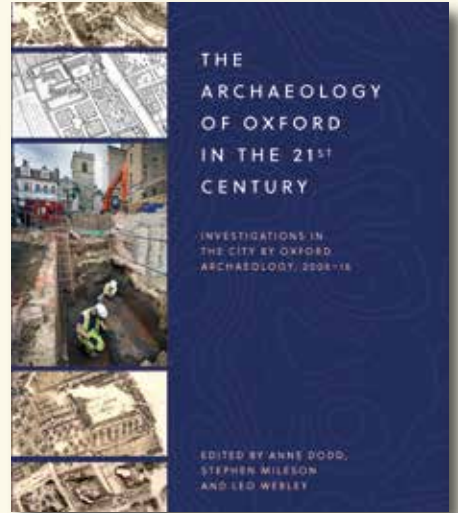


IN TOUCH

Review 2020/21



Editorial

Ken Welsh

We are now nearing the end of a second year of the Covid-19 pandemic and the continuing situation has led to difficulties and challenges for OA as it has for everyone. In spite of this, the past year has been an exceptionally busy one and we have been able to excavate a huge range of fantastic archaeology on some of the biggest construction schemes being undertaken in the country. The range of discoveries that has been made has been astonishing and some of these are described in more detail in this edition. We have also been operating further afield, undertaking extensive surveys in the truly extraordinary archaeological landscape of the AlUla Valley in Saudi Arabia.

Despite Covid-19, we have been able to engage with the public, and while this has often had to be carried out remotely, more recently it has even been possible to meet face-to-face – always an advantage when trying to convey the excitement of discovery. However, we have also held a series of very successful themed research seminars, along with a number of online presentations of the results of specific projects. The big advantage of online seminars is that they open the events up to a much larger audience, and we have seen huge enthusiasm from the public and the archaeological community alike to learn more about what we have been doing. I am quite sure that the future will see us providing a mixture of live and remote events, capturing the best of both formats.

We have also launched a new online library site, which provides much better digital access to thousands of our reports. However, this is only the first in a phase in the development of a new online archaeological resource centre, the OA Knowledge Hub, which we will be rolling out in the coming months.

We have also been focusing on further improvements to our digital recording and mapping system which designed to provide our skilled field archaeologists with the tools they need to ensure the best project outcomes, both for the



archaeology and for our clients. Its use on a large-scale and complex evaluation scheme is described in this edition.

At OA, we have always regarded our staff as our biggest strength and this year has seen us expand our widely admired training schemes to include our experienced Assistant Supervisors, providing them with the skills and knowledge they need to progress in their careers. We now have structured training schemes in place which provide a new archaeology graduate with a career progression pathway from their first paying job in archaeology through to readiness to supervise their own archaeological sites.

Finally, two of OA's longest serving members of staff have retired this year. Gill Hey has stepped down as CEO after eight years in post (and over thirty years at OA) and Simon Palmer (who has been at OA for over forty years!) retired from his role as Chief Financial Officer. They will both be sadly missed.



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OXFORD ARCHAEOLOGY 2020-25

LEADING AND INNOVATING: CREATING AND SHARING KNOWLEDGE

LEADING & INSPIRING



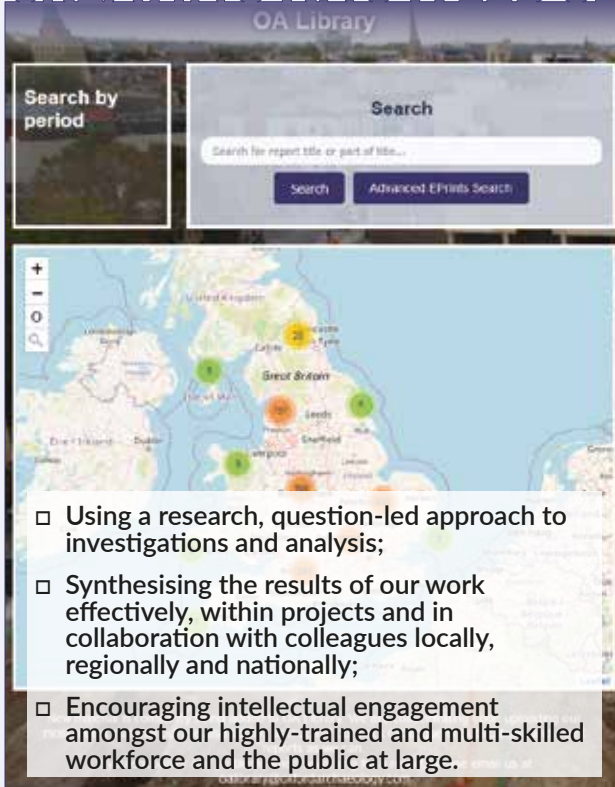
- Being at the forefront of the archaeological profession, promoting the social value of heritage and the application of the highest archaeological standards;
- Providing excellent client service, healthy and safe working and environmental sustainability through our Quality Management Systems;
- Promoting a positive and inclusive environment for all and a culture internally that is enabling, empowering and encouraging.

INNOVATING



- Building on our digital recording and web-based systems;
- Continuous questioning, evaluation and improvement of our processes;
- Being imaginative and radical.

CREATING KNOWLEDGE



- Using a research, question-led approach to investigations and analysis;
- Synthesising the results of our work effectively, within projects and in collaboration with colleagues locally, regionally and nationally;
- Encouraging intellectual engagement amongst our highly-trained and multi-skilled workforce and the public at large.

SHARING



- Externally:**
- Sharing our results as widely as possible, with archaeologists and non-specialists alike;
 - Assisting our clients to use our work to demonstrate the social benefits they deliver;
 - Building bridges with our local communities and organisations, and with the academic communities in our areas.
- Internally:**
- Improving methods of communication across our offices;
 - Extending our training programmes, and improving mentoring and line management support at all levels; and
 - Providing fair terms, conditions and remuneration.

FAREWELL TO... GILL HEY

When we guided Cambridgeshire County Council's archaeological field unit, CAMARC, into the fold to become part of Oxford Archaeology in 2008, Gill was already known to some of us by reputation as a prehistorian or, in my case, author of the Planarch project, which evaluated the effectiveness of archaeological evaluations. On appointment as CEO in 2013 Gill brought an approachability to the role that is a hallmark of the inclusive approach that I feel we now have across the senior management team. Gill wanted to make a difference, most particularly, for the individual. Whether that individual was a team member on an OA excavation, a member of the public encountering our work or fellow academics or professionals, her approach was equally weighted. I believe there has been great strength in our CEO being someone who has dug on sites, who has directed excavations, participated in research, worked on committees and who has chosen to 'do' this thing called archaeology in different places in the world. Gill is engaging and inclusive, but she knows her mind and

is no push over. Great qualities for a CEO and clearly something that underpinned her absolute commitment to the strategic plans she developed and ensured were largely delivered.

At a time when the company was struggling to make its way in an increasingly competitive environment at the 'top end' of commercial contracting, rolling out an agenda of technological change alongside the broadest of wide-ranging inclusiveness, but with the thinnest of available resource post-recession to do this, could have been vastly over-optimistic. Yet, in 2021, here we are, at the top of our profession again in terms of technology, practice and process, with the company having grown larger and more profitable than previously. Much of that is down to our staff, of course, but the vision, drive and commitment of Gill to both conceive and deliver on so many fronts is incontrovertible.

Gill is going to be missed by all of us, but the reason to not fear for OA going forward is that she has made sure that the mission is so broadly shared by so many colleagues. At a personal level, the silver lining is that she intends to stay involved in aspects of archaeology, and perhaps aspects of Oxford Archaeology. Maybe this is only au revoir then – and that has to be a good thing.

Paul Sperry, OAE

Throughout her career, Gill has always been an advocate for women in archaeology. At OA, she consistently championed women's skills and abilities in the company, providing encouragement and support at all levels across the organisation. When Gill became CEO in 2013, and as is still the case today, the senior management positions in archaeology were



overwhelming dominated by men it was refreshing and inspirational to work for one of the few archaeological companies in the UK led by a woman.

Kat Anker, OAS

Gill's recent retirement has resulted in a seismic shift up here in Lancaster. Not only have we experienced a re-shuffle at CEO level, but also at Regional Manager level too. Personally speaking, I'm pleased for Gill that she has



felt able to retire. I'd imagine that steering the charity through the events of the last couple of years has been far from easy. Even before that, though, Gill's schedule looked to me incredibly punishing and I don't know how she had the energy to keep it up for so long. On top of the constant tours between our offices there was also the conferences, academic work, professional advocacy, site tours (including AIUla), and excavations. All that vim and commitment has left a substantial legacy behind and some mighty big shoes to fill.

Gill is not turning her back on archaeology though, and I'm comforted to know that she plans to attend to some worthy causes lurking in the North West's archaeological backlog. It's extremely convenient for us, in Lancaster, that Gill has chosen to make Kendal (just up the road) her main retirement base. As such, we'll, hopefully, continue to benefit from her support, friendship, insight, and archaeological knowledge. I always found Gill to be open, friendly, and down to earth, and I know that she cared passionately about her team, as well as archaeology. Most of all, I have enjoyed all the conversations, over the years, about the Mesolithic and Neolithic, and long may they continue!

Fraser Brown, OAN



SIMON PALMER

May saw the well-deserved retirement of Simon Palmer, our Chief Financial Officer. Simon had been with Oxford Archaeology for an incredible 44 years, beginning his career in 1977 as an archaeologist at what was then the Oxford Archaeological Unit. Before too long, he was directing excavations, and over the years worked on several major sites, particularly in the Upper Thames Valley, among them the Uffington White Horse, prehistoric and Roman landscapes at Fairford, and an Anglo-Saxon cemetery in Lechlade, all resulting in impressive publications.

While at OA, Simon retrained as an accountant and became OA's Chief Financial Officer. In this role, he worked tirelessly to keep us in business and provided much wisdom and sound advice. We will miss him hugely and we wish him all the best for his retirement.



INTRODUCING...

Ken Welsh / Chief Executive Officer

At the beginning of October, Ken Welsh took over from Gill Hey as OAO's Chief Executive Officer.

Although fascinated by archaeology from a young age, Ken initially completed a degree in Environmental Sciences and worked for a short while as a geologist. After responding to an advert in the Guardian, Ken began his archaeological career in 1987 as a volunteer on the excavation of a medieval and Tudor manor house near Bristol. Paid jobs followed, and Ken worked in London, Italy, Sussex and Cambridge before finally joining OA as a Project Officer in 1995. In that role, and subsequently as a Project Manager, Ken has been involved in some of OA's largest projects, including Heathrow Terminal 5 and East Kent Access Road, along with a large number of smaller sites, particularly in the Thames Valley.

