keeper's Cottage. Whilst results of this scan did not contribute any direct imaging for a church structure, intriguing features were revealed in the large field to the north. These may be related to Medieval enclosures, or farming patterns possibly of Iron Age origin. To the high ground to the rear of the cottages, towards the ridge line to the north-east, evidence of modern and early disturbance was noted, including an intriguing feature which may relate to a small structure (Fig. 2).

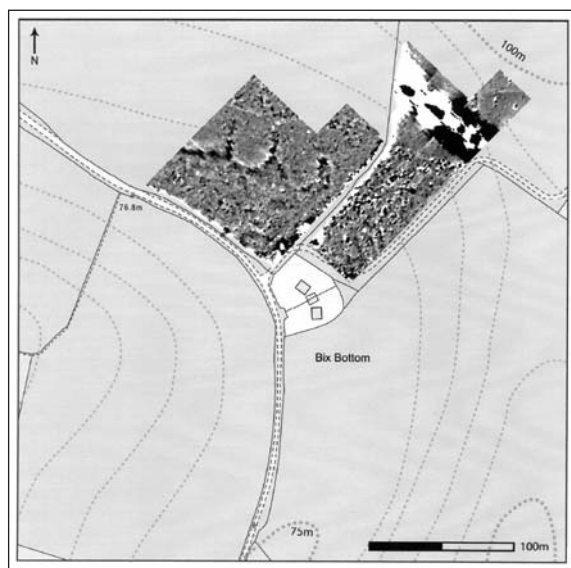


Fig. 2. Gradiometry survey results

The following GPR survey was conducted in September 2009, and covered three areas of varying sizes to the north and north-west of the cottage and within the boundaries of the garden. This yielded mixed imaging which on first analysis suggested no definite linear features. However, the data was re-processed and the results indicated probable foundations aligned on an approximate east/west axis. These were sited very close to Keeper's Cottage in the central part of the garden. The scale suggested a building width of approximately 4.5m, with a possible length of three times this: similar in size to the ruined



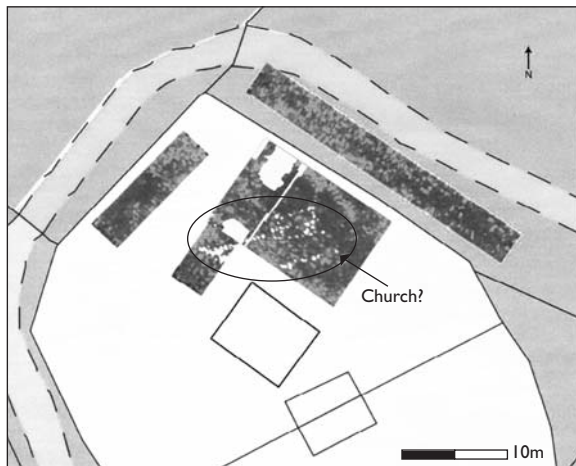


Fig. 3. GPR survey results

church of St James to the north. Dr Tim Astin and Matt Berry considered this image very suggestive of a church foundation (Fig.3).

Early in 2010, following further permission from landowner and tenants, a long section trial trench was excavated across the width of this feature on a north/south axis and 2m from the assumed gable end of the building. This entailed a massive disturbance to the lawn area and for this reason we agreed that we would carry out this task very early in the year to facilitate quick re-growth. Commencing on 15 March, a 7m x 1m trench was excavated, later extended to 8m. Twelve SOAG members participated in this early season undertaking. The same garden soil as had been encountered in 2008 was found: a loamy mixture containing assorted flints and gravel down to a depth of approximately 500-600mm. This was underlain by a more uniform heavier layer of loose flint and gravel of a depth of 500-600mm, again identical to the 2008 trench (Fig. 4).

We know from a letter written by Harry Watts in 1936 (Nicholls, 2009) that the local rector who sold off the land at the end of the 19th century had used



Fig. 4. Bix trench section

the plot for growing potatoes. Deep digging and/or ploughing had therefore worked over these layers to an appreciable depth, to such an extent that no other variations in stratification could be discerned. Pottery sherds, of Medieval and Roman date, and fragments of both animal and human bone were found scattered throughout these homogenous layers. There had been consistent disturbance over a wide area. The subsequent 100 years of gardening activity had penetrated some 600-700mm with consequent disturbance. Traces of mortar were encountered at a depth of 700mm, particularly towards the centre and north end of the trench, but at the same time scattered large pieces of flint and small stones occurred at this depth. One small piece of white encaustic decorated floor tile, identified as of Penn type from the second half of the 14th century, or possibly of local manufacture, was found to the south end of the trench at a depth of 600mm in this worked soil. Further excavation appeared to show firm masonry, comprising large amounts of lime mortar with flints on an east/west alignment, extending over the width of the trench to the north end. Alongside this, at the extreme end, a burial was uncovered. Together with further skeletons revealed throughout the trench, this severely restricted the opportunity to deep section the excavation, since minimal disturbance to any burials was required. At the extreme north end of the trench, past skeleton numbered 8, sufficient space was encountered to probe the flint/mortar matrix to a bottom depth of 2m; here solid masonry was revealed (Fig. 5).

This comprised a uniform mix as a solid mass of heavy flint, well mixed lime mortar and pebblestones: a foundation layer. Further masonry of slightly lighter density extended towards the south and mortar continued as a layer or bed beneath burials at a slightly varying depth of approximately 1.2m. A localised probe to a depth of approximately 1.5m at the extreme south end of the trench revealed further disturbance but with very little mortar. A human femur, part of a burial, was uncovered at this depth, but no further excavation was undertaken because of the very limited space.



Fig. 5. Wall base. North end with skeleton

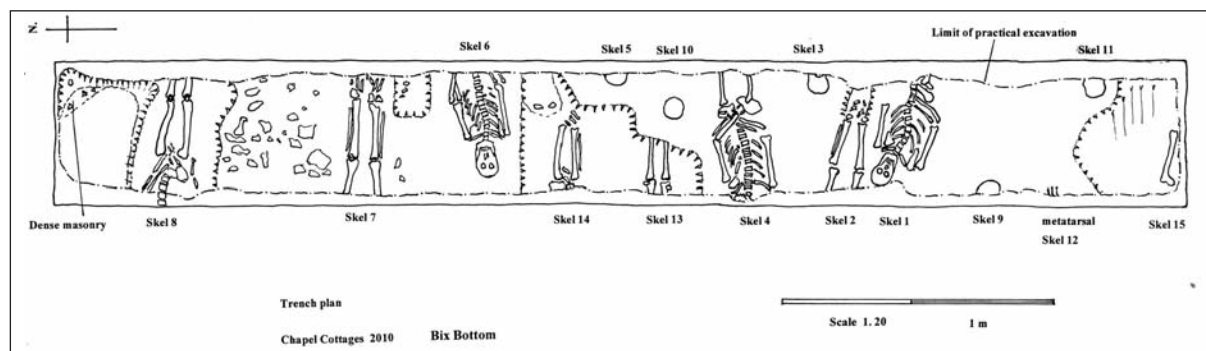


Fig. 6. Trench plan

In all, 15 skeletons were revealed, plus isolated fragments of at least two further bodies where previous working of the soil had disturbed burials. As well as the three skeletons from the 2008 excavation, we also know that many were revealed when the foundations for the two new (re-built) cottages were laid in the 1970s, and others earlier in the 19th century. The 15 burials were orientated east/west with small variation in alignment. Two burials, numbered 7 and 8, showed partial grave cuts down to the mortar layer, but others were not clear because of later soil disturbance. Such a restricted excavation has meant that it has been impossible to determine linear features of any foundations; consequently no measurements and orientation of any walling can be ascertained. A priority of the landowner, and ourselves, was that during the excavation there should be minimum disturbance to these Christian burials. We have again been fortunate in receiving the expert opinion of Dr Anna Williams, a forensic anthropologist from Cranfield University, who kindly undertook an on-site examination of each skeleton, and she has provided much useful data on her findings (see below).

All the fully-exposed skeletons indicated careful placing in a supine position. Skeletons 3, 5, 9, 10 and 11 had skulls lying at a slightly higher level than the rest of the body and thus were not fully exposed due to the restricted area (Figs. 6 and 6a). These burials were of identical pattern to those revealed in the 2008 excavation which was slightly to the north of this trench and they had the same mortar spread below the bodies. No trace of coffins was detected and simple shroud burial is assumed for each body. From the positioning, apart from skeleton 15, it is possible that these burials were reasonably contemporary. The project has been fortunate in that the VCH have been able to allocate funding for three Carbon-14 analyses, again to be undertaken by Oxford University's Research Laboratory for Archaeology. At the time of writing these important results are awaited.

It is difficult to determine the reason for the dense overlay of large and small flints in a dark loamy soil



Fig. 6a. Photograph showing density of skeletons in the burial

which extends as a fairly uniform layer throughout the trench and which lies immediately over the burials. The upper areas show no grave cuts penetrating this, except partially over skeleton 8 and faintly over skeleton 7, so this layer may have been an accumulation of debris flint, though a minimal amount of mortar adhered to individual flints. Was the bottom of the similar upper layer levelled off by the plough action (Fig. 7)? Burials were relatively shallow. Were they limited to these depths by a wish not to penetrate foundation or definite floor levels considered of religious significance? Stratification of pottery sherds cannot be relied upon to confirm any context. The majority of the pottery is of Roman date, 240-400AD, and from all levels. It includes, very surprisingly, two pieces from a depth of 1.7m, alongside the bottom of the heavy masonry at the north end of the trench. This would indicate either later disturbance or loss during construction of this

foundation walling. It is difficult to argue for later deposit in this very low position and it may confirm deposit at the time of construction or redeposit during wall robbing. One piece is identified as Red Oxford colour-coated ware. The second piece is Sandy Grey ware, but probably Roman, locally produced. Several other sherds from various layers date from the 12th- to 13th-century, including well-made Henley type ware, small pieces of local Medieval and post-Medieval ware, a 14th- to 15th-century pot sherd, a piece of red glazed 16th- to 18th-century earthenware, and other pottery fragments of mixed date and type. It is not a large collection, but nevertheless of interest in date and manufacture. One further piece of hand-fired Medieval or post-Medieval tile was also found in a loose context and is possibly of local Nettlebed fabric. The occurrence of this quantity of pottery, although small, does indicate activity in two distinct periods in this valley. It is not likely that these sherds were brought on to the site as part of farm manure.

### Conclusion

There is strong circumstantial evidence for this being the precise plot or holding for the missing early Medieval church of Bix Gibwyn, but it cannot be conclusive. The possibility exists that the masonry footings belong to a separate and/or earlier building, although the flint/mortar mass is very comparable to the wall construction of St James's Church. The two pieces of 14th-century floor tile may be significant.

The GPR survey provided strong imaging and the excavation has, at least in part, corroborated the

interpretation of the results in that part of a heavy foundation wall has been located, but its extent is unproven. Also, deep working of the soil in the garden over time has created very disturbed conditions. Matt Berry has extracted good data which ideally should be corroborated by further excavation. Whether this is possible in the future is uncertain.

The trial trenching, intended to confirm the wall lines and clear orientation indicated on the GPR image, was very restricted, both by the number of close burials and by the necessarily limited size of the trench itself. If it had been possible to enlarge this into a grid system of excavations covering a larger area, a more positive plan may have been revealed, although it is almost certain limitations would have been imposed by many more burials.

