



CAMBRIDGE ARCHAEOLOGY FIELD GROUP

Newsletter Number 167

May 2012

www.cafg.net

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Chairman	Barrie Fuller, 47 Queen Edith's Way, Cambridge, CB1 4PJ		
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Treasurer	Dudley Pusey, 45 St Laurence Road, Foxton, Cambridge, CB22 6SF, tel 01223 503600		

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The AGM was held on 4th April 2012. The following Officers and Committee Members were elected for 2012/13:

Chairman	Barrie Fuller, email bf202@cam.ac.uk
Secretary	Susan May, email caf.g.may@ntlworld.com , tel 01223 843121
Treasurer	Dudley Pusey, email puseydc@ntlworld.com , tel 01223 503600
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The AGM resolved that **subscriptions** should be increased to:

£9 for individual membership

£12 family membership

Entrance to lectures for non-members £1 (no change)

The chairman reported on another busy year for the Group: the wide range of fieldwork periods and types summed up the Group's current standing, evidenced by feedback from the University and the County Council. In particular the post-doctoral researchers were supportive and appreciated the Group's lectures. He had represented the Group at meetings of the BBC's Hands on History project, which had promoted recognition of the Group. Although the Group would not be directly involved in this year's project, it had received considerable support last year and he had been able to report to the BBC some 1800 visitors to the Wimpole excavations. He recommended members to keep an eye on events: the big regional event was to be in Bury St Edmunds.

The chairman thanked Peter Cornelissen in particular, together with others, for the development of the website; and commended the new workshops for fieldwalkers, which had been suggested by a new member. He also commented on the link to Jigsaw, and proffered his thanks to all for their efforts.

The President expressed his thanks to Barrie Fuller for his work and for pushing forward the administration of meetings. It was good that the Group was so busy: local archaeology was burgeoning in this area.

The field officer's, secretary's and treasurer's reports had been circulated and were accepted: they will be filed with the minutes, but if you did not receive copies and would like them, please let the secretary know. The secretary further reported that the registration system for members on the website should be ready to use within a few days.

The field officer further reported that the flint from Oily Hall was with Lawrence Billington of the Cambridge Archaeological Unit for initial assessment. Early comments were that more than 50% looked Mesolithic: this was similar to assemblages the Unit was finding on the west side of the Fens and they were enthusiastic about it. It was hoped the Unit would carry out a full survey of the flint: the Group had been awarded a grant of £200 from the Cambridge Antiquarian Society towards such a survey and it was hoped the National Trust would be able to make up any difference. Craig Cessford, also of the CAU, had examined pieces of college plates found at Brook Farm, Haslingfield in the 1990s and a report was to be published on the website. Already on the website was Colin Coates' report on the various Mr Rattfords of Wimpole, which showed the value of documentary research.

On the forthcoming summer activities, the field officer reminded members of the test pitting project in Haslingfield in June: Rob Atkins of OAEast was keen to explore the archaeology of the village and support was being given by Jigsaw and the Village Society. A meeting was to be held in the Methodist Hall on the 14th April to explain the project to residents, and members were invited to come if they possibly could. It was hoped that some pits would be dug by the residents but there were already a number of offers of land if the Group could dig. Paul Blinkhorn was to come on the Sunday of the dig to look at pottery. He had already looked at the Group's fieldwalked pot, some of which had proved to be Bronze Age.

The Group had excavated at Wimpole Hall for the last 13 years, but, the field officer apologised, it had not yet been possible to agree with Angus Wainwright, the NT archaeologist, whether there should be any digging this year. Angus was anxious to ensure completed reports for digs undertaken and their deposit with the HER. The field officer was hoping that there might be the opportunity for test pitting and survey but, if not, he suggested that the Group make itself available to help on other digs, such as the Fen Edge Archaeology Group dig at Cottenham or any by OAEast. He would like to see members have the opportunity to dig: many had been introduced to digging at the Wimpole excavations.

The AGM resolved that a policy be adopted of topping up the Val Whittaker Memorial Prize fund in order to maintain the capacity to offer bursaries for longer; the policy to be reviewed in 2 years or sooner should circumstances require it. The ability to offer bursaries is seen as valuable for the standing of the Group.