In 2016, Ken became Regional Manager of OA South. He also took on responsibility for IT and digital development, giving him the chance to lead the development of OA's successful digital recording system.

As newly appointed CEO, Ken is excited to have the opportunity to build on OA's past achievements and to work with staff, clients and others to ensure its continued success in the future.



Fraser Brown / Regional Manager OA North

Fraser's archaeological career started in 1988, when he volunteered on Manpower Services Commission sites, at Buckland Abbey and then Roadford Reservoir, Devon. Subsequently, he spent several seasons digging at West Heslerton, North Yorkshire, receiving an early introduction to GIS and databasing. Work with various field units followed, interspersed with studies, firstly at Newcastle and then Sheffield universities. Following graduation, Fraser dug in Scotland, the south of England and London, joining OA in 1998. Initially, his main duties were with Framework Archaeology, at Heathrow Terminal 5 and Stansted Airport. In 2003, he made the leap to OA North and never looked back. His time in the north was, at first, spent in post-excavation (PX), authoring monographs. Later, he managed the fieldwork and PX phases for several major infrastructure projects. Most recently, he has mainly been indulging his interests in prehistory, lithics and waterlogged landscapes on the Isle of Man, Caernarfon, Carlisle and Windy Harbour, near to Blackpool. He is also Health and Safety Advisor for OA North.

It was with some trepidation that Fraser assumed the Regional Manager post; his predecessors are hard acts to follow and there will no doubt be some challenges ahead. Fraser would like the Lancaster office to remain a friendly, inclusive, interesting collaborative and fun place to work, so that OA North can continue to attract talented archaeologists into its orbit and help them to progress their careers.



Kat Anker / Regional Manager OA South

At the beginning of September, Kat Anker took over from Ken Welsh as OA South Regional Manager.

Kat grew up in New Zealand and had an interest in archaeology from an early age, spending many an hour scouring her local library for the latest edition of Current Archaeology magazine. After completing a degree in Classical Studies, the closest thing to archaeology she was able to study at the time, Kat relocated to the UK in 1997. She was a little unsure how to break into a career in archaeology, so she enrolled in an MA in Forensic Archaeology at Bournemouth University.

In the summer of 1999, an advert for an English Heritage training excavation was posted on a noticeboard and so began Kat's archaeological career. She spent the next few years on the digging circuit which included several stints working for Oxford Archaeology, before rejoining the company in 2004 as an Assistant Supervisor. Kat spent the next seven years in the field, becoming Senior Project Manager in 2011 and Contracts Manager in 2013.

Looking forward to her new role, Kat is particularly interested in innovating and improving fieldwork processes, communications and outreach at OA South.



Andy Lane / Chief Financial Officer

Andy joined OA in March to take over the financial reins from our long-serving CFO Simon Palmer. Andy is a very experienced financial professional. He joins us after spending the past decade in global roles in the international charity sector. Prior to this Andy worked in industry and business consultancy. As well as financial management, Andy has extensive experience in business change, technology delivery, programme management and digital transformation.

Andy is an economics graduate and he qualified as an accountant in 1996. He is passionate about archaeology and undertook some detailed research on the sector for his MBA dissertation. Andy is currently undertaking part-time doctoral research on digital transformation in the charity sector.

Andy is very excited to be joining OA at such important stage in our history, and is keen to use the skills, experience and insights that he has developed in working with other organisations to help ensure that OA is ready to meet the challenges of the future.



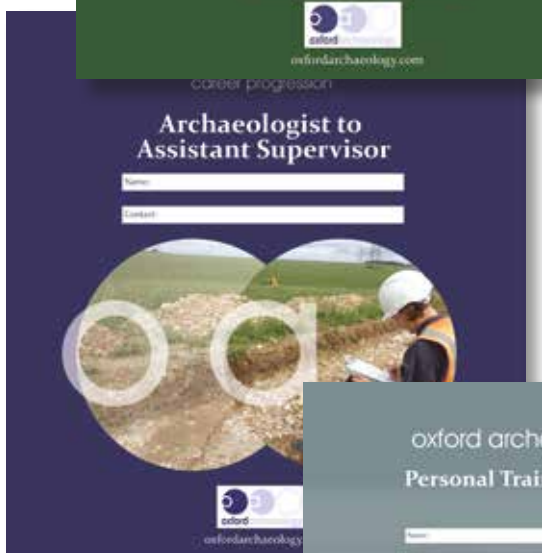
TRAINING: ASSISTANT SUPERVISOR CAREER PROGRESSION PROGRAMME

Gerry Thacker

Following the highly successful – and award-winning – roll-out of our Graduate Trainee and Archaeologist to Assistant Supervisor (A2AS) training schemes, the next stage in our training programme has been launched. This is the Assistant Supervisor career progression programme, which takes staff onwards from completion of the A2AS programme, and helps them to develop the skills, qualifications and experience that would enable them to take on a Supervisor role in the future.

We are committed to providing all fieldwork Assistant Supervisors with a framework for career progression, within which staff can record their ongoing experience and training as they progress within the role. A learning agreement sets out the various goals that Assistant Supervisors need to achieve to progress and are based on a skills and training matrix and job descriptions.

The programme relies on individuals taking a proactive approach to their own learning within a framework of mentoring and formal training, with resources provided by OA.

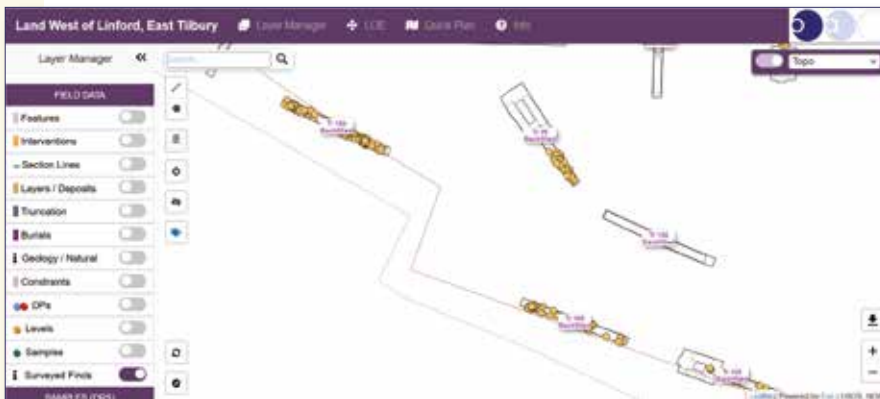


WEBMAP AND DRS DIGITAL RECORD CAPTURE AT LOWER THAMES CROSSING, ESSEX AND KENT

Steve Lawrence

When Oxford and Cotswold Archaeology combined resources as OCA in late 2019 to undertake an evaluation along the route of the Lower Thames Crossing for Balfour Beatty on behalf of National Highways, we were faced with the slightly daunting prospect of having to record and report on approximately 4000 trenches spread along a 14-mile route.

The Lower Thames Crossing is the proposed route of a new motorway and crossing under the Thames that runs from the A2 east of Gravesend in Kent, through a tunnel under the Thames, before emerging on the Thames north bank in Essex. From here it heads north-west, meeting junction 29 of the M25 in the London Borough of Havering. It is an ambitious construction scheme that crosses several different landscapes bearing a wide range of heritage assets.



Project management

Our digital tools – the digital recording system (DRS) and the mapping tool WebMap – quickly became essential to the management and delivery of the fieldwork. They provided the means to measure processes and to generate invoices accurately reflecting the works completed. The approach taken meant that every single trench and all records for each trench needed to be assessed individually to measure how much work had been completed. With the staff and records spread across Essex and Kent and the manager in Oxfordshire, such a task would seem unimaginable without the digital data being available.

Our cloud storage system also had a supporting role. It makes it possible to upload any number of images of trenches and provide the client with a link to view them.

Site data capture

An important part of WebMap and DRS is on-site data capture. Control of data entry is essential, as this is perhaps the one area

Context No.	Type	Fill Of	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Description	Plan #s	Section #s	Comments	Date
10400	layer	10400	2.00	0.33	Ploughsoil	-	-	Very loose dark grey brown silty clay.	20/07/21
10401	layer	10401	-	0.11	Subsoil	-	-	Friable mid buff brown silty clay.	20/07/21
10402	layer	10402	-	-	Other Layer	10400, 10401	10404, 10405, 10406	Flint scatter event.	20/07/21
10403	cut	-	0.48	0.34	Ditch	-	10405	Present in flint grid ACB.	06/08/21
10404	fill	10403	0.48	0.24	Dolberche Backfill	-	10405	Mic blackish grey sandy silt.	06/08/21

where significant errors or deficiencies may become apparent. In the case of LTC, this was managed directly on site, with the fieldwork director providing tuition and guidance to the site supervisors for them to disseminate to the staff. The importance of this cannot be underestimated, as creating consistency in approach across such a large project was no mean feat.

An archaeological tool

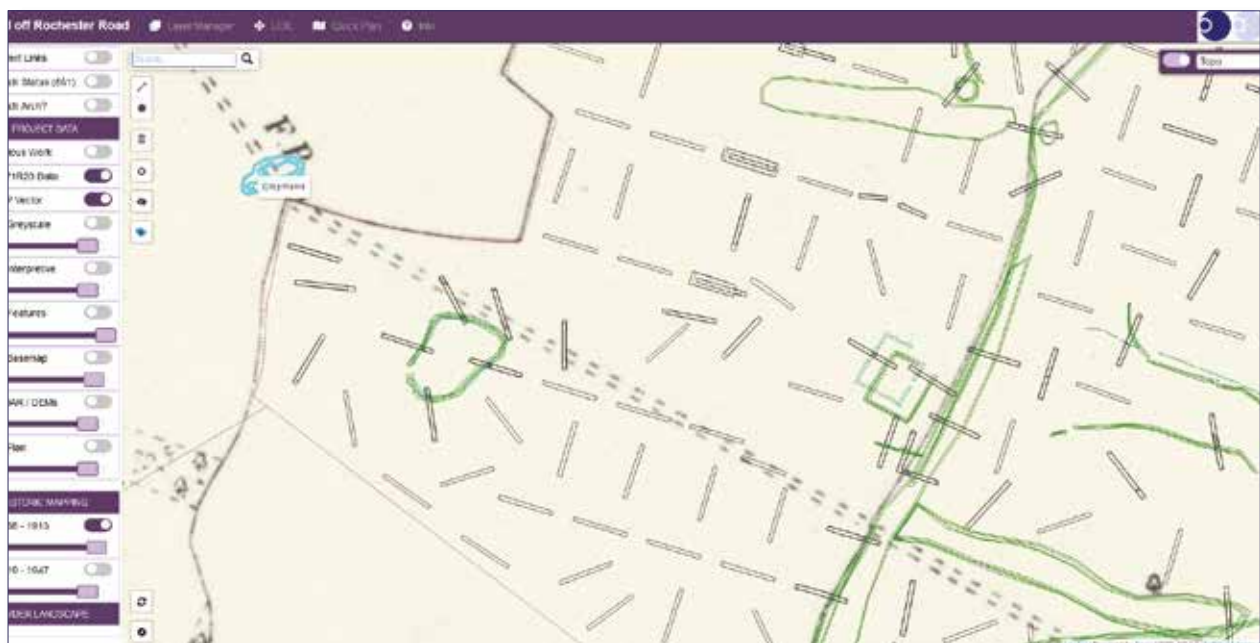
The exciting aspect about WebMap is that it can be used as a live tool when excavating and recording the archaeology. All staff are able to access data live on site. This has proved to have many benefits, not least in engaging staff more effectively in what they are trying to achieve in a single trench that may be one of 500 or so in that area. It is very easy in large evaluations for staff to get 'lost' in the project and for them to not fully understand what they are trying to achieve beyond recording their individual trench. By having WebMap available staff can take an independent approach to understanding the setting of their trench in the wider landscape and help interpret features in relation to surrounding results.

