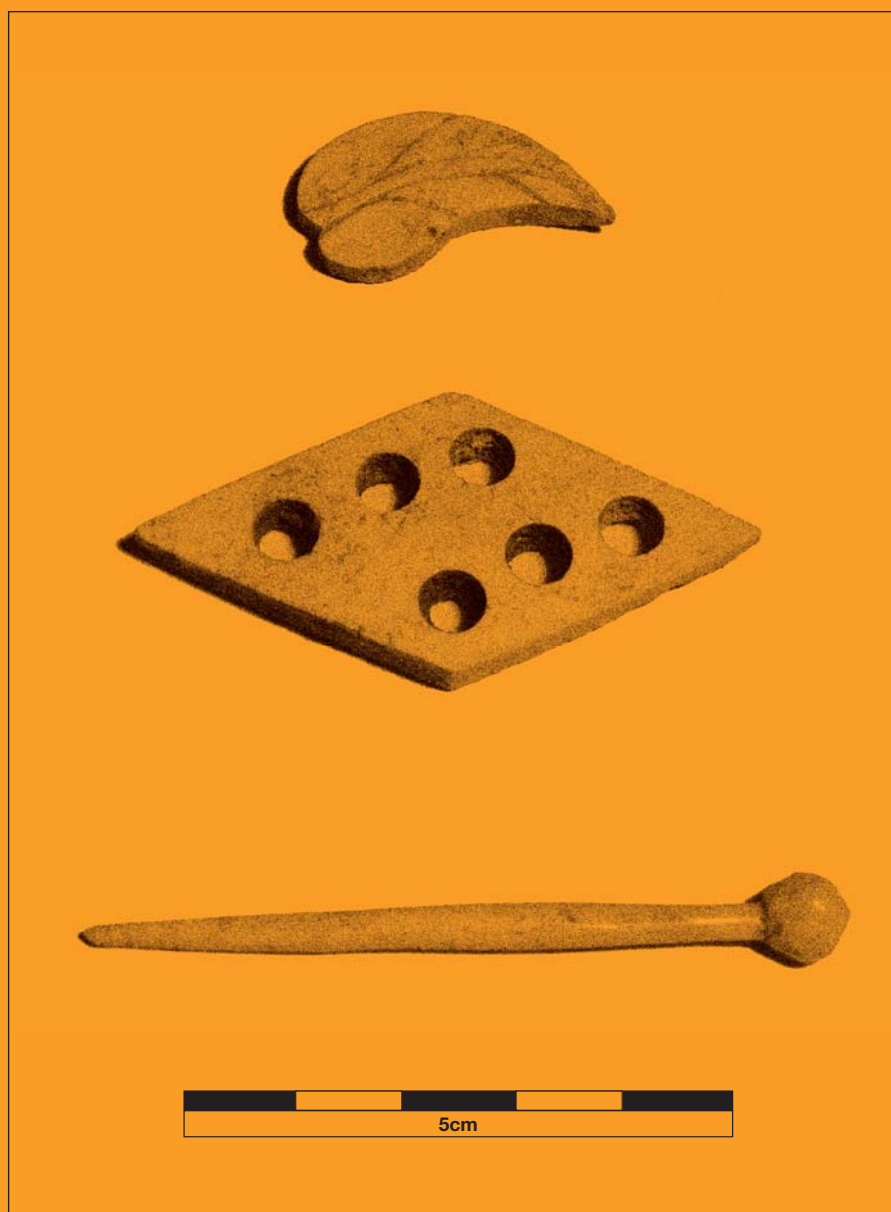


Bulletin

SOAG



SOAG Bulletin No. 68



South Oxfordshire Archaeological Group 2014



www.soagarch.org.uk

SOAG Committee 2013

President

Hazel Williams villa@soagarch.org.uk

Vice-President

Ian Clarke bbchap@soagarch.org.uk

Chairman

David Oliver chairman@soagarch.org.uk

Vice-Chairman

Nancy Nichols events@soagarch.org.uk

Honorary Secretary

Mike Vincent secretary@soagarch.org.uk

Honorary Treasurer

Kaz Greenham treasurer@soagarch.org.uk

Editorial Team

Janet Eastment eastment@soagarch.org.uk

John Hefferan bulletin@soagarch.org.uk

Any statements made or opinions expressed in the *SOAG Bulletin* are those of the authors alone for which the South Oxfordshire Archaeological Society does not accept responsibility. Any errors are those of the author alone.

Acknowledgements as stated in the articles.

ISSN 0953-2242

© The South Oxfordshire Archaeological Group and the authors 2014

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.

Published by the South Oxfordshire Archaeological Group 2014

Printed in the United Kingdom by Lamport Gilbert Limited, 3 Darwin Close, Reading, Berkshire RG2 0TB

Cover illustration: *Bone objects excavated at Gatehampton Farm Roman Villa.*
See articles on pages 10 and 18.

Contents

Pat Preece 1924-2014

Extract from the citation for Pat's election to
Honorary Membership in 2011 *Sue Sandford* 2

Edited version of the tribute from SOAG President
at the 2014 SOAG AGM *Hazel Williams* 2

Edited extract of an article by Pat Preece
on her early years in SOAG 3

Chairman's Report *David Oliver* 4

Lectures, Visits & Events in 2013 6

SOAG Summer visit to Standlake
and Woodstock *Mike Green* 7

Open Day at Gatehampton 2013 *Hazel Williams* 9

Reports and Articles

Gatehampton Farm Roman Villa Excavation
Interim Report 2013 *Hazel Williams* 10

A new trench at Gatehampton: the east end
of the villa? *Dave Jobling* 18

Blewbury Local History and Archaeology Groups
Blewbury Big Dig – Test Pit Programme
2nd Interim Report *Dave Carless* 26

Ascott Park Research Project
An Overview and Interim Report *Ian Clarke* 28

Emmer Green
A non-intrusive investigation into
the remains of a Bronze Age Barrow Cemetery *David Nicholls* 34

Greyhorne Woods
Report on test excavations at Greyhorne Woods *Dave Oliver* 41
and Tim Southern

Pat Preece

1924 – 2014

SOAG Committee: 30 years

SOAG Chairman: 2000-2005

Honorary SOAG Member: 2011



Pat was one of four ladies who were key figures in SOAG's early years; the society's founder Cynthia Graham Kerr, Marion Fallowfield, Mary Kift, and Pat herself. We mark her passing by repeating here the citation composed by Sue Sandford when Pat was elected to Honorary Membership of SOAG in 2011, followed by a tribute from SOAG's President Hazel Williams.

Pat was the most prolific writer of articles for SOAG Bulletin so we follow Hazel's tribute with an edited version of an article that Pat wrote in 2011 on the occasion of the passing of Marion and Mary, in which she describes affectionately how she came to join SOAG in the 1970s and her early adventures in the society.

Extract from the citation for Pat's election to Honorary Membership in 2011

Pat, who joined SOAG in the mid seventies, served on the committee for nearly 30 years and was for five years its chairman. 'Always reliable, determined, ready with sound advice, and able quickly to cut through nonsense': this was how fellow former chairman Ian Clarke described her six years ago. But he was right to add that 'kindness and humour' were, and are, some of her other characteristics.

However, Pat's major contribution to SOAG has always been through her research. For nearly 40 years, often with her great friends Mary Kift and Marian Fallowfield, Pat has been investigating the history of South Oxfordshire using as her primary sources the landscape itself, the memories of local people, and historical maps and documents. While working fulltime in the Health Service, she studied Medieval Latin, Medieval handwriting and Old English, and in 1985 completed the three-year Oxford Certificate in Local History, taught by Joan Dils.

Pat's combination of documentary research, interviews with working and retired woodmen and sharp-eyed observation has led to her becoming an acknowledged expert on local woodlands. She has contributed 41 articles to the SOAG Bulletin, fifteen concerning woodlands, as well as contributing to other journals, including Oxoniensia.

Pat has been inspired by our local countryside, usually beautiful, often enigmatic and intriguing; and by the writings of W. G. Hoskins and Oliver Rackham, who taught us how to read and understand the woods and hedges, banks and fields, tracks and paths in the landscape. Again in Ian's words: 'her determination to show that archaeology is not just about digging artefacts out of holes in the ground, but is about people, the way they lived, and the way they shaped the landscape around them, has been an inspiration to us all. Landscape Archaeology is the modern archaeology – Pat was in at the start of this pioneering movement.'

Tribute from SOAG President, Hazel Williams (An edited version of what Hazel said at the 2014 SOAG AGM)

Pat Preece was one of our longest serving members – as Pat would point out, not a founding member as she did not join in 1969, but in the 70s. It would take some time to fully acknowledge her contribution to both Landscape Archaeology in South Oxfordshire, and to SOAG, and the citation above, and Pat's own words (below) do that well.

Pat was chairman of the group for several years, a long-standing member, and someone to whom all the projects leaders often went to for advice and information on the local landscape. She and her two companions, Mary Kift and Marion Fallowfield researched and investigated the landscape archaeology of the parishes of South Oxfordshire. This meant travelling as far as Canterbury researching church &

diocese records and more importantly, getting out into the landscape, walking and mapping the parish boundaries. Pat was particularly expert on the local woodlands and its industries, such as hurdle making, and talked to the people who were still involved or remembered.

In a time when landscape archaeology is often done from top down – via Lidar and computer-generated mapping, Pat and her companions demonstrated the importance of feet on the ground, of getting out into the landscape, and using research and local knowledge to record our local heritage. She also set up Trio; a SOAG fund to inspire others to go down a similar route. When I was passing on the sad news of her death to SOAG members the most frequent comments, as well as a great respect for her work in landscape archaeology, were that she was a friend, a good companion, good company ... and I'm sure that is how we would all like to remember her.

Edited extract of an article in *SOAG Bulletin* 65 (2011) by Pat Preece (on her early years in SOAG)

Thirty-five years ago my husband Gordon and I moved to Caversham. One day, walking down to the local shop, I met Derek Fallowfield; we started talking about archaeology and he mentioned SOAG. Shortly afterwards I joined and met [his wife] Marian and Mary Kift. They had just finished digging at Lilley Farm and then the dig moved to the Devil's Churchyard near Checkendon. We found that very hard work as it was in an area of felled woodland and there were masses of tree roots.

Shortly after the dig Cynthia [Graham Kerr] announced that people were needed to do parish surveys, so Mary, Marian and I went to Woodstock, where the Oxfordshire Unit was then situated, to find out about it – our future was then sealed! Mary had a great knowledge of Mapledurham and as Marian and I lived in the parish we decided to start with that. We met James Bond who encouraged us and was very helpful. Marian and Mary did quite a lot of pot washing, but as I was still at work and had other activities, I did not. When the Newington dig was proposed we did quite a lot of field walking. As a considerable number of documents formed the background to the areas we were involved with, I went to Keele University on some courses to learn Medieval Latin and writing. Mary and I had already been to some Joan Dils courses but still found it difficult. As Newington had belonged to Canterbury Cathedral, Mary and I went to the archives there. We had a delightful week, staying in a small hotel that overlooked the cathedral.

As the archives were only open for a short period each day, we did quite a lot of sightseeing, including the site of the Saxon cathedral and St Martin's Church which we found fascinating and with which Mary was thrilled. At the archives I struggled with many court rolls with Mary writing down the translations. Unfortunately the rolls were mostly about the cleaning of the waterways, but it was obvious from the many names that Newington was now a shrunken village. The other problem was that the then archivist was not very helpful (she left shortly afterwards). Mapledurham was examined as best we could, learning as we went along. Checkendon followed and by then we were getting into our stride and realising that we were interested in the landscape in all its aspects – of course we had read Hoskins and Beresford and Marian especially was interested in Hooper and hedges.

Mary in particular loved the countryside and its plants and knew their names which we tried to remember! She drew our attention to the birdsong and knew the names of the birds – Marian was better than me at this. As we went on there was a period when we looked at barns and farmyards measuring and recording what we found. We had to convince the farmers that we were not interested in the conservation of the many derelict barns, otherwise we would not have been welcome. Mary used her memories of the Land Army to help us about farmyards. So we went on to look at South Stoke and the other parishes up to Crowmarsh – happy days. We met on Fridays every week for thirty years, sometimes to go out, and when the weather was unsuitable, to sit and research and record the parishes. At first we sent our researches to Woodstock and then to Oxford in the Westgate Library and then it became obvious that there was no interest but we continued and recorded what we could.

Chairman's Report

David Oliver

This report summarises the activities of SOAG for April 2013 – April 2014 and includes contributions from other committee members. It is David Oliver's last report as SOAG chairman before his term ended in April 2014: he has moved to north Bedfordshire for family reasons.

Introduction

Once again, I am happy that I can say SOAG had a good year! The committee has, as ever, worked very hard and SOAG has much to thank them for. It is very good to have our new Treasurer, Kaz Greenham, and auditor, Sue Fogden, on board who have fitted in seamlessly, for which I am grateful. It is of some concern that membership again fell in 2013; we lost 36 and gained 19 new members. The membership receipts however were held stable due to a life membership payment, whilst our Gift Aid submission has finally been approved by HMRC: many thanks are due to all members who have been able to participate in this scheme.

Summary of SOAG's fieldwork programme

Whilst we did not dig at as many locations as before, we carried out a minor excavation at one new site (Greyhorne Wood) and geophysics at two others (Ascott Park and High Wood) in addition to the regular Gatehampton and Blewbury digs.

At Gatehampton, the efforts of SOAG's diggers have extended the known area of the Roman Villa; it is truly a large building and it may be that we have now shown where its eastern end is. The test pit programme at Blewbury has carried on and is gradually increasing what is known about early settlement in the village. (More details of our Gatehampton and Blewbury work are given in a later section of this report.)

The extensive geophysical survey at Ascott Park was led by Ian Clarke and Gerard Latham and Ian believes it has now confirmed the location of the lost house to be in the "hole" at that site.

Work at Brightwell Baldwin has been halted until we gain permission from the new owner to carry on with the excavation. No work was conducted this year at Greys Mound either, but it is still hoped that in future we may be able to undertake a limited excavation with the intention of dating the structure.

A geophysical survey was also carried out, jointly with Marlow Archaeology Society, over an interesting cropmark near Binfield Heath found on Google Earth.

However, due to extremely dry site conditions, results were not good and the survey may be undertaken again. This site is near that of an unidentified Roman building in High Wood, which is being studied for its potential as a long-term SOAG project.

Two test pits were dug at Greyhorne Wood (led by myself) in the hope of finding some evidence as to the age of the enclosures discovered there by a SOAG member. No evidence was found although a wooden revetment where a track cuts one of the mounds proved to be probably Victorian. That, however, does not date the mounds to all being Victorian.

A variety of interesting crop marks in what remains of open space in Emmer Green is suggestive of significant prehistoric activity in this area. To record what can still be discovered before it is put at risk by any potential new development a geophysical survey was undertaken of the recreation ground using the combined resources of SOAG and BARG. Reading University also assisted with the loan of their more specialised magnetometer and GPR equipment. When they have been analysed the results and conclusions will be logged with Reading Borough Council.

Blewbury village archaeology

Following the successful 2012 "Blewbury Big Dig" test pit season (a community-based archaeology programme, mainly in private gardens, led by Dave Carless), it was decided to extend the campaign for two more years. With continued strong support from SOAG, including the active participation by several SOAG members, further progress was made by the end of 2013. A total of 25 test pits has now been completed, and in the close season all finds were washed and processed. In addition to test pitting, a programme of geophysical surveys of the open spaces within the village was started. Both the test pits and the geophysical surveys are now primarily focussed on two main research areas: the Saxon origins of the village and the history of the small Nottingham Fee Manor in the heart of the village. In 2014, this work continues as a close partnership between the Blewbury village groups and SOAG.

Gatehampton Roman Villa

In 2013, a record number of volunteers participated in the Gatehampton roman villa excavation, nearly 80 in all. It is particularly pleasing that this included twenty young children under 14 years as the site attracted more family groups. An important part of SOAG's aims for archaeology in South Oxfordshire is to engage and enthuse the next generation of young archaeologists.

The Gatehampton Open Day in September attracted a similar number. This was organised in collaboration with a walking group from Pangbourne and another from Whitchurch which included a 'walk through history', ending at the villa site. A dry sunny day made all the difference, with the whole site open and the villa layout marked out for visitors to see. As usual, guided tours, displays of finds and information and refreshments were provided. The day was a great success.

The Gatehampton excavation has reached an interesting phase with a large trench in the site field and a new trench opened in the car park area to the east. Two large rooms and part of a corridor were excavated in the ten by twelve metre trench in the site field. In the car park trench, substantial walls suggest that we may be close to finding the extent of the building and establishing that the eastern end of the villa may be the earliest phase.

I must thank all who have carried out this fieldwork, particularly the site directors and team leaders who shoulder so much responsibility.

Lectures and events

The SOAG lecture programme, which runs from September to March each year, continues to entertain and stimulate SOAG members during the winter months. This year our speakers were mainly local, including three from Reading University, one from Oxford University, two from Oxford Archaeology, and Judy Dewey from TWHAS, our neighbouring society in Wallingford, who helped us out one month at very short notice when a speaker was unable to attend. The lecture topics however have been more widespread, covering digs in the Middle East, Kent, and Wallingford; the science of pollen analysis; the effects of the Black Death; and finally the mystery of why people figure so little in pre-historic British pottery decoration. We are particularly grateful to our lecture organiser, Nancy Nichols, who nevertheless emphasises that she is dependent on suggestions for lectures and lecture topics by SOAG members.

In 2012, we mooted changing our venue from the village hall in Whitchurch Hill to a location in one of our neighbouring urban centres, but we decided to stay and are happy that attendance has held

up, notwithstanding the closure of the bridge at Pangbourne for most of the season adding to the journey times for some attendees.

The lectures also facilitate continuing social contact between members during the non-digging season, and two events were particularly successful on this count – the SOAG Christmas Party after the last lecture of the year, and the buffet after our April review of the year's field events. We therefore thank also Becky Morrisson and David Cox for their regular assistance on the catering front.

The summer visit this year, also organised by Nancy Nichols, was to Oxfordshire's Museums Resource Centre at Standlake, where a presentation on the role and responsibilities of the Centre was followed by a tour of the main collections, which includes most of the finds from the county's archaeological digs. After an excellent and sociable lunch at the Talbot Inn near Eynsham we progressed to the Oxfordshire Museum in Woodstock. It is here that many of the most interesting artefacts from Standlake are on public display and for this event we were given privileged access to some new galleries. Tea and cakes in the museum garden ended a very enjoyable and rewarding day for 24 SOAG members and friends.