The chairman apologised that he had failed to organise a memorial to Dr John Alexander, our former President. With hindsight, the aim of a conference had been ambitious and nothing had come together. He suggested that a more realistic aim was either a half day event or a special lecture, perhaps with wine and nibbles beforehand, unless another member was willing to take on the organisation of a whole day conference. Something must be done this year, and contact had been made with the organiser about the CAS Autumn conference. It was hoped that there would be no cost to the Group.

Following the AGM, Dr Spoerry talked about "Medieval pottery in Cambridgeshire; a new regional review".

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Subscriptions for 2012/13 are now **due**. See above for rates.

LECTURES

The last lecture in the current season will be held at **7.30pm on Wednesday, 6th June** in the seminar room at the McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research, Downing Street, Cambridge. Parking is available on site from Tennis Court Road: if the barrier is down press the button for the attendant. The speaker will be:

Patricia Duff on *Gobekli Tepe (an 11,500 year old stone circle site in southern Turkey) – more questions than answers*

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. A plan can be provided.

Those attending evenings at Bar Hill, **PLEASE NOTE** that, in the event of fire, the Fire Brigade needs to be called on 999. The fire alarms do not automatically connect to the Fire Service.

We will **NOT** be at Bar Hill on the following Wednesdays in order for everyone to have the opportunity to go on the guided walks organised under the auspices of Cambridgeshire Archaeology:

- 20th June** – Burwell village and medieval castle mound, moat and outworks
- 11th July** – Castle Camps medieval fortress and deserted medieval village
- 15th August** - Giants Hill, Rampton demolished medieval village and partially constructed 12th century anarchy castle earthwork remains

FINDS WORKSHOPS FOR FIELDWALKERS

The first of what we hope will be a series of workshops for the less experienced fieldwalker on identifying likely finds was held on 18th April and was very well received. Since the fieldwalking season is now over, the next workshop will be on the **19th September**, in time for next season, and will concentrate on flint.

However, over the summer on our normal Bar Hill evenings we will have the opportunity to re-examine finds from our various collections and all are most welcome.

FIELDWORK

The fieldwalking season is finished. Unfortunately, the last few weeks at Boxworth did not produce anything of great interest.

We will be test pitting in Haslingfield on the weekend of 16th/17th June with residents of the village. This is a project to try to expand existing knowledge of the history of the village. Details were sent with the last newsletter, but if you do not know about it, please contact Mike Coles. All help will be useful: if you have not yet offered your services and are free part of that weekend, please get in touch.

Other work over the summer is still under discussion.

WEBSITE

You can now find Peter Cornelissen's mapping of our more recent fieldwalking finds on the website, in an area restricted to CAFG members and others specifically authorised. You need to register and obtain a password, which you can do via the website. You can also access approved committee meeting minutes by the same system.

VAL WHITTAKER MEMORIAL PRIZE

We hope to present awards on the 6th June.

MESOLITHIC SITES AT STONEHENGE

On 7th December David Jacques from the Open University talked about finding a Mesolithic site 1.2Km from Stonehenge. The team from the Open University had been digging the site since 2005, but had only been in the field for 26 days, the budget having increased to £2,000 from £750 only two years ago. Until late 2011 there had been 30 Mesolithic finds spots in the Stonehenge landscape, but no real evidence of human occupation on or around Salisbury Plain.

The site was in a prominent spot, equidistant between Stonehenge and Durrington Walls, near the river and a spring in the north east of Vespasian's Camp Iron Age hill fort. It had not been touched by landscaping as it was leased for agriculture, and had been considered purely an Iron Age feature. It had been the curator of Vespasian's Camp who had drawn David's attention to other possibilities.

Work had started by the spring in 2005, when tools, including piercing tools, were found, but with no real stratigraphy. It was, however, a classic site type, on a bluff, protected from the North West winds. Geophysics on the higher ground appeared to reveal pits, but it was later discovered that the landowner had allowed dumping from road building in the 1960s.