The use of WebMap as an archaeological tool is not limited to the site staff. It can be used to engage with external stakeholders for differing purposes. It provides a remote means allow the planning archaeologists to view results and provide comments, as well as to sign-off individual trenches. We have successfully kept pace with the client's programme partly due to this ability to provide quality information remotely. It has provided planning archaeologists with the confidence they need to confirm that OCA has completed the works without the need for multiple visits each week. WebMap has been a very valuable tool in presenting the up-to-date interim results at the regular stakeholder meetings.



Conclusions

The accessibility and functions of WebMap, DRS and the cloud combine to provide extremely useful tools to help manage and run all aspects of a large and complex project like LTC. What's more, the tools can be applied to any project successfully with the correct supporting skills and training in place. The result is a better set of records being available for on-site interpretation and a high-quality primary archive being produced from the outset. Site staff also get better quality on-site training and experience. ■



THE FUTURE OF DIGGING? AN ELECTRIC JCB

Gerry Thacker

At OA, we like to keep abreast of the latest innovations, and an on-going project for Cherwell District Council has allowed us to consider new options for excavation.

Recently, OA South was invited to undertake an evaluation at the site of St Edburg's Priory, founded in Bicester in AD 1182-5. The site is now covered by Bicester Library, which was known from previous work contain the remains of the priory complex, including parts of the church. The current project, ahead of library redevelopment, aimed to locate any further remains associated with the priory and inform the strategy for further work.

Unusually, the team from OA South had to work inside the former library building. Given these constraints, we sourced a two-tonne electric excavator from our regular plant supplier David Beecroft Ltd to undertake the mechanical excavation safely inside the library building. Being electric, the machine was emission free, which means there were no issues regarding pollution and the build-up of



exhaust fumes and hence there was no need to use any extractor fans.

The electric digger performed well, being at least as powerful as conventional machines. The only problem we had was with the height of the library doorway, which required a little bit of modification before we could get the machine inside! ■

OA RESEARCH SEMINARS

Liz Popescu

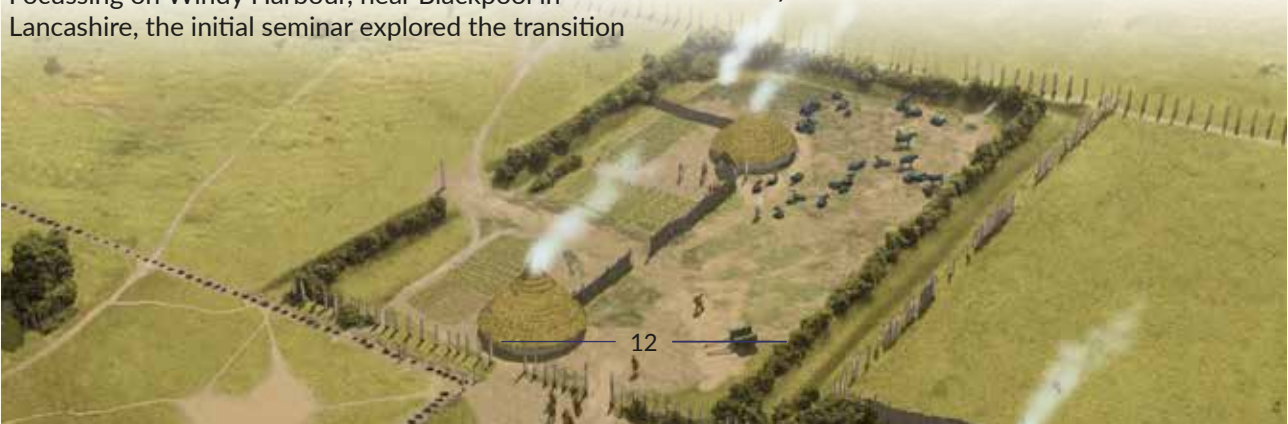
Launched this year, the OA Research Seminar series showcases OA's work across all periods over wide geographical areas. The underlying concept reflects our strategy to use a research-led approach to our work and to engage creatively with a wide range of audiences: staff, colleagues, students and the academic world, Development Control Officers, consultants and the general public. Digital delivery ensures that we achieve a local, regional and national reach.

The talks are presented by OA Project Managers and Project Officers. Each seminar is chaired by a respected academic in the relevant field, often an OA Trustee and/or member of our Research Committee, reflecting our widespread links with universities. They are supported by an expert panel of staff and external researchers who are able to answer questions in a live setting. Recorded versions are available on our website (<https://oxfordarchaeology.com/research-publication>).

Focussing on Windy Harbour, near Blackpool in Lancashire, the initial seminar explored the transition

from hunter gathering to farming from the Mesolithic to the Bronze Age. The second meeting examined a key period of settlement pattern change across southern Britain during the middle Bronze Age – at this time, settlements and field systems become more apparent in the archaeological record and show regional diversity. Following our chronological approach, the third seminar dealt with perceptions of Iron Age farmsteads in East Anglia, Essex and the Upper Thames Valley and questioned previous interpretations of settlement density and inter-relationships; no longer can these be interpreted simply as self-sufficient family units. New evidence has important implications for issues such as social relationships beyond the household, animal and crop husbandry, seasonality and landscape usage.

All the seminars have been well received, attracting audiences of more than 500 people. Three seminars will be held each year with the next one – on a Romano-British subject yet to be decided – planned for January 2022. ■



OA KNOWLEDGE HUB

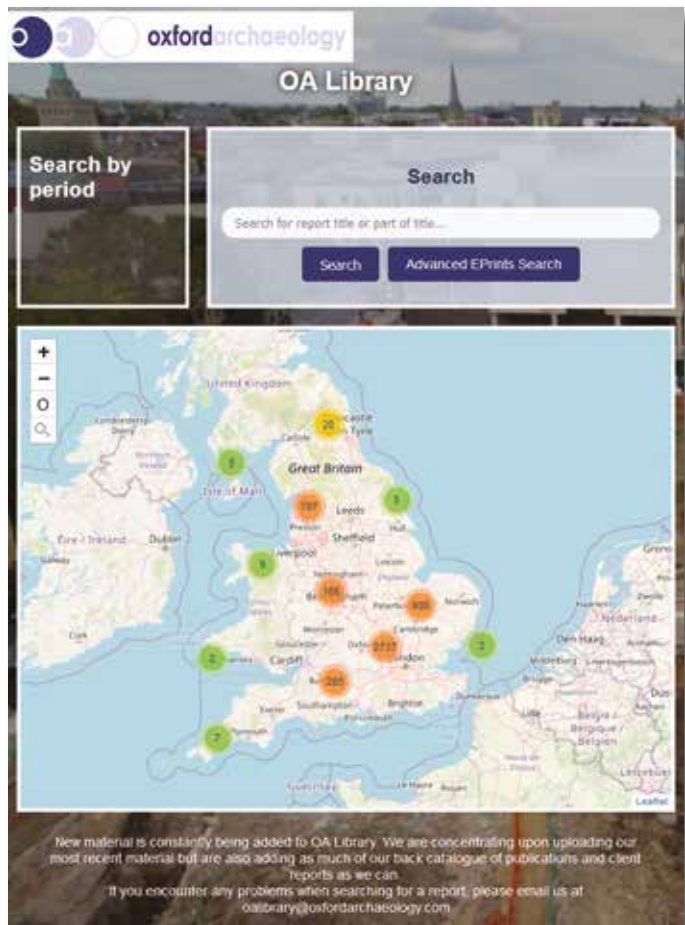
Liz Popescu

OA's Knowledge Hub is an ongoing strategic project which will set us apart from our competitors. It will emphasise OA's expertise across a wide range of landscapes, geographical areas, site types and specialisms, as well as reflecting our standing as a national leader in archaeological publication, research and community engagement.

The idea is to create a new interactive hub as a conduit for our work, reaching all our target audiences, linked to OA's strategy and our publication approach. It will consist of six elements, based around a searchable map of our sites and projects: publication, OA Library, our digital research archive, research case studies, outreach and, ultimately, a virtual museum.

The OA Library has already been given a new search interface and interactive map for the 5,000 items it contains. Work is progressing on creating a distinctive design for the hub pages, developing ideas for content (including interactive items for specific projects) and a redesign of the publication pages.

<https://library.oxfordarchaeology.com/> ■



HIGHWAY TO HULL: EXCAVATIONS AT HULL TRINITY BURIAL GROUND

Lauren McIntyre



The on-site osteological laboratory; Below: Osteologist assessing skeletal remains on site

Back in 2015, OA undertook a trial-trench evaluation within Trinity Burial Ground, Hull. The site is one of several heritage assets that partially lie within the footprint of National Highways' A63 Castle Street major improvement project which will see a new junction and underpass created in the city centre. We've been working with Balfour Beatty (the principal contractor for the scheme) on archaeological aspects of the project for five years now, so it was exciting to start the excavation in October 2020.

Team effort

Holy Trinity is the larger of Hull's two urban parishes, covering 900 acres that include the southern part of the densely populated Old Town, as well as the areas to the west that saw extensive and rapid urban expansion during the 18th and 19th centuries. At the heart of the Old Town since the days of Edward I, Holy Trinity is England's largest parish church and has now been given minster status. By the late 18th century, the medieval graveyard was unable to accommodate Hull's dead, their numbers swelled by the rapidly growing populace of the industrialising and expanding port town. Trinity Burial Ground was thus opened in 1785 on what was then the western edge of town and was in use until 1861. During those 76 years, over 43,000 burials were recorded



on the parish register and, although it is known that some of those people were interred in the medieval cemetery, the majority are thought to lie within Trinity Burial Ground. To date, the team recovered the remains of some 9250 individuals, all of which being subsequently reinterred in the reburial trench along the southern edge of site.

