



CAMBRIDGE ARCHAEOLOGY FIELD GROUP

Newsletter Number 169

November 2012

www.cafg.net

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LECTURES

The next season of lectures will be held at **7.30pm** in the seminar room at the McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research, Downing Street, Cambridge on the dates below. Parking is available on site from Tennis Court Road: press the button by the visitor barrier. The season continues with:

5 December	Robin Standing on "Bumps, bombs and birds: the historic environment of RSPB Reserves"
9 th January	Mike Coles on the Group's fieldwork over the past year, particularly the Haslingfield archaeology project

The normal date for the AGM and lecture in April would be the 3rd. However, this is in Easter week, so the 10th has been booked. The talk by the President will be about the Medieval landscape.

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.

When we have no processing of finds from immediate fieldwork, we will be checking through boxes from earlier fieldwork to decide what should be sent for long-term storage and what is needed for current research.

CHRISTMAS / NEW YEAR SOCIAL EVENTS

We will have an informal social evening at Bar Hill on the 19th December. All welcome, please bring a contribution of food or drink.

A New Year dinner is being organised at The Burleigh Arms, Newmarket Road, Cambridge on 30th January. Choices will be made from the normal menu on the night, for details see http://www.burleigharmscambridge.co.uk/s_foodanddrink.asp. Parking is available. All are welcome, with partners. Please let Heather Berry know by 18th January if you are intending to come: h.l.berry@cantab.net. What do people think about historical fancy dress ?

FINDS WORKSHOPS FOR FIELDWALKERS

A series of workshops for the less experienced fieldwalker (and others) will be held at Bar Hill on the following dates:

16 January	QGIS [digital mapping system] (Peter Cornelissen). As this is computer-based, only a few people can be accommodated, but the session will be repeated.
20 February	bricks (Mike Coles)

CURRENT FIELDWORK

We are currently fieldwalking on the east side of the Childerley estate. On most of the area examined so far there has been little in the way of pottery, but we have one significant scatter of Roman pottery in an area of about 50 metres by 50 metres. We may go back and look at this in 10 metre squares to get a better sample of the pottery types.

We hope to finish this group of fields before Christmas but will take one Sunday morning out to go to Lower Valley Farm, Fulbourn, where John Waterhouse has been negotiating access. This site will be a contrast to the heavy clay of west Cambridgeshire as it is on the chalk uplands, and we could expect prehistoric activity in this area. The expected date is the **16th December**, but watch your emails for confirmation. In the New Year we hope to start fieldwalking on areas of the parish of Wimpole which we have not yet visited: this will be part of our Wimpole Project funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund.

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

As most of you will now know, we have been awarded a Heritage Lottery Fund "All our Stories" grant of £9,300 to investigate the landscape of Wimpole for signs of earlier settlements. We are also grateful to the University of Cambridge's *Cambridge Community Heritage* for their continuing support. Formal publicity was given by the HLF on the 22nd November and we have sent out press releases locally. This project will actually start in January 2013, but a first open meeting for members was held on the 14th November to start detailed planning.

Payment of the full grant will be made at the beginning of the project and expenditure will have to be accounted for under various headings. The meeting considered that a separate bank account is not required as long as everything is properly recorded and controlled.

The project will be split into areas of activity with a co-ordinator for each and Terry Dymott will be the overall co-ordinating project manager. A project steering group will be formed, comprising essentially the activity co-ordinators. At the moment, the activities are seen to be:

- Fieldwork
- Documentary/background research
- Finds
- IT/data control
- Publicity

These will be refined in the course of planning meetings.

Fieldwalking will start at Cambridge Road Farm as soon as practical, but test pitting and any larger scale excavation (which we hope to time for the Festival of British Archaeology next July) needs to be based on research. Consequently, research into the landscape of Wimpole and adjoining parishes needs to start as soon as possible (but noting that no expenditure can be made until January). Any references identifying landholders will be useful, but researchers will need to remember that we are not attempting and do not have the time to write a social history.

