

Bulletin

SOAG



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South Oxfordshire Archaeological Group 2018



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

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Cover: *The second Trier beaker found in Trench 16 at Gatehampton. Photo: © Richard Miller. See article on page 9.*

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John Westwood

Hazel Williams: President of SOAG, on behalf of the SOAG committee



In April 2018 we learned of the death of John Westwood, an enthusiastic, humorous and accomplished member of SOAG for nearly 35 years. John (and his wife Margaret who died in 2017) moved from London to Goring on retirement in the early 1980s after a long career as a bookbinder, designer, teacher, typographer, studio director, model-builder and editor. John worked for HMSO at the end of his career and wrote an account of his working life for the Society of Bookbinders in 2005 (http://www.hmsoldies.org.uk/John_Westwood.html). John and Margaret joined SOAG in 1983 after Margaret met our founder Cynthia Graham Kerr at yoga class in Goring. John and Margaret were both very active members of the group taking part in most of the early SOAG projects including a major excavation in Abingdon, the SOAG excavation at Newington and the early stages of Gatehampton. (*John and Margaret, top right*)

John made his mark straight away. Cyn's description of John in the 1984 *SOAG Bulletin* was of 'a very useful SOAG', a 'versatile designer and craftsman', who 'besides the trowel, was handy with most tools'. John repaired the SOAG Dig Hut, made a 'beautiful drawing frame' and used his book binding skills to produce a SOAG Register.

In 1987, John and Margaret were commended for their quick action in saving a large Sarsen stone that marked an ancient boundary at the Goring-Streatley bridge by the Swan Hotel. Only a foot or so of the stone showed above ground level but when workmen began to dig it up it was found to be 7 feet high. John Westwood quickly contacted the foreman and manager of the hotel and prevented the stone from being broken up. It was placed on the boundary line with a small plaque.

John and Margaret wrote many articles and visit reports for the *SOAG Bulletin* which reflect their wide range of interests. These include 'Barns in three Oxfordshire parishes' (*SOAG Bulletin* 42 1986),

'East Hendred : a village history' (*SOAG Bulletin* 43 1987), 'Dating countryside hedges' (*SOAG Bulletin* 52, 1996), 'Flag Fen' (*SOAG Bulletin* 53, 1996), 'King Arthur and the battle of the Glein' (*SOAG Bulletin* 56, 2001) and 'Calleva Atrebatum' (*SOAG Bulletin* 57, 2002) and John gave a talk on Local Places Names (*SOAG Bulletin* 49 1993).

John's interests extended beyond archaeology. He gave talks on 'Lettering and how to date it' (*SOAG Bulletin* 42), and he was a great Meccano enthusiast, making a model of Quarry Bank Mill in Cheshire for example. He was also a member of the Goring Transport History Group and gave an impromptu talk at a SOAG meeting in 1996 on Brunel while the projector was being fixed!

John and Margaret were regulars at SOAG events and lectures even in their later years. Mike Fulton, former SOAG chairman, recalls that 'John often had interesting (and sometimes controversial) interventions to make at meetings and was unafraid to do so. He suffered from hearing loss and took to task lecture speakers who did not project their voices sufficiently to fill the room – or else spoke to the image on screen and not facing the room(!)'.

Even when declining health eventually prevented John from attending meetings he maintained a keen interest in SOAG activities, he would read the *SOAG Messengers* and contact committee members with useful comments on current issues such as where meetings were held and the running of the group. He also continued with his bookbinding work well into his 90s.

It is always sad to report the passing of another of our long serving members and John will be greatly missed; we are reminded of just how much they contributed and that thanks to their efforts SOAG has been a very active and lively Group for a very long time.

Chairman's Report

Dave Carless

Given at SOAG Annual General Meeting 22 April 2018

Introduction

In 2017 SOAG again had a very active year with fieldwork continuing at two locations (High Wood, and Gatehampton – see notes below). Although we were unable to do any work in Blewbury, we aim to be back in the autumn of 2018. We are also planning to resume our work at Ascott Park in the Summer, under Ian Clarke's leadership. In addition to the fieldwork we enjoyed a full programme of events organized by Nancy Nichols, including numerous interesting lectures and site visits. I would like to thank the whole membership for their continued support and contributions, which make the fieldwork and events possible, and the committee for putting it all together.

Again this year we have added substantially to our field equipment most notably by the purchase of a new resistivity meter which is proving most useful. (See article on page 41.) Furthermore I am pleased that we have at last found a long term solution to our equipment storage problem. We have invested in a transport container and arranged a permanent location for it at modest rent. Both of these capital items have been funded out of Cynthia Graham Kerr's kind bequest. In addition to this, Geoff Deakin has very kindly donated his magnetometer to the Group: many thanks Geoff.

Membership and Finance

Our core finances remain in reasonable balance. Membership in 2017 grew slightly and was ahead of our budget assumptions. We warmly welcome all our new members and hope we attract many more in 2018. Again our Hon. Secretary, Mike Vincent, was able to secure a substantial Gift Aid contribution to our income.

Publications and Communications

My thanks to all those who undertake these vital roles. Mike Green works tirelessly to maintain communications with all of the group's members, both routinely through publication of *SOAG Messenger* and management of the web site, and by ad hoc email updates. John Hefferan and Mike Green edited and produced our flagship annual journal, *SOAG Bulletin*.

In addition we publish results of our research projects to a wider audience through the CBA South Midlands Archaeology annual report. Our project leaders also give presentations to other archaeological

organisations, thereby raising the profile of SOAG and our research work. Work also continues, under the leadership of Mike Green, on digitising and making available our written archive of past projects. (See article on page 41.)

Fieldwork and Research

Work at the High Wood Roman site in 2017 was designed to further examine the walls found previously. These walls resolved into two rooms of probable 4th century AD date, divided by a doorway. These overlay an earlier pit which contained artefacts dated to the late Iron Age/ 1st century AD.

Test pitting indicated that the outer wall of these rooms extends for at least 35metres, and a corner was identified at the western end. In 2018 it is proposed explore this range further and to continue test pitting with a view to identifying the character of this building complex – which remains enigmatic. (See report on page 25.)

David Nicholls, who initiated this project, was unwell throughout the period of the dig but Alan Hall was in post as Site Director. David has regrettably withdrawn from the project and Alan has assumed overall responsibility, ably supported by a team comprising Andrew Allum and Mike Vincent.

2017 was planned to be the final year of excavation at Gatehampton Roman Villa, SOAG's longest running project, under Hazel Williams' leadership. The main trench, one that was opened originally over the bath house in 2000 and in which most of the substantial building was excavated, was finally closed. However, discoveries in the new trenches at the eastern end of the building where work has focussed in the last few years brought some exciting discoveries that have led to the decision to extend the project, on a reduced basis, through 2018. Most importantly, there is evidence that there may be a second bath house at the east end of the building and this will be the focus of the excavation in 2018. (See report on page 9.)

Participation at the Gatehampton dig was good during 2017 with a substantial amount of work required to complete the excavation of the cess pit and to progress the other two trenches. The annual Open Day was again very popular with both SOAG members and the local community. (See article on page 5.)

Lectures, Events & Visits in 2017/18

Lecture Series

26 January 2017

Jim Leary (University of Reading)

Avebury and Stonehenge. The Vale of Pewsey Project

23 February 2017

Ken Welsh (Oxford Archaeology)

A Causewayed Enclosure and later discoveries at Thame

23 March 2017

Paul Smith (retired Oxfordshire County Archaeologist)

Recent Discoveries and Other Animals in Oxfordshire

28 September 2017

Trevor Rowley (Emeritus Fellow, Kellogg College, Oxford University)

The Landscape of the Norman Conquest

26 October 2017

Richard Oram (Planning Archaeologist, Oxfordshire County Council)

Shining a Light on the Past - How Lidar Transforms Our View

23 November 2017

Two 30 minute lectures by SOAG members:

Andrew Allum

Highwood: the Mound and Other Enigmas

Lindsey Bedford

Boxford: A Villa and a Mosaic

25 January 2018

Adam McBride (Oxford University)

The Origins of Wessex: Long Wittenham and the Context of Power

22 February 2018

Carl Champness (Oxford Archaeology)

Wallingford, Winterbrook: Excavations of a multi-period site with Prehistoric and Early Saxon settlement (note that this is a change to the original title of the talk)

22 March 2018

Dr David Bird (Retired County Archaeologist, Surrey)
Route of the Roman Invasion

22 April 2018

49th Annual General Meeting and Review of SOAG Archaeology in 2017-18, followed by SOAG social

Events and Visits

28 July & 31 July

Visit to the Iron Age site at Winterbrook, Wallingford, courtesy of Oxford Archaeology

Organiser: Mike Vincent

24 September

Open House at SOAG Gatehampton Archaeological Excavation

Organiser: Hazel Williams and SOAG Diggers

Gatehampton Open Day 2017

Hazel Williams

Another very successful Annual Open Day was held at the villa on Sunday 24 September 2017, an event enjoyed by both visitors and the Gatehampton diggers who made the preparations. More than 100 people were on site to support the event including a large team of SOAG diggers, SOAG members, friends and family, local people from the Gatehampton and Goring area and members of other local societies and groups. All the trenches were opened to view and there were displays of site information and the latest finds.

On arrival in the car park visitors first encountered Trench 16, which presented quite an impressive sight with large flint and tile walls and features and of course, the cess pit, the deepest area in the building and the place where the Gatehampton Trier pot was discovered. Mike Green managed the guided tours, helping visitors to understand the history of the project, the scale of the building and what has been discovered over many years.

The weather was warm and sunny, the tea and cakes popular. A group of young local archaeologists spent the afternoon learning how to trowel and we have had a steady stream of visitors since the event keen



Above: Visitors enjoy the tea and cake, and the display of finds and site information

Right: Local young archaeologists



to learn more about excavation. My thanks to those who supported the event and the hardworking Gatehampton diggers for their efforts both on the day and in the weeks leading up to it. In Trench 16 especially, a great deal of heavy work was involved in excavation and preparation before the day. It is always rewarding to see the whole site at its best, with surfaces cleaned and to hear visitors' comments; it gives us a chance to review our progress before we start to plan the next stage of excavation.



Visitors viewing Trench 7 guided by Mike Green

Photo: Richard Miller

Reports and Articles

Oxfordshire Past conference 2018

Mike Green

Oxfordshire Past is the main history and archaeology conference in the county, and features a mix of presentations by professionals, academics and amateurs. This year it took place in St Peter and St Paul church in Deddington, between Oxford and Banbury, and was attended by SOAG members Mike Green, Mike Vincent, Nancy Nichols and Peter Gardner (the first three are shown in the photo manning the SOAG display at the conference).

Oxford City talks

Four of the nine talks were focussed on the city of **Oxford and its environs**, beginning with city archaeologist, **David Radford**, who always has much to tell us about recent city excavations, most of which are enabled by modernisation and extensions to the colleges. This year discoveries have been made that challenge aspects of the standard story of Oxford's origins. The city was one of King Alfred's

burhs established in the 9th century. The city walls are thought to have been developed in two phases: first to encircle the primary burh, and later extended around the secondary burh - the town's extension eastwards towards what is now New College, in whose grounds it is most visible. Excavation this year around the old Bodleian library provided an opportunity to locate the ditch that would have defined the eastern boundary of the primary burh – but none was found. Therefore either it must follow a very unusual alignment, or the story of the town's extension needs some rethinking.

Excavations elsewhere are challenging Oxford's Alfredian origins. Parts of the primary burh's banks and ditches have now been dated not to the 9-10th C but to the late 8th C. This throws up the possibility of an earlier settlement by the Mercian King Offa. The third example where a rethink may



Nancy Nichols, Mike Green and Mike Vincent manning the SOAG display at the conference

be necessary is the excavation of a new section of an apparently defensive structure discovered some years ago just north of the city walls. This has now provided a date of 9-10th C raising the probability of it being part of an anti-Viking defensive work. It is possible however that it is also a re-use of a prehistoric henge, and it may also have been re-used much later as part of the Civil War defences that were erected very quickly in the 17th C, known sections of which are very close by.

Later in the day **Ben Ford** from **Oxford Archaeology** described the archaeology associated with the **Oxford Flood Alleviation Scheme**. Oxford was created adjacent to the Thames where the river is very braided. As the city expanded, water courses were blocked, narrowed, rerouted, or built over, as a result of which the city and its surroundings were, and still are, subject to periodic flooding, which also frequently cut off access to the town from the south completely. The Grand Pont – now the Abingdon Road – built in the Middle Ages, solved the southern access problem but worsened the flooding by further restricting the water flows, as also did the building of the railway in the 19th C.

The flood alleviation scheme is designed to provide a relief route for the Thames to the west and south of the city. Rather than a tunnel or canalised waterway the new channel is designed to be a meandering river course with appropriate landscaping. Oxford Archaeology are leading a project to create a complete 3D map of the affected area using electromagnetic scanning, boreholes, test pits and open excavations (more than 270 in total!). This has enabled the prehistoric landscape to be reconstructed. It would have been an area rich in resources, and sites of activity from Mesolithic to Romano-British have been found. A number of trackways have also been identified which may have linked the banks to islands, or in some cases have spanned the whole water course. It is pleasing to think that the solution to a modern problem may result in the recovery of an appealing landscape and be an asset for the city.

In the third lecture devoted to Oxford city, **Julian Munby** addressed the identification of Oxford's few remaining **Norman structures**. In Domesday the town was recorded as having 721 dwellings, but most of these were swept away in the redevelopment of Oxford as a university city in the later Middle Ages. Only ten stone buildings have been identified as wholly or partly Norman, i.e. 1190 or earlier. Julian

ran through them all, observing that the easiest one for the public to see is the former Merton College stables in Merton Street. He also addressed the ongoing redevelopment of the Copper Callas building adjacent to the castle, where it seems that one unsuitable 5-storey structure is likely to be replaced by another in the shape of a luxury Marriott hotel. But it has provided the opportunity to excavate the medieval mill and brewery that used to occupy the site, and to resolve uncertainties about how both of them utilised the adjacent river.

The fourth Oxford City-oriented lecture returned to the southern suburbs of the city. **Anne Laurence** described a community history project to discover more about the **37 Men of New and South Hinksey** who are named on the villages' First World War memorial. The project has combed census, parish, church, college, and other records. Who volunteered and who was conscripted? What were their occupations? Where did they live? Which professions were protected and why? What was the impact of their loss on their neighbourhood? In the process the project has constructed an excellent social history of the early 20th century. Whilst the two communities of Hinksey are almost adjacent, their employment bases were very different: South Hinksey employment was largely related to agriculture, whereas New Hinksey employment was geared more to the University. There were several surprises. Agricultural labourers are often the first to be called into service in wartime, but in 1916-17 there was a crisis of major food shortage on the home front coinciding with the need to feed the forces at the front. Some of the trades exempted from conscription seem unusual and there were some odd effects. When coal merchants were added to the list of exemptions, Oxford was suddenly found to have a disproportionately large number of them! The whole business of organising recruitment, and gearing the economy for war was a much more haphazard and even chaotic affair compared with what happened in WW2.

VCH in SOAG territory

Simon Townley gave a short overview of the work of the **Oxfordshire Victoria County History (VCH)** project, followed by **Simon Draper** announcing that a draft of the VCH work on **Goring** now appears on the VCH Oxfordshire website. He then gave an overview of its contents which attracted special attention from the SOAG member present as it contains significant coverage of Gatehampton. Whilst in modern times the few buildings in Gatehampton are clustered

round the Manor House and farm (the location of our long running Roman Villa dig), in early medieval times it was a significant settlement almost rivalling Goring. Other VCH work currently underway in SOAG's territory include the following for which draft texts are (at the time of publication) available on the VCH website:

<https://www.victoriacountyhistory.ac.uk/counties/oxfordshire/work-in-progress>

- Crowmarsh Gifford (draft texts by Mark Page)
- Goring (draft texts by Simon Draper)
- Mapledurham (draft texts by Stephen Milesen)
- Newnham Murren (draft texts by Mark Page)
- Shiplake (draft texts by Stephen Milesen)
- Whitchurch and Whitchurch Hill (research by Simon Draper just beginning)

(When published the online versions are moved to the following website:

<https://www.british-history.ac.uk/>)

Simon acknowledged the help provided by SOAG to VCH in supplying copies of our digital document archive. He noted in particular the value of the landscape archaeology conducted by SOAG's late chairman Pat Preece.

Other presentations:

David Clarke for the **Oxfordshire Building Records (OBR) Group** described two buildings of special interest studied this year. In Abingdon the Roysse Room in the Guildhall was examined and its roof proved very unusual, being of a type he has previously seen only in the West Country and parts of Wales. Closer to our territory, OBR have taken another look at Chalgrove Manor House and in particular the two adjacent barns, which, from analysis of the roof beams, have now been dated to the late 16th/early 17th C and 18th C which was not previously known.

John Marshall of the **Chipping Norton Old Buildings Recording Group (CNOBR)** described the wide variety of joinery used in the many late and post-medieval buildings that can be found behind the frontages in what is otherwise a mainly 18th century market town. Few of us suspected there were so many different ways of doing mortice and tenon!

Andy Robertson owns a medieval house in **West Hanney** (south west of Abingdon) and a chance encounter with a friend revealed that he had found a collection of late 19th C community newsletters that had been edited and bound by the former owner of

Andy's house. He presented a light-hearted study of the contents by listing all the things that are very different about village life then and now, but also the things that never seem to change (retiring to the pub after the cricket match has been rained off!).

Trevor Rowley and **Leigh Mellor** described a community-based history and archaeology project underway in **Appleton** (north-west of Abingdon). They are using the full array of documentary research, geophysical surveying and test pitting, supported by a grant from the CBA's Mick Aston Fund. As with many such village projects there is a mystery which they would like to resolve. In Appleton there are three manors which provide multiple focal points for the village. The manor that has always been assumed to be the Saxon origins of the village, was revealed by test pitting probably not to be so. Another example of how a community project involving locals and amateurs assisted by the professionals can help add to, and maybe rewrite, their village history.

In his closing address **Chris Day**, representing our hosts, the Deddington & District History Society, and formerly of Oxfordshire VCH, commented that the county really does have an unusual level of activity compared with many others, with a healthy interaction and mutual support between the professional, academic and amateur sectors. We agree and can thoroughly recommend attendance to interested SOAG members. We always announce the conference in advance in *SOAG Messenger* but keep an eye on the conference website: <http://oxfordshirepast.org/>

Gatehampton Farm Roman Villa Excavation

Interim Report 2017-18

Hazel Williams, Derek Greenwood and Roelie Reed

Introduction

2017 was planned to be the final year of excavation at Gatehampton, SOAG's longest running project; the aim was to complete the investigation of the layout, character and dating of the eastern end of the building. The main trench, one that was opened originally over the bath house in 2000 and in which most of the substantial building was excavated, was finally closed. However, work in the new trenches at the eastern end of the building where excavation has focussed in the last few years brought some exciting discoveries that have led to the decision to extend the project. A key factor was emerging evidence that there might be a second bath house at the east end of the building and this was confirmed with the discovery of two rooms with hypocausts as excavation progressed during 2018. A fuller account of the bath house area will be included in the next *SOAG Bulletin*.

Participation was good during 2017 with a substantial amount of work required to complete the excavation of the cess pit and to progress the other two trenches. The annual Open Day was again very popular with both SOAG members and the local community.

