



# CAMBRIDGE ARCHAEOLOGY FIELD GROUP

**Newsletter Number 174**

**July 2014**

[www.cafg.net](http://www.cafg.net)

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## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The AGM was held on the 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2014. The draft minutes are attached for members and are also available in the members' section of the website.

Subscriptions remain unchanged for this year, at £10 for individual members and £15 for families. If you have not yet paid, your **subscriptions are due**. If you wish to pay by bank transfer, please contact the treasurer or secretary for account details.

The officers and committee of the Group remain unchanged. Richard Cushing agreed to continue as the examiner of the accounts for a further year, but a volunteer is needed to take his place.

The meeting agreed to transfer £200 from ordinary income to the Val Whittaker Memorial fund to ensure that bursaries can continue to be offered; but that offering more than one bursary in a year should be exceptional.

The collated responses to the member questionnaire were considered and some suggestions put forward, including more structured processing evenings, but more detailed discussion was needed.

## SPECIAL GENERAL MEETING

The meeting to discuss the responses to the member questionnaire was held on the 2<sup>nd</sup> July. The full minutes are attached, but topics covered in the time available were:

**ways to attract/retain new members** – suggestions were made for increasing publicity through the press media, village newsletters, local groups and students.

**ways to encourage participation** – a programme of workshops on Wednesday evenings should be developed. Suggestions were made for individual members to research particular classes of artefact, topics and objectives to be defined first.

**officers and committee** – consideration was given to limiting terms of office, but concluded to be ineffective; sharing roles and shadowing were, however, favoured, as was a back-up of systems, work methods and tasks.

Arrangements will be made for further consideration.

## 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 outside visit. We meet from about 7.15 pm. A plan can be provided.

We are currently sorting through finds boxes from earlier fieldwork before most of it is sent to Cheshire for long-term storage.

## LECTURES

Lectures are normally held on the first Wednesday in the month in the seminar room of the McDonald Institute, Division of Archaeology, Downing Street, Cambridge, at 7.30pm. Parking is available on site from Tennis Court Road. The next season will start on 1st October, when Jody Joy, new curator of the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, will talk to us again, this time on *Fancy objects in the British Iron Age: the story of early Celtic art*.

### Medieval Huntingdon

After the AGM, Dr Paul Spoerry spoke on *Finding, and not finding, medieval Huntingdon*. He is working on a synthesis of the knowledge being built up, 80/90% of it in the last 20 years, and hopes to continue over the next 12 months.

The town, focused on the river Ouse, was fortified in the late 9<sup>th</sup> century by the Great Danish Host (the first genuine reference to the town). There were four Saxon churches (St Clements being a Danish dedication) and 16 medieval. St Mary's is the mother church, and post settings next to it could be for a gate. Scholars have proposed two Danish burghs, and Bar Dyke could be a Saxon Burgh ditch – the bank and ditch are from the Civil War, but lie on the line of an ancient lane, possibly 9<sup>th</sup> century.

There are marked low-lying areas around the town. That in the north west was not inhabited in the medieval period. At the Model Laundry site in the east was found the hard boundary to the town on the Roman boundary ditch and building. The Saxon ditches head northwards and the dry land extends behind them. Here the natural scarp was used to create defences. The outer bailey ditch of the castle mound was also found on a scarp, to the east end of the low area of Mill Common.

12<sup>th</sup>, 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> century settlement was largely in the middle of the town along the High Street, south of the realigned street. However, there was a lot of empty space, especially from the 14<sup>th</sup> century onwards, even though Huntingdon was a prosperous town. In the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries, properties were laid out along Ermine Street (Stukley Road) outside the town ditch, creating significant suburban activity for a kilometre, although there are few documentary references. The area was abandoned in the late 14<sup>th</sup> century, until the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

In the middle of the town south of the market place, only Saxon remains have been found, with two sunken floored buildings and one assembly of artefacts including five sherds of mid-Saxon pottery. No mid-Saxon settlement has yet been found, however the late Saxon settlement seems to be based on the river (including a kiln), although scattered.