Other events that SOAG took part in included a stand at Oxfordshire Past 2014, arranged and hosted by myself, and a pottery workshop, jointly with BARG, tutored by Lorraine Mephram of Wessex Archaeology.

Publications

Under the editorship of Mike Green, in 2013 there were ten issues of our newsletter, *SOAG Messenger*, which is our main method of communicating with members. *SOAG Messenger* advertises and then reports all our activities as well as publishing interesting Tailings submitted by members. Recently we have increasingly advertised public events organised by our neighbouring societies, mirroring an increasing trend for collaborative working and reflecting the fact that many SOAG members are also members of other local societies. The frequency of publication is only possible through the many contributions from our activity leaders and other SOAG members.

Mike also maintains the SOAG website, one of whose particular values in recent years has been attracting newcomers to SOAG. They read about us on the web, and typically arrange to visit our Sunday dig at the Villa. Many then join our society.

SOAG Bulletin, once again produced by the editorial team of John Hefferan and Janet Eastment, covered the 2012 and early 2013 fieldwork and other events.

Lectures, Visits & Events in 2013

Lecture Series

24 January

Professor Roger Matthews and Dr Wendy Matthews
(University of Reading)

**Excavating the First Farmers in the Zagros
Mountains of Iran and Iraq**

28 February

Judy Dewey (curator of Wallingford Museum)

Wallingford: from burh to borough

28 March

John Poulter

The Planning of Roman Roads in Britain

22 April

AGM and Review of SOAG Archaeology

26 Sep

Gregory Stores (University of Oxford)

**The Black Death: its Nature and Effects on
Society**

24 Oct

Dr Michael Keith-Lucas (University of Reading)

The use of pollen analysis in archaeology

28 Nov

Dr Lisa Brown (Oxford Archaeology)

Finding the People in the Pottery

and The SOAG Christmas Seasonal Party

Events and Visits

1 June

Oxfordshire Past 2014

Kidlington

SOAG had a display, arranged & hosted by
Dave Oliver

19 August

Oxfordshire's Museums Resource Centre

Standlake (a.m.)

The Oxfordshire Museum

Woodstock (p.m.)

Organiser: Nancy Nichols

6 October

Open House at SOAG Gatehampton

Archaeological Excavation

Organiser: Hazel Williams

7 December

Half-Day Workshop on Pottery Coarseware

(joint with BARG)

Tutor: Lorraine Mephram (Wessex Archaeology)

Organiser: Dave Carless

SOAG Summer visit to Standlake and Woodstock

Report by Mike Green

On the morning of Friday 9 August, 24 SOAG members and colleagues gathered at the Oxfordshire Museums Resource Centre at Standlake for the first part of SOAG's 2013 Summer Visit. Our host was Christiane Jeuckens, Collections Officer and Social History Conservator, who welcomed us and prefaced our tour of the Centre with a 30-minute introduction to Standlake's history and current responsibilities and programmes.

The Centre has been in existence since 1993 and is the county's main storage and archiving facility with responsibility for Archaeology, Social History, Prints and Pictures, and Costumes. (Oxford University has a separate arrangement whereby its archives and storage are the responsibility of the Ashmolean Museum.) There are currently about 100,000 objects on the database, of which about 50% are from archaeology.

Recent years have seen steep cuts in funding by the county, which have forced a more rigorous evaluation of the Centre's holdings, a key criterion for which is that an object must not only have an Oxfordshire



Oxfordshire Museums Resource Centre at Standlake

provenance and be properly documented by its originators, but also must add something new or unique to the county record, or have a special story to tell. For this reason, many items in storage are either being offered back to the originators, or made available to other museums via a national network that exists for the purpose. This has relieved some of the pressure on storage space, which now looks adequate for the next 4-5 years. Ideas are being developed for expansion after that time, but in the current funding climate nothing is certain. Christiane urged the leaders of our archaeology field projects to get in touch at an early stage to be given guidance on the standards and requirements for any materials that might end up at Standlake. From now on, the Centre will, of necessity, be very strict in their implementation.



In the finds processing room with one of our guides, Sam van de Geer (3 from left). A Saxon sword and several daggers were amongst the items being worked on.

We also learned about the programme for public engagement, which includes exhibitions, displays, events, loans, research and, not least, the use of volunteers. The latter not only helps the Centre in times of minimal staffing, but also provides opportunities for amateurs to engage with the collections. More than one SOAG member is already involved in this way.

We were then split into two groups for a tour of the Centre, seeing first the processing room, in which objects were being prepared and recorded prior to storage, and then the main storage warehouse. The latter was a veritable Aladdin's Cave for the historically curious. Half the building was occupied by an extensive roller-racking system containing boxes of archaeology finds: the other half contained an eclectic mix of the rural (a threshing machine), the industrial (an early printing press), the domestic (a child's cradle next to a 1950s Bendix washing machine!), and the ancient (the memorial stone to a Roman legionary from Alchester), and many others artefacts, all neatly piled to the rafters. It was even part art gallery with conserved paintings lining one area.



At one end of the storage area

The most sociable part of the day was lunch at the Talbot Inn near Eynsham. Many SOAG members take part in only a selection of our activities and it was good not only to see new acquaintances being made, but also to greet several new members in convivial surroundings.

The afternoon was taken up with a visit to the Oxfordshire Museum at Woodstock, where some of the objects first processed at Standlake are on display. Members were free to wander the museum and its pleasant grounds, and we were hosted again by Christiane, who had arranged for private access to a soon-to-be-opened special display about the Romans and Anglo Saxons, who also provided the perfect end to our day by laying on tea and coffee.



One half of the SOAG lunch party.



A squeeze of SOAG members! Tea on the lawn at Woodstock Museum at the end of a great day.

Open Day at Gatehampton 2013

Hazel Williams

The annual Gatehampton Open Day was held on Sunday 6 October 2013 and was as successful as the 2012 Open Day but with the added advantage of dry warm sunny weather. Over 80 visitors included friends and family of SOAG members and the site owners, plus two large groups of local walkers. A group from Pangbourne was led by Peter Worsley. Another from Whitchurch, led by Eric Hartley, completed a 'walk through history' to the villa, along the ancient route of the Tuddingway, a road studied by SOAG member Pat Preece (SOAG Bulletin 56). Due to the good weather, we were able to set up displays of finds and site information in the open under the two new SOAG gazebos. The display included new high-level photos of the site taken just the week before by Dave Oliver. John Hefferan rebuilt a section of Roman roof beside his display of box tiles and other CBM. Young visitors participated in digging supervised by Derek Birks and Brenda Austin, and David Cox organised the finds washing. Dave Jobling and Tom Walker made an excellent job of the guided tours and Becky Morrison and Penny Kay served tea and cake.

Open to view was the ten by twelve metre Trench 7 with the walls and floors of four complete rooms exposed and more appearing. More of the building could also be seen in Trench 16, the new trench opened in the car park and over ten metres east of Trench 7. The whole plan of the villa building was also laid out on the field in red and white tape so that visitors could appreciate the size and scale of the building. We all enjoyed the day and the chance to show everyone what has been achieved in the last year. My thanks to all the Gatehampton team for their hard work in preparing for the day; the presentation of the site and its progress was much praised by the visitors who spent the afternoon with us.



Fig. 1: The site on Open Day with guided tour in progress



Fig. 2: John Hefferan with the display of CBM



Fig. 3: Displays under the gazebo



Fig. 4: A very busy site on the day

Reports and Articles

Gatehampton Farm Roman Villa Excavation

Interim Report 2013-14

Hazel Williams

Introduction

Gatehampton Farm is SOAG's longest running project, the excavation of a substantial 3rd to 4th century Roman villa building and the investigation of the surrounding landscape. A major part of the villa building has already been excavated; a structure that has over ten rooms and corridors as well as a small bath house at the western end. (Fig. 1)

In 2013, the excavation continued to focus on the large trench over part of the villa building comprising Rooms 5-8 and the South Corridor Room 3 (Trench 7). In addition to this, a new trench (Trench 16) was

opened beyond the site field to the east in a car park area with the aim of finding the extent of the building in that direction.

An important part of the project too is to continue to encourage participation by experienced volunteers and those new to archaeology. In 2013 there were a record number of diggers working on site, including many children and the weather was good, with plenty of dry sunny days perfect for excavation. An Open Day in September was popular with visitors and is reported separately.

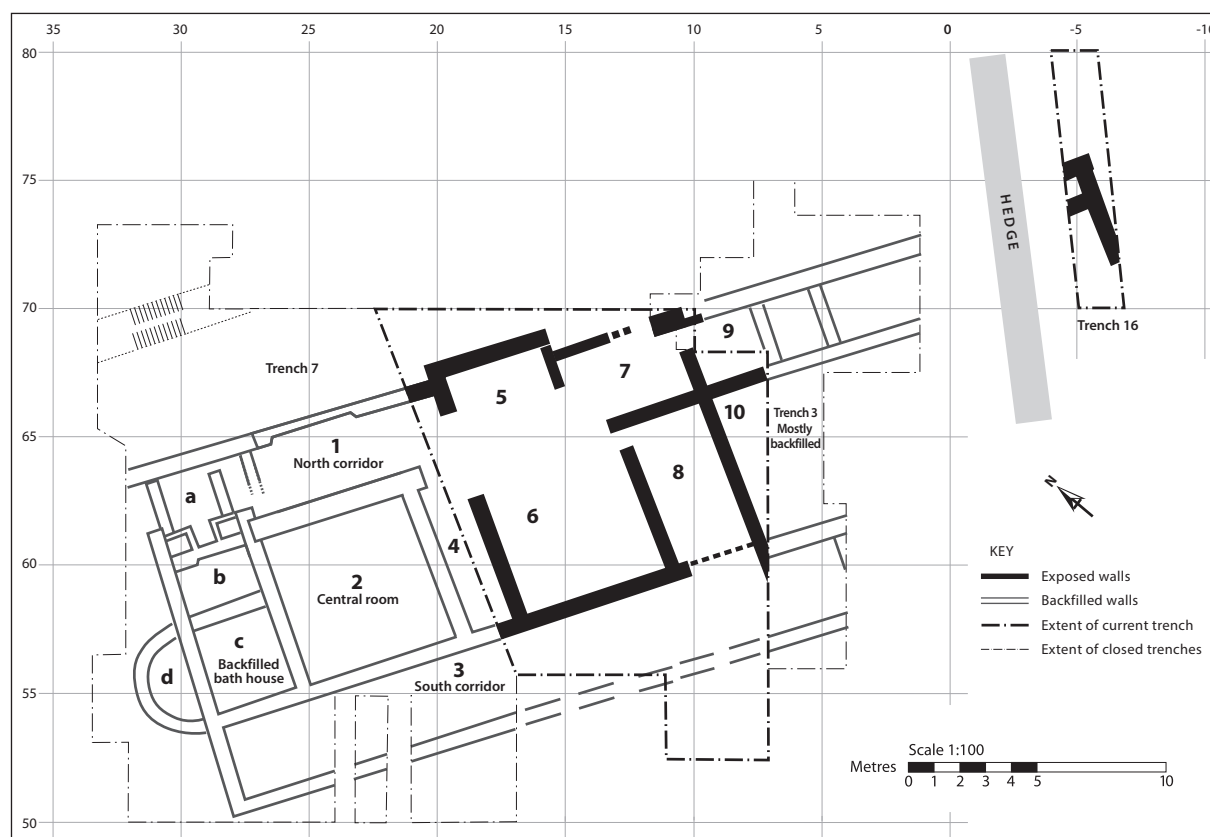


Fig. 1: Site Plan

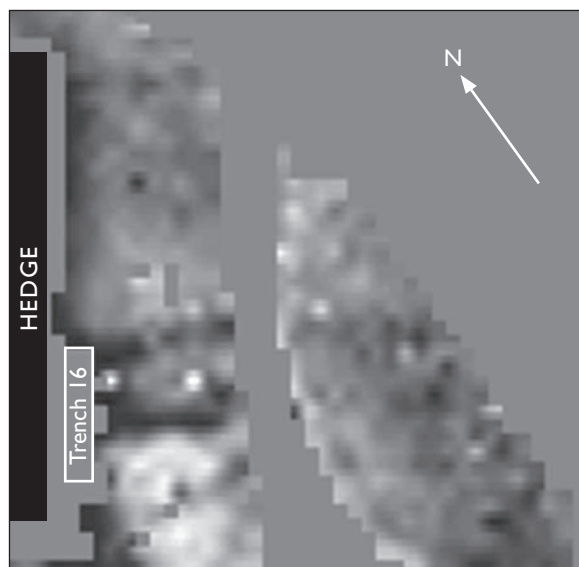


Fig. 2: Resistivity survey of Car Park area showing position of Trench 16

Trench 16: extent of building to the east

There has been very little investigation of the eastern extent of the villa building and the villa enclosure, or of other possible buildings or features eastward beyond the current site field. It was apparent that the building continued in that direction; a 1 metre square exploratory trench had been dug on the other side of the field hedge many years ago and appeared to show that the exterior north wall of the building continued in that direction.

In 2013, several geophysical surveys were done in what is a car park area on the east side of the site field hedge. Before the survey began areas of gravel hard standing, and other debris discovered during previous attempts to survey the car park, were removed by machine, leaving an underlying topsoil layer. Both magnetometry and resistivity were used. Fig. 2 shows the resistance survey results, with the position of Trench 16 indicated; the equipment used was an RM 15 Resistance Meter; the survey done in 10-metre grid squares. The survey does appear to show the continuation of the enclosure ditch and, south east of this, parallel walls representing the northern side of the building. Trench 16 was positioned over these features and this is reported separately by Dave Jobling.

Trench 7

By the end of 2012, the excavation of Rooms 1 to 4 was completed and this area was backfilled by machine in May 2013. A small area of Trench 7 was already open over rooms 5, 7 and 9, and in May 2013 the trench was extended south by the removal of

topsoil by machine over Rooms 6, 8 and the South Corridor Room 3. This resulted in a total trench area of 12 by 10 metres across the building. The purpose of this phase of the excavation is to establish the layout and phasing in relation to previous trenches to the west and the original trench first dug on the site, Trench 3, just one metre to the east. There were two particular questions to answer; did this section of the building show evidence of the same transition from working area/barn to higher status living spaces that had been found to the west in the Central Room 2 and also in Trench 3? Did the wall on the east side of the trench really extend right across the building, as indicated by the 2011 geophysical survey and if so, did this mean there was an earlier or at least different building to the east of this line?

During 2013 most of the demolition rubble was removed from Rooms 6 and 8 and the walls and floors exposed. A start was made on the investigation of the various floor levels, the construction of the walls and the relationships between them, and that has continued in 2014.

The demolition rubble covering Rooms 6 and 8 was up to 30cms deep with the dividing wall 7490 between the two rooms initially not visible beneath the rubble layer. The rubble consisted of flint stones varying in size from small stones to very large angular flints, large chalk blocks, mortar and soil with ceramic building material in the form of roof tile (*tegula* and *imbrex*) and flat bricks. Although the smaller flint stones were left untouched or had one surface dressed, the large and very large flint stones were faced on two or more sides; some of the very large stones were dressed on four sides, formed into rectangular blocks. There were two concentrations of CBM, one in each room, consisting of both roof tile and flat brick tiles, but there were notably fewer nails than were found in the rubble debris of Central Room 2, a room of the same size. There was very little rubble on the north side of Room 8; this is in the area around Room 7 thought to have been robbed out (SOAG Bulletin 67, 13). The rubble was denser and had a greater concentration of large and very large flint stones and flat bricks towards the south side of Room 6 and on the south and east sides of Room 8. Fig. 3 shows the trench in September 2013, after most of the rubble layer had been removed.

Room 6

The floor of room 6 is six metres square, the same size as the Central Room 2 to the west, and it is enclosed by walls of flint stones and mortar that are

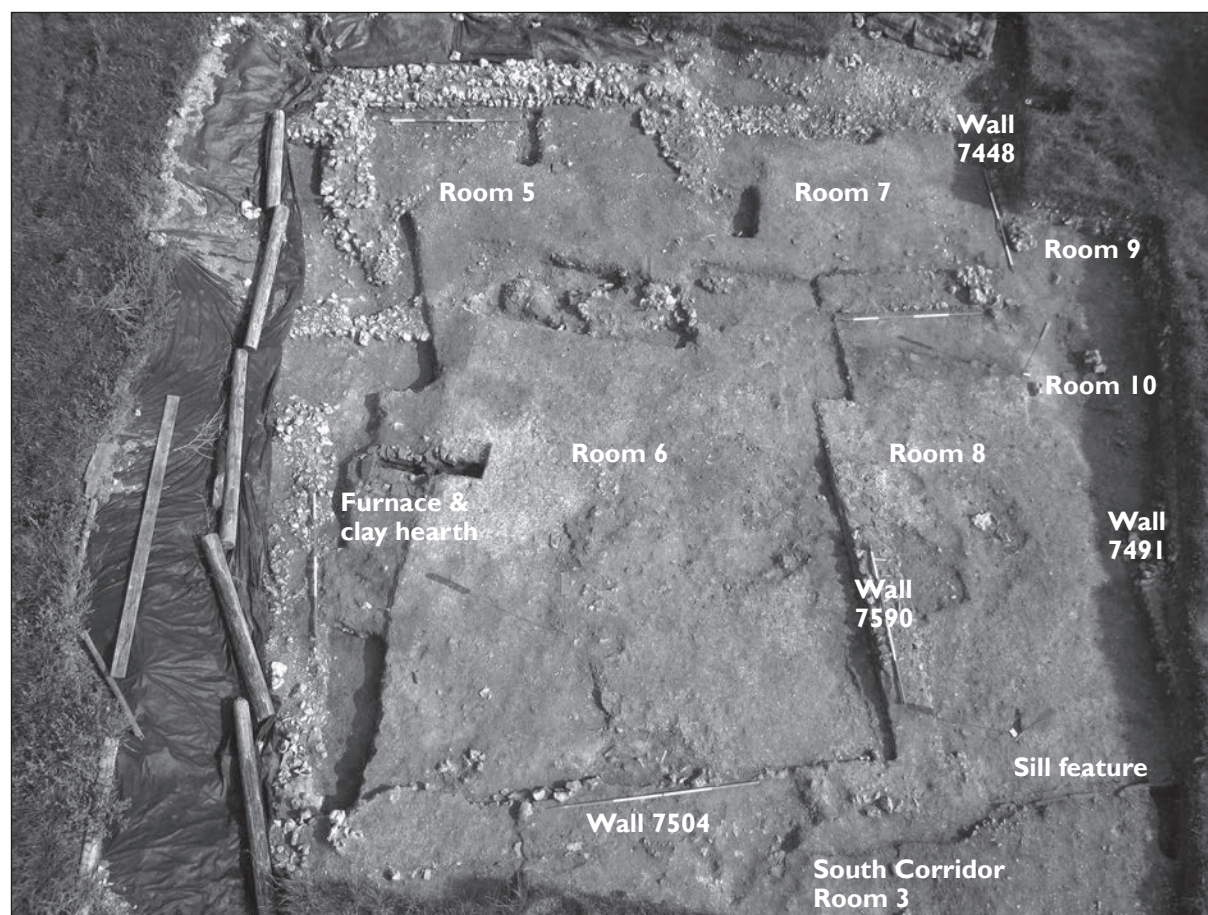


Fig. 3: Overhead photo of Trench 7 September 2013

of varying extent and construction. Both the west and east walls end with a gap, perhaps doorways, on the north side of the room. The wall line across the north side of the room is the least distinct and has only one small section of less than a metre where a second course of flint stones remains above floor level. A two metre square section of the south west corner of the room was excavated in 2012 and this part of the south wall was interpreted as a doorway, and three hinges were found close by (Bulletin 66 2012, p 22). The remainder of the south wall (7504) is of slightly different construction, with only one course of stones above the floor level of Room 6. Above the flints is a layer of greyish 'stippled' mortar, initially appearing quite smooth and flat, with 0.35m section that has a moulded edge and the whole surface marked by small holes (0.1m wide and less than 50mm deep) creating a stippled effect. The same mortar was used on the east wall (7490) of the room but has a second course of flints remaining in places. It is also clear that despite the flat appearance of these wall surfaces there are in fact shallow depressions in the surface where a second course of flints lay. Investigation of the connection between walls 7504 and 7490 was in progress early in 2014 and it appears that they are likely to have

been constructed at the same time and are joined at the south east corner, rather than one abutting the other. There is also an integrated extension to the south wall 7504 that extends 0.4m into Room 8 and supports part of the 'Sill' feature on the south side of Room 8.