The plan of the villa building and trenches in 2017-18

The new schematic plan of the villa shows the general layout of the building at its fullest extent and part of the enclosure ditch close to the north eastern side. It is clear from excavation that the building was extended gradually, and the plan shows the different materials used in construction. Rooms 1 to 8 form the western section of the building, constructed in phases during the fourth century, with walls of flint and mortar throughout. The bath house at the western end of the building was distinctive for the extensive use of reddish *opus signinum* as render and mortar.

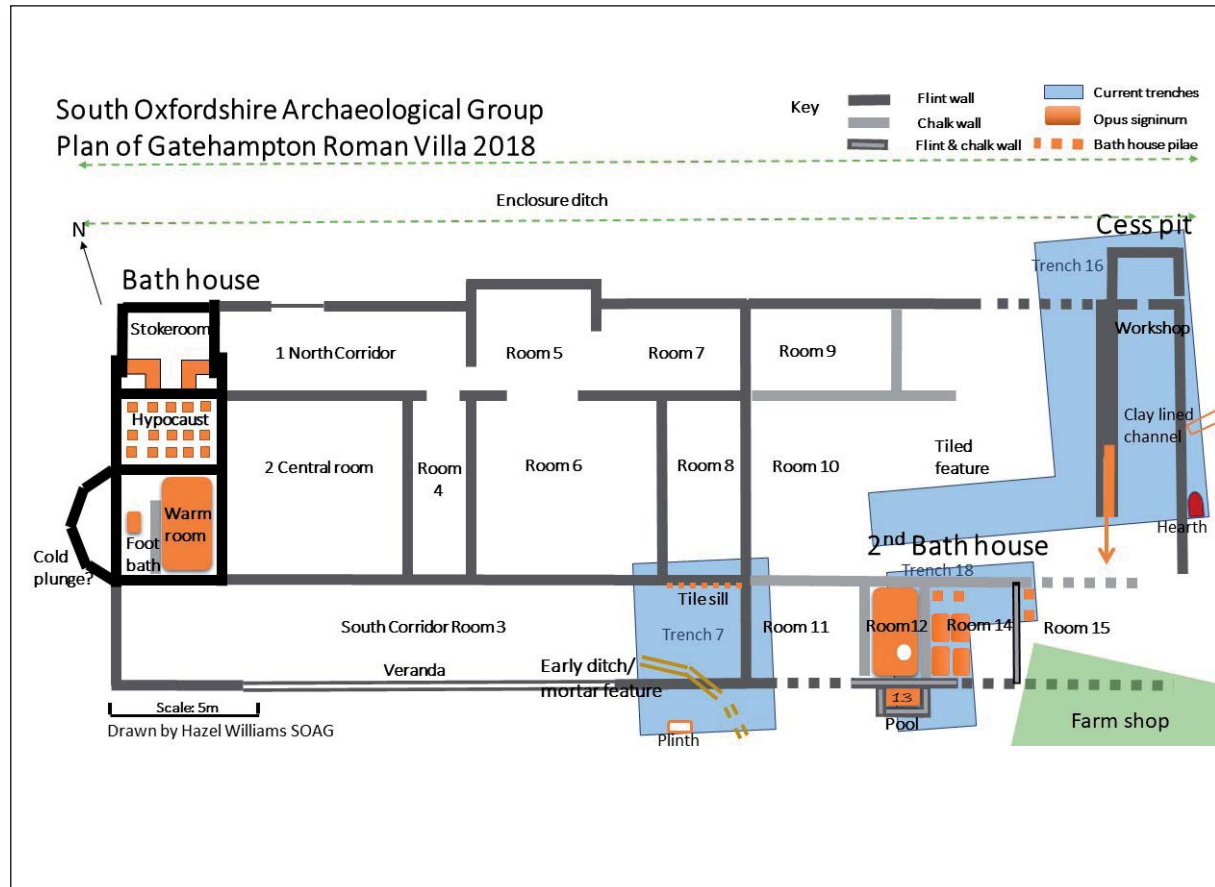


Fig. 1: Plan of the villa building and trenches in 2017-18

Rooms 9-11 to the east appear to have the same layout of parallel walls enclosing rooms on the northern and southern sides of the building but with different building methods as all the inner walls are of chalk and mortar. Coin evidence suggests that this may be the earliest part of the building dating to the mid to late third century. The wall that forms the western side of the workshop is unusual at a metre in width, but it abuts the northern wall of the building and may be a later addition; part of it has a tiled feature on top and this may relate to the construction of a second bath house around Rooms 12-15.

The trenches

At the beginning of 2017 four trenches were open; the remaining section of Trench 7, the small L-shaped Trench 18 to the south east, and the large L-shaped trench area that combined trenches 17 and 16, extending from the site field to the car park area.

The eastern side of trench 16 was extended by one metre to look at features extending beyond the eastern wall of the building and the trench was also extended by a metre along the south side. Early in 2017 the large hedge separating the site field from the car park was removed down to soil level leaving low stumps. The removal of the overhanging branches and vegetation meant that there was easier access to the area to the west of Trench 16 and an area of up to three metres, narrowing to approximately one metre, was accessible.

Trench 18 was gradually extended east by two metres during the excavation in 2017, no further extensions were made in 2018.

Trench 7

Much of the work in the trench was completed in 2016 including the discovery of a curved linear mortar feature [7536] that clearly pre-dated the construction of an early foundation wall and the south wall of Room 3. (*SOAG Bulletin* 71, pp13). Beneath the mortar was a U-shaped ditch and in 2017 this was exposed in two slots: one to the west side of Room 3, within the building (Fig. 2) and one outside the building.

The fill was of similar material in both slots with smaller stones filling the basal 10cm, large flints forming a central deposit, and then stones of mixed size to the surface. There was no evidence of any 'primary' fill in either slot and this could imply that the ditch was either cleaned out prior to its infilling, or that it was filled in very soon after its construction. The infilling may have been done before the

construction South Corridor Room 3. There was one small fragment of probable Roman pottery within the fill but no dateable material in the base of the ditch that might show whether the original cutting of the ditch dates to the Iron Age or to a Roman phase prior to construction of this part of the building.

An alternative interpretation of the curved linear feature is that the underlying ditch was dug and filled to provide a foundation for a wall of an earlier building. The very solid concrete layer has two parallel grooves 30mm wide and 50mm deep across it that appear to be purpose built, perhaps channels for pipes or vents? Excavation of the footings of flint walls of the villa shows a very similar fill. There is also a similarity in construction and appearance to the apsidal room of the bath house. The curved appearance of the feature may be due to two changes of angle, in the same way that the apsidal room consists of four angled sections of wall forming a half circle. It is also apparent that a gravel surface abuts the feature on the north eastern side, along with burnt deposits that respect the edge of the feature suggesting it must have formed a barrier and was originally higher. If it was the wall of an earlier building the courses above ground level would have been removed during construction of the South Corridor Room 3.

Late in the excavation, a rectangular mortar feature was discovered outside the building, right at the edge of the trench, set within the chalk surface. It was a mortar slab, roughly rectangular measuring approximately 1600mm by 1550mm, very solid and varying in thickness from 200-250 mm, with an uneven surface. It is just over 2.5 metres from the south wall [7520] of the building and parallel to it;

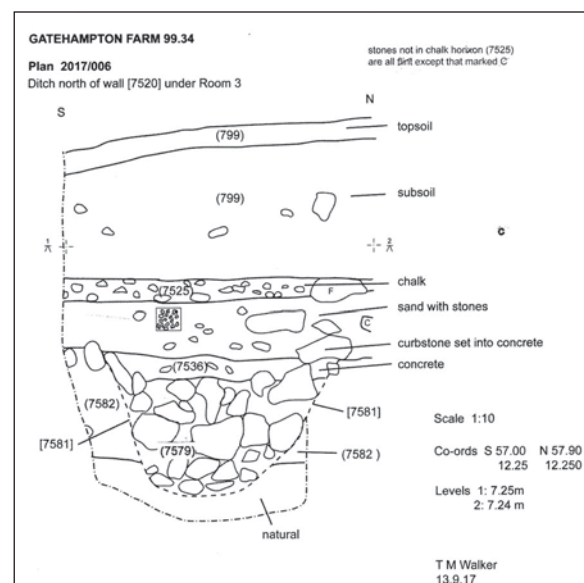


Fig. 2: Section across the ditch under Room 3



Fig. 3: Sunken pool with lead drainage pipe

perhaps a plinth or base for a water tank or statue? Several possible post holes were found in the chalky surface around the mortar, and fragments of a thin copper alloy tube were found in one of them.

Trench 18

Prior to 2017, only two narrow slots a metre wide had been excavated in Trench 18, along the northern and western sides of the trench. The line of inner lateral chalk wall had been found and there were indications of an outer flint wall on the south side. During 2017 demolition rubble was removed from the rest of the L-shaped trench area, the walls and floors of Rooms 12 and 14 exposed and the sunken pool feature (13) discovered. This part of the villa building has well-built internal walls of chalk blocks, but the exterior south wall of the building is constructed using outer dressed flint headers and chalk packing; different to the exterior south wall just a few metres to the west along the south side of Room 11. The same flint and chalk construction method was used for the three projecting walls of the pool.

Room 12 is a small narrow room, less than two metres wide and just under three metres long. It appears to have originally had a chalk floor, but this was covered with a 50mm thick layer of *opus signinum* with a small circular depression 450mm in diameter and approximately 200mm deep, that may have been lined with *opus signinum* too. At a later stage, the northern part of the floor was covered with a second layer of crushed and tamped chalk, perhaps patching an area of worn floor.

The sunken pool or tank (13) is 1800 mm long, 800 mm wide and 400mm deep. The base is laid with

regularly sized and spaced terracotta tiles and the sides of the pool are lined with a 30mm thick layer of *opus signinum* render with an extra layer moulded around the base where the walls meet the tile floor. In the centre of the south side at the base of the tank is a lead pipe, approximately 50 mm in diameter, positioned to drain the tank to the outside. The fill of the pool consisted of a demolition deposit of painted wall plaster in a black and white pattern with some plain red. There were also fragments of tile with the *opus signinum* and mortar attached; it does not appear that the pool was lined with tile, none were found attached to the surface and the render appears to be smooth and would have been waterproof. It is possible that there was a sill or step at a higher level; the top edge of the *opus signinum* lining is truncated – it is less than 400mm from the surface of the topsoil. It is remarkable that it has survived in relatively good condition; this may be due to the stable and compacted fill of plaster, *opus signinum* and tile fragments, a similar mix to that seen in the sunken tank in the bath house.

Room 14 is just under 3 metres square and by the end of 2017 the demolition deposit had been removed and an uneven mortary surface with patches of *opus signinum* revealed. The mortar appeared to continue eastwards over a line of buried stones that subsequently were shown to mark the presence of a narrow flint wall separating Room 14 from Room 15.



Fig. 4: Hypocaust in Room 15



Fig. 5: Hypocaust in Room 14 and opus signinum floor (top)

When the mortar layer was removed from Rooms 14 and 15 early in 2018, large slabs of *opus signinum* were visible in Room 14; the slabs were up to 700mm by 600mm in size and only slightly tilted due to the collapse of material beneath. Fragmented lumps of the same material covered the remaining floor areas of Room 14 and 15 and two small areas in both rooms were excavated, revealing regularly spaced *pilae* stacks made with 200mm square tiles, with sooty deposits around them.

Many small finds were discovered in the lowest levels of the demolition deposit in Room 14, mostly less than 50mm above the mortar layer. Three coins were found and, like the collection of coins found previously in Room 11 to the west (*SOAG Bulletin* 70, pp15 and *SOAG Bulletin* 71, pp14), these are common types of low value copper alloy *nummus* issued in the early fourth century, minted in Trier (ATR), Lyons (PLG) and Arles (CONST) and all common to Romano British sites. (See Table 1.)

Metal Fe objects found include a small metal ‘boss’, part of a hinge bracket and part of a small knife blade. Two small copper alloy wire rings were also found. The pottery from the deposits included fragments of a New Forest Ware jar.

The building materials and methods of construction used in the part of the building excavated in Trench 18 are very similar to those seen in the bath house at the western end of the building; the extensive use of reddish *opus signinum* for render and for the floor surfaces. The sunken pool feature is larger but very similar in construction to the small tank in the warm room of the bath house. The discovery of two heated rooms adjacent to Room 12 might suggest that it was a cool room, with a waterproof floor and cool plunge pool (Room 13) attached. The initial impression of the hypocausts in Rooms 14 and 15 are that they are shallower than in the western bath house hot room, there are box tile fragments, but none so far found in situ.

Trench 16

A limited geophysical survey in 2017 over the narrow strip between Trenches 16 and 18 using SOAG’s Mk 2 TR meter indicated that an internal wall and tile feature, along the western side of the workshop, may continue south to connect with the bath house area in Trench 18.

First exposed in 2016 (*SOAG Bulletin* 71, p17), the feature extends across the building, parallel with the eastern return of wall 16002. The flint and mortar foundation is one metre in width, the whole feature is 4.3 metres long and abuts the northern section of wall 16002. The northern half of the feature consists of several courses of worked flints topped by a single course of flints about 65 cm wide, presumably the lowest course of a large wall above.

The southern half of the base flint foundation is overlaid with a double layer of mortared tiles within narrow parallel chalk block walls along the edges of the feature; a short section just has loose tiles to either side. The feature is truncated at its southern end probably by modern disturbance. A large deposit of *opus signinum* was found abutting and tapering away



Fig. 6: Trench 16 with tile feature foreground and cess pit background

SF No.	Obverse	Reverse	Mint	Date
569	CONSTANTINVS IVN NC	CLARITAS REIPBVLICAE Sol Invicto	ATR	317-337AD
570	Constantinopolis?	Victory on a prow?	PLG	330-335AD?
580	POPROMAN..	Wreath & star	CONST	c.AD330

Table 1: Three coins found in Room 14

from the west side although there is no evidence so far that the tiled feature has any in its construction. A later sheep burial was also cut into the tile layer; the bones were partially articulated and probably too large to be Roman. Substantial quantities of large butchered animal bones, both Roman and modern, continue to be found in this area of the building.

There has been much discussion as to the significance of this feature. Given the size of the foundation it may be that this was the original external wall of the building with the 'new' easterly wall [16002] being added later. The tiles running along the foundation could signify an internal drain or culvert associated with heating or water management and therefore with the possible second bath house.

Alternatively, the tiles could form the lining of a ventilation duct running within the wall. It is possible that the thicker wall was constructed to separate the kitchen, latrines and workshop from the rest of the building in which case a drain or vent might be expected. Excavations in the adjacent room to the east between the linear feature and wall [16002], are in progress but have revealed a possible early channel to the sluice and the cess pit and a hearth with large areas of burning, covered by a later chalk floor.

Of interest was a small, almost complete jug or cup, excavated close to the flint foundation, in a demolition deposit about half-way along the western side of the feature.

The Cess Pit

In autumn 2017 attention turned to the partly-excavated cess pit. At the start of the season, only two of the cess pit walls [16018] were visible but further excavation quickly revealed the third wall, close to the location indicated by Dave Jobling (*SOAG Bulletin* 71, p15). The cess pit abuts wall [16002] at its eastern corner and this forms the closing, fourth wall of the pit.

The well-constructed, virtually square, cess pit is about 2 metres across and extends about 2 metres below ground level to a flat base of the natural. There are clear butt joints between the cess pit walls and [16002]. Three sides of the pit are lined with heavy mortared chalk blocks which rest on a bottom course of flints. The fourth side, below [16002], is steeply sloping natural. Above, the cess pit walls are constructed of flint and are similar in width to [16002]. Probably, they supported a substantial structure above ground with the pit situated beneath. There is a threshold where the western cess pit wall meets [16002], indicating an opening into the structure.

Two further purpose-built openings in the west wall were discovered in 2018. Fig. 7 shows the inlet culvert to left [in 16002], one opening in the west wall and two others to the left indicated by flat tiles.



Fig. 7: Cess pit from the east

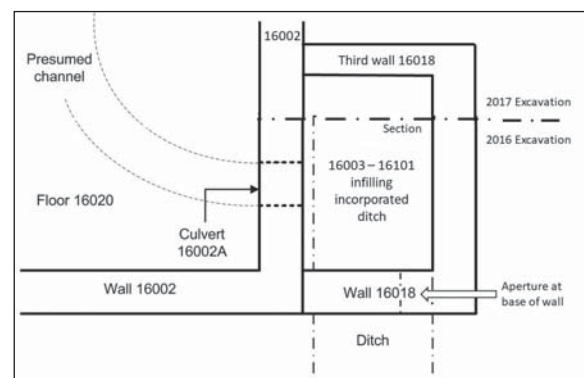


Fig. 8: Cess pit: schematic plan, not to scale

By the end of 2017, the entire contents of the pit had been excavated apart from a small access step. The deposits followed the pattern of 2016 but this year's excavations provided a clearer insight into the contexts at the bottom of the pit:

- The uppermost layer (16003) was a lens shaped deposit of soil containing masses of CBM, butchered animal bone and pottery. One particular find was a large fragment of an unusually shaped seven-sided roof tile similar to one found previously in Trench 7, dating possibly from the 4th century.
- Underneath was a very thick deposit of loose CBM (16042), slumped in the middle, comprising mortar, chalk, flints and plain and decorated plaster.
- Below this was a rich organic deposit (16056) of smooth soft brown silt, supporting a tangle of tree roots and containing pottery shards and animal bone.
- Under that was a dark brown deposit (16057) which consisted primarily of silt, organic residue, plain and decorated plaster fragments and many chalk lumps which had been heavily stained and crusted with brown organic matter (reported in 2016 as coprolitic material).



Fig. 9: Chalk/coprolitic lumps from (16057)

A new deposit (16101) was recorded at the bottom of the pit in this year's dig (now more easily distinguishable from 16057). It was a fine, brown friable silt with occasional patches stained orange and yellow and was thickest along wall [16002]. It lay beneath all the other contexts and was almost certainly the mineralised residue of the organic/coprolitic materials first held in the cess pit. Within this deposit was a small layer of impervious clay material (16061) which, when lifted, gave off the distinct smell of sewage, providing further evidence of the pit's early contents.



Fig. 10: Organic layers at the bottom of the cess pit

The sequence of deposits demonstrates that after initial use as a cess pit, plaster was dumped on to the solidifying contents (sanitary reasons or just disposal?) Use as a cess pit was then re-established but when this function ceased, the area was levelled with a thick layer of rubble and mortar from elsewhere. With continued shrinkage of the organic layers below, the pit eventually slumped up to 60cm in places and became a dumping ground for domestic waste.

Unexpectedly, the 2017 excavation revealed a large culvert in the base of wall [16018], connecting the cess pit to the ditch outside, which leads away from

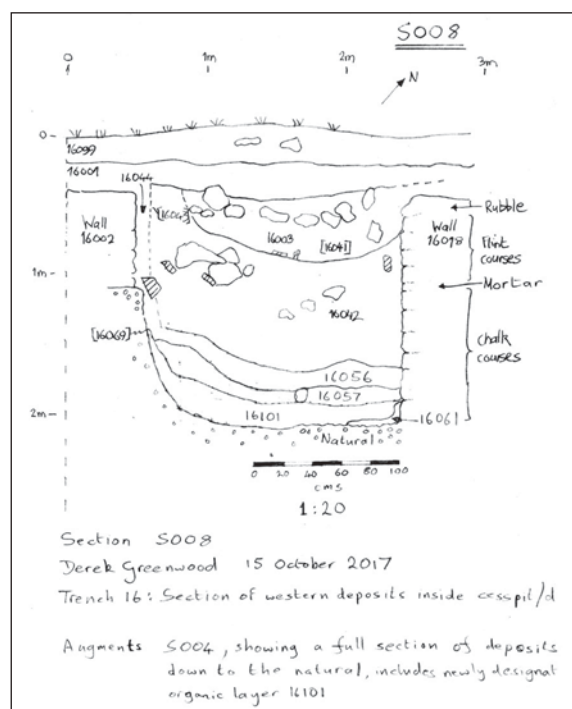


Fig. 11: Section across the cess pit

the building towards the east. This passageway is well preserved at its lowest levels, consisting of an opening through the wall about 40 cm across, with well laid courses of right-angled chalk blocks forming the walls. At higher levels the surrounding wall is very loose and prone to rock falls (two following excavation), so it's difficult to estimate the true height of the opening.