If what we have revealed is robbed out, demolished or removed wall remains, and probably the mortar spread of a de-tiled floor base; and if these further burials, which still await C-14 dating, are of a similar period to those revealed in the 2008 excavation, it would suggest that Bix Gibwyn church had a relatively short life, a supposition supported by documentary evidence. The positive statement by Harry Watts that the lost church stood on the site of the earlier Broads Cottages may be correct, especially as he had concluded that the whole of the north wall had collapsed almost bodily to the south. Following this, it was reported that in later years large quantities of flint and stone had been carted off the site. If this is so, could the walls have remained standing, at least in part, until about the 17th or 18th century, or were

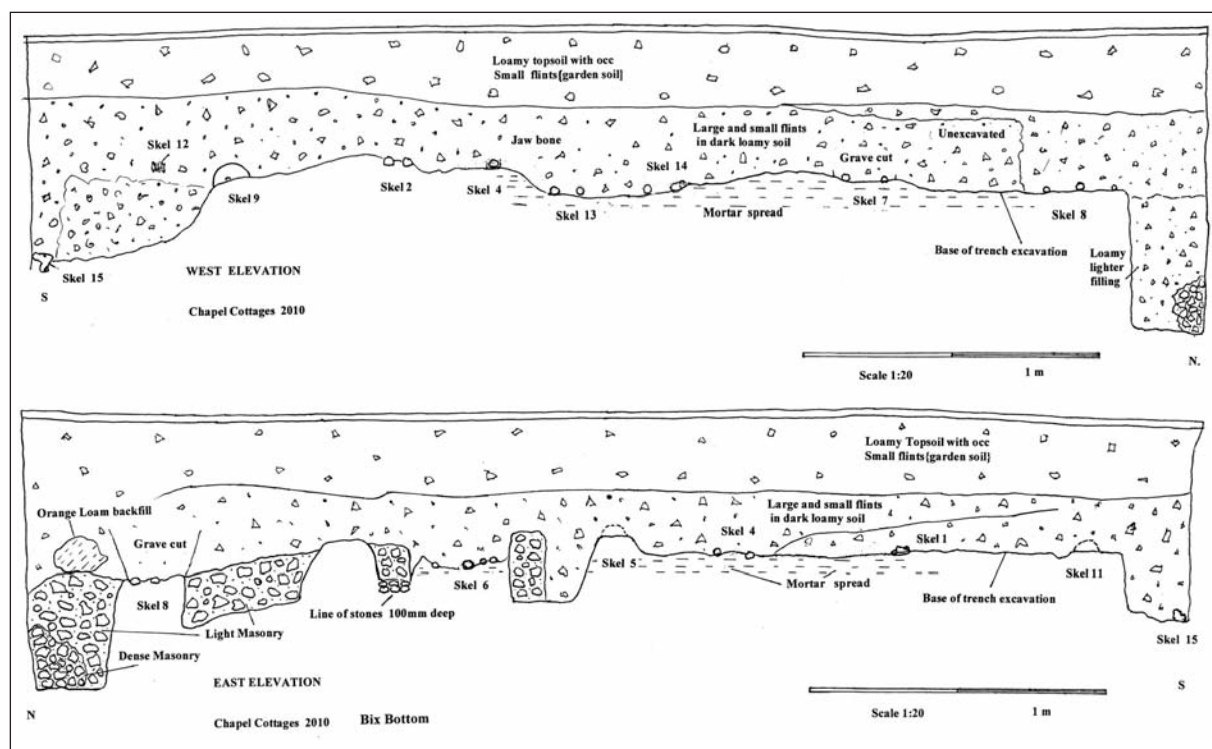


Fig. 7. Trench sections



13th-century burials taking place within an already partially ruined or abandoned building? Greening Lamborn stated that the church was *Ecclesiastica destructa* in the 19th century (Greening Lamborn, 1936).

### Acknowledgements

I am particularly grateful for the patient and kind support of Jane and Paul Wyatt of Keeper's Cottage, who have once again suffered a massive intrusion into their peaceful garden; to Major General Lord Alvingham and Lady Alvingham for their kindness in allowing this work to continue on their property; to Chris Lloyd Rodgers, Agent, for his interest and help; and to the team who made this fieldwork possible: in particular, Colin Davies, Vivienne and Derek Greenwood, Steve Gibson, John Hefferan, Linda Haynes, Roelie Reed, Tom Walker and Mike Green. Paul Wyatt also helped with initial work in clearing. Tim Astin is due special thanks for enabling all this to happen with his enthusiastic support and for introducing and guiding Matt Berry in his research. I would also like to thank Matt Berry himself, for his interest – even though it was University work – his data and his research results. Thanks are due to Nancy Nichols for setting this up. I again thank Diana my wife, who quietly supported the project and helped set out and plot the trench plan. I am grateful to Paul Booth and Maureen Mellor for their examination of the pottery and tile, and hope this small site has contributed useful information for this part of Oxfordshire. Dr Anna Williams has again produced a remarkable amount of data on the skeletons despite such a short time on site, and must be congratulated on her comprehensive report. It has been a pleasure working once again with Stephen Miles and Simon Townley of the VCH and I trust our small project contribution is adding to the picture of this fascinating period of social Medieval history in this beautiful valley.

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## Initial Analysis of Human Remains

Anna Williams

Nine human skeletons were partially exposed by the trench. Analysis was conducted in the trench, with skeletal elements *in situ*, although the removal and cleaning of the os coxae and other elements was permitted to facilitate determination of the sex, age at death and stature of the individuals. It should be emphasised that these are initial findings only, and that more detailed and precise conclusions would be attainable through thorough laboratory analysis.

### Skeleton I

The cranium and post-cranial skeleton of Skeleton I was partially exposed, truncated at the superior aspect of the os coxae and sacrum. The exposed skeleton was well preserved and in good condition. The mandible, right humerus, and the right pubic symphysis were lifted, cleaned and examined before being replaced in their original positions.

#### Sex

The sex of this individual was determined to be male, based on cranial characteristics. The supraorbital tori were prominent (score = 4, Buikstra and Ubelaker, 1994), and the angle of the mandible close to 90°. The mental eminence was pronounced (score = 3, Buikstra and Ubelaker, 1994), and the mandible exhibited moderate gonial flaring. The metric measurements of the right humerus (maximum diameter of humeral head in vertical plane = 45.73mm) fell in the intermediate range between male and female, according to Bass (1995). The maximum diameter of the radial head was found to be 23.07mm, which again is in the range of indeterminate sex (Bass, 1995).

It is likely, due to the morphology of the cranial characteristics, that this skeleton is male, but this cannot be confirmed without further examination of the rest of the pelvis, skull and other long bones.

#### Age

It was possible to estimate the age of Skeleton I through analysis of the pubic symphyseal surface of the right os coxa. The morphology of the surface of the pubic symphysis was best described by Phase 10 of the Todd Pubic Symphysis Scoring System (Buikstra and Ubelaker, 1994), which suggests an age of over 50 years for this individual. This is corroborated by signs of vertebral lipping on the lumbar vertebrae which is indicative of arthritis (Buikstra and Ubelaker, 1994).

### Stature

The approximate stature of Skeleton 1 during life was estimated using long bone measurements. Using the maximum length of the humerus, 34.7cm, it was estimated that the height was between 173.81cm and 182.95cm (approx. 5' 7" to 6'), with an average of 178.38cm (5' 8.5") (Trotter and Gleser, 1977). This estimate is only based on the length of the humerus, which is not a weight-bearing bone, and could be refined if the femur or tibia length was included in the calculation. This calculation also assumes the individual was male, which may be incorrect.

### Pathology or Trauma

The estimation of stature during life may be an apparent overestimation due to possible pathology exhibited by the skeleton. The vertebral column of Skeleton 1 appeared to be abnormally curved and twisted laterally in the lower thoracic region. This is suggestive of scoliosis of the spine, which is a gradual onset, chronic curvature of the spine in a medial-lateral direction. Some vertebrae appeared to be "wedge-shaped", crushed under compression forces, which may be indicative of osteoporosis associated with old age (Roberts and Manchester, 1999). This is only an initial interpretation, based on observation of the vertebrae in situ, and it would be necessary to lift, clean and examine the bones in a laboratory to draw more concrete conclusions regarding the spinal pathology.

The mandible of Skeleton 1 exhibited a significant pathology. All of the mandibular teeth were missing ante-mortem, except for the lower right first premolar, which was present and severely worn, and the lower central incisors, which were lost post-mortem. The

mandible exhibited significant asymmetry (Fig. 1), as the alveolar bone of the mandibular body on the right hemi-mandible showed evidence of remodelling around a large cloaca (pus filled drainage hole). This is likely to be the result of a massive sub-mandibular abscess (Junger, 2008), and infection and inflammation of the mandible, cheek, tongue and other tissues (Fig. 2). It would have been extremely painful, and without medical intervention, could have precipitated the death of the individual.

### Skeleton 4

Skeleton 4 was partially exposed, from the maxilla to the mid shaft of the femur. The skeletal elements were in good condition and well preserved. The right humerus was lifted, cleaned and examined before being replaced in its original position.

### Sex

The sex of this individual was determined to be male, through a brief analysis of the morphological features of the pelvis according to Phenice (1969) and the metric analysis of the humeral dimensions. The shape of the iliac blades appeared to be narrow, and what was visible of the pelvic inlet was narrow too. The maximum diameter of the humeral head in a vertical plane was found to be 50.0 mm, which suggests that the individual was male (Bass, 1995).

### Age

It was possible to estimate the age of Skeleton 4 through analysis of epiphyseal union of the long bones, vertebrae and pelvis, the surface of the pubic symphysis, and dental eruption and attrition.

Fusion of the head and the distal epiphysis to the shaft of the femur and the humerus was not quite



Fig. 2. (Above) A patient with a mandibular abscess, indicating how this condition may have appeared during life (<http://www.med-college.net>)

Fig. 1. (Left) The mandible showing the location of the abscess and illustrating its marked asymmetry

complete – the epiphyseal line was visible. Complete fusion of these epiphyses to the shaft usually occurs at about 18-20 years (Schwartz, 1995). The iliac crest was not completely fused to the iliac blade. The epiphyseal plates of some thoracic and lumbar vertebrae had not yet fused to the bodies of the vertebrae. Fusion occurs in these areas between the ages of 16 and 25 years (Schwartz, 1995). The surface of the pubic symphysis showed extreme billowing and furrowing, indicative of a young adult, and its characteristics were best described by Phase I of the Todd scoring system (Buikstra and Ubelaker, 1994), which suggests an age of 18-19 years. The lower third molars or “wisdom teeth” had not yet erupted. This usually happens between the ages of 16 and 30 years (Schwartz, 1995). The teeth showed no evidence of wear and attrition, which is also indicative of a young adolescent. As a result of these observations, it is estimated that Skeleton 4 was approximately 16 years old at the time of death.

#### *Stature*

The approximate stature of Skeleton 4 during life was estimated using long bone measurements. Using the maximum length of the humerus, 33.1cm, it was estimated that his height was between 169.19cm to 178.33cm (approx. 5' 5" to 5' 8"), with an average of 173.76cm, or about 5' 7" (Trotter and Gleser, 1977). This estimate is only based on the length of the humerus, and could be improved if the femoral and tibial lengths were included in the calculation.

#### **Skeleton 6**

Skeleton 6 was partially exposed, from the head to the waist, truncated at the lumbar vertebrae. The pelvis was not visible. The skeletal elements were in good condition and well preserved. The left and right humerae and the mandible were lifted, cleaned and examined before being replaced in their original positions. The right humerus was found to be slightly rotated medially in situ, but this is believed to be an artefact of burial, rather than an indication of pathology or trauma during life.

#### *Sex*

The sex of the individual was determined to be male from an analysis of the morphological features of the skull, and metric measurements of the humerus. The skull was robust, and exhibited pronounced supra-orbital ridges and glabella (score = 3). The mandible exhibited a large mental eminence (score = 4) and the angle of the mandible was close to 90°. All of these features suggest a male individual (Buikstra and Ubelaker, 1994). The diameter of the left humeral head in a vertical plane was 47.96mm, and of the right was 47.79mm, which both fall into the male range

(Bass, 1995). The humerae exhibited defined muscle attachments at the point of attachment of the deltoid muscle and were robust in morphology.

#### *Age*

The age of the individual was estimated using dentition, epiphyseal fusion and the appearance of the vertebrae. The epiphysis at the sternal end of the clavicle was fully fused to the shaft, and the third mandibular and maxillary molars had fully erupted, indicating that the individual had reached skeletal maturity, and was at least 30 years old (Schwartz, 1995). The teeth were in good condition and did not show a lot of wear or attrition, but there was ante-mortem loss of the lower right molars.

The articular surfaces of the lumbar vertebral bodies exhibited marked osteophytic growth, or “lipping” of new bone formation over the edges of the vertebral bodies. This is caused as a result of degeneration of the cartilaginous intervertebral discs between the vertebrae, which stimulates additional bone growth. This is indicative of the early stages of arthritis (Roberts and Manchester, 1999). As a result of these observations, it is estimated that Skeleton 6 was a mature adult, possibly in his 40s or 50s, beginning to show signs of old age.

#### *Stature*

The stature during life of Skeleton 6 was estimated using the length of the left humerus. It was calculated to be between 178.15cm and 187.29cm (approx. 5' 8" and 6' 1"), with an average of about 182.72cm, or 5' 9" (Trotter and Gleser, 1977). It must be remembered that this estimate is based only on the humerus length, which does not directly contribute to the height of the individual, and is therefore not the best element on which to base stature estimation. It does, however, give a rough idea of the height of the individual during life.

#### **Skeleton 7**

The lower half of Skeleton 7 was exposed, from the mid-shaft of the femur to the toes. It was well preserved and in good condition. The pelvis was not visible. The tibia were removed, cleaned and measured before being replaced in their original positions.

#### *Sex*

The only tentative means of determining sex in this truncated skeleton was to measure the epicondylar breadth/bicondylar width across the distal end of the femur (Bass, 1995). This breadth was 112mm, which strongly indicates that this is a male individual. The long bones of the leg were very robust and masculine in size and morphology, which also indicates that the individual was male and led an active life.

### Age

It was only possible to determine that Skeleton 7 was a fully adult individual from the exposed remains, as all of the epiphyses of the long bones had fully fused. There was no indication of arthritis or other degenerative disease on the exposed remains to suggest an elderly individual.