The demolition debris in Room 6 produced a large quantity of painted wall plaster, mostly in a red, green and white geometric design. A 1.5 metre section of the south wall appears to have collapsed inward and six to eight parallel lines of flint stones were visible in the demolition rubble. Several layers of well-preserved painted plaster lay beneath this.

A section of painted wall plaster, about 2.5cms thick and 10-15cm high, was found still in situ along the base of the east wall (7490) and around the south east corner. It was probably originally dark red with fine horizontal raised lines on the surface. This colour and surface pattern is seen frequently in the building and it does seem to be applied to the base of walls with smoother plaster further up.

Many fragments of a glass vessel, including part of a 'squiggle' decoration, were found within the

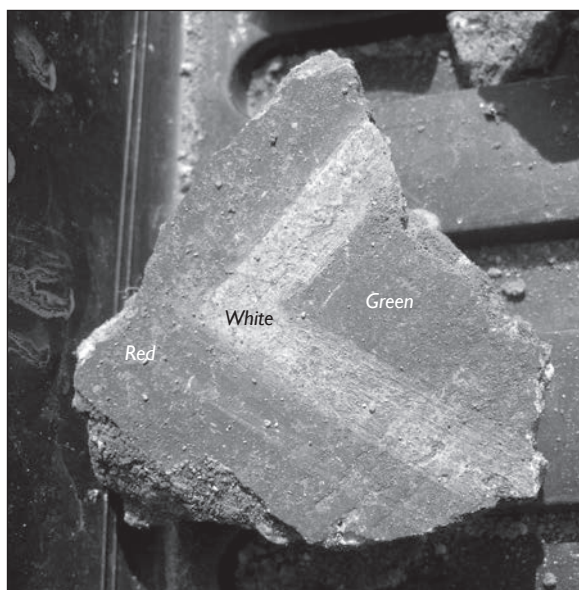
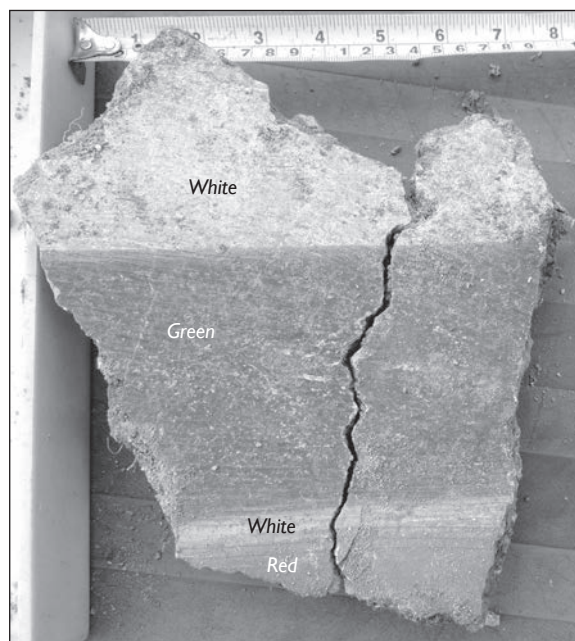


Fig. 4: Above and right, red and green painted wall plaster from Room 6



demolition rubble of Room 6. (Fig. 6) Two bone objects were also found on the floor surface; one is leaf shaped and may be part of a box decoration or jewellery; it has a small groove on the back that might indicate where it was attached to a chain for example. The other object is a lozenge shape that resembles a weaving tablet but this is not certain as the pattern of holes is not symmetrical and the holes and surfaces do not appear to be worn by use. However, it is very accurately cut; each of the four sides measures exactly 3.5cms, so perhaps the asymmetrical arrangement of the holes is deliberate. (See cover illustration.)

The floor surface exposed beneath the demolition layer varies in composition; partly crushed chalk and partly an '*opus signinum*' mix of mortar and tile fragments. On the east side of the room, particularly in the south east corner, the mortar floor surface is quite smooth and well preserved and abuts the wall plaster; but the surface is more patchy in other parts of the room. In places where the floor surface is missing, a sandy levelling layer is visible. Excavation this year stopped at the initial floor level but a piece of slag was found in a small area in the centre of the room where the surface had deteriorated and earlier burnt deposits could be seen with lumps of yellow clay. These are close to the furnace feature on the west side of the room and an extensive hearth area adjacent to the furnace that consists of yellow clay blocks placed in a rectangle with darker red and burnt deposits in the centre; both these features and the layers beneath the mortar floor are being looked at in detail in 2014.



Fig. 5: Painted plaster in situ in Room 6



Fig. 6: Fragments of glass vessel with squiggle decoration

Room 8

Room 8 is six metres by three metres, enclosed by flint and mortar walls on three sides but with a terracotta tile 'sill' feature on the south side. As in Room 6, a substantial layer of demolition rubble covered the floor surfaces. It was noticeable that there was a greater number of very large flint stones, particularly on the east side adjacent to the east wall (7491). A coin, a bronze *nummus* of Constantine I AD312-319, with a reverse of Sol Invicto Comiti, was found securely mortared on to a flint stone from the wall rubble (Fig. 7).

Despite the promising quantity of rubble, wall 7491 is, for two thirds of its length, traceable only by a mortar surface with just three flint stones remaining above floor level. However, in the south east corner of the room there is a 1.5m section of the wall extending north that is well built and at least 0.5m wide. At the north end of this feature there is a further 0.5m section that is built with a course of *tegulae* laid at floor level and part of a course of flints above.

This construction, at first, prompted comparison with the type of construction used in the walls recently discovered in Trench 16, but there the tiles were of flat brick, not roof tile. It was noticeable however that a number of brick tiles were found in the demolition rubble close to this section of wall, along with the very large dressed flint stones, but no brick tiles have been found so far within the wall structure although this area is still being excavated in 2014.

Part of Room 8 was excavated in 2012, a section of flint and mortar wall on the north side and in the north east corner a patch of chalk floor with a sandy levelling layer beneath. During initial cleaning of the area at the beginning of 2013, a coin, a bronze *foliis* of Constantine I AD333-334, with a reverse of Romulus & Remus & the Wolf, minted in Trier (Fig. 9) was found within the sandy layer.

The same sandy layer appears to be present under most of the floor of the room, but work early in 2014 showed that at least in the middle and south side of the room, tesserae were laid on top of this. Some tesserae remain in place against the walls on the east and west side and abut the sill on the south side. Many loose tesserae were found in Room 8 close to the sill. These are large terracotta tesserae but appear to be slightly sharper edged and neater than those found the other side of the sill in the adjacent south corridor. This may be because more care was taken in their manufacture or that the



Fig. 7: Bronze nummus of Constantine I AD312-319, with a reverse of Sol Invicto Comiti



Fig. 8: Wall 7491 with tile section in foreground



Fig. 9: Bronze foliis of Constantine I AD333-334, with a reverse of Romulus & Remus & the Wolf, minted in Trier

corridor tesserae were exposed to more wear. Two small areas of the tesserae are blackened as if exposed to combustion. Work on the stratigraphy within the room is progressing in 2014 but two other layers have been identified; an '*opus signinum*' mortar floor surface with tile inclusions that overlies the laid tesserae and also burnt deposits contemporary with or under the tessellated layer.

On the south side of the room, the expected wall did not appear; instead there is a narrow tile 'sill' feature. This consists of a line of large terracotta flat brick tiles approximately 0.25m square and 0.03m thick, placed vertically across the gap between walls 7490 and, most probably, 7491; the excavated section is just over two metres long and the tessellated floor in Room 6 appears to abut the sill. The tiles of the western end of the sill abut the small extension of wall 7470 mentioned above, but the east end of the sill is still beneath the baulk. On the south side of the sill, in what is assumed to be part of the long uninterrupted South Corridor Room 3, there are two small patches of tesserae also abutting the sill and set in a mortar layer. Both the tesserae and the sill show evidence of plough damage of the type seen before in tessellated floors on the site (SOAG Bulletin 58, 11); two shallow cuts in the surfaces about half a metre apart caused by the use of a sub soiler. The sill tiles are also broken and displaced in two places (Fig. 10).

The South Corridor Room 3

This area was only partially excavated in 2013; a small section of chalk floor surface was found south of wall



Fig. 10: The sill feature on the south side of Room 8



Fig. 11: Excavation in progress 2013

7504 but does not appear to extend as far as the sill (Fig. 11). A sondage close to the sill produced pottery and burnt material at least 20cms below the level of the top of the tiles and suggests an earlier surface with the sill as a 'step'. Apart from the removal of the topsoil and a thin layer of soil and rubble most of the remaining area is still to be excavated. The line of the south wall was partially excavated and is visible as a scatter of flint stones. During 2014 a flint and mortar wall across the corridor, just at the edge of the trench and disappearing under it, was discovered and is a continuation of the wall line comprising walls 7448 and 7491, that extend right across the building. The wall across the corridor marks the end of a long open space on the south side of the building that measure 18 metres in length.

Discussion

We have confirmation of the 2011 geophysical survey of this part of the building; that the layout of space is consistent with that seen in the rooms to the west. In fact, Rooms 6 and 8 largely repeat the pattern of the Central Room 2 and the north-south corridor Room 4 with large square rooms interspersed with smaller narrow ones and we already know that Room 10, to the east of Room 8, is also a large room.

There are already indications in Rooms 6 and 8 of the transition from working area to a higher status living space as the building was gradually extended, presumably as the occupants of the villa became more prosperous and more living space was required. In Room 6 a more detailed investigation of the furnace feature, the clay hearth and the early phase of the room will be completed in 2014 and should provide some more evidence of the earlier industrial phase.

In Room 8 there is some interesting dating evidence if it can be assumed that the coin attached to the wall rubble in Room 8 does come from wall 7491. This would mean construction of this wall after 319AD. The coin found in the northeast corner of Room 8 is dated 333AD and came from the sandy levelling layer under a patch of chalk floor. Although the levelling layer appears to have originally been laid for an earlier tessellated floor, the chalk surface above the coin did not extend very far into the room. So the coin may relate to later patching of the floor rather than the laying of the original tessellated floor.

One of the most important discoveries in 2013-2014 is the wall line that extends right across the building dividing Rooms 7 and 8 and the South Corridor Room 3 from the section of the building to the east. This is the only wall found so far in the villa building

that completely divides the north, central and south rooms. This wall also marks a difference in building style; all the internal walls to the east are of chalk blocks, those to the west are of flint and mortar. There is still more to be done to find out whether this was built originally as a single wall and whether that wall was the end of an earlier and different building to the east. The distribution of the rubble debris suggests a substantial wall on the east side of Room 8 and a 1.5m section extends from the south east corner of the room. However there is quite a large gap in the wall above floor level; is this simply more of the robbing out of walls seen in this area of the building or was it opened up to allow access when the building was extended eastward? Room 8 seems to have been open to the south corridor area (Room 3), was the sill sited at a large doorway? Rather like a barn?

When excavating so much heavy rubble, it is often a surprise to find delicate items such as the glass and bone objects surviving under the debris. These objects hint at the lifestyle of the occupants and are a reminder that there would have been furniture, cupboards and boxes on which they were placed or in which they were kept. Bone objects have been found before; a total of five bone pins and these items are known to be by products of the butchery industry and could perhaps have been made on site. A particularly good example was the bone tablet with a decoration of a face and two circles found at Gatehampton in 1999 in the rubble over the Stoke Room (a) along with several bone strips with engraved lines and holes. The tablet may have been inlay for a workbox or jewel box, and the strips could have come from the box sides or furniture (M. Henig pers. comm. *SOAG Bulletin* 55, 15).

Conclusions

We have succeeded in 2013 in completing the first phase of our investigation of this section of the villa building with all demolition layers removed and a start made on looking further. Work progresses relatively slowly on this site; this is a reflection of the commitment to providing space and opportunities for inexperienced diggers whilst at the same time ensuring that all is done to a good standard. There were a record number of people on site during 2013, many of them new to excavation, but the project is designed to cope with a wide range of skill levels. The experienced SOAG diggers are key to this and provide the expertise required and our good relationships with the landowners mean that the project has a more relaxed time frame.

Work continues on these rooms in 2014; it is evident that this part of the building shows a clear transition from working areas to living spaces. More investigation is needed to try to understand the sequence of building; was the villa building gradually extended westward, with former barns and workshops gradually subsumed into the villa building or was the development of the building more complex?

In 2014 it is hoped that a clearer view of the development of this part of the villa will emerge using both the evidence from Trench 7 and looking again at what was discovered in Trench 3 and at what lies between the 'dividing wall' and the substantial walls found in Trench 16.

Participation

An important aspect of this project is to encourage participation in archaeology and this year was remarkable for the record number of people involved. An Open Day in September was also very successful (see separate report). Another important part of the project is to disseminate information about our activities to as wide an audience as possible within the usual constraints of ensuring site security. In addition to the 80 or more people digging at the site in 2013, a similar number attended the Open day. Furthermore, talks were presented by Hazel Williams at the Berkshire Archaeological Society Conference, the CBA South Midlands Conference and to the Oxfordshire Local History Association.

It is particularly pleasing that of the 80 volunteers on site during 2013, 20 were young diggers under 14 years old. Encouraging young people to take an interest in archaeology is an important part of the project and for SOAG. The excavation of the south wall was one area that the young diggers enjoyed and a small group of 8 year olds were on hand when the sill feature emerged to great excitement. We find that young diggers take a lot of care and once they had gained some skill, several were put to work on the delicate task of lifting the layers of painted plaster from Room 6 with excellent results. We hope to continue to have young archaeologists on site.

As usual I must express my sincere thanks to the hard working SOAG team who made this all possible. Many thanks to John Hefferan for his work recording the CBM, to David Cox for his work as on site Finds Officer and to Dave Jobling for his work in supervising and reporting on Trench 16. Dave Oliver, SOAG Chairman and a regular participant in the project, spent a morning in September taking the excellent

overhead photo of the site, our thanks to Dave; we will miss his expertise on this but thanks to his efforts we have a good series of overhead photos that cover most of the site. Sadly Steve Gibson, Deputy Director of the site for the past four years decided to step down from this role at the beginning of 2014 due to other commitments. Steve has been involved with the Project for ten years. He excavated the enclosure ditch outside the bath house area and was Site Supervisor for several years before becoming Deputy Director in 2010. He is very knowledgeable about the site and fortunately has agreed to continue to be involved as a member of the team as far as other commitments allow. My particular thanks to Steve for all the work he has done for the project and for his continued support.



Fig. 12: Steve Gibson

We are very fortunate at Gatehampton to have landowners who are supportive of our activities and allow us time to excavate in a way that gives opportunities for young and inexperienced diggers. We are very grateful for their continued support and encouragement; Robin Cloke supported the early stages of project for a very long time and continues to take an interest in our activities. Our grateful thanks to current landowners Sarah and Roger Edmunds and to all the folks at Daisytown Ltd, their contribution to the success of the project is much appreciated.

A new trench at Gatehampton: the east end of the villa?

Dave Jobling

Introduction

This paper describes the 2013 extension of the Gatehampton Roman villa/farmstead eastwards from the existing site, with some clarifications derived from work conducted early in the 2014 season. At the time of writing (June 2014), there are many questions to be answered. Does anything lie to the east of the walls found during 2013? Are these structures of a different (perhaps earlier) phase to the rest of the villa? What are the various structures found alongside the outer face of the easternmost wall? Can we account for the many micro-tesserae found in the area of those structures? Can we resolve the many interlocking paved layers into a sequence? What is the walls' northern "spur", a feature unknown from the rest of the site, and how, if at all, was it connected to the main body of the villa? Where is the northern corridor's south wall?

In addition to examining the context of these questions, the paper will cover some of the small

finds retrieved from what is now known as Trench 16, and outline plans for a significant extension of the trench during 2014.

Opening trench 16

At the beginning of the 2013 digging season, the Gatehampton site was extended into the car park. The trench measures 10 metres by 1.5 metres, and is separated from the main villa site by a large hedge. Its alignment is shown in Fig. 1.

Opening up this new area was motivated by the ongoing quest to locate the eastern end of the villa, and by the presence of geophysical traces that align with both the northern ditch and the two lateral walls framing the villa's north corridor.