The sources already identified for research and the volunteers so far are:

Printed histories of the area
Historic Environment Record
Cambridgeshire Collection
Cambridgeshire Archives
University of Nottingham archives
Cambridge University Library
Aerial photographs
Museum of Archaeology & Anthropology
Fitzwilliam Museum
Folk Museum

Terry Dymott
Susan May, Richard Cushing
Susan May
Mike Coles
Robert Skeen, Barrie Fuller
Richard Cushing
Robert Skeen, John Waterhouse
Barrie Fuller

Local/National Trust information

More volunteers are needed for this phase. If you can help, even if only for a short time, please get in touch. Where volunteers are identified above please contact them directly if you are unable to get to the next meeting. Relevant email addresses are given below. All members working on the same source will need to co-ordinate to avoid duplication.

We are finding ways to contact local people and National Trust staff and volunteers, and Terry has already talked to an enthusiastic Wimpole Parish Council.

Another meeting open to all members will be held on **Tuesday, 18th December at 7.30pm in the McDonald Institute, Downing Street, Cambridge**. Regrettably, parking on site may not be possible. The aim of that meeting is to report on the contacts made so far, to finalise the areas of activity and the responsible persons, and to encourage as many members to take part as possible. Enjoy the challenge !

Barrie Fuller	bf202@cam.ac.uk
John Waterhouse	john.waterhouse@anglia.ac.uk
Mike Coles	michael@coles741.freeseve.co.uk
Richard Cushing	racushing@yahoo.com
Robert Skeen	robertskeen@email.com
Susan May	cafg.may@ntlworld.com
Terry Dymott	terry.dymott@btinternet.com

CONSTITUTION

At its last meeting the committee looked at possible amendments to the constitution, having examined those of similar organisations. The constitution as it stands is enclosed, with suggested amendments highlighted in green. The proposed amendments of substance are

Clause 4	age restrictions – these already appear on the membership application form
Clause 5	addition of appointment of examiner of the accounts by the AGM
Clause 6	form of voting at a general meeting
Clause 9	role of the committee

Other possibilities, which have been considered unnecessary for inclusion in a constitution, are a requirement to take out insurance, and specific provision in Clause 15 for the remainder of Val Whittaker's bequest, as this is believed to be covered by that clause.

The intention is to put the amended constitution before the AGM in April. **Please give the matter some thought and let any member of the committee know if you have suggestions.**

AUTUMN FIELDWORK

Besides fieldwalking at Childerley, this autumn we have spent one weekend digging test pits across geophysics features in fields near Cobb's Wood, Wimpole to establish the degree of preservation of archaeological material in the top soil. We found surprisingly little pottery, but one extraordinary find was a piece of carved bone, perhaps the base of a chess piece.

We also spent a Saturday morning helping the Young Archaeologists' Club fieldwalk in the same general area, using 10 metre squares. The YACs will wash and sort the finds they made and give us a report. We have had thanks from the YAC leaders, the youngsters and their parents for a very enjoyable morning; we hope they may join us again when we are working on the Wimpole Project.

As part of one of our projects we have been able to make use of the metal detecting skills of some of our members. This has produced a fine collection of material: five strap ends of 9th to 14th century date; a very rare horse harness pendant of the 12th century and several items of Roman date, some

of which appear to be military belt fittings. These metal finds need to be drawn and we would be very pleased to hear from any member who has the skills or is willing to learn.

HASLINGFIELD ARCHAEOLOGY PROJECT

Rob Atkins and Mike Coles are writing the report on the dating evidence for the development of the village from fieldwalking over a number of years and this summer's test pitting. The finds from one test pit were displayed as an example at the CAS conference. We plan to hold an event for the village in the New Year and Mike will talk to the Group about it in January.

If you have photographs of your pit that you have not sent in, could you please send them to: michael@coles741.freeserve.co.uk

COMMITTEE MEETING

A committee meeting was held on the 24th October, when paid-up membership stood at 47, of which 10 were family memberships. £58.76 had been paid for website management and maintenance, and funds currently stood at: bank £1,367.74; building society £1,900; cash £61.81. Haslingfield test pit mapping would cost £300, and £42.60 was reimbursed for the test pit handbooks and forms, to be set off against the relevant grant. An application had been made for CBA Challenge funding towards the analysis of the Oily Hall flint.

Forms, flyers and posters for the 2013 Val Whittaker Memorial Prize had been sent out and offers made to Hills Road Sixth Form College and Madingley Hall to talk to students. Jez Davies' report on the uncovering of the mast of The Sheraton was now on the website.