### Stature

The stature during life of Skeleton 6 was estimated using the length of the left and right tibiae. It was calculated to be between 169.77cm and 177.77cm (approx. 5' 5" and 5' 8"), with an average of about 173.77cm, or 5' 7" (Trotter and Gleser, 1977). A more accurate stature estimation would have been possible if the femur dimensions had been available.

### Skeleton 8

The lower half of Skeleton 8 was visible in the trench, with the lumbar vertebrae, distal ends of the radii and ulnae and hands, the whole pelvis, femora and the top of the tibiae exposed. The exposed bones were well preserved and in good condition, although quite fragile and crumbly. The right side of the pelvis, the femur and the radius were lifted, cleaned and examined before being replaced in their original positions.

### Sex

The sex of the individual was determined to be female from an analysis of the morphological features of the skull, pelvis and metric measurements of the femur and radius. The pelvis exhibited a very wide sciatic notch (score = 1), wide sub-pubic angle, a definite pre-auricular sulchus (score = 2) (Buikstra and Ubelaker, 1994). The maximum diameter of the femoral head in a vertical plane was found to be 43.0 mm, and the transverse diameter of the distal articular surface of the radius was 22.0mm, both of which measurements suggest that the individual was female (Bass, 1995).

### Age

It was possible to estimate the age of Skeleton 8 through analysis of the surface of the pubic symphysis and the appearance of the auricular surface of the ilium. The surface of the pubic symphysis showed characteristics best described by Phase VII or VIII of the Todd scoring system (Buikstra and Ubelaker, 1994), which suggests an age of 35-45 years. The auricular surface exhibited density and coarse granulation, with vague striae, and slight activity in the retroauricular area. The phase that best described the characteristics was Phase 5 of the Meindl and Lovejoy (1989), which suggests an age range of 40-44 years. As a result of these observations, it is estimated that Skeleton 8 was an adult in her early 40s.

### Stature

The stature during life of Skeleton 8 was estimated using the length of the right femur, 45.2cm. It was calculated to be between 162.02cm and 169.46cm (approx. 5' 3" and 5' 5"), with an average of about 165.74cm, or 5' 4" (Trotter and Gleser, 1977).

### Skeleton 14

Only the lower half of Skeleton 14 was visible in the trench. The distal portion of the femora and whole tibiae and feet were exposed. All bones were in good condition. The left tibia was removed, cleaned and measured before being replaced in its original position.

### Sex

It was not possible to determine the sex of this individual by analysis of the bones in situ, as the primary indicators of sex, the pelvis and the skull, were not exposed.

### Age

It was not possible to accurately determine the age of this individual, except to say that it was a mature adult, as all of the epiphyses of the long bones were fully fused.

### Stature

The stature during life of Skeleton 14 was estimated using the length of the left tibia, 38.8cm. It was calculated to be between 171.83cm and 179.83cm (approx. 5' 6" and 5' 9"), with an average of about 175.83cm, or 5' 7" (Trotter and Gleser, 1977). It should be remembered that this stature estimation is based on the tibia only, and an improved estimation could have been made if it had been possible to include the femur in the calculation. Also, this estimation assumes the individual was male, which may be incorrect.

### Skeleton 15

The only part of Skeleton 15 recovered and analysed was a single femur. This was broken post-mortem, but was otherwise in good condition and well preserved. Once measured, it was replaced in the trench in its original position.

### Sex

It was possible to arrive at a tentative estimation of the sex of the individual from metric measurements of the femur. The bicondylar breadth or epicondylar width of the femur across the distal end was 68mm, which suggests that the individual was female (Bass, 1995). The maximum diameter around the femoral head in a vertical plane was 43.0mm, which also suggests the individual was female (Bass, 1995).



### Age

It was not possible to accurately determine the age of this individual, except to say that it was a mature adult, as all of the epiphyses of the long bones were fully fused.

### Stature

The stature during life of Skeleton 14 was estimated using the length of the femur, 45.8cm. It was calculated to be between 163.28cm and 170.95cm (approx. 5' 3" and 5' 6"), with an average of about 167.23cm, or 5' 4" (Trotter and Gleser, 1977).

### Sample Population

It would be unwise to draw strong conclusions about the wider population based on the evidence provided by the extremely small sample of individuals from this

burial ground or cemetery, but as a group, the skeletons exposed by the trench exhibited some interesting characteristics. All of the stature estimates indicate that these people were taller than average. Many of the skeletons exhibited robust muscle attachments of their humerae, where the deltoid muscle attaches, which may indicate that they lead active lifestyles that included heavy lifting or manual labour. There was also some evidence of arthritis in a couple of the skeletons, which also suggests that the individuals were engaged in strenuous activity that would have caused active degeneration of their spinal columns. It also is an indication that people were living into their 50s and beyond, which may be unusual for the time period.

### Summary of Findings

Skeleton	Sex	Age (years)	Stature (ave. cm)	Comments
Skeleton 1	Male	50+	178	Severe mandibular abscess
Skeleton 4	Male	16	173	
Skeleton 6	Male	Mature adult	182	
Skeleton 7	Male	Mature adult	173	
Skeleton 8	Female	40-44	165	
Skeleton 14	Unknown	Mature adult	175	
Skeleton 15	Female	Mature adult	167	

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Anna Williams is Lecturer in Forensic Anthropology, Department of Applied Science, Security and Resilience, Cranfield University, Shrivenham.

## Brightwell Baldwin Community History and Archaeology Project (BBCHAP)

### 2009 Excavation in Brightwell Park

Ian Clarke

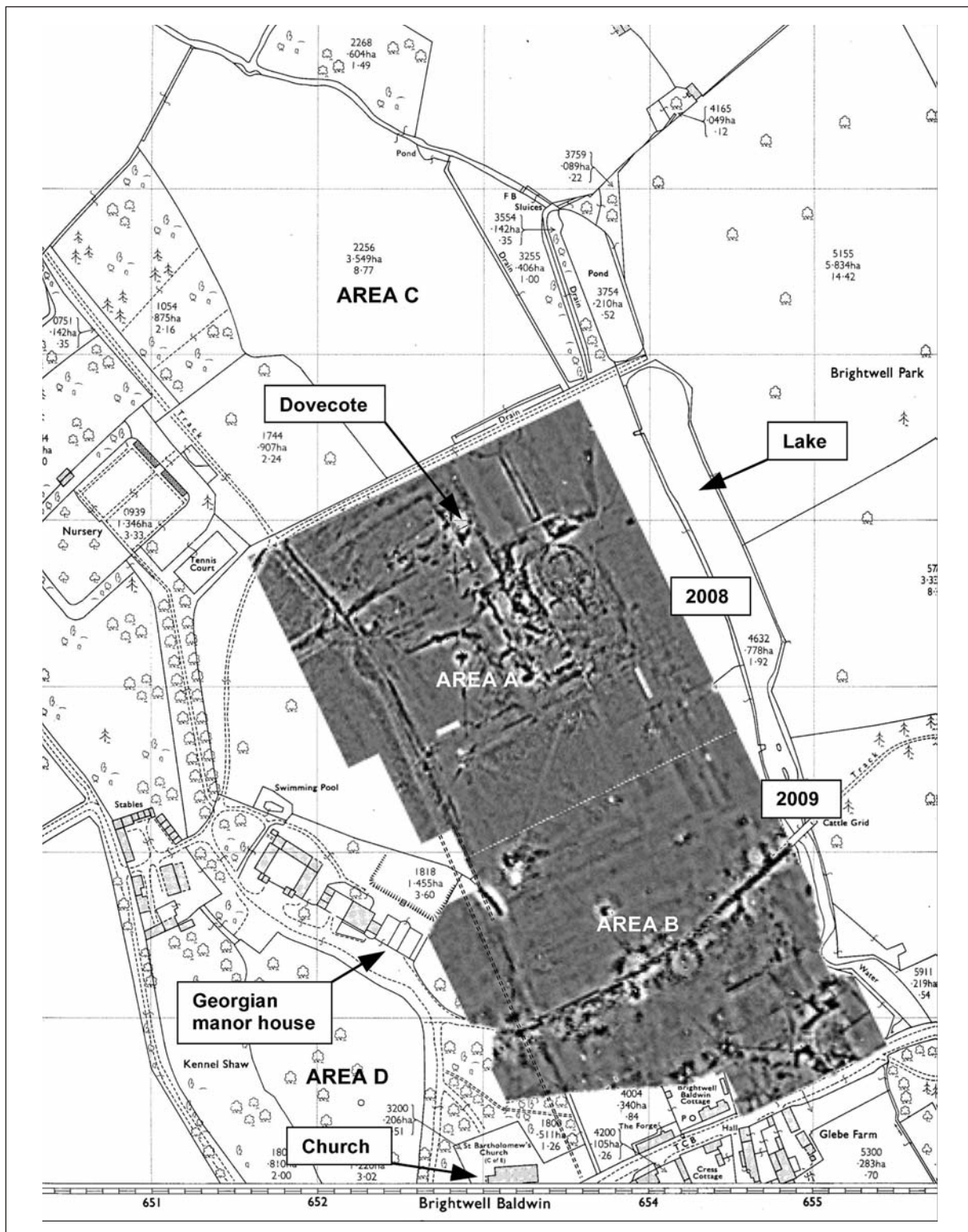


Fig. 1. 2008-09 twin-probe resistance survey of the central and southern enclosures of Brightwell Park

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## Introduction

The old 'Manor of Parkes', the principal manor of Brightwell Baldwin throughout the Medieval and early post-Medieval period, was burnt to the ground in 1788 and its location within Brightwell Park was forgotten. The site was rediscovered by a geophysical survey in 2008 which revealed an extensive complex of buildings and garden archaeology in close proximity to the well known Brightwell Park dovecote, as fully reported last year in *SOAG Bulletin* No. 63 (Clarke, 2009). In 2009, the geophysical survey was extended southwards to cover the remainder of the park to the boundary, revealing the southern extent of the old manor's formal gardens and south carriage drive. Later in 2009, a two-week excavation uncovered a small area of the manor house buildings. This report primarily covers the archaeology revealed by that excavation, but also gives a reinterpretation of the 2008 geophysical data in the light of those findings. The report is an abridged version of the interim report to be published in *South Midlands Archaeology* No. 40 in 2010.

## Geophysical survey in Brightwell Park (2008/09)

The location of the 0.5m twin-probe resistance meter survey is shown in Fig. 1. It covers an area of c4.6ha of the central enclosure of the Park (Area A, 2008) and c4.3ha of the southern enclosure (Area B, 2009). The dovecote is located at SU 6528 9540. The direction of survey is 25.5° west of grid north,

i.e. roughly on a NNW–SSE line. Grids were edge-matched and all data despiked before further processing. Figs 2 and 3 show the data after high-pass filtering. Dark features indicate high resistance and light features low resistance.

The data reveals extensive archaeology in Area A of what we interpret to be the buildings of the old manor house, together with evidence for 'Italianate' style formal gardens that once surrounded the manor house, and the carriage drives that provided a formal approach from the north and south. The dovecote is shown to be an integral part of the layout. The survey in Area B confirmed the southern extent of the formal gardens and the straight line of the south carriage drive through to the High Street (the earlier name for the main street through the village). It also revealed evidence in the south-east corner of the Park for the old rectory that was demolished c1802 and possible evidence for Medieval crofts along the High Street; both important features to be reported on at a later date. This report concentrates on the old manor house.