The topsoil (context 16009) contained a mix of ceramic and limestone tile fragments, pottery, bone and charcoal, merging into an underlying layer (16009) of more densely packed demolition materials. The ceramic tiles found in this context are generally

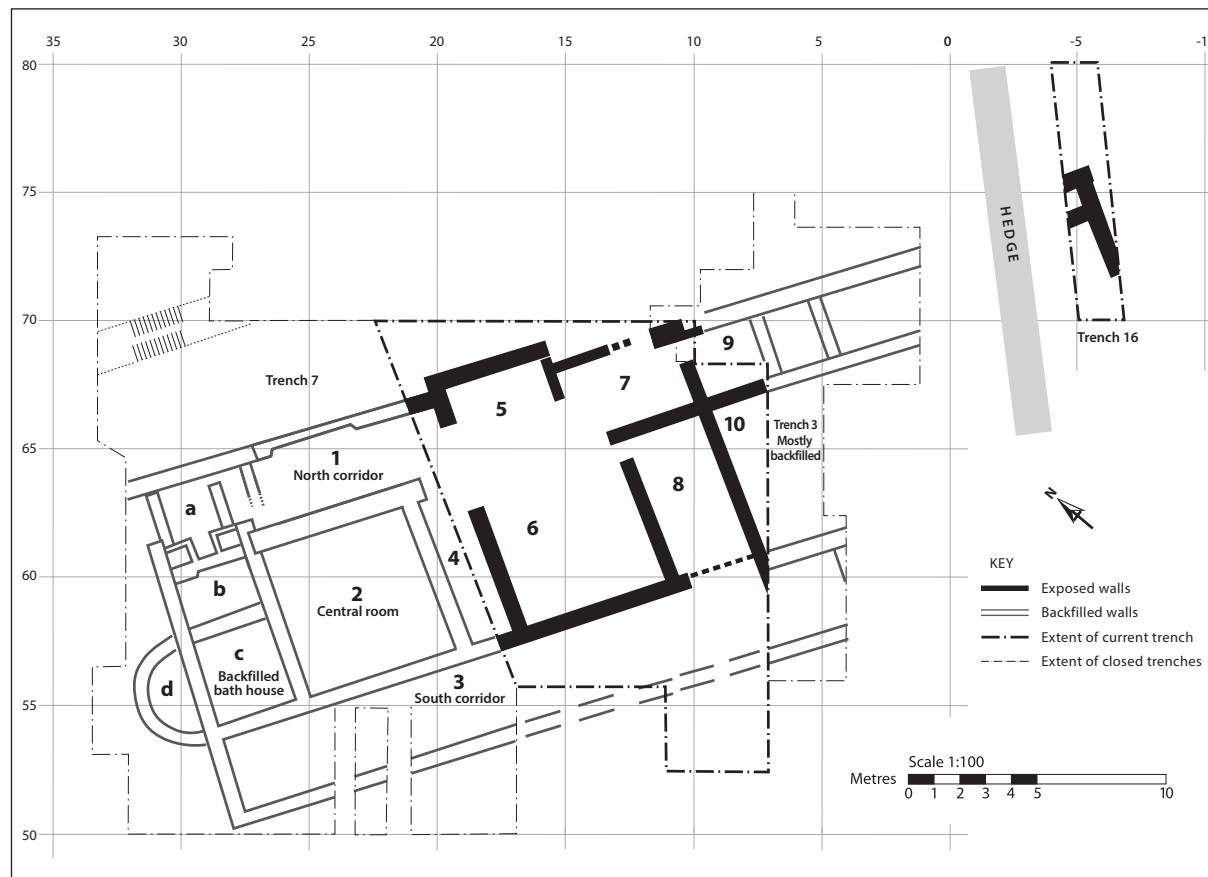


Fig. 1. Gatehampton site plan, including the new Trench 16

more degraded than those found elsewhere on the site, suggesting a difference in clay, firing or age. Soil conditions and drainage do not seem in any way different from elsewhere on the site.

Most prominent in 16001 are the very large quantities of mortar shaped by the curved underside of imbrex roof tiles, along with pieces of mortar formed around right-angled structures, perhaps timbers. It is notable that the imbrexes that must have produced the curved forms are themselves very poorly represented in this context, and were perhaps recycled at some point. The tegulae found here are neither numerous nor deeply stacked, and are predominantly horizontal in orientation, suggestive of a flat roof collapsing rather than tiles sliding off a steeply-pitched roof and accumulating in deep, localised piles (as with Room 2, the so-called Central Room).

See Fig. 2 for a plan of the whole trench.

The walls

Substantial walls were uncovered only 10-15cms below the surface (contexts 16002, with 16018 later separated off), as shown in Fig. 3 and Fig. 4. There are significant differences between these walls and those found across the rest of the site.

Wall 16002 is the highest quality construction so far uncovered at Gatehampton, with three regular courses of well-dressed flint nodules running approximately north-south (A-D in Fig. 3), with a width of 50cms (the same as all other walls at Gatehampton). Wall A-B is of similarly high quality, with its outer face characterised by an inlaid tile course (not present on the inner surface, and therefore likely to be decorative rather than used for

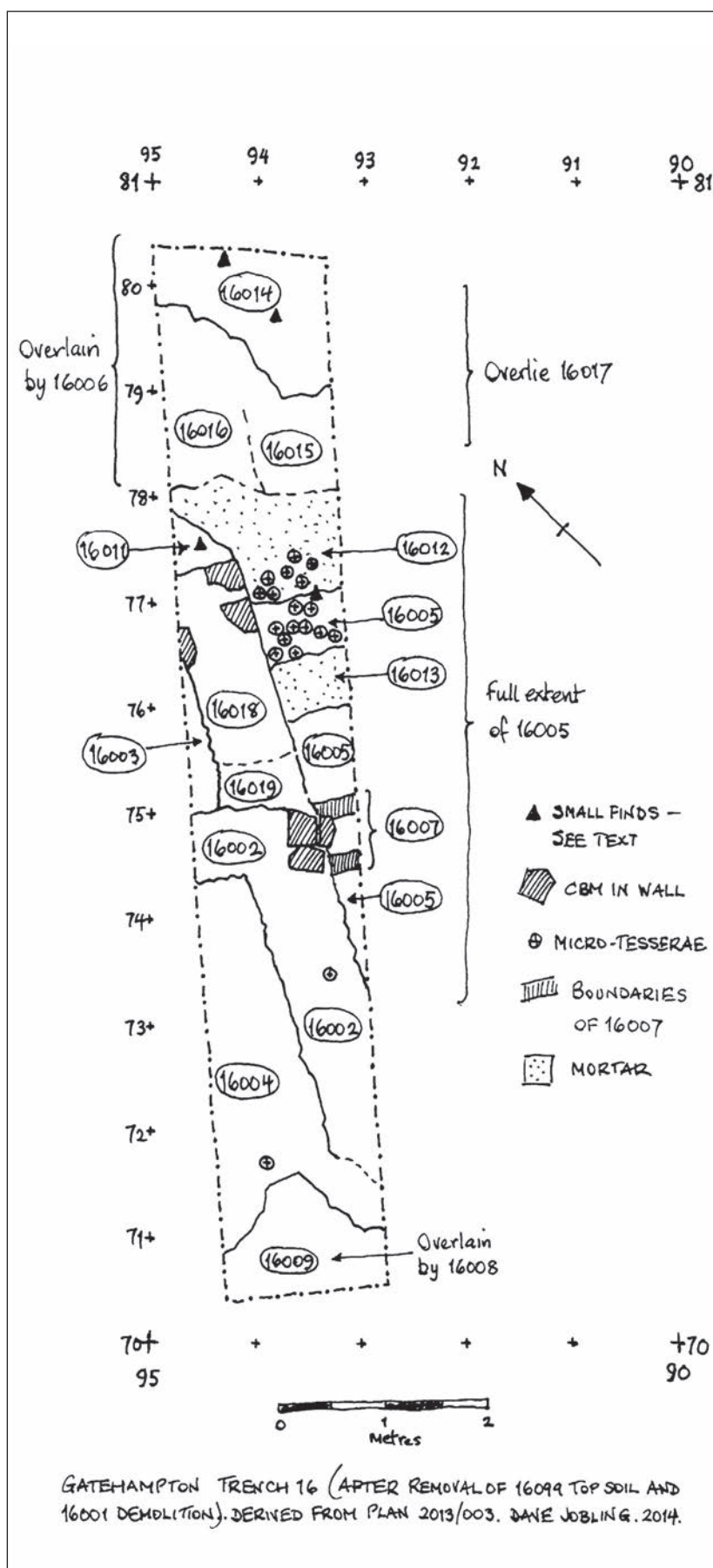


Fig. 2. Plan of Trench 16

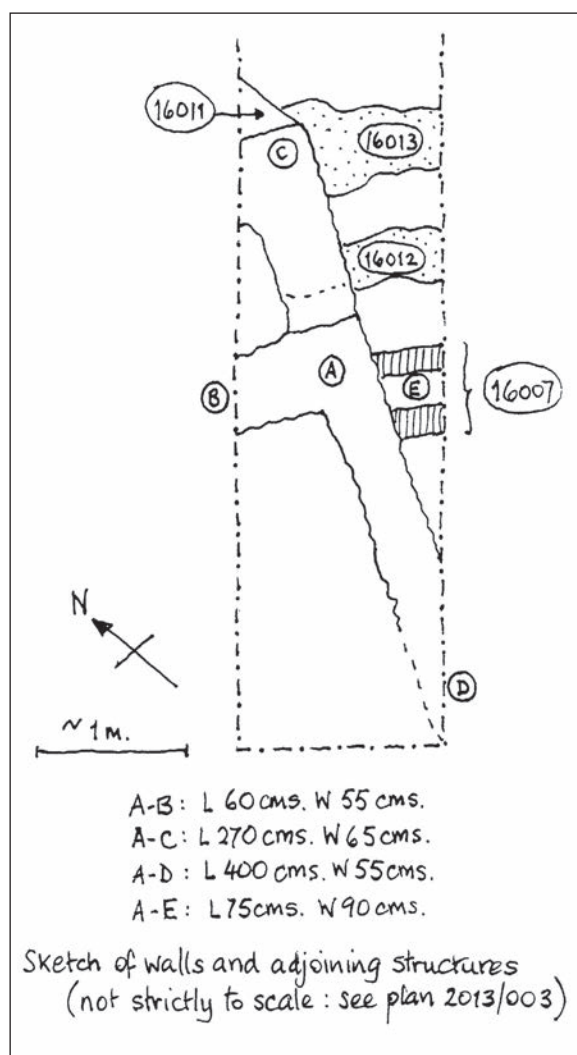
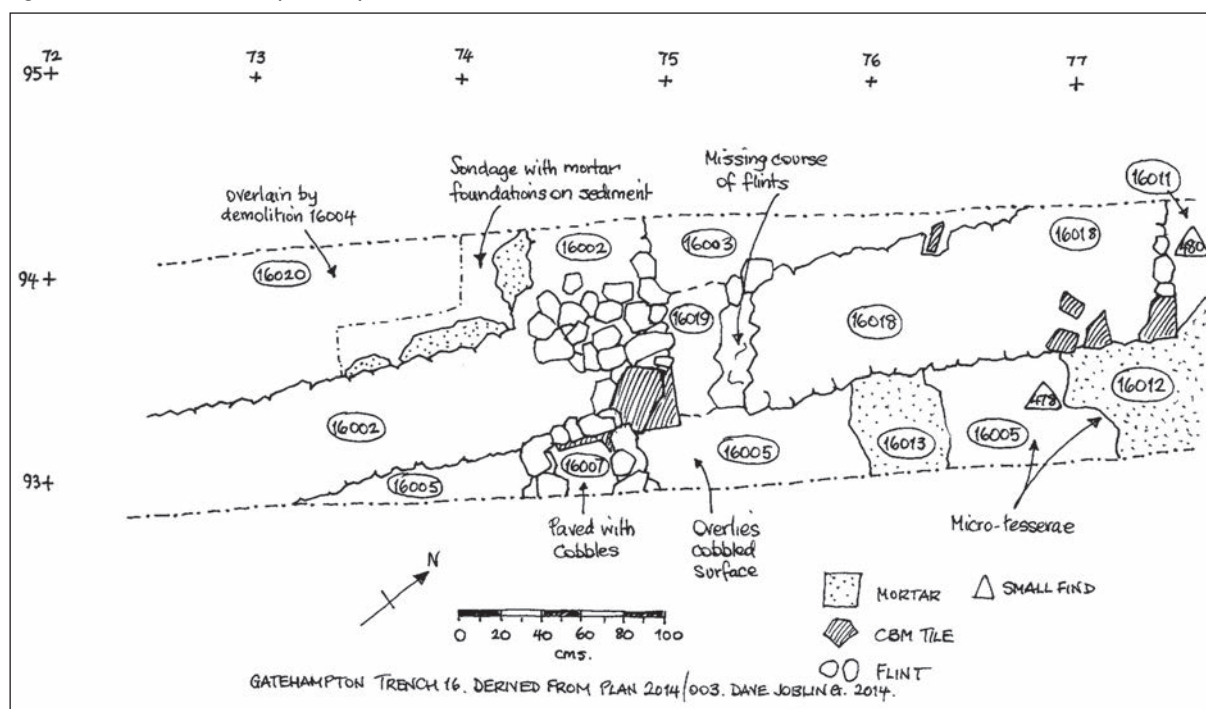


Fig. 3. Schema of the walls

Fig. 4. Plan of the walls at the point they meet



levelling). The corner of these walls is formed from CBM tiles laid to produce a perfect 90-degree outer angle (Fig. 4), a rare feature at Gatehampton.

Wall A-B is a very close alignment with the outer wall of the villa's northern corridor. However, no trace has yet been found of the corresponding southern wall of this corridor, though geophysics suggested the presence of some sort of structure. Extending the trench is expected to confirm whether the pattern of walls known from the western trenches extends to this part of the complex or not. It is possible that the walls here have a different layout, except for retaining the line of the outer façade.

To the north of the B-A-D angle is another wall, context 16018. Originally thought to be a part of the 16002 assembly, 16018 is now known to be separated from it by a gap (16019) of between 20 and 45cms width. There are three explanations to choose from for the presence of 16019.

The first is that 16019 is an area that has been robbed out, and that 16018 and 16002 were originally part of the same structure. Differences in the construction of the two walls suggest otherwise, as does the presence of the CBM tile coursing in the outer face of wall A-B that would have been lost inside the build, had the walls been a single structure.

The second is that 16018 is a separate build, perhaps an outhouse, but still contemporary with the rest of this end of the villa. Extending the trench into the

hedge line should explain whether the northern spur is a single, straight wall, or whether it turns west into the baulk of the trench. That is, whether at this point there is an end or a corner.

The third is that I6018 is an older structure that was dismantled (incompletely) to make way for a newer building, now the eastern end of the villa complex.

The winning explanation needs to account for the northern spur being of a very different and cruder type. It is 10-15cms wider than I6002, and only the top-most course is of neatly dressed flint. Below the top course, the wall is a conglomerate of chalk, mortar, random flints and CBM tile fragments. It too, at its northern end, has a tile-built angle. This 2.5 metre projection from the villa's northern façade is the only one known at Gatehampton.

Tile corners are known only from these two walls and from the corn drier, which may be a feature of age and therefore characteristic of the oldest parts of the villa complex.

At its southern end, wall I6002 disappears, either because of robbing out, or because there is an entrance to the room there. This will be investigated during 2014.

None of the walls shows signs of in-situ rendering or plaster, though some small, isolated fragments

of cream plaster with a deep red stripe have been uncovered at different points in the trench, both "inside" and "outside" the building (it is assumed that B-A-D enclosed the inner areas, while to the east was the outside). Demolition alongside the inner surface of the lower end of wall A-D has revealed a few pieces of 10cms thick wall rendering with a plaster skim, detached from the wall, and showing no traces of colour.

External features

Running along the "outside" of the walls are a number of unusual structures. Alongside the northern spur, I6018, are two features made of mortar (I6012 and I6013). Excavation of I6012 showed it to have no structure and to be almost certainly discarded building material, though what was being built when this excess mortar was dumped cannot be determined. The larger I6013 is believed to be the same.

A more interesting feature lies alongside the northern extremity of wall I6002, projecting from it eastwards into the edge of the trench. It seems to consist of a two-walled structure (I6007; Fig. 5) with a flint-lined floor, about 60cms in width and the same in depth. It may be a channel of some sort, though its function remains obscure and it is completely blocked at its western end by the wall.

Covering the mortar dumps and the channel feature



Fig. 5. The "channel"



Fig. 6. Section of the northern ditch

was a demolition layer, I6005, made up of clay soil mixed with chalk, mortar and flint, and many inclusions of tile, bone and pottery. In its lowest levels, between the two mortar dump features, were found a large number of micro-tesserae, of the type used in high quality mosaic flooring. It seems as though these pieces have been washed into this position from elsewhere, and their origin, unfortunately, remains completely unknown.

Internal floors

Within the (as yet unnumbered) room enclosed by walls B-A-D, the floor surfaces consist in the main part of mortar, except in the southernmost area, where there is a steeply sloping packed chalk floor (context I6009). This bears a very close resemblance to an area of chalk floor almost certainly associated with an entrance into Room 10, and raises the possibility (as does the disappearance of wall I6002 at this point) of an entrance into the Trench 16 building (another mystery to be investigated when the trench is extended).

This major area of packed chalk, unlike those in Rooms 2 and 10, does not appear to lie on top of abandoned CBM tesserae. This will be further investigated in 2014.

The chalk floor was covered by a thin (4-6cms) context, I6008, of what appeared to be wind-blown dust and soil with numerous CBM inclusions, pot

shards and pieces of cut bone. This context has been interpreted as a deposit that accumulated from casual use after the building was abandoned as a permanent settlement, but before its collapse. The mortar-rich demolition layer, I6004, lay directly on top of this deposit.

The packed chalk surface accounts for only a small proportion of the so-far uncovered area of the room, merging with an area of mortar surface. A sondage in the angle of the walls shows that the mortar/chalk surface lies directly on the natural sediment (red-brown silt mixed with flint) onto which the lowest course of flints is mortared.

External surfaces and the northern ditch

The villa's northern ditch (whose cut is context I6017), which remained unidentified through 2013 despite a trace of it appearing on geophysics, has now been convincingly located (Fig. 5). It lies approximately four metres from the northern façade (though only 1.5 metres from the northern spur), which corresponds to its proximity to the northern façade on the western side of the hedge. It is, however, much smaller in both depth (50cms) and width (1.3 metres), and there are hints that it may end in this area.

