

# IN TOUCH

Issue 47

## Oxford Archaeology Review 2017/18

### Delivering benefit to the wider community

Community archaeology

Spotlight on training

Highlights of our work

Roundup of our publications



# Welcome to In Touch

When the Oxford Archaeological Unit was constituted in 1973, it was to 'advance education in the subject of archaeology for the public benefit'. This might have been 45 years ago, and the wording might sound slightly old-fashioned, but its sentiment could not be more relevant to the environment in which we work today.

Public benefit is the stated aim of much government policy; the recent Culture White Paper published by DCMS, for example, cites the intrinsic, social and economic value that heritage and cultural engagement bring. Sustainability through delivering economic, social and environmental value is at the heart of planning legislation (National Planning Policy Framework, NPPF 2018), and our role within the planning system is precisely because archaeology is recognised as having social value. Our clients in the development sector are required to show that they can achieve the three main sustainability goals, and the work we do for them enables them to demonstrate that they do.

At the same time, heritage protection is at risk because of cuts to government services, particularly in local planning departments, and pressures being brought to bear to dilute existing legislation.

OA as a major charity has an important role to play, with our partners, in showing that our work, whether in the private or public sector, really does deliver benefit. Archaeology is relevant in society today, at a local and much wider level. We can offer a unique perspective on current issues, such as immigration and the movement of people, homelessness, violence and our relationship with our neighbours, and enable people to reflect on features that have been part of life in Britain since human inhabitants arrived nearly one million years ago.

This edition of In Touch showcases some of our recent projects that have made a more local impact,

contributing to knowledge and to the lives of the people in the communities in which we have worked. Much of the benefit has been delivered through our day-to-day development-led work, particularly for housing and urban regeneration. Talking to people on site, holding open days and giving talks to local groups never fails to enthuse and engage. We are very excited, for example, to be involved in an HLF-funded project to involve local schoolchildren and residents of the growing town of Cambourne near Cambridge to discover the remains of the past beneath their new homes. The project, which has included the creation of an interactive digital map of the archaeology that is being revealed, helps to create a real sense of place and community for those setting up home in a 'new' town.

The new planning framework states that heritage assets that will be lost in development should be examined and recorded in order to advance understanding, but also that the evidence (and any archive generated) should be made publicly accessible (NPPF 2018, para 199). OA has a long and proud tradition of making our results accessible in many different forms. As described below (page 25) we have published several books over the last year, including a booklet on the legacy of Lancashire's textile mills, which is written for non-specialists. Articles in many different journals and exhibition panels have also been part of our output.

OA always aspires to do more. We employ a full-time Community Archaeology Manager, and this edition of In Touch highlights some of the key ways in which Clemency Cooper and other members of the OA team have contributed to our charitable objectives.

## GENDER PAY GAP, BULLYING AND HARASSMENT

In January 2018, OA filed its first gender pay gap report: [https://oxfordarchaeology.com/images/pdfs/OA\\_gender\\_pay\\_gap\\_report\\_](https://oxfordarchaeology.com/images/pdfs/OA_gender_pay_gap_report_)



Jan\_2018.pdf. This demonstrated that, with a gap of 5%, we had a relatively good gender balance but we recognised that we should do more. We have been investigating why many women choose to leave fieldwork at an early stage in their careers, and we want to ensure that it is not because of an intimidating culture on site. We strongly support the ClfA initiative to eliminate bullying and harassment in the workplace. We have designed and delivered toolbox talks on sites and in the offices about this issue, and have put a procedure in place to encourage reporting of any incidents. We are now training Project Managers and more junior managers and supervisors on how to support victims.

*Gill Hey*  
CEO, Oxford Archaeology

# In this issue

We are pleased to present our review edition of In Touch. Inside this issue, you can read about just some of the exciting fieldwork, survey, building-recording and post-excavation projects we have undertaken over the past 12 months. We round up our talks and publications, we put the spotlight on our training, and in a special series of articles, we reveal how we are bringing archaeology to the wider public.

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## UNLOCKING THE POTENTIAL OF THE PAST

As archaeologists, it can be all too easy to take an intrinsic interest in the past for granted and forget that many people outside our sector are not aware of our existence, let alone interested in the more esoteric nuances of buried soils and curvilinear enclosures. One of the pleasures of doing outreach events is seeing people's eyes and horizons widen when they get the chance to meet 'real life' archaeologists and handle objects many hundreds or thousands of years older than any they've touched before.

As much as it's important to ensure that members of the public have an enjoyable and memorable time when participating in outreach activities, archaeology also has the potential to be a truly transformative experience for individuals, their communities and wider society. An understanding and appreciation of the past and the way in which new discoveries are made can change how someone perceives their own abilities and aspirations, as well as how they view the place where they live and their relationship with the people they live and work alongside.

Our focus is often on our responsibility to mitigate the impact of development on heritage sites through investigation, but this does not in and of itself deliver wider public benefit. This is achieved by generating tangible outputs that enable site information to be accessed, preparing archives and publications that reach a non-specialist audience, and devising outreach activities that include public education and participation. With the strategic involvement of local stakeholders to target new and diverse audiences, these outputs can be used to produce social, economic and cultural outcomes which address some of the pressing public needs of today, such as promoting wellbeing, career and skills development, tourism, social interaction, civic pride, a sense of place and a feeling of belonging.

As Community Archaeology Manager, I'm very proud that meaningful public engagement is at the heart of what we do at Oxford Archaeology, which is a charity with a heritage and education focus, and that many of our commercial ventures, dedicated community archaeology projects and volunteer initiatives demonstrate these public benefits. This is particularly effective where strong relationships are cultivated with local authorities, resident associations, media outlets, charitable and voluntary organisations, educational institutions, developers and others to meet individual and collective needs.

In our commercial work, the challenges we face are in identifying and exploring all the available avenues, given different and sometimes conflicting agendas, shifting goalposts and finite resources. Unfortunately, this can result in public engagement becoming a tokenistic gesture

bolted-on to the end of a project or being passed over altogether. By identifying the concerns and priorities of stakeholders about the impact of a development early in a project, the archaeological discoveries can be considered as a helpful solution and a unique opportunity to add value.

Where we do have the chance to share and involve people in our work, it's also crucial that we capture and disseminate these achievements to demonstrate the impact that can be had and justify the existence of a planning policy framework which values the historic environment to clients, politicians and the electorate. It is not always straight forward to identify what discernible and long-lasting differences have been made, but at Oxford Archaeology we are fortunate to have had extensive experience of developing robust evaluation methods and have been building legacy plans into our dedicated community archaeology projects over many years. Equally important when evaluating outreach projects is acknowledging and tackling what doesn't work so well in order to plan and improve our public engagement. This requires open and constructive communication with our participants and partners.

We cannot, of course, unlock the potential of the past and bring wider public benefit without the active engagement and support of everyone involved in the company. I'd like to take this opportunity to thank all staff, volunteers, trustees and partners who give their time, expertise and enthusiasm so that members of the public have the opportunity to learn about and get involved in investigating, protecting and enjoying their local heritage.

*Clemency Cooper*



# THE LEGACY OF THE JIGSAW PROJECT

The 'Jigsaw – Piecing Together Cambridgeshire's Past' project was born out of a long-established tradition of public archaeology in Cambridgeshire, where the professional and voluntary archaeological communities have worked closely together to investigate and promote local archaeology. Formerly the county's in-house archaeological field unit, OA East has maintained a prominent educational and outreach programme in partnership with Cambridgeshire County Council and has jointly delivered a range of Heritage Lottery funded projects.



While these projects had provided excellent opportunities for local community participation, we were aware of our inability to respond to requests beyond the project focus or where established community groups exist. This led to the idea of a project to develop a 'community-led' approach to local archaeology which would provide the tools and training for both individuals and groups to carry out their own research. With support from Huntingdonshire District Council and the Council for British Archaeology, OA East and Cambridgeshire County Council applied successfully for Heritage Lottery Funding for a five-year project, starting in 2011, designed to support and develop community archaeology in Cambridgeshire.

OA East appointed two community archaeologists who provided access to information, training and equipment, and produced a series of best practice guides. These can still be found on the dedicated website ([jigsawcambs.org](http://jigsawcambs.org)) Sixteen existing archaeology and history societies became affiliated to the Jigsaw community and eight new community groups were established. Over 500 people volunteered on the project and received dedicated support and training to research, understand and protect their local archaeological heritage. Some of the most successful and memorable elements hinged on close collaboration between the groups and with other external organisations, such as the Wildlife Trust.

Although the project came to an end in June 2016, the project's legacy will continue for many years to come.

