



CAMBRIDGE ARCHAEOLOGY FIELD GROUP

Newsletter Number 159

July 2010

President	Dr John Alexander	Vice-President	Dr Paul Spoerry
Chairman	Barrie Fuller		
Secretary	Susan May, 94 High Street, Great Shelford, Cambridge, CB22 5EH, tel 01223 843121; email: cafg.may@ntlworld.com		
Treasurer	Graham Vincent		

VISITS AND LECTURES

- 21 July We will join the Oxford Archaeology East guided walk around the archaeology of Shire Hall, including Cambridge Castle. Meet in front of the castle mound at 7 pm. There will be **no** meeting at Bar Hill
- 11 August We will join the Oxford Archaeology East guided walk around the deserted medieval village of Clopton (near Croydon). Limited parking. Please ring 01223 - 850500 individually to confirm attendance. There will be **no** meeting at Bar Hill.
- 8 September Visit to Cambridge University archaeology storage facility at West Cambridge (the Short's site) with Anne Taylor. There will be **no** meeting at Bar Hill

The lecture programme will start again on Wednesday, 6th October.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Subscriptions are now due at an increased level this year from 1st April 2010 at:
£8 for individual membership
£11 family membership

If you need to post subscriptions, please send them to the treasurer, address above.

You should be aware that you are only covered by the Group's insurance if you are a paid-up member.

BAR HILL PROCESSING EVENINGS

Processing continues at the Oxford Archaeology East HQ at 15 Trafalgar Way, Bar Hill on Wednesdays when there is no lecture. We meet from about 7.15 pm.

For those who have not yet found us: approach Bar Hill; at the roundabout where Tesco is on the left, go straight on; take the first right (Trafalgar Way) and Unit 15 is on the corner of the second left turn, with parking in front. Be careful of the large lorries in this area. A plan can be provided.

FIELDWORK

Further fieldwalking on the Childerley estate did not, unfortunately, produce much in the way of evidence of former use and we were eventually beaten by the height of the crop. However, over the last few Sundays various members have been surveying the ground surface of the meadow at Wimpole where we are due to excavate for the Festival of British Archaeology.

Excavations at Wimpole will take place from Saturday 24th July to Sunday 1st August inclusive, near the Home Farm buildings, with turf and topsoil removal on the 18th July. This year we are investigating a possible brick building disturbed by a recent telephone cable trench. Early maps, site survey, parch marks and geophysical surveys by Rheeseearch all indicate a possible rectangular building. We will therefore be trying to establish its structural nature, its plan and its use, whilst also testing for any earlier building or activity. In contrast with the former garden walls investigated in the Park, this site is expected to require careful investigation of horizontal layers.

The site lies adjacent to the road which runs past the main entrance to the Hall, and next to Home Farm buildings. Excavators may park off the track to Cobbs Wood Farm. If you are just visiting, you can park in the main Wimpole Hall visitors' (paying) car park and walk back across the park.

The National Trust's main events for the Festival of British Archaeology will be on the weekend of the 31st July/1st August, when the public will be encouraged to visit the excavation.

If you would like to take part in the excavation and have not already received the detailed project, please call Mike Coles on 01223 87103 or Susan May on 01223 843121.

COMMITTEE MEETING

A committee meeting was held on the 23rd June, at which time membership stood at 6 family and 27 individual, 8 of which were free for the current year (applicants for the bursary competition). We reviewed the requirements for the competition and decided to increase the minimum age to 17; to move the deadline for next year to the end of March to take account of the submission date for A2 projects, with presentations in June; to include a box for confirming consent from the referee; to set out the assessment criteria more clearly; and to make other minor clarifying changes to wording.

Colin Coates has taken over the administration of the website started by Bill Hughes: <http://www.cambridge-archaeology.org.uk/>, which is now more particularly about the Group. The cost of maintenance was discussed, together with the most cost-effective ways of uploading items, and it was agreed that Colin's reasonable expenses should be reimbursed. However, the domain name will expire next year and we were aware that the website may need to be re-considered: a number of possible hosts were mentioned, for investigation. In the meantime, however, Emma Smith is creating a page for the Group on Facebook.

