



CAMBRIDGE ARCHAEOLOGY FIELD GROUP

Newsletter Number 164

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www.cafg.net

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SUBSCRIPTIONS

Subscriptions are now due and should be paid, if you have not already done so, to the treasurer.

The rates are: £8 for individual membership
 £11 family membership

LECTURES

The new season's lecture programme begins in October, at 7.30pm in the seminar room at the McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research, Downing Street, Cambridge. Parking is available on site from Tennis Court Road.

- 5 October Mark Hinman on *Skeleton Green revisited - Excavations at Braughing Roman Cemetery*
- 2 November Dr Richard Preece on *The discoveries at Happisburgh*.
This lecture will be held in the South lecture room in the Department of Archaeology
- 7 December David Jakes on *Mesolithic sites at Stonehenge*
- 11 January Mike Coles on recent fieldwork, including excavations at Wimpole

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 or evening walk. We meet from about 7.15 pm. A plan can be provided for those who have not been before.

We will **NOT** be at Bar Hill on Wednesday, 28th September because of A14 overnight closures.

Our meeting on the 21st December will be a social evening, when all are invited. Please bring a contribution to eat or drink and any interesting photographs or finds.

FIELDWORK

We will start fieldwalking in the next 2/3 weeks. Watch out for emails/phone calls.

CAMBRIDGESHIRE HISTORY FAIR

We had a stall at the 2nd Cambridgeshire History Fair at Cherry Hinton on Saturday, 17th September and had a considerable amount of interest. A photo of one of our members with the display is on the website.

WEBSITE

We hope you will use the website as a resource and give your feedback. There are updates and photographs from the Wimpole excavations.

All members can use the “blogs” page, for questions/answers or new information you want to share. You will need a log-in name and password – Peter Cornelissen will set these up for you on request, email: peter@cornelissen.org.uk. There is also a gallery where members can upload photographs. Again, contact Peter Cornelissen for the relevant link.

WIMPOLE EXCAVATIONS 2011

When, in 2009 a new telephone line was laid between Wimpole Hall and Home Farm, some unexpected brick structures were uncovered next to the eastern barn of the farm. Subsequent examination of old maps suggested the bricks might be the walls of the house shown on a map of 1828 by Robert Withers and on farm plans drawn by Sir John Soane – marked as “Mr Ratford’s house”. The earliest map of Wimpole, 1638, also shows a house in this position. The Group was asked to investigate.

In 2010 we excavated five trenches and found the red brick walls of the foundation of the 17th century house, a rectangular structure one room wide and perhaps five rooms long. At the southern end there appeared to be a massive brick gable end and to the west a cobble yard or floor. Underlying this house we found medieval pottery, 12th to 15th century in date, and the possible marks left from a timber frame building.

This year in July we opened trenches to further explore the structure and the area to the west of the house. We found a large extension west of the house, built perhaps in the early 18th century, with clunch walls (clunch is a hard form of local occurring chalk) and the rammed clunch base of what would have been a tiled floor. To the west of this extension is a cobbled floor extending beyond our trench. Below the remains of the 17th and 18th building we are beginning to find remains of the earlier medieval occupation on this site.

We uncovered the brick foundation of the south end of the house, confirming that it extended across the building and was probably a gable end. We attempted to find the north end of the house in the next field. What emerged was a brick built drain, probably of 18th century date. It would seem the house did not extend as far as this trench. But we may yet find evidence of this end of the house.

So, the 17th century house had a low brick wall with a timber frame on top. The brick gable end suggests it may have been two stories. The roof was probably thatched, as we have not found large numbers of roof tiles; and some of the walls were plastered and painted with blue colouring. The house was extended westwards at its south end, using clunch as the building material for the foundations, and perhaps a timber frame structure on top.

Before this house was built there was a timber framed house dating back to the 12th or 13th century.

We have found a large quantity of pottery, glass bottles and window glass. There are also buttons, pins and bone handles. A very fine silver Charles 11 three pence coin dated 1671 is a star find.

The dig was included in the BBC's "Hands on History" website, they provided publicity material, and Mike Coles gave an extended interview on our findings on Radio Cambridgeshire.

Very many thanks to all the excavators and other helpers, particularly those who were washing finds on site.