The presence of the channel must be linked to the ditch outside. Possibly, it provided for drainage of liquids away from the cess pit and into the ditch. If this were the case, the cess pit would act more like a septic tank and would require much less frequent emptying.

Cess pit finds

The 2016 excavation of the cess pit provided a remarkable find of an almost complete dimpled Trier motto beaker. More remarkably in the 2017 dig, a second motto beaker was found. Like the first beaker it was located at the lowest level within the cess pit, just above the natural and hard up against the northern wall. It was in several large pieces and has been re-constructed. The message on this year's beaker is 'AMANTIDA', which translates as 'GIVE TO YOUR LOVER' or something similar.

These beakers are well-known but rare – perhaps 30-40 have been found in the last 100 years, so to find two examples in one small location and at the same level is probably unique.

Anne Strick, who found the pot, describes her reaction

'All archaeologists and enthusiastic diggers know when the trowel sound changes you know you've got that 'something' and that is exactly what happened in Trench 16. On one Sunday in October 2017, at the bottom of the trench in the cess pit, we found an almost whole Trier Pot covered in very soft soil. It didn't take very long to extract it and the squeals of delight (from the finder) were heard all over the dig! Absolutely gorgeous! This discovery has made all those years of shifting tons of spoil very worthwhile and the smile hasn't gone away yet!'

In addition to these two motto beakers four larger grey ware pots were also found at roughly similar depths, spaced around the cess pit. The fragments mostly remained close together, enabling the pots to be partially re-constructed. The locations of the pots, the limited spread of the fragments and the sparseness of other pottery shards this deep does suggest that the pots and the beakers were deliberately thrown into the pit when it was first dug out and have been left undisturbed until the present day. Several pig foetuses were also present at this lowest level in the cess pit. The question arises as to whether this was a coincidence or whether their presence is linked in some way with the pots and was part of a ritual deposit on the opening of the cess pit.

Area beyond eastern end wall of the building



Fig. 12: Roelie Reed inspecting the clay lined channel

The trench was extended by one metre along the eastern side, to look at the area outside the building partially excavated in 2015 (SOAG Bulletin 70, pp17). A clay lined pit or channel extends outwards from the eastern end wall of the building. It is approximately two metres wide narrowing to less than a metre at the base and almost a metre deep. The yellow



Fig. 13: The two motto beakers with their finders

clay lining is over 200mm thick forming a U-shaped channel widening at the top and with a rounded end close to the end wall [16002] of the building. A half section in progress in 2018 has shown that the lower fill consists of two layers of burnt deposits with plenty of pottery. Above this are several layers of mortary building debris and soil. A copper alloy pin was found in the demolition deposit under the topsoil. The section currently under excavation is two metres in length and it is likely that the feature extends several metres to the east. The purpose of the channel is not yet clear; the yellow clay is soft and malleable when damp but dries out very hard. It may have formed a waterproof lining to the feature, but it is also used elsewhere in the building for high heat areas such as the base of a hearth.



Fig. 14: Copper alloy pin

A hearth area of burnt deposits (16098), but no clay base, was also found outside the building close to the wall [16002] in the south east corner of the trench. There was no structure around the hearth but there was evidence of high heat and several lumps of slag were found within the deposits, suggesting it was

used for metalworking. One piece of cut animal (possibly cattle) bone was also found. Further work to find the extent and purpose of these and other features outside the eastern of the building continued in 2018.

Summary

At the beginning of 2017 it was expected that the priority would be the excavation of the remaining part of the cess pit and this was completed early in 2018.

The final phase of Trench 7 has illustrated again the way in which the building was developed in stages over time presumably as the owners' needs and pockets expanded. There may also have been another early structure to the south enclosed by the curved wall, if that is what it is, south of the building. The discovery of a second bath house has changed the course of the project and excavation will continue, still on a small scale, into 2019. There are many similarities of materials and construction in the two bath houses but no indication yet of whether they were built at the same time or one replaced the other. There may even be an argument that the two bath houses and cess pit were manifestations of a phase of prosperity that led to new amenities added to transform a basic farmstead building into a more high-status residence. The key to finding these answers is in securing more dating evidence and it is hoped that further excavation of the second bathhouse will provide some.

In 2019 the cess pit area and most of Trench 16 will have been backfilled and the focus of the excavation will be on the quite well-preserved bath house. There are hypocausts in Rooms 14 and 15 to explore further and Trench 18 is likely to be extended to establish the extent of the bath house, the location of the stoke room and to see whether the large tiled feature found in Trench 16 is also part of the bath house complex.

Participation and acknowledgements

Work during 2017 and 2018 has been done in trenches that are relatively small compared to the large open trenches that were characteristic of the Gatehampton in the past. This has meant fewer diggers involved but a greater concentration of SOAG expertise that was important when excavating quite sensitive areas. I would like to thank the team of dedicated diggers who participated during 2017 and 2018. There was a lot of hard work involved as well as the highlights.



Fig. 15: Excavation in progress in Trench 18

The excavation has reached a stage where the trenches are no longer situated in the open area of the field but are positioned close to a modern building and to access routes. Despite this and our continuing extension to the project timescale, our site owners have been unfailingly helpful and enthusiastic. Our thanks to Daisytown Ltd, to Bob and Liz Jones and to Robin Cloke for all their support.

Our thanks also to Dr Shaun Mudd, Department of Classics and Ancient History, University of Exeter, the author of two papers on Roman drinking and to Edward Biddulph (Oxford Archaeology) and Margaret Ward of the Study Group for Roman Pottery for their help and advice on the Trier pots.

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See <http://potsherd.net/atlas/Ware/MOSL.html> for a formal description of the Moselkeramik pot.

Excavations at High Wood, Harpsden, Oxfordshire

Interim report 2017 - 2018

Alan Hall

Background

Excavations continue at this site of a Romano-British building complex which has been under investigation by SOAG with annual campaigns since 2014.

David Nicholls, who had worked as a volunteer at the nearby Harpsden Roman Villa during the 1950s had been intrigued by the findings of Henley-on-Thames Archaeological and Historical Group (HAHG) and determined to pursue the matter in due course.

The excavation site lies in mainly deciduous woodland on the Phillimore estate at an altitude of 92m. and covers about 1 acre (0.4 hectares) with the core area at SU 75017951. The geology is Winter Hill Gravels with pockets of clay. The underlying chalk is at a depth of probably no more than 2m.

The site contains a saucer-shaped depression approximately 1 metre deep which encompasses the whole of the northern range of buildings. To the south, the east and the west, and at a higher level, the extent of the building complex is defined by ridges which contain building remains.

The mature beech and oak trees within the excavation area are seen to be 150-180 years old, thus indicating deliberate plantation of the area in the early 19th century.

The Mound

The Mound, which lies immediately to the west of the excavation site, is roughly circular and is approximately 16 metres in diameter.

In their 1977-83 excavation of this feature, Henley Archaeological and History Group recovered from this mound artefacts dating from the early 1st to the late 4th centuries AD (*SOAG Bulletin* 70.23).

This feature is problematic in that, although it exhibits the characteristics of a spoil heap from earlier archaeological investigation, we have been unable to locate records of any formal investigation that may have given rise to its presence. However, it is significant to note that a beech tree with an

estimated age of 150-180 years surmounts it, thus suggesting historic – or even “antiquarian” – intrusion to the site.

The finds recorded from the HAHG excavations have been located and await analysis but photographic evidence in their archive shows that a few plastic bags – which presumably contained artefacts from the Mound – were reburied on site. Whether to pursue these during the current exercise has yet to be decided but a decision will follow further fieldwork in the immediate area.

It seems plausible that the mass of this feature may have derived from the nearby saucer-shaped depression in the middle of the excavation site.

Evidence for Late Iron Age/Early Romano-British Occupation

Satellite imagery has revealed the crop marks of a double-ditched enclosure lying in the field close to the south east of the excavation site (*Bulletin* 70.23). Although not yet investigated or dated, it nevertheless exhibits the characteristics of an Iron Age or early Romano-British enclosure. Geophysical survey in 2017 has suggested the possibility of several pits within the enclosure but did not elicit information beyond what was apparent in the Google Earth image. It is envisaged that test trenching may follow in due course.

Coins of this period have been found, out of context, around the excavation site by metal detectorists.

During the 2016 excavations, to the north of an east west enclosure wall, apparently outside this and at a level below the foundation of the wall, a pit was found (Pit 1 in Fig. 2) which contained, in the lower fill, pottery of Late Pre-Roman Iron Age date.

In 2017 another pit was found to underlie the walls of Rooms 1 and 2 (Pit 2 in Fig. 2). Within the top fill a silver unit of *Cunobelinus* (AD 10-41), a silver minim of *Epaticus* (AD 20-40), part of a La Tène style brooch and, under Room 2, a C1 Hod Hill brooch give a secure date range for this feature.



Fig. 1: La Tène and Hod Hill style Brooches from Pit 2 under Room 1

2017 - 2018 Excavations

The Enclosure Wall

In 2016 Trench 3 was situated over a wall showing at ground surface level and was extended both to the east and west as the feature was unearthed. The full extent of the wall was not revealed at that time but it appeared to continue further to both east and west.

This wall was of a regular construction being 65cm in breadth and built of methodically laid flints with 'headers' on the outsides and napped to form an even outer surface, all set in a firm mortar. It was 3 courses (50cm) in height. A "depression" under the wall towards the centre required two additional courses to provide stability. This east-west wall is interpreted as the northern wall of an enclosure to a complex of buildings.

Test pitting to the east indicates that the wall ends probably somewhere under the public footpath – but not beyond. To the west, test pitting showed a continuation of the wall in two pits and a right-angle return to the south was revealed in 2018 in Trench 6, which gives an east-west dimension of the enclosure of approximately 50m. Similarly, this western alignment was followed in two test pits, the southerly of which suggested a much-degraded corner returning to the east and giving a north-south dimension to the enclosure of approximately 40m. Until this point, where the wall was revealed, it was seen to form a level surface.

Room 1

Excavation in 2016, along the Enclosure wall in Trench 3, revealed the northern portions of two rooms and these were explored further in 2017 in Trench 4 and in 2018 in Trench 5 (Rooms 1 and 2 in Fig. 2).

The rooms were divided by a strongly constructed north-south wall with heavy mortaring, a strengthening course of tiles below the top course and a top surface layer of tile. It is postulated that this layer provided a flat surface probably to support a wooden-framed wall construction.

An entrance way, 1 metre across, was situated in the middle of this dividing wall. The discovery nearby of an S-shaped iron brace with organic residues might suggest its use within a wooden building or possibly a door fixing. A decorative iron plate with a hook attached found close-by had probably been used on a wooden door.

The wall returned westward to form the southern wall of the room and was lap-jointed to the dividing wall with a mid-course of mortar continuing unbroken throughout the return. After the return, the west-running southern wall deteriorated and what remained was a bed of very strong mortar 75cm in width and 5cm thick which continued for 2.4m but, from this point, it appears to have been robbed away. A section of the base, 1 metre square,



Fig. 2: Rooms 1 and 2 in Trenches 3, 4 and 5

was found offset 1m to the north of the line. Traces of the wall line continued for a further 2.7m as a spread of mortar chips only. Further supporting evidence for robbing was provided by an undated metal tool found wedged under the base of the nearby cross wall at the point of its west return. It was not possible to give a date to this robbing but it may well have been in ancient or medieval times

The room was 2.8m in internal width and had the remains of a surface of rammed flints which had been removed to the south – suggesting possible robbing. This surface would not serve as a practical floor but presumably formed a base over which some levelling material would have been laid although no traces of such were found.

Finds from under a building collapse in Room 1 dated from throughout the Roman period. It was not possible to discriminate between the underlying soil level and that which filled the top of an underlying pit such that Late pre-Roman Iron Age/1st century AD finds from this area may be from within this pit.

A few small pieces of painted wall plaster were found in the soil on the southern side of the room and overlying the degraded cross wall. It may be that they were part of the fabric of Room 1 but this cannot be confirmed.

Room 2

A less regular and un-mortared wall ran to the east of the dividing wall to form the southern wall of Room 2. It was constructed either contemporaneously with or shortly after the dividing wall as shown by the provision of a short “tenon” joint projecting from that wall into the construction of the cross wall. At the eastern end, this deteriorated to one layer of flints only which overlay 30cm of loamy soil. By contrast, the northern (enclosure) wall was built down to 10cm above the natural stratum which suggested that, if they were constructed contemporaneously, the former was laid at ground level, while the latter, deeper, wall was formed within a construction trench. The relatively flimsy southern foundation suggests that this room was less substantial than Room 1 and may have been in the nature of a lean-to construction.

Room 2 was 2.8m wide internally throughout and had a concrete floor, some 8cm thick, which was overlaid, in a small area only, by a skim of finer mortar. Pottery and ferrous items were found in sampling below the floor and pockets of root disturbance pierced this layer. A small area in the northern part of the floor in the 2017 excavations showed evidence of burning indicating a later hearth or fire.

To the west, the mortar floor stopped at the threshold in the dividing wall in a clear straight edge but there was no evidence of a paved threshold.

In 2018 Trench 5 was placed to reveal in full features discovered by test pitting in 2017. Excavation was constrained by the roots of a mature beech tree. As expected, this work revealed that Room 2 continued eastwards but probably as a “corridor” as there was no evidence of a flint-based cross wall. It is, of course, entirely possible that it was originally divided by a wooden structure which has since disappeared.

Some 4m of the enclosure wall had been removed at the juncture of Trenches 3 and 5 leaving a mortar trace which was entirely absent for 1m within Trench 5. Immediately adjacent to this, a rectangular wall-like construction, 0.75m x 0.75m formed of three courses of unmortared flints, abutted the northern (outside) face of the wall. As this stood alone and did not appear to form part of a room, its purpose could not be determined.

The mortar floor continued but was truncated in a clean line. The regularity of this cut suggested post-collapse intrusion which was supported by the find nearby at a low level, of a small piece of moulded glass (probably dated to C18-19AD). From this point eastwards fragments only of the mortar floor remained and, of significance, one piece (50cm x 25cm) overlaid an oblong cut (2.5m x 30cm) with a sub-circular “bowl” in the centre showing evidence of high temperature burning and containing a lower fill of a fine sooty soil with a strongly magnetic response. Surrounding this feature were 4 post-holes cut into the natural in a rectangular array measuring 4m x 2m. This feature was interpreted as a metal working furnace – or, possibly, a pit for the pre-smelting of iron ores - within a protective shelter of pre-C4 date (Allen, J.R.L pers.com.). The roots of the beech tree constrained clear photographic recording.

The enclosure and inner walls of the room both subsided to the west by 1½° which may be compared with settlement of walls seen in room 3.

The North South Cross Wall

The corner of a wall, with a return oriented approximately north-south was revealed in 2015. Subsequent excavations have disclosed that a heavily-mortared wall 5 courses high, extends for 7.5m to the north where, in Trench 4, it displays a return to the west, which is approximately parallel to that seen at the southern end in Test Pit 4. Although many of the outer flints were napped, the construction was somewhat irregular and without any selection of larger stones or ‘headers’ for the outer layers and with a slight ‘kink’ and bulge at the southern end.

Pottery was found at all levels in the surrounding soil as well as quantities of bone, glass, and two coins. The trenches were excavated down to the natural without finding any evidence of floors.

However, in 2017 within Trench 4, the wall appeared to be of later construction to the northern range of buildings (Rooms 1 and 2) as a 25cm layer of dark soil lay between the base of the wall and the ground surface on which stand these apparently earlier buildings. Furthermore, it is unlikely that the more-sophisticated northern rooms would have been constructed to lie 0.25m only from the corner of the cross wall which implies that the latter was constructed when the former were ruinous and possibly at, or below, ground level. The irregularity in structure and coarseness of this wall contrast markedly with the relative precision evident in the construction of Rooms 1 and 2.

At the southern end, test pitting in 2015 to the west failed to show further remains but, at the northern end, although much degraded, and reducing to one basal course of flints only, the wall continued westwards into the baulk of Trench 4 and requires future investigation. The dating and characterisation of this structure is presently unknown. The discovery of an iron lever-like tool securely wedged under the

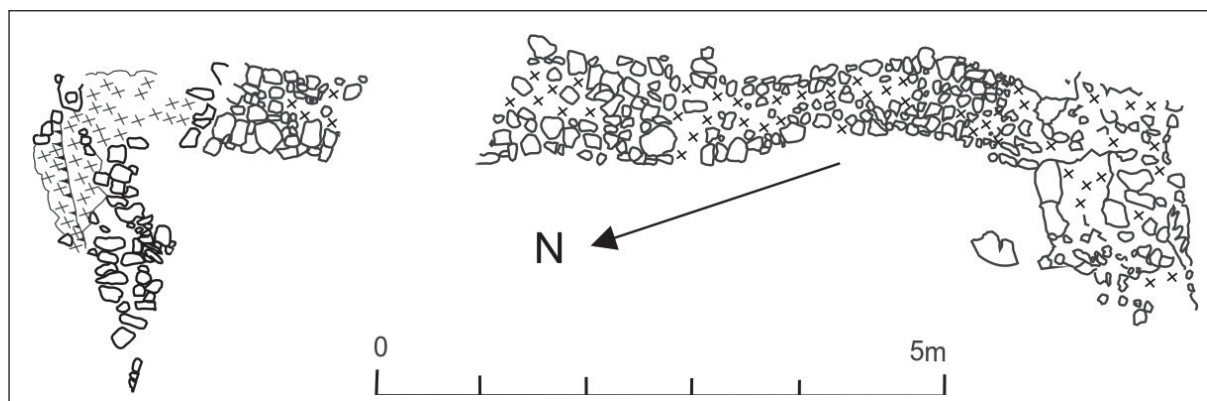


Fig. 3: Plan of the Cross Wall

corner of the return may be a further indication of a later, and unsuccessful, attempt to demolish or rob the wall as part of a general robbing of the area.

Room 3: The North Western Corner of the Enclosure

Test pitting in 2017 revealed a corner to the enclosure wall with a southerly return and Trench 6 was sited to understand room construction at that end and to look for evidence of a western range of rooms.

The northern and western enclosure walls continued and were of similar nature and construction to that seen in Rooms 1 and 2. An inner east-west wall was soundly built with a projecting plinth to the south side and formed a room (Room 3, Fig. 4) 2.8m wide internally. Each wall had subsided by 8° easterly towards the saucer-shaped depressed area in the centre of the site and had been displaced and

damaged in opposing segments, probably in one episode and possibly by heavy ploughing.

A layer of roofing tiles was overlain by scattered building flints, suggesting a roof collapse in Room 3.

Internal walls were not found to support a range of rooms along the inner side of the western wall, neither was there evidence of a dividing wall within Room 3.