Many of the geophysical anomalies can be interpreted as archaeological features with a fair degree of certainty, as reported in *SOAG Bulletin* No. 63. The interpretation of carriage drives, main entrance and garden features remains unchanged and is shown in Fig. 2 – note that the data plot here has been rotated so that north is towards the left side of the page with

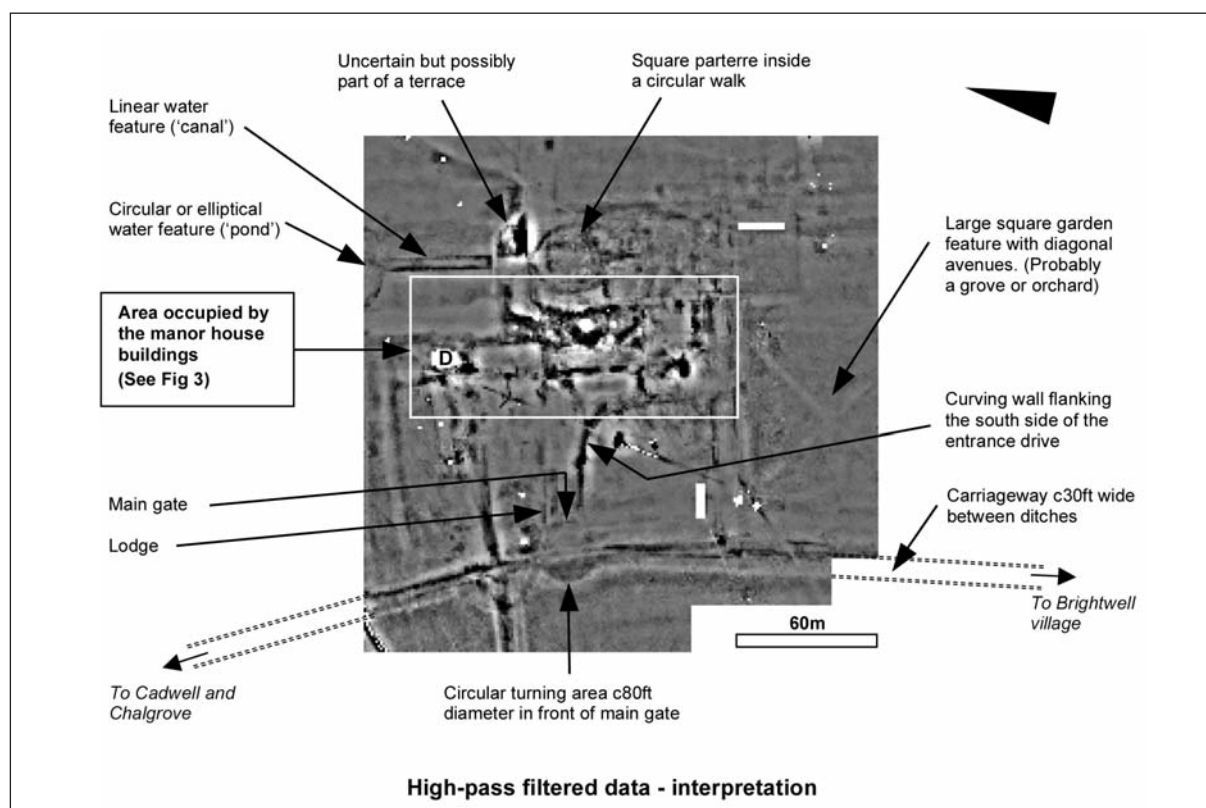


Fig. 2. Brightwell Park (Area A): 2008 twin-probe resistance data at 1 x 1 m intervals. (D is the dovecote.)



the carriageways running across the bottom – but some uncertainty remains concerning the location and layout of the manor house buildings. As is usually the case, the results of excavation prompted a re-examination of the geophysical data and some amendment to earlier interpretation is necessary.

#### *The manor house buildings – a reinterpretation*

Reference should be made to Fig. 3, which shows the area enclosed by the white rectangle in Fig. 2 to a larger scale. The following is a revised interpretation of what we may have, based around the reasonable assumption that the main house was originally a Medieval hall-house.

The features we believe represent the principal structures and buildings are aligned on and parallel to a principal NNW–SSE axis (dashed line X–X in Fig. 3) that has the dovecote at the north end. Directly on this axis are two large, low-resistance, rectangular areas, which we now think are open areas, or ‘courtyards’. Between these two ‘courtyards’ is a broad, higher resistance feature that appears to be a building. (The western end of this building was the focus of the 2009 excavation, as reported below.) Just to the south of this ‘courtyard building’ and directly on a rectilinear (WSW–ENE) cross-axis (dashed line Y–Y in Fig. 3, which is aligned on the ‘main gate’) is a feature protruding westwards beyond the line of the courtyard wall. This is likely to be the ‘gateway’ to the south courtyard, possibly with a small gatehouse. Immediately to the east of the two courtyards is a large, roughly rectangular area of high-resistance features that is now believed to be the ‘main house’. The eastern end of the courtyard building joins onto the main house. The rectilinear cross-axis (Y–Y) from the main gate, through the supposed gateway into the south courtyard, passes through the centre of the circular ‘parterre’ garden feature, immediately to the east of the house; so if we are right about the gateway, it seems likely that the porch of the main house will also

be on that alignment, with a ‘screens passage’ beyond.

At this stage it is not possible to be certain about the layout of the house, but a provisional interpretation is offered in Fig. 3 based on the suppositions above concerning the location of the entrance porch and screens passage. If correct, then to the south of the screens passage would be the Medieval Great Hall, with parlour and solar beyond, and to the north of it would be the service area. This is of course speculative and can only be proved by excavation.

#### **Excavation in Brightwell Park (2009)**

Over two weeks in June/July 2009 we carried out an exploratory excavation on the old manor house site and Fig. 3 shows the location of the trench. A favoured hypothesis at the time (Clarke 2009) was that this might be the location of the entrance porch into a screens passage, with the large rectangle to the south representing the Great Hall. But the emerging archaeology did not support this and by the end of the dig our tentative conclusion was that we had uncovered part of a wing of the main house, built along the north side of a courtyard, with possibly part of a gateway or ‘gatehouse’ in the south-west corner of the trench. If correct, then the Great Hall would be fronting the east side of that courtyard, about 8m (25ft) east of our 2009 trench (as outlined in the revised geophysics interpretation above). Post-excavation analysis has reinforced this conclusion.

A rectangular trench of 8 x 6m was opened and later enlarged in selected areas to cover a total of 66m<sup>2</sup>. Building archaeology was found 0.1–0.2m below the surface and covered the whole area of the trench, extending into the balk on all sides. The archaeology is shown in Figs 4 and 5.

#### *Earlier building levels*

The excavation plan did not allow the complete removal of later building archaeology to fully reveal earlier levels. The latter were, however, explored by

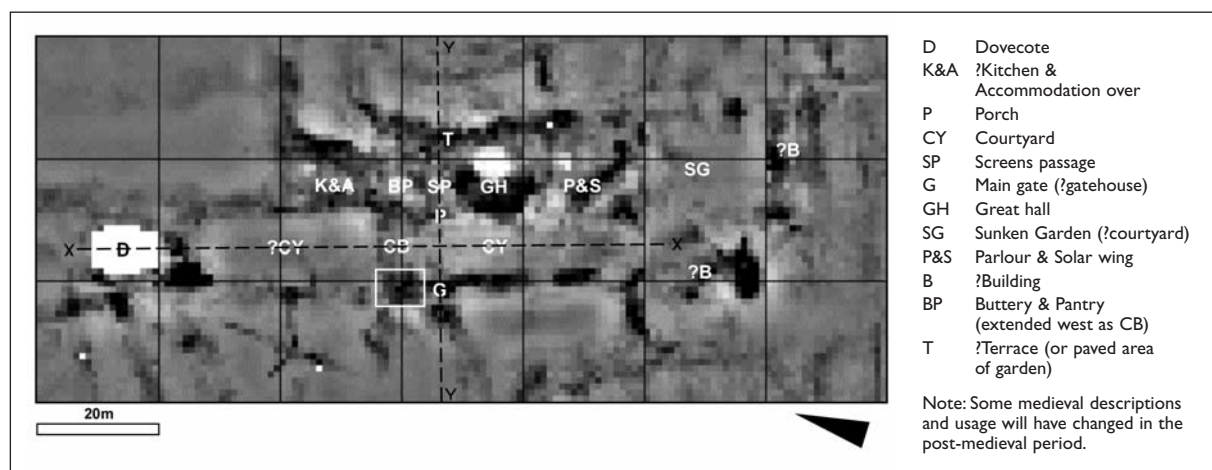


Fig. 3. Possible layout of the manor house – provisional interpretation. (The white rectangle shows the location of the 2009 trench.)



Fig. 4. View of 2009 trench. (Two small extensions were later cut into the north balk.)

two sondage pits [small exploratory pits – Ed.] on the line of the ‘west-wall’ feature in the geophysics, a feature not at first evident in the trench. The first sondage [SOND1] revealed the lower layers of a substantial wall [016] c1.2m thick, built from large, rough-hewn, local chalkstone (Totternhoe stone) in a lime mortar. This had been reduced to a level just above a mortar floor [014] about 50-75mm thick, laid after the wall was built and abutting it on the east side. The floor was laid on a compacted silty-clay sub-soil which also bounded the west side of the wall at

the same level. It was not excavated but may be the natural. To the south the wall appeared to continue under a chalkstone and mortar floor [018] – certainly the line of the wall was clearly visible to the south of the trench as a linear earthwork, corresponding with the ‘west-wall’ feature in the geophysical data. To the north, the wall appeared to continue beneath a later sand and gravel layer [004], so a second sondage [SOND2] was dug at the north edge of the trench on the wall-line, where it was hoped there would be a corner where the wall turned east, as suggested by the geophysical data. Similar large chalkstones and some mortar were found in the south and east cuts of SOND 2 at the expected depth, but if this was the wall it was severely robbed out. With only a small area exposed the result is encouraging but inconclusive.

The mortar floor [014] was incomplete and the ground beneath had subsided, giving the floor a south - north downward tilt. The same tilt was visible in wall [016] and in the ground the other side of it. The broken northern edge of the floor was bounded by tumbled stones from wall [016]; its southern edge by another wall [008] c0.6m wide, built from chalk and lime mortar from the same ground level as the floor. Both walls [016] and [008] were built before floor [014] was laid. The walls were clearly contemporaneous for a time, but their age and

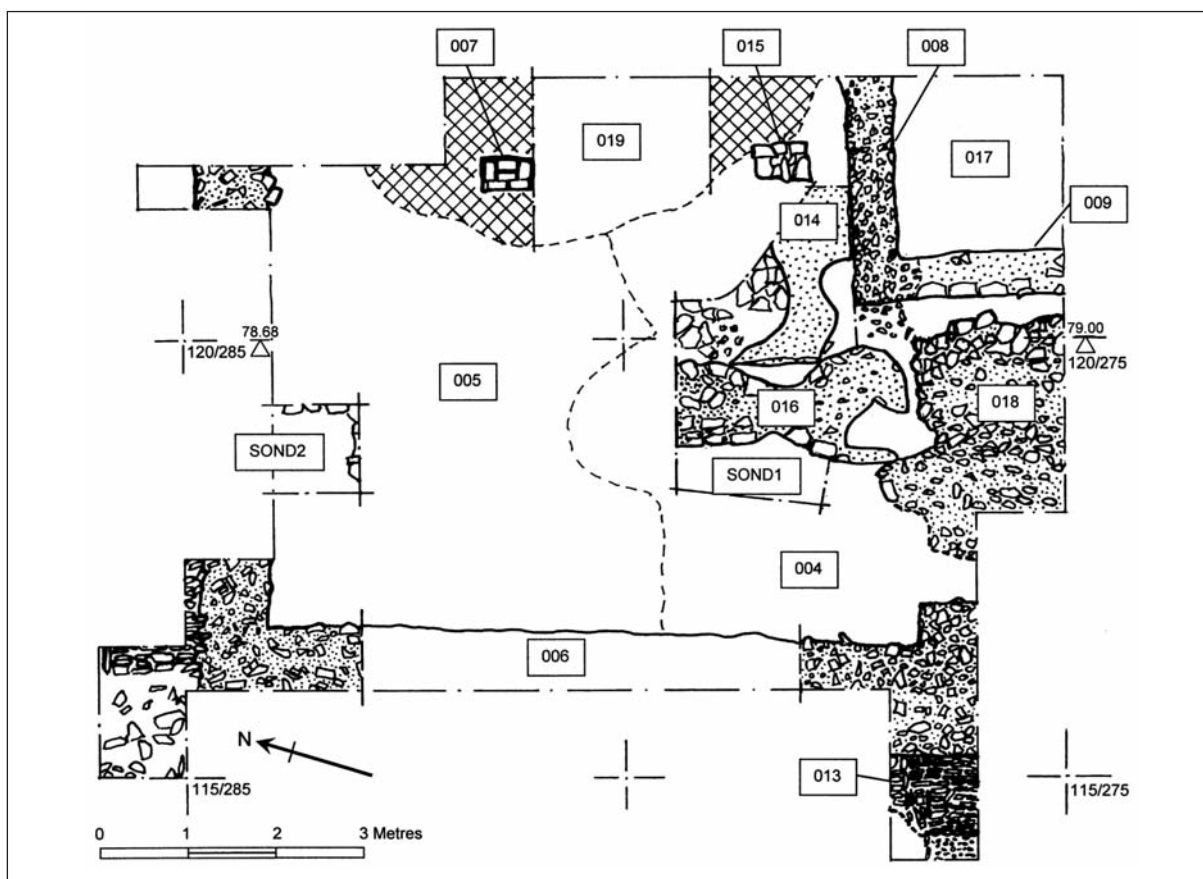


Fig. 5. Plan of 2009 trench

relative chronology could not be determined with certainty. They contained no brick and only rare fragments of roof tile, but whilst this might suggest an early date it is not conclusive. The chalk used for [016] was generally large to very large and blocky, but that for [008] was medium to large rubble. The weight and construction of [008] suggests it was a dwarf wall to support a wall plate and timber structure.

Evidence suggests that wall [008] originally extended up to and abutted wall [016] and that wall [009], built at right angles to it, belongs to a later phase.