About 40%, or 3000m², of the burial ground has been excavated within large tents that ensure that

the works are private; this is a legal requirement, as exhumation of human skeletal remains is always to be screened from public view. At the peak of the fieldwork, our team comprised over 90 staff, all working with full regard to Covid measures. It's very much been a collaborative effort, with staff from Lancaster, Cambridge, Oxford, from York Archaeological Trust, as well as Humber Field Archaeology, our partners on the scheme. Plant, technical support, and spoil management was provided by Balfour Beatty.

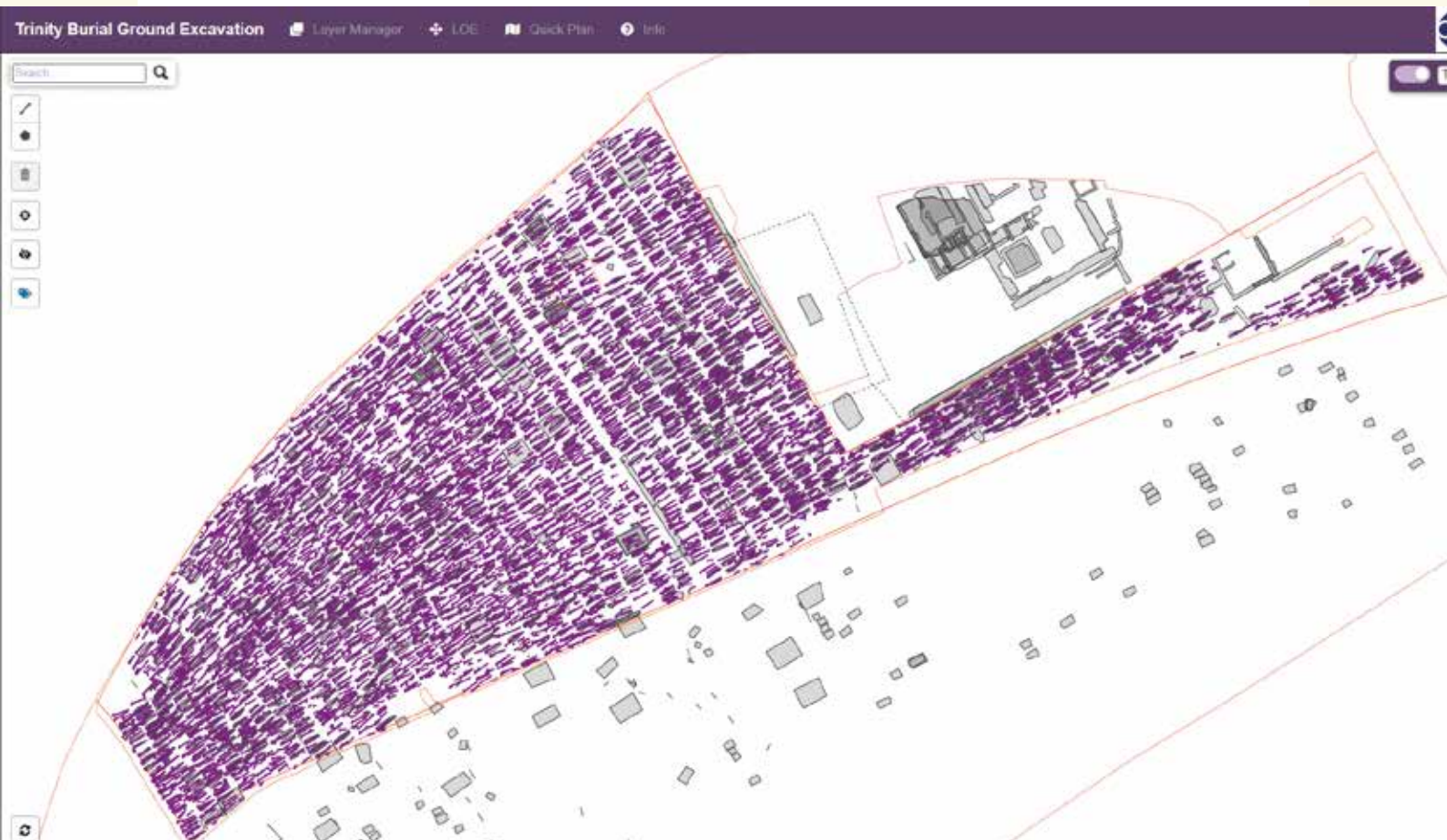
To give an idea of scale and the tough task we had, the team was lifting around 300 burials per week at the height of the excavation. The burials were primarily earth-cut graves, though brick tombs were also found in the central portion of site. Clearance of graves also revealed pre-cemetery features, including a large undated pit, possibly for retting (processing of flax in textile manufacture), as well as several ditches that contained medieval pottery.

Going digital

Skeletons were assessed in situ and the results recorded on our new burials database (BD), along with all the contextual data pertaining to each grave. Our existing Digital Recording System (DRS) is fully integrated with all contextual data on BD, resulting in an innovative and cohesive digital archive. Additionally, survey data was uploaded to our digital WebMap on a weekly basis, making it possible to see our progress week by week. ■



Digital recording using Burials Database; Below: The Trinity Burial Ground excavation as seen on the OA Webmap



HINKLEY POINT C CONNECTION, SOMERSET

Stuart Foreman and Bob McIntosh

After more than two years in the field, the epic excavations along a cable route through the Mendips for Balfour Beatty on behalf of National Grid finally came to an end, successfully hitting a long-standing deadline at the end of August. Many thanks are due to the whole team for their achievement, especially given that much of the work coincided with the Covid-19 pandemic and some of the wettest weather on record. A huge volume of soil was moved by hand following meticulous recording, particularly in the final months.



Excavating an Iron Age crouch burial from the cluster pit; Below: One unusual inhumation



Bodies in pits

The cable route encountered three substantial Bronze Age and/or Iron Age sites, all within 5km of each other and within sight of a prehistoric hillfort. The three sites, taken together, span more than a thousand years of settlement in the valley. A linked programme of geoarchaeological borehole studies, now complete in the field, is expected to help reconstruct the evolving landscape of the Lox-Yeo valley and the adjacent Somerset Levels.

At the top end of the valley, perched on a plateau outside the ramparts of the hillfort, we found traces of a Bronze Age settlement comprising timber roundhouses and four-post structures, pits and boundary or drainage ditches. Our pottery specialists have had a look at the pottery from this site and provisionally date it to the late Bronze Age. Similar material has been found at nearby prehistoric hillforts, which occupy hilltops along the limestone ridge of the Mendips, most of which have evidence for Bronze Age (and earlier) activity pre-dating their Iron Age hillfort phases.

Perhaps most excitingly, at the bottom end of the valley and next to the river, we found an intriguing Iron Age funerary site consisting of a tightly packed cluster of about 100 large pits, 10 of which contained adult human burials. Most of the burials were more-or-less crouched, but one looks as though he had been tipped into the pit head-first! Weird burial practices are a well-known feature of the later prehistoric period. They may include pre- and post-depositional manipulation of body parts, exhumation, messing around with bones and redeposition. Were these practices intended to insult enemies and outcasts, venerate ancestors or were they forms of human sacrifice? It is hoped that this new discovery will shed light on these questions.

Thank the gods (or god) for the Romans

At a site near Winscombe, we now have a fully recorded settlement sequence extending from the late Iron Age to the post-Roman period. The best-



It is at the start of the 4th century that there seems to have been a dramatic intensification in activity. A new cobbled road was built through the settlement, and for several decades thereafter, successive stone buildings jostled for the best position on the street frontage, sometimes encroaching onto the road itself. A glass bowl, now in the Ashmolean Museum, engraved with hunting scenes and made in the period around AD 320-330 was found in the northern part of the settlement in 1956 and serves to illustrate the

preserved and most complex part of the site has more than 30 distinct layers of archaeology stacked on top of each other in a 1m-thick sequence.

The Roman settlement seems to have commenced in the late 1st century but was quite low status initially, with no evidence for stone buildings and rather limited artefact assemblages. The settlement expanded substantially during the middle Roman period (2nd-3rd centuries AD) and may have reached its maximum extent at this time. The settlement experienced periodic flooding, which had to be managed by the excavation of large flood defence ditches.

enhanced status, prosperity, and connections that this settlement enjoyed.

After the Romans

We found no evidence for post-Roman buildings or even continued maintenance of the road. However, we found post-Roman artefacts in soils that developed after this part of the settlement had been abandoned, including a 6th-century finger ring and a 7th-century sword scabbard chape. A monastery was located nearby, and it is possible that this developed from the northern core of the settlement. ■

VIEW FROM THE SITE *Bob McIntosh*

The site near Winscombe was without a doubt the most daunting, challenging but also rewarding project I have ever had the pleasure of running. Initially I thought I was taking over a project that appeared to be a cobbled Roman road, a few staff and some Roman coins, but then, just as Covid-19 hit, this quickly ballooned into a couple of hundred metres of exceptionally well-preserved Roman settlement and a large team of 35 archaeologists. I think it is fair to say that the excavation turned out to be a success. Not only was the archaeology incredible, but in excavating it I had a hand in training many of the next generation of archaeologists and supervisors, and in this I take great pride.



Excavating one of the many Roman structures; Right: Selection of Roman finds

INTRODUCING HS2: EXCAVATING FLEET MARSTON

Carl Champness and Stuart Foreman

Over the last year a team from OA South has been excavating an important site for Fusion JV at Fleet Marston, Buckinghamshire, which represents one of HS2's flagship archaeological projects along its southern section.

The site at Fleet Marston is in an area we know very well from our extensive excavations at the adjacent Berryfields development, investigated between 2007 and 2016. As at Berryfields, the current site comprises a Roman settlement that was established along Akeman Street, a major Roman road running between the Roman towns at Alchester (near Bicester) and Verulamium (St Albans), but is located closed to its core, being concentrated around the junction of Akeman Street with several branch roads.

The excavations have revealed a series of enclosures, forming a ladder-like pattern either side of Akeman Street. The width of the road was not uniform across the site, being narrower at the western end of the site. Towards the eastern end of the area, the road widened by some 8m. The reason for this difference is not clear, but it may relate to the nature of the activities taking place in this area; more space may have required, for example, to accommodate a bustling market or other commercial activities. Such activity is suggested by the recovery of metal

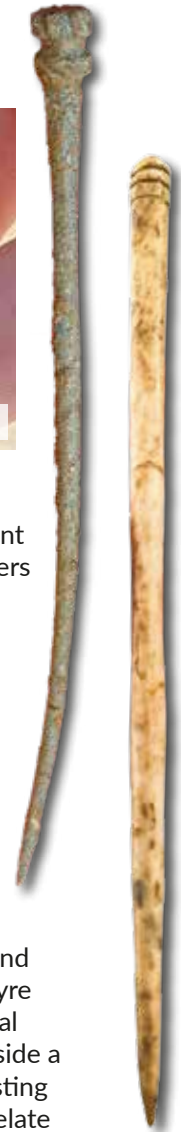


Lead gaming dice; Right: A bone and metal pin

objects like a gaming dice, various lead weights and over 1200 coins would. It is thought that the settlement represented a staging post for travellers or soldiers on their way to Alchester, which would have been about day's march away.