The committee felt that the most needed addition to the constitution was to set out the role of the committee and suggestions were made on what this should be [incorporated into the proposed amendments]. The appointment of the examiner of the accounts ought also to be included. It was confirmed that other similar groups had clauses stating that, in the event of dissolution, any remaining funds were to be transferred to other organisations with similar aims, and that the committee considered that the existing Clause 12 [now 15] would protect the use of the Val Whittaker bequest. The secretary was to draft amendments and circulate them to the committee prior to circulation to the whole membership.

A request had been received from the County Council for a list of materials to be sent for deep storage, but the request needed clarification. It was understood that the National Trust favoured retaining material from their land on site where possible; the possibility of archaeological finds generally being kept in the relevant parish had been raised with the County but rejected.

Website use had been about the same as in the previous three months, and included a youth group in the USA, who had made contact to express their thanks. It was agreed to try to develop a finds archive and to add the membership application form. Any feedback from members would be welcome.

At that point, the results of the HLF grant bid were not known, but letters had been sent out. If the bid was successful, a meeting open to all would be held on the 14th November. The pottery from the Haslingfield test pits had been returned from Paul Blinkhorn and his identification list was being decoded for use in a report. Some of the identified pieces might be kept to enhance the Group's study collection. A rough distribution plan from fieldwalking was also in preparation.

Fieldwalking had started at Childerley and the landowners were now happy for the Group to cover the whole estate. Agreement had been reached for fieldwalking at Lower Valley Farm, Fulbourn, being an area on chalkland for contrast; and plans were also in hand for walking at Cambridge Road Farm, Wimpole. If the HLF grant was forthcoming, an assessment would be made on whether sessions in addition to Sunday mornings would be needed.

The possibility of a commemoration of John Alexander at the CAS autumn conference now looked unlikely, but the chairman asked that the matter should be left on the table for a further six months. It was, however, noted that the McDonald Institute had a John Alexander series of seminars on African archaeology.

The sorting of unclassified pottery from earlier fieldwalking was nearly complete. When it was, the archaeologists at the Historic Environment Record would be approached about publication of the results.

We considered an invitation to comment on a proposal for a *Community Archaeology Magazine*, but the proposed content looked too theoretical to be of interest. We also considered a developing Mesolithic Research and Conservation Framework but, again, felt this was not something to which the Group could contribute at this stage, although it could be investigated later.

We agreed to display photographs and finds from recent work at the CAS autumn conference, but not to give details of any one site, and to use the same display at the Jigsaw winter social. We also considered the Jigsaw training programme for next year and requested workshops on magnetometry, Medieval pot identification and drawing (both site and finds).

The next ordinary committee meeting is due to be held on the 20th February 2013, when any member is welcome to attend.

WEBSITE

Don't forget that you can register to view areas restricted to CAFG members and others specifically authorised. You can do via the website. We now have a new, open, area for *the Wimpole: silent voices and deserted homes* project. Please give us your feedback on the website.

VAL WHITTAKER MEMORIAL PRIZE

On the 3rd October, Jez Davies, the winner of this year's Memorial Prize, outlined his work in uncovering, with a team of others, part of the mast of the steam trawler, The Sheraton, wrecked off Hunstanton. His report is available on the website. Since then he had been invited to dig on The Colossus, a 74 gun ship of the line built in 1787 and wrecked in 1798 off the Scilly Isles and now lying in 17 metres of water.

A LATE ISLAMIC LANDSCAPE AT FREIHA, NW QATAR

Our main speaker on the 3rd October, Gareth Rees from Oxford Archaeology East, spoke to us on: *Pearls in the Desert: investigations of a late Islamic landscape at Freiha, NW Qatar*, a project conducted by the University of Copenhagen with the Qatar Museums Authority. The research centred on the abandoned town of al-Zubarah and its hinterland, which was dotted with villages deserted in the 1970s. The area had a marine economy, with very shallow seas; a coastal belt 1 – 7 metres above sea level with a seasonally inundated zone; but set in a desert landscape with no water courses. Most of the settlements were along the old shoreline and in the Islamic period there was a thin layer of fresh water sitting above the brackish water, but this was now pumped.