Between the northern spur and the end of the trench is a complex patchwork of packed surfaces (seemingly built), and looser deposits (seemingly

washed into place by flowing water). Investigation over a wider area is needed, but it seems that a poorly compacted context (16006) of mortar, chalk, flint, pottery and CBM overlies two adjacent ditch fill contexts (16015 and 16016), differentiated, from west to east, by degrees of compaction and the presence or otherwise of CBM. They, in turn, overlie the cut of the ditch itself. 16006 contained two wire-like ferrous “pins” mentioned below.

Small finds

A casual search of topsoil lifted by the JCB immediately produced a bronze coin from the early 330's AD. Although it lacked context on the site, it was struck during the era of Constantine the Great and his sons, a dynasty well-represented in Gatehampton coinage.

Between the northern end of the northern spur (wall A-C) and the ditch is a small triangular context, 16011, consisting of uniformly fine-grained reddish brown sediment of the type found extensively across the villa site. This deposit contains few inclusions except for heavily corroded nails, fragments of charcoal, and an exquisite carved bone pin, SF480 (Fig. 7), certainly the highlight small find of Trench 16 so far. 16011 is enclosed by the wall to the south and the mortar dump context, 16012.

Numerous, evenly-sized white and dark brown micro-tesserae, plus one red (Fig. 8), have also been found, almost exclusively in the area between the two mortar dump contexts. They seem to have been washed into the area by water, though their source has not been identified.

As already stated, two obscure, wire-like “pins” were unearthed at the northern end of the trench (context 16006). They are too corroded for their function to be identified. A further ferrous object, perhaps the fragment of a blade or trowel was also found in 16005, the context that overlies the two mortar dumps, but, again, it is too corroded to easily interpret.

Plans for 2014

Fig. 9 gives a good indication of the quality of the walls uncovered in Trench 16 so far.

Because practically every part of the trench has revealed something of interest, the 2014 season has been easy to plan. A general expansion of the trench in all directions (with the likely exception of north, at this time) would allow us to investigate the layout of internal walls, and to judge whether the corridor, then middle range of rooms, then corridor pattern is retained here, or whether a different layout was adopted.



Fig. 7: The carved bone pin



Fig. 8: A fanciful, but feasible, assembly using the micro-tesserae from Trench 16. (A single red tesserae is in the centre of eight white ones, which are bordered by brown tesserae.)

More specifically, it is not clear what lies immediately to the west of the trench (to the left, in Fig. 9), especially where the angle of the L-shaped wall and the line of the northern spur wall disappear into the baulk, so we will extend towards the hedge as far as the root system will allow.

Where is the south wall that should logically be a part of this easternmost extension of the northern corridor? It could be to the south of the current end of the trench, or, if not, suggests that this area really has a different layout to the rest of the villa. Does the missing wall area to the right of the chalk floor really denote an entrance?

To the east, what is the channel feature (Fig. 5)? How far does it extend out under the car park? Does the complex of path-like surfaces found to the north of the spur wrap around the eastern wall and run south? If they do, does that really suggest that 16002 is the eastern end of the villa? Are there outbuildings or more spurs under the car park? Or have we finally found the Eastern end of Gatehampton villa?

Fig. 9: A typical day in Trench 16, with the packed chalk floor in the foreground



Fig. 10: The tile course at the northern end of wall 16002



A working hypothesis: building sequences and the contents of Trench 16

The apparently superior building standards, the tile inlays and corners, and the northern spur seem to set the Trench 16 walls apart from the rest of the site. The paragraphs that follow are not necessarily the views of SOAG or of the Gatehampton digging team, but the ideas outlined here provide this writer with a framework for asking further questions and for planning the 2014 extension of the trench.

The Gatehampton area was (and is) agricultural. The corn drier found on the other side of the railway in 1989 supports this idea, with analysis of organic materials found there identifying wheat, barley and the weeds usually associated with such crops. Tim Allen's report of Gatehampton's earliest excavations dates the corn drier to the late first century (Allen 1995, 39-44). So, early on, the area was associated with arable farming, which is a logical fit for the site's topography, drainage and soil. Logically, the corn drier did not exist there in isolation. The implication is that there would have been some domestic and working arrangement nearby, as early as the late first century, to justify it being there. We cannot know whether the corn drier was owned by the Gatehampton estate, but their close proximity is suggestive, and there does not seem to be any better association to propose at this time. (It is on the wrong side of the river to have been logically associated with the area's grander villa at Upper Basildon.)

The Gatehampton villa, as it is currently understood, is a substantial linear construction, at least 50 metres from end to end, with an outer northern corridor, in the middle an east-west range of rooms separated by north-south walls, and then a southern corridor. It seems that the villa was extended westward over time. Evidence for this is the building sequence apparent from the area of Room 2. Here, extensions to the villa covered what had earlier been external surfaces marked by the residues of iron making. In Room 2 itself, the packed chalk floor overlies contexts made up of soot, charcoal and slag lying directly on the natural sediment, and this is true of other rooms. It can be surmised that these were outdoor working surfaces gradually swallowed as the villa developed westwards, progressing through the construction of large and colourfully painted rooms, and ending with the bathhouse at the westernmost end of the villa.

We know from this that the site as mapped to date did not spring into existence in a single phase. So where was the earliest core of the complex, and

what could have been the context for the earliest building work being carried out?

It seems logical that the luxury evident at the western end of the villa required the accumulation of capital or credit. We cannot know, of course, how the Gatehampton estate achieved this build-up of wealth, but early success at farming would be a strong contender. But where did the landowners (and labourers) live while the estate was being developed, and the capital was being accumulated?

Given similarities between our new walls and the corn drier, I would suggest that the earliest part of the villa/farmstead was to the east of the site, and that extensions were added later towards the west, as the owners became more successful and richer. The Trench 16 walls have a number of things in common with the corn drier, including more solid construction, rudimentary foundations and inlaid tile construction.

So, it may be that the old farmhouse and the corn drier were roughly contemporary, and fundamental to the growth of a successful estate, from which money eventually flowed, that was ploughed into a bit of grandeur in later generations. The initial construction would have had the quality considerations of being there to stay, which is probably different to the mind-set of someone of perhaps limited means but eager to impress. In short, early quality and function versus later display.

An interesting question raised by the unusual arrangement of walls in Trench 16, and the possibility that there lay the origins of a farming operation, relates to the location of outbuildings. The corn drier fits the bill, properly isolated from the rest of the site by the need for proximity to the fields (and to the river, for transportation of grain?) and for the mitigation of fire risk. Could wall 16018 be the remains of another, and are there others to be found further to the east, or elsewhere in the area?

This line of speculation underlies the project plan for Trench 16 through 2014. In addition to exploring the interesting features that disappear into the sides of the trench in its 2013 form, I'd like to search for evidence that it was the early functional and domestic core to the site. Or that it wasn't.

References

Allen, T. G. 1995. *Lithics and Landscapes: archaeological discoveries on the Thames Water pipeline at Gatehampton Farm, Goring, Oxfordshire 1985-92*. Oxford: Oxford University Committee for Archaeology.

Blewbury Local History and Archaeology Groups

Blewbury Big Dig – Test Pit Programme 2nd Interim Report

Dave Carless

Introduction

The Blewbury Big Dig project is run as a partnership between SOAG and Blewbury Local History and Archaeology Groups in which both parties provide equipment and members of both can take part.

The background, methodology and results of the first season were presented in the first interim report last year and so are not repeated here. In addition to the 16 test pits completed in 2012, a further 9 have now been completed and a programme of geophysical surveys of open spaces within the village has been started. As the programme will continue and potentially be completed in 2014, detailed results of these are not presented here.

The locations of test pits for 2013 and 2014 have been chosen to focus on a number of specific research questions:

- What evidence is there of early occupation in the Nottingham Fee Manor (a small manor dating back to the Domesday Book, entirely surrounded by the Great Manor of Blewbury)?
- What are the early Saxon origins of Blewbury? Is there evidence of a possible minster church?
- Where were the historic boundaries between village and fields?



Fig. 1: Test pitting in a Blewbury garden



Fig. 2: A resistivity survey underway in Cochrane's field, Blewbury

Analysis of Pottery Finds

In total 2343 potsherds, mostly small single pieces, were recovered from the 25 pits. Where possible these were assigned date ranges: Early/Mid Saxon (410 to 900AD), Late Saxon (to 1066), Saxo-Norman (to 1150), Medieval (to 1450), Post Medieval (to 1750) and Modern.

As in 2012, there were no Roman or Prehistoric finds. The temporal and spatial distributions of 2013 pottery finds are consistent with the 2012 results.

Geophysical Surveys

Within the village itself a number of open spaces which are each large enough to accommodate several 20m x 20m grid surveys have been identified. Fortunately, these lie in locations that may help answer our research questions.

Both a resistivity meter and gradiometer are being used to investigate these spaces, and test pits are being dug within them to complement the surveys. A training exercise has taken place in the smallest of the sites (the Play Close) and work has started on another, Cochrane's field. Results from these will be included in next year's report.

Discussion

The Blewbury Big Dig continues to be a success as a community archaeology project. We continue to have enthusiastic participation of local garden owners and willing diggers and pot washers from within the village and the surrounding area, including the extensive collaboration of other local archaeology groups.

Although we still remain cautious, our conclusions on settlement patterns from last year remain unchanged:

- No evidence was found of prehistoric or Roman settlement within the present village curtilage.

- There is evidence of early/mid Saxon (dated 5th to 8th century) occupation. This is the earliest occupation evidence yet found in the village and may have connections with the pagan burials on Blewburton Hill and elsewhere within the Parish.
- There is evidence of continuous occupation from Saxon to modern times.
- No evidence was found of settlement outside the areas of occupation shown on the 1805 enclosure map implying that there has been no contraction of the village prior to its modern expansion.

The Forward Programme

Both the test pit programme and the geophysical surveys will continue in the 2014 season. Barring unexpected events, it is expected that this phase of the work will then be largely completed, but there remain many potential targets in the parish to investigate!

Acknowledgements

Once again we are immensely grateful to all the people who have offered their gardens and given up their time to survey, dig, sieve, wash, sort, count, weigh, photograph and report.

The programme has been undertaken with the kind support of TWHAS (The Wallingford History and Archaeological Society) who loaned us equipment and, in the guise of Gerard Latham, provided much needed support and guidance to get us going. We are greatly indebted to June Strong for help in dating the pottery and to Geoff Deakin for use of his gradiometer. We are also most grateful for generous financial support from Sustainable Blewbury.

Ascott Park Research Project

An Overview and Interim Report

Ian Clarke

Introduction

Ascott Park is close to the village of Stadhampton and about 12km southeast of Oxford, at BNG:SU 611 981 (Fig. 1). The park is owned by Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) who commissioned Oxfordshire Buildings Trust (OBT) to carry out extensive historical and archaeological research preparatory to improving public access and the opening of an Historical Trail in 2010. The site is well marked for those who travel along the B480 between Stadhampton and Chalgrove by a group of stone gate piers and pillars backing onto a wide, double avenue of lime trees stretching south into the distance but with no sign of a great house. The park is on the English Heritage (EH) Register of Historic Parks and Gardens, registered Grade II, list number 1001086. Various buildings and structures are also listed Grade II or II*, including a dovecote, a 'granary/icehouse' (or banqueting house) and a pavilion. For the full list see Bowden & Rardin 2007 or the EH website.

The history of the post-medieval occupants of Ascott Park, the Dormers and their successors, and the problems surrounding where they lived, has been ably summarised by John Sykes of OBT (Sykes 2008/2012). William Dormer commissioned a new house in about 1660, complete with formal avenues and gardens laid out in the latest fashion, but the house accidentally burnt down in 1662 when close to completion and was never rebuilt. Despite much recent research, the precise location of this house is still disputed and remains unconfirmed.

The first three sections of this report are similar to a report prepared for South Midlands Archaeology No 44 to appear later in 2014 but the final two sections are new.

Earlier work

In 2007, Mark Bowden of EH led an archaeological survey and investigation of Ascott Park on behalf of OBT (Bowden & Rardin 2007). The survey elucidated



Fig. 1. General location map.

© Crown copyright Ordnance Survey. All rights reserved.

the post-medieval history of the park, of particular interest here being those features relating to the extensive remodelling of the site at the time of the building of the new house by William Dormer. Bowden confidently locates the 1662 house on an axial alignment with the main avenue and gateway, at a rectangular hollow (or cellar) (21) fronting a linear earth bank (or terrace) (22) and overlooking formal gardens to the south. This is where 'local tradition' places the house (Judge 2001, 127; Crake 1882).

[Note: The numbers in brackets are identifiers from the EH report included here for cross-referencing.]

Also in 2007, a geophysical survey was carried out by Abingdon Archaeological Geophysics (AAG). Earth resistance and magnetometer techniques were used to survey much of the area of the 17/18th century formal gardens, including the earth bank (22) and hollow (21) thought by EH and OBT to be the location of the 1662 house. Both methods detected important archaeological features: the magnetometry showed linear features relating to the garden layout and possible rubble spreads; the resistivity gave better results for both garden and possible building remains (Ainslie *et al* 2007; Ainslie 2008). In their report (2007), the Ainslies propose that "...areas of probable rubble and linear features...north of the earth bank" (22) indicate a large house arranged around a rectangular courtyard, perhaps open to the east. This is thought unlikely by Mark Bowden who interprets the area as an 'entrance courtyard' for the house (Bowden & Rardin 2007, p16).

In 2009, an excavation was organised by OBT and directed by independent archaeologist Brian Dix. The volunteers who took part in this excavation included several SOAG members. A number of trenches were opened to examine remains of the 17/18th century formal gardens, the earth bank (possible terrace) (22) and hollow (potential house site) (21). Dix's report summarises the results and findings, but he is unable to offer any firm conclusion regarding the location of the 1662 house (Dix 2012). His long Trench 7 that sectioned the bank (22) and western end of the hollow (21), revealed the foundations of an outer retaining wall for the terrace-bank and clear evidence for a robbed-out surrounding wall in the hollow and possible flagstone floor. No evidence of burning was found and the deposits in the central area were found to be notably clean. Dix proposes that the archaeological evidence: "...is consistent with the creation of a former basement or cellar in the early 18th century... [but] *that the project was unfinished,*

and possibly abandoned at an early stage" (my italics). Dix suggests the 1662 house was perhaps located elsewhere and that the hollow may represent a second attempt to build a new house in the early 18th century (Dix 2010/2012). An area of "building rubble" east of the hollow (21) and towards the 'granary' (34) is suggested as worth investigating as a possible site (Dix 2009).

The results of the 2009 excavation may be usefully compared with those of an earlier excavation in 1969 by Susanna Everett and colleagues, when a long trench also sectioned the bank (22) and hollow (21) but at the eastern end. Significant quantities of rubble, mortar, burnt tile, ash, charred wood and melted lead were found within the bank. Rubble, brick, tile and mortar were also found in the hollow immediately north of the bank but the rest of the hollow was relatively clean. A coursed limestone and mortar wall 0.6m thick survived on the south side of the bank. On the south side of the hollow (north side of the bank) a coursed limestone and mortar wall 0.9m thick was revealed surviving to a height of c.2m, but no evidence was found for a wall on the north side of the hollow. Everett speculated as to whether the long, narrow bank could possibly be the remains of a house but found this difficult to believe. She firmly concluded: "It is certain, however, that contrary to local tradition there were no buildings in the hollow to the north of the bank" (Everett 1969).

One final possibility, put forward in response to Dix's unsettling conclusions, was that the house might have been located at the southern end of the main avenue, looking across a formal garden towards the terrace bank, in which case the hollow could be the site of a grotto/pavilion (Clarke 2011).

Preliminary geophysical work

SOAG accepted an invitation from John Sykes of OBT to consider further fieldwork at Ascott Park with the primary aim of finally determining the location of the 1662 house. A preliminary geophysical survey was carried out in 2013 to assist with the formulation of a proposal for further archaeological work. The survey was an extension (outwards on all sides) of the ground resistance survey carried out by AAG in 2007, the data from the two surveys being merged. The main purpose of the new survey was to see whether there were any rectilinear anomalies indicating a substantial building in the locations suggested by earlier researchers, or in peripheral areas, but it also enhanced the important 'courtyard' area of AAG's results by placing it in a wider context. The survey team was led by Gerard Latham.

Fig. 2 shows the combined data after minimal processing and Fig. 3 after high pass filtering to remove geological gradients. Close study of the data has revealed significant new details about the 17th century house and garden layout, which will be covered in a separate geophysics report. More importantly here, the data provides new evidence to assist in determining which of the proposed locations of the house is the most likely. Whilst no conclusion based purely on geophysical data can be definitive, particularly when it relies on negative evidence, some reasonable conclusions can be drawn from the survey results based on a 'balance of probability'. The latter is a reasoned judgement based on experience, an understanding of the site (especially geology and soil conditions) and taking into account what kind of features are showing up and with what clarity they are revealed. Based on this balance of probability, the important findings from my examination of the survey data can be summarised as follows:

- 1) The high resistance in the rectilinear area north of the bank (shown as Forecourt in the image), interpreted by AAG as possible rubble spread, is simply the background response from well-draining surface soils and geology, which extend over a wide surrounding area. Ainslie's 'courtyard house' theory can be safely discounted. [Note: Fig. 2 shows this geological response most clearly.]
- 2) There is no evidence to indicate a house at the southern end of the main avenue. Clarke's alternative theory can also be safely discounted.