The Roman coin evidence suggests that the settlement in the area exposed in the current site was occupied from the mid-2nd century until the late 4th century AD.

The settlement appears to have been established across an earlier Roman burial ground, as suggested by the discovery of four cremations and a pit containing a dump of possible pyre material. Importantly, this earlier burial ground would have probably lain outside a contemporaneous settlement, suggesting that the later Roman roadside plots relate to a period of settlement expansion.



Excavation of the Roman cemetery





Akeman Street;
Below: A samian ware decorated bowl



Evidence of quarrying relating to gravel extraction was identified on a low hill, 200m south of Akeman Street. The gravel is thought to have been used for the construction or maintenance of the road surfaces of Akeman Street and other roads revealed elsewhere on the site. A nearby gravel surface produced a large quantity of hobnails and cattle horns and may have been a temporary work surface utilised by military personnel. In addition to the quarrying remains, a stone-built corn-dryer (or perhaps malting oven) was also uncovered in this area.

An area of later Roman burials forms another exciting discovery on the hill. Indeed, it is now evident that the burials lay within two discrete cemeteries. The number of burials suggest that there was a population influx in the later Roman period, accompanied by a reorganisation of the settlement hinterland. The cemeteries overlie a series of ditched enclosures dating to the Iron Age, though it is too early to determine if the earlier evidence relates to settlement, funerary or other types of activity. Together, the cemeteries contained around 425 burials and constitutes the largest known Roman cemetery in Buckinghamshire.

Nails were recovered from many of the inhumation burials, attesting to the use of coffins. In the base of some graves, stones appeared to have been deliberately placed around the edges. Few of the burials contained grave goods, but where present these include a whetstone, coins, beads, and bone objects. The paucity of hobnails within the burials is also notable, suggesting that many of the individuals were not buried with their shoes. Approximately 10% of the burials comprised decapitated individuals, with several instances of the head having been placed between the legs or next to the feet also being recorded. That these remains represent the burial of criminals or other type of outcast is one interpretation, although decapitation is well-known elsewhere and appears to have been a normal, albeit marginal, burial rite during the late Roman period. The burials provide a picture of the lives and beliefs of the community that lived at the roadside settlement of Fleet Marston. No doubt assessment and detailed analysis of the burials and other evidence will reveal many more secrets yet. ■



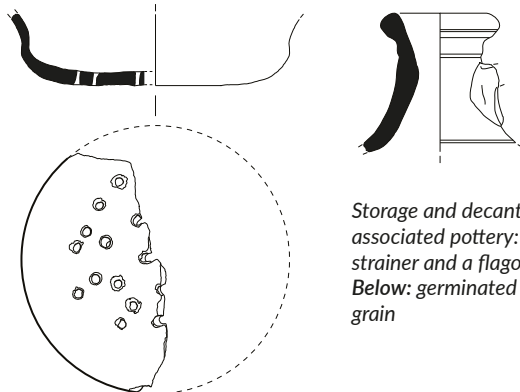
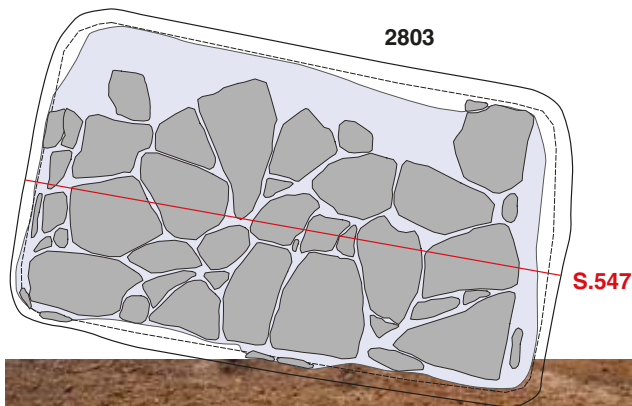
Corn dryer

CRANFORD BUSINESS PARK, NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

Graeme Clarke

Back in 2016, a team from OA East excavated a Roman-period site at Hanwood Park (formerly East Kettering), North Northamptonshire, for RPS on behalf of Hanwood Park. The team uncovered compelling evidence for malt production in the form of abundant germinated spelt wheat in association with clay and stone-lined steeping tanks, and a balancing pond.

A neighbouring site at Cranford Business Park, overlooking Hanwood Park, provided further evidence for malt production. Excavations for RPS on behalf of Roxhill revealed a late 1st to late 2nd-century enclosure, which contained an array of corn-drying ovens, and two clay-lined tanks with carefully constructed stone floors. Significantly, these were identical to the steeping tanks at Hanwood Park. One also produced a large assemblage of mostly germinated wheat grains, along with an interesting collection of ceramics, whose secrets have been revealed during post-excavation analysis.



Storage and decanting associated pottery: a strainer and a flagon; Below: germinated spelt grain



The pottery derived from very large storage jars, which may have held liquids, and at least two miniature jars or cups that may have been used to measure out their contents. Vessels associated with the storage and decanting of liquids, such as flasks, flagons, and a greyware strainer, were also present. Interestingly, analysis of the residues on the strainer and flagons revealed an absence of the animal fats found more widely on the pottery from this site, confirming their association with the steeping tank and the malting process. Several of the jars had an external grey or taupe residue, reminiscent of beer-stone, a scale forming on the surfaces of brewing apparatus.

Steeping tanks, such as those from Hanwood Park and Cranford Business Park, have rarely been excavated. The examples from the two sites represent important additions to the small corpus and indicate that malt production, probably for brewing, was an important element of the Roman-period economy in the Kettering area. ■

Corn dryer during excavation



DRAYTON LODGE, BANBURY, OXFORDSHIRE

Carl Champness

During 2021, a team from OA South excavated a 10ha site in Banbury, Oxfordshire, as part of a new housing development for Vistry Homes. Geophysical survey and evaluation indicated that the site Drayton Lodge had clear archaeological potential, and subsequent large-scale excavation has allowed the full picture to emerge.

Prehistoric activity is represented by an array of postholes and pits. These seem to form two groups of features, one seemingly defining a timber structure, whilst the other, represented by two parallel lines of posts or pits, probably forms a pit alignment. The date of these features is uncertain, but evidence for prehistoric activity, located in the northern part of the site, can be more confidently dated to the Iron Age. The evidence comprises a small oven or kiln, a fence-line, and a circular timber structure. Slag was recovered from some of these features, suggesting that this area was associated with metalworking.



Plan of Drayton Lodge excavation;
Left: Spindlewhorl and excavation of
unfired clay loom weights

Evidence for Roman activity was concentrated to the west. There, a metallised surface was covered by a large spread of semi-organic material that produced a wealth of Roman pottery and other remains. This surface might represent the remains of a Roman threshing floor, or part of an agricultural structure. What is more, the team uncovered a potential stone-lined corn dryer next to this surface, along with two inhumation burials and a dense cluster of quarry or rubbish pits.

The excavation also revealed some exciting evidence for Anglo-Saxon archaeology relating to a small 'village'. This village contained 16 sunken featured buildings (SFBs), some of which seem to have been either deliberately or accidentally burnt down. These buildings produced a wealth of personal objects, including a bronze brooch, several bone combs and needles, fired and unfired clay spindle whorls, along with pottery and residual or reused Roman and Iron Age finds. ■

DORSET VISUAL IMPACT PROVISION

John Boothroyd

This year saw the completion of our excavations along the route of the Dorset Visual Impact Provision, excavations that began in July 2019. As the project progressed, we moved away from investigating remains of prehistoric date and turned our attention to a small Roman settlement and an early medieval cemetery.

From the outset, we had been under the impression that activity at our Roman settlement site was focused on agricultural processing, this interpretation being strengthened with two of the final features excavated: impressive corndriers or malting ovens. These structures complemented smaller ovens already exposed, as well as eight fairly simple stone buildings, which we suspect had wooden superstructures and thatched roofs, indicated by a lack of roof tile, that formed the settlement. The perceived scale of crop processing appears to go far beyond the needs of the settlement identified, suggesting production to feed into the wider community, potentially including a supply to Durnovaria (Roman Dorchester), located only 5km to the north-east.



The final key excavation area began just before Christmas. During the evaluation works, seven inhumation burials – four juveniles in cists and three adults – were identified cutting through an earthen bank. The bank was ‘L’ shaped in plan and enclosed an incredibly exposed hilltop, an ideal site location for some winter working. Stripping of the hilltop exposed a small cemetery comprising 132 graves, with several containing two individuals, resulting in a total of 136 inhumation burials. As with the remains identified during the evaluation, the graves were a mix of cists and simple earth-cut features with nearly all remains in a supine extended (that is, on their back) or flexed position, except one individual which was

prone. Graves goods were extremely limited, but a small number of brooches and a couple of knives were recovered. The graves were arranged in rows and followed the alignment of the bank, indicating a structured and managed cemetery.

Nine of the individuals had been buried in a crouched position in small graves, which were either sub-circular or square. These burials were located away from the main cemetery and the bank, and, although not confirmed, are suspected to be of Bronze Age date; struck flint was recovered from these graves.

Radiocarbon dating of one of the extended or flexed inhumations from the evaluation returned a date of cal AD 660-770. Saxon migration into West Dorset is not supposed to have occurred until the mid-late 7th century, meaning that our individuals could be some of the remaining post-Roman occupants of the area or some of the earliest Saxons. There is very known activity of this date in the vicinity of the site and currently no suggestion as to where these individuals may have come from. The small village of Portesham, approximately 3.5km to the east of the site, is believed to have originated as a Saxon minster, while excavation undertaken in the early 2000s identified burials of 6th/7th-century date. However, this is some distance from our site. As we move into the post-excavation analysis phase, the origin of the individuals and the longevity of the cemetery will be key research questions.

I would like to thank the team for all their hard work over the two years, as well as National Grid and Morgan Sindall for all their support in facilitating the works. ■



A Roman corndrier or malting oven during excavation



One of the hilltop burial containing two inhumations; Left top: General view of the cemetery; Left below: Team photo, overlooking the scheme



MARKET SQUARE, CAMBRIDGE *Gareth Rees*

In the spring of 2021, a team from OA East was presented with a rare opportunity by Cambridge City Council, to undertake a survey in central Cambridge, which was designed to record the Grade II listed granite setts that form the surface of Market Square. The setts (and also a central fountain) were constructed in 1855/6 following a fire, and they lie at the heart of the Cambridge Conservation Area. With redevelopment plans in the pipeline, Historic England were keen to understand their layout and state of preservation before they approved any changes as part of the proposed redevelopment of this historic area.