Al-Zubarah had been a 100 acre walled town established in 1764 by a tribe with strong ties to Manama in Bahrain, and was a centre of the pearl trade until 1811, when it was burnt to the ground by the Omani navy. It had been a city-state tax haven for merchants from all over the world. A 400 metre square fort, now largely a mound, had been built above the town, at Murayr, with a canal from the sea by-passing al-Zubarah and a series of double walls, possibly for water management.

Freiha lies to the north of al-Zubarah and was founded as a town in the 1750s. It was a smaller settlement and involved in the pearl trade. Its state of preservation varied: the east and south contained mud wall footings and virtually no stone; in the north, masonry stood up to 0.5 metre; while the centre had masonry of up to 1 – 1.5 metres and more stone rubble. It seemed that there had been a southward migration or gradual abandonment. There was a large mosque in the centre,

substantial middens, domestic buildings and rock art on outcrops. The aim of the fieldwork was to test the initial appearance and provide data.

There were 6 phases of domestic buildings. The first, probably post-15th century, were post-built with fire pits for cooking; the second were temporary post-built structures with clay lined basins and fire pits. These were probably being built all along the coast. The third phase brought the first evidence of permanent occupation, with separate external activity areas for cooking, fishing, drinking tea, washing, making charcoal and making mortar. After a hiatus, domestic buildings were stone built, of locally quarried limestone. They now had 2 rectangular rooms and courtyards. External activities were cooking and mortar and charcoal making; internally there were areas for storage, food processing and washing.

Five middens were investigated and contained oyster shell, date stones, lots of fish bones, a little pottery, animal bones, beads and copper alloy weights.

There was only one mosque in this settlement with at least five phases of rebuilding, each followed by abandonment and collapse. It was built of stone and mortar but, possibly related to the constant wind, walls collapsed and sometimes the roof. Multiple post holes in the prayer hall spoke of attempts to support the collapsing roof. Over time the internal design changed and in one phase it was rebuilt on a different alignment. This rebuilding suggests sporadic wealth.

Freiha had a high dependency on the sea and fishtraps were found. There was a single fresh water well, so water may have been brought from inland. It had no field systems, but quern stones were found and a date press, a large number of coins and imported pottery, all suggesting trade links.

A number of teams had been involved in the research of the area and the plan was to put in a heritage trail and apply to UNESCO for World Heritage Status.

RECENT VILLAGE TEST PIT EXCAVATIONS IN EAST ANGLIA

On 7th November, Carenza Lewis outlined the Access Cambridge Archaeology test pitting programme undertaken since 2005 in over 40 currently occupied rural settlements (CORS) in East Anglia where earlier development is hidden, resulting in more than 1,000 pits dug by school children and local people. In the area around Cambridge, test pitting had been undertaken in Great Shelford, Willingham, Cottenham, Girton and Ashwell.

The method of 1 metre square pits dug in 10cm spits with the use of a 10mm sieve as standard where possible was designed to be useable by novices and was not intended for structure recording. Nevertheless the collection of pottery from a wide area was useful for large scale analysis and had led to the recognition of varied settlement patterns, especially for the Anglo-Saxon and Medieval periods.

Carenza explained, with the use of distribution maps, the settlement pattern for several villages as discovered through test pitting. The evidence for two, where pits had been dug from 2007 to 2011, was extensive. In Pirton, west of Ashwell, there was some Roman activity, mostly along the line of a stream but virtually nothing in the centre of the village. There appears to be a new foundation mid C9 – mid C11 and an expansion to the end of the C14, but a contraction in the C15 to the mid C16, when the village picks up again although not to the previous level before the end of the C18.

Carleton Rode in Norfolk demonstrated a dispersed settlement with outlying farms. There was some earlier evidence, but Carleton itself started to come into existence mid C9 – mid C11, although not near the present church. From the mid C11 to the end of the C14, settlement was fairly compact in Carleton Rode and other farm sites, but still almost nothing around the church. The decline in the C15 and C16 saw Carleton back to its Anglo-Saxon levels, but with slightly more evidence round the church and a settlement at Uppgate Street continued. The village filled up again from the mid C16 to the end of the C18, but mainly in the C18, including around the church.

Other villages, and examples were illustrated, showed similar expansion in the High Medieval period, followed by contraction, but Thorney was unusual in having little in that C11 – C14 period but more in the late C14 – C16. Long Melford and Chediston were also exceptions.