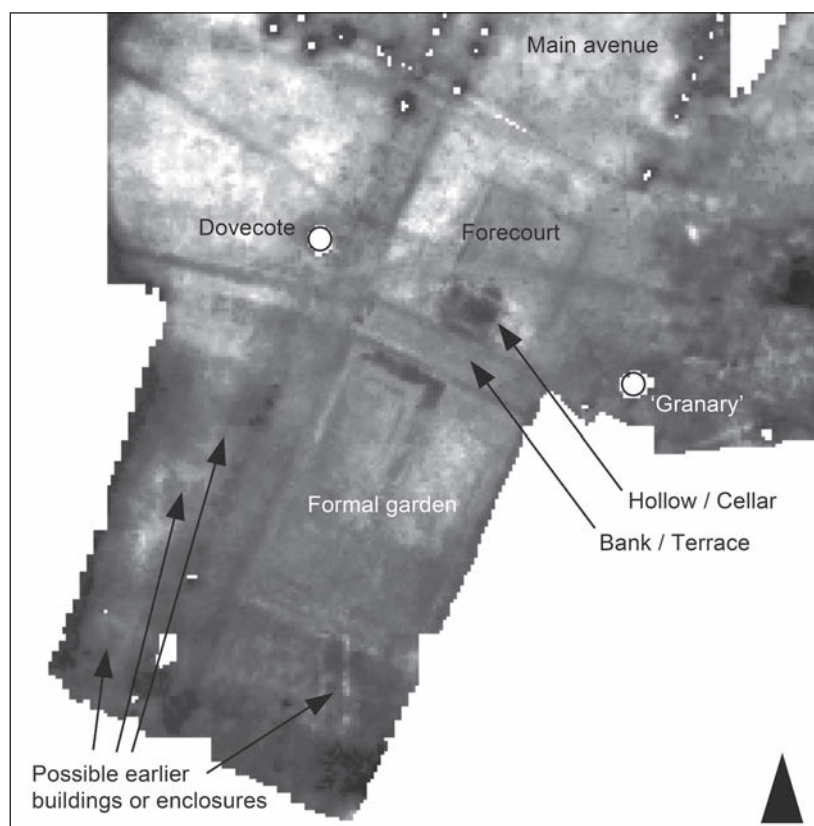


Fig. 2. Combined ground resistance data after edge matching and low pass filtering (white high / black low resistance; survey square 480 x 480m)

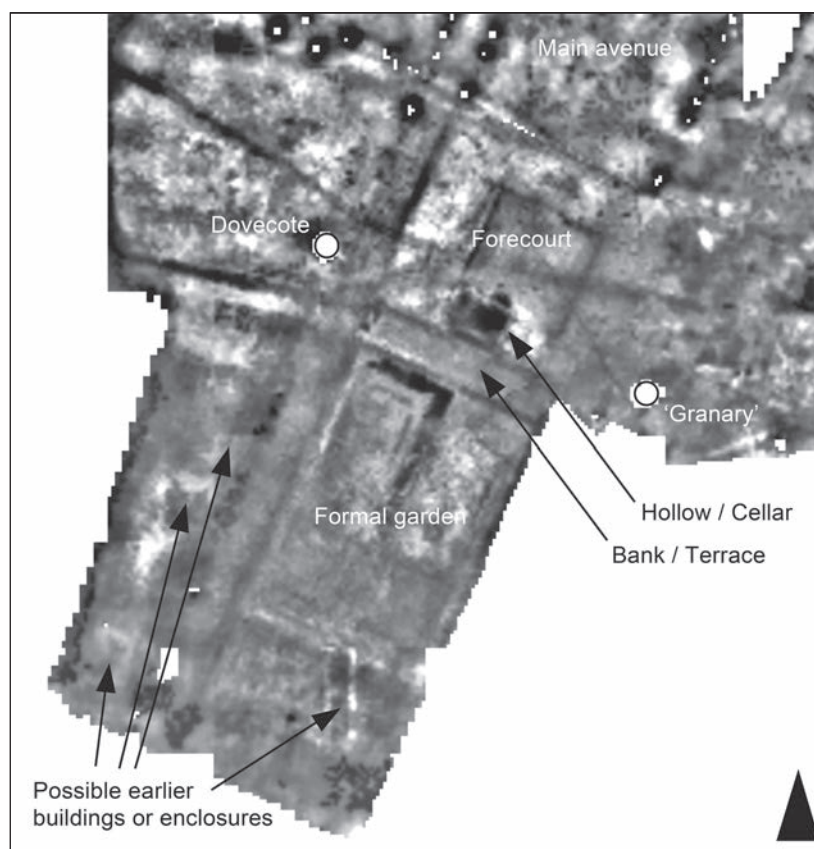


Fig. 3 Combined ground resistance data after high pass filtering and interpolation (white high / black low resistance; range $\pm 47\Omega$; survey square 480x480m)

- 3) The magnetometry response towards the 'granary', interpreted by AAG as possible rubble spread, does not suggest a house site. There is resistivity evidence for walls in this general area related to the 17th century remodelling: it seems likely that the walled enclosure of the early house was reduced in size at some date and that another wall is an integral part of the terrace/house in the hollow. Further investigation is needed.
- 4) There is evidence of one, possibly two or more, buildings or enclosures in the southern area of the formal gardens but these appear to predate the 17th century terraced gardens. They might justify further investigation at some stage.
- 5) The geophysical evidence in general firmly supports the interpretation of a double-pile house with basement and ground-floor terrace in the 'traditional' location, as proposed by Bowden (EH).

SOAG will proceed with the last as the working hypothesis for further research, including the probability that the terraced gardens and avenues are an integral part of a mid/late 17th century 'grand design'.

A secondary (detached) survey in 2013 in the northeast corner of the park attempted to locate the site/ground plan of the lost medieval chapel but without success. It seems likely that any substantial remains have been ploughed out.

Reappraisal of earlier work

A critical reappraisal of all earlier research work is nearing completion, preparatory to formulating a new research strategy for 2015 onwards. This work was delayed for some time by lack of access to the crucial 2009 dig archive but the latter was deposited at the OCC Museums Resource Centre at Standlake in May 2014 and an initial appraisal of the documentary archive has been made.

With regard to the assumed house site (i.e. the hollow/cellar and bank/terrace) the drawings and field notes from the 2009 dig are of significant value in supplementing Dix's final report (2012). Regrettably, despite the generally excellent quality and clarity of the archived documents, there appears to be no definitive record of survey coordinates or ground plan measurements for the house and terrace. Missing data is not unusual in any dig archive and is not unexpected in this case given the very broad scope of Dix's fieldwork programme conducted over a short timescale.

Making certain assumptions, the house depth can be estimated from Dix's drawing of Trench 7 suggesting an overall figure of c.13.7m (45ft). The terrace depth in front of the house can be extracted with fair accuracy from Everett's 1969 trench drawing to give c.9.1m (30ft) from the outside of the front wall of the house to the inside of the outer support wall. Everett measured the house wall at 0.9m (3ft) thick and the terrace wall at 0.6m (2ft) thick. Neither dig investigated the width of the house. The early 18th century estate plan (cited in Sykes 2008/2012) suggests a square ground plan and the geophysics appears to support this, although it is far from clear. We lack any coordinate data that would allow a secure correlation of the two digs. We also lack coordinate data that would enable us to confidently link up the alignments of walls in Dix's Trenches 5 and 6 with his Trench 7: the geophysics suggests the terrace may be narrower outside the width of the house. Establishing accurate survey coordinates and ground plan measurements for the house and terrace will be essential in any new fieldwork.

The 2009 dig archive confirms (as suspected) that the bank/terrace was not fully sectioned down to the original ground level: over the central area only the top soil and one surface layer were fully excavated. We are therefore still reliant on Everett's 1969 excavation drawing and report for a principal knowledge of the contents and stratigraphy of the bank/terrace. We can only speculate as to whether a full section of the bank in 2009 would have revealed evidence of burning and demolition similar to that discovered in 1969.

Current thinking and the likely direction of future research

As noted above, SOAG's working hypothesis is that the 1662 house was located at the 'traditional' location of the hollow and bank, and includes the probability that the terraced gardens and avenues are an integral part of a mid/late 17th century 'grand design'. This represents a firm return to the position taken by EH and held by OBT before the 2009 excavation. It naturally follows that for this hypothesis to be true there must be a convincing alternative interpretation of the evidence uncovered in 2009, i.e. Dix's findings must be successfully challenged. Any new interpretation must also be compatible with the evidence from Everett's 1969 excavation.

It is my contention that the evidence from the hollow and bank, as recorded by EH and AAG in 2007 and revealed in more detail by the 1969 and 2009

excavations of Everett and Dix, is entirely consistent with this being the site of William Dormer's house, burnt down in 1662 when nearing completion. Why then did Dix find no evidence of burning in the hollow and why was the central area notably clean? (The latter was also noted by Everett.) The archaeology suggests that the house was built with a cellar (or perhaps more correctly we should call it a basement) half below ground and half above – an increasingly fashionable feature of new-build houses in the later 17th century – which in this case raised the ground floor to the intended height of the terrace. If we postulate that the basement was of vaulted construction, which is highly likely at this date, then the masonry would have prevented the fire from penetrating and destroying the basement level. Furthermore, clearance of burnt materials and partial or complete demolition of the upper levels of the house could then take place without leaving any evidence of such within the basement confines. After the fire, it might reasonably be expected that the substantial vaulted basement and the terrace would have been left in place, first in the hope and expectation that the new house would at some date be rebuilt from this foundation (thus minimising cost) and second that in the meantime these features could continue in use to provide interest in the garden for amusement and entertainment. The evidence from near-surface finds suggests that the final demolition and removal of the basement level and terrace walls did not take place until much later. The fact that no effort was then expended on levelling the house site further suggests that this probably coincided with the formal gardens going out of use, as also concluded by Dix (2012). The absence of demolition debris over the central area can be attributed to the fact that the floor in the basement, almost certainly of flagstones, was amongst the last material to be removed.

How then do we explain the substantial presence of 'ash, burnt tile, charred timber, and melted lead' found within the terrace fill by Everett in 1969? Whilst we cannot rule out that such material may have come from the demolition of other buildings, the simplest and most likely explanation is that the terrace was empty, or partly empty, at the time of the fire. It thereby provided a catchment for falling debris during the fire and (more importantly) a substantial and useful repository for any unwanted materials from the subsequent demolition of the upper levels. But why was the terrace empty? The answer is quite simple but dependent on a knowledge of normal

building practice, both then and now but even more so then. In a solid terrace the containment walls must withstand a significant horizontal thrust from the compacted rubble and earth of the fill; they would therefore be built up to full height and then left for many weeks or preferably months for the lime mortar to mature and gain the necessary strength. With the non-hydraulic or feebly hydraulic lime binders available at the time it was well understood that any structure built to carry lateral thrust could never be left for too long before imposing the load: in a vaulted structure, for example, the timber centrings would be left in place for many months. The terrace at Ascott Park was filled eventually but sometime after the fire. This again confirms that the terrace was considered a desirable feature of the gardens, even without the house.

I should also say at this point that it is important to dispense with any idea that the earth from the hollow was somehow 'thrown up' to form the bank, as has been loosely suggested at times. This is not what happened and practical considerations make it unworkable. If material from the hollow was used for the terrace fill (likely but by no means certain) it was first set aside until the walls were built and the mortar had matured. This is still the way it is done now on building sites although timescales are much reduced by the availability of modern, quick setting cement. A close examination of the stratigraphy within the terrace could of course confirm the filling sequence and methodology. Everett's section drawing goes some way towards this.

The above is not simply an alternative interpretation of the archaeological evidence but a simpler and therefore more convincing one. It is consistent with all of the available evidence and eliminates any need to postulate a 'second attempt' to build a house, either elsewhere or on the same site. In choosing between this interpretation and that of Dix, we may sensibly apply the principle of Ockham's razor, or *lex parsimoniae*. [See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Occam's_razor]

With a satisfactory interpretation of the evidence from the house site available to us, is any further fieldwork strictly necessary? From a personal viewpoint (and from one of protecting a listed site) the answer is no, but some additional fieldwork is perhaps justifiable to fill in gaps in our knowledge and to prove the above theory 'beyond reasonable doubt' – a theory that is convincing to me may not be so to others. Some further excavation by

SOAG on the house and terrace site is therefore under consideration for 2015 onwards. This will focus on recovering accurate locational coordinates, confirming ground plan dimensions, examining the relationship of the house and terrace, and most importantly in proving (if possible) that there was a vaulted construction for the basement and what form that took. Any such excavation would be on a basis of minimal intervention to achieve these basic aims and may well include some partial reopening of earlier trenches. Other research questions are being considered but are likely to be subsidiary in the first instance.

Acknowledgements

My sincere thanks are due to the enthusiastic SOAG volunteers who completed the 2013 survey in record time under the excellent leadership of Gerard Latham. I am most grateful to Oxfordshire County Council for granting permission to carry out the survey, for the support of Richard Oram the OCC Planning Archaeologist and for the continuing encouragement and interest of John Sykes and the Oxfordshire Buildings Trust. Thanks are also due to John Osbourne, tenant farmer at Ascott Park and to other residents of Ascott and Stadhampton who continue to show a lively interest in the project.

References

- Ainslie, R., Ainslie, S. and Oatley, C. 2007. *Ascott Park: survey using magnetometry and resistivity*, June 2007. Abingdon Archaeological Geophysics. Unpublished report for OBT
- Anslie, R. 2008. "Stadhampton Ascott Park", *South Midlands Archaeology* No. 38, Oxfordshire. p47
- Bowden, M. and Rardin, A. 2007. *Ascott Park, Stadhampton, Oxfordshire: analytical earthwork survey of a 17th century park and garden*, *Archaeological Survey and Investigation Report*. English Heritage Research Department Report, Series 93/2007, http://services.english-heritage.org.uk/ResearchReportsPdfs/093_2007WEB.pdf
- Clarke, I. 2011. *A new theory on the location of William Dormer's 'new' house at Ascott Park*. Unpublished note for OBT, dated 1 March 2011
- Crake, Rev. A. D. 1882. *'Fairleigh Hall', a tale of Oxfordshire during the Great Rebellion* (Preface). A R Mobray & Co, Oxford & London
- Dix, B. 2009. *Letter to J Griffin Esq, Hon. Sec. OBT, dated 7 October 2009, regarding Ascott Park, Stadhampton: archaeological investigation*
- Dix, B. 2010. "Gone but not forgotten", *Historic Gardens Review* Issue 24, Dec 2010 – Jan 2011. The Historic Gardens Foundation: London
- Dix, B. 2012. *Archaeological excavation at Ascott Park, Stadhampton, Oxfordshire, August 2009*. Unpublished report for OBT
- Everett, S. 1969. *Trial excavation at Ascott Park*. Unpublished report, OCC HER record: PRN1797
- Judge, C. (comp.), 2001. *The Parish of Stadhampton, Oxfordshire, incorporating the villages of Ascott, Brookhampton, Chiselhampton & Stadhamton*. Stadhampton History Society
- Sykes, J. 2008. *The mystery of where the Dormers and their successors lived in Ascott Park*. Unpublished OBT report, March 2008
- Sykes, J. 2012. *The mysterious later history of Ascott Park*. OBT report, February 2012. Copy deposited in the Oxfordshire History Centre, Ref. D11/483

Emmer Green

A non-intrusive investigation into the remains of a Bronze Age Barrow Cemetery

David Nicholls

Introduction and Location

Late in 2012, a recently observed image on Google™ Earth was pointed out to the writer by SOAG member, David Oliver. This image showed a small group of circles on the recreation ground in Emmer Green. These were completely surrounded by urban development, except on the western boundary abutting allotment holdings. The area of the field amounted to approximately 0.54ha (1.24 acres): the centre point of these features is at SU 719766 (See Figs. 1 and 2).

The site was visited early in 2013 to assess prevailing conditions, and it was immediately apparent that no evidence of the circles or other features could be discerned at ground level, but that gradual intrusion was taking place. This grassed field had been laid out to a very even surface for recreational purposes, with a further compounded area to the north, allocated for playing equipment with recently erected, and extended, fencing surrounding this. A small area had been covered with hard surfacing. To the southwest corner of the field, adjacent to the allotments, an entrance off Grove Road had been created during the 1980s and this leads to a storage and facilities structure.

Investigative Procedure

It was decided in view of the paucity of such potential virgin sites within the area, and the vulnerability of this one within the Borough particularly, that approaches should be made to the Council with a view to obtaining permission to extract more detailed information by non-intrusive geophysical surveys of the area of the rings, and this was agreed. Such information would be of benefit in deciding the future use of the site and whether it should be considered for scheduling.

The geophysical work programme for SOAG in 2013 had already been planned, but in discussions with Berkshire Archaeological Research Group (BARG), affiliated to Berkshire Archaeological Society (BAS), it was agreed that a joint examination of the site

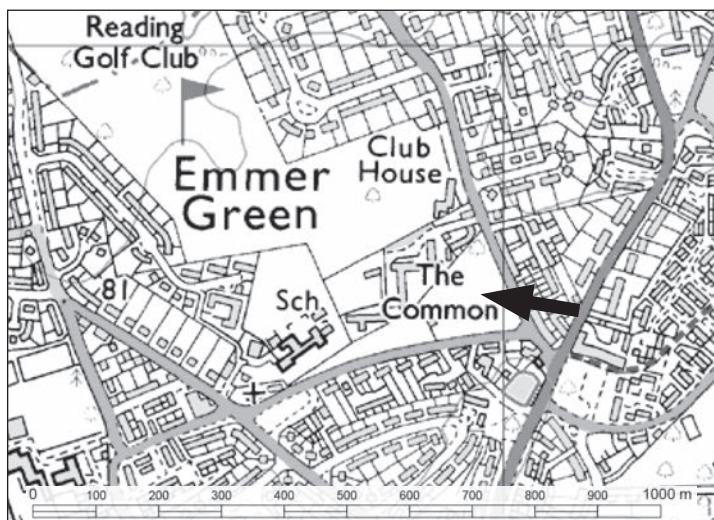


Fig. 1. The site location © Crown copyright Ordnance Survey. All rights reserved



Fig. 2. Google™ Earth image (2006) showing a group of circles at Emmer Green.

could be achieved in 2013 with BARG undertaking resistivity and magnetometry scans of the site. The work was undertaken on 11-13 June 2013. BARG also undertook a useful search of historical records of the field. This established that this area of ground had been known as 'The Common' since the late 18th century. No ownership from early mapping indicated agricultural use requiring ploughing since that period, so it may have been pastureland for nearly 200 years before being ultimately adopted as a general recreation ground by Reading Corporation in 1935.

It would seem that this ground had received little intrusion, and only to the extent of localised preparation and levelling for sporting activities and the construction of the present facilities – some of which are very recent encroachments.

The height of the field varies – from the south at 81.9m to 83.9m in the north – with an average of 82.6m OD.

Aerial photographs examined in the picture library of the Geography Department of Reading University,

dating from 1969 – show the field marked out for a variety of sporting activities. Depending on height, climatic conditions and perspective, rings are clearly visible on some images. Traces of up to 11 rings were indicated, some overlapping others (see Fig. 3).