FINDS FROM WIMPOLE

We have nearly finished washing the finds from Wimpole, but there is still lots to do in cataloguing, identifying, dating and interpreting. Not all of this can be done on Wednesday evenings alone and we are seeking members who would be interested in taking on some of the work. In particular, can you help with:

Bottles – there seem to be 50 glass bottles. We have some information on dating, but further research is needed plus careful examination of the bottles for any identifying marks

Other glass – some of this may be window glass or possibly drinking glasses. It needs sorting and identifying

Clay pipes – again, research of the available information is needed

Bones – these need counting and cataloguing – identification would be a bonus

If you are interested, please contact the field officer, Mike Coles, email:

Michael@coles741.freerve.co.uk

VAL WHITTAKER MEMORIAL PRIZE

The Memorial Prize for 2011 was awarded to Stephanie Emra from Hills Road Sixth Form College and a member of the Group, and we offer our congratulations to her. The presentation was made on the 1st June.

For 2012 we have opened the competition to anyone of 17 or over who has a passion for archaeology and who is doing or has done an investigation into some aspect of archaeology (previously it was limited to those following a course of study). We are offering up to £150 towards furthering the interest in archaeology. Members of the Group are eligible to apply and full details can be found on our website: www.cafg.net .

COMMITTEE MEETING

A committee meeting was held on Wednesday, 29th June. At that time, funds totalled £2,379.31, including the Val Whittaker bequest. Expenditure of £10 to exhibit at the Cambridgeshire History Fair and £36 for a name board for use in photographs was agreed, and the purchase of garden sieves for use in the Wimpole excavations was authorised.

Wimpole Excavations

Following last year's experience, the field officer wanted to be able to sieve some of the excavated soil to check for small finds. Investigations into the materials needed for a professional-type sieving frame had suggested a cost of about £100. As there was limited time before the excavation and some doubts were expressed about the usefulness of dry sieving except for loose soils, it was agreed that garden sieves should be purchased in the first instance. Any wet sieving would have to use a bucket of water. Other arrangements for the Wimpole excavations were to spread record keeping around more excavators, to which end a revised context sheet had been produced; to hold a briefing at the start of each day; to have a designated photographer; to carry out more metal

detecting; and to start washing finds on site by National Trust volunteers. It was noted that the excavation now featured in the BBC's "Hands On History Dig!" and that the BBC had provided leaflets, badges and activity sheets for children. The BBC would be following progress and their "Things to do" website would allow us to advertise future activities there.

Website

We agreed to put the proposal for the Wimpole dig on the website and noted that the exams board had given consent to the winning project report for the Val Whittaker Memorial Prize to appear. An analysis of visits to the website from 4 March to 4 June showed 480 visits by 301 people.

Val Whittaker Memorial Prize

The Memorial Prize requirements were reviewed, tutors having been invited to comment, and we agreed to lift the requirement that applicants should be studying, as it was felt that we should not exclude people who might be carrying out their own research.

Commemoration of John Alexander

Work on finding speakers was continuing.

2nd Cambridgeshire History Fair

We agreed to mount a display at this event at Cherry Hinton on 17 September, to include information on the Wimpole excavations.

Fieldwork

Possible areas for fieldwalking included an extension of the Barton/Comberton area, a continuation at Childerley, and the Anglesey/Burwell areas. The field officer favoured a change of location from the majority of last winter's fieldwalking, to cover different types of landscape. This could be fen edge, a suggestion was also made of chalk areas. A request had been made for the Group to walk an area near springs at Bassingbourn and also to investigate the possibility of walking on a farm at Sawtry (off the A1 north of Huntingdon). John Waterhouse had now digitised 51 existing fieldwork site files and was currently checking for anomalies. Once he was satisfied that the data was correct, its future use could be considered, but it would at least be lodged with the Historic Environment Record.

Funding Opportunities

It was noted that the newly formed CBA East from the merger of CBA Mid Anglia and East Anglia had funds of £12,500 which could be applied for to support the presentation of discoveries. It was also noted that lottery funding of £500,000 over 5 years to Cambridgeshire Archaeology and Oxford Archaeology East for the JIGSAW Community archaeology project had been approved: part was to fund two Community Archaeologists and part for training local groups and volunteers and the purchase of equipment which could be borrowed.

The next committee meeting will be held on Wednesday, 19th October at 7.30pm at Bar Hill. Any member is welcome to attend the meeting – if you have any issues you would like discussed, please let me know.

EXCAVATING A PROVINCIAL CAPITAL OF THE ASSYRIAN EMPIRE

On 1st June, John MacGinnis talked to us about the Ziyaret Tepe archaeological project in south east Turkey, in advance of the dam of the Tigris Valley. Little work had been carried out before the dam project, but stelae of Assyrian kings found in the 19th century and rock reliefs showed that the area had been part of the Assyrian Empire.

The central mound was some 30 metres high, with a surrounding town. Digging started in 2000 following geophysical survey and surface collection, and the citadel and western lower town had been explored; the hope was to now explore the eastern lower town, but there was a maximum of 4 years left.