#### *Later building levels*

At some point in time, wall [016] was demolished and covered over with later building levels. A new wall [006] was built, approximately parallel to and replacing wall [016], but 2.4m west of it. The thickness of wall [006] was exposed by a 2 x 1m extension in the south-west corner of the trench where it proved to be c1.2m thick, but widening out abruptly to c1.8m about 0.8m from the south balk. The remains of the wall comprised a rubble core (or base) of poorly sorted, small/large chalk, brick and tile in lime mortar. Brick fragments in the core varied in width from 3½-4½ inches (89-114mm) and in thickness from 1¾-2¼ inches (44-57mm), suggestive of a possible Tudor date. It seems most likely that the wall had facings of brick (although stone is possible) but this was not clear at the level excavated. No complete bricks were recovered.

A 1 x 1.5m extension in the north-west corner of the trench and one of 1.5 x 0.5m in the north-east corner confirmed that wall [006] turned east through a right angle to run the full width of the trench just under the north balk. The small parts of the north wall exposed were only 0.8m thick. The northern end of the west wall may have been only 0.8m thick too, but this was just in line with the balk and was not confirmed.

Outside wall [006] in the south-west extension, a pavement or drip-course [013] 0.75m wide was revealed comprising large chalk slabs about 50-70mm thick, close-packed and laid on edge at about 30° to the vertical. The outer edge of this pavement was defined by a line of medium to large, cobblestones and outside this was a packed gravel area [011]. The south-west extension revealed a similar pavement of close-packed, inclined chalk slabs outside the north wall, here at least 1.2m wide. This pavement had been partly destroyed but numerous loose cobblestones and chalkstones from it were recovered. All the (inclined) pavement stones had one well-rounded top edge, indicative of human and animal traffic over a significant time period.

In this phase, wall [008] remained standing but was shortened by about 0.6m and a new wall [009] was built at right angles to it. Wall [009] contained some rubble similar to [008] but was generally better built, incorporating large, angular, thin slabs of chalk, with the outside faces well dressed. It also appeared to have been built from a higher ground level than [008] although this was not confirmed with absolute certainty. To the west of wall [009] and possibly covering part of the remains of old wall [016], is a sub-floor [018] comprising a mono-layer c50mm thick of rough hewn, medium to large angular chalk in a lime mortar. The remains of this floor stopped short of wall [009] leaving an irregular gap of 0.2-0.3m. If this floor was laid as part of the 'Tudor remodelling', then the gap may have resulted from the post-fire robbing out of a wall facing, or of a tiled or stone floor. An alternative theory is that floor [018] is an earlier deposit that has been cut through to build wall [009]. There is an unexplained gap along the north side between this floor and the remains of the old wall [016]. It is possible that this floor was laid in a break in the wall for a Medieval gateway, the gap on the north side being where the floor abutted the reveal of a gatepost, later demolished.

Inside the new outer wall [006], the whole area was covered and levelled by a compacted layer [004] of small to medium flint in a reddish-brown sand matrix. This formed a floor, or more properly a 'base-layer' for a floor, up to 150mm thick, bounded by the west and north outer walls, by wall [008] and floor [018] on the south side, and extending into the balk on the east side. It merged along an uneven line on its north-west side with sub-floor [018] with no change in level, which does support the idea of this perhaps being an earlier floor. This base-layer was well sorted and was notably free of inclusions and finds in the limited areas excavated [SOND1 and SOND2], with only very rare iron nails being recovered. It seems



Fig. 6. 'Digging up the Park' – the team take a welcome break!



likely that this area was once covered by dry-laid flagstones (there was no sign of mortar) robbed out when the manor house was demolished.

Built on top of base-layer [004] on the east side of the trench, were two rectangular footings [007] and [015], each comprising a rectangle of large, thin slabs of chalk bedded on lime mortar. The east side of the trench was extended by 1m to reveal these footings. Superimposed on footing [007] was a rectangular arrangement of six bricks, laid with lime mortar, giving a base c0.45 x 0.34m (2 x 1.5 bricks). It was clear from residual mortar and displaced bricks that footing [015] once had a similar arrangement. These footings were 3.2m apart and set at right angles to the line of wall [008], with the centre of [015] c0.7m from the wall face. They are too insubstantial to have supported brick or stone pillars and were probably to support timber framing.

#### *Post-fire/demolition levels*

In a localised area of the south-west corner of the trench, overlying a part of wall [006], the adjacent area of sub-floor [004] and that of [018], was a weakly-cemented deposit of reddish-brown sand [010] up to 20mm thick but tapering out to nothing within about 2-3m of the corner of the trench. The deposit was notably clean except for some fragments of early 18th-century stoneware and parts of the base and body of a fine, red earthenware, lathe-turned bowl (c1840s), found resting on wall [006]. This sandy layer probably derived from gravel material [003] brought in to level the site, leached out by rain and panning in some low-lying areas. It was excavated as part of [003] and insufficient attention was paid to understanding and recording it, resulting in some post-excavation confusion. It is at least now certain that it is a post-fire/demolition event.

A deposit [017] in the south-east corner of the trench, bounded by walls [008/009], composed loose building rubble in a soil matrix. On the south side was a spread of chalkstone and mortar c0.6m wide that derived from the demolition of wall [008]. Wall [009] seems to have been dismantled more carefully, supporting the proposition that it was built from better material. Covering the rest of the area was a large quantity of broken roof tile, including some valley tiles. There was insufficient time to excavate this deposit fully to 'ground' level, but the belief is that this area is part of the courtyard.

Covering sub-floor [004] over roughly the whole of the northern half of the trench, was a mono-layer of medium to large, rough-hewn chalk building rubble [005], some of this being constructional wall-stone and some showing the characteristic single worn edge of pavement stones, and including c2-5% broken ceramic building material (CBM), mostly roof-tile. The

interstices of this rubble layer in the north-eastern quadrant of the trench contained very small to small charcoal, varying from 30% coverage close to the balk, and decreasing to less than 5% over a distance of 3-5m from the corner. The part of sub-floor [004] revealed in the eastern 1m trench extension, was overlaid by a layer of sandy silt containing and overlaid by a dense ash layer [019].

Covering the whole of the trench was a friable layer [003] 25-75mm thick of moderately sorted, small to medium angular flint gravel in a clayey-silt, soil matrix, containing c15% medium to large, poorly sorted CBM and rough hewn chalkstone, rising to c40% on the east side overlying the ash layer [019]. This latter area included a deposit of decayed mortar c1m in diameter, adjacent to the north-west corner of footing [015] and a number of half and three-quarter bricks were recovered from around this footing. Over most of the trench, the flint and rubble layer [003] included occasional very small to medium pot and glass, iron nails and clay tobacco pipe (CTP), rising to frequent in the area on the east side close to and between footings [007] and [015]. This area yielded a significant number of finds of high-quality 17/18th-century ceramics and large quantities of broken wine bottles, far exceeding the total recovered from the rest of the trench – over 10kg of wine bottle glass was recovered. From the very edge of the trench in this area also came some dressmaking or lace pins and a fragment of a stick from a lady's fan. The only early period find was a corner of a Medieval decorated floor tile, design Penn P69, c1350 (Bucks XIV).

Layer [003] was essentially the lowest level of a flint gravel deposit [002] up to 0.2m thick of similar basic composition, but including only rare medium to large chalk rubble, small to medium CBM, rare cobblestones, and rare bulk finds. This material had been brought in to cover the site and was overlain by the topsoil and turf [001] c0.1m thick. One fragment of dressed marble was recovered from deposit [002]

#### **Discussion and provisional interpretation**

The archaeology is consistent with this being the western end of a range of buildings, or wing, of the main house, built along or forming the north side of a courtyard. The provisional interpretation is as follows.

The early chalkstone wall [016] was the plain wall of a Medieval courtyard, with the main access gate probably sited just to the south of our trench. The main house, based on a Medieval hall-house, fronted the east side of this courtyard. The north side of the courtyard was formed by a wing built out from the service (north) end of the hall-house, probably initially forming an L-shape. (Possible later extension



of the main house to the north seems to have resulted in a T-shape.) The courtyard wall of this range is represented by the wall [008] in the south-east corner of our trench, which was probably a dwarf wall supporting a timber-framed structure.

Some time in the Tudor period the stone courtyard wall was demolished, wholly or in part, and replaced by a new wall [006] some 2.4m to the west, most probably faced with brick. It seems likely that the old courtyard gate was replaced by a new and grander one, and we may have a corner of such showing as the thickened part of the outer wall in the south-west corner of our trench. Possibly there was a gatehouse. The stone courtyard wall to the south of this may have been retained, or possibly it too was replaced (or refaced) with brick in a consistent architectural style, but only excavation can determine this. The base of the new outer wall was finished and protected outside by a decorative pavement of chalk slabs, laid on edge and divided from adjacent areas by a line of cobbles, providing a drip-course and dry walkway.

The courtyard building was enlarged out to the new wall-line and extended into an L-shape. The reduced structures inside were covered and levelled by compacted sand and gravel, probably to support flagstone flooring. The new floor was dry-laid except perhaps on the south side between wall [009] and the outer wall [006], where chalk in lime mortar (floor [018]) provided the base. The enlarged room was divided by a timber-framed wall, or screen, supported on footings [007/015]. The function of the building is not clear, but the finds in this area included a significant proportion of high-status, 17/18th-century objects. The buildings clearly had a tiled roof as broken tiles were found scattered over the whole of the trench, and outside the courtyard building, in the corner formed by the walls [008/009], was a large deposit of broken roof tiles, including valley tiles. The courtyard buildings remained standing through the early post-Medieval and up to the destruction event of 1788.

An historical account tells us that the house was destroyed by fire on 11 March 1788. The area of ash and charcoal on the east side of the trench is therefore significant and may be evidence for that fire spreading out from the main house along this wing; alternatively, it may simply be from a post-demolition bonfire. We cannot be certain either way without further excavation towards the main house. Following the fire, all useful building materials were robbed out and used in the construction of the new house, or sold, and this certainly included the brick walls and stone flooring. Any remaining standing walls were slighted and the rubble spread across the site. There was no incentive to clear pottery and glass broken by

the collapse of the building, and this was probably left lying where it fell, becoming mixed with the building rubble as demolition proceeded and floors were prised up. After the clearance, gravel (probably from a source within the parish) was brought in to level the site and form a drainage layer before the whole was covered with top soil and seeded for pasture.

The data and post-excavation analysis so far enables dating of events only to the broad periods of Medieval, Tudor and early post-Medieval, and post-fire. And although this provisional interpretation makes sense of the archaeology revealed, we have not yet uncovered a sufficiently large area to be certain. That wall [009] is later than [008] has yet to be determined with absolute certainty; and whether wall [009] terminates at a closing wall, or joins a gatehouse, is unknown at this stage. It is also unclear whether floor [018] belongs to the Tudor remodelling phase or is earlier, although the idea that it may be part of a Medieval gateway is intriguing. There are unanswered questions concerning the location and status of the courtyard gateway. The landowners have kindly agreed that we can return to the site in 2010 to examine the area immediately to the south of the 2009 trench and this will include reopening part of the 2009 trench to try to resolve some of the outstanding matters.

### Acknowledgments

A community project is totally dependent on the enthusiasm and skill of its volunteers. A measure of that enthusiasm is that all of our local volunteers have become SOAG members and so are contributing not just to their own project, but to the success of the whole Group. I am delighted to pay special tribute to the 'geophys' team who contributed their time so willingly and to thank all who took part in the excavation, not least Site Supervisor Peter Shackleton and Finds Officer Catherine Clarke, and to congratulate them all on their achievement. I am especially pleased that BBCHAP excavations are approved by Universities and that in 2009, Peter Shackleton, Liane Deacon and Lee Janes used the Brightwell Park dig as part of their University of Bristol archaeology course fieldwork requirement. Finally, my grateful thanks go to our enthusiastic and supportive landowners, Tessa and Nigel Mogg, who now have their ancestors' old manor house back.

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# Gatehampton Farm Roman Villa Excavation

## Interim Report 2009

Hazel Williams

*The excavation of the Roman villa at Gatehampton was begun in 1992, under the direction of Cynthia Graham Kerr, founder and first President of SOAG. Hazel Williams was formally appointed Director of Excavation in 2010, having worked with Cyn since 1997.*

### Introduction

The project attracts new members and visitors every year, mainly from Oxfordshire and Berkshire, but also a small number from much further afield. As in previous years, students from the University of Bristol, the University of Reading, and others, use their Gatehampton experience as part of their course credits. Basic training in all on-site activities was provided as usual, with opportunities for more experienced diggers to enhance their skills.

During 2009 work was completed on several areas of the site in advance of backfilling. In Trench 11 the cobbled surface was removed and the small ditch with mid-Iron Age pottery fully excavated. At the same time the stokeroom floor was exposed and the deposits within the furnace flue sectioned. An investigation of the relationship between the hot and warm rooms of the bathhouse area showed that there was more than one phase in that part of the building. A further look at an area of cobbles outside the south-west corner of the building revealed a pathway and close by, the burial of a neonate, the third to be found in that vicinity.