More Roman archaeology has been found than expected; not a town but more than a villa and a few burials.

### Iron Age Torcs

On the 7<sup>th</sup> May, Jody Joy, previously of the British Museum and now curator of the Cambridge Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, talked about *Torcs and identity in the later Iron Age*, focusing on the Snettisham hoards. From this site, over 60 years, tens of kilograms of precious metal have been found. Torcs, neck rings with decorative ends, are found from the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC (though only from about 300 BC in Britain) to the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD and from the Czech Republic to Ireland. On the continent they are found mostly in graves; in Britain, nearly all in hoards. There are two concentrations of Iron Age hoards, one in

Staffordshire, around Tamworth, and the other in East Anglia, especially north-west Norfolk, on high ground close to rivers; although they are found in very small numbers throughout much of Britain.

At Snettisham there are at least 14 hoards, containing more than 175 torcs, 30 kg material. The first three were found in 1948 by ploughing, others as stray finds, by excavation or by metal detectorists. Some hoards have dateable coins from the late 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC to 60 BC, but not later. The hoards appear to be part of the transformation of society in the early to mid 1<sup>st</sup> century BC as torcs go out and coinage comes in – some may have been melted down to make coins.

There are a number of interpretations: smith's or founder's hoards; tribal treasury; votive. The area was a centre of political power and religious activity, with evidence for maritime trade via the Wash. Jody's approach is to consider each hoard separately as they may each have a different purpose.....Hoard A contained a gold tubular torc on an iron core, which would make it appear heavier, and showed international links. The pieces in Hoard F had been deliberately cut into pieces and bent before deposition, and twisted with different alloys – this hoard must have been collected over time and showed all stages of collection and recycling. In Hoard L, however, the torcs were found in layers separated by soil, with silver on top, then copper alloy, with gold at the bottom. Repairs to the torcs were obvious, possibly to emphasise their age, and showed signs of being worn over a long time. The surface treatment to bring out colour was obviously important. Where complete torcs are found together it may indicate that they were too important to break.

Torcs were not just a sign of leadership, with little evidence of social stratification. However, wearing a precious torc in a ceremony would make you different from your normal self. Simple torcs might be worn everyday. In considering the purpose of torcs, it is necessary to think of the person and the torc together.

### **Roman Barrows**

On 4<sup>th</sup> June Sarah Poppy, English Heritage, talked on *Roman Barrows*. Little attention has been paid to barrows in Romano-British funerary studies and it is a rare monument type, with about 100 examples nationally. All surviving examples are nationally important and 26 are scheduled ancient monuments.

Of the scheduled monuments, the barrows are concentrated in eastern England. Most are late 1<sup>st</sup> to mid 2<sup>nd</sup> century. They are conical, often with a flat top and are found alone or in a linear disposition. The primary cremation is often in a central chamber or cist and grave goods were often deposited – food and drinking vessels, animal remains, lamps – and secondary burials are rare. There is a general assumption that they are associated with villas and roads. There are close parallels on the continent, especially in Belgium.

Sarah had studied a few of the barrows . Of those she spoke about, two examples are given.

Mersea Mount had been dug in 1912, when a small recessed burial chamber had been found with rubble foundations, tile walls and a corbelled roof. Analysis of the cremation in 2012 found a sticky resin coating the bones of an adult male. The resin matches frankincense, believed to originate from East Africa. Literature speaks of unguents added after cremation, but this is the first time it has been proven.

The Bartlow Hills were thought to be associated with a Roman villa, but no evidence has been found for a villa in the expected area. A 4<sup>th</sup> century rubbish pit has been found, but the barrows are 1<sup>st</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup> century. Soil analysis suggests that the soil was dug from various close locations. They are sited near the river, not the road and would have been barely visible from the Roman roads, which challenges the idea that barrows are always in a prominent spot.