The survey aimed to provide a 3D model, with 2mm resolution, by photogrammetrically mapping the

location of each sett. Initially, we thought that the surveying would be slightly simplified owing to Covid regulations, which meant that most of the stalls would be closed. Just before we started work, however, the food stalls in the market reopened, which meant our plans had to change quickly. Fortunately, we managed to work around the traders by constantly shifting our fencing, starting early in the mornings (although even 6am was not quite early enough to beat some of the traders) and working late into the evenings.

All of this meant that we had to separate the survey area into 28 separate models, which we pieced back together into one contiguous model. The work has also involved masking out pub-revellers who strayed into shot, as well as rogue vegetables lying around the greengrocers' stalls, which are now digitally pickled for prosperity in high resolution! ■



The 3D model showing the setts and the fountain

CHESTER NORTHGATE *Rachel Newman and Paul Dunn*

Archaeological investigation of the Chester Northgate project began in 2020, following a long development process on behalf of Cheshire West and Chester Council, involving detailed design to limit the amount of disturbance to the Roman legionary fortress, part of the Area of Archaeological Importance, one of only five such designated urban sites in the country. The bulk of the fieldwork was contracted by Vinci Construction, the principal contractor. The work involved Phase 1 of the redevelopment, within the legionary fortress, and the off-site drainage and cable routes leading from the scheme, extending through the medieval city.

Small-scale excavations were undertaken within the fortress, where the development could not be lifted above the 'archaeological plane', below which significant archaeology was likely to be present, accompanied by a general watching brief of this and the off-site work. Floors and upstanding walls of a barracks were exposed in the north of the site along the length of a surface-water drain, with wall plaster, including some with rare blue paint. To the east of this, in a service trench and the main basement area, the remains of an unusual building close to the central range of the fortress were revealed, thought to be part of a stores complex, next to a road. This was unexpected, as the area had been excavated in the early 1980s, but clearly had not been fully explored, as part of a kiln was identified. Both these sites produced some interesting finds, including a small gaming piece.

The watching brief on the off-site work, largely along St Martin's Way, immediately to the west, showed that the fortress ditch had been completely obliterated by cellars of post-medieval buildings that had fronted the former Linenhall Street and St Nicholas Street.

With fieldwork drawing to a close, post-excavation assessment of the results is currently underway. ■

Selection of finds from the excavation



SADLER BRIDGE STUDIOS, DERBY

Richard Gregory

While the process of archaeological excavation is often a rapid act, bringing a project to completion can sometimes take many years, and this was certainly true of an excavation undertaken in central Derby, at a small site that is now home to Sadler Bridge Studios. This site lies at corner of two of Derby's former medieval streets, Sadler Gate and Bold Lane, and back in 2009 OA North was invited by Derby City Council to excavate several small trial trenches, to see if any significant archaeology survived. This proved to be the case and so, after a four-year break, we returned to complete a larger excavation.



With the fieldwork complete, the archaeology recorded, and the finds and samples collected and processed, a post-excavation assessment report was then rapidly produced, which recommended analysis and publication of the results. However, the project then stalled once more, and it was not until 2019 that we were finally commissioned to complete the project, and this has just been finished, resulting in an archive report, publication in the Derbyshire Archaeological Journal, and the safe deposition of the archive with Derby Museum.

The excavations uncovered excellent evidence for 12th-14th-century activity within two burgrave plots behind the medieval buildings that once fronted Sadler Gate. Within one plot, there were two medieval outbuildings, one a workshop associated with iron production and smithing, the first medieval building of this type to be excavated in central Derby. The site also contained a series of large pits that had been filled with ordure and rubbish. These pits contained a wealth of environmental information. This included preserved plant remains, indicating that the townspeople ate oats, rye, and bread wheat, as well as peas/beans, which were grown directly in the plots. Wild plants, such as elderberries and blackberries, formed another element of the diet, and imported figs were also consumed, probably when native fruits were not available. A selection of common medieval culinary and medicinal herbs was also recovered, including hemlock, henbane and black nightshade, which are all plants requiring careful preparation to dissipate their poisonous properties.

In addition to the plants, the pits also contained numerous animal bones. These indicate that cattle, sheep and pigs were cooked, and that fish was another element of the medieval diet. Although some sea fish were recorded, the majority were freshwater fish. These were probably from the Derwent, and, unusually, they were very small in size, and so must have been caught using some very fine nets.

With results like these, the archaeological work was well worth the wait. ■



Above: Figs pips from a pit; Left: The excavation trench in central Derby

WINDY HARBOUR, LANCASHIRE

Fraser Brown

Excavations continued during 2021 for National Highways and Kier Highways along the route of the Windy Harbour road scheme. The route of the road transects a lobe of land that extends into the Lytham-Skippool Valley. The previous year's excavations to the south discovered that a promontory at the confluence of the two valleys had acted as the focus for numerous acts of votive deposition during the early Neolithic period. Objects including quantities of Carinated Bowl pottery, struck lithics, incised stones, polissoirs and polished stone axeheads had been cast out into the wetlands.

We wondered where the objects had come from, but our excavations to the north appear to have solved the mystery, the team having found a contemporary settlement there. The preservation is excellent, as the site lies on the wetland edge and much of it is sealed below a layer of peat. Many of the deposits are waterlogged, including extensive midden spreads.

In addition to the middens, we have revealed hearths, cobble spreads, and the footprints of posthole structures. The small sub-circular dwellings, though



associated with Neolithic Carinated Bowl pottery, are reminiscent of those found on late Mesolithic hunter-gatherer settlements. However, four radiocarbon dates were obtained from charred materials retrieved from two evaluation test pits and these all date to the 38th century cal BC – regionally consistent with the introduction of farming and Neolithic material culture. It is now apparent that these dates were from later deposits in the middens, and so lower, earlier, charcoal-rich deposits could potentially date to the beginning of the fourth millennium or end of the fifth millennium BC. The earliest Neolithic activity therefore seems to be superimposed on top of a hunter-gatherer camp. This evidence could represent hunter-gatherers adopting Neolithic culture, rather than farming groups settling the area.



Aerial view of the promontory and paleochannels;
Left: A cobble spread and ogival arrowhead

Transitional Mesolithic/Neolithic sites are incredibly rare nationally, so finding multiple very well-preserved sites of this period is exceptional and regionally it is without precedent. The results so far strongly hint at parallels with other sites further north along the Cumbrian seaboard, and it is probable that the Windy Harbour community was connected with others around the Irish Sea zone. ■

WEST CAMBOURNE, CAMBRIDGESHIRE

Neal Mason

In 2020, an OA East field team set about tackling the notoriously flinty clay of West Cambourne in Cambridgeshire. The 8ha site, destined for residential development by the West Cambourne Consortium, lies in a wider area of extensive Iron Age and Roman settlement remains. After facing everything from freezing snow and gale-force winds to sun-baked fills and torrential summer storms, we uncovered a landscape of field systems, trackways and enclosures spanning the middle Iron Age to early Roman period.

The settlement origins lie with three middle Iron Age, kidney bean-shaped enclosures, each surrounding a roundhouse and set out along a meandering boundary stretching across most of the site. These were replaced in the late Iron Age by a rectangular enclosure, within which were several intercutting ring-gullies pointing to fairly long-term occupancy. Unfortunately, finds were unusually sparse from both the ring-gullies and the enclosure ditch, but there was just about enough pottery for dating purposes. The remains of two ovens were found outside the enclosure.

The next phase was the imposition of a rectilinear field system during the early Roman period, which was then supplemented by multiple phases of enclosures in the south-central and northern areas. Preservation in these areas was particularly good, as features lay under an extant headland created



Excavating early Roman domestic pottery

by medieval ridge-and-furrow cultivation. It was from this early Roman phase that we recovered probably the best find from the site: a very well-preserved brooch of unusual type. An eight-post structure was revealed close to the southern limit of the site. Large amounts of hammerscale were recovered from the postholes, suggesting that the structure was a forge.

The final phase of activity seems to have been focused on the digging of several large waterholes, often into the corners of enclosure ditches, hinting at a possible change in land use from arable to pastoral farming. These features were interesting, if challenging, to excavate; some of them measured over 5m wide and 1.5m deep. They produced a good selection of finds, including high-status decorated samian ware, and even a complete worked antler tine, the latter potentially being residual evidence of a far earlier presence at West Cambourne. ■



Aerial view of the site; Above: A Roman brooch

THE ALULA ARCHAEOLOGICAL LANDSCAPE SURVEY

Jamie Quartermaine

What is probably the most extensive, systematic archaeological ground survey ever undertaken in not only the Middle East but beyond was completed in 2021 by Oxford Archaeology for the Royal Commission for AlUla (RCU) in Saudi Arabia.

The c 3300 square km 'core' area (larger than the size of Lancashire) of AlUla County is centred around the oasis of the AlUla Valley, which comprises desert floor, outcrops, uplands and lateral valleys (but excludes the oasis itself). The AlUla Valley lies on a major north/south communication route through the Arabian Peninsula, which attracted travellers as well as sustained settled populations through millennia due to its natural availability of water – springs and high-water table – in an otherwise arid environment.

The extensive landscape survey recorded over 16,000 archaeological sites, some of which date back to the Palaeolithic period, as much as 200,000 years ago, and culminate





A burial monument from the Bronze Age period;
Below: A mustatil



with the Hijaz railway, which was built in the early 20th century and figured in the activities of Lawrence of Arabia. The survey was undertaken in conjunction with Saudi staff and students of King Saud University, and incorporated training a local team in recording and site identification techniques.

Starting in spring 2018, the survey utilised high-resolution aerial photography to identify possible archaeological sites, each of which was visited on the ground by archaeological teams to confirm it was pre-modern and to map, describe and photograph it. In addition, specialist survey teams searched for, and recorded, rock art and inscriptions, which are not detected by remote sensing, and that provide a

remarkable record of past cultures in the region.

More detailed recording was undertaken of selected sites by photogrammetry using a drone, to provide accurate and detailed 3D models of the archaeological monuments and landscapes. This was followed by a programme of targeted excavation of key monument types, intended to establish their dates and functions. These include extraordinary mustatils (Arabic for rectangle), which were discovered to probably be ritual monuments and dating back more than 7000 years to the Neolithic period, and substantial burial monuments from the Bronze Age, approximately 5000 years ago.