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Jigsaw's key purpose was to train and support local people and groups, and give them the skills, knowledge and confidence to complete all stages of an archaeological project to professional standards. The success of the Jigsaw project has been the creation of a network of like-minded people who share their skills and knowledge, exchange news on their projects and ideas for further work and support one another.

We continue to host regular meetings of the affiliated groups, and maintain the resources bought and developed during the project. The Jigsaw website has been updated and excavation, survey and recording tools go on loan on a frequent basis. We also provide advice to Jigsaw groups on reporting their project results to the HER and are developing new archiving guidelines for community projects.

There has always been a number of professional archaeologists working with local groups and volunteers, but Jigsaw has hugely increased this number. It is now commonplace to have members of community groups coming to our office to borrow equipment, ask for advice and even volunteer on our excavations. This continues to be manageable thanks to an established network for disseminating information, the cross-sharing of skills between groups and the strength of the relationships and friendships which have developed between staff and the local groups and volunteers.



The project was short-listed in the British Archaeology Awards in 2014 for the Best Community Engagement Archaeology Project. Jigsaw did not win but it was highly commended and was one of the three finalists. It has only been through the combined effort in terms of organisation, knowledge, support and enthusiasm of the project's partners and most of all the community group members themselves that the achievements of the project live on. The first county-wide project of its kind, Jigsaw has not only resulted in a huge number of people learning about and feeling empowered to participate in their own local heritage but has developed a new way to carry out sustainable community archaeology and created a template for how future projects might achieve similar goals in other areas of the UK.

*Stephen Macaulay and Clemency Cooper*

(This article is an edited version of a piece that appeared in *The Archaeologist*, issue 104, summer 2018)

# DORCHESTER- ON-THAMES: TEN YEARS ON, AND MORE

The Discovering Dorchester project had its inception in 2007, when the aspiration of Oxford Archaeology and Oxford University to collaborate on a community archaeology project of real research value coincided with the enthusiasm of the volunteers of the Dorchester Abbey Museum. Led by the then honorary curator, John Metcalfe, Dorchester had ambitious plans for improvements to its local museum; the archaeologists knew all about the importance of Dorchester and its amazing potential for further investigation.

A research plan was put together with a focus on four key periods: the Neolithic and early Bronze Age; the later Iron Age; the Roman period; and the early to middle Saxon and, with contributions from all parties, a successful bid was made for Heritage Lottery Funding. This principally provided resources for the museum, but with some additional funding for a programme of excavation in which there was to be an emphasis on training and community involvement. A part time Education Officer formed part of the HLF-funded team; the training excavation was also part-funded in various ways by OA and the university.

Several fieldwork activities were eventually undertaken under the umbrella of the project:

In 2007, excavation was carried out in a small area of the Minchin Recreation Ground, in the north of the village, after previously unrecorded features were located on an aerial photograph and in subsequent geophysical survey.



This revealed part of a Bronze Age ring ditch and Roman enclosures. A test pit was also dug in a garden at Haven Close, in the southern part of the village, where finds included Mesolithic flint and early Roman evidence.



From 2008, excavation of an area in a central part of the Roman 'small town' in the allotments, directed by Paul Booth, provided the mainstay of the training excavation programme. It had its final field season in July this year (see page 23).

Meanwhile, from 2010-2012, Gill Hey directed work on the well-known Dorchester Cursus. Geophysical survey had shown that part of the northern end of this monument survived, and excavation revealed not only the ditch, but significant later features associated with it, including a Beaker burial with an early All-Over-Cord Beaker pot.

Further related work included test pitting in the village carried out by local volunteers with the University Archaeological Society, earthwork and building survey by the Department for Continuing Education, the salvage of parts of an important late Roman burial in the Dyke Hills to the south of the village, and in 2016, limited geophysical survey within the Iron Age oppidum area enclosed by the Dyke Hills.





The end of the HLF-funded project was marked by the production of a popular booklet summarising work up to 2012, and further outputs included an informative leaflet subtitled 'a walk through 10,000 years of archaeology'. Thereafter, community archaeology was mostly focused on the training excavation in the allotments and its annual open day, but visits by school parties and by local archaeological and amenity groups also featured and informal visitors were always welcome.

The training excavation was extended from a three- to a four-week programme, the first two weeks being for the university students, mostly Archaeology and Anthropology undergraduates at the end of their first year. Weeks three and four were devoted to volunteers drawn from a wider area, and with varied interests and backgrounds; a strong contingent was formed by Continuing Education students from Rewley House. The assistant director was usually a post-graduate student based in the Institute of Archaeology at the University, and the site team leaders were also mainly Oxford post-graduates, but more recently including some promising second or final year undergraduates, a valuable learning experience for them. An OA staff member was also part of the supervisory team, and they got a lot out of working in an environment that was very different from that of typical development-led project.

Training included obvious elements such as instruction in excavation technique, all aspects of basic recording, and finds washing, whereby the students were introduced to a wide range of artefacts and ecofacts. Assistance in this process from local volunteers was a regular part of the project, and for a number of years a devoted group of Dorchester residents met at regular intervals in the 'off season' to work through the backlog of unwashed finds. The physical activities were supplemented by frequent talks by team members and others from the university on a wide range of topics ranging from aspects of local archaeology to flint technology, environmental archaeology and techniques of site photography.

Now that the excavations are over, the primary challenge is to resource appropriate publication of the various pieces of fieldwork, of which only the Dyke Hills burial rescue has been formally published so far. Just as challenging, but just as important, is to ensure that the advances in our understanding of Dorchester's past are fed back to the people of Dorchester itself. Here the Abbey Museum will play a major role, but as the primary instigators of the project, we have a key responsibility to keep archaeology 'alive' within the community.

*Paul Booth with Gill Hey*



# OXFORD SOUTH'S YEAR OF OUTREACH

Since the success of the outreach elements of the Oxford Westgate Project, which won the Best Archaeological Project in 2016 and for which I was the Outreach Officer, I have been organising the events programme for our Oxford office.

Each year we plan out a series of events, with societies, schools and other local organisations. In late spring, we take part in Oxfordshire Past with the Oxfordshire Architectural and Historical Society. Each year it is held in a different town in the county and this year it was in Deddington. We had a book sale and information stand and a display about current sites. Our own Ben Ford spoke about the Oxford Flood Alleviation Scheme. We like to tie our events into national events where possible to improve publicity. We select events for the Festival of Archaeology in July and Heritage Open Days in September, which here in Oxford is the extremely popular Open Doors event organised by the Oxford Preservation Trust.

This year in July we helped the Abingdon Area Historical Society celebrate its 50th anniversary by organising two days of children's activities at Abingdon Museum. We supported the society by producing colouring sheets of objects in the museum, taking along our very popular small bones and artefacts sorting activity, which keeps children occupied for hours as they use tweezers to pick out very tiny bones and snail shells, often much to the surprise of their parents! There were special trails produced by the museum and the society selected finds from excavations over the last 50 years for a handling session. It was a popular and thoroughly enjoyable event.

Also in July, we were invited by a new charity, StretchDidcot, to attend their Roman-themed event. We took along pottery and a selection of brooches from the



Great Western Park excavations. Despite competing with a crucial World Cup match, I was able to talk to some very keen children and their parents about the archaeology, and the unexcavated villa, that was found very close to their school and homes. The following week, we supported the final open day of the University of Oxford's training excavation in Dorchester, which after 10 years has finished this year, with another book sale and information stand.



The last event of the season was the Open Doors festival and once again we were in the Oxford Castle Quarter with displays focusing on our Oxford Flood Alleviation Scheme project and the Cooper Callas site just around the corner from the castle. We also had displays showcasing our 3D site models on Sketchfab and large historic maps of Oxford. Open Doors is always a great event where we can focus on our work within the city and demonstrate the variety of work that we do on a daily basis.

I thoroughly enjoy taking this message out to the public across the city and county each year and am looking forward to organising more fantastic events for 2019.

Becky Peacock





# ON THE JOB: TRAINING THE NEXT GENERATION OF ARCHAEOLOGISTS

In August 2014, Oxford Archaeology began a formal six-month training scheme for newly graduated archaeologists, or those with little commercial experience who wished to pursue a career in commercial archaeology. Now OA has turned to training staff for the next stage of their career, as **Gerry Thacker** explains.

The original Graduate Training Scheme has been a huge success, with over 100 graduates joining the company. The scheme became one of the first schemes to be ratified by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists and achieved 'Highly Commended' status from the Archaeology Training Forum. On successful completion of the programme staff gain promotion to Archaeologist grade, and indeed, some of our Graduate Trainees (GTs) have now progressed to supervisory positions.