## **TEST PITTING AT WIMPOLE**

Plans are well advanced for the excavation of more test pits in the park at Wimpole Hall from 26<sup>th</sup> July to 3<sup>rd</sup> August. You should have received the proposal, which is for test pits on further potential house sites and an exploration of the possible pipeline that fed the fountain. If you have not responded to the invitation to take part, but would like to do so, please contact Terry Dymott, at [terry.dymott@btinternet.com](mailto:terry.dymott@btinternet.com)

## FIELDWORK

Fieldwalking on the Childerley estate continued until Easter. No more Roman scatters were found, but we did eventually find a scatter of medieval pottery and tile, together with some pieces of quern stone. In addition, there was a copper-alloy chape from the end of a sheath for a knife or dagger. These are likely to be associated with the former hamlet of Little Childerley. Some pictures can be seen on the website.

## WIMPOLE GLASSHOUSES

On 30<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> May and 2nd June, members excavated and recorded the brick foundations of three buildings in the gardeners' yard at Wimpole Hall. Two of the structures appear to be garden frames, one of which later had heating pipes. The third building was a more elaborate structure with a central chamber and chambers along the north and south sides. Again, at a later date, an extensive cast iron piped heating system was installed. All three structures are likely to date from the mid to late 19<sup>th</sup> century. The full report and photographs are on the website.

We had not expected to be open to public view, but in fact we had a number of interested visitors.

## WIMPOLE: SILENT VOICES AND DESERTED HOMES HERITAGE LOTTERY FUND "ALL OUR STORIES" PROJECT

We are gradually putting together the "grey" report of all we have discovered in this project. A further progress meeting will be held in August.

A talk on the project is being given to the Foxton Local History Group and to Orwell Past and Present. Talks could be given to other local history groups.

If you look on the website, you will see a note about a "hack" silver Viking ingot of the 9<sup>th</sup> century, found during the fieldwork for this project.

## HASLINGFIELD ARCHAEOLOGY PROJECT

The full "grey" report containing notes on all the finds from fieldwalking over many years and test pits dug in June 2012 is now complete. A printed copy is retained at Bar Hill, and copies have been sent to the Historic Environment Record and the Haslingfield Village Society. We are looking at the best way of providing members with a copy, as it is a substantial document, but the summary appears below.

### **Summary**

*This report records all work carried out by CAFG within Haslingfield parish between 1981 and 2012. This comprises fieldwalking of about a quarter of the parish (1981-2007), 10 casual observations including three test pits within the village (c.1985-2011), an earthwork survey at River Farm (Field 2) and 24 test pits within the village excavated over a weekend in 2012. This is a significant amount of work which has added substantially to our understanding of the development of the parish over time.*

*Very small quantities of earlier prehistoric material were recovered, with no significant artefacts present; although a small concentration of worked flint was found in Field 13.*

*A small quantity of Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age (LBA/EIA) pottery was found in two adjacent fields, extending over a 400m by 100m area (Fields 4 and 8). It is possible that these artefacts imply a long lived settlement from the LBA/EIA period, earlier than previously thought. Over part of this area, within Fields 8 and 9, CAFG field walking has also found some Mid/Late Iron Age pottery and a mass of Roman material over an area c.500m by 200m. The latter included tesserae, many tiles (including box flue) and metal objects (including a cockerel brooch and a Saxon brooch). Susan Oosthuizen has recorded this area as a possible estate centre (Roman and Saxon) and the CHER notes an Iron Age cremation, a Roman villa, Roman burials and Saxon cremations from this site.*

CAFG fieldwork has found three further probable Mid/Late Iron Age to Roman settlements located in Fields 2, 6 and in an area around TL 4066 5221 within the present village. The Field 2 settlement is likely to have been extensive, as artefacts covered a 300m<sup>2</sup> area and this work greatly adds to the two CHER findspots (a coin and a pot sherd) recorded previously here. The settlement in Field 6, however, was not previously known. Mid/Late Iron Age (and Roman) pottery was found during casual observations in the village at TL 4066 5221, as well as Roman pottery nearby during the 2012 test pit survey, suggesting a settlement over a c.300m by c.150m area. A few Roman artefacts have been recorded in the CHER as finds spots for part of this area, but the CAFG material has not only suggested a Mid/Late Iron Age start date but also extends the area of the possible settlement.