The survey also documented settlements, temples and burials that relate to the incense trade from the Iron Age and Nabataean periods (about 3000-2000 years ago), and towns, forts, farming lands and irrigation systems of the more recent Islamic period.

The Oxford Archaeology ground survey in the 'core area' of AlUla County was complemented by aerial (helicopter) survey in the c 19,000 sq km hinterland, conducted by a team from the University of Western Australia, which also carried out ground survey and targeted excavation at selected sites. A recent documentary made by the Discovery Channel – *Architects of Ancient Arabia* – presented the results of the survey and excavations, highlighting burials excavated by the University of Western Australia and the mustatils explored by Oxford Archaeology. These distinctive Neolithic monuments are associated with early domesticated (and wild) animals and are of considerable archaeological importance in the region, demonstrating the potential for further research. ■

OA IN THE NEWS

The work of Oxford Archaeology has attracted local, national and international media attention.

An item about an unusual burial in Bishop's Stortford, excavated by OA East, appeared on the BBC News website in December. The same month also saw the publication on BBC News and local and national press of stories relating to OA East's excavation at Cressing in Essex. Much was made of a potential Boudica connection.

OA hit the headlines again in February with the phallic imagery on a Roman millstone from the A14 in Cambridgeshire (a MOLA Headland Infrastructure project, but with input from OA, including specialist work on the worked stone) and a Roman-period torc-holding figurine from the Wimpole Estate, also in Cambridgeshire. Both stories featured on the BBC News website, in the local and national press, and internationally on news media websites.

Trinity Burial Ground in Hull seemed to be rarely out of the news. Articles included one on the Edinburgh Live website about a 'mystery' bottle of liquid (probably urine) found between the legs of one skeleton. Another, in the Hull Daily Mail, highlighted a link between the cemetery and a

historical dockland disaster in Hull. An article in the Yorkshire Post focused on the discovery of evidence of precautions taken against bodysnatching in 19th century.

Articles about geoarchaeological work undertaken by OA East at Common Staithe Quay in King's Lynn appeared in the Eastern Daily Press and the King's Lynn Borough Council website. OA East's excavation at Burwell in Cambridgeshire, where Bronze Age settlement evidence and burials have been recorded, attracted greater attention, the story featuring on the BBC News website, Cambridge News, and the 'In Your Area' website.

The publication in the journal *Archaeological and Anthropological Sciences* of a paper on Oxford's medieval Jewry in St Aldates, excavated by OA South in 2016, led to articles appearing in, among other titles, the Oxford Mail, the Daily Mail, the Jewish Chronicle, the Jerusalem Post, and the Smithsonian Magazine.

All the items that have appeared in the press over the year demonstrate the significance of our work, both in the field and in post-excavation. ■

TALKING ABOUT OUR WORK

Every year, staff give talks to the general public and community groups or present papers at conferences and archaeological society meetings. The difference this year is that, like last year, many of the talks were delivered online, although gradually events have been returning to village halls, lectures rooms, and conference centres. Here are some of the highlights.

In March, two OA North sites, Windy Harbour and Chester Northgate, were showcased at the online Annual Archaeology Forum hosted by Lancaster University. An online lecture about Windy Harbour was given to the Society of Antiquaries, while staff from OA South talked about recent later prehistoric discoveries in Oxfordshire at the Oxford Architectural and Historical Society's annual Tom Hassall Lecture. In April, we 'virtually' sent several of our staff to the annual ClfA conference, which had the theme of 'Professionalism in Archaeology'.

June saw the launch of three webinars on the archaeology of the Dorset VIP project, hosted by National Grid. Each webinar looked at the evidence from a specific period, the first examining the prehistoric evidence, the second turning to the Roman period, and the third concluding the series with the post-medieval period.

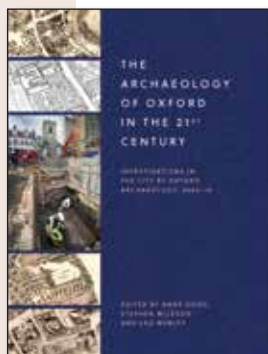
As part of the Festival of Archaeology in July and August, COPA, our joint venture with Cotswold

Archaeology, presented public webinars about two HS2 projects – the built heritage at Coleshill and another on the excavations at Doddershall – and another (hosted by Cotswold Archaeology) about the findings at the Redcliff Quarter in Bristol. The results of COPA's work at the HS2 site at Fleet Marston, the location of a Roman town, were presented at a special Buckinghamshire Archaeological Society conference on the archaeology of HS2 in the county in May.

Throughout the year, National Highways provided weekly updates about our work at Trinity Burial Ground. There were dedicated archaeology pages on the National Highways website, and staff gave online presentations about the findings to the public. ■

The screenshot shows a webpage from National Highways. The main heading is 'A63 Castle Street archaeology'. Below the heading, there is a sub-heading: 'As part of our £355m A63 Castle Street scheme we're hoping to piece together detailed information on Hull's population when Trinity Burial Ground was in use.' There is a photograph of a hand holding a small, dark, circular archaeological object. The page also includes a 'Published' date of '27 Nov 2020' and a 'Share this article' section with social media icons. At the bottom, there is a text box: 'Our experienced team of archaeologists are hoping to find a wealth of information about the lives of Hull society at a time when the population was rapidly expanding, as commercial and activity intensified in the 18th and 19th century.'

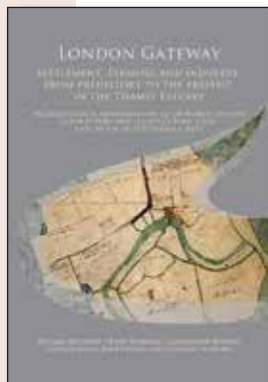
OA IN PRINT



December 2020 saw the publication of **The Archaeology of Oxford in the 21st Century**, the first in a new series of occasional papers published by the Oxfordshire Architectural and Historical Society. The volume presents the results of eleven excavations carried out by OA South within the historic walled city of Oxford and in the extramural area just to the north.

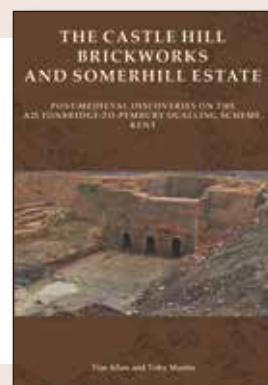
The investigations shed fresh light on the character of medieval Oxford, both before and after the Norman Conquest, and on the early modern city, including its Civil War defences. The results are set within a larger context by a chapter outlining the key findings, a new synthesis of current knowledge of Oxford's archaeology, and an examination of the changing aims and methods of archaeology carried out in the city over the last fifty years. Viewed as a whole, the book represents a significant new contribution to knowledge of Oxford's archaeology and history.

The latest volume in OA North's Lancaster Imprints series, **Farmers and Weavers**, was published in May. The book presents the results of investigations at Kingsway Business Park, near Rochdale, and Cutacre Country Park, near Bolton. Evidence for prehistoric and medieval activity was discovered within the two areas, particularly a significant middle Bronze Age settlement and medieval iron-smelting site at Cutacre, although the majority of the remains investigated dated to the post-medieval and industrial periods. These latter remains relate to a range of different rural house types and farm buildings, built by the lesser gentry, and the yeoman and tenant farmers of the region. The results greatly enhance an understanding of the archaeology of Greater Manchester, and, more generally, provide important information on rural settlement in north-west England.



As the year draws to a close, a further two books are about to be published. **London Gateway: Settlement, farming and industry from prehistory to the present in the Thames Estuary*** reports on investigations carried out at DP World London Gateway Port and Logistics Park near Stanford-le-Hope in Essex and on the site of a wildlife habitat on the Hoo Peninsula in Kent. The evidence paints a picture of life on the edge of the Thames Estuary from early prehistory to the 20th century. People came to the marshes in Mesolithic and Neolithic times, perhaps on a seasonal basis, to hunt, and gather plants and seafood. In the late Bronze Age, Iron Age and Roman periods, people trapped seawater to extract salt. In the medieval period, the marshland offered unrivalled pasture for the sheep and cattle belonging to upland farms on the gravel terraces. Over time, the marshes were drained to increase the pasture and the value of the farming estates. One remarkable discovery was part of a 16th-century timber wharf, which was found on the edge of one of several creeks that snaked through the marshes and is testament to the site's enduring role in trade and communication.

The Castle Hill Brickworks and Somerhill Estate: Post-Medieval Discoveries on the A21 Tonbridge-To-Pembury Dualling Scheme, Kent* describes the well-preserved remains of a 19th-century rural estate brickworks, very few examples of which still survive. The Castle Hill Brickworks was established by 1833 within the grounds of the Somerhill Estate, and continued to produce bricks, tiles and drains for the estate and the local area until the 1930s. The excavated remains included three kilns, six drying sheds, a workshop and two pugmills, together with a cottage, office, clay pits and ponds, and provide the most complete picture of a rural brickworks that has been published from anywhere in the south-east of England.



* Coming out in December 2021

All these books are available to buy from Oxbow Books (<https://www.oxbowbooks.com/oxbow/>).

COMMUNITY ARCHAEOLOGY: LOCKED DOWN BUT LOOKING OUT

Clemency Cooper

Despite the challenges and uncertainties, the past year has undoubtedly brought some unexpected and positive new perspectives on how to reach out to, engage and work with the public. It has prompted us to embrace new technology and forge new partnerships, expanding the ways in which we effectively engage with people online, as well as in person.

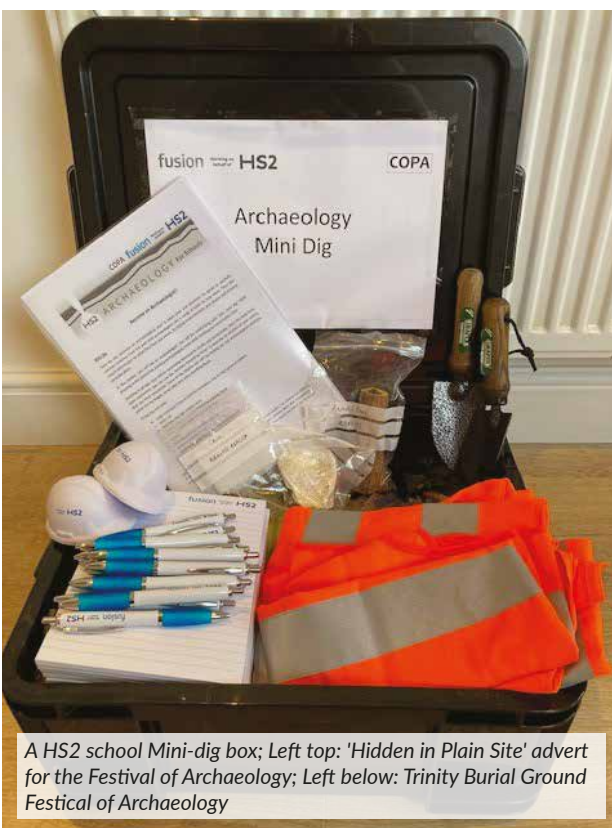
During last winter's lockdowns, we successfully adapted our outreach programmes to be delivered remotely. Our staff presented online talks, tours, activities and Q&A sessions from kitchen tables and site huts up and down the country, bringing countless people into contact with our work and providing new behind-the-scenes insights. Trialling ways that brought us into the virtual classroom was particularly rewarding. Notably, working with our COPA consortium partners, we delivered a series of virtual workshops and a package of resources and activities to primary schools along the route of HS2 in Buckinghamshire, Northamptonshire and Hertfordshire.