In line with 'A Strategy for Oxford Archaeology 2014-20: our 2010 Vision', OA is committed to investing in our staff at all grades, by seeking to develop a skilled workforce through the provision of effective training and career development structures. Putting this strategy into action, OA has recently developed a career progression programme designed to follow on from the GT scheme and help staff to progress from Archaeologist grade to Assistant Supervisor level competence.

As with the GT scheme, the programme outlines several learning goals, which are linked to the appropriate National Occupation Standards for archaeology. There is no fixed time limit to reach the required standard, but as a guide we would expect that Archaeologists will need up to two years to progress from completion of our GT scheme to attaining promotion to Assistant Supervisor, dependent on their confidence, experience and aptitude. There is an emphasis on those undertaking the programme being proactive and seeking out the opportunities that they require.

The programme contains both practical site-based elements and quarterly training sessions, which are undertaken at our regional offices. Both aspects are linked to a series of learning goals, which were identified through OA's skills and training matrix. For example, the health and safety learning goal includes gaining an awareness of current health and safety legislation, understanding the rationale behind risk assessment and method statements, the content and importance of the site health and safety file, incident reporting procedures, and undertaking an asbestos awareness course. Other learning goals focus on gaining a good understanding of British archaeology, site observation and recording, photography, digital survey, site formation processes (including stratigraphy and environmental archaeology), team working, mentoring skills, OA information technology systems and continuing professional development.

All staff undertaking the programme are required to maintain a site log, where they can reflect on the tasks they have undertaken and what learning outcomes they have achieved. This is supplemented by a document log, where trainees record the site documentation (project designs, geophysical survey reports, desk-based assessments etc.) that they have read. To facilitate this, trainees are provided with links to files located on OA's online file storage system.

This is the first time in OA's 45-year history that a programme like this has been implemented, and it represents an exciting opportunity to formalise the training of the next generation of archaeologists.



**MAYLANDS GATEWAY, HEMEL HEMPSTEAD**

Excavations on the western outskirts of Hemel Hempstead for CgMs Consulting and Prologis revealed Roman remains associated with a scheduled Romano-Celtic temple complex. This predominantly agricultural landscape included the remains of three corn-dryers, clay extraction pits and areas of industrial activity.

One of the most interesting features was an exceptionally well-preserved Roman lime kiln located at the edge of a large chalk quarry. The kiln consisted of two tile-lined circular chambers and was preserved to a height of over 2m. It was filled with the last chalk firing, represented by

alternating chalk and fuel layers. Two draw-holes survived at the base of the structure, where the quick lime was extracted for use as mortar. A less well-preserved tile kiln, constructed using flint and tile, was identified within a circular enclosure.



Both kiln structures appear to have been associated with the construction of the temple located just 200m to the north. A piece of ornate worked limestone that may have originated from the temple complex was also found.

It is believed that the temple fell into disuse at the end of the 2nd century AD and may have been demolished to provide building materials for the fortification of Verulamium (St Albans). After demolition, the area was given over to agriculture, with field systems and corn dryers established on the site.



The site has produced one of the best-preserved Roman lime kilns in the country. The discoveries provide insights into the construction methods used in the temple complex and the organisation of such large-scale projects.

*Carl Champness*

**MELBOURN, CAMBRIDGESHIRE**

Last winter, excavation was carried out by OA East at a site in Melbourn in Cambridgeshire for Hopkins Homes. The site consisted of features dating to the late Neolithic, Bronze Age and post-Roman periods. Assessment of the faunal remains revealed some significant findings.

Pits were found to contain the remains of several wild species, including aurochs, red deer, roe deer and elk. Several remains from these pits were radiocarbon dated to the late Neolithic period. Aurochs remains are not common finds, though they have been recovered in similar numbers from several sites in the region, including Must Farm, Fengate and Babraham Road. Their numbers at Melbourn are considered

a significant concentration. Aurochs remains were recovered with domestic cattle fragment from the same pit fill. Domesticated cattle were introduced to England at the beginning of the Neolithic period and would have co-existed with the wild aurochs.



Red deer, roe deer and elk antler from this period were also identified. Antler, whether collected as shed pieces or removed from carcasses, would have been exploited for craft purposes. Elk is one of the largest species of deer to have ever lived and have been recorded at only 27 sites in Britain.



The assemblage has the expected range of domestic animals and highlights exploitation, mostly for meat, which is apparent from the trends in the age of slaughter. The exploitation of wild species such as aurochs and deer is of particular significance, as it provides evidence that the practices of hunting and craftworking were carried out.

*Hayley Foster*

## SOUTH CLIFF CARAVAN PARK, BRIDLINGTON

Last winter, a team from OA North visited Bridlington's South Cliff Caravan Park. While there were few opportunities for sunbathing and holiday fun, the team did uncover some very interesting later prehistoric and Roman archaeology for Galliford Try on behalf of East Riding of Yorkshire Council.

Much of the site is occupied by an enclosure system, the axis of which is defined by a closely spaced pair of substantial ditches that cross the entire excavation area. These are flanked by a brickwork-like system of enclosures, with several integral trackways. Domestic activity occupied the higher, (slightly) drier ground. Comprising several roundhouses, the settlement remains are thought to belong to the Iron Age, although some features produced Bronze Age pottery and flintwork. A rather irregular enclosure system, distinct from the wider network, seems to have developed very locally around the

structures and continued in use into the Roman period.

Several rectangular buildings are thought to be of late Roman date. The best preserved of these had at least two construction phases, the first comprising beamslots and postholes, the second a footing of mixed boulders. Given this mode of construction, it is perhaps unsurprising that Roman buildings are hard to detect on rural sites in East Yorkshire.

The agricultural character of the site is reinforced by the presence of a corn-drying oven, the remains of several four-post granaries, numerous ponds, and an arrangement of ditches likely to relate to stock management. Beyond the settlement, there are at least two Iron Age square barrows, and a small square Roman enclosure, reminiscent of a rural shrine.

*Stephen Rowland*



## MIDWAY, NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

Across the winter, a team from OA South excavated a large, multi-period site adjacent to Junction 16 of the M1 for First Industrial Midway South. Although the weather (rain, followed by snow) was challenging to say the least, the team managed to uncover dense concentrations of both Iron Age and Roman archaeology.

Earlier investigations at the site had revealed the presence of an early-middle Iron Age settlement and evidence for Roman activity relating to a villa estate, and so the chance that our excavation would produce significant results was good.

The team excavated an area of approximately 4.5ha and encountered a dense enclosure system dating to the Iron Age and Roman periods. Interestingly, an Iron Age pit



alignment seems to form the limit of the Iron Age activity and it probably also acted as a significant boundary into the Roman period, as none of the Roman-period enclosures extend west of it.

Apart from the Iron Age and Roman enclosures and boundaries, the foundations of a large aisled building have been identified. This building is Roman in date and was possibly a temple, having a stone-tile roof and being associated with a spring. The structure was also associated with several structures relating to crop processing, including three T-shaped corn-dryers, a large square corn-dryer, and a number of stone-lined and/or stone-floored pits.

*Steve Lawrence*

## WARTH PARK, RAUNDS

Excavations were carried out by OA East on a 12-hectare site at Warth Park in Raunds, Northamptonshire for CgMs Consulting on behalf of Roxhill Developments. Much of the time towards the end of the project was taken up by the investigation of a monument known as ‘Cotton Henge’.



The monument comprised two concentric ring ditches, the outer of which had a diameter of c 75m. Prior to excavation, this monument had been intriguing because the cropmarks and geophysical survey apparently showed it to be lacking an entrance. Hand excavation of the 2m wide and 1m deep ditch confirmed that there was no entrance into the interior of the monument.

While we continue to call the monument ‘the henge’, in reality it is unlikely to really be one. It is probably a landscape monument of some sort, although we are still scratching our heads about its true function. Fortunately, during our time on site (and independently of our fieldwork), a radiocarbon date was obtained from charcoal collected during the evaluation work, returning a date of 3965-3800 cal BC and thus placing it at the start of the early Neolithic period.

The henge was not the only feature of note on this site. There has been a smattering of late Neolithic pits, early Iron Age settlement features, Roman remains, including a well from which an almost life-size wooden arm, presumably originally part of a wooden statue, was recovered, and seven Anglo-Saxon sunken-featured buildings.

Overall, this site has produced a plethora of archaeological remains, much more than was originally anticipated.