A few artefacts dating to the Early-Middle Saxon period have also been found by CAFG. A single Saxon brooch found at TL 411 531 presumably originates from the Saxon burial ground found during coprolite digging in 1874 (CHER 04816). Pottery recovered from this period suggests the possible presence of two previously unknown settlements, both directly to the south-west and north respectively of the large Mid-Saxon green postulated by Sue Oosthuizen and Chris Taylor. The former comprises three Early/Middle and Middle Saxon pottery sherds found during fieldwalking at River Farm (Field 2). In the same location, Saxo-Norman and medieval pottery has also been found during CAFG fieldwalking, perhaps suggesting continuous occupation. The second suggested settlement is very uncertain due to the limited nature of work. This consisted of a casual observation at 36 New Road, where a large sherd of a probable cremation urn was recovered, and 100m to the north-west of this, where a single pottery sherd was found in Sidney Gardens, within a test pit.

Casual observations and test pits by CAFG have found Saxo-Norman pottery and other artefacts in 10 sites within the area of the former green and in three places directly outside it. This evidence, combined with other archaeological work, suggests that final nucleation occurred at Haslingfield in the Saxo-Norman period, with an early 11th or just post-Conquest date probable. No pottery or artefacts of this period have been found beyond the present village in other parts of the parish, despite significant areas being fieldwalked.

An increased number of sites datable to the c.12th to mid-14th century period have been identified by CAFG, represented by pottery and other artefacts recovered from casual observations and test pits. These were within the former green itself and around it, including along at least two of the roads leading out of the village. Interesting objects recovered include part of a possible Purbeck stone mortar. Earthworks were recorded by CAFG at River Farm (Field 2) and comprised house platforms, a road-way and other features. These elements are likely to have dated to the medieval period as, subsequent to the survey, the site was ploughed and fieldwalked with 472 medieval pottery sherds found along with a small number of late medieval sherds.

In the c.12th century, a new hamlet seems to have been established in the parish at Brook Farm, c.500m to the north of the present village. Medieval and late medieval pottery was found, concentrated over a c.250m by 200m area. It is possible, even likely, that this belonged to the former Sternes manor. Haslingfield is an example of new settlement(s), or hamlets forming outside the main nucleated settlement.

There was a reduction in the number of artefacts datable to the late medieval period found both within the former green and around the outside; sites abandoned include the River Farm area. In contrast the 'hamlet' at Brook Farm continued throughout the late medieval period. Pottery production (fabric 402: see Appendix E) may have been undertaken, given the presence of possible kiln waste found here.

Within the main manor (Scales) in the centre of Haslingfield village, a large midden layer up to c.0.5m thick, dating to the c.mid 16th century, was found in three test pits. Test Pit 4 was the most productive, with a significant quantity of mostly primary material (pottery, bone, tiles (floor and roof), brick, nails, shells etc.). In the post-medieval period there seems to have been a slow increase in population within the present village, although the hamlet at Brook Farm seems to have become diminished in c.16th/17th centuries, becoming just a farm.

## FLINT FROM OILY HALL

Lawrence Billington's full report on his analysis of the worked and burnt flints found fieldwalking on the fen edge at Oily Hall, Lode, will be made available to members shortly. We are awaiting only plotting of the finds onto an Ordnance Survey base.

This, however, is a summary of the main findings as sent to those bodies who were good enough to grant aid the analysis of the flint: the Council for British Archeology, the Cambridge Antiquarian Society, and the National Trust (Wicken).