Some cover earlier, fainter images and slight linear features are also revealed but it is impossible to determine if these are contemporary. On some photographs, in good conditions – eight can be counted, therefore gradual erosion has taken place in the past four decades. Fig. 3 shows all the identified

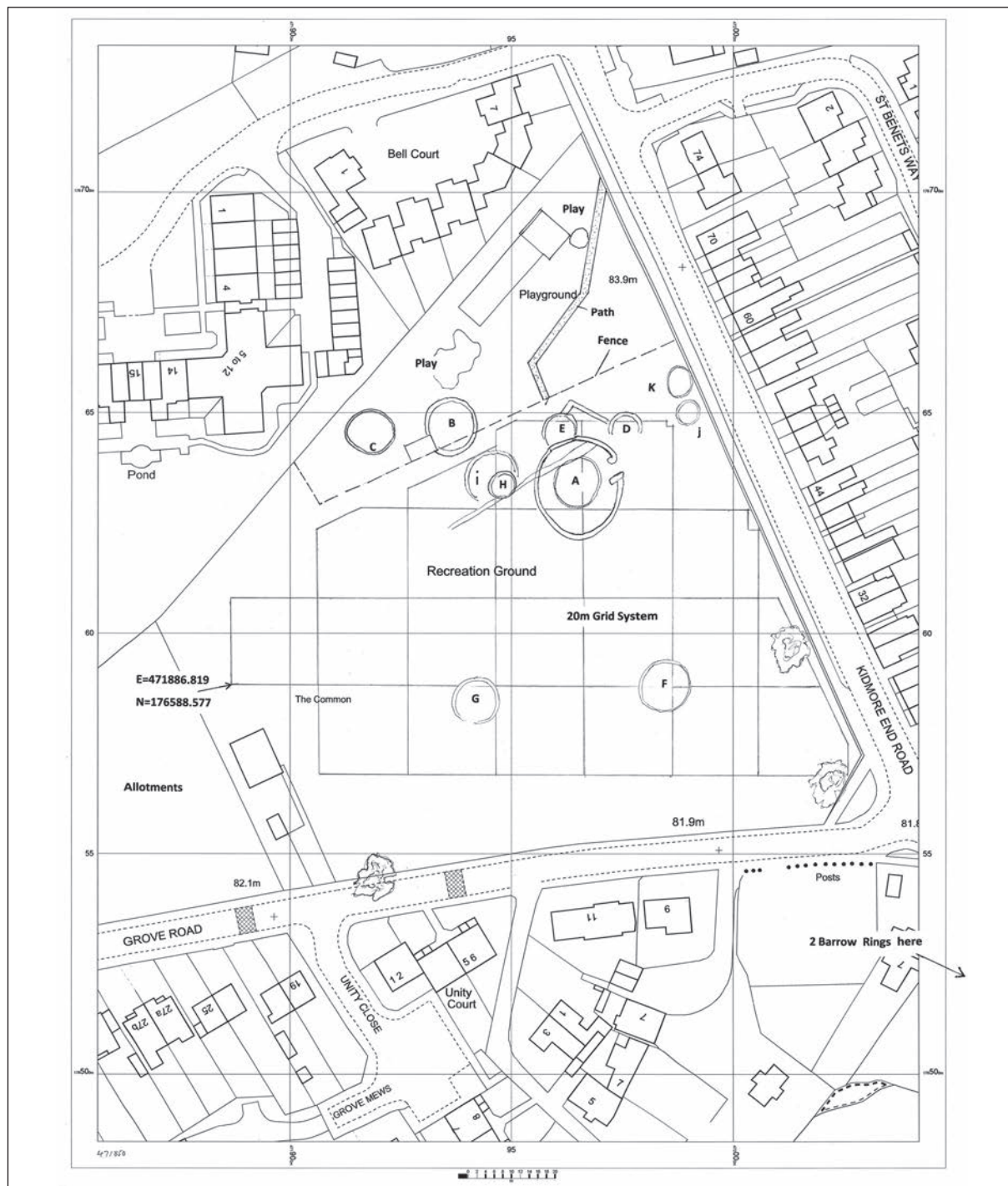


Fig. 3. Showing the historically observable rings at Emmer Green and the survey grid layout

rings that can be listed, but only rings A, B, C are clearly discernible on present imaging, with two more, D and E, faintly showing. Two further rings approximately 250m away on separate open ground, adjacent to the shopping centre to the SE, have been noted, as well as two further reported rings (unplotted) within the grounds of Caversham Park.

This high land is comprised of plateau gravels overlaying chalk at a varying depth and these monuments are grouped at a distance of some 2.5km (1.6 miles) from the River Thames basin directly to the south.

Recording Procedure

In early June, Jerry Anderson was asked if he would visit and fix points for the geophysical survey grids to the OS mapping system. This provided the base for the initial seven 20m grids (later extended to 21 including partial ones) (See Fig. 3). Four grids covered the large ring A, but B and C were in the unrecordable compound area to the north. The remainder were not visible. Resistivity surveying of this and subsequent areas was started by BARG, with a contribution by the SOAG team led by Mike Green, who had become available. The magnetometry survey was carried out by Dr Andrew Hutt for BARG. Resistivity equipment employed were Geoscan Twin Probe RM15 machines, with 0.5m spacing. For magnetometry, a Bartington 601 Single Sensor Gradiometer was used. The overall results of the resistivity survey are shown in Figs. 4 and 5.

The results of both surveys are somewhat disappointing and inconclusive. Apart from weak imaging in the resistivity survey showing the principal barrow 'A' and the possible associated linear feature, no certain results can be attributable to any of the other barrows excluding 'B' and 'C' which were not accessible in the compounded area. This does not mean that they do not exist, only that the later GPR survey was not extended to cover the whole field when it may have been possible to include much weaker anomalies.

Inevitably such surveys will sometimes yield anomalies the interpretation of which are subject to differing opinions and in variable software applications. No final conclusions were reached but in the overlay of magnetometry results to resistivity in their report, BARG discussed certain anomalies the most interesting of which is the ring in the most westerly grid, which could indicate soil movement from constructional activity.

One of the objectives of these surveys was to confirm the existence of a feature to Barrow A – originally

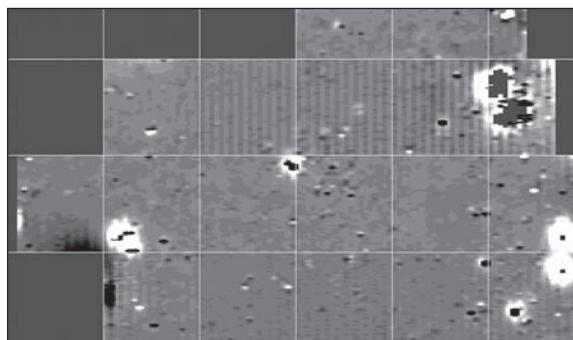


Fig. 4. Results of the BARG magnetometry survey

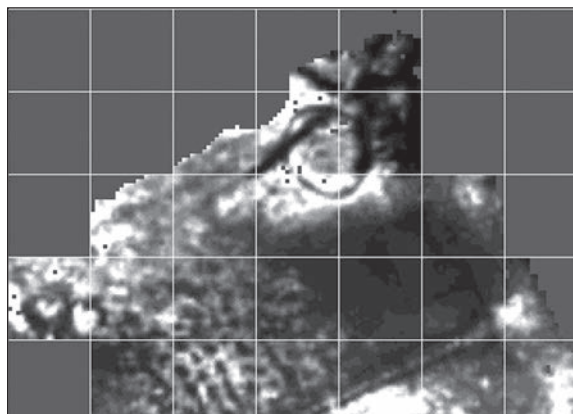


Fig. 5. Results of the BARG and SOAG resistivity survey

noticed on a Google Earth image and verified by a purpose-commissioned photographic aerial pass over the site (see Fig. 6).

This showed an internal post, or stake hole circle, indicative of a Bronze Age feature occasionally found in such barrows, possibly evidence of a mortuary house or part of the burial (or cremation) ritual procedure.

Because of the somewhat inconclusive results of the resistivity and magnetometry survey outcome, I decided to consider the efficacy of applying Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR) (See Figs. 7 and 8) and also a further magnetometry survey (see Fig. 9) over the main area of Barrow A, and this was achieved through the support of David Thornley of the University of Reading (UoR) Department of Archaeology, Geography and Environmental Science. The magnetometry survey clearly showed the main ring ditch with an internal second ring.

The linear feature skirting across the GPR and other images, and creating a chord from NE-SW (approximately), is possibly contemporary. GPR imaging at 0.1m would appear to indicate an interruption of the ring ditch to the eastern side with two distinctive circular terminations leading in to the inner circle. Other isolated features also show to the north.



Fig. 6. Aerial photograph taken in summer 2013. Black arrow indicates possible internal circle

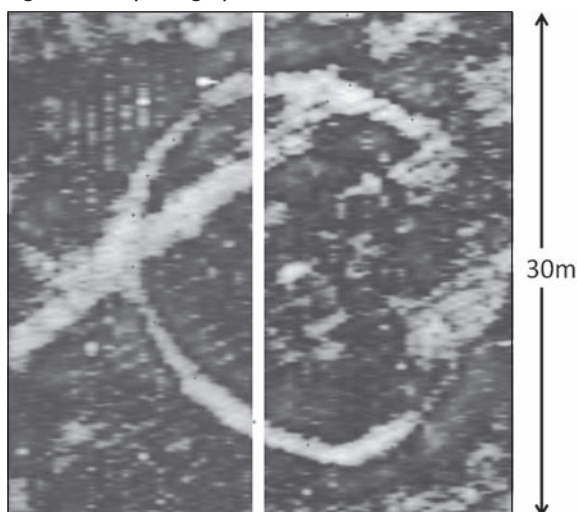


Fig. 7. GPR survey – slice at 0.1m depth

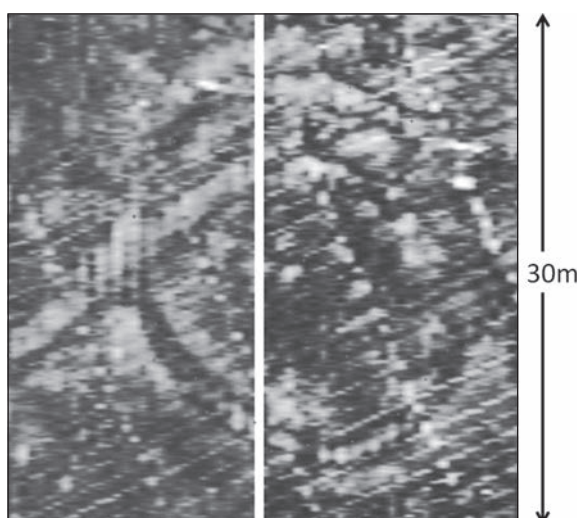


Fig. 8. GPR survey – slice at 0.35m depth

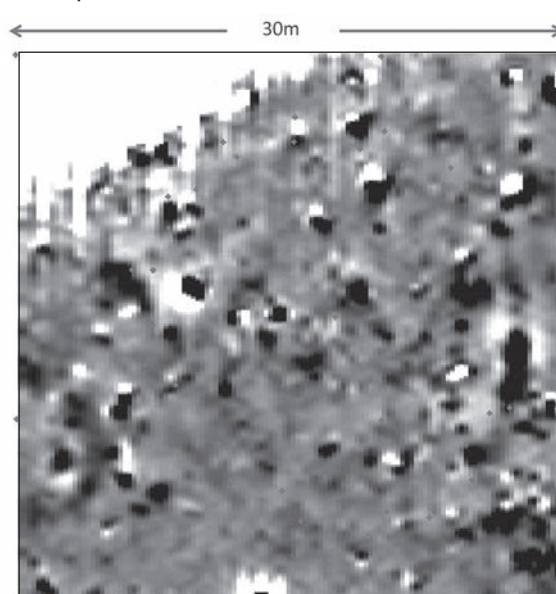


Fig. 9. Magnetometry survey undertaken by UoR across Barrow A

From the evidence of GPR, it is clear that Monument A – and, by inference, the other monuments shown – are at a very shallow depth, with strongest featuring at approximately 0.1m-0.35m. At 0.35 parallel lines may be evidence of other activities. However, GPR depth slices also show ground disturbance to over 1m. Indications of a small, central feature to the ring also shows. GPR data obtained covering Barrow A is shown in Figs. 8 and 9. In April 2014, Rafael Korzinsky – a graduate in Geoarchaeology from Wroclaw University in Poland and an MSc in Geomorphology from Reading University, and now working as a lead

surveyor in engineering geophysics at Sandberg LLP, with considerable field experience, examined further the GPR imaging and has put forward a possible interpretation. The following are his observations:

Summary: (of Barrow A)

In addition to providing horizontal slices at different depths GPR enables us to view vertical sections through the feature surveyed. Fig. 10 shows part of the horizontal slice at 0.1m depth with section XY selected to provide a vertical section through part of the main Barrow A ring feature. Fig. 11 shows the vertical section, with features of interest labelled A to D, followed by Korzinsky's analysis

Feature A: Ring ditch appears to be 2m wide and has been detected to 0.6m depth. Internal lamination in the ditch suggests gradual deposition of material and multiple episodes of backfilling of this feature.

Feature B: Internal feature within the ring or possible intrusion. Feature B is a nonconformity which means that its structure (layers and their angles) is different from the local formation it is embedded in. In our Fig. 10 case this will be geological or man-made formation which is shown as the multiple lateral stripes between 0.5m-1.4m depth. This formation is characterised by significantly higher amplitude of GPR signal which implies higher content of solid material or water.

Feature C: Discontinuity in local geological/man-made formation may be associated with a discrete intrusion (maybe a pit associated with wooden pole?)

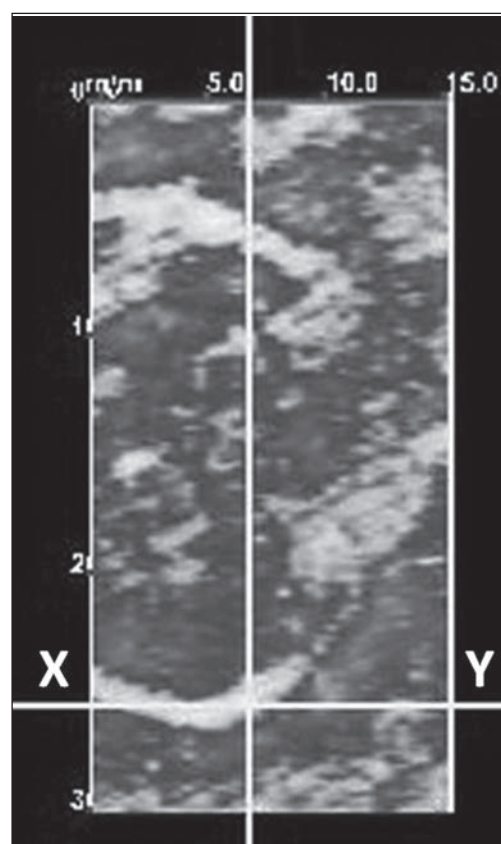


Fig. 10. GPR horizontal section at 0.1m showing location of vertical section (X-Y)

Feature D: Discontinuity in local geological/man-made formation may be associated with a discrete intrusion (maybe a pit associated with wooden pole?)

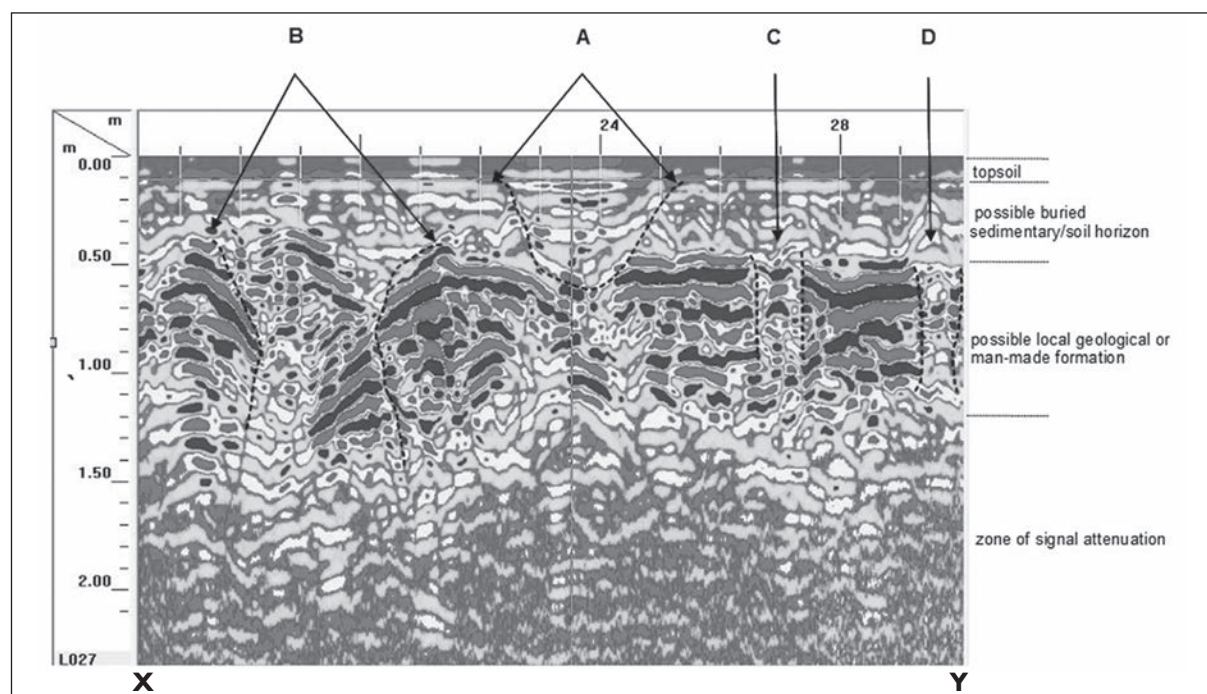


Fig. 11. Vertical section from X to Y

Details of Barrows

A summary of the size and condition of the 11 barrows indicated in Fig. 3 is shown in the table below.

The profiles of all the barrows are now completely eliminated. These were almost certainly of Bowl, Bell or even Disc form but in their constructed state were probably no higher than approximately 1m. According to Grinsell, late BA barrows may have been relatively lower and the surrounding ditches were shallower. The surrounding ditches are level with the general ground. Barrow A ditch is shown clearly in a ground level photograph which reveals the ditch due to the parched conditions prevailing at the time of the survey (see Fig. 12).