*Louise Bush*

## BINGHAM, NOTINGHAMSHIRE

This year saw excavations by OA South at a site near Bingham and close to the Roman town of Margidunum. The fieldwork, commissioned by CgMs Heritage and carried out in advance of residential and commercial development by Barratt/David Wilson Homes, uncovered evidence for a Roman settlement on the southern side of the Fosse Way that may form part of the hinterland of the Roman town. In form, the settlement appears to be similar to a so-called ladder or agglomerated settlement, being defined by a series of small enclosures arranged in a ladder-like pattern.

Other evidence relates more directly to domestic occupation. These include ring gullies and rectangular structures marking the positions of houses, as well as rubbish pits and stone-lined wells. Finds from the settlement include metalwork and pottery, the latter including imported samian ware vessels that had been repaired in antiquity. A large pond or spring produced a high concentration of coins and other metal objects, which may represent deliberate offerings.

Domestic activity appears to have ended at the site in the 4th century, when the settlement was converted into a burial ground. A broad spectrum of the population appears to have been buried, as the remains of infants, young adults and adults have all been recovered. Over half

of the burials were associated with a ring of coffin nails, indicating that the bodies were placed in wooden coffins. Several burials also had hobnails around the feet, indicating the presence of shoes. Interestingly, at least two of the burials were double burials, possibly indicating family relationships.

Fieldwork has continued, and further discoveries are likely to emerge with post-excavation analysis of this exciting site.

*Carl Champness  
and Lee Sparkes*



## WINTERBROOK, WALLINGFORD

Excavations over the summer at this south Oxfordshire site, for CgMs Consulting, uncovered a series of settlement enclosures and burial remains.

The earliest phases of activity comprised Mesolithic flintwork and pits and a rectangular Bronze Age or early Iron Age enclosure that produced flint-tempered pottery, lithics and animal bone.

The most extensive phase of activity, however, dates to the middle Iron Age and includes a rectangular enclosure containing two large roundhouses and at least four smaller ones, as well as several four-post structures, bell-shaped pits and midden deposits. This settlement appears to have formed part of a much larger settlement that continued to the west and headed towards Slade End Farm.

An unexpected discovery of eight inhumations was also made during the excavation. These extended along the length of a boundary ditch that shared alignment with the Bronze Age/early Iron Age enclosure. The better-preserved skeletons displayed a range of burial positions, including crouched, prone and on their sides. Radiocarbon dating



of two of the skeletons placed the burials firmly within the middle Bronze Age, with the remaining burials likely to be of this date also.

Other interesting finds include an early medieval spearhead, knife and other iron objects excavated from a charcoal-rich pit associated with an area of metalworking. The weapons date from the 12th century, during a turbulent period in Wallingford's history.

*Carl Champness and Mariusz Gorniak*

## HARLOW, ESSEX

A team from OA East worked through the summer heatwave to excavate an early Neolithic causewayed enclosure just outside Harlow in Essex for CgMs Consulting on behalf of Persimon, Barratt and Taylor Wimpey.

The enclosure forms a C-shape with the open side overlooking a tributary of the River Stort on a false crest of the hill, and utilises the natural topography, with the terminal ends at points where the hill drops off. It lies only 2km to the south-west of another causewayed enclosure at Sawbridgeworth, which takes a similar form and also overlooks a stream feeding into the River Stort.



The causewayed enclosure was constructed as a series of interlinked pits with five causeways and semi-causeways along its length. The sizes of the pits vary, with the shallower and smaller pits appearing towards the ends of the enclosure. A layer of material containing worked flint present on the outer edge may be the remains of a ploughed-out bank.

Within the enclosed space are 40 pits and/or postholes, with a further five just outside the south-eastern edge. Excavation of these, and the initial processing of the environmental samples taken from these have revealed hazelnut shell fragments, grain, a charred apple core and a possible charred rodent dropping, along with a good amount of pottery and some worked flint. The pits are clustered into two areas on each side of the enclosure, leaving the central area open.

The enclosure has produced vast quantities of Neolithic pottery and worked flint, as well as a quern fragment. The pottery is a mixture of decorated and plain flint-tempered Mildenhall type and consistent with the general date of causewayed enclosures of 3700-3300 BC.

*Robin Webb*



**NEWARK: SCANNING A PREHISTORIC URN**

Following completion of fieldwork in July 2017 on land that forms part of Urban and Civic Plc’s development of Newark South, post-excitation analysis began and over the year has continued apace.

During the preliminary assessment, Louise Loe, head of OA’s heritage burial services, advised that a large inverted Bronze Age Bucket Urn needed to be CT-scanned, so that a better appreciation of its contents, including human remains, could be developed before its excavation. For this, we turned to the radiography department of Churchill Hospital in Oxford, as Louise explains.

“Scanning urns using computerised tomography is not new, but is something few of us in the commercial sector have the opportunity to do because of expense or inaccessibility. We were lucky to be offered an opportunity to scan the urn at the Churchill Hospital. A National Health Service facility, the scanner is, naturally, prioritised for patients, so I felt especially fortunate (and humbled) to be slotted in between two appointments.

“Arriving in the radiography suite with the urn on a wheelchair was a little surreal, but no-one asked me what I was doing! The scan was performed by a team of very enthusiastic radiographers. They told me that, on average, they perform about 80 scans a day, beginning in the early hours of the morning. Scanning the urn was not completely new for them (one of them had scanned an Egyptian mummy), but they were fascinated – as was I – to see its contents gradually appear on the computer screen as the scan was made. They are one of the most dedicated groups of professionals I have met.”

*Adam Tinsley and Louise Loe*



**GEOARCHAEOLOGICAL ROUNDUP**

The geoarchaeological programme across the three offices over the last year has been quite buoyant. A variety of projects have been undertaken across the North, the Midlands, East Anglia and the South, ranging from desk-based deposit models, borehole surveys and contributions to evaluation trenching and excavations.

Deposit models have been produced by OA North for the Windy Harbour to Skippool Road Scheme in Lancashire, and the Trans-Pennine Mottram in Longdendale route near Manchester. We also worked on sediment sequences from the River Tyne at Jarrow, in the vicinity of St Paul’s monastery. Ongoing excavations at Wharf Road, Warwickshire and Buckton Fields, Northampton have

revealed extensive ploughwash (colluvial) sequences and spring deposits within which are stratified multiperiod archaeological features and artefact scatters.

The highlight at OA East was the drilling of boreholes in the basement of Norwich Castle Keep to recover cores from pre-Norman dark earth deposits preserved beneath the mound. Further work was also carried out in Ipswich related to the proposed Orwell River Crossings, close to our previous excavations at Stoke Quay.

At OA South, major pieces of work include the extensive evaluation for the Oxford Flood Alleviation Scheme, which complements the geoarchaeological work carried out for Oxford Westgate, currently in post-excitation assessment. Most recently we have completed the evaluation trenching for the 5km Dorset Visual Impact Provision (VIP) Project, investigating chalkland dry valleys and buried soils across the Ridgeway, and look forward to searching for the one of London’s lost rivers - the Tyburn - beneath Buckingham Palace.

*Elizabeth Stafford*



Site visit to OAN excavation at Wharf Rd Warks

## ALDERLEY EDGE, CHESHIRE

This year, a team from OA North was at Alderley Edge, one of Cheshire's more famous historical, mythical and literary landscapes. The Edge forms a sandstone escarpment, which, with its open-access woodland and dramatic viewpoints across the Cheshire Plain, has become a popular tourist destination. The landscape gave rise to the local legend of 'The Wizard of the Edge', which in turn inspired Alan Garner's classic children's fantasy novel, *The Weirdstone of Brisingamen* (1960).

The Edge is significant, too, from an archaeological point of view. Its sandstone outcrops contain copper minerals, which have been exploited from the Bronze Age onwards. The archaeological landscape at the Edge is therefore exceedingly rich, but also represents a vulnerable resource. In particular, the escarpment has been subjected to extensive water erosion, while its open-access areas also suffer from footfall erosion.

Given the archaeological significance of the Edge, the National Trust commissioned OA North to undertake a detailed survey across its Alderley Edge properties. This survey took many forms, including surveying earthwork sites, locating and bringing together previous small-scale archaeological work and research, and identifying the surface remains of the underground mineshafts and caverns, mapped by the Derbyshire Caving Club. Much of the survey was undertaken using a



total station. Other areas were subject to photogrammetric survey, using photographs taken from a drone.

It is hoped the survey will allow future visitors to fully appreciate the historic landscape of the Edge and see many of its early copper workings and other features, with or without a wizard in tow!

Helen Evans



## BROUGHTON CASTLE'S ROMAN VILLA

An investigation by Oxford Archaeology on the Broughton Castle estate near Banbury shed light on what has been revealed to be one of the largest villas in Roman Britain.