The biggest challenge in 2009 was the backfilling of the trenches on the western side of the field: Trench 11; the smaller Trenches 13-15; and a substantial area of Trench 7. It was important, particularly in relation to the deeper areas of the bathhouse, to ensure that this was done in a way that would preserve the walls and features of that part of the building; therefore detailed planning was required. Diggers and visitors enjoyed the opportunity to work on the bathhouse area, now complete with the recently discovered apsidal room. This marks the end of a period when visitors and diggers were able to see at first hand the features of a small Roman bathhouse and elements of the heating system.

### Excavation

**Trench 11:** *Cobbled yard and boundary ditches north of the villa enclosure*

In 2008, excavation in Trench 11 and small Trenches 13, 14 and 15 nearby had established that there was a cobbled area and two small boundary ditches 20m

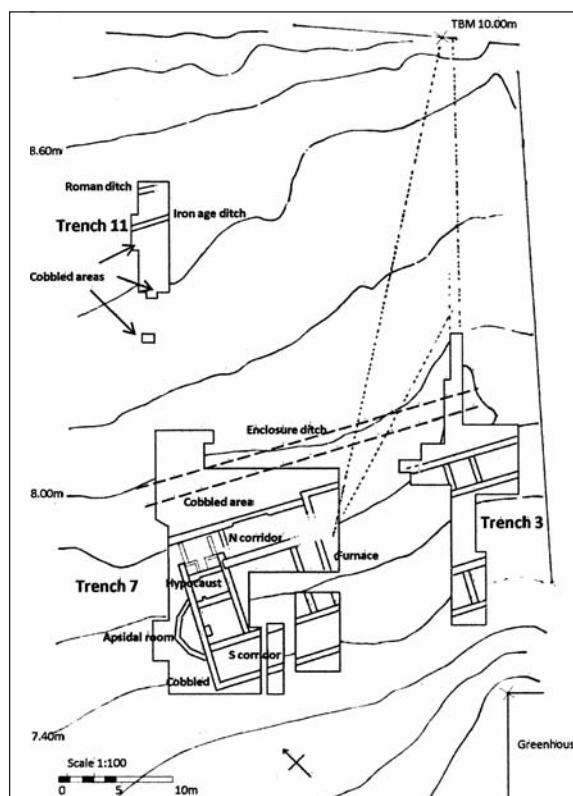


Fig. 1. Site plan

north of the villa enclosure ditch. One of the ditches had mid-Iron Age pottery in the lower fill, but all the material above this had been removed by JCB when the trench was first opened. This meant that the ditch had not been fully excavated, although the stratigraphy in the section along the north-west side of Trench 11 was clear: it showed that the cobbled surface extended across the Iron Age ditch but ended about 2m short of a second small ditch that contained plenty of Roman pottery (Williams, 2009).

In 2008 Trench 11 had been extended by a small area, 3m x 1m, on the east side to expose the cobble surface; in 2009, this was removed and the ditch fill excavated.

The ditch has a shallow, bowl-shaped profile, only 0.5m deep and 0.8m wide. One or two more small fragments of mid-Iron Age pottery were found, confined, as before, to the lower half of the fill. Layers of accumulated soil above this were devoid of finds

except for a very thin deposit only a few centimetres deep immediately under the cobbled surface, where small fragments of Roman tile and pottery were found. It was in this layer that the most remarkable find of 2009 was discovered. After the cobbled surface was removed, cleaning of the baulk revealed a thin green wire object protruding from beneath the stones.

Careful trowelling produced a copper alloy penannular brooch, most probably dropped at about the time the cobbled surface was laid; the stones were quite tightly packed and it seems unlikely that the brooch slipped through. The brooch is in good condition, the pin still intact and movable, and is likely to be Roman in date, indicating that the cobbled surface is contemporary with the villa.

It is likely that both the cobbled area and the outer ditch were contemporary with the villa. The 3rd- to 4th-century pottery found in the ditch fill included a number of fragments of the same Alice Holt jar and plenty of black burnished ware. The cobbled surface or yard was quite well constructed, with signs of more than one layer of stones in places. The spread of stones appears to extend over an area at least 6m x 10m. No post holes or signs of an agricultural outbuilding were found in the small areas excavated.

The two ditches were originally identified by crop marks and confirmed by the SOAG geophysical landscape survey (Williams, 2005) and from this it is known that they continue for more than 200m westward. Efforts to pick up the line of the ditches further eastward, using resistivity and magnetometry, have not been successful. There is a lot of modern disturbance in this part of the site field and the remains of the spoil heap still in the way. It may be that there is a change of direction, northwards. It is hoped that more survey work beyond the road running along the north side of the field will show whether this is the case and it may be possible eventually to do more work on this within the site field.

#### **Trench 7: The bathhouse**

The bathhouse area of the villa, the suite of heated rooms at the western end of the building, is one of the most interesting areas of the site. It was excavated in several phases. The most memorable was the first stage: excavating the rubble that filled the under-floor area, the hypocaust of the 'hot room'. Diggers removed layer after layer of broken box flue tiles mixed with lumps of pink *opus signinum* cement and black soot, with colourful painted wall plaster mixed in. Along the north-east side of the room, the arched shape of the flue entrance became visible and at the bottom of the deposit was a deep layer of soot and charcoal through which the remaining slabs of the *pillae* stacks could be seen.



Fig. 2. Discovery of the brooch under the cobbles



Fig. 3. Copper alloy penannular brooch

From this exciting start, excavation progressed to expose a suite of rooms that must have provided a measure of luxury for the inhabitants of this Roman farmstead building. Although this area has been of great interest in the past, and the focus of open days and visitors to the site, in recent years poor summer weather and the need to protect the area have meant that most of it has remained under cover. A further room, an apsidal room on the western end of the building, has been discovered (Williams, 2009).

In Fig. 4 the bathhouse is seen complete for the first time, when all the covers were removed, in September 2009, prior to backfilling. Viewed from the north, the stokeroom and furnace flue are in the foreground; beyond that the hottest room with the hypocaust; then a second 'warm' room with an *opus signinum* floor and sunken tank feature, but with box tiles in the wall that show it too was heated at one stage. In the background is the south corridor and to the right, the apsidal room that may have been the site of the cold plunge pool.

#### *The stokeroom*

The south side of the stokeroom was excavated several years ago and the furnace flue revealed, plus a small area of the stokeroom floor. The remaining fill of this area below ground level was removed gradually and mostly by junior diggers. The layers of soil and





Fig. 4. View south over bathhouse

domestic refuse deposited there provided a good source of finds: large pieces of pottery; bones; and some exciting objects, including a key and lock mechanism and a copper alloy bracelet (Williams, 2008).

By 2009, all that remained was a deep layer of soot and charcoal, with some patches of chalk, covering the floor area of the stoker room. Excavation of this layer showed that there were concentrated areas of burnt charcoal and soot on either side of the flue entrance, perhaps where ash was initially dumped. The floor beneath this was made of *opus signinum* cement. The flue had already been cleared of collapsed tile but the burnt deposits within the flue had not been disturbed. These were sectioned and revealed a layer of *opus signinum* cement base, with burnt deposits above. This had later been covered by second layer of cement, perhaps to make the raking out of the ash easier, and there was more burnt charcoal on top.

*The hot room and warm room: evidence of more than one phase?*

Part of the *opus signinum* floor of the warm room was excavated to find out if there was originally a second



Fig. 5. Detail of box tiles in corner of hypocaust

flue taking hot air into the room below floor level. Four box tiles (two either side) extending down 40cm under the floor indicated that this room was heated at one time. No sign of an opening was found in the wall separating the two rooms. The under floor area had been filled with rubble and plaster, roughly covered by a thick layer of *opus signinum* cement. Above this the floor had been quite well laid, with a smooth surface and raised moulded edges.

It appears that there may have initially been one larger room with a hypocaust that was eventually divided in two. The second room was then laid out with additional features: a smooth floor and behind a partition wall a sunken tank feature. It may be that the apsidal room was also part of this second phase of development of the bathhouse. It is not clear how the second room was heated. Perhaps there were flue tiles taking heat through the wall. A box tile laid horizontally through the wall of the hot room may have directed hot air into the apsidal room.

*The cobbled area outside the south-west corner of the building*

This cobbled area was already identified and partially excavated but the discovery of the cobbled yard within the enclosure on the north side of the building prompted a further look. A larger area was exposed and revealed a concentration of cobbles forming a pathway, about 0.5m wide, extending in a straight line from a doorway at the west end of the south corridor. An area of burning, close to the corner between the walls of the south corridor and the apsidal room, may have been the site of a brazier.

While this area was being investigated, the opportunity was taken to cut a narrow slot quite close to the field fence to establish the extent of the cobbled surface. At the bottom of this slot, within the layer of rubble over the cobbles, evidence of a third neonate skeleton was found. A small number of cranial fragments were discovered, just before the area was to be backfilled. There was no time left for proper excavation of the rest of the skeleton that we assumed must lie in the adjacent baulk.

Two previous neonate skeletons had already been found in the vicinity; in these the bones of the cranium were undisturbed, but had fragmented due to the pressure of the soil above. It is therefore possible that the remainder of the skeleton is largely intact. After permission was obtained to handle the remains, the fragments of skull were photographed and recorded before being placed back into the trench. This last-minute discovery seems to confirm that the rubble of the abandoned building was habitually used for the burial of stillborn or neonate infants.



Fig. 6. Backfilling the bathhouse

### Backfilling of the trenches

After much preparation, the backfill of the western half of Trench 7 and other smaller trenches north of the villa was completed in one day. The deeper areas of the bathhouse had already been prepared. The under floor areas of the hypocaust and stokerroom were lined with geotextile to preserve the surfaces but allow moisture through. More geotextile was laid across the *opus signinum* floor and other features. The deep areas such as the hypocaust and the stokerroom were then filled with sand to ensure stability. The whole trench area was then covered with spoil. The geotextile was also used to form a barrier across a 10m gap where there was no baulk separating the backfilled area from the rest of the trench.

A year later the area remains very stable and we are confident that the walls and features of that part of the villa will be preserved for the future. Coins of 2009 were left in the trench to help future archaeologists, and also one of Cyn's well-worn trowels, as a fitting tribute to all her work at Gatehampton.

### Geophysical survey and preparation for 2010

The focus of the excavation has shifted eastward, with the eastern half of Trench 7 still open and with plans to extend it further in 2010. There is a gap of approximately 7m between the east side of the current trench and the old Trench 3 that

was excavated in the 90s. All our surveys and observations indicate that the building continues eastwards beyond the field hedge on that side. A survey in 2009 by Geoff Deakin using the SOAG RM15 Resistivity Meter picked up the features excavated in Trench 3, but showed very little in the gap between the two trenches. Work during 2010 will concentrate on this area.

### The people

During 2009 a slightly smaller than usual team of diggers worked very hard, at times on the process of filling trenches, less interesting than excavating them. But there were some exciting new discoveries, we made good progress and successfully completed the backfilling of a large area of the site. I would like to thank everyone for their efforts. The excavation was open for more than 20 days between May and October, and 45 people dug at the site over this time. Numbers of volunteers were lower, due to the concentration on backfilling rather than opening new areas and recruiting new diggers. It is expected that in 2010 more volunteers will be involved. A more structured approach to on-site training is being developed, now that we have several more experienced diggers who are able to help with this.

Opportunities for young people to experience excavation can be limited and difficult to access



Fig. 7. Work in progress August 2009

without taking a university-based course or incurring expensive fees for participation. Although in the last two years a small additional Dig Fee of £10 has been levied at Gatehampton, to help cover costs, the project is still designed to be accessible to those who may not have any experience of excavation. We have a long tradition at Gatehampton of providing a friendly and welcoming setting in which individual volunteers can benefit from basic training in all site activities, at a pace that suits their level of skill and experience.

### Acknowledgements

We are very grateful to the site owners, Sarah and Roger Edmunds, for their continued support for the project; for kindly allowing us plenty of time to prepare for the backfilling; and for their practical help in providing storage facilities on site as well as mowing. We also appreciate the help that Robin Cloke has given us over the years and he has generously agreed that we can start digging up his part of the field again in 2010.

One very important contributor this year was our JCB operator, Brian Murphy, who skilfully filled and compressed a lorry-load of sand into the deeper areas of the site, while deftly avoiding the walls and features that we were anxious to preserve. He spent a very long day with us and shifted a huge amount of sand and spoil, with an excellent result: the field restored and stable, the archaeology secured for the future.

I would also like to thank Tim Allen, of Oxford Archaeology, for his help and advice. I would like

especially to express our thanks and appreciation to Paul Smith, who retired as County Archaeologist this year, for his invaluable help and support for the project over so many years.

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## Hazelmoor

Pat Preece

The following is a translation from the Reading Abbey Cartulary of the Charter, recorded c.1219, giving land to Reading Abbey.