An ongoing area of concern was accessing maps onto which to plot distributions of finds, and we agreed to clarify with the Ordnance Survey the precise nature of the copyright rules. Records in old files were gradually being standardised. For the forthcoming excavations at Wimpole, Mike Coles warned that the archaeology would be different from that in the former gardens, and emphasised the need to be aware of horizontal layers and of the possibility of metal finds.

Colin Coates has done some excellent work on translating hand drawings into digital images. Emma Smith has volunteered to learn this skill, but other members are invited to learn.

We agreed not to meet at Bar Hill on the 21st July and 11th August, but to join the guided walks on those evenings – see "Visits and Lectures" above. The lecture programme for the autumn is starting to come together.

An invitation had been received to submit an entry into a new publication for local history groups called "The Preview", organised by the Cambridgeshire Association for Local History. This appeared to be very similar to "The Conduit", published by the Cambridge Antiquarian Society, and we agreed to maintain the Group's entry in "The Conduit".

The next committee meeting will be held on Wednesday, 1st September at Bar Hill, which all members are welcome to attend.

USE YOUR COMPUTER SKILLS

Further volunteers are invited to learn how to translate hand-drawn drawings into digital images which can then be used in reports. If you are interested, please contact Colin Coates by email: c-coates@virgin.net or phone: 01733 243715

HERITAGE AND RESCUE ARCHAEOLOGY: AN UNAUTHORISED VIEW

After the AGM on the 14th April, our president, Dr John Alexander, reported that he had been at a conference on archaeology in Africa, where the problems causing concern were very similar to those in Europe and America 30 years ago.

He deeply regretted that the term “heritage” has crept into discussions on history and archaeology during the last few years. Heritage is much bigger - it is whatever we accept from the past, including music, folklore and children’s games, and is difficult to link with archaeology. It has spread interest in the past but in part has endangered it. It is worth looking at the whole issue of heritage, including the history of the species, for which the ally and possible master is genetics. Many may get a shock when they discover their origins. Religion is also part of heritage, and John cited an instance in Ghana where local people objected to the desecration of shrines even though the purpose was to obtain building materials to meet rising housing demand. Archaeology plays an important role in providing the long view, whereas historians are dealing with selected heritage. As an example, in Britain we recognise that the Roman invasions do not make us hate Italians. Archaeology’s great value is in the acceptance of the whole of the past and being a science of record.

Most new scientific techniques have been developed in Europe and North America, often imported from other disciplines, which allows archaeology insights into thoughts and beliefs, though there are dangers. There had been an interest in the past from the 1600’s by antiquarians and that pattern still existed in 1930’s. However, there was a big extension of interest after 1918 because of the use of aircraft to spot sites, particularly in Britain, France, Germany and Russia, and local societies began to realise that there were more sites around. In this area, Cyril Fox was the pioneer of the fieldwork which has led to landscape archaeology. Interest increased even more after the Second World War as major steps were made in investigating the meanings of marks in aerial photographs.

Opportunities to investigate the past were lost in the 18th and 19th centuries with the development of canals and railways – artefacts found would often be sold to antiquaries. The equivalent today is pipelines and roads. In the late 40’s/50’s/60’s restoration of towns and countryside was underway. New machinery could remove large amounts of land quickly and large-scale works were undertaken without archaeological investigation since archaeology was not part of development planning or timescales. Today’s inclusion makes a difference. Records of odd finds appeared in newspapers and on radio and from the 1950’s, television aroused much public interest. At this time, John was at the Institute of Archaeology in London and started the first diploma courses. Other people were also starting to teach extra-mural courses at universities and from 1953 there was a rush in demand for classes and lecturers from the field to give talks. Interest grew in local societies, though these were mainly lecturing societies.