Investigation at the site began in 2016 with surveys by metal detectorist Keith Westcott. These were followed in 2017 by a geophysical survey that confirmed the presence of a large courtyard villa. Earlier this year, Oxford Archaeology, under the management of CgMs Heritage, was commissioned by Broughton Castle Estate to undertake a trial trench evaluation to characterise the remains further.

Five trenches were excavated across a possible ditched access track, the north, east and south ranges of the villa, and a possible detached aisled building to the south of the main complex. The archaeological remains exposed in the trenches confirmed the results of the geophysical survey. The villa comprises a courtyard some 85m square. It appears to have been provided with the usual high-status

refinements. Stone tesserae attest to the presence of at least one mosaic, and flue tile fragments and brick that derive from heated rooms were recovered.

The dating of the villa is hampered by the inevitably small artefactual assemblage recovered, and earlier phases may have remained obscured beneath later deposits. However, the emphasis of the pottery assemblage is on the later part of the Roman period, with little evidence for activity before the middle of the 2nd century, and it has been tentatively suggested that occupation was not intensive during the later 4th century.

Simply in terms of size, the villa is impressive and is comparable to the grand villas at Chedworth and Woodchester in Gloucestershire, Bignor in Sussex, and Brading on the Isle of Wight.

Mark Dodd, Steve Lawrence and Edward Biddulph



Photo credit: ©Nathan Allan

**MEDIEVAL POTTERY FROM THE LANES, CARLISLE**

OA North has been examining an assemblage of medieval pottery recovered from the Lanes area of the city during the 1970s.

The Lanes takes its name from the narrow streets that lay within the walled medieval city. By the latter half of the 20th century, the area was run-down, and was subsequently redeveloped. An archaeological excavation was completed by the former Carlisle Archaeological Unit at the same time, when in excess of 35,000 sherds of late medieval pottery were recovered.

Post-excavation work was delayed for many years, but recently, OA North received funding from Historic England to analyse the post-Roman archaeology uncovered by the excavations. Progress on the pottery analysis is well underway.

Among the vessels are bearded-face jugs, which probably graced the dining table. Rare in north-west England, the style is common throughout north-west Europe. Exactly what the bearded face represents is not well understood. The jugs may have been used during rites of passage, specifically the coming of age of boys and their transition into manhood, or they may reflect stories that were brought back by medieval Crusaders. Another suggestion

is that the bearded men represent sexual potency, fertility and virility, and their depiction was perhaps a subtle way of ‘rebelling’ against medieval moralists. After the Black Death, the elaborately decorated pots of the high medieval period disappeared, as plainer pots became more common.

It is hoped that the current analysis will make a useful contribution to the understanding of these intriguing medieval vessels.

*Jeremy Bradley and Adam Parsons*



**REDCLIFF QUARTER, BRISTOL**

A team of archaeologists from both Oxford Archaeology and Cotswold Archaeology have been working together on an urban site in Bristol for Redcliff MCC LLP and Change Real Estate.

The site is within the 12th-century expansion of the city and the team has been encountering all sorts of medieval features and remains – building walls, floors, tenement plots, vat bases, hearths, cess pits, boundary and drainage ditches, beautiful green glazed pottery, leather, silver coins, bone objects, whetstones, lead fishing net weights, glazed roof tiles, a wooden barrel and stakes. There is also the odd post-medieval cellar and scatter of clay pipes.

The excavations are close to OA’s Finzels Reach work and when published the two sites should provide an excellent story of medieval Bristol. With that a long way off in the future, a large and very successful open day was held in September to showcase the results to the public.

*Vix Hughes*





## DUKE STREET, NORWICH

An evaluation by OA East in Norwich proved to be both exciting and challenging. The work, commissioned by John Youngs, revealed a sequence of stratigraphy over 3m thick. Features of late Saxon, medieval and post-medieval date included timber structures and pits. The layers produced fish bones, butchery waste and craft-related faunal remains, as well as pottery. Hammerscale and slag may indicate workshops on the site or reflect a movement of waste material from the surrounding area to this location.

The site had also been quarried, probably in the early medieval period; the pits were filled with plenty of medieval rubbish. The north part of the site may have been open ground and used as a convenient place to dump rubbish from the surrounding houses.



Late Saxon timber buildings were replaced with more solid walls made from flint and mortar, several of which were found in the trenches. Some of these walls clearly continued in use, as they were incorporated into the early post-medieval buildings when floor levels were raised and resurfaced. Part of a 'witch' bottle dating to the 16th-17th century was recovered from one of the floors. The bottle contained mercury, used by medieval and early post-medieval physicians to treat a variety of diseases, including syphilis.

Remains of a brick-built 19th-century foundry included a complete yellow-buff brick that has a deep decorative 'frog' impressed with a salmon and the words TRADE and WARK, possibly meant to read MARK.

*Aileen Connor*



## NORWICH CASTLE KEEP

Norwich Castle was founded soon after the Norman Conquest and was the only royal castle in Norfolk and Suffolk for nearly a century. Building on years of previous work, research excavations by OA East took place within the keep in advance of a major redevelopment of Norwich Castle Museum as part of the 'Gateway to Medieval England' project. Most of the work took place beneath the standing Norman building.

One of the most striking discoveries was the way that the different sections of the original ground floor were used for distinctly different functions. In one area a series of mortar and trodden earth floors was recorded, with a worn path leading diagonally across the room from one of the spiral staircases. Very few finds came from these deposits, indicating that the area was kept clean of accumulating debris.

Elsewhere, deposits and pits containing 14th-century pottery yielded large quantities of mammal, bird and fish bone. Domestic mammal bone was dominated by pig and cattle remains, closely followed by sheep or goat. Ageing data suggest the possible consumption of lamb, suckling pig and veal. Wild species, such as swan, red and fallow deer, rabbit and hare, and a large quantity of fish and marine mammal bone, were



also recovered. Most of the marine mammal bone has yet to be examined, but a vertebra belonging to a cetacean, probably a dolphin, has already been identified.

The results of the project will contribute to a monograph and to the new displays within the Museum, including digital models of the constructional sequence and reconstructions of the Norman castle.

*Liz Popescu, Heather Wallis and Hayley Foster*

## ANGEL MEADOW, MANCHESTER



Manchester's Angel Meadow was, during the Victorian period, notoriously less idyllic than its name might suggest. The Industrial Revolution brought an explosion in population, and the once green vale degenerated into a disease- and crime-ridden slum. Its dark alleys, closely packed tenements and boarding houses quickly became hotbeds of vice and a no-go area for many citizens, including the police. It was the German philosopher Friedrich Engels writing in 1844 who famously described 'the frightful condition of this hell upon Earth'.

Excavations at the site by OA North for Orion Heritage focused on uncovering and recording the remains of these infamous cellars and tenements where the poorer workforce of Victorian Manchester lived.

The layout of the housing is a mixture of back-to-back terraces, some with and some without cellars, arranged around a series of courtyards, cobbled streets or ginnels. In most cases we have been able to see evidence for how these properties changed over time. The majority of the remodelling has been connected to late 19th- and early 20th-century attempts to increase and improve sanitation, with evidence for the addition of lavatory blocks often being the main modification.

As part of our project, we wrote a blog and we held a couple of open days, which proved very popular. A lot of the visitors had a good view of proceedings from their surrounding flats and offices. Other visitors had a more tangible connection, as their families had grown up in the area.

*Aidan Parker*

## THE CHESTER NORTHGATE REDEVELOPMENT

Over the last couple of years, OA North has been providing archaeological advice to the Chester Northgate project, a 5.5-hectare redevelopment located at the heart of Chester's historic city centre.

From an archaeological standpoint, the project's main challenges stem from the fact that the city's historic core – the site of the largest legionary fortress in Roman Britain and a significant medieval urban centre – is designated an Area of Archaeological Importance (AAI). Designing new structures around these remains has been a learning experience for all of us.

The importance of minimising disturbance to Chester's nationally significant archaeology means that great care



is needed both to assess the impact of any proposed development and to produce a design that results in minimal damage. Information on the nature and preservation of the archaeology of the Northgate area, though, remains patchy, as became apparent when OA North was commissioned to undertake a detailed desk-based assessment in respect of the scheme.

Phase 1 of the Northgate scheme received planning consent in September 2016.

*John Zant*



**A ROMAN BRIDGE AT BERRYFIELDS, AYLESBURY**

The Thames river flows from a confluence of three streams to the north of Aylesbury in Buckinghamshire to Dorchester-on-Thames in Oxfordshire. There are bridges at several places along its course, but which is the oldest-known crossing? Radiocarbon dating of two timber piles salvaged from construction work associated with the Aylesbury Berryfields development has put one candidate forward.