*Cambridge Archaeology Field Group is grateful for grants towards the professional analysis by Lawrence Billington of a flint assemblage comprising 1436 worked flints and 1202 unworked burnt flints collected by fieldwalking in the parish of Lode, Cambridgeshire. The majority was recovered from 245 x 10m squares. The collection provides a westward extension of a string of lithic scatters on a ridge of sand adjacent to a palaeochannel of the river Cam on the southern and south eastern fen edge. The fields were walked in the 1980's during the Fenland Survey, at which time nothing was found. The exposure of this assemblage since that time (evidenced by the good condition of some of the flints) shows that fen edge buried soils still sealed have the potential for the discovery of rare in situ Mesolithic scatters. The assemblage is predominantly Mesolithic, but with good evidence from the Neolithic and early Bronze Age, typical of this fen edge.*

*The analysis showed that 67% of the worked flint is corticated (patinated), the vast majority heavily; and a very large proportion is technologically and typologically Mesolithic. Without exception the diagnostic corticated types are Mesolithic, and this has allowed cortication to be used as a chronological guide. This assemblage is dominated by blade based technology, and all stages of the process are represented. In addition, study of the blade morphology, in particular blade and bladelet widths, suggests that there might have been two broad Mesolithic phases, unless there was a technological change within the late Mesolithic or two core reduction strategies current at the same time. There is potential for further exploration of chronology and technological change.*

*The corticated types also include 12 microliths and related forms, with good evidence for manufacture on site at least during some occupations; 11 scrapers; a broken tranchet adze and two adze sharpening flakes.*

*The comparatively low proportion of burnt to worked flint is consistent with a largely Mesolithic assemblage.*

*The proportion of flint with unweathered cortex is low, but appears to be largely Neolithic or Bronze Age; gathered from chalk geology away from the site, again typical for this area. Uncorticated flint can be dated to the earlier and later Neolithic and the early Bronze Age, with no evidence for anything later. The majority of the material is from a flake based reduction strategy, but some is blade/narrow flake based. The early Neolithic blades are generally broader than those from the Mesolithic, indicating subtle but significant differences in core reduction strategies, similar to findings elsewhere. This assemblage can offer a valuable contribution to the discussion of interpretations of the Mesolithic/Neolithic transition. 59 retouched tools were in this group, including five arrowheads, 34 scrapers and six knives.*

*The distributions of corticated and uncorticated worked flint are largely separate except for an overlap in high density areas. In general this is a classic multi-period assemblage of repeated numerous occupations and visitations, but further analysis of the high density group may illuminate whether they relate to discreet phases, since there are signs that the spatial integrity of some of the major flint scatters may have been retained.*

## COMMITTEE MEETING

A committee meeting was held on 14<sup>th</sup> May. Consideration of the responses to the member questionnaire, notes of which have been sent to members, was the main item. Subscriptions were coming in; expenditure so far being insurance and affiliation fees to the Cambridge Antiquarian Society and Council for British Archaeology. We agreed to display at least some of the Wimpole posters at the Jigsaw annual conference on

12<sup>th</sup> July, and to offer practical experience of fieldwork together with talks to other groups on *The Missing Piece*, on Jigsaw's website.

We decided to try to publicise the Val Whittaker Memorial Prize to the increased numbers of sixth forms in the southern part of the county. Plans for excavating test pits at Wimpole at the end of July were proceeding, as were arrangements for clearing foundations of former glasshouses, also at Wimpole.

Keeping the website refreshed is an ongoing issue, and it was agreed to put the Wednesday evening programme on it. In addition, members are urged to "like" the Group on Facebook.

Peter Cornelissen offered to arrange a visit to the Guestingthorpe Roman site, and September was thought to be the best time.

The date of the next meeting will be decided after the general meeting on 2<sup>nd</sup> July.