Relevance of this barrow group

This is a relatively large group of monuments which although diminished in number should still be protected from further decline or be investigated by excavation to extract all available information as well as reclaiming any preserved artefacts. Barrows A, B and C should be able to yield this. The site is extremely vulnerable to interference either by ignorance or deliberate activity. Alternatively it could be listed and or scheduled and protected.

Most barrows are individually placed although groups are noted for South Oxfordshire and North Berkshire although such modern boundaries are irrelevant in considering the placing of barrows in the region as a whole.

Local occupation sites are relatively rare. One of the nearest sites demonstrating possible small-scale settlement activity is at the recently examined (2010) location at St Peters Hill Caversham Heights, 2k (1.25 miles) to the SW where Late Bronze Age occupation was uncovered by Ford and Raymond. A number of Sporadic Bronze Age finds have been recovered in the whole area but apart from concentrated barrow groups to the south east of Reading near Bracknell/Maidenhead/Slough and then into Oxfordshire at South Stoke/Dorchester and beyond, such concentrations are not common. Recently (2009/2010) a small group have been non-intrusively examined at Rotherfield Greys by SOAG in the 2000s. The flood plain near Sonning also provides evidence of barrow construction, and examples are also at Shiplake and Eye and Dunsden with several single specimens at Mapledurham and immediately south of Reading.

This group at Emmer Green is now fragile evidence of concentrated late prehistoric religious burial practice and probably represents the last of many once covering this high land.

Conclusion

Further investigations to obtain dating and environmental information should be encouraged as well as every effort made to protect the remaining monuments.

Barrow	Visibility on photograph	Approx. size (metres OD)		Features	Height	Preservation
		Barrow	Ditch			
A	Good image	22.0	2.0	Internal stake hole ring 11m	Level	Fair
B	Fair	12.0	1.5		Level	At risk
C	Fair	9-11.0	1.5		Level	At risk
D	Gone (faint)	7.0	–			Gone
E	Gone (faint)	8.0	–			Gone
F	Gone	11.0	Possibly 1.0			Gone
G	Gone	11.0	Possibly 1.0			Gone
H	Gone	6.0	–			Gone
I	Gone	13.00	–			Gone
J	Gone	5.5	–			Gone
K	Gone	6-7.00	–			Gone



Fig. 11. Conducting the GPR survey adjacent to and across Barrow A

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank:

Brita Sensical, Dr Andrew Hutt and the BARG team for their geophysical survey work and historic research.

The SOAG team led by Mike Green for assisting with the geophysical survey work.

Jerry Anderson for his invaluable help with GPS plotting.

Dennis Pearson of Ipsden Airfield for his generous contribution of free flights and aerial photography.

Dave Thornley and Reading University for once again providing geophysical and GPR Survey support.

Reading Borough Council Parks Department for permissions and their interest.

Przem Rafael Korzinsky from Sandberg LLP for advice and interpretation of the GPR data.

Bibliography

Ashbee, P. 1960. *The Bronze Age Round Barrow in Britain*. Phoenix House Ltd. London

Grinsell, L.V. 1953. *The Ancient Burial Mounds of England*. Methuen & Co Ltd. London.

Last, J. Editor. 2007. *Beyond The Grave. New Perspectives on Barrows*. Oxbow. Oxford.

Ford, S. and Raymond, F. 2013. 'A Late Bronze Age Artefact Scatter and Medieval Ditch on St Peter's Hill, Caversham', *Berkshire Archaeology Journal*, 81, 27–35

Sensical, B. 2013. *Archaeological Surveys on the Emmer Green Recreation Ground Phase 1*. Prelim report by BARG.

Report on test excavations at Greyhorne Woods

Dave Oliver and Tim Southern

Summary

An irregular enclosure of approximately 2.8 acres was found and mapped in 2011 within Greyhorne Woods. It lies on the east side of the unmade part of Colmore Lane, just south of Witheridge Hill. The enclosure has a very large perimeter bank and ditch when compared to the boundary bank and ditch along Colmore Lane to both the north and south of the enclosure. The construction period is unknown.

Over two days in September 2013, a test pit was dug and various surface features cleaned in the hope of finding dating evidence.

Site Location

The enclosure is located immediately east of the unmade section of Colmore Lane and approximately 450 metres south of where Colmore Lane meets the road from Stoke Row to Highmoor (see Fig. 1).

Access from the north is via Colmore Lane, off the Stoke Row to Highmoor Road just to the west of the property called 'The Olde Place'. From the south, access is off Stokerow Road via Colmore Lane. The site is located on the high ground or plateau between two dry valleys running west off the Harp Valley.

Context of the project

The Forestry Commission needs to establish how important the site is and how to manage both it and forestry operations for the future. The Oxfordshire County Council archaeological department also need to assess the site's importance.

Geological and topographic background

The enclosure is situated on the plateau overlooking two dry valleys. To the east is the Harp valley, which gives Harpsden its name. To the north is a much smaller dry valley running off from the Harp valley and forms part of the boundary for the Saxon estate of Newnham Murren (Charter B.1176, K.526 Grundy, 1933, <http://www.esawyer.org.uk/charter/518.html>).

Today the plateau is part of a conifer plantation managed by the Forestry Commission and slopes from Colmore Lane to the two valleys.

The BGS sheet 254 (published 1980) shows the area



Fig. 1: Location of Greyhorne Wood. © Crown copyright Ordnance Survey. All rights reserved

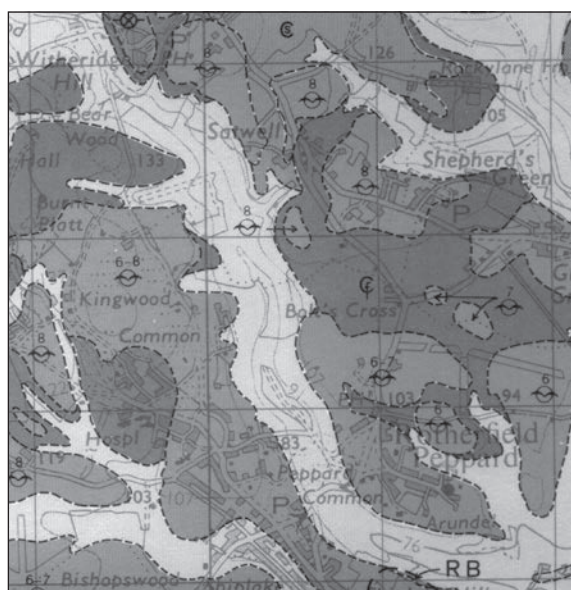


Fig. 2: Section of the BGS sheet 254 showing the surface geology of the region.

of the enclosure to be on a finger of 'clay with flints' that overlies the 'upper chalk' which becomes more exposed as the altitude decreases to the north, east and south (see Fig. 2).

The site is crossed by a bridleway which today runs north east across the site but in Victorian times ran almost due east and crossed the eastern boundary today where the mound and ditch are breached.

Archaeological background

The enclosure was first identified and mapped in 2011 when SOAG member Dr Tim Southern was mapping the boundaries of Greyhorne Wood for the Forestry Commission (see Fig. 3).

The name Greyhorne is purported (Gelling 1953) to come from one of the boundary markers given in the Charter for Newnham Murren in 966. However, the location of that particular boundary marker, which from the charter would be at the point the dry valley (middle slade) merges with Hearp Valley (SU 6927, 8428), and is today outside Greyhorne Woods. There is however, documentary evidence at the National Archives at Kew to suggest that Greyhorne Wood was either significantly larger and/or slightly further west, and included part of what today is Bear Wood.

The Charter bounds list as the most easterly point a field called Calf Leigh (SU 6952, 8378), a name that implies a location for looking after calves, and as such is more than likely close to a homestead.

The boundary bank and ditch enclosing the enclosure has been damaged, probably by forestry planting in several places on the southern and eastern edges. Whether the breach at the south eastern corner is the result of modern forestry, Victorian action or an original entrance is however unknown.

The western edge appears to have escaped the damage described above and as such was profiled in 2011 in the vicinity of SU 69567, 83495, along with the profile of the boundary bank between the enclosure and Greyhorne Plantation in the vicinity of SU 6962, 8308. These profiles show clearly that these two banks and ditches are very different, with the enclosure feature being over twice the width of the feature much closer to Greyhorne Plantation. The latter is similar to the boundary bank and ditch between Burnt Platt and Kingwood Common which is described as being built in 1263 (Salter, 1930).

The enclosure boundary bank and ditch is similar to the southern boundary of an estate (probably Mongewell) to be found in Bassett Woods (SU 6770, 8340) (Buckingham and Southern, unpublished work)

It is generally accepted that the size of such boundary

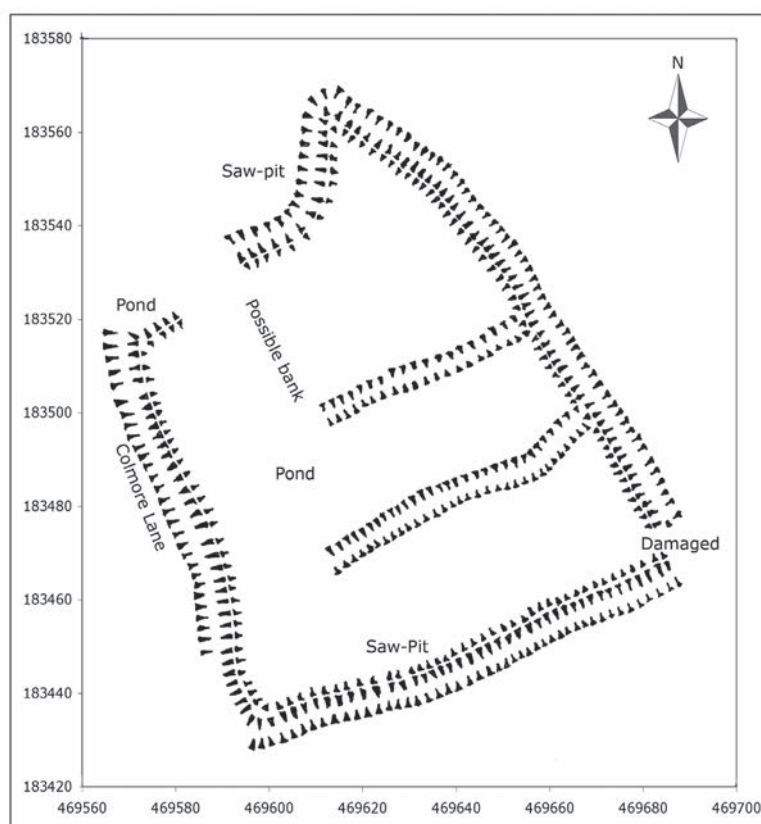


Fig. 3: Plan showing the outline and some of the internal features (Tim Southern).

features increased as we go back in time and, if we assume this to be the case and couple it with the probable location of some form of homestead in the vicinity at the time of the charter of 966 AD, it is possible the enclosure is pre-Norman - although a 12th to 13th century date is also possible.

Aim of the fieldwork

The principle aim of the field work was to try to establish a date for the construction of the enclosure. To this end the work planned was:

- To excavate a test pit across the southern boundary ditch.
- To clean and examine the section of the bank at the breach cut through the boundary bank and ditch at the south-eastern corner.

Test Pit

A 2 metre wide test pit was sited approximately 14 metres west of the start of the ditch at the south eastern corner of the enclosure.

The pit was dug using the "Wallingford Method" whereby 10cm depth increments are made until a feature is reached. Unexpectedly the ditch proved to be very shallow, with natural being reached at around 10cm below the present surface as shown in Fig. 4.

Prior to excavation the surface profile, as shown in Fig. 4, suggested the material for the mound construction would have probably come from the

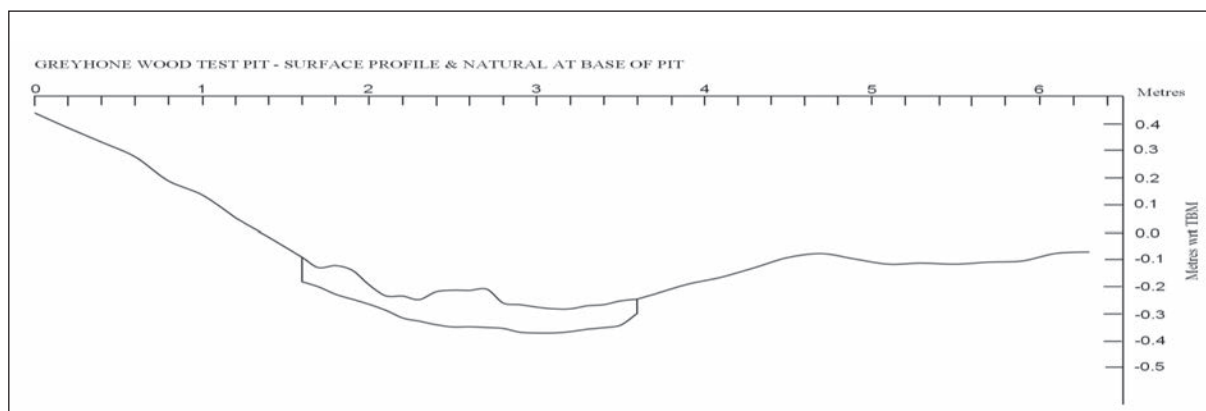


Fig. 4: Profile of the external ditch

digging of the ditch. However, it is unlikely that the very shallow ditch would have provided enough material to make the mound.

As planned, all the excavated material was sieved, but no finds were found.

Cleaning of breach

The breach though the mound is adjacent to the south-eastern corner of the enclosure. The southernmost side of the breach was cleaned to a vertical face by cutting back the exposed material by between 5 and 10cm. This face was continued downwards until what proved to be a hardened surface was reached. The cleaned face contained a series of small post holes that had a rectangular section filled with black material, probably totally decayed wood; these holes were at regular 14 inch (356mm) centres (see Fig. 5) two conclusions are considered:

(i) That the post holes were originally filled with rectangular pieces of wood approximately 1 inch (25mm) by 3 inches (75mm), as embankment supports.

(ii) That the yellow clay and the black decayed wood are the result of handmade bricks being stacked on the site under ricks, becoming wet and were ruined. The clay would have come from the two ponds on the site which have been examined for suitable material for making bricks by a company still making handmade bricks in the Chilterns (see Post Excavation, below).

The hard surface was made up of firmly embedded stones with quite a variation in size (Fig. 5). This surface was followed across the entire width of the breach to its far side by digging a narrow and shallow trench. However, the opposing side of the breach was not well defined and there was no sign of a matching revetment within the limited area cleared although its existence cannot be ruled out.

Once again all material removed was sieved, but again there were no finds.



Fig. 5:
Breach: southern side
section and surface

Post Excavation

Samples of the material found within the two ponds within the enclosure were taken to H.G. Matthews Brick Works based at The Brick Works, Bellingdon, Chesham, Bucks HP5 2UR for examination by Jim Matthews. The material was good quality brick earth and suggested that the two ponds were formed by the excavation of this material.

Brick clay when pugged becomes a yellowish homogeneous almost stone free material very similar in texture to the clay between the wooden uprights excavated at the breach. Today H.G. Matthews either hand throw or use a machine to make bricks, which need to be dried prior to firing in a kiln or clamp. From their photographic record this drying used to occur in the open, covering the stacks of bricks with small wooden shaped covers that were supported on either side by small timber supports which would be on very regular centres.

This suggests one possible explanation for the yellow clay with the regular wooden uprights. It could have been from an itinerant brickmaker, whose covers came off allowing the bricks to spoil and eventually forming the mass excavated. The addition of irregular sized stones then could have been a means of trying to correct the problems of a mass of clay on the track.

If the clay and uprights do come from this source then somewhere within the vicinity should exist a clamp for firing bricks. Such a clamp should have left a thermal imprint that should be detectable with a magnetometer. It is also unlikely that bricks made in such a way would be transported far so the likely end use for these bricks has to be the original buildings located on the site which is today the Olde Place, on the Stoke Row to Highmoor road where the track passing the western edge of the enclosure meets that road. It is known from the Stonor Estate Map of 1725 that there were two building on the site and they were in the ownership of a Mr Blackwell.

Conclusions

No dating evidence was found.

The test pit reached natural at a shallow depth and the ditch is highly unlikely have provided sufficient material for the construction of the associated mound.

The breach at the south east corner was originally thought probably to have been made during forestry operations, although it was known to be on the line of the Victorian bridleway. This work has not been able to identify the origin of this breach but has identified areas for further research.

If the brick-making hypothesis is correct then the breach predates the brick making. If then, the clay is earlier, the stones could easily have been added in Victorian times to make the track more usable, ameliorating the problem of the clay. If the area is clay from brick making then the only properties in the vicinity are those that today form the basis of the "Olde Place" on the Stoke Row – Highmoor Road, which may provide possible dating evidence.

Acknowledgements

Thanks to all SOAG members who helped over the two days. We are also grateful for the attendance of Richard Oram (Oxfordshire county archaeologist) and the Forestry Commission's archaeologist, Tim Yarnell, both of whom gave useful input when on site.

References

- Gelling, M. 1953. *Place-names of Oxfordshire Part 1*; English Place Names Society, Cambridge University Press.
- Grundy, G. B. ed. 1933. *Oxfordshire Record Society, Volume 15, Saxon Oxfordshire*. Charters and Ancient Highways.
- Stonor Estate Map*. Bodleian Library, Shelf mark: E.C17: 49 (91)
- Salter, H. E. 1930. *The feet of fines for Oxfordshire 1195 - 1291*. Oxfordshire Record Society, volume 12.
- National Archives Kew, Shelf mark C146/418.

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 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 and Universities, 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 may 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 may 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 use of footnotes is discouraged.
- The text should be single-spaced; the title and author name(s) should be included at the beginning of the article. Numbered figure captions should be placed in the text to indicate the approximate position of illustrations, and the source of the illustration included where appropriate.
- 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.
- Pounds, shillings and pence need not be converted into pounds and new pence.
- 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.

- To assist Oxford County Archaeological Services HER database collection, and with landowners approval where appropriate, please include a National Grid Reference (NGR) with any site information.

Contributions before 28 February for publication in that year to the *SOAG Bulletin* Editor John Hefferan, 41 College Road, Reading, Berks. RG6 1QE. Email: bulletin@soagarch.org.uk.



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 Honorary Secretary, Lockerley, Brightwell Baldwin, Watlington OX49 5NP
Tel: 07974 445142 Email: secretary@soagarch.org.uk