Both piles were made of oak and hewn by axe to a point. The larger of the two is some 2.5m long and c 450mm by 400mm in cross-section. The other pile is 1.85m long and c 430 by 370mm in cross-section. The timbers were found by the river on the line of the Roman road of Akeman Street. A Roman date was suspected, but a later date, or even a prehistoric one, was not impossible.

Unfortunately, the piles could not be dated by dendrochronology, despite the survival of many annual



growth rings, and so a sample from each timber was submitted for radiocarbon dating. The results confirmed the Roman date: 87-316 cal AD for one, 86-247 cal AD for the other (both at 95.4% confidence).

It is not certain that the timbers formed part of a bridge that carried Akeman Street over the Thames, but the interpretation is plausible. Based on their form, the piles could have held a bridge trestle which in turn supported a metallated timber decking for the roadway. Connecting the Roman towns of Verulamium, Alchester and Cirencester, the road was an important artery of communication, and no doubt the bridge saw a lot of traffic. If only the timbers could talk!

*Edward Biddulph*

**OA WINS 'BOOK OF THE YEAR'**

We were thrilled when our publication, *Lost Landscapes of Palaeolithic Britain*, won the award for 'Book of the Year' in the Current Archaeology Awards 2018.

The volume, written by leading Palaeolithic specialists Mark White, Martin Bates, Matthew Pope, Danielle Schreve, Beccy Scott and Andrew Shaw, and coordinated by Elizabeth Stafford at OA South, explores the remarkable results from research projects funded by the Aggregates Levy Sustainability Fund (administered by Historic England) that have transformed our understanding of the Palaeolithic Britain.

The awards ceremony was held on 23rd February at Current Archaeology Live! 2018 at Senate House,

University of London. Accepting the award on behalf of the team from archaeologist and TV presenter Julian Richards, Mark White said: 'I am very surprised – no one votes for the Palaeolithic!'

*Edward Biddulph*



**COLDALHURST FARM, ASTLEY**

On the southern edge of Astley, a village to the west of Manchester, a proposed new housing development gave OA North the opportunity to record an intriguing and largely unmodernised vernacular farmhouse.

The farmhouse was surveyed using a handheld laser scanner. The survey indicated that the original farmhouse survived at the core of the building and was built as a two-cell building of two storeys constructed in handmade brick. It had an entrance at the centre of the southern elevation and appears to have incorporated a pair of semi-circular arched windows within its eastern upper gable. Although much altered, this phase could be dated to the late 17th century, although the arched windows may have been reused from an earlier structure.



The original house was extended at least twice in the 18th century, with a further extension during the first half of the 19th century. It was probably during the latter extension that the original southern doorway was blocked and a new one inserted to provide better access to the new reception room.

I was fortunate to be shown around the property by a former tenant who had been born in the house and whose family had lived there for nearly a century prior to its abandonment. It is rare in archaeology that we get an opportunity to talk to the people who lived and used the places we are studying but when we do, it is always a valuable experience.

*Andy Phelps*

**HAMPTON COURT PALACE**

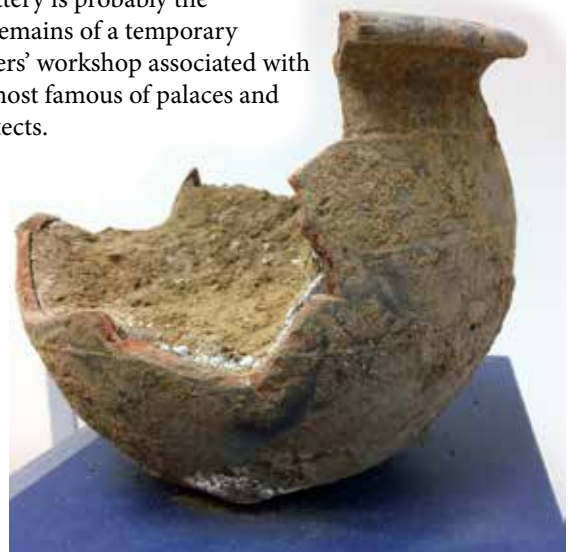
When archaeologists from Historic Royal Places carried out an evaluation at Hampton Court Palace, they uncovered a remarkable group of pottery and a case of untidy workmen in the late 17th century. The pottery was sent to OA South for assessment, which shed more light on this exceptional group

The group of pottery came from a single deposit dated by clay pipes to c 1690-1710. It contained what are normally commonplace domestic vessels, among them two smallish one-handled bowls or 'porringers' and a large tripod pipkin, but it is these three vessels that are also the most fascinating.

One of the porringers contained a very thick deposit of dried green paint. A bristle-headed paint brush with part of the wooden handle still surviving was set within the paint deposit. The second porringer contained a deposit of white paint. The tripod pipkin probably started life as a cooking vessel, but after the feet were knocked off it was reused as a paint pot; a thick layer of whiteish paint could be seen on the inside wall of the pot.



After falling out of favour during the 17th century, Hampton Court Palace became fashionable again as a Royal Palace under monarchs William and Mary. Large parts of the medieval palace and its gardens were entirely remodelled by Sir Christopher Wren (at the same time that he was rebuilding St Paul's Cathedral) to suit the new royal tastes. This group of pottery is probably the rare remains of a temporary painters' workshop associated with this most famous of palaces and architects.



*John Cotter and Ben Ford*

## INVESTIGATING TWO POST-MEDIEVAL FARMHOUSES

Of the various building recording projects that OA North has undertaken across the North over the past year, two projects stand out.

One was a survey for Manx Utilities of Glenfaba House, a mid-19th century building near Peel on the Isle of Man. The building was erected by a wealthy sea captain named Cameron between 1840 and 1850. The house is remarkable for its preservation, its mid-19th century layout, original sash windows and shutters and all its interior doors remaining intact. The survival of its original mouldings and a servants' bell board allowed us to determine the function of individual rooms, as well as identify the 'above' and 'below' stairs areas of the house. Further research is likely to provide us with the individual names of those who lived in the building, giving us a complete picture of the building's history.

In contrast, the survey of Dingle Farm in Middleton, a farmhouse of probable 18th-century date, revealed a heavily remodelled building that preserved almost

no visible features of historic interest. However, the investigations, for CgMs Heritage on behalf of Auxilia Developments Ltd, suggest that the fibreglass mock waney edge timbers and plasterboard wall coverings hide the core of the original building. Of interest is the adjoining barn's original timber roof, complete with assembly marks and a possible apotropaic pentagram incised into one of the tie beams. The practice of warding off evil spirits with symbols in barns is a tradition that is known to have survived up to the early 20th century and is a fascinating glimpse into the superstitions of the farmer.

*Andy Phelps*



## OLDBURY-ON-SEVERN, GLOUCESTERSHIRE



Oldbury-on-Severn is a small village near the mouth of the River Severn and is characterised by a 18th/19th -century farmhouses, which are typically stone-built, two-storey, structures with pantile roofs. OA South's Buildings Department carried out a survey of three of these farmhouses prior to their renovation. The project also involved historical research and map regression, which gave an insight into the farmhouses' occupiers/ owners, construction history, as well as the agricultural activities associated with the respective farmsteads.

The surveys indicated that the farmhouses retain much of their historic fabric and character. All conform to the local style (except that one has plain terracotta tiles on its roof, as opposed to pantiles), and they probably originated as simple, two-bay structures that were extended over time.

The interior arrangement and architectural detailing in the farmhouses are also remarkably well preserved. Each has a pantry, which retains its original 19th-century dresser,

whilst 19th-century fixtures, such as architraves, skirting boards and occasional cornices, survive throughout.

On the final day of recording, a hidden doorway was discovered at one of the farmhouses. The door had been covered with a panel and wallpapered over, but its architrave remained conspicuous. The space inside was found to contain little more than a blocked window and was probably once used as storage space.

There were intriguing details in the outbuildings, too. One building had a stuccoed ceiling rose. Its presence is surprising in an outbuilding, and it is possible that the building was used as a cider house.

*Deirdre Forde*



## IRTHLINGBOROUGH, NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

An impressive Roman-period carved stone block was uncovered during a community excavation in Irthlingborough. The surface is highly worn, but shows a sea creature and human figure. The tail of the creature is clear, and the human figure either sits astride the body of the creature (Neptune riding a hippocampus, perhaps; there is a hint of the neck of the horse-like beast to the left of the human figure) or is joined to it to form a single creature, such as a triton. One arm of the human figure appears to be raised, while the other arm is pointing down and carries what could be a trident. The condition of the relief is very poor, however, and without

further examination, the detail and interpretation remain uncertain.