Lecturers such as Peter Fowler, Philip Barker, Paul Rahtz and John were worried about the state of destruction and formed the “Barford Conference” (1970 see link below) to get the public concerned. Prominent people were contacted and a national meeting was held which went well. Several ideas came out of it in 1972: Barry Cunliffe’s idea of the creation of County archaeologists to do emergency fieldwork, and Martin Biddle’s about “the developer pays”. Emergency archaeology was new in Britain, unlike in North America. Slowly the idea of “the developer pays” came in and surprisingly, developers accepted archaeology as part of the normal costs, unlike in North America or Europe, where most archaeology is state funded.

In 1970 John was involved in a book on “Rescue Archaeology” (published by Penguin), in which he wrote a chapter on world themes. The problems then in Europe are similar to those in Africa today, although he is mildly optimistic about China, where institutes are being set up. After the London meeting “Rescue” was formed, and the Council for British Archaeology (see link below) became important. Extramural groups were flourishing and new societies starting up, which made all the difference in excavations where previously only professional “navvies” were available as workmen. The result was that over the last 20 years a body of skilled emergency archaeologists became present in all archaeology units in Britain, as in other countries.

John suggests there should be a sub-discipline of “Rescue Archaeology”, perhaps at MPhil level, and outlined several requirements beyond those needed for research archaeology:

1. Anyone interested should be trained in all periods in a practical way.
2. They should have a practical approach, with a sense of urgency and able to make quick decisions.
3. They should understand contractors, builders and works timetables, finding compromises where necessary.
4. They should be able to work without skilled assistance, knowing how to improvise, decide what to dig and, on multi-level sites, what levels are likely to be important.
5. They should be able to address publication, which is more difficult now with the number of specialisms required for reports on finds. Raising finance is an essential skill.

For the future, ethnographical help will be mostly from museum collections as anthropology concentrates on how societies adapt rather than the old study of societies before “Western” influence. In Africa, local groups are studying ethnography, but have no government funding. Here, oral traditions are our concern. In Britain, unlike a lot of the continent, we are fortunate not to have suffered much in the way of wars or invasion: for example 70% of current Cambridgeshire villages were named in the Domesday Book.

Paul Spoerry commented on the position of archaeology in Africa being like that of its wildlife, a focus of “Heritage” tourism; and John suggested that volunteers, in particular rescue archaeologists, could go, with support from governments, the World Bank etc.

Barford Conference: <http://www.biab.ac.uk/online/results1.asp?ItemID=62811>

CBA history: <http://www.britarch.ac.uk/cba/history>

SUTTON HOO

On the 5th May, Angus Wainwright, National Trust regional archaeologist, talked to us about the Surtton Hoo Anglo-Saxon burials, by popular request.

The story of the excavations began in 1937 when Mrs Pretty, interested in antiquarian matters, noted mounds in the grounds of her property near Woodbridge. She contacted Ipswich museum, who recommended a local man, Basil Brown, a rare professional archaeologist, to look at them. Brown had very little funding for the work and Mrs Pretty provided the services of two labourers from among her staff. As Brown began excavating what is now known as mound 2, he uncovered the remains of ship rivets, and compared it with the remains of a ship excavated at Snape in the 19th century, this being the second example in England. The burial had been robbed. Cremations in other mounds had also been robbed and no-one in the archaeological world was very interested.

Brown was invited back in 1939 to work on an adjacent mound, mound 1. Following his usual technique, he dug in from the east following the ground, finding a ship’s rivet in almost the first spadeful. When he came across a rivet, he would clean very carefully around it. He uncovered the outline of a clinker built boat, 27m long, whose rows of rivets and timbers showed as stains in the sand. The ship is the biggest and most complete Anglo-Saxon vessel to be found. It was expected that the burial had been robbed, like many others. During the 1600’s a campaign of robbing had taken place and in the 18th/19th centuries, shafts had been sunk into many burials. As it turned out, the mound that Brown was now excavating had an apparently intact burial.