Gift from William Marshall Earl of Pembroke [son of William the Marshall, Regent for Henry III, who died at his manor in Caversham] for the 10 marks [a mark was the equivalent of two thirds of a pound] worth of land which he was obliged to give to the Abbey for the damage and destruction caused by him and his men during the late war [the uprising against King John] of 72 acres of land in his wood of Caversham [the charter gives it as 60 and 12 acres] viz all the land with trees within the following bounds: from Haselmere north by the circuit of Haselmeden, from the latter

eastwards to the croft of William the Smith, then to the croft of Jordan son of Irevenus, thence by Grimeshole to Oselakmore and thence by his wood back to Haselmere as the land was measured and assigned to the Abbey by Alan of Hyde the donors steward and by the good men of the neighbourhood and as it is enclosed by boundaries (Kemp, 1987).

Looking through some of the documents and information about the old parish of Caversham, we came across the above, referring to an area called Hazelmere. There is a lane from Gallowstree Common to Kidmore End called Hazelmoor Lane. This is within the old parish of Caversham which extended into the hills until the 20th century. 'Moor' or 'more' can often be a corruption of 'mere', meaning boundary from the Old English 'gemaere'; but 'mere' could also be the Old English for 'pool' or 'pond'. We set out to try to find some of the places mentioned and came to various suppositions.





On the Caversham Tithe Award map (BRO) there was a field called Hazemoor land or ground, which is possibly the equivalent of Haselmede or meadow, and there are also two small woodgrounds which could have been the crofts mentioned. It seems likely that 'Grimeshole' could be the field called 'Puck', which could be equated with 'Grim', as both are names for magical beings. The 'hole' of Grimshole mentioned could be in the group of trees which can still be seen in the middle of Little Puck Field, which was also called Well Close.

The wood mentioned could be what is now called Cold Norton Wood. The reference to 'his wood', that is, the wood of the Earl of Pembroke, gives rise to an interesting possibility. A survey of 1552 (PRO) carried out by the King's Surveyor, giving a description of the manor granted to Francis Knowles (later Knollys), mentions a 23-acre coppice called 'Erleswode'. Could this be Cold Norton Wood, which has a similar acreage?

'Oselakmere' is probably OE for 'boggy pond boundary'. 'Ose' may be from 'ooze', 'lac' is OE for 'pond' or 'stretch of water' and again 'mere' for 'boundary'. This possibly is the field called Pond Close at the time of the Tithe Award. Another interesting field name with reference to the boundary of the given land is Hagmoor. This is a compound of 'haga', one meaning of which is 'enclosure in woodland', another is 'hedge'; and 'moor' is probably 'mere' or 'boundary'.

The acreage of these fields and woods from the Tithe Award adds up to 81 acres, as compared with the 72 acres given by William. However it is possible that the boundary did not completely encompass all the fields. Another possibility is that the local customary acres are different from the statutory acres. The statutory acre was established in the reign of Edward I as being 40 roods long and 4 roods wide or 4840 square yards (Richardson 1986) and for several centuries afterwards the customary acre was still used and this could vary in size in parishes all over the country. The nearest known customary acre was on the map of Eastfield near Woodcote dated 1755. On the map the customary acres are bigger: the statutory measure is 7 acres, 2 roods, 29 perches and the same area by customary measure is 6 acres, 2 roods, 1 perch. It is possible that the Caversham acres were similar. Unfortunately we have no map or document listing the customary acre in Caversham.

The northern boundary of the piece of land donated by William is also the boundary of the old parish of Caversham, which is delineated by Reades Lane. The lane has a rich hedge with an average of seven species in a thirty yard length and one count of 11, including such ancient woodland indicators as spindle, whitebeam and maple. The hedge is on a bank, as one would expect of an old boundary. Hazemoor Lane itself has a hedge species count of 8, with a wide bank, and although it is not mentioned in the charter it probably existed then. It was strange in Hazemoor Lane to think we were surrounded by history: could the steward, Alan of Hyde, have ridden along it examining and measuring the land before the handover?

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## The Ladies on the Roof

John White

I was sitting drinking a cup of coffee and wondering, as one does, what I should write for the next *SOAG Bulletin*, when on the radio came a trailer for a quiz programme asking about the connection between 'duchesses', 'empresses' and 'wide ladies'. My interest in measurements (especially imperial ones) made me take notice, and I listened to the whole programme until I could add these to my list of measures. They were revealed as sizes of roofing tiles.

Names of items used by various trades are ephemeral, and fascinating in what they tell us about the various trades and the people employed in them. For example some years ago I worked for a company involved in lighting equipment for theatres and filming. The lighting engineers referred to all the lamps they used by their various trade names, except for one. This lamp was universally known as a 'Blonde', and for some reason the lighting engineers made a habit of collecting these lamps in person from the lady in the supplier's office! The female connection in this case was obvious, but that with roofing tiles was not, so I had got myself a (yet another) project.

The quiz programme, although identifying these aristocratic names with roofing, did not specify what the actual sizes were. However, an initial internet search solved this problem as a supplier's catalogue was found ([www.thetiledroofingconsultancy.com](http://www.thetiledroofingconsultancy.com)) which listed the traditional sizes together with the metric ones that the company also supplied. This was not the full answer as the names were just sizes, not measures (meaning that no number of 'wide ladies' could be said to make an 'empress'), and these sizes applied only to slates and not to tiles, which are made of baked clay.

Further information was obtained from the websites of companies specialising in the supply of reclaimed building materials. Slates were listed as sourced from France and Spain, from Yorkshire, Westmorland and Wales, and under Wales the 'aristocratic ladies' were mentioned but without any further explanation. Other types of roofing material such as clay tiles were also listed, but here the names such as 'Acme' or 'Tilehurst' appear to refer to the manufacturer, or, with names such as 'Pantile' or 'Double Roman', refer to the shape or design rather than the sizes. The sizes, when these were given, all appeared to be somewhat similar.

Table 1. Roofing Slate Sizes

Name	Length (inches)	Width (inches)
King	36	20
Queen	34	20
Empress	26	16
Small Empress	26	14
Princess	24	14
Duchess	24	12
Small Duchess	22	12
Marchioness	22	11
Wide Countess	20	12
	20	11
Countess	20	10
	20	9
	18	12
Wide Viscountess	18	10
Viscountess	18	9
	16	12
Wide Lady	16	10
Broad Lady	16	9
Lady	16	8
	14	14
Wide Header	14	12
Header	14	10
	14	9
Small Lady	14	8
Narrow Lady	14	7
	13	11
Small Header	13	10
	13	9
	13	8
Large Double	13	7
Double	13	6.5
	12	12
Wide Double	12	10
	12	9
	12	8
Double	12	7
Small Double	12	6
	11	11
	11	9
	11	7
Single	11	5.5
	10	10
	10	8
	10	7
	10	6
	9.5	7.5

The metric sizes are from 600mm x 450mm down to 200mm x 200mm.

Table 2. Roofing Tile Sizes

Name	Length (inches)	Width (inches)
Clay plain	11	7
Clay plain	10.5	6.5

The internet is full of interesting information, but what we have here is mostly just qualitative. For example, there is plenty published about thatching, discussing the differences between the use of reed or straw. Articles describe how the harvesting of grain was done to optimise the quality of the straw for use in thatching, until the cheapness of machine made tiles combined with the economy of mechanical harvesting made the use of thatch rare. They describe how the arrangement of the material differs depending on whether one is using straw or reed. They even mention that heather is used for thatching in some parts of the country. They also say that when renewals are made by adding layers, some roofs reach a thickness of more than 7ft [2.1m]. But nowhere is there a mention of the weight of material used. The nearest I found was in the Oxford English Dictionary where a 'loggin' was a Yorkshire dialect word for 14lbs [6.4k] of thatching straw.

Similarly the information on bricks is mostly qualitative. The change from imperial to metric was mainly accomplished by changing the thickness of mortar to metricise the size of walls. I also learned from the internet that the reason for the increase in size in bricks following the Tudor period was due to tax. Bricks were for the wealthy, so, as had been the case with windows they were taxed per unit. The result was bigger and fewer bricks – and a smaller tax bill. The final result was that the clay itself was taxed and buildings were faced with thin tiles. Sizes are hard to compare as potteries worked in terms of a 'ball' of clay, a notable example being a 'thirty-six' size flowerpot which was one of which 36 could be produced from the standard 'ball' of clay. Similar rules applied to their other products. Size depended on the traditions and the equipment in use at the pottery.

SOAG members and visitors to Oxford and the Cotswolds will realise that there is another building material that I have not yet mentioned, namely stone. Cotswold stone is a sedimentary rock, which although it cannot be split as cleanly as the metamorphic slate, is fissile and can with the help of moisture and frost be worked into plates for roofing using techniques that have barely changed since Roman times. The websites of local authorities, such as the Cotswold District Council, contain a lot of interesting information. Because of the structure of

the material, the thickness of a Cotswold roofing stone is set by its length. As with all roofing, construction starts with fixing a series of horizontal support battens. Then the 'cussoms', or longest course of stones, is put at the eaves. This course is often doubled and is designed to throw the water as far as possible from the walls. For fixing, the stones are drilled for oak pegs with which they are hooked on to the battens. Each course of stones is shorter by about half an inch than the one below it and so each batten is set half an inch closer than the one below. Except for the reducing separation, the roof is built up in the same manner as with tiles, but because of the thickness of the stones an average stone roof will weigh many tons, and the wavy appearance of the roof really is caused by it sagging under the weight. Because each course is a different size the roof gets strength by the stones locking together.



Fig. 1. Roof at Bibury, Gloucestershire, showing decreasing size of roof tiles from eaves to roofline. Photo: John Sandford

The roofers give each course a different name. Most of these names go in sets of three, Short, Middle and Long varieties, working down from the top. As with the 'Blonde' lamp, some may have started as a local tradesman's jokes, and the result is that some names may be considered to be rather rude. The top course is of 'Cocks' (Is there some connection here with weathercocks?) or 'Pricks'. Short, Middle and Long 'Cocks' (or 'Pricks') are normally 6ins long, as are Short, Middle and Long 'Cuttings'. Short, Middle and Long 'Monities, Becks, Bachelors, Nines' and 'Wibbuts' usually increase in length by half an inch, up to 'Follows' and finally 'Cussoms' or 'Eaves', which are usually about 24ins long, but may be 30ins or more.

There is more work to be done, with high on my list a visit to the Welsh Slate Mining Museum.

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# From the Archives

## Alterations to Woodeaton Church, and other Features in the Village.

An Extract from the Logbooks of Cynthia Graham Kerr

**Cynthia and Adam Graham Kerr**  
**Edited by Janet Sharpe**

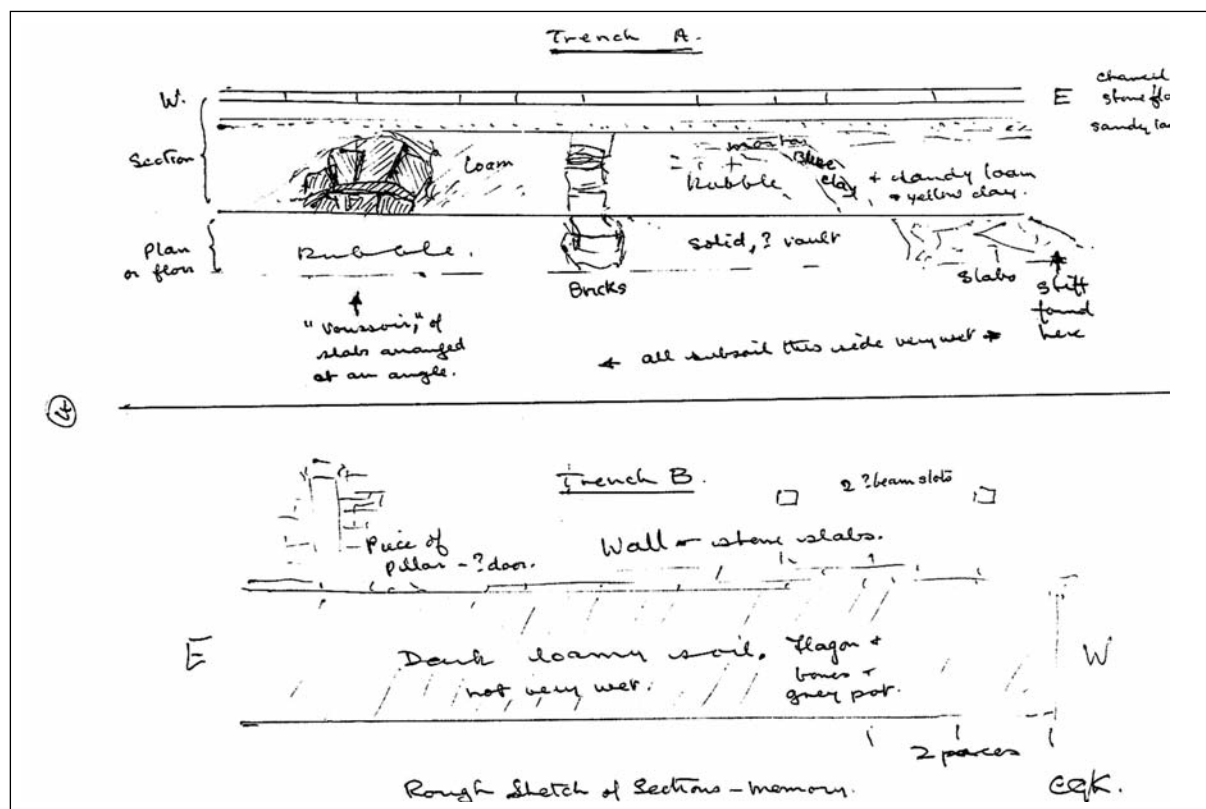
Upon entering the Church of the Holy Rood (13th-century) I found all the pews had been removed from the right hand side and the floor dug up, and four to five workmen in the process of relaying the floor with new wood. They showed me a femur broken in two pieces, and two bits of a skull from the inner trench (Trench A) along the nave. (I hoped it was not Richard Taverner's, b.1505, a famous layman of the village – but no, according to Arthur Mee's *Oxfordshire* (1942), he is buried in the chancel.)