Buildings were mostly very eroded, being made of mud brick, but on the central mound or citadel were the remains of a monumental building. Luxury goods were found, including Assyrian pot 2mm thick (as thin as can be made), stamp seals, ivory and metal work. One interesting find was a whistle in the form of a bird's head. Parallel tracks of baked brick showed the palace to have a typical Assyrian reception room, and the existence of huge doors was shown by pads and door sockets. Painted plaster was of a typical Assyrian colour scheme, probably mid 8th century BC. Pits containing metal turned out to be graves of cremation burials. All this indicated that this was almost certainly the site of Tushhan, an Assyrian colonial city.

Steps were found on the citadel mound and it had been possible to get down to about the 4th millennium BC, but the wash was too much to get right to the bottom.

A tablet in the Assyrian script and language but with non-Assyrian names (one was Hittite) possibly dated from the destruction of the city and may have come from western Iran.

The lower town contained a complex of monumental buildings, of which two were dug. One was a house, possibly for a priest, with rooms arranged around a courtyard and next door was a possible temple treasury. The courtyards had a blue and white checkerboard design, and were later filled with mud brick with graves dug through. There were also domestic residences and a road network. A section of the massive city wall was dug, together with rooms built against it.

Clay tokens with 8 shapes were found and were probably for counting. Clay tablets were also found with lists of goods. Some of these dated to 611BC, the year after the fall of Ninevah. A 30kilogram "duck" weight was discovered, but none of the smaller weights, suggesting that people had time to pack before leaving. A clay pig also indicated Assyrian connections as the pig was a signature of Assyrian occupation.

Ninevah was destroyed in 612 BC by the Babylonians and others in a rebellion against the brutal rule of the Assyrians. The government fled west to Harran and the north-west of the Empire was the last remaining part.

A letter was discovered from the military commander who had received an order to raise a unit of chariotry. He replies that this is not possible and concludes "Why do I have to stay behind and die?" It is not known whether this was written and not sent, received, or a copy, but shows the importance of excavating.

LOCAL EVENTS

24 September, 9.30am – 5pm: Great Gransden Show with the presence of the Historic Environment Team

1 October, 11.00am: CBA East visit to Thetford. Meet at Thetford Priory entrance, by the small car park, for a tour of the ruins. Walk to Thomas Paine statue, locating Ancient House Museum and Town Council building. Lunch break 12.30 – 2.00pm, when sites of interest may be visited individually. Meet 2.00pm at the Castle park by the signboard, for a guided tour of the castle site. Free. Further details and map available from the secretary.

15 October, 10.30am – 1.00pm: finds identification day at Ely Museum

19-30 October: University of Cambridge Festival of Ideas. Includes:
Talks and open morning (22nd) at the Museum of Classical Archaeology
Anglo-Saxons and Egyptians at Girton on 22nd
Prehistory day at the Cambridge Archaeological Unit, Storey's Way on 22nd
Haddon Library picture show on 29th
War and Peace in the early Middle Ages, Dept of Anglo-Saxon, Norse & Celtic on 29th
Pick up a brochure in town on go to: www.cam.ac.uk/festivalofideas

The Fenland History on Friday programme of talks at Ely Library begins on October 7th at 10.30am. £2.50 on the door. For further information see: www.cambridgeshirehistory.com/MikePetty

CAMBRIDGE ANTIQUARIAN SOCIETY

CAS lecture meetings are on Mondays at 6.00pm at the Law Faculty, West Road, Cambridge, which members of the Group are welcome to attend. The season begins with:

- 3 October Dr Ben Geary on *Down by the River: excavations of prehistoric timber alignments in the Waveney Valley*
7 November Dr Catherine Hills & Dr Carenza Lewis on *Under hallowed turf: recent excavations in Newnham College gardens*
5 December Prof Tony Legge on *Beef for the Bosses, Pork for the Proletariat; animals at El Amarna, Egypt*
9 January Dr Peter Kitson on *The male occupational structure of Cambridgeshire and Huntingdonshire during the 18th and 19th centuries*

The Ladds Lecture will be given by Geoffrey Dannell FSA on *Edmund Tyrell Artis – Antiquary, Palaeontologist and Much More* on Thursday 3 November at 7.30pm at the Huntingdon Methodist Church Hall

The CAS autumn conference on recent work in the Cambridgeshire region is on **Saturday 26 November, 10.00am – 5.00pm** at the Law Faculty.