There was no evidence of a floor and a 1.7m x 1.65m deposit of slag lay on the natural. Some of this showed concave profiles such as might be expected from the bases of bowl furnaces used for iron smelting. Two pieces of strongly-magnetic worked iron were also present: a nail, weighing 10g with a large oval head and a much-corroded bar 225mm in length with an apparent square cross-section. Although there was

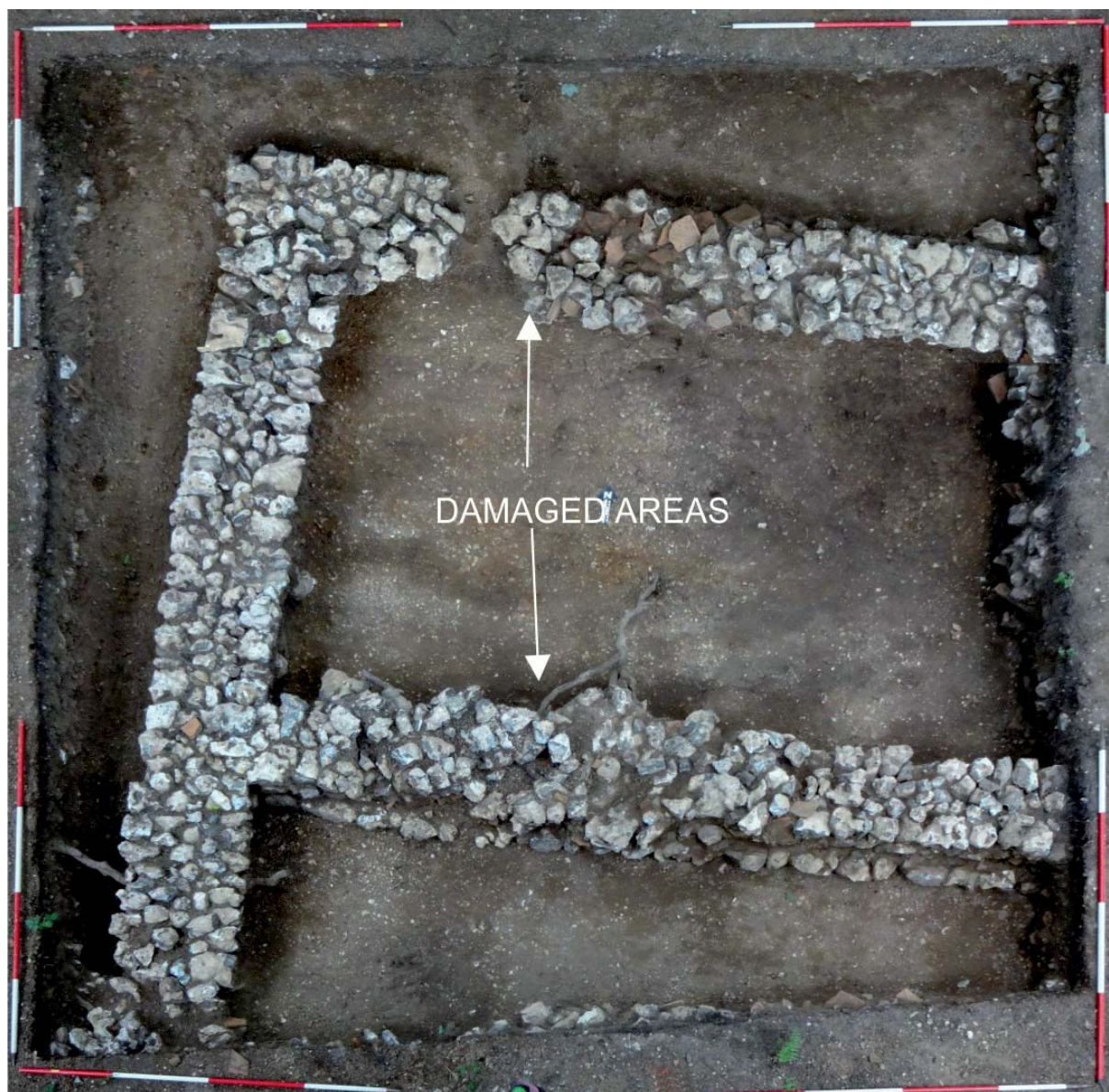


Fig. 4: Room 3 and the north western corner of the Enclosure

no evidence of metal-working structures within the trench, this evidence when taken together with the “bowl” furnace underlying Room 2, points towards early-date iron smelting at or near the site and probably also iron working (Allen, J.R.L pers.com).

Dating

Unfortunately, it was not possible to discern any clear stratigraphy in the overlying soils: throughout the northern range of rooms there was a mix of “woodland” loamy soil and building material. Even where an apparent level of CBM appeared, it was underlain by similar soil

There was no stratigraphically-secure artefactual evidence from which to date the occupation of Rooms 1, 2 and 3 although ceramic building material from the overlying soil matrix has been dated to the 4th century AD from their style and from the cut outs on roofing *tegulae*. The overall scarcity of imbrices and the preponderance of lydions might indicate that most (all?) of the CBM is second-hand material which has been brought to the site for constructing the walls rather than as roofing or floors/hypocausts (Peter Warry, pers.com.).

Pits 1 and 2

In 2016, to the north of the Enclosure wall, apparently outside the building and at a level below the foundation of the wall, was a pit (Pit 1 in Fig. 2). It was partially excavated because only one quadrant of this (1m x 1.25m) lay within the bounds of the trench. At the base of the pit lay some large adjoining sherds of Late pre-Roman Iron Age/Early Romano-British pottery with a latest date of AD 70 (Paul Booth, pers.com.).

In 2017 a pit was found to underlie the wall of Room 1 (Pit 2 in Fig. 2). Full excavation was possible to the south but a quadrant in the north-west fell within the area excavated in 2016 when it had not been recognised. Under Room 1, time constraints limited excavation to a sondage 60 cm wide. However, within the top fill, finds of a late Iron Age brooch, a silver 12mm unit of *Cunobelinus* (AD10-41) and a silver minim of *Eptaticus* (AD20-40) give a secure date range for this feature.

Although it was not possible to discern a boundary between the fill of the pit and the overlying soil, the top level contained a military-style belt stiffener and an artefact which may have been the point of a *pilum* although it may be the shank of a drill bit (Quita Mould, Barbican Associates, pers.com.).

Roofing Nails

Some 103 roofing nails were found in 2018 in the continuation of Room 2 (65 nails) and in Room 3 (38 nails) and their positions plotted but this failed but to reveal any meaningful distribution pattern.

The Western Enclosure Wall

Test pitting approximately 15m south on the alignment of the western wall of Room 3 revealed, in Test Pit 20, a continuation of the wall, of the same construction i.e. a flat top surface, 60-70cm in width with headers to the outside and 2 courses in depth remaining. The missing flints were seen in tumble alongside.

Further exploration, in Test Pit 21, identified an ephemeral arrangement of building flints which were initially identified tentatively as a corner return of the enclosure wall to the east. It was degraded with missing courses and a gap where the wall was entirely absent. The possible corner was even more severely ruinous and immersed in a spread of building flint rubble and CBM. Identification was tentative only and relied largely on the flints standing in 2 courses in parts and their alignment at a right angle to the western wall along a ridge running east-west across the site.

The Southern Building Remains

From the apparent south western corner of the enclosure wall a ridge of higher ground, standing proud of the land surface by between 10cm and



Fig. 5: Test Pit 21, The south western (tentative) corner of the Enclosure wall

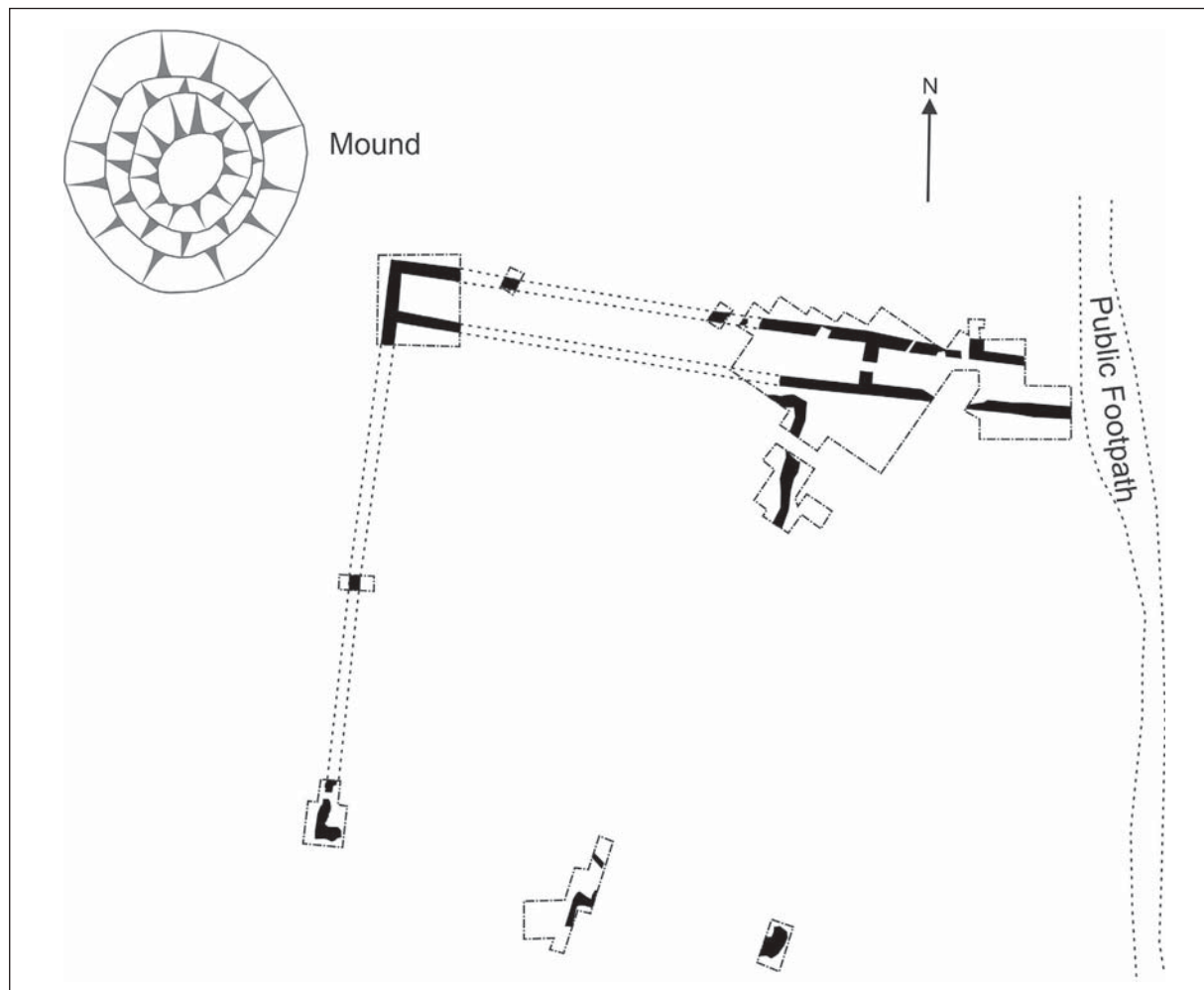


Fig. 6: Plan of the Site

30cm, runs across the site parallel to and 40m from the northern enclosure wall. This was examined in Trench 7 and Test Pit 22. There is evidence of pit-like intrusions along this line, most particularly to the east.

Trench 7 was sited across the ridge and was 7.5m x 2m in dimension. Throughout the trench lay a dense scatter of building flints and CBM. This scatter was cleared to reveal a possible wall structure, which was visible in section only as a layer of building flints lying in two courses. Detailed GIS (Fig. 8) plotting of the site shows that this does not align with the feature in Test Pit 21, indicating that this is unlikely to be a wall.

Test Pit 22 similarly unearthed a spread of building flints and CBM but did not reveal any apparent structure.

As the ridge forms a discrete and regular alignment which runs parallel to the northern enclosure wall, it may represent a southern enclosure construction. However, it has been disturbed catastrophically in the areas that have been examined. Whether

this is the result of agricultural activity or previous “archaeological” intrusion has not been determined.

Remains to the East

Extensive test pitting to the east of the public footpath indicates that the enclosure wall probably returns south somewhere under the public footpath (Fig. 6), but this cannot be investigated fully presently. However, informal shallow examination has found substantial traces of building flints and CBM on what might be an east range of the complex. This will be the subject of future investigation.

High Wood Finds Reports

Coins

Over the period 2015-2018, a total of 84 coins were found.

The collection has been identified to show a distribution which, although too small a sample on which to base firm conclusions, is nevertheless broadly in line with the Portable Antiquities Scheme average for Romano-British occupation sites.

Of note is a gold quarter stater of Diat which was found in woodland topsoil within what is now known to be the area of the building complex. Two silver coins of the same period were found in secure stratigraphic context thereby dating Pit 2.

Date Range	Reece Period	Number
Late Iron Age	1A	3
AD41-54	2	2
54-68	3	2
69-96	4	4
C1		1
138-161	7	1
C2		2
260-275	13	12
269-296	13/14	3
275-296	14	8
296-317	15	4
317-330	16	4
330-348	17	6
348-364	18	7
364-378	19	19
378-388	20	1
388-402	21	1
C4		4
Total		84

Table 1: Numbers of coins found by period

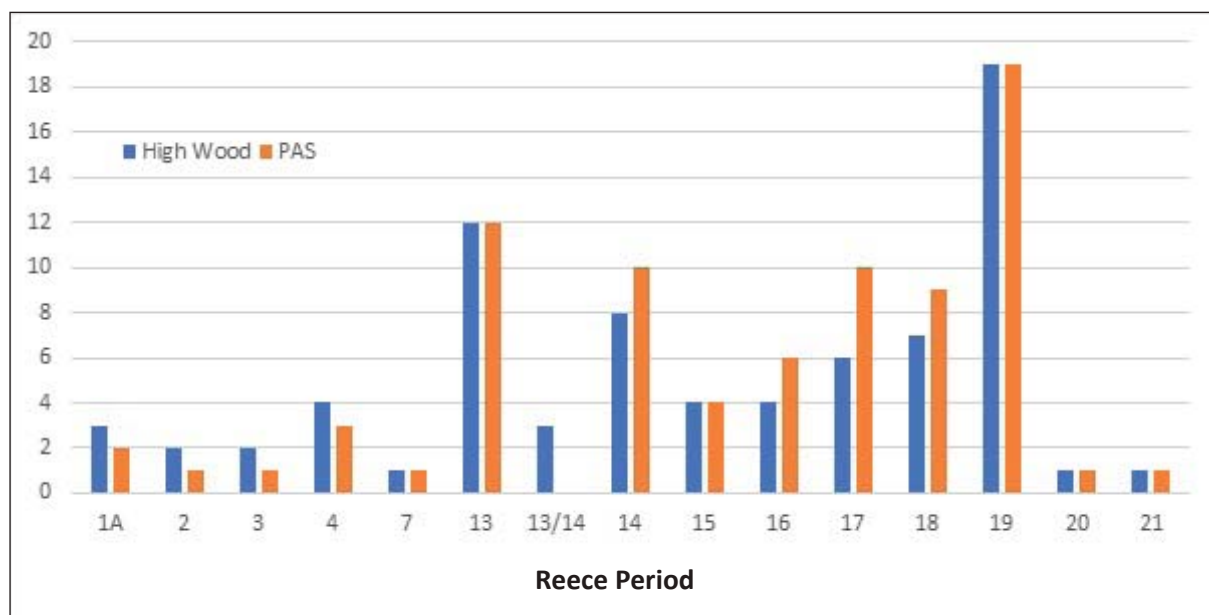
Significant Metallic Finds

As well as the brooches and coins found in the waste pit that lay under the walls of Rooms 1 and 2, the pit also produced two items with potential military connotations: a “propeller” style belt stiffener and the possible head of a *pilum* (military spear). Unfortunately, it is not possible to differentiate *pilae* from drill bit shanks which are very similar in form, and this particular example does have traces of wood (as from a handle) on the “point”.



Fig. 7:
Possible Pilum head
(or shank of drill bit)

Belt stiffener



Comparison with Portable Antiquities Scheme of coins found by period.

PAS Data after Walton, P. in Moorhead, Sam "History of the Roman Coinage XIX"

<http://www.treasurehunting.co.uk/Sam-Moorhead-July-2011>

Taken together with the four masses of chain mail (*Lorica Hamata*) discovered in 2015 in the cache of artefacts, evidence is accumulating of some form of military connection with the site. It has been suggested that the chain mail might represent a deposit at a temple or shrine but the discovery of military artefacts in a waste pit would appear to mitigate against this and suggests occupation of the site by some person with a military connection – perhaps a retired legionary?

Pottery Finds

From the 2015, 2016 and 2017 excavations we have recovered 6800 sherds of pottery, weighing, in total, 106 kilograms, all of which has been classified using the Museum of London Archaeology (MOLA) coding system (MOLA 2014).

Analysis indicates occupation from the Late pre-Roman Iron Age throughout the Romano-British period as tabulated below:

Pottery	Weight (grams)	%
Total Late pre-Roman Iron age/C1Iron Age/ C1	1604	1
C1-C2	9377	9
C2	608	1
C1-C3	1366	1
C2-C3	2148	2
C2-C4	1349	1
C3-C4	5362	5
C1-C4	85673	79

Table 2: Date ranges of other finds

Much of this was undateable small sherds of grey ware without evident rim forms and which could be assigned only to a general AD C1-C4 dating. There was a variety of pottery fabrics present with only a small presence of imported wares from the early period.

The understanding of the sources of grey sandy wares is a problem ubiquitous to the study of pottery for the period and, as a generality, it has been conventional to emphasise the dominance of the Alice Holt potteries of the Hampshire/Surrey border. However, it has been possible to recognise a significant presence of sherds from the near locality at the apparent (but unexcavated) kiln site at Swan Wood, Nettlebed. As to the remaining grey wares, it is apparent that much may be from unidentified, local regional sources (Paul Booth, pers. com.). Indeed,

any kiln that reproduced the forms common to the period and had access to Gault clays together with the often-nearby Greensands might be indistinguishable from the Alice Holt produce.

Similarly, sherds which were classified as “Highgate Wood Poppy Head types” were similar in both form and fabric to the wares of those potteries, but it is possible that they may be of a more local and unsourced regional manufacture (Paul Booth, pers. com.).

Industry	Weight (grams)	%
Unsourced Grey wares	102678	95.2
Possibly Swan Wood Grey Ware	677	0.6
Highgate Wood Poppy Head beaker types	219	0.2
Cologne	15	>1
Moselle	7	>1
Nene Valley Colour Coated	48	>1
Oxford Industry	1935	1.8
Samian	239	0.2

Table 3: Pottery analysis by fabric

Some 75% of sherds, by weight, had no identifiable rim form but of the remaining 25%, the majority comprised jars and bowls (85%) as follows:

Forms	Weight (grams)	% of Diagnosed
Undiagnostic sherds	80412	75
Diagnostic sherds		
Flagons	420	2
Jars	14650	56
Beakers and cups	1106	4
Bowls	7717	29
Dishes	1877	7
Mortaria	442	2

Table 4: Pottery analysis by form

Mean sherd weight is 11.4g and mean Estimated Vessel Equivalent of rims is 7.93%, which is reflective of the heavy disturbance, and possibly selective looting, of parts of the site.