2010 saw work on the south edge of the spring, which proved to be the main source of important material with primary deposits of all manner of (possibly new) tools, including one to take the bark off trees. Bone and teeth were also found, including 20 bigger teeth with their roots removed, giving a carbon calibration date of 6250 BC, well before the construction of Stonehenge. In this landscape only three posts under the Stonehenge car park have been found to be older, at c.7500 BC.

English Heritage gave £1,000 for a long weekend of excavation in 2011 when, despite very wet weather, tools in such pristine condition were found that they cut the excavators' fingers. One was a blade with cortex retained either side, which was very good for grip. Over 5,500 flints and tools were found, including 1,500 pieces of burnt flint so far and one tool with the aerodynamic qualities of a stealth bomber. More than 200 pieces of bone came out, the majority of auroch, including enormous auroch vertebrae probably from a yearling of about 1.5 tons (the current maximum weight for a similar animal is 0.75 tons). Given that meat was not salted, an enormous number of people must have been around to deal with it, English Heritage estimate about 100, out of a population of 20-35,000 in Great Britain and Ireland. Much of the meat must have gone off site to kin groups, but certainly some was cooked on site.

This is the first Mesolithic "home base" found in the Stonehenge landscape, occupation seemingly in the process of moving from temporary to permanent. Artefacts for most seasons have been found and traces and women and children, suggesting that it may have been settled for much of the year.

By the spring part of a broken bronze dagger dated to 1400 BC was found and thought likely to be ceremonial. It had come from a broken rapier sword refashioned into a dagger: possibly a way of remembering in a non-literate society. Also possibly from the Bronze Age were two stones carved in the shape of ducks, believed to be motifs for fertility and healing. So the spring did not stop being special in the Mesolithic. The team has found a Neolithic leaf shaped arrow head, a Roman curse, a Saxon brooch of c. 5th century in the smaller spring, and carved wooden staves of Black Death date. There was evidence of older items being pulled up from the spring deposits and mixed with the later deposits – was this a form of communal memory? Besides the spring site there are barrows hugging the contours, a hollow way, ramparts and a multi-phase field system.

Springs are rare on Salisbury Plain, the only other complex being next to Bluestonehenge, so this site is pivotal in the landscape and is of international importance. For this reason English Heritage consider that major funding must be obtained before further work. David expressed his particular thanks to Tom Lines and Tom Phillips of OA East.

SPICEWORLD: A MEDIEVAL PORT OF TRADE ON THE MALABAR COAST

On the 2nd February Robert Harding, visiting scholar in Oriental Studies, told us about excavations at Vizhinjam in Kerala, south India, as part of the “Civilisations in Contact” project, studying trading links. The site is now a fair way from the present-day coast.

Ancient texts speak of exports from Kerala as pepper (still a key export), cardamom, cinnamon and nard from the Himalayas. Finding evidence of the Romans has been an obsession of Indian archaeology, the first Roman coin being found in the 18th century. Most Roman coins found have been early, with few after the 3rd century collapse, until much later. In 31BC Egypt was conquered by Augustus and became a conduit for obtaining spices: boats crossed to India from ports on the Red Sea. Mesiras was a great port in southern India with many Roman finds, and there is plenty of evidence of Indians travelling in 2 or 3 masted ships.

Evidence at Vizhinjam is greater for later periods: a place of that name in about the right place appears on a 4th century map. The greatest amount of evidence is available for the 8th – 10th centuries, when Vizhinjam appears in inscriptions. It had a great fort with great walls, a moat on three sides and the sea on the 4th. Buildings and walls were encrusted with jewels. It was also subject to conquest among the powers of the region.

At the Medicine Hill fort, parts of walls (mentioned in texts as reaching the sky) were found in 2 and 3 tiers. Mixed porcelain was also found; also a cave shrine of 7th/8th century date carved out of a boulder; a temple of the 8th/9th century; and the moat, now stagnant – it had been dredged as a harbour for the fishing fleet.

The settlement was in what is now no-man’s land between the Muslims and Christians, bulldozed after riots. The buildings were of timber except for some stone temples. Turquoise glazed ware, typical of a Mediterranean type from the Persian Gulf and a great number of beads were found – some of the imports. West Asian pottery forms 8-9% of the total found. Of the exports, timber was a large component along with spices.