## VAL WHITTAKER MEMORIAL PRIZE

At our June lecture meeting, we were pleased to present this year's award to Katherine Peacock, from Hills Road Sixth Form College for her project: "An Archaeological survey of the Mere Way in Cambridgeshire".

Beth Sayers, one of last year's winners, used the prize towards the cost of her Diploma in Archaeology course with the University of Cambridge Institute of Continuing Education. Matt Finch, the other winner, has gone on to university but, as he is not studying archaeology, has donated the prize to Hills Road Sixth Form College for the benefit of its archaeology students. The plan is to buy tickets for the Mary Rose exhibition during the summer residential trip.

## CAMBRIDGE ANTIQUARIAN SOCIETY

The CAS excursions programme features:

23 September Some Huntingdonshire churches

8 October Walpole's Lynn

The secretary has more details and booking information.

## JIGSAW CAMBRIDGESHIRE

We exhibited the display boards from *Wimpole: silent voices and deserted homes* at the Jigsaw summer conference for affiliated groups on 12<sup>th</sup> July. We were able to explain our work to members of other groups and to learn about their projects.

The Jigsaw website has best practice users' guides which can be downloaded, and details of training courses for 2014. These are free but places must be booked in advance at [www.jigsawcambs.org](http://www.jigsawcambs.org)

## THE COUNCIL FOR BRITISH ARCHAEOLOGY

CBA East has a number of events coming up:

19 July, 9-5 and 20 July 1-5pm Archaeology weekend at Norwich Castle Museum

20 September, 10-5pm *Roman Archaeology in the East of England conference*. Godmanchester

For more information see: [www.cbae.archaeologyuk.org/events](http://www.cbae.archaeologyuk.org/events); to join as a member in your own right (£5 a year) email the secretary, Alison Tinniswood at: [Alison.tinniswood@hertscc.gov.uk](mailto:Alison.tinniswood@hertscc.gov.uk)

The national CBA members' weekend takes place on 17-19 October and will be looking at the archaeology of Suffolk. For more information go to <http://new.archaeologyuk.org/events/members-weekend-the-archaeology-of-suffolk>

The CBA is providing an online toolkit for people to record places associated with Britain's 1914-18 Home Front, at [www.homefrontlegacy.org.uk](http://www.homefrontlegacy.org.uk), and will be hosting workshops in the region.

## CONFERENCES/COURSES

Cambridge University's Institute of Continuing Education runs short courses on a variety of topics on archaeology, the historic environment and local history. Examples:

25-27 July            *The Sutton Hoo treasure, the Staffordshire Hoard, and the golden age of Old England*  
10-12 October        *Ordinary people and ordinary lives in the Roman world*

The secretary has the latest booklet of short courses, but also see [www.ice.cam.ac.uk](http://www.ice.cam.ac.uk).

6 September        *The Suffolk Church in the Middle Ages*. Suffolk Institute of Archaeology and History conference at Bury St Edmunds

20 September      *Defining Kingdoms: sixth to tenth centuries*. Sutton Hoo Society conference at University Campus, Ipswich. For information and booking, go to: [www.suttonhoo.org](http://www.suttonhoo.org)

## EXHIBITIONS

"Britain: One Million Years of the Human Story" at the Natural History Museum runs until 28<sup>th</sup> September

English Heritage's central archive store in the grounds of Wrest Park, Bedfordshire, is open to the public for guided tours on the first Monday of every month. Details on EH's website.

## EXCAVATIONS

For details of continuing excavations, go to: [www.britarch.ac.uk/briefing](http://www.britarch.ac.uk/briefing) or [www.britisharchaeology.org/briefing](http://www.britisharchaeology.org/briefing) (Council for British Archaeology) and [www.archaeology.co.uk/digs](http://www.archaeology.co.uk/digs) (Current Archaeology).

## LIBRARY ADDITIONS

- British Archaeology July/August 2014
- CBA Newsletter, issues 2 spring 2014
- Jigsaw Cambridgeshire newsletter No.4, December 2013

Susan May, Secretary