Interim bones report

(By Janet Ridout Sharpe)

Introduction

This is the third report in a series (Ridout Sharpe and Carter 2016, Ridout Sharpe 2017) that will culminate with a definitive bone report once the excavation has been completed.

A total of 487 bones, bone fragments and teeth were recovered from the High Wood excavations in 2017 and only 55 were added to the assemblage in 2018. The results from both years are combined in this report. The bones were collected by hand and sieving was not employed, so the smaller fragments and the bones of small mammals and other small vertebrates such as fish were not retrieved. The assemblage is therefore biased towards the larger domestic animals. There were no human bones.

The bones and teeth were identified as far as possible, counted in terms of numbers of identified specimens (NISP) and weighed, and the results are summarised in Table 5. Where possible, the extent of tooth wear and the epiphyseal fusion status of the long bones were used to estimate the age of livestock at slaughter.

Species	NISP		Weight	
	No.	%	g	%
Equids	3	0.55	92	2.30
Cattle	65	11.99	1733	43.28
Sheep/Goats	141	26.01	581	14.52
Pigs	74	13.65	984	24.58
Red Deer	3	0.55	113	2.82
Dog	1	0.19	1	0.02
Fox	2	0.37	5	0.12
Rabbits	10	1.85	14	0.35
Chickens	1	0.19	2	0.05
Wild Birds	4	0.74	1	0.02
Unidentified	238	43.91	478	11.94
Total	542	100	4004	100

Table 5: Species composition according to NISP and weight

Domestic animals

Sheep/goats comprised about 50% of the identified livestock, with cattle and pigs each accounting for about 25%. The bones had been butchered with many of the long bones split, presumably to extract the marrow.

Horse-like (equid) bones were infrequent. No additional evidence was forthcoming to support the presence of mules at High Wood, following the discovery of a possible mule tooth in 2016 (Ridout Sharpe 2017). The few equid bones recovered appeared instead to represent a small pony, possibly even a donkey. Unfortunately the evidence is too sparse for a definite conclusion to be drawn.

The kill-off pattern for cattle appears to show a mixed economy with surplus stock slaughtered for meat at a younger age than animals retained for secondary products such as milk and traction. Bone measurements suggest that both small Iron Age-type cattle and larger improved Romano-British stock were present, but there are insufficient data to show if body size changed over time. Alternatively, it is possible that the larger bones represent plough oxen and the smaller ones cows.

Sheep and goats are notoriously difficult to tell apart on bone evidence. Although goats may have formed a very small component of the sheep/goat complex, most are likely to have been sheep (Allen et al. 2017). The kill-off pattern for sheep supports the exploitation of older animals primarily for wool but also probably for dairy products, with some lambs culled for meat. The presence of a few very young lambs may be explained by neonatal/perinatal mortality with lambing ewes maintained on or close to the site. The small size of the bones suggests that the sheep were of a primitive Iron Age-type stock such as Shetland, which is still famous for its wool today.

Unlike cattle and sheep, where a range of skeletal elements including skull fragments, vertebrae and foot bones that carry very little meat suggests that the animals were slaughtered at the site, pig bones are represented mostly by mandibles and other parts of the skeleton are rare or absent, indicating that these animals were killed and butchered elsewhere. It is possible that pigs' tongues were on the menu. Tooth wear combined with the presence of some permanent teeth still erupting through the jawbone suggest that most of the pigs were killed in their second year.

The single chicken bone may be intrusive, but it could be significant that it came from a bantam hen: Romano-British chickens appear to have been bantam breeds (Allison 1997). Part of a vertebra of a moderately large dog was also found. This is another 'first' for High Wood and although dog prints are frequently found on roof tiles, the rarity of dog bones suggests that dead dogs were disposed of separately from food waste.

Wild animals

A butchered red deer metatarsal bone showed that venison was occasionally eaten, and red deer antler appears to have been utilised. The tip of one antler had been sawn off, possibly with the intention of making it into a tool handle.

A fox humerus from the late Iron Age/early Roman pit might have been intrusive or may represent the deliberate disposal of a scavenger/predator. A partial fox cranium found beneath roof collapse is almost certainly intrusive.

Ten rabbit bones, all from disturbed contexts, are also considered to be intrusive as are the few wild bird bones encountered. These include the humeri of a snipe and two lapwings: both are birds of open country and lapwings in particular are associated with arable fields, thus supporting the conjecture that the High Wood site was at one time under the plough.

Bones: Conclusions

The results of this and the two previous interim reports on the animal bones from High Wood have shown that the proportion of sheep was consistently high. This predominance of sheep bones at a rural site during the Roman period, when the trend was for cattle to outnumber sheep, has parallels at the Lowbury Hill temple site (Hamilton-Dyer 1994) and the Maddall Farm villa estate (Gaffney and Tingle 1989), both on the Berkshire Downs. If the High Wood site is to be considered a farmstead rather than a temple, then its economy may have centred on wool production.

Owing to the disturbed nature of the site, it is possible that none of the contexts can be regarded as secure, with the possible exception of the late Iron Age/early Roman pit which was sealed by the later building. If we may consider surfaces beneath building collapse (which yielded 30% of the bones) to be relatively secure and later than the pit (which also yielded 30%), then there is slight evidence to suggest that, whilst sheep predominated throughout, cattle

outnumbered pigs in the later deposits whereas pigs outnumbered cattle in the earlier pit. An increase in the proportion of cattle over time is in line with current thinking about changes in livestock exploitation during the Roman period (Allen et al. 2017), although in this case it was not at the expense of sheep.

To date, 1637 bones, bone fragments and teeth have been recovered at High Wood and the overall results so far have corroborated the 1:2:1 ratio of cattle:sheep:pig bones. It will be interesting to see whether future excavations at this site will confirm or refute this pattern.

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Fig. 8: Chris Michel establishing GIS coordinates



John Moughton surveying features

Planning

Much effort was devoted by our team of Andrew Allum, John Moughton and Chris Michel to using the Group's Position Station. Chris, who is in another life employed by the Ordnance Survey, used her skills to establish a base line with OS co-ordinate values accurate to within 1cm. Working off this John and Andrew conducted a detailed survey of all features and contexts within the site such that our planning is now conducted to modern standards of accuracy.

Conclusions

The site continues to produce a good range of finds from across the Late Iron Age to the end of the Romano-British period. Unfortunately, the only features that have been securely dated are the early pits underlying and immediately outside Room 1 although there are indications from the ceramic building material that the rooms in the northern range of buildings of 4th century AD construction.

The results achieved so far show that the complex is much larger than originally envisaged, with some 50m x 40m of wall indicated. The characterisation of the remains is confused by the presence of the mound of what is presumed to be spoil from earlier intervention. If this assumption is correct, then the array of wall plaster found therein might be assumed as coming from the northern range of buildings –

where only a few small pieces have been found in the present excavations. The status of the complex would be enhanced if this could be proven.

There is clear evidence from the enigmatic “cross wall”, the early waste pits and the probable furnace, that the site has undergone a series of uses in different periods.

Acknowledgements

This project would have not been undertaken without the commitment of David Nicholls who, through his energy and tenacity, initiated and guided the work. His recent withdrawal from the project, following a period of poor health, to concentrate on other projects is regretted but understandable.

We continue to benefit from the generous support and interest of the landowner (the Phillimore Estate) and our enthusiastic team of diggers, the majority of whom are SOAG members although the project has drawn-in a number of interested local people- some of whom have joined SOAG.

Members of the Oxford Blues Metal Detecting Club have given regular, enthusiastic and invaluable assistance.



Fig. 9: The fun of it all

SOAG acquires a new resistivity meter: the TR/CIA Mk2

Mike Green

In 2017 SOAG acquired a new resistivity meter, a TR/CIA Mk2, purchased with funds from the *Cynthia Graham Kerr Bequest* - the legacy to SOAG from the estate of our society's founder.

The history of geophysical surveying devices in SOAG

Geophysical surveys are a key component of much SOAG field work. They provide a non-intrusive method of discovering what might be beneath the surface of sites of interest and are used to guide us on where to excavate. The first equipment acquired by the society was a Geoscan RM15 resistivity meter in 2006. This was purchased by the BBCHAP project (see *SOAG Bulletins* passim), funded by a Heritage Lottery Find (HLF) grant. More recently we have acquired a single pole Geoscan FM18 gradiometer (more familiarly known as a magnetometer). This was originally owned by SOAG member Geoff Deakin, which he has lately donated to SOAG.

We have also been fortunate in occasionally being able to use other devices owned personally by SOAG members, in particular: (1) a TR/CIA Mk1 resistivity meter owned by Gerard Latham, and (2) a twin-pole Bartington magnetometer owned by Richard Miller. We have also used magnetometry and

Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR) equipment from the University of Reading.

For processing geophysical data, we own a copy of Geoscan's Geoplot software (also funded by the BBCHAP HLF grant), and we occasionally use the free software, Snuffler.

Our RM15 meter has been heavily used for over ten years. It is beginning to age, and also now presents a few complications regarding its connection to and compatibility with modern PCs (its design dates from the 1990s). A new generation of resistivity meters is beginning to come to market. These exploit newer technologies which yield increases in productivity and usability, and significantly reduce manufacturing and retail costs – making them much more attractive and affordable to amateurs.

The TR/CIA Mk 2

The TR/CIA Mk 2 is the second generation of resistivity meter produced by TR Systems under sponsorship by the Council for Independent Archaeologists (CIA), of which SOAG are members.

The key features that illustrate the new capabilities offered by the device are as follows (Fig. 1):

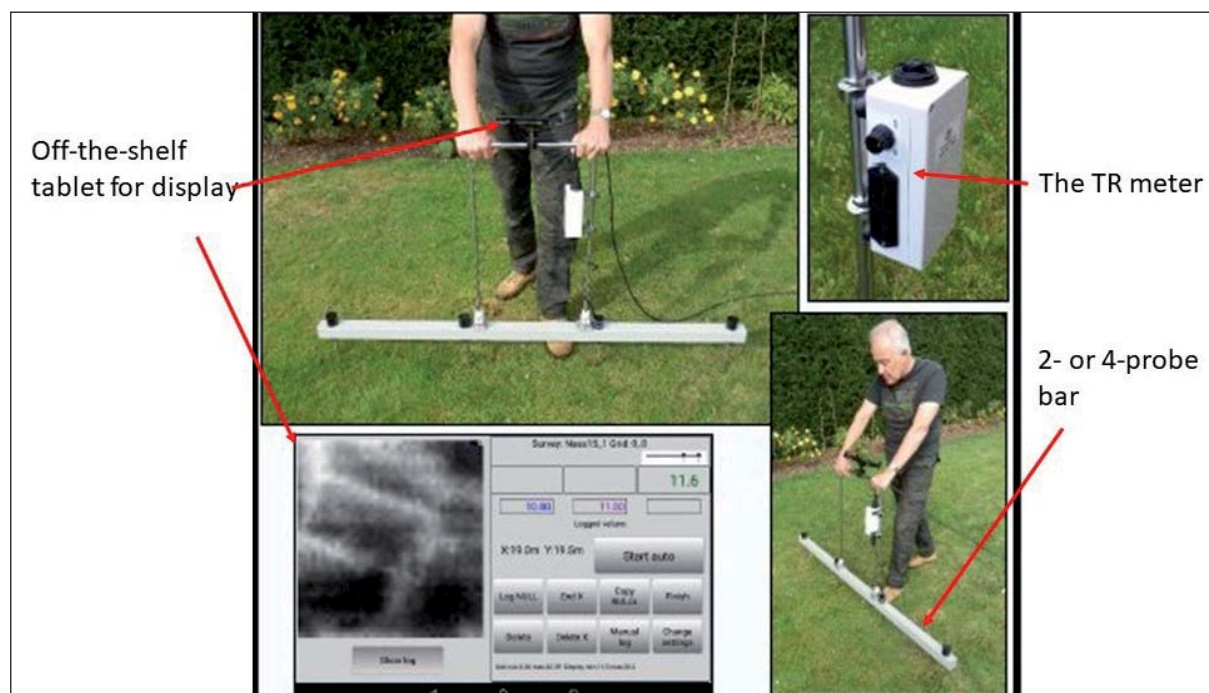


Fig. 1: The TR/CIA Mk 2 resistivity meter

Separation of the meter and the user interface

In previous devices these were integrated in one box which sat on top of the frame. With the Mk 2, the meter is housed in a smaller box, out of the way on the side frame, and which houses faster, more functional, and cheaper electronics. The user interface is provided by an off-the-shelf modern tablet (in SOAG's system it is a Samsung Galaxy Tab) which communicates with the meter via Bluetooth. The use of a mass-produced tablet reduces the need for the bespoke electronics of the Mk1 and reduces costs. The most significant benefit of the new display is that the results of a survey can be viewed, and even processed, dynamically, as the survey progresses, rather than having to wait till later to process the output on a computer.

Surveying several gridlines at once.

Changing to a longer probe bar, it is possible to survey three lines in a survey grid simultaneously. In appropriate field conditions this can dramatically speed up a survey.

Simultaneous 3-depths survey.

The depth sensitivity of any resistivity survey is proportional to the spacing between the probes. With previous equipment, to survey a grid at different depths necessitated different surveys with different length probe bars. With the Mk2, three depths can

be surveyed at once, and the progress of the three surveys can be monitored dynamically. Again, this is a great productivity aid.

Real time processing of the survey output.

With previous devices, processing the data and viewing the results of a survey had to wait till the results could be processed on a computer. With the Mk 2, processing can be conducted 'on the fly'. This processing is less sophisticated than computer-based processing but does enable the survey results to be observed whilst the survey is being conducted. (Full processing still takes place later on the computer.)

Illustration of the display and an example of dynamic processing

The new device has been used at several SOAG field projects, and was also used by SOAG as part of its contribution to the Boxford Community Big Dig project in which a Roman complex was excavated in 2017. The example here is a survey grid over what is currently thought to be a Roman barn some 50 metres from a villa (Fig. 2). The illustrations are from the tablet display, showing first the setup of the array of grids to be surveyed, and then successive stages of processing in the field after one grid has been surveyed (this processing can also be done during the grid survey).

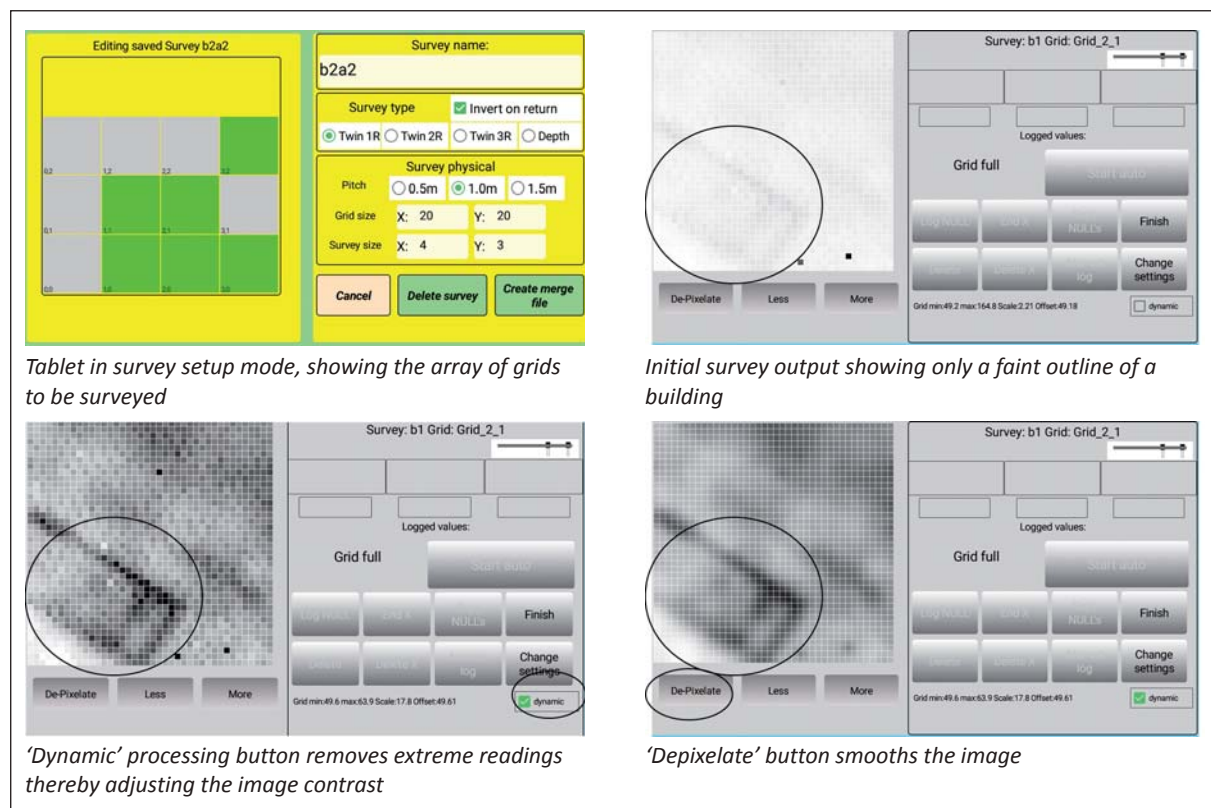


Fig. 2: Dynamic processing of survey image in the field

Postscript

The dig at Boxford immediately became world famous for the discovery of a mosaic that has been described by Anthony Beeson, an expert on Roman mosaics, as *“without question the most exciting mosaic discovery made in Britain in the last 50 years and must take a premier place amongst those Romano-British works of art that have come down to modern Britons”*.

Fig. 3 shows volunteer John Mitchell, and SOAG member Mike Green, with the new Mk 2 meter surveying over the location of the yet-to-be-discovered mosaic. The photograph is of course a composite!



Fig. 3: Surveying over the Boxford mosaic (composite photo)

Investigating the ‘Eye and Dunsden Causewayed Enclosure’ – Fieldwalking and Geophysics at Spanhill Copse

Interim Report by Janet Eastment

With Geophysics report by Roger Ainslie

Introduction

The identification of a Neolithic causewayed enclosure in the parish of Eye and Dunsden, South Oxfordshire from cropmarks seen on aerial photography has been the subject of some debate in the past (Lamdin-Whymark 2008, 141-158, Oswald *et al.* 2001, 54). During the course of current fieldwalking surveys in the Shiplake area an opportunity arose to investigate this monument, which is situated north of Spanhill Copse in a field adjacent to the A4155 (Figs. 1a & 1b). This report contains details of the fieldwalking and geophysics surveys carried out at the site along with other fieldwalking surveys around Shiplake. The results of the fieldwalking and geophysics in the field beside Spanhill Copse provide new evidence for a buried archaeological feature, possibly a Neolithic causewayed enclosure, at this location.