Ipswich museum began making discreet enquiries for advice and help and Mrs Pretty was persuaded to pass responsibility to a new breed of more scientific archaeologists, and Charles Phillips from Cambridge University investigated the burial chamber. Brown, although still involved in the excavations, was now sidelined. By August 1939, war was imminent and pressure was mounting to finish, to the detriment of recording. Funding was only £200, so there was no cover over the dig, equipment was borrowed, finds were stored in vegetable baskets wrapped in moss and under Mrs Pretty's bed. Piggott took the great buckle to London in his pocket.

The area's yellow sand is very acidic. Iron rusts and organics disappear, but gold remains in the same condition as when first buried. One of the burial items was a pattern welded sword: 90% of male burials from this period contain swords. The most famous find was the helmet of bronze on iron, found in pieces and one of only 4 of its type known, although the Staffordshire Hoard contains at least one, of gold. This is otherwise the finest in northern Europe, similar in design to one from Upsala. Although it might have given the wearer some protection, it was more a parade helmet. The nose piece is a flying dragon and the eyebrows have boar's head finials. There are plates, 2 showing people dancing with swords, a constant in all helmets of the period. The animal decoration appeared across western Europe and a pre-literate society may have read the symbolism.

Other finds included a shield and spears, all symbols of a warrior, and a collection of items associated with feasting. There were two large drinking horns of some 2ltr capacity, possibly made from massive aurochs horns. They would have been for communal drinking, being passed between warriors. As extolled in Beowulf, hospitality was part of being a leader.

A cauldron, which would have hung from a ceiling beam in a great hall by a chain of complex blacksmithing, 3.5m long, is the best example in Britain and possibly Europe. Owning such objects would have conferred great status and signified a great leader. A bucket for beer was found, along with drinking vessels and a lyre for accompanying the declamation of poems.

The "jewellery" was all functional, including the great solid gold buckle. It had an ingenious mechanism for fastening onto different belts. It was engraved with 22 animals including snakes, eagles or hawks' heads, a frog biting its own leg and interlaced patterns, not symmetrical. These patterns have usually been thought of as Celtic, because of manuscripts of 100 years later in Northern Britain. The Anglo Saxons were not thought to be capable of such things. However, Celtic designs are all spirals, interlace patterns are Germanic.

A bag lid was decorated with blue glass and garnets set in cloisonné work. The stones were precisely cut, being held in place by friction or glue. Gold foil was set behind the garnets, which must have glistened in the firelight. It was decorated with eagles swooping on ducks. There was also a shoulder clasp, designed to be sewn onto garments, held together by a removable pin. It is unique in the north, showing knowledge of styles of dress in the classical world. The design was purely Germanic, with an interlaced, geometric pattern.

The collection of silver from the burial is the largest found north of the Alps and comprises both antiques and new items, some from the Eastern Mediterranean. These do appear in ones or twos in other northern European graves, but the Sutton Hoo collection is the largest.

The assumption is that it was a pagan period grave, but this need not be the case. No personal objects were found with the body. Dating of the grave is not precise and revolves around the coins – these are Frankish with dates between 600 and 630. Whoever was buried, commanded immense riches and power. One item, considered to be a sceptre, was a very large hone-stone, too big for the normal practical use of putting a final edge on a blade. It was carved with human faces and had a fitting with a bronze hanging ring, surmounted by a stag.

If it was a burial of a king of East Anglia, the usual assumption, could it have been Raedwald, the most dominant king at the time, dying around 625? No other pagan Anglo-Saxon royal burial has ever been found to compare against. Was it a Christian burial? Earlier, Kent had been the most

dominant kingdom and Raedwald went there for baptism. It has been questioned whether the so-called 'Saulos-Paulos' spoons were baptismal spoons, however other possible Christian objects were found in the grave. Raedwald established a temple with an altar for Christ and one for the old gods, keeping his options open.

The boat itself, at 100ft long, suggests power and prestige. At this time travel was often easier by water than overland, and there are other boat burials in east Anglia and Scandinavia, all sleek with a high prow and stern, a form still seen, enabling the boat to be beached. Did it have a sail?