As well as our popular research seminars, we started a virtual walking tour video series on our YouTube channel called 'Hidden in Plain Site', which explores little known archaeological sites in Lancaster and Cambridge. We also received an excellent response to the 'Going Underground' webinar series on

the archaeology of the Dorset VIP hosted by the National Grid, and the 'Meet the Archaeologist' videos produced in collaboration with Balfour Beatty for the Learn Live online careers platform for secondary school students.

At Trinity Burial Ground in Hull, we've provided weekly insights to a subscriber list of several thousand people and run a series of well-attended online webinars for National Highways. We also produced a 3D virtual model of the neighbouring New Gaol site and contributed content to an activity booklet produced by Hull Museums. By the time of this year's Festival of Archaeology, we were starting to run on-the-ground events again. OA, with Balfour Beatty and Highways England, had a stall outside Hull Minster for the festival's final showcase event with information about the excavations, finds on display and activity packs for families.

It has been a gradual, cautious and, above all, welcome return to running public events this summer. This has included open days at Burwell in Cambridgeshire and at Middlewich in Cheshire, and talks in Somerset about our work at Hinkley C Connection. It has been especially satisfying to return to sites dug during the first national lockdown and present our findings with the benefit of time for extra analysis and interpretation. This autumn, we've worked with Urban & Civic to produce public

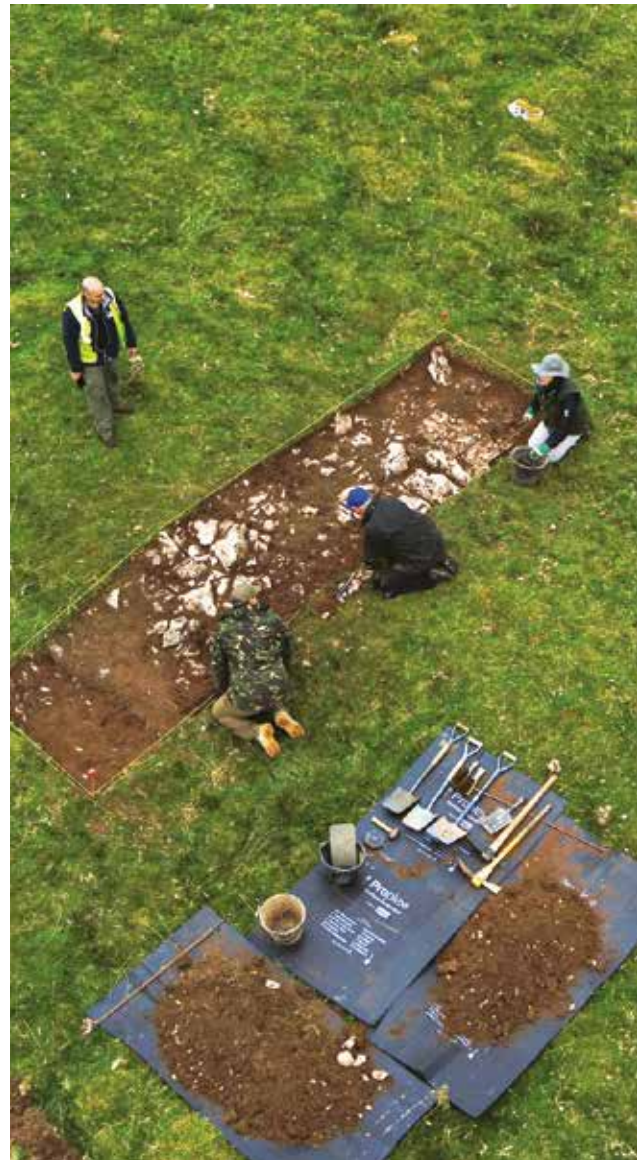


A HS2 school Mini-dig box; Left top: 'Hidden in Plain Site' advert for the Festival of Archaeology; Left below: Trinity Burial Ground Festival of Archaeology





Top: Reconstruction for the Wintringham exhibition; Below: Operation Nightingale during the excavation at Weeley, Essex; Right: Volunteers from the Westmorland Dales Landscape Partnership Scheme



exhibitions of the archaeology found at our sites at Waterbeach and Wintringham last year.

We will continue to take a blended approach to make ourselves accessible and reach more people. At Chester Northgate, we presented our finds to a local primary school who visited the site but also recorded a series of videos shared on the Chester Northgate YouTube page and with local secondary schools. In Weeley, Essex, we've delivered both online and in-person events and created a dedicated blog site for OA, subsequently used to share updates from our project at Sibford Ferris in Oxfordshire.

Opportunities for direct participation were understandably limited while social distancing was in place but the Napoleonic era barracks at Weeley were also recently host to a week-long excavation with Operation Nightingale involving military veterans from the local area. Elsewhere in the East, we've run a programme of fieldwalking and metal detecting for the National Trust as part of their parkland restoration scheme at Oxburgh Hall. Meanwhile, in Cumbria, volunteers from the Westmorland Dales Landscape Partnership Scheme

have been excavating keyhole trenches across Little Asby Common looking at a range of sites, from medieval long houses to prehistoric round houses.

We recognise the importance of not only facilitating public engagement but also maximising the benefits that these opportunities offer to individuals and wider society. OA is one of seven partners (with MOLA, CBA, ADS, DigVentures, Wessex Archaeology and York Archaeological Trust) working together on a National Lottery Heritage Fund project to understand the audiences engaging with archaeology. The project will develop evaluation methods and benchmarking data which should allow us to identify barriers to engagement, test new methods to reach people, and diversify our audiences.

It's always a pleasure and a privilege to share Oxford Archaeology's work with the public, but no more so than in the past year. This review is just a snapshot of what has been achieved in difficult circumstances. Thank you to the OA staff and our external collaborators for all they've done to make this happen. ■

WHO IS

OXFORD ARCHAEOLOGY?

OUR STAFF

Over the past year*, Oxford Archaeology has employed some 500 members of staff across its three offices. The success of the company depends on every member of staff, and we would like to thank them for their hard work and dedication.

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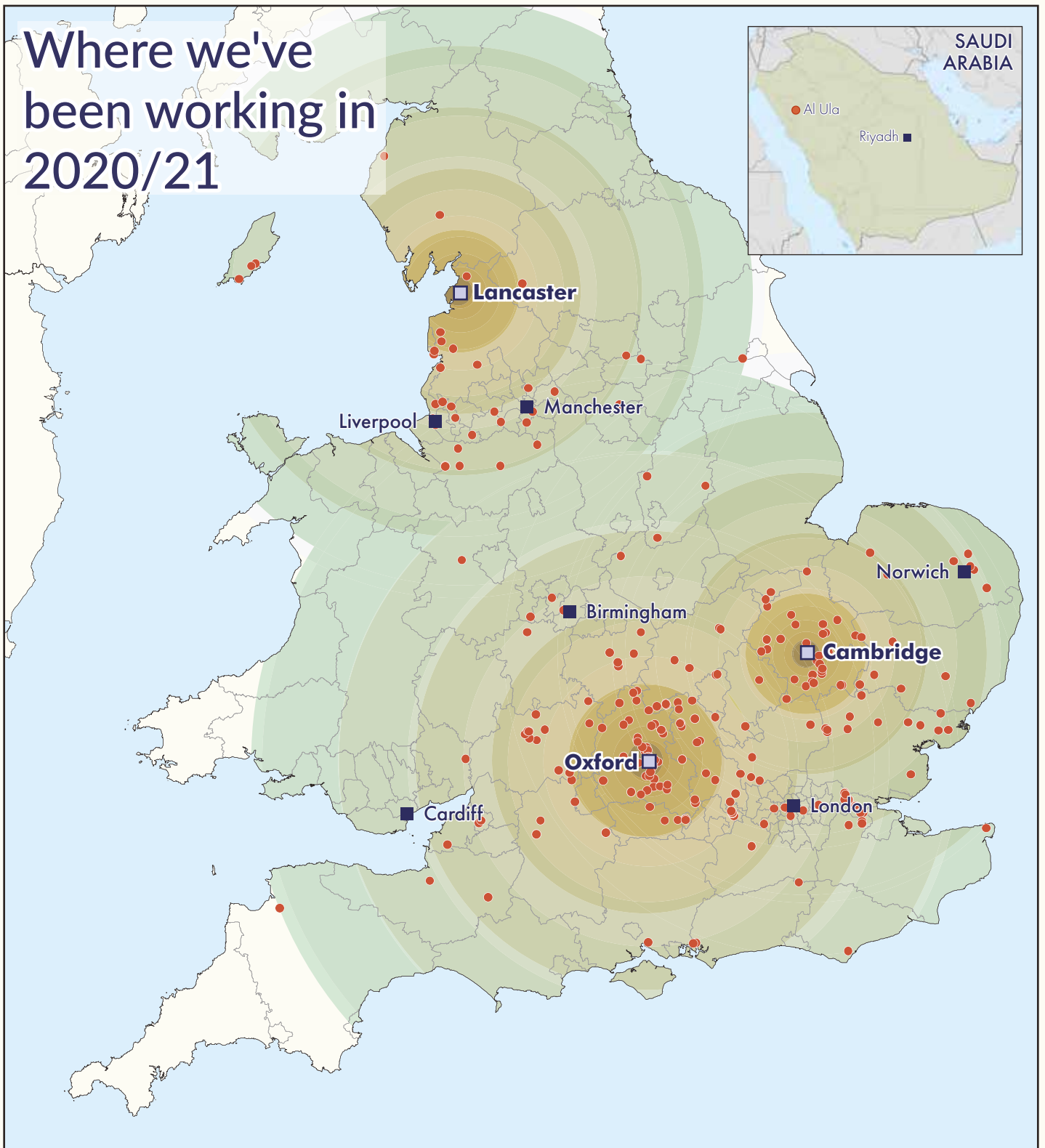
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* OA employees from November 2020 to October 2021

Where we've been working in 2020/21



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Many thanks to all who have contributed to this issue and uploaded images - several of which have been reproduced here - to the OA Forum

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