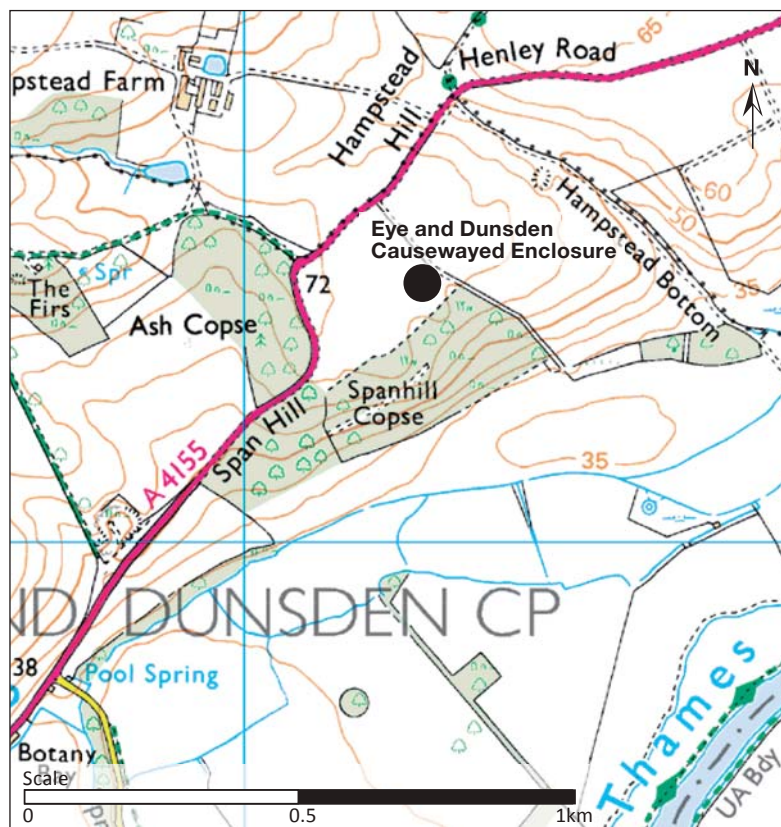


Fig. 1a. Map showing the location of the ‘Eye and Dunsden Causewayed Enclosure’.

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Fig. 1b. Looking south-west across the site, photo taken from the southern end of the hedge with Spanhill Copse on the left and the A4155 to the right of the field.

Photo: Janet Eastment

Prior research at Spanhill Copse

An aerial reconnaissance photograph taken in September 1970 (Fig. 2), shows a curved cropmark in a field north of the Thames. The National Record of the Historic Environment (NRHE) lists this feature as monument number 917319 with the entry:

Eye and Dunsden Causewayed Enclosure

"Site of a possible Neolithic causewayed enclosure. The cropmarks were plotted and interpreted by RCHME in 1994 as part of the Industry and Enclosure in the Neolithic Project. The site lies north of Spanhill Copse and about 900 metres north west of the River Thames, just off the floodplain, on a plateau of flat ground." www.pastscape.org.uk

The identification of this possible causewayed enclosure to the north of Spanhill Copse, was investigated by Oxford Archaeological Unit (OAU) in 1974. Although a "rapid trial excavation" (OAU 1974, 2) trench was dug they were unable to find any "features, either man made or geological, which could have caused the cropmark" (Palmer 1976, 186). Unfortunately there was no mention of any worked flint recovered during the trial trenching and there was no published report, only a paragraph in the October 1974 edition of OAU's Newsletter. Oswald *et al.* (2001, 54) have since reassessed the evidence commenting that the "location of the trench was imprecisely recorded", and consider RCHME's photographic interpretation (Fig. 3) still supports this as a probable causewayed enclosure.

Oxford Archaeology were unable to find any original notes or plans for the position of their trial trench from their investigation when I contacted them. However, it would appear that at least one SOAG member was present during the 1974 investigation who recorded the position of the trench on a map, subsequently discovered in the SOAG Archives. This document has revealed that the location of the OAU trench was at the edge of the field beside the hedge, the map also indicates a track here providing access for farm vehicles to the field (Fig. 4). Today the track no longer exists, but the hedge remains intact.

Top: Fig. 2. Aerial reconnaissance photograph, September 1970. Cropmarks north of Spanhill Copse, Eye and Dunsden, appear to represent part of a causewayed enclosure with two widely spaced circuits.

Centre: Fig. 3. Eye and Dunsden Causewayed Enclosure Project 1994, RCHME/EH/HE Aerial Photographers comment: "Fragments of two ditches forming the north western edge can be made out. The inner circuit comprises of six sections of ditch interrupted by causeways 0.5 to 9 metres wide, following a curved course approximately 100 metres long. The outer ditch is represented by a single, curved ditch, 15 metres long. To the south, another short stretch of ditch which may relate to the enclosure can be seen."

Bottom: Fig. 4. Map from the SOAG Archive showing the position of Oxford Archaeology Unit's trench.

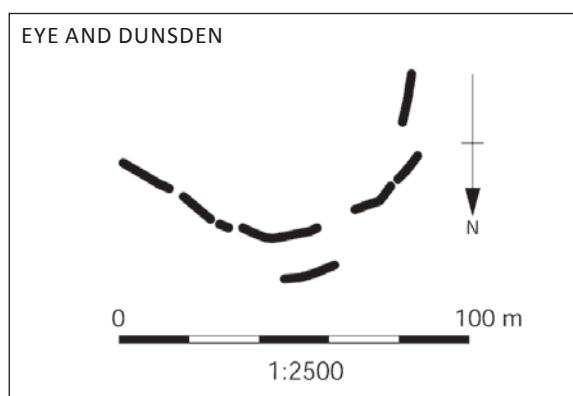
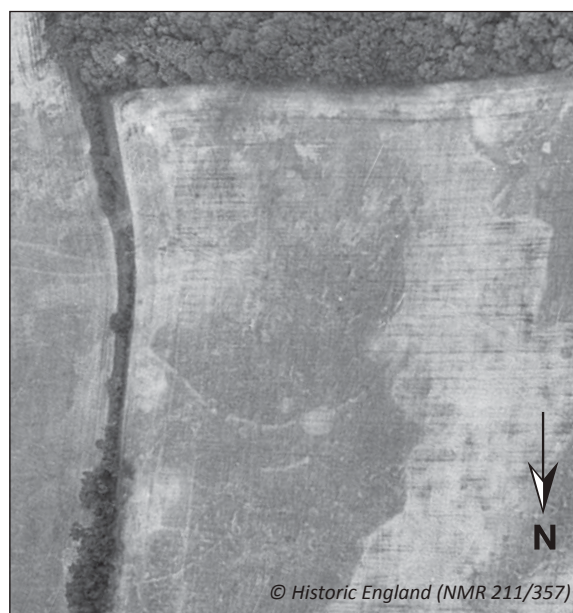
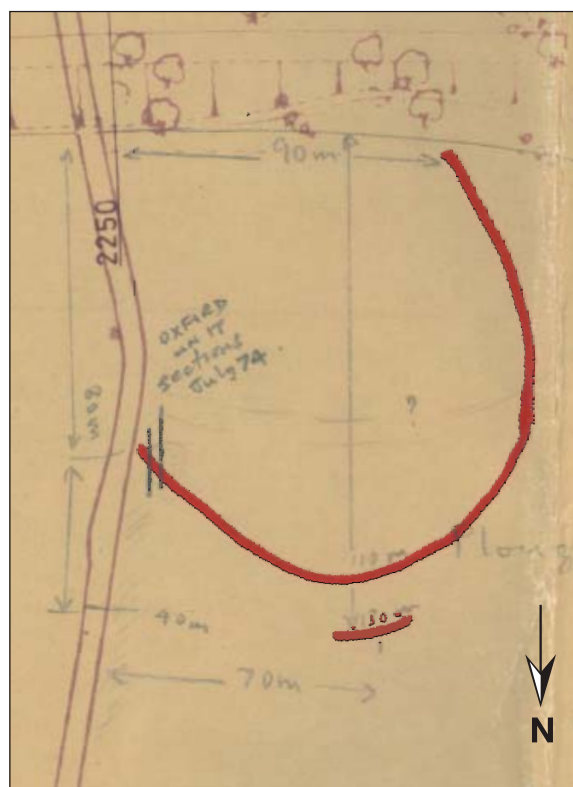


Illustration: Lamdin-Whymark 2008, Fig. 44 page 157.



Fieldwalking Surveys in the Shiplake area

Recently I have been researching prehistoric activity in the Middle Thames Valley, through the evidence of worked lithics, in particular flint surface scatters recovered from fieldwalking surveys. As part of this research several fieldwalking surveys have been carried out on the fields around Shiplake Court Farm during 2012-2015.

To date around 93 hectares have been fieldwalked in the Shiplake area at nine different locations (Fig. 5): Kiln Lane (16.6ha), Memorial Avenue (7.3ha), Mill Lane (7.6ha), the field opposite the Plowden Arms (4.8ha), Hampstead Bottom (11ha), Warren Hill (6.7ha), Shiplake Court Farm (36ha), Hampstead Hill and Spanhill Copse (over the field with the cropmarks, 5.5ha). Although the assemblages collected during the fieldwalking surveys are still undergoing full analysis it is apparent, from a preliminary overview, that activity was occurring in the area during the Mesolithic to Bronze Age periods of prehistory.

The assemblages from Hampstead Bottom and Warren Hill, two fields which are on the first gravel terrace immediately above the floodplain and below

Hampstead Hill, have been analysed and the results show a concentration of Neolithic through to Bronze Age lithic material, with some possible Mesolithic content as well (Fig. 6). A recent survey of the fields adjacent to Shiplake Court Farm has indicated a possible early Neolithic presence in the area with some of the flint tools collected having diagnostic characteristics to the flintwork from that period.

This evidence of an early Neolithic presence in the area increases the possibility that the features seen in the aerial photography in the field beside Spanhill Copse on Hampstead Hill may be related to activity in the Early Neolithic, meriting further investigation of the site, by both fieldwalking and geophysical survey.

Spanhill Copse fieldwalking survey

A systematic fieldwalking survey over the field with the cropmarks, between the A4155 and Spanhill Copse and part of the adjacent field on Hampstead Hill, was carried out between 29 April and 4 May 2015. The aim of this survey was to make an evaluation of the extent of prehistoric activity, by use of a sampling strategy across the field.

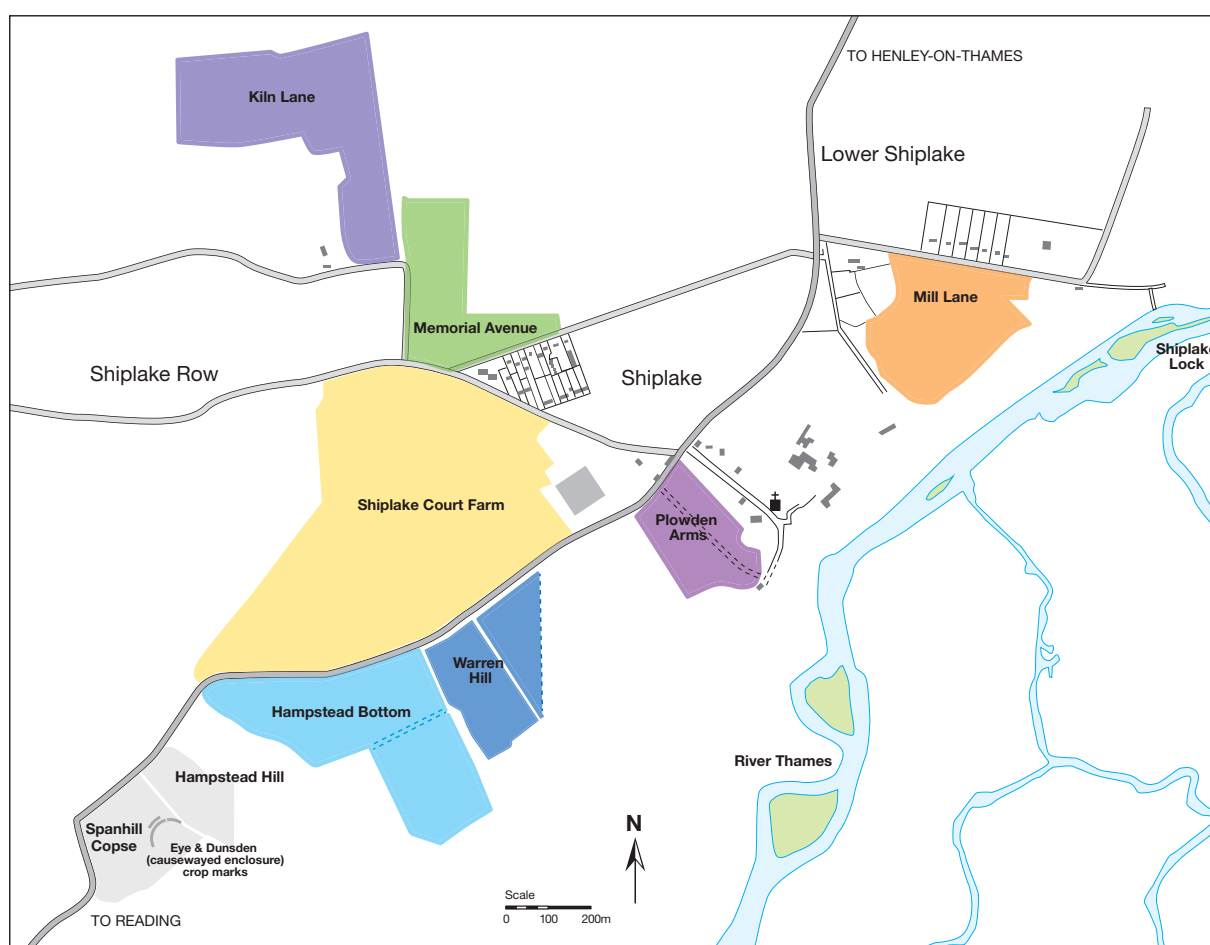


Fig. 5. Map of the area around Shiplake showing the locations of the fieldwalking surveys.

Illustration: Janet Eastment

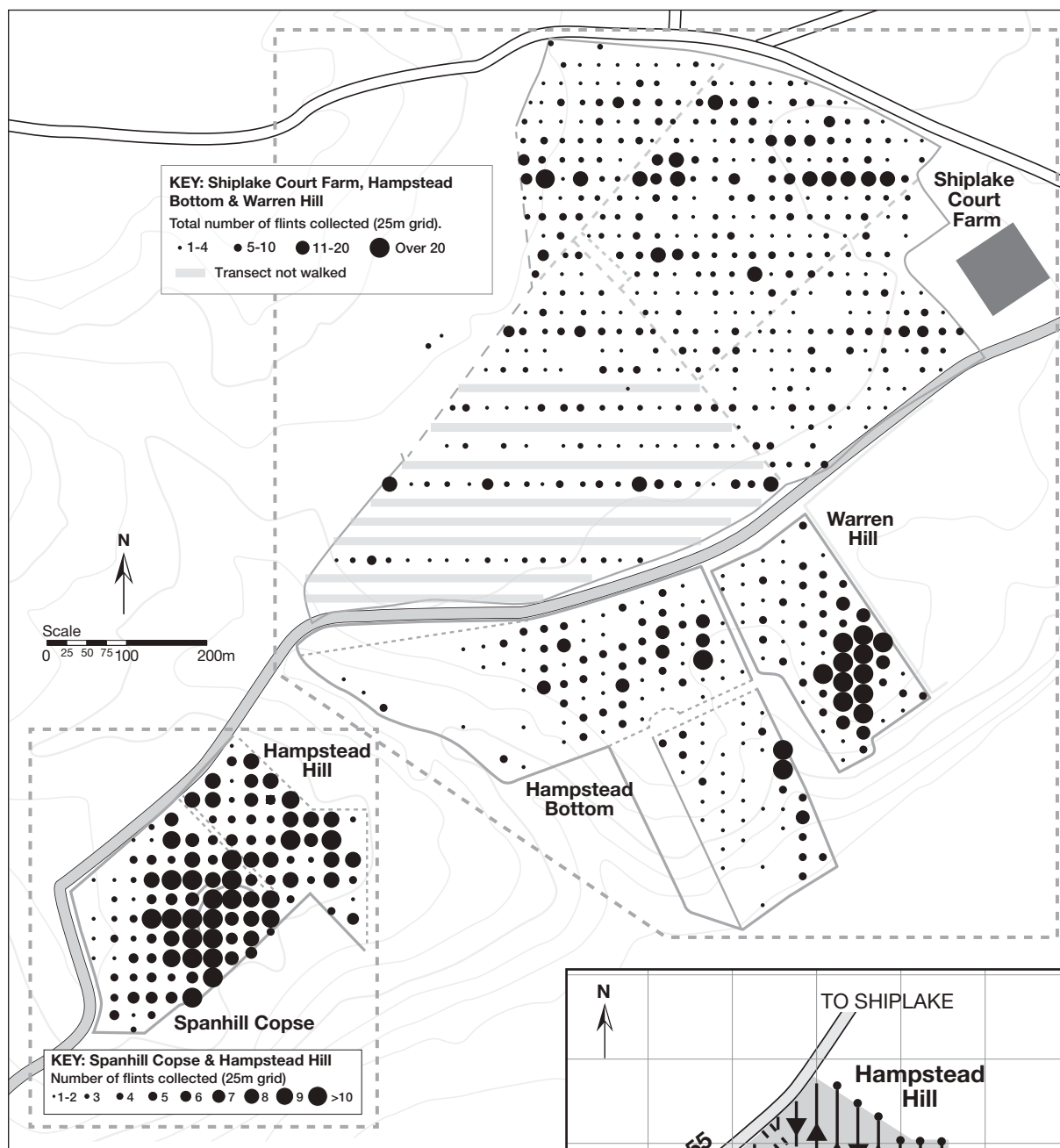


Fig. 6. Distribution plan showing the quantity of flint artefacts collected during the fieldwalking surveys around Shiplake Court Farm as well as the survey at Spanhill Copse and part of the adjacent field on Hampstead Hill. Illustration: Janet Eastment

The methodology for the fieldwalking survey was to walk along transects, spaced 25 metres apart and aligned North-South on the Ordnance Survey grid, with collection points at 25 metre stints along each transect (Fig. 7), effectively creating a 25 metre square grid across the field. The grid markers were positioned using a handheld GPS, which was capable of accuracy to one metre, depending on satellite availability, but was generally accurate to between three and five metres in the field.

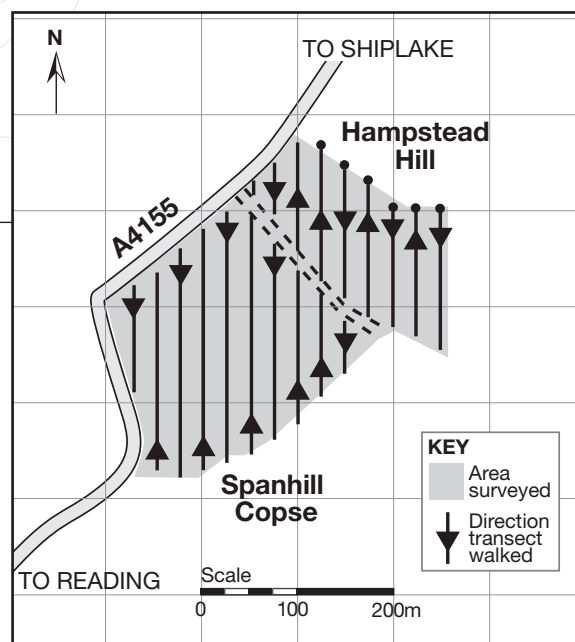


Fig. 7. Plan of the fieldwalking survey at Eye and Dunsden. Showing the area fieldwalked and the position, and direction walked, of the transects which were spaced at 25m apart. Illustration: Janet Eastment

Results of fieldwalking survey at Spanhill Copse

A significant amount of flint, which includes worked flakes and burnt flint, was collected during the fieldwalking survey (Fig. 6). The plan shows the distribution of the flint across the field, with a concentration of artefacts collected from the area with the cropmarks seen on the aerial photography. Although ploughing would have redistributed the flint over the field during the years it is considered as significant that a large number are clustering in this area.