The block was originally part of a monumental structure, possibly a tomb or shrine. The site is located on the opposite side of the Nene valley to the roadside settlement of Higham Ferrers (excavated by OA), where monumental stonework has been recorded. Remarkably, the block was found with the carved side face down. Had the carving been uppermost, then it may not have survived the later ploughing to tell its tale.

*Edward Biddulph*



## CAMBOURNE VILLAGE COLLEGE EXCAVATION

Already the largest settlement in south Cambridgeshire, the new town of Cambourne is set to double in size with a new development by Taylor Wimpey and Bovis Homes to the west. This area is currently home to the secondary school, Cambourne Village College, and when OA East conducted an evaluation in 2015, every Year 7 student took part in an archaeology workshop and a guided tour. Inspired by their visit, students at the school

formed an after-school archaeology club and successfully applied for a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund's Young Roots programme earlier this year to explore the archaeology of Cambourne with OA East as heritage partners.

The evaluation identified a discrete, enclosed farming settlement, which was occupied for about 500 years from the middle Iron Age into the Roman period in a field south of the school, and in September 2017 we returned for a week-long excavation with the college's archaeology club to investigate it further.

All the features were hand-dug by the students, with supervision from OA East archaeologists. Soon, a steady stream of pottery and bone from midden remains and roundhouse gullies kept the students busy. Some of the older students completed their own section drawings and context sheets. It was wonderful how the whole school got caught up in the excitement of the excavation. Workshops and assemblies about the project were also held in primary schools.

This was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to involve the first generation of residents to be born and grow up in Cambourne in their own excavation to discover the remains of the last people to occupy West Cambourne nearly two thousand years ago.

*Clemency Cooper*



## DORCHESTER-ON-THAMES, OXFORDSHIRE



The Discovering Dorchester training excavation, run by the University of Oxford and Oxford Archaeology, in the allotments overlying the south-west quarter of the Roman settlement, came to an end this summer.

The main discovery in this final season was evidence for the early Roman fort identified by Sheppard Frere in excavations in 1963. This consisted of the wall slots of timber buildings, apparently of more than one phase, some indicated by voids marking the presence of decayed timber posts. Objects potentially related to this phase included a fired clay sling bullet, a Claudian coin, two Hod Hill-type brooches, a possible strap fitting and a fine copper alloy mount with a head of Silenus.

The central part of the site was almost completely occupied by a zone of pits, some partly examined previously. These were very substantial, typically up to 2m deep with very steep-sided profiles, and were probably dug originally as quarries for gravel and brickearth. Some of these pits may have been dug in the later 1st century and perhaps related to construction of the Roman road.

The pits and the building and associated gravel surfaces

were eventually cut in about the middle of the 4th century by a ditch. This defined a large area later occupied by a sequence of probable midden deposits with activity continuing into the early Saxon period.

In overall terms the discoveries relating to the earliest phases (possible late Iron Age, and early Roman military) and latest phases (late Roman into early Saxon transition) seem to be the most important outcomes of the excavation, but this remains to be confirmed. A long process of analysis awaits.

*Paul Booth*



## DUDDON DIG

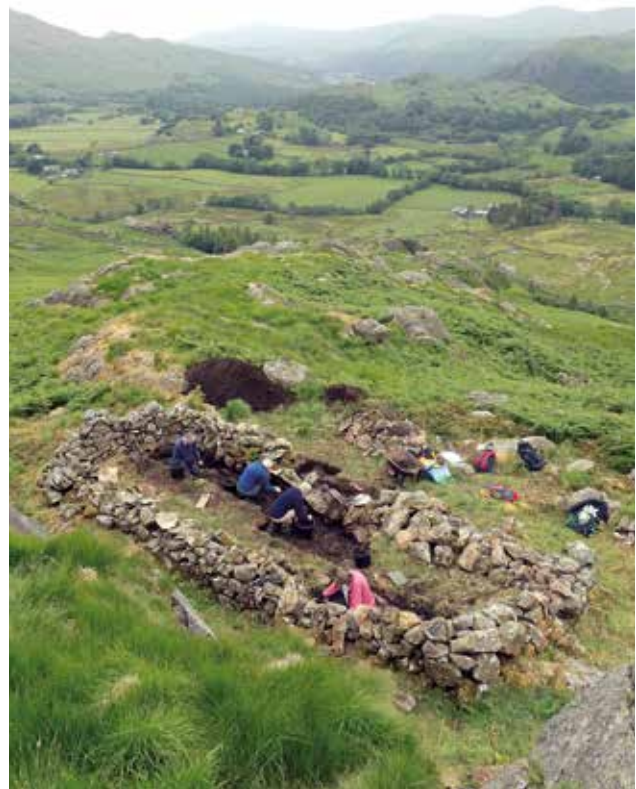
The final season of digging in the Duddon Valley with staff from OA North and volunteers from the Duddon Valley Local History Group was split between two sites; a return to Longhouse Close to try and answer questions thrown up by last year's early radiocarbon dates and the investigation of what was thought to be a small stone shieling at Tongue House Close.

Last year's excavation at Longhouse Close revealed a medieval stone building with a cross passage surrounded by two, somewhat enigmatic, large outer walls. The real surprise, however, was that a series of surfaces lying below the cross-passage structure turned out to be middle Bronze Age in date.

The focus of the excavation this year was to examine the extent of these surfaces. The surfaces extended some distance to the north and south, while to the west the site was bounded by a kerb of boulders. A single struck flint and a fragment of Bronze Age pottery were also recovered. The Duddon valley is not exactly strewn with Bronze Age sites, but at its head, by what was once a small tarn, are a number of ring cairns, one of which was excavated by the Duddon group and OA back in 2007.

The excavation of the third structure located at Tongue House Close, reached after a steep ascent, proved more straightforward; smaller than the other two buildings investigated as part of the project, and may have started life as a shieling.

*Jeremy Bradley*



## ARCHAEOLOGY TALKS

Over the year, our staff have been invited to local archaeological society meetings, academic conferences and other events to talk about the results of our work.

Staff gave papers on the Oxford Westgate pop-up museum at the European Association of Archaeologists' conference in Maastricht, urban flour production in the south-east to the Roman Finds Group, fish and seafood remains from the Herculaneum sewer at the 'Bountiful Sea' conference held at the University of Oxford, and the use of samian pottery to a conference on ancient cooking at New York University.

A talk was given to the regional group of the Institute of Civil Engineers about the organisation's founding president, Thomas Telford. Another talk was on the Holme Fen Spitfire was given to the Sedgeford Historical and Archaeological Project, and a talk on the archaeology of Duxford to the Saffron Walden Town Library Society. Recent work on Mesolithic finds from southern England was described at a meeting of the Barbarians Prehistory seminar group at the University of Oxford.

Aspects of Roman Britain were the subject of presentations given to groups in Cambridgeshire. Anglo-Saxon discoveries on the A14 were described to attendees at the Cambridge Antiquarian Society conference. Delegates to a meeting of Oxfordshire Past, organised by the Oxfordshire Architectural and Historical Society, learned about our work on the Oxford Flood Alleviation Scheme. The West Lancashire Archaeological Society heard about the

## OA IN THE NEWS

From time to time, our discoveries grab the attention of newspaper and website editors, allowing news of our work to reach wider audiences. Here are some examples of where our work has made a splash this year.

Items about the archaeology of the Oxford Flood Alleviation Scheme, investigated by OA South, appeared in the Oxford Mail and the BBC News website. The Oxford Mail ran a piece that mentioned our excavation of a medieval friary at Oxford's Westgate Centre. A story about the Westgate Centre also appeared in the Independent. Another item on the BBC News website, in this case one about 'the landmarks that mean you're nearly home', included a reference to an unpublished report of ours on the bridges of the M25 (the landmark being the bridge with the 'Give Peas a Chance' graffiti).

Digging into its archives, the Bucks Herald ran a feature on a Bronze Age ard from OA's excavations some years ago at Eton as part of a series exploring the history of Buckinghamshire in 12 objects.

The Newark Advertiser published a feature about OA North's excavation at Newark-on-Trent. Meanwhile, OA East's excavations at Long Melford in Suffolk featured in the Suffolk Free Press. Excavations at Norwich Castle featured in the Eastern Daily Press and on the 'Norfolk Now' YouTube channel. The work has also been the subject of ongoing social media posts by Norwich Castle, as well as OA.



Carlisle Northern Development Route, while the Lancaster Archaeological and Historical Society heard about the latest results from the Duddon Valley longhouse community project.