Under these bones there was a layer of local slab stone which may be a vault, and adjoining, another seeming vault (they sounded hollow) of later date (it was either a stone slab or made of concrete with

a diamond-shaped memorial stone over it in the nave). Then came a row of bricks, then, just beyond, an interesting arrangement that looked like a small stone voussoir set in the side (see rough sketch). The soil varied.

Trench B, running the length of the wall, was quite different. The soil was loamy and dark brown, and it was very difficult to see anything in it owing to the very poor light. We put on one of the lights but it was no help.

About two paces from the west end of this trench a piece of a red Roman flagon (2nd-century or thereabouts) was discovered: unfortunately the hefty lad digging had sliced it clean in half with a blow from his spade. The break was new and we presently found the base, about 6 inches down or less (difficult to see anything!) and whilst I was fetching my trowel, they pulled it out. We went through all the spoil and recovered a number of chips and bits from the flagon, but some of it was missing in spite of sifting through all the spoil from the area now in the Grundon. The two halves of the flagon fit together around the middle. I also retrieved a piece of thin brown glass and several bits of grey pottery, and two to three



possible bits of painted plaster.

All these finds were left by the pulpit in two 'zones' with Trench A bones on the right, and the flagon and bits on the left. I wrote a note about these and a very rough section drawing to send to the Architect, Mr Raydon of Beaumont Street, Oxford; a neighbour supplied this information and a letter from him, and said that he reports these sorts of things (to the Unit, the museums, English Heritage?). She lived opposite the church door and was very interested and helpful. I didn't know her name. There were also a few bits of bones near the flagon (Roman?). Might the church have been built on a pagan site? Or were Christian Romans buried there? But in this case, why did they have grave goods? The men have to finish by July, I believe. They were very amiable and interested.

The note was left with the kindly neighbour to give to Mr Raydon. She then told us about the "thatched chapel that's now a cowshed".



Following her directions, we moved up the village and found a bridle road nearly opposite the 13th-century Cross. This building is most extraordinary: it has stone walls (like all the buildings in the village) but is about 8 to 10 feet high to the roof and the front has a stout wooden door with a Gothic arch and a window each side with "Norman" arches (similar to

but much smaller than those of Tackley church). Attached to one side is a tin cowshed, and others are built to the rear. The roof – both of the original building and "annexe" – is of thatch, but the woodwork has collapsed completely so we could not see inside or get in. We cannot remember exactly how the windows looked.

The neighbour considers it to have been a chapel: the only other use I could think of was as a lodge to the manor of 1775, but it is on the wrong side of an old bridle road which dwindles into a path to Cutteslowe. Also it does not 'match' the manor.

This road is also of interest because on the map it appears to end nowhere and this would tie in with the neighbour's story that there is a DMV [Deserted Medieval Village] around here. The name of the DMV was Spayer and there is still a Spayer Bridge and Spayer Lane (the name may not be quite correct) and she said it was deserted as a result of the Black Death. I could see broad ridge and furrow in the lower part of the field but no platforms, but the grass was long, and the next field was filled with corn.

There is also a Roman temple to the south and we were told where it is, but it was late, and a long drive home, so we left it for another visit.

Any inspection [of the church] should be made immediately, as one floor has already been put down in places. The walls show a piscina on one side and a pillar (old door?) on the other, and other features. The Rector (Michael Holland) is the Rector of Islip and he has five parishes.

See the drawings: my apologies, they are from my (not good) memory.

## The Drincan

**Marian Fallowfield and Pat Preece**

*This article was first published in  
SOAG Bulletin No. 56, 2001 (2002).*

The search for the course of the Drincan began when we saw a stream appearing across the fields where we had never seen one before [Map ref. SU625854]. We could see it from the A4074 appearing to flow in the direction of Little Stoke, evidently having been brought to the surface by the heavy rainfall in the autumn of 2000 and the early months of 2001. Pat suggested that it might be the River Drincan [sic] so we decided to try to find out if the stream was really the Drincan, and where it reached the Thames, first

by fieldwalking and then by studying any references to it we could find in documents.

The most likely source of the Drincan was the spring and stream marked, on OS 2½ inch maps, flowing along Brokendon Bottom [sic] at SU627855 near Icknield Way. We could see the stream from the minor road that passes Ipsden Church. It was flowing fast through a ditch and under the road, then along the Trunk Ditch to a large pond near Larkstoke Stud. At this point it is culverted under the A7074 and disappears underground. A dip in the ground, Brokendon Bottom near the Icknield Way, had filled to form a pond that was being used by swans, ducks and lapwings.

Footpath closure due to foot and mouth hampered our fieldwalking, so we had to make our observations



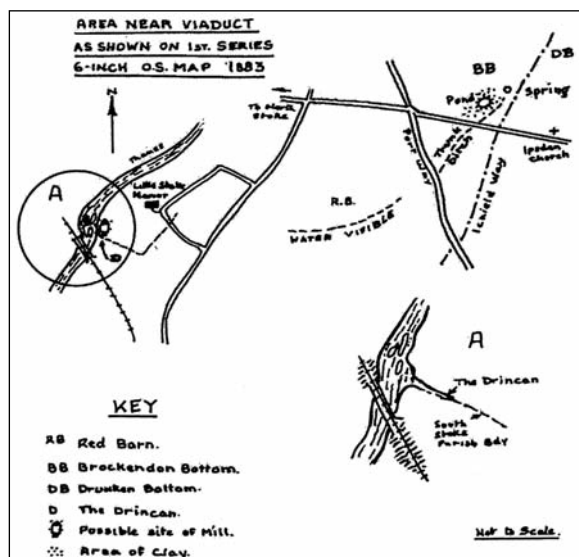


Fig. 1. A sketch map of the course of the Drinkan

from the nearest road. From the minor road near Little Stoke Manor we had a good view of the surrounding fields where there were a number of drainage ditches, one of which appeared to be going in the direction of the Thames. We asked a man with a tractor in one of the fields near the road whether he had ever heard of the Drinkan and if he knew where it reached the Thames. To our surprise he knew about the stream and said that it reached the river in a ditch near the railway viaduct. We had seen this ditch whilst walking by the Thames a year or so earlier and had understood that it was the Mere ditch (Fallowfield, 1998). 'Mere' means 'boundary', probably the parish boundary with South Stoke.

According to the documents Little Stoke once had a much larger population than it has now: the Domesday survey shows that it had land for four ploughs. There were two slaves and six villagers with two smallholders who had two ploughs. There was also a mill worth twenty shillings.

This mill continued in use throughout the Middle Ages; it is referred to in 1332 as a watermill with a pool and a weir in South Marmion (Little Stoke) (Boarstall Cartulary p.26). In 1445 Edmund Rede granted to Reading Abbey 'the mill called Little Stoke mill and the water called Little Stoke Water with a fishery, weir, pool and all appurtenances, but not the southern part of the way called Mill Way. Edmund Rede and his Checkendon tenants to have access to the water by the mill for washing sheep (Boarstall Cartulary p.28).

The wide exit of the Drinkan ditch to the river shown on the OS First Series map of 1883 could well be 'the water by the mill for washing sheep'. The ditch and the mill appear again in 1685 as 'a tithe for Ipsden Church of three farthings yearly for meadow of 1 acre [0.4ha] next to the river Thames and another

acre [0.4ha] bounded east by the ditch, and for the mill' (North Stoke Terrier – Oxford Record Office).

Little Stoke [Mill] has long disappeared, so we can only assume from the references that it must have been either on the bank near the ditch or on or near one of the islands. Mills on the Thames such as Mapledurham Mill and the mill at Sonning (now a theatre) are also on or near islands. The references to a pool and a weir indicate that the mill used water from the Thames. The ditch where the Drinkan reaches the river was called Mereditch End in 1213 and 1220 (Eynsham Cartulary); later in 1629 it was called Drunken End (Court Book of South Stoke – Christchurch College Archives) and in 1774 it was referred to as Drinken End (*ibid.*) The last reference to the name of the ditch is in the long article written between 1860 and 1864 by Edward Anderton Reade in which he says 'Ipsden had an interest in the mill at Little Stoke, which stood on the Drinkan, called the Drinking ditch'.

In his book *The Ipsden Country*, J.H. Baker mentions seeing the Trunk Ditch flowing in 1959. He describes the course of the stream disappearing under the Woodcote-Crowmarsh road and reappearing in the fields flowing towards Little Stoke fields. He also mentions that some twenty years earlier the stream crossed the Goring-Crowmarsh road (B4009) and flowed into the fields towards the Thames.



Fig. 2. An aerial photograph of the course of the Trunk Ditch taken in July, 2010, after prolonged dry weather. The A4074 runs across the top of the photograph, with the large red-brick Ipsden Barns just visible at top right. Photo: Sue Sandford

These fields have always been wet. To quote Baker again: 'the river meadows abound in springs and my friend 'Tom' who has worked for over thirty years on this land spends much of his time controlling them. With a trenching plough he cuts channels to irrigate this land, or to conduct the water to the river'.

The stream J.H. Baker saw must be the same one seen by us and is one of the intermittent streams that can only be seen on the surface after prolonged rainfall. Probably in the past the Drinkan appeared more often, particularly at times such as the period before the Black Death when the climate was colder and wetter than it is now. Judging by the documentary

evidence the path of the stream where it approaches the Thames ran in a ditch and local springs could well have added to the water.

OS Explorer Map 171, Chiltern Hills West, shows the many ditches that now drain the land near Little Stoke Manor. Similar ditches also appear on the OS First Series Map of 1883. Some of these must have been in existence earlier, certainly the one which runs into the river and which is most likely to be the place where the Drinkan meets the Thames.

#### References

Fallowfield, M. and Kift, M. (1998) Old Boundaries in South Oxon. *SOAG Bulletin* No. 52 (1997): 21-24

# Corrections and Clarifications

Sue Sandford

#### SOAG Bulletin No.63 (2009)

Green, M. 'Carbon Dating the Human Bones', in Nicholls, D. *The Lost Church of St Michael, Bix Gibwyn*, Bix: 23-32

Mike Green examined the Carbon-14 dates of the three skeletons found in the 2008 excavation at Bix, and speculated about what this might tell us about the relationships between the individuals. Unfortunately Table 1, p. 32, contained some errors. The table containing the corrected data is published below, followed by the **Interpretation** section, which also contains a minor correction. The speculative conclusions of the article remain essentially unchanged.

#### Interpretation

We observe that all three individuals may have been born within the 16-year period AD 1157 – 1173, and, if this was the case, in such a small community they would almost certainly at least have known each other. Their differing lifespans meant that their deaths spanned a period of about 30 years: nevertheless they were buried immediately adjacent to each other.

We therefore speculate, with the caveats already mentioned, that the individuals might be related, perhaps siblings, who lived to very different ages but were buried close to each other, possibly in a family plot.

	Skeleton 1	Skeleton 2	Skeleton 3
Date of death	AD 1172 – 1265 (95.4% confidence level)	AD 1167 – 1213 (68.2% confidence level)	AD 1159 – 1213 (68.2% confidence level)
Midpoint of date of death range (X)	AD 1218	AD 1190	AD 1186
Age from William's data (Y)	50 – 59	17 – 19	21 – 29
Date of birth (X – Y)	AD 1159 – 1168	AD 1171 – 1173	AD 1157 – 1165

Table 1. Range of dates for births from carbon dating results

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## 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.
- Any quoted material should be inside quotation marks and sources, including material freely available on the internet, should be given. If your information comes from a website you must cite the full www address and the date you consulted it.
- 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. 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, leave no 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.
- The Harvard System should be used for references whenever possible but 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@me.com](mailto:susansandford@me.com)) before 28 February for publication in that year.

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**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**

SOAG Membership Secretary, Lockerley, Brightwell Baldwin, Watlington OX49 5NP  
Tel: 07974 445142 Email: [memb@soagarch.org.uk](mailto:memb@soagarch.org.uk)