A detailed distribution plan will be made of the tools within the assemblage, once it has been analysed and processed. However, an initial analysis of the

worked flint suggest a prehistoric presence in this area dating to the Neolithic (c.4000-2500BC) and the Early Bronze Age (c.2500-1500BC). A few flakes that may be of a later Bronze Age date were also collected but this was significantly less in number than from the other sites fieldwalked around Shiplake.

A partial analysis, of the flints collected, shows that there are a few diagnostic tools within the assemblage that indicate a possible Early Neolithic presence at this site. These include a laurel leaf point, which has one bifacially knapped edge and may have been used as a cutting tool (Fig. 8) and a disc scraper (Fig. 9).



Fig. 8. Early Neolithic laurel leaf point from the field adjacent to Spanhill Copse. Laurel-Leaf points have an unknown function but are sometimes suggested as roughouts for leaf-shaped arrowheads or are used as cutting tools, which is the probable use for this example.

Photos: Janet Eastment



Fig. 9. Disc Scraper, a sub-circular flake with abrupt retouch around 75% of its circumference. This form of scraper is diagnostic to the Early to Mid Neolithic period.

Photos: Janet Eastment

Spanhill Copse geophysical survey

The lithic assemblage collected during the fieldwalking survey provides evidence for an Early Neolithic presence at the site, which is highly significant when considered in conjunction with the aerial photography. Because of this a decision was made that the site warranted a geophysical survey to see if any evidence of archaeological features, corresponding with the cropmarks and the fieldwalking finds, could be ascertained. It was hoped that the geophysics would also pick up the ground disturbance from Oxford Archaeological Unit's 1974 trial trench, to see where this may have been sited in relation to any hidden features the geophysics may reveal.

In late November 2015 an initial magnetometry survey was carried out by five SOAG members, led by Mike Green. The survey was located where the cropmarks had been recorded and where the highest density of lithics had been found. 10 x 20m² grids were sampled at 1m, on 1m transverse, to cover the target features.

The results from this sample survey were very encouraging and highlighted the need for a more extensive survey of the field, however, there was only a short time-frame left to do this before it was cultivated. Because of the significance of the site it was decided to contact Roger Ainslie (Abingdon Archaeological Geophysics), who has assisted in various SOAG projects, to ask for help with this survey.

In January 2016 Roger Ainslie conducted a more extensive survey of the field covering 37 x 30m² grids. The technical details are as follows:

Type of survey:	Magnetometer
Area surveyed:	1.54 hectares.
Traverse separation:	1 metre
Reading/sample interval:	8 per metre.
Type, make and model of instrumentation:	Bartington Grad 601/2 fluxgate gradiometer.

The resulting image from this magnetometry survey can be seen below (Fig. 10).

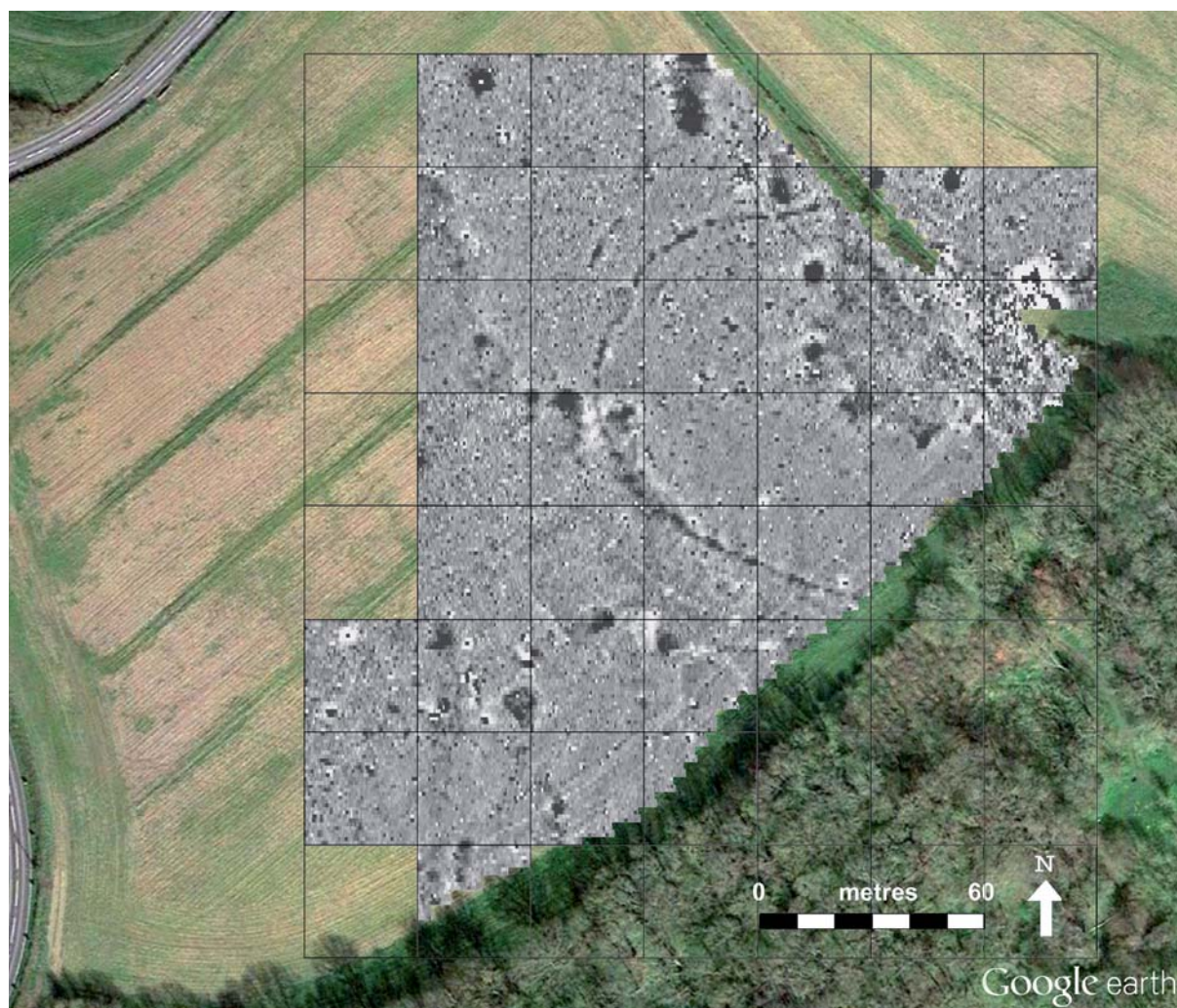


Fig. 10. Result of the Bartington Grad 601/2 fluxgate gradiometer survey at Eye and Dunsden shown laid over a Google Earth photo of the site.
Image supplied by Roger Ainslie

Result of Magnetometer Survey

The following comments on the survey results are provided by Roger Ainslie along with the corresponding geophysics plot below and Fig. 10.

1. *Outer section of probable ditch and main ditch-like high anomalies. It could be that it is a palisade or that the magnetically responsive deposits in it are uneven.*
2. *Large ferrous anomaly and smaller ones consistent with bricks or similar being used to prevent vehicles being bogged down at the field entrance and iron near the hedge.*
3. *Slight line of high readings. This could be an inner ditch or the edge of a bank.*
4. *Pit-like high anomalies. These could be natural as they are both inside and outside the main ditch, but they could be archaeological. Some also appear on the Google air photo. They could be solution hollows, tree throw holes, pits, large post holes, dene holes etc.*
5. *Slight high anomaly in what could be a circular ditch.*
6. *Curving lines of low magnetic response which could relate to the outer section of ditch – 1 above.*
7. *More pit-like anomalies similar to 4 above.*

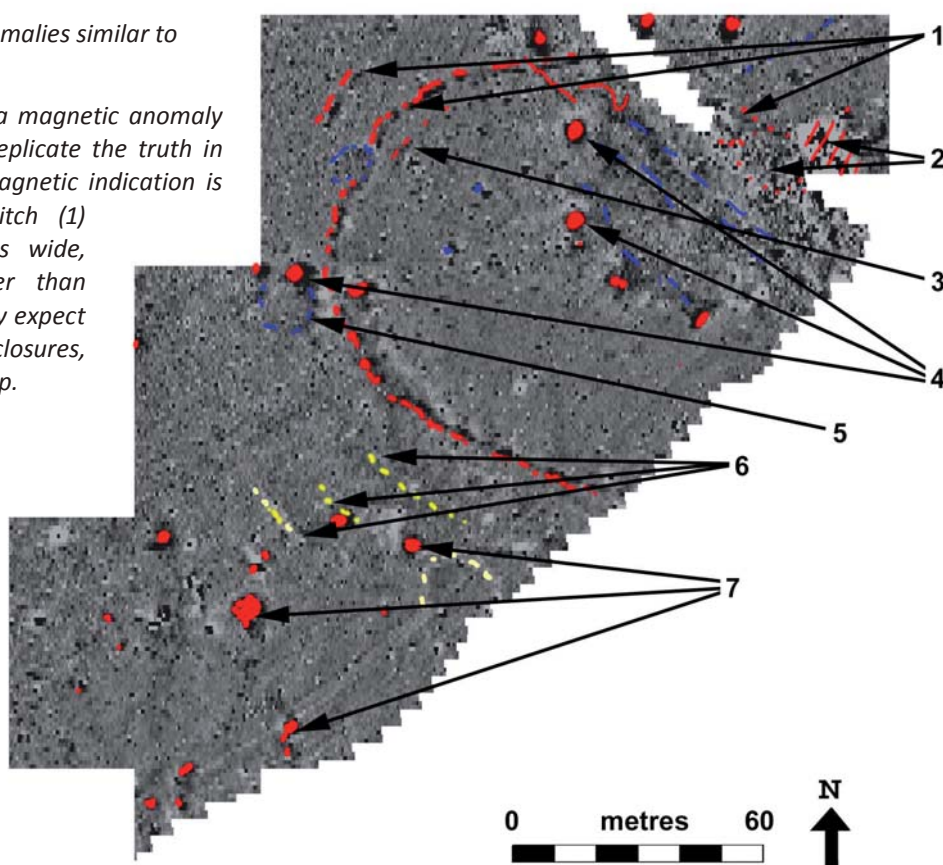
Whilst the size of a magnetic anomaly does not exactly replicate the truth in the ground, the magnetic indication is that the main ditch (1) is some 2 metres wide, which is narrower than one would normally expect for causewayed enclosures, and 1.5 metres deep.

The extent of the magnetic anomaly can be larger than the feature if it is all filled with magnetically responsive material, or smaller if there is only a narrow band of responsive deposit at the bottom of the ditch.

One of the outer, apparently concentric, curves of low readings (6) aligns with the putative outer ditch, which is also visible on air photos. It may be that some parts of ditches had burnt material in them and others did not.

This site has quite a lot of remains which could be detected magnetically. In addition to the main enclosure anomaly, the possible outer rings are of interest as it is rare for these to be detected and their existence should be tested.

The small areas of high readings, which are both inside and outside the enclosure, also warrant further investigation. These could be pits or dene holes. Geophysics alone is unable to give a date or purpose to these and that will have to be done by other means.



Note: Additional images of the geophysics results and a LiDAR image of the area are published in an appendix to this article in the electronic edition of *SOAG Bulletin 72*, which can be downloaded from the SOAG website, www.soagarch.org.uk

Conclusion

When considering the facts presented in this report, comprising of the cropmarks in the aerial photograph, the lithics from the fieldwalking and the geophysical surveys, it could be considered that there is compelling evidence for a buried archaeological feature, possibly a Neolithic causewayed enclosure at the field beside Spanhill Copse. Whilst it is not possible to date the feature from the geophysics it is worth mentioning that there is no documentary evidence of any historical building or feature at this location. Based on the fieldwalking survey, which produced only lithic artefacts – no pottery nor any other ‘man-made’ artefacts were found on the field surface, the lithic evidence suggests the feature belongs to a period in prehistory when the site was being actively used.

With regard to the lack of evidence from the 1974 trench paced by the Oxford Archaeology Unit, looking at the position of the trench from the SOAG map (beside the field track) and the corresponding position on the geophysics (now beside a hedge dividing the two fields). It would seem that the 1974 trench was probably placed in a gap in the ditch, as the geophysics shows the ditch feature stopping around a metre before the trench position. The geophysics also shows that the ditch appears to continue on the other side, along the hedge line, before being lost due to the disturbed surface at the field entrance where the high magnetometry readings were recorded.

As mentioned previously, Oswald *et al.* (2001, 54) have published their doubts about the validity of the results of the Oxford Archaeology Unit’s trial trench, they consider that the photographic evidence showing the cropmarks is more compelling. However the record for ‘Eye and Dunsden causewayed enclosure’ on Historic England’s *PastScape* website (which is widely used by development planners for desktop assessments), states “*the validity of the site is low*” basing this opinion on the results of 1974 excavations. This demonstrates the vulnerability of prehistoric monuments that are not visible on the ground surface when it comes to development planning decisions.

Future work

Considering the evidence obtained from this fieldwork a recommendation would be for further archaeological investigations to be carried out at this site in the future. Initially a resistivity survey in conjunction with some test pits over key features revealed in the geophysics, namely the ditch, and to investigate one or two of the pit-like anomalies. The aims would be to establish the size and depth of the ditch, and the position of any causeway gaps present, as well as to obtain some dateable evidence.

Acknowledgements

A special thank you to Roger and Sally Ainslie for their time spent producing the detailed magnetometry survey at Eye and Dunsden.

Also to Simon Beddows, Farm Manager Coppid Farming Enterprises for his enthusiastic support and allowing access to the fields.

Thanks to the SOAG members who have contributed their time with the fieldwalking, often at very short notice, and the initial geophysical survey.

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SOAG Bulletin digital archive: now online and searchable

Mike Green

The history of *SOAG Bulletin*

SOAG Bulletin has been SOAG's journal-of-record since the founding of the society in 1969. Currently it is published annually and is the formal record of all SOAG activities over the previous 12-18 months, and is also the first destination for detailed reports on all SOAG fieldwork. *SOAG Bulletin* is a membership benefit. It is therefore initially distributed in printed form to all current SOAG members, and then to a range of libraries and museums, including, for example, the British Library. From the year 2000 all editions have been created digitally, which has enabled these versions also to be published on the SOAG website. However, earlier versions existed on paper only and consequently back issues have only been available via special request to whomever was the current custodian of the SOAG's archives.

Digitisation of the *SOAG Bulletin* paper archive

The archive of the paper-only editions of *SOAG Bulletin* was digitised in 2017. These digitised versions are PDF documents which can be viewed in image form, i.e. a facsimile of how they appear on paper, but are also text searchable. The digital archive of the complete set of *SOAG Bulletins* is now available on the SOAG website: soagarch.org.uk. From the home page select 'Publications', then '*SOAG Bulletin*', or go directly there at soagarch.org.uk/bulletins.html.

They are listed in chronological order, and individual editions can either be viewed online or be downloaded for viewing on a local computer.

Online search across the digital archive

Valuable though it is to have the whole archive online, it is much more useful for researchers to be able to search the whole set for a target term. Using web search engines such as Google is often not very productive when it comes to searching local document sets: the researcher needs to be much too precise to obtain useful search results. The latest development is that the *SOAG Bulletin* archive can now be searched from within the SOAG website. This enables researchers to find all instances in the archive of the chosen search term using less



Fig. 1: Samples from the *SOAG Bulletin* archive

precise search terms and without the results being cluttered with spurious hits from elsewhere on the web. This capability is available through a search window at the head of the listing on the *SOAG Bulletins* web page (see illustration below). This feature has been implemented technically using Google's Custom Search mechanism, which restricts the search to those parts of a website specified by the site's webmaster, in this case the web folder where all the *SOAG Bulletins* are held. (Because the Google's Custom Search tool is free to implement the local search results are usually prefaced by a few sponsored websites in the same manner as the more familiar global Google Search does).

Search examples

This local search capability was launched on the SOAG website in late 2017 and has already proved its value within the society. The following are two recent examples of its value within SOAG.

Example 1: Searching for a specific SOAG field project

One of SOAG's current field projects, High Wood, commenced in 2014. There has always been a suspicion that SOAG might have visited the site much earlier, but the details were obscure. Using the new Custom Search facility yielded (as would be expected) hits for recent editions of *SOAG Bulletin*, but in addition there was a hit for Edition 19 from 1972. Page 2 of that document revealed that a SOAG member did indeed examine the site,

in response to a contemporary proposal to build a new road linking Henley to Caversham which would have cut through it. (The road was never built.)

This search and the results are illustrated below, which serves to demonstrate how the feature operates. The search begins on the *SOAG Bulletin archive* page on the SOAG website.

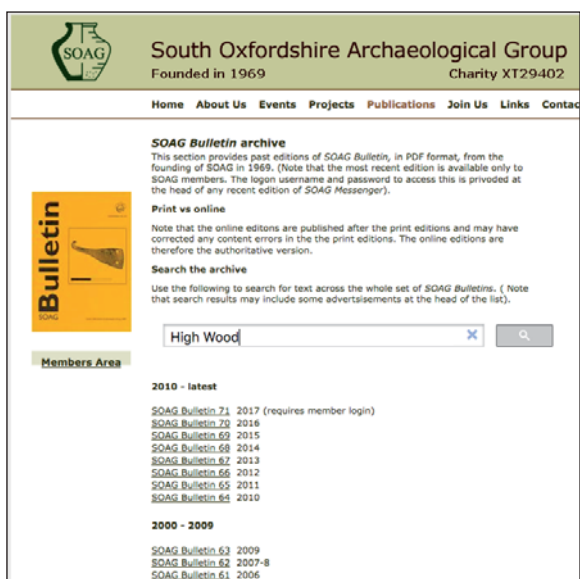


Fig. 2: Searching the archive for the term 'High Wood'

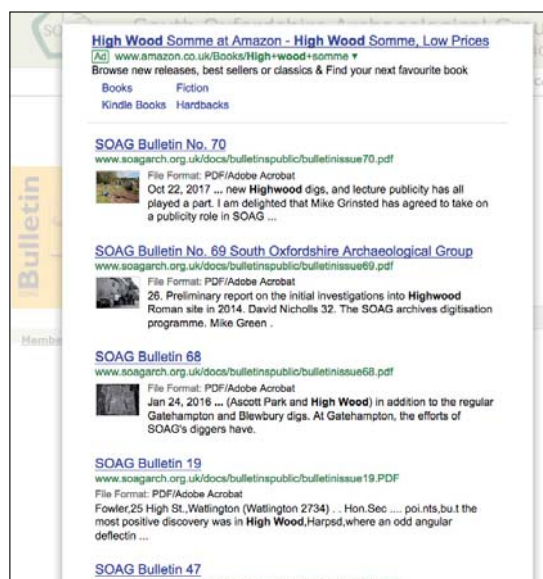


Fig. 3: Search results finding Edition 19 from 1972

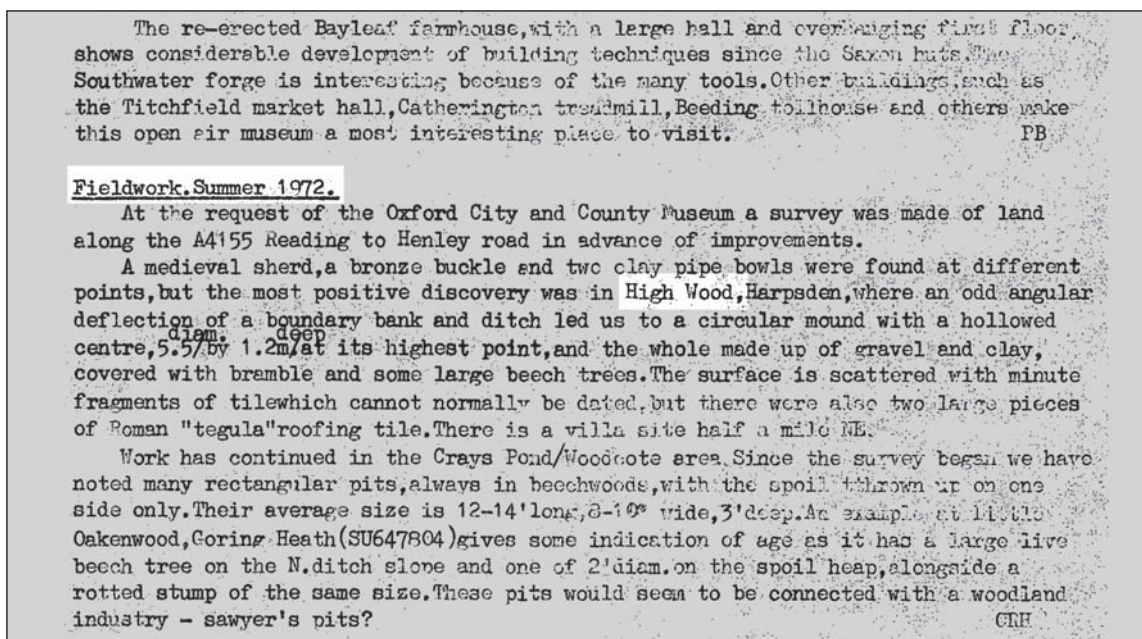


Fig. 4: SOAG Bulletin 19, page 2, which documents SOAG activity at High Wood in 1972

Example 2: Researching an obituary

Long standing SOAG member John Westwood died in early 2018. Searching the archives – including the digital archive for *SOAG Messenger*, (about which see below) – enabled a more comprehensive tribute to John to be written. (*This tribute is published elsewhere in this edition.*)

We expect this search capability will also be of value to non-SOAG researchers. Our society's work over 50 years is an important part of all the archaeology and historical research that has been conducted in South Oxfordshire. By making our records publicly available in this manner we are discharging a duty to make our work more accessible to the community at large. We are also reducing the potential workload on the custodians of SOAG's paper archives.