In the area there was also a major monastic site, now totally gone, which imported wine

It seems that there were a lot of newcomers, in particular there is evidence of Persians in the Christian and Muslim finds. The Persian influence increased as the Roman Empire declined. There was also quite a large proportion of Jewish settlers.

This was still a work in progress and it was hoped to refine the chronology and the place of Vizhinjam in the trading network.

JIGSAW CAMBRIDGESHIRE

We are now affiliated to JIGSAW, the new project supporting and developing community archaeology in Cambridgeshire. Training workshops are now being organised, for which individual application should be made. The website is: www.jigsawcambs.org and you are urged to keep checking it for new events. Forthcoming workshops include:

13 June Recording buildings. Cottenham Village College. 7pm

- 17 July Introduction to the Historic Environment Record. Ramsey Library. 7pm
 15 September Conservation and Monument Management. Waterbeach Tillage Hall. 10 – 12.30pm

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 ends with:

- 11 June David Jacques on *Time and Time again: new insight into the significance of Vespasian's Camp in the Stonehenge landscape.*

Bookings for CAS excursions should be made to Mr A Kirby, 3 Hills View, Great Shelford, Cambridge, CB22 5AY. Further details can be given, but the programme continues with:

- 13 June Castle Acre. Coach from Trumpington p&r site 10am. £25 (£18 for EH members)
 5 September King's Lynn Revisited (the second new town). Meet outside the Custom House, King's Lynn at 11.15am. £6.00
 4 October Royston. Meet at St John the Baptist Church at 2 pm. £5.00

On Saturday, 26th June, the CAS is holding a garden party at the McDonald Institute, from 3 – 5pm, to include inspections of the new archaeological galleries in the Museum. Tickets are £8 each. Applications, with cheque to CAS, and phone number, to John Stanford, 11 Histon Road, Cottenham, CB24 8UF.

CAS members (including affiliated groups) are invited to a tour of the excavations of an Anglo-Saxon cemetery at the Oakington recreation ground, on Saturday, **7th July from 2.30 – 4pm**. The dig is being conducted by Duncan Sayer and the University of Central Lancashire. There is some parking on the recreation ground. No booking required.

The autumn conference will be held on 24th November.

LOCAL EVENTS

The following are all Cambridgeshire Archaeology events and are free. Where booking is required this is stated. The full programme can be found at: www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/archaeology

- 6 June Longstanton guided walk. Meet 7pm at All Saints Church
 9 June Finds identification 10.30am – 2.30pm, Cromwell Museum, Huntingdon
 13 June Wandlebury Country Park and scheduled monument guided walk. Meet 7pm at the Education Centre. Car park charges apply.
 20 June Burwell village and castle guided walk. Meet 7pm at St Mary's Church (guide is Barrie Fuller) **Group activity**
 21 and 22 June St Ives town and museum guided walk. 7 – 9.30 pm, Norris Museum, St Ives. Booking essential on 01489 497314
 27 June Durobrivae Roman town guided walk. Register interest by the end of May with the HER team on 01223 728564, email: archaeology@cambridgeshire.gov.uk
 4 July Devil's Dyke guided walk. Meet 7pm at the Burwell Road car park between Burwell and Swaffham Prior
 11 July Castle Camps guided walk. Meet 7pm at All Saints Church. **Group activity**
 15 July Bartlow Hills guided walk. Meet 7pm at St Mary's Church, Bartlow. Booking essential with OA East on 01223 850500
 18 July Car Dyke guided walk. Meet 7pm Waterbeach recreation ground car park.
 22 July Guided walks and exhibitions along the route of the guided busway, 10am – 4pm
 25 July Wisbech guided walk. Meet 7pm at Wisbech & Fenland Museum Wisbech
 25 July Finds identification at the Fitzwilliam Museum, 10am – 12.20pm

28 July Finds identification and hands-on with ancient objects at the Norris Museum, St Ives, 11am – 1pm

Festival of British Archaeology activities include (besides those mentioned above):

Guided walks of Flag Fen 14, 15, 21, 28, 29 July at 11am and 2.00pm

Family archaeology activity day 26 July 12 – 4.00pm, Denny Abbey and Farmland Museum

For details of these and other activities in the region, see: <http://festival.britarch.ac.uk/whatson>

CBA AND CBA EAST

The CBA's application to extend its community archaeology bursaries project has been approved by the Heritage Lottery Fund. This will bring an additional grant of £532,000 to support a further 24 bursary placements over the next two years. It will also enable the CBA to employ a Training Coordinator for the project full-time.