JIGSAW CAMBRIDGESHIRE

JIGSAW is a new project, supported by a Heritage Lottery Fund grant, to support and develop community archaeology in Cambridgeshire. Existing groups will be able to affiliate and access training workshops and borrow equipment; it is intended that at least one new community archaeology group will be set up in each of the county's 5 districts and will learn the necessary skills; and individuals can also become involved in Jigsaw. There will be regular training sessions and workshops and Jigsaw will have all the necessary equipment for investigating local archaeology, available to loan free. Participating groups and individuals will have the opportunity to display their work, and there will be a biannual newsletter.

The two Community Archaeologists have now started work and are based at the Oxford Archaeology East premises at Bar Hill. The website is: www.jigsawcambs.org

We look forward to working with them.

CONFERENCES/COURSES

Weekend courses at Madingley Hall:

- 2 – 4 December *The Seven Wonders of the Ancient World*
2 – 4 December *English Place Names: landscape and society*
13 - 15 January *The Anglo-Saxon Church in East Anglia*

10 - 12 February *Sutton Hoo and the Goths*
2 – 4 March *English village history – sources, methods and themes*

In January, the Institute of Continuing Education (Madingley Hall) is beginning a series of 5 week inter-disciplinary courses of 2 hours a week. Of interest are:

History of objects – artefacts of ritual and religion Starting 9 January
Invasion! Exploring the clash of cultures Starting 20 February
Humps, bumps, buildings and hedges: walking through history 5 field trips starting 18 April

For details of all the above, see: www.ice.cam.ac.uk The Institute also runs e-learning courses.

21 October *Archaeology Up Close* Museum of London free drop in activity.
See: www.museumoflondon.org.uk

University of London Study Egypt Days (details available through the secretary):

22 October Excavating Tombs & Graves in Ancient Egypt
26 November Forensic Aspects of Archaeology

The next two Historic Environment Research Conferences organised by the McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research will be held at the Law Faculty, West Road, Cambridge, at a cost of £43 each: see www.mcdonald.cam.ac.uk/events for further details

5 November Landscapes of Anglo-Saxon Christianity
25 February Recent research in vernacular architecture: rural building traditions of the “poorer sort”, 1600-1900

EXCAVATIONS

For details of training and other excavations still continuing, go to: www.britarch.ac.uk/briefing (Council for British Archaeology) and www.digs.archaeology.co.uk (Current Archaeology).

NEWS

Two almost complete iron swords of the 1st century BC, with their wooden handles and scabbards intact, have been found at Must Farm, near Peterborough in the silted channel of the old river Nene. The Cambridge Archaeological Unit has also found this year a bronze age sword, and altogether nine swords have been found in the old river channel since the late 1960s.

On 14 May 2011 CBA regions East Anglia and Mid Anglia merged to become CBA East.

EXHIBITIONS

Typecast: Flinders Petrie and Francis Galton Exhibition of photographs that explores their contentious legacies. Petrie Museum, Malet Street, London WC1. Until 22 December 2011.
See: Events.ucl.ac.uk

Triumph, protection and dreams: The African headrest in context Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge.
20 September – 21 January 2012

WEB SITES

Pilot study on modernizing scheduled monument consent to allow wider consultation:
www.britarch.ac.uk/news/110504-smc

Archaeology Forum document on why local government needs archaeology advisers:

www.britarch.ac.uk/conservation/whatsnew

The Government's draft Planning Framework: www.communities.gov.uk in the planning, building and the environment section

LANDSCAPE AND LOCAL HISTORY GROUP

The Landscape and Local History Group exists to support researchers in these fields and meets three or four times a year with contributions from members. The next meetings are:

28 September The WWI hospital in west Cambridge

8 December The fate of small farmers at enclosure: the Fulbourn experience

If you are interested in joining, contact Lyn Boothman at annys@boothman27.fsnet.co.uk or phone 01223 323042

LIBRARY ADDITIONS

Archaeology at Cambridge McDonald Institute annual report 2008-9

Bones for the Archaeologist IW Cornwall (revised edition) 1974 JM Dent & Sons Ltd

British Archaeology July/August and September/October 2011

Cave Art – a guide to the decorated Ice Age caves of Europe Paul G. Bahn. 2007. Frances Lincoln Ltd

Cambridge Antiquarian Society – Proceedings LXVII for 1977; includes Roman burials in the Cambridge area

Cambridgeshire Archaeology Historic Environment Team Annual Report 2009-10

CBA Conservation Update, June 2011

CBA Newsletters, April and August 2011

Current World Archaeology October/November 2009

English Heritage Research News No 6, summer 2011

Wharram Percy Deserted Medieval Village Maurice Beresford & John Hurst for English Heritage. 1990. Batsford Ltd

Please note that all copies of "Current Archaeology" have been deposited with Hills Road Sixth Form College

Susan May, Secretary