More excavations were carried out in the 1960's, when Martin Carver worked on mound 1. A phosphate concentration was found where the body should have been, but it is still possible that there was no body. An undisturbed burial was found nearby, with a man in one grave and a horse adjacent, continental style. The horse had a typical East Anglian bridle with fittings. In the later Christian period, Sutton Hoo became a place of execution.

When the visitor centre was built, another Anglo-Saxon cemetery was discovered, as well as a ring ditch with burials, including cremations, in a continental style, of which this is the only British example.

The Sutton Hoo landscape would be recognisable to Anglo-Saxons if they came back today, with its various "hoos" or projections/promontories overlooking the river Deben. Inhumation burials occur right out to edge of the promontory. Anglo-Saxons liked to use old burial sites, but royalty moved their burials along to the next piece of unused land. No Bronze Age burials were found in the royal burial ground, but there was a Bronze Age mound in the cremation burial ground. In Beowulf, the hero was buried on a hill against the skyline, but the Sutton Hoo mounds are not visible from the river Deben.

The Scandinavian royal mounds at Upsala are boat burials, near a river, and the finds include helmets, decorated like the Sutton Hoo helmet. At Childerichs the Frankish kings were buried with immense treasure; the 'Staffordshire Hoard' is small in comparison and Sutton Hoo tiny.

Market research among visitors shows many know about the Romans, but do not know much about the Anglo-Saxons. It was a time when names and kingdoms became established and the very foundations of the British way of life were laid down. Little remains of the Celts in East Anglia. The National Trust seeks to promote the Anglo-Saxons, through high status Sutton Hoo and West Stow which gives a glimpse into the lives of everyday folk.

Most of the Sutton Hoo objects are housed in the British Museum now, with reconstructions at Sutton Hoo. The reconstruction of the burial chamber was an exercise in experimental archaeology, with planks split and trimmed by axe, giving a more authentic finish. Textiles were reconstructed and would have been a big aspect of the burial. Weaving at the time was of the highest quality. An attempt to recreate a hanging fabric took the weavers 5hrs to weave 5ins. A loop pile cloak, typical of the period, would have been warm and waterproof. Master craftsman Hector Cole attempted to create a sword like that found in mound 1, but could not achieve the same quality. The reconstruction artist used US Civil War generals for character inspiration, with their craggy, outdoor features.

The Sutton Hoo ship burial was uncovered 70 years ago this month. Arts Editor Andrew Clarke spoke to National Trust archaeologist Angus Wainwright about the story surrounding one of Britain's greatest historic treasures.

<http://tinyurl.com/ooeyql>

<http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/main/w-vh/w-visits/w-findaplace/w-suttonhoo/w-suttonhoo-archaeology.htm>

Sutton Hoo Society: <http://www.suttonhoo.org/index.asp>

CAMBRIDGE ANTIQUARIAN SOCIETY

The CAS has an excursion programme this summer. Bookings (with cheques) should be sent to: Mr A Kirby, 3 Hills View, Great Shelford, CB22 5AY, not later than one week before the excursion. The programme continues with:

- 15 September The medieval riverside at Ely. Meet at 14.00 at Ely station entrance. £7.00 with tea at The Maltings, £3.00 without
- 6 October Moggerhanger Park, Bedfordshire, building designed by Sir John Soane, grounds laid out by Humphrey Repton. 13.00 Trumpington P&R, return by 18.00. £19.00

LOCAL EVENTS

- 17 July Saxon Special day at the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology. Family-based activities. 10.30am-4pm
- 17&18 July Peterborough brought to life at Peterborough Museum, Priestgate. Sat 10am - 5pm, Sun 12-4pm
- 24 July Living history at The Old Gaol, Ely, Ely Museum. 11am -1pm, 1.30-3.30pm
- 24&25 July Flag Fen archaeology weekend, Flag Fen Archaeology Park, The Droveaway, Northey Road, Peterborough
- 4 August Guided walk around Whittlesford Church (CB22 4NG). Meet at the church 7pm
- 18 August Guided walk around the earthwork remains of the Roman town of Durobrivae, meeting at 7pm. Places are limited – to see if any remain phone 01223-850500
- 4 September St Neots History Day at the Priory Centre, 10am – 4pm. Free
- 11 September Finds identification day at Ely Museum. 10.30 am – 1 pm. Contact Museum for cost.
- 25 September Meet Cambridgeshire Archaeology Historic Environment Team at the Great Gransden Show. 9.30am – 5pm
- 2 October Guided tour of the Cambridgeshire Archaeology finds store at Landbeach (CB25 9FT). 10am – 1 pm. Phone 01223-728564 to confirm attendance.