Staff also spoke to the Study Group for Roman Pottery, the West Wickham and District Local History Club, the Norfolk and Norwich Archaeological Society, the North Hertfordshire Archaeological Society, the Norris Museum, the Cambridge Archaeology Field Group, the Covington History Group, and the Ely, the South Oxfordshire Archaeological Group, and District Archaeological Society.

Such engagements are a key part of disseminating archaeological knowledge and helping connect people with their heritage. They are also a good opportunity to people to purchase some of our publications! All in all, it has been a busy, but rewarding year.

Edward Biddulph



An excavation within a school in St Albans which uncovered the remains of Verulamium's basilica, featured on the websites of the Hertfordshire Advertiser, the St Albans Museum, the Diocese of St Albans, and BBC News.

An episode of 'Viking Dead', a television documentary series exploring the Vikings that aired on Yesterday TV, was devoted to the mass grave of executed Vikings found by OA South in 2009 during the construction of the Weymouth Relief Road in Dorset. The hour-long documentary featured a reconstruction of the grisly event and interviews with members of the project team.

Edward Biddulph



**OA IN PRINT**

This year saw the publication of several monographs, as well as a host of journal articles. Here are some of the highlights.

**Excavations at Wixoe Roman Small Town, Suffolk,** by Rob Atkins and Rachel Clarke, presents the results of investigations at the site of a Roman ‘small town’

in Suffolk. The excavations produced significant finds assemblages, and a major contribution of the work has been the reinterpretation of the town’s road network. Overall, the results make an important contribution to the continuing debate over what constitutes a Roman ‘small town’.

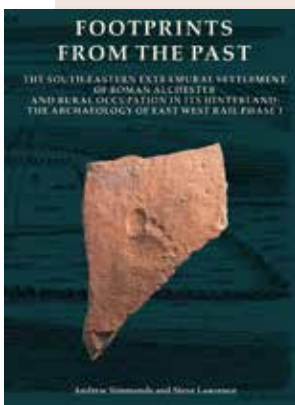


**In the Shadow of Corinium,** by Andrew Simmonds, Edward Biddulph and Ken Welsh, describes excavations at Kingshill South on the eastern edge of Cirencester in Gloucestershire. Among the notable discoveries were a stone-footed building best described as a proto-villa and an aisled building with an apsidal end. Grain, meat, and wool, among other goods, were produced at the Roman settlement, probably to supply the town of Corinium Dobunorum.



**In Footprints from the past – the south-eastern extramural settlement of Roman Alchester and rural occupation in its hinterland,** Andrew Simmonds and Steve Lawrence report on an investigation of an

extramural settlement associated with the Roman fortress and subsequent town at Alchester, Oxfordshire. The settlement may have been partly rural in character, involved in farming the landscape around the town, which was intensively managed for agricultural production, probably as meadow and pasture.

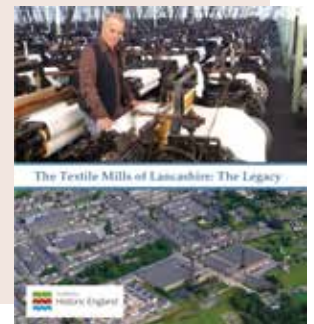


**Gill Mill: Later prehistoric landscape and a Roman nucleated settlement in the lower Windrush valley near Witney, Oxfordshire,** by Paul Booth and Andrew Simmonds describes excavations at the Gill Mill quarry.

The landscape was intensively exploited from about 300 BC, with the largest of the Iron Age settlements remaining in occupation into the early 3rd century AD. Meanwhile, a large nucleated settlement grew up around a road junction roughly 1km distant to the NW. The settlement contained relatively few identified buildings and appears to have had a specialised economic role related to cattle management and may have been an integral component of a wider estate holding and perhaps had an administrative focus at its unexcavated centre.



**The Textile mills of Lancashire: The legacy** is the culmination of a decade of research on the textile mills of Lancashire by OA North born out of two phases of survey funded by Historic England, designed to assess the survival of, and threats to, modern Lancashire’s historic textile mills. It highlights the growth of the region’s textile industry, and the architectural form and evolution of Lancashire’s textile mills and ancillary industries. The book also show that such buildings can be readily adapted to modern use as viable spaces, rather than being seen as eyesores to be demolished.



**Local and national archaeological journals** remain an important vehicle for the publication of our work. Sites reported on have included a Bronze Age barrow on Dartmoor, prehistoric remains in Suffolk, Iron Age/early Roman settlements in Kent, a Roman cemetery in Cumbria, a saltworking site in Kings Lynn, and a post-medieval kiln in Woolwich.

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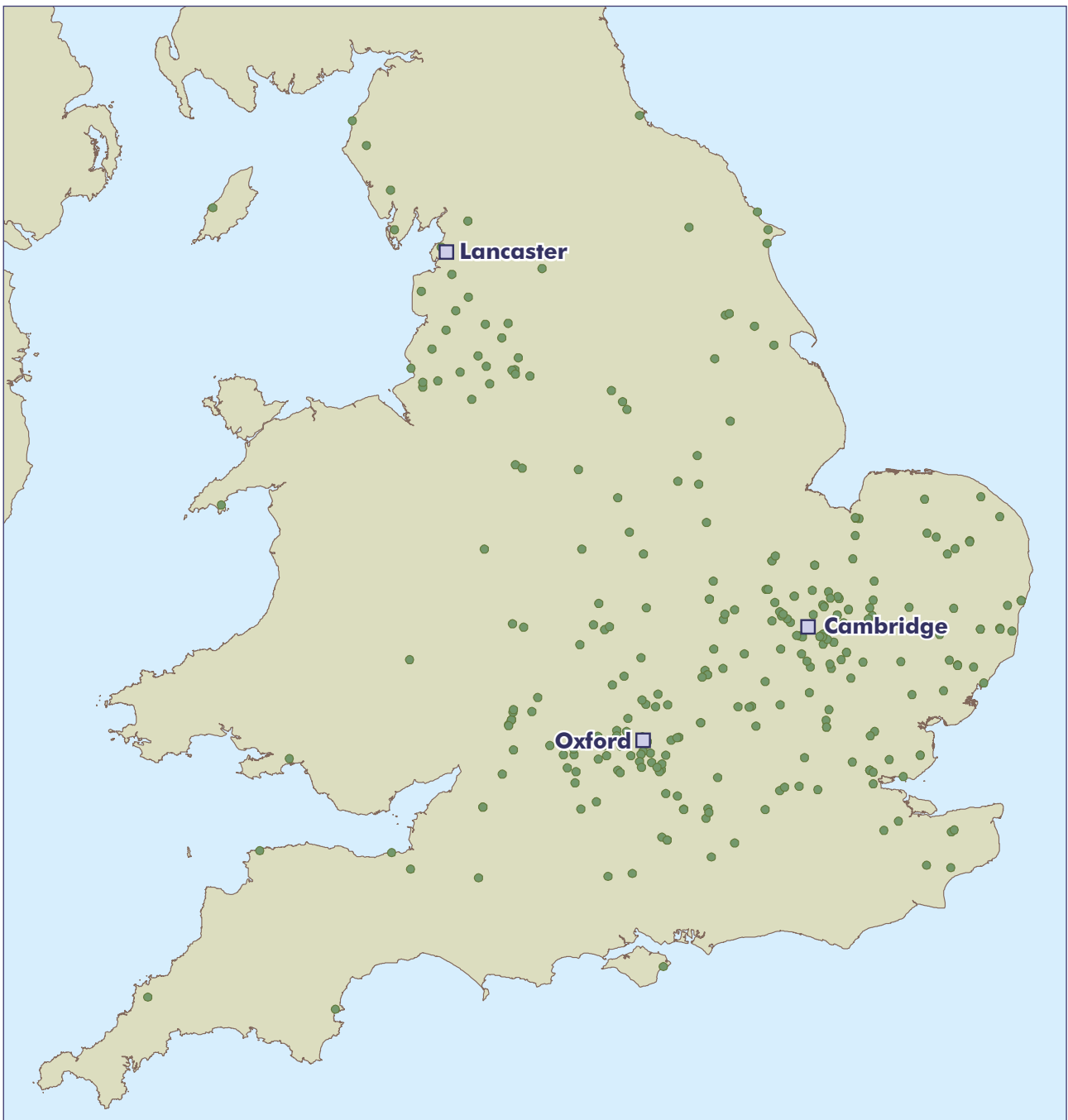
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# Where we've been working in 2017-18



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Cover image: Local children excavating part of the extra-mural settlement of Maryport Roman fort in 2014. The results of the Maryport project will be published in 2019

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