Other archive digitisation activities

Another major component of SOAG's archives is the complete set of our newsletter, *SOAG Messenger* – 370 editions stretching back to 1981. These have also been digitised and are now available on the SOAG website (under the Publications tab), but in this case behind a membership login and therefore available to members only. The reason for this privacy is because our newsletter frequently contains material that was supplied by members on the implicit understanding that the information was being distributed to SOAG members only: consequently, they often contain personal contact details e.g. phone numbers and email addresses, which the society has no consent to put into the public domain. It is also likely that some content may be in breach of other aspects of modern data protection. (This contrasts with *SOAG Bulletin* where it has always been known by contributors that the document will be public, as the document was for sale and was logged with public museums and libraries). As yet there is also no facility to search the entire archive of *SOAG Messengers* in the same manner as *SOAG Bulletins*.

This is due to technical limitations on how Google Custom Search works, but it is hoped to find another means of providing this capability.

The final two areas in which digitisation is planned but not yet completed are:

Miscellaneous project papers.

These are from various SOAG projects that were never published. The goal is to digitise these prior to finding appropriate homes for both the paper and digital versions.

Cynthia Graham Kerr's notebooks.

These comprise five foolscap-size notebooks which are essentially Cyn's diary of all SOAG activities from 1969 to about 2003.

Funding

Funds for digitisation come from the Cynthia Graham Kerr Bequest. £1000 has been reserved for the project, a figure that is visible on SOAG's balance sheet, which is published to members each year at the SOAG AGM. It is likely that the total expenses for the activities described in this article will come in well under this reserved figure.

Appendix: Eye & Dunsden Causewayed Enclosure Geophysics

Lidar relief view of 1km national grid square

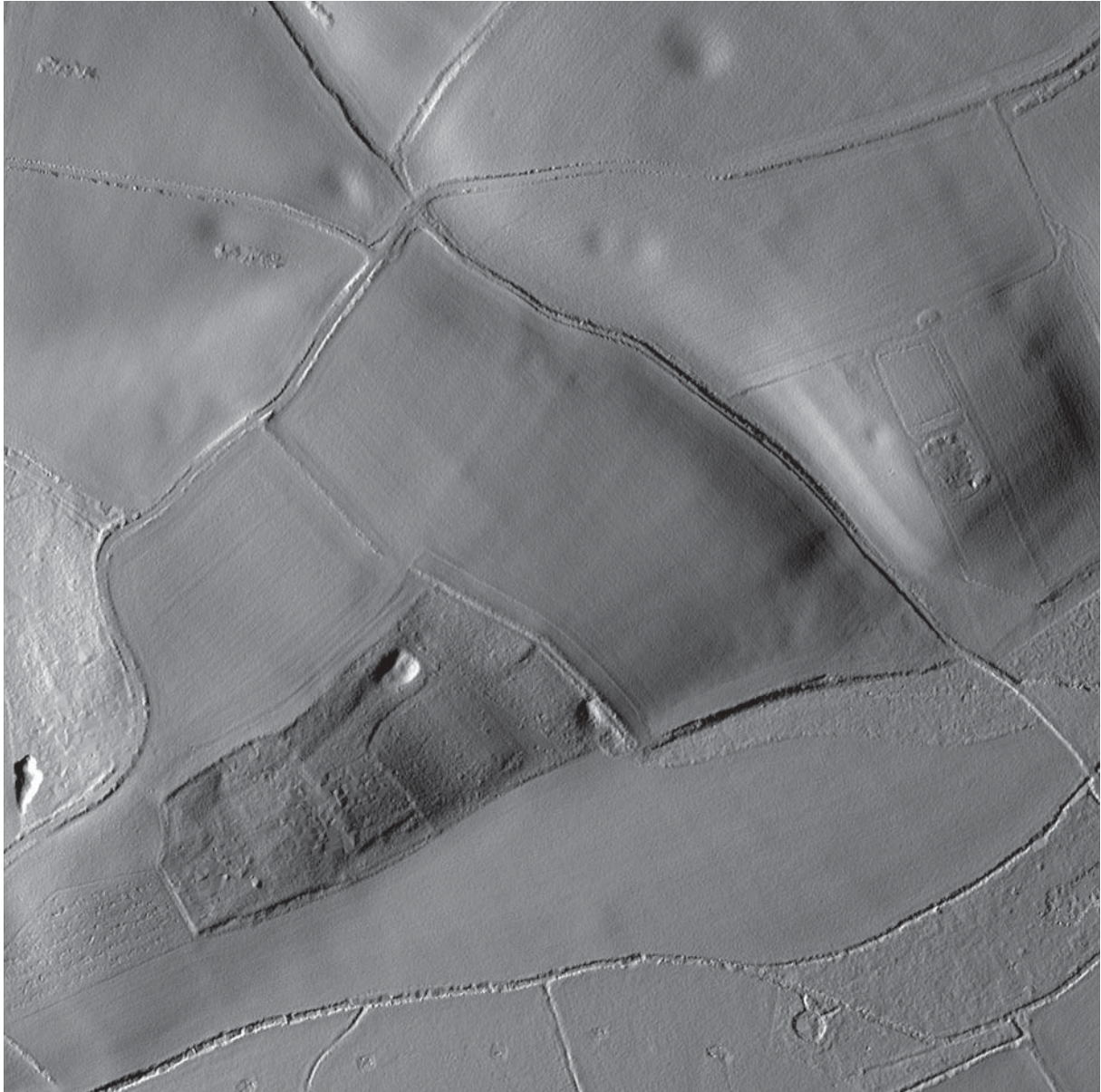


Image of the site from Google Earth 2004



Aerial image, Google Earth.

Location and grid order

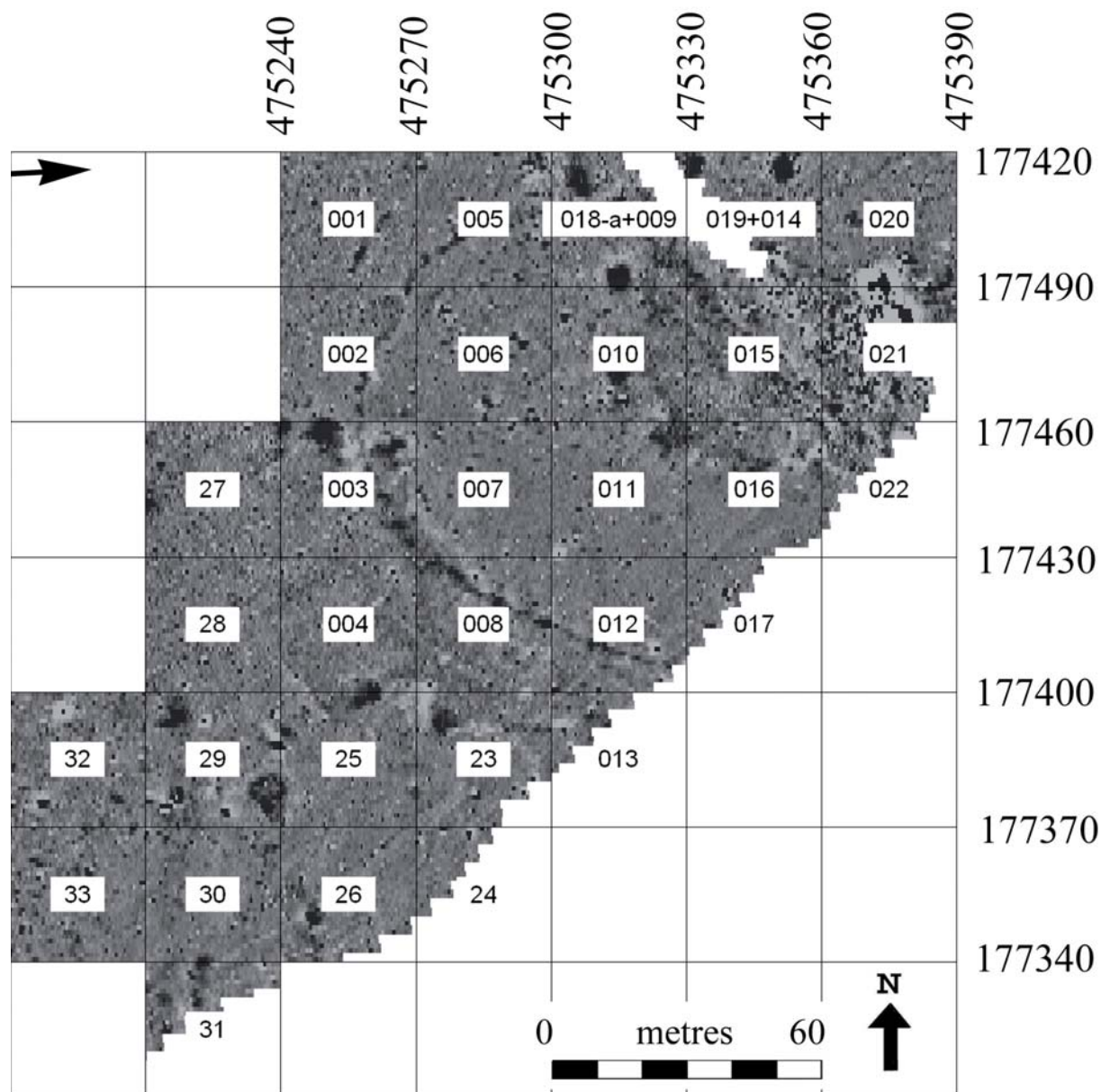


Image supplied by Roger Ainslie (Abingdon Archaeological Geophysics)

Greyscale with scale

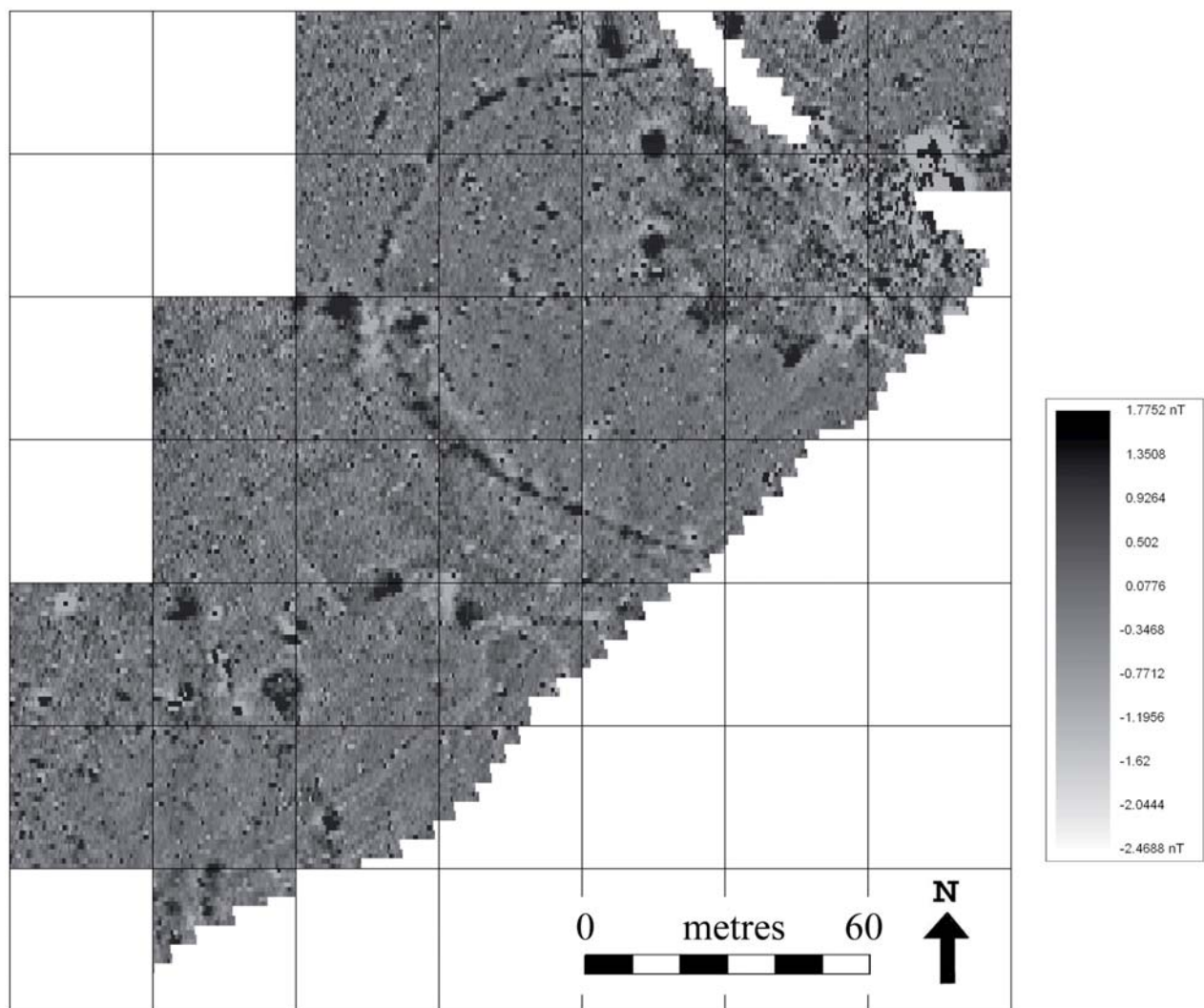


Image supplied by Roger Ainslie (Abingdon Archaeological Geophysics)

Trace plot clipped to $\pm 100\text{nT}$

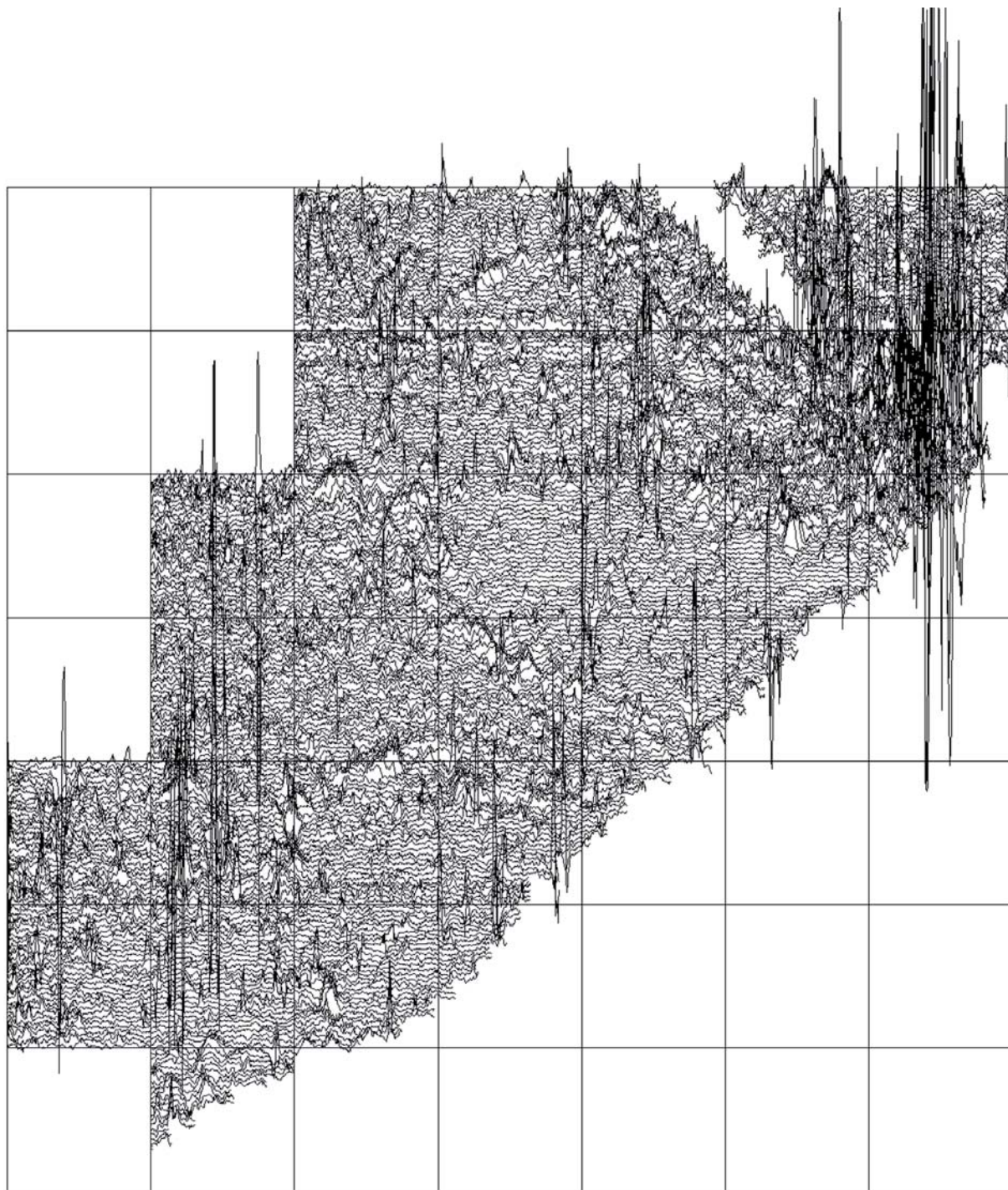


Image supplied by Roger Ainslie (Abingdon Archaeological Geophysics)

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 120 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.

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