CONFERENCES/COURSES

- 3-9 September *The theory and practice of archaeological excavation*. Cambridge University ICE
- 18-19 September Council for Independent Archaeology conference focusing mainly on the work of the Waltham Abbey Historical Society, concluding with a guided tour round the Abbey. Waltham Abbey. www.independents.org.uk
- 24-26 September *Crisis, what Crisis? Collapses and Dark Ages in Comparative Perspective*. International conference hosted by the McDonald Institute. www.mcdonald.cam.ac.uk/events/conferences-workshops/CwC/
- 15-17 October CBA weekend in Cornwall

FIELDWORK OPPORTUNITIES

Details of digs can be found at: www.ilovethepast.com (through *Current Archaeology*) and www.britarch.ac.uk/briefing (CBA), also: archaeology.about.com

NEWS

Colchester Archaeological Trust has raised the £200,000 needed to buy the site of Britain's only know Roman chariot track, and hope to display the remains of all eight of the circus's starting gates. (*Current Archaeology*)

NEW PLANNING GUIDANCE FOR ARCHAEOLOGY

In March 2010 the last Government published Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment, which replaces PPGs 15 and 16. One of the main changes is that local

planning authorities should require developers to publish the findings of archaeological investigations where these are required in relation to a planning application, to deposit copies with the Heritage Environment Record and to deposit any archive with a local museum or other repository. In addition, historic assets not already designated but of demonstrably equivalent significance should be subject to the same policies as those designated. Also, local planning authorities are required to “maintain or have access to a Historic Environment Record” (formerly the Sites and Monuments Record) and ensure that information is publicly available.

The full statement and practice guide can be accessed via:

www.english-heritage.org.uk/professional/advice/government-planning-policy/pp5/

COMMUNITY ARCHAEOLOGY

The Council for British Archaeology has been gathering information on the current levels of voluntary and community involvement in archaeology and has identified at least 2,030 groups, representing possibly 215,000 individuals (compare some 7,730 paid archaeologists in 2008). Popular activities are, naturally, visits, talks, excavation and landscape survey; together with lobbying for issues concerning local heritage, buildings recording and conservation.

As a result, the CBA has formulated a number of recommendations, including further investigation into training for professional archaeologists and others in communication and management skills for working effectively with the voluntary sector. In addition, existing community and voluntary projects should receive support and encouragement to record their research and findings in specific online databases so that it can be accessed by others and feed into the local Historic Environment Record. Discussions are already underway with the Institute for Archaeologists, English Heritage and the Heritage Lottery Fund for accessible guidance in carrying out projects, and to help grant awarders to ensure that the archaeological requirements for community projects are clearer.

For the full report see: www.britarch.ac.uk/research/community and do also look at the CBA's Community Archaeology Forum: www.britarch.ac.uk/caf

WEB SITES

www.englishheritagearchives.org.uk Searchable catalogue of the National Monuments Record collection of photographs and documents. Some images can be viewed online and all can be ordered.

www.wikiarc.org Moderated and written by archaeologists
Try Google Maps Street View for views of sites.

EXHIBITIONS

Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts, Norwich ; prehistoric figurines from Albania, Macedonia, Romania and Japan. Until 29 August.

Ashmolean Museum, Oxford : The Lost World of Old Europe, The Danube Valley 5000-3500BC. Until 15 August

Sutton Hoo, Suffolk : Pictures of the Past – illustrations by Victor Ambrus. Until 31 October

LIBRARY ADDITIONS

British Archaeology July/August 2010
CBA Conservation, May 2010

Susan May, Secretary