Carenza's aim was to research the wider picture of settlement patterns over time and geography. Pottery yields so far, where pits had 2+ sherds, were Anglo-Saxon 12%, high Medieval 41% and late Medieval 21% and the number of discrete settlement elements for the same periods were: 56, 106 and 89, suggesting that many villages were thinned rather than deserted. Villages with Anglo-Saxon elements appeared to be mostly in a swathe south-west to north-east across the region, with virtually nothing in Essex nor fenland, and evidence of the greatest expansion in the high Medieval period seemed to be in a similar swathe. In the late Medieval period the number of pits with 2+ sherds drops as much as 50% in some cases. Test pit evidence mirrored known Deserted Medieval Villages quite well.

Test pitting was an amazingly effective way of reconstructing the past of a village, which could be built up gradually. Results of all the projects are on line at:

www.accesscambridgearchaeology.wordpress.com
www.arch.cam.ac.uk/aca/

JIGSAW CAMBRIDGESHIRE

Training workshops for 2103 are now being planned. If you have particular requests, make contact through the website: www.jigsawcams.org. You are urged to keep checking it for new events.

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 continues with:

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| 7 January | Dr Christopher Chippindale on <i>Ancient violence: pictures of wars and warriors in the prehistoric rock-art of Aboriginal Australia and Alpine Europe</i> |
| 4 February | Peter Studdert on <i>Looking forward – looking back: how contemporary developments in Cambridge are drawing inspiration from the city's architectural past</i> |
| 4 March | Alison Dickens & Dr Sam Lucy on <i>The Trumpington Cross in context: new light on the 7th Century</i> |
| 8 April | Dr Christopher De Hamel on <i>Archbishop Matthew Parker and his manuscript library at Corpus Christi College</i> |

Other events are:

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|-------------|---|
| 26 January | 7 pm, <i>Dinner at Corpus Christi College, Cambridge. Cost £55.</i> |
| 23 February | Day Conference on <i>Cambridge Antiquarians and Archaeologists, 1870-1970</i> |

LOCAL EVENTS

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| 16 March | East of England regional seminar on <i>Roman Rural Settlement</i> , McDonald Institute as part of a Roman grey literature project (formally "Realising the research potential of developer-funded Roman archaeology in England"). By invitation only. Contact Nathan.blick@cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk |
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The Cambridge Archaeology Unit is now digging in North West Cambridge and expects to be able to offer open days and the opportunity for local groups to take part in the spring. Contact will be made with us when details are known.

LANDSCAPE AND LOCAL HISTORY GROUP

This group, which exists to support researchers, meets at Anglia Ruskin University, East Road, Cambridge at 7.30pm. Its next meeting is:

14 March Helen Harwood on *Presenting history – storytelling and facts*

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

CONFERENCES/COURSES

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

8-10 February	<i>Pompeii</i>
15-17 February	<i>Art and poetry in the dream ship from Sutton Hoo</i>
1-3 March	<i>Reading prehistoric figurines</i>
12-14 April	<i>Medieval villages, pastures and fields</i>
28-30 June	<i>The landscapes of Anglo-Saxon England</i>

Madingley Hall short courses of 2 hours per week for 5 weeks start again in January with:

Historic environment: seminar group. Starts 8 January
Humps, bumps, buildings and hedges: walking through history. Starts 20 February

9-10 February 2012, 4-5 May and 22-23 June 2012 Human remains workshops at Stockwood Discovery Centre, Luton. See: www.osteologycourses.co.uk

1 – 2 March *Current Archaeology Live!* At the University of London's Senate House

EXCAVATIONS

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

NEWS

Cambridgeshire County Council :

- is about to undertake an HLF funded project on Cambridgeshire castles
- is taking part in a national audit of Historic Environment Records for a 5 year project "English Landscape and Identities c1500BC – 1086". For details see www.arch.ox.ac.uk
- has signed the Memorandum of Understanding on Heritage Crime. 2 arrests have been made for night hawking at Bartlow

The Bronze Age boats from Must Farm are to be conserved at Flag Fen

LIBRARY ADDITIONS

British Archaeology November/December 2012

Proceedings of the Cambridge Antiquarian Society, Volume CI for 2012

Susan May, Secretary