There are more details about the good news on the website:

<http://www.britarch.ac.uk/news/120528-hlfnews>.

Saturday 7th July 2012 For CBA East a behind the scenes tour of Cambridgeshire's Archaeology Store at [Landbeach](#) near Cambridge will be given by Quinton Carroll, the head of Cambridgeshire County Council's Heritage Environment Team. Meet at 10:30 am for a tour lasting approximately 1 hour, booking is essential as numbers are strictly limited. To book your place please email Aileen Connor at: aileenconnor705@btinternet.com or write to her at: OA East, 15 Trafalgar Way, Bar Hill, Cambridge, CB23 8SQ.

LANDSCAPE AND LOCAL HISTORY GROUP

This group, which exists to support researchers, has its next meeting on:

6 June *Cambridgeshire sources for local history*

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

CONFERENCES/COURSES

Weekend course at Madingley Hall (see www.ice.cam.ac.uk for details):

21-23 September *Art on the Rocks – a survey of world rock art*

Historic Environment Research Conference organised by the McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research, at a cost of £43 each: see www.mcdonald.cam.ac.uk/events for further details

9 June *Medieval and Tudor gardens – recent research. At Newnham College*

23 June Stone Age toolmaking class at Butser Ancient Farm,. See:

www.butserancientfarm.co.uk

23-24 June Human remains workshop at Stockwood Discovery Centre, Luton. See:

www.osteologycourses.co.uk

28 July Thetford: The Medieval church in context plus talks and tours of the Medieval town – Society for Church Archaeology, in Thetford. See www.britarch.ac.uk/socchurcharchaeol

EXCAVATIONS

The Fen Edge Archaeology Group are excavating a Roman site in Cottenham from Saturday 7 July to Saturday 21 July and are inviting volunteers. It is not a training dig, but a professional archaeologist will be on hand. If you have not received details, contact the secretary for information.

The Copped Hall Trust Archaeological Project is holding field schools 6 – 10 August and 13 – 17 August investigating the development of a Tudor grand-house from Medieval beginnings. Further details available from the secretary.

DigVentures are holding a field school at Flag Fen from 23rd July to 12th August. For details, go to www.digventures.com and search Flag Fen Lives.

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

NEWS

An Anglo-Saxon “bed burial” of a teenage girl wearing a gold and garnet cross has been found at Trumpington Meadows. These burials are rare, this being the 13th found in the UK. A bed burial was also found some years ago at Barrington.

A unique Y-shaped Romano-British building has been found near *Venta Icenorum* (modern Caister St Edmund), the *civitas* capital of the Iceni. It has no known parallels but appears to have been shortlived and possibly some kind of cult structure.

EXHIBITIONS

Cambridge University Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology re-opened on the 25th May. Open Tuesday to Saturday, 10.30am – 4.30pm

At the National Maritime Museum Cornwall, in Falmouth, a boat can be seen being built in the Bronze Age style, until 30th September.

English Heritage’s museum at Housesteads Roman fort on Hadrian’s Wall has re-opened after redevelopment

At Chedworth Roman villa, Gloucestershire visitors can now see the recently uncovered mosaic floors

LIBRARY ADDITIONS

British Archaeology March/April and May/June 2012,
CBA newsletter April; 2012
CBA Conservation and Communities (issue 16) February 2012
English Heritage Research News spring 2012

Did you know that the “Anglo-Saxon shield” displayed just inside the Bar Hill offices is a x 10 version of an Anglo-Saxon brooch found at Edix Hill cemetery, Barrington in the 1989-91 excavations.

